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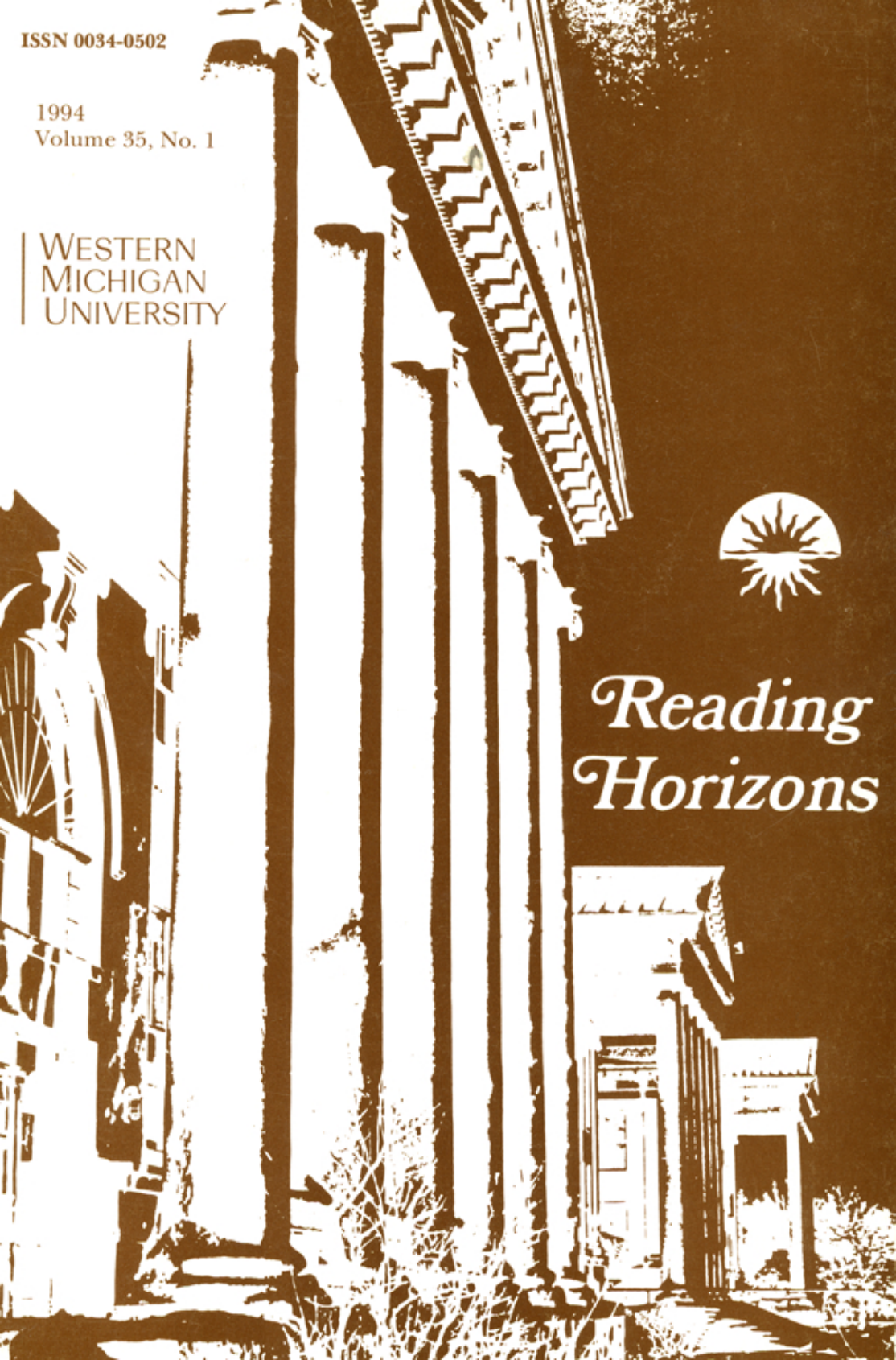
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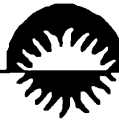
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Reading Horizons





READING HORIZONS

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Children's Literature and Literacy Instruction: "Literature-Based" Elementary Teachers' Belief and Practices

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In recent years, there has been growing interest nationwide among elementary teachers for using children's literature as the core of the reading program. A national survey (Cullinan, 1989) indicated that many states are involved in literature-based initiatives, and some states, led by California, have mandated the use of literature (Alexander, 1987). Therefore, many teachers are making the transition from highly structured commercial reading programs to literature programs that require extensive teacher decision-making regarding materials, grouping, instructional practices, and assessment. Concerns are now being raised in the profession about the nature and appropriateness of some literature-based programs' implementation (Gardner, 1988; Purves, 1990). For example, philosophical tension is growing between teaching *reading* with literature (suggesting a primarily *literacy* focus) and teaching *literature* (implying a stronger *literary* perspective). In fact, Purves (1990) bluntly pinpoints this conflict by

asking whether literature can be "rescued from reading" (p. 79).

Despite the sweeping nature of these changes, little systematic research has documented classroom practice in or teacher perceptions about literature-based reading programs (Lehman, 1989; Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989). Several studies have probed the effectiveness of literature-based reading instruction (Cohen, 1968; Chomsky, 1972; Eldredge and Butterfield, 1986), and research by Walmsley and Walp (1989) explored how literature is being used in six elementary schools. These investigations are supplemented by many teachers' first-hand accounts of implementing literature-based reading programs (Hancock and Hill, 1987; Nelms, 1988; Routman, 1988). Finally, Scharer's (1990) research documented the transition of teachers into literature-based reading programs, and research by Hoffman, Roser, Battle, Farest, and Isaacs (1990) probed teacher learning and change as a result of using children's literature in primary classrooms. Still, there is a need to provide more in-depth examination of the nature of literature-based reading instruction (Giddings, 1992; Hiebert and Colt, 1989; Zarrillo, 1989), for, as noted by Walmsley and Walp (1989), "the question of what constitutes the body of literary knowledge and experiences appropriate for children prior to secondary school... still remains largely undefined" (p. 37).

On the other hand, a growing body of research shows a relationship between teacher beliefs or perceptions and instructional decisions in reading. In 1977, Duffy (quoted in Meloth, Book, Putnam, and Sivan, 1989) studied the relationship between teachers' concepts of reading and their practices and found that these were congruent for just half of the participating teachers. Later, Buike and Duffy's (1979) research into this same relationship found it to be positive, at least at a

superficial level. However, a closer look showed the relationship to be "fluid" (p. 9), and influenced by other non-reading conceptions (such as classroom management) and by grade level and pupil ability level. Meanwhile, DeFord (1979) validated an instrument to determine teachers' theoretical orientation in reading instruction. This instrument was used by Richards, Gipe and Thompson (1987) to investigate teachers' beliefs about good reading instruction. They found that two of the theoretical orientations, the graphophonics and the whole language stances, were correlated strongly with different kinds of experiences, such as years of teaching experience, number of professional reading courses taken, and number of different grade levels taught. These findings tend to support Rupley and Logan's (1985) discovery that teachers' knowledge of reading content relates to their beliefs about reading, which, in turn, influences their decisions about the importance of reading outcomes — namely decoding-oriented versus comprehension-oriented outcomes. Furthermore, Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd's (1991) study of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in reading comprehension instruction suggests that shifts in beliefs precede changes in practice and that at such times of transition, beliefs and practice may be incongruent. Finally, both Shapiro and Kilbey (1990) and Meloth, Book, Putnam and Sivan (1989) argue that a critical and reflective examination of teaching practices is essential for teachers to integrate their theoretical knowledge and beliefs with their instructional behavior.

In summary, this review of the literature demonstrates a need for more investigation of the nature of literature-based reading, while at the same time reveals a relationship between teacher beliefs and reading instruction. Specifically, examination of the relationship between teacher perceptions and practices in literature-based reading instruction is lacking. Thus, the purposes of this study were to investigate three

questions: 1) What are teachers' views about the role of children's literature in the literacy program?; 2) How do teachers implement literature-based reading programs in their classrooms?; and 3) What is the congruence between teacher perceptions and teacher practice regarding literature-based reading instruction?

Method

Data for this investigation were gathered in two phases. Phase 1 of the project consisted of a survey providing quantitative information about teachers' perceptions and practices. During Phase 2 of the study, qualitative data were collected in the classrooms of a sub-sample of 10 teachers to provide an opportunity for the researchers to validate the teachers' self-reports of practices and their congruence with teachers' stated beliefs.

Phase 1. To initiate our research project, we developed a two-part questionnaire that would assess teacher perceptions of and identify classroom practices in literature-based reading instruction. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers for specific use in this study (see Appendix A). The teacher perception component of the questionnaire was modeled after the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (DeFord, 1979) and included 12 items to which teachers responded using a 5-point Likert scale. These items stated beliefs about the use of children's literature, to which respondents indicated their degree of agreement or disagreement. The second component — instructional practices involving the use of children's literature — was patterned after an instrument to survey practices in writing instruction (Freeman, 1989). It consisted of forced choice questions as well as items where multiple responses were possible. The questionnaire was pilot-tested and modified (with assistance from a consultant with expertise in survey instruments) based upon the

preliminary results. Redundant items were eliminated, ambiguous wording was clarified, and the format was altered.

The revised questionnaire then was given to 350 elementary teachers who attended a one-day conference on literature-based reading. The response rate was 55 percent (192 teachers). Although we recognized that this sample of teachers represented a select group, we deliberately chose them in order to identify teachers who already had a strong interest in using children's literature in the classroom. The respondents represented teachers in grades K-7, as well as reading teachers. While most of the respondents taught in public schools, 15 taught in private or parochial schools. School locations were characterized by 31 percent of the teachers as rural, 19 percent as suburban, 37 percent as small city, 7 percent as urban, and 6 percent were unknown. Teaching experience of respondents ranged from 0-4 years (20 percent) to 5-10 years (18 percent), 11-15 years (18 percent), and more than 15 years (41 percent); 3 percent gave no response.

The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using several procedures. For each item, the percentage of responses was determined; means also were calculated for those items where appropriate. Respondent characteristics (teaching location, years of experience, grade level) were used as variables in computing analyses of variance. In addition, a canonical discriminant analysis was computed to determine the congruence between teacher beliefs and practices for the questionnaire. This procedure indicates the relationships between criterion and predictor sets of variables. The technique provided insight regarding whether beliefs predicted which practice was used and which of the beliefs might be most related to the use of a particular practice.

Phase 2. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents indicated their willingness to participate in a follow-up structured interview. We purposefully chose to interview only those teachers who expressed a desire to be included in this phase of the study. A stratified random sample of 10 teachers (of the 54 who volunteered) was selected for these interviews. Three primary (K-2), five intermediate (grades 3-5), and two middle school (grades 6-7) teachers were chosen. Four taught in rural locations, three in small cities, and three in suburban areas. One teacher had 0-4 years of experience, three had 5-10 years, one had 11-15 years, and five had 15+ years. The interviews probed specific issues identified from the questionnaire results as needing more in-depth investigation and were structured around three general areas: teachers' knowledge and understanding about children's literature, how they make instructional decisions, and how they assess children's growth (see Appendix B).

Part of the interviews consisted of asking the teachers to read *Amos and Boris* (Steig, 1971). This children's picture book (appropriate for a wide age range) contains rich themes and language as well as striking illustrations. We wanted to find out what teachers would focus on as they thought about how they would use this book with children. We asked them to respond in writing to three open-ended questions: *What would you want children to take away from this book?*; *What questions would you use to stimulate discussion?*; and *How would you help children "revisit" this book?*

The interviews, which were conducted in the teachers' classrooms after school hours, were tape recorded and field notes were taken. Classroom inventories, guided by a checklist, focused on the literacy/literature environment and included evidence of displays about children's literature, the number and types of children's books in the classroom,

materials or equipment that support children's interactions with books, evidence of cross-curricular links involving children's literature, and resources (i.e., library availability and professional publications) for literature-based teaching (see Appendix C). Slides were taken to capture this information visually. In addition, selected artifacts of teacher-created planning materials and children's literature-related work were collected to provide further supportive information and to triangulate with the survey data. Interview and inventory data were content analyzed by the categories developed for the structured interview and the inventory checklist.

Results and discussion

Results from analysis of the survey data will be discussed first in relation to the three research questions, followed by additional findings from interview data collected in 10 classrooms.

Teachers' views about the role of children's literature. On the questionnaire, teachers indicated consistent beliefs in several areas: 73 percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that teachers should develop their own literature programs rather than relying on published programs; 94 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that children's literature should be the primary component of the reading/language arts program; and 92 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that children should be taught how to use critical thinking skills when they read books.

Other beliefs from the questionnaire produced varied responses. Much difference of opinion existed concerning whether it is more important for children to read widely or to engage in an in-depth study of one book. The beliefs of experienced teachers differed significantly from those with less experience ($F(3, 184) = 2.95, p < .034$), in stressing the importance

of reading widely. The value of a suggested list of children's books for each grade level also produced significant differences in responses. Teachers in rural and small city districts felt lists were significantly more important than those teachers in suburban and urban locations ($F(3,168) = 3.14, p < .027$). Teachers in suburban and urban schools felt more confident than their counterparts in rural and small city districts in teaching literature without the benefit of a published program ($F(3, 167) = 6.38, p .001$). There were wide differences of opinion regarding whether certain books should be read by every child and whether children should learn how to analyze books by their literary elements. Finally, rural and small city teachers were more in agreement than suburban and urban teachers that children's literature should be studied using a structured, sequential curriculum ($F(3, 171) = 4.45, p < .005$).

Teachers' implementation of literature-based reading. Ninety-one percent of the teachers reported on the questionnaire that their students have *very positive* or *moderately positive* attitudes toward reading, and 85 percent read aloud at least once a day. Children read books of their own choice on a daily basis in 78 percent of the classrooms, three times each week in 13 percent, at least once a week in 7 percent, and in 1.6 percent such reading does not occur on a regular basis.

Teachers stated on the questionnaire that they use a variety of instructional materials including teacher-made and commercially-prepared worksheets, multiple copies of books, other media and a classroom library. Basals are used to varying extents in 54.5 percent of the classrooms, while 45.5 percent of the teachers do not use the basal at all. The fact that more than half of these teachers used basals in some manner while agreeing that literature should be the primary component of a literacy program (see "views" discussion) may reflect a lack of consistency between beliefs and practices, a

perception of newer basals as being literature-based, the use of basals in a manner different from traditional practice, or simply compliance with district/school requirements to use basals.

Responses to the survey question regarding how children are grouped for instruction varied considerably as follows: 11.7 percent group by reading ability, 11.7 percent by student interest, 0.6 percent by social interaction skills, 51.1 percent use flexible grouping, and 25 percent do not use any kind of grouping.

How do teachers assess literature-based reading? According to the survey results, projects/extension activities, conferences, and observation are used most frequently, while book reports, worksheets, and written tests are employed least frequently. Reading logs or journals also are used by a majority of teachers. Nine percent of the teachers report that they do not assess literature work. Observation as a method of assessment was used significantly more often by kindergarten and first grade teachers than by middle school teachers ($F(3, 118) = 7.02, p < .001$). Further, more experienced teachers use observation significantly more often than less experienced ones ($F(3, 148) = 4.06, p < .008$). However, less experienced teachers use projects significantly more often than experienced ones ($F(3, 149) = 4.54, p < .005$).

Congruence between beliefs and practice

The respondents' beliefs were used as predictors for each of the 12 practices. The canonical discriminant analyses indicated that the measured beliefs could predict the use of six of the practices. The results revealed that teachers' perceptions significantly predicted: 1) how much time students read a book of their choice in class; 2) the role of the basal reader in the classroom (i.e., if and how much it is used); 3) the primary

resource used by teachers in planning the literature program (such as teacher-made guides, published teacher's guides, or commercial literature programs); 4) how book extensions are selected (whether by teacher or student choice); 5) the types of materials used in instruction (such as teacher-developed or commercially prepared materials, children's books and other media, and the basal reader); and 6) whether conferences are used as an assessment technique. It does appear, then, that teacher beliefs do correlate with certain classroom practices as reported by the teachers on the questionnaires.

Additional insights from interviews and inventories. These findings are grouped according to the general categories developed for the structured interviews and include substantiating evidence from the classroom inventories.

Knowledge and understanding about children's literature. Teachers' agreement on the questionnaire about the primacy of children's literature in reading and language arts programs was supported by the presence of many children's books in the classrooms of teachers interviewed. However, the numbers in individual rooms ranged from approximately 200 to more than 1,500 books. The types and genres of these books were varied: Big Books, predictable books, novels, information books, fantasy, poetry, and picture books.

Interviewed teachers' opinions about best children's literature were eclectic. When asked to name three outstanding children's books, the 10 teachers listed a total of 25 different books, only five of which were named by more than one teacher. Their reasons for selecting these books were fairly evenly divided among children's and their own personal interest/enjoyment, literary merit, and curricular or educational concerns. Likewise, with respect to which authors are important for children to know, these teachers named 40 different

ones, 10 of whom were mentioned more than once. The main reason for choosing these authors (given for 11 of the 40 authors) was child interest, followed by literary and curricular/educational priorities, a particular book of the author's, and teacher enjoyment or contact with the author.

These teachers' definitions of a literate person provide insights about their understanding of the role of children's literature in general. Their comments showed a wide range of interpretations, with many global characterizations about enjoying reading, being a lifelong reader, choosing to read, losing oneself in reading, having varied reading interests, and reading to learn more. More specific or utilitarian definitions emphasized the ability to read print and function in society and being an "eighth grade level reader."

Although no one included an understanding of what literature is within these definitions, classroom inventories provided evidence that teachers were helping children to explore some dimensions of literary elements and of the writer's craft. Children studied the work of one author in-depth, focused on a particular genre, or examined and compared several versions of one folktale. They compared and contrasted two books with a similar focus, they looked at how authors developed character, and they created story maps. Along with these observational data, teacher responses to the *Amos and Boris* questions highlighted its themes and characterization, stylistic choices made by the author, and children's personal response. However, few of the questions or activities suggested by these teachers would lead children to focus on the illustrations of this picture book or to explore Steig's poetic use of language. Every classroom showed evidence of cross-curricular links with children's literature. Many teachers used interdisciplinary themes, like wolves, panda bears, China, or the human body.

All but one classroom had displays created by children, including bulletin boards, group projects, book posters, murals, models, and mobiles. Children's books were organized or arranged in varied ways, but every classroom illustrated ways of making books accessible and inviting for children. Books around a topic sometimes were grouped in boxes and baskets or tucked under tables. Chalk trays, small tables, and even tops of filing cabinets held book displays. We found that rooms became too small to hold all that they were doing; displays sometimes spilled into the halls — an added invitation for children in other classes to enjoy books.

When teachers were asked to name their most valuable professional resources in planning for literature-based instruction, by far the greatest number of aids mentioned were specific books, such as *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman, 1987) or authors, such as Lucy Calkins. These were followed by other teachers, colleagues, and classroom visits; professional journals or articles; conferences, institutes, and inservices; children's bookstores; and professional organizations. Very few said that they relied upon published instructional materials, such as book guides or book collections with manuals. Their reasons for citing these resources suggest that while they like specific ideas about activities and "how-to instructions," these teachers prefer to use resources selectively, for their own professional growth, and to remain current. Thus, the interview data supported teachers' belief, stated on the questionnaire, that developing their own literature programs is preferable to relying on published programs.

Instructional decisions. Overall, interviewed teachers' considerations in book selection were not as clear-cut as shown in the questionnaire results (child interest and literary

quality). Rather, selection factors mentioned in the interviews were more evenly balanced among curriculum concerns and the need to avoid overlap with other grades; children's needs, interests, and reading levels; literary quality, themes, style, authors and illustrators, genres, and connections or comparisons with other books; the teacher's personal evaluation of books as enjoyable and suitable for the grade level or of literary merit; and the need for variety. The tools they use in book selection reflect a reliance on literary merit (such as American Library Association recommendations, the Newbery award, or *The Hornbook Magazine* reviews) or recommendations from other people (such as librarians, conference presenters, various booklists, or children).

Interview and inventory data supported the questionnaire findings on grouping for instruction, with most teachers indicating that they use flexible groupings in many permutations: whole class for reading or listening to books and working on book extensions, small groups for reading and discussing books and completing book projects (teacher-selected heterogeneous, homogeneous, or random; child-selected by interest, friendship, or book), pairs for buddy reading, individuals for independent, self-selected reading and teacher conferences. Sometimes the purpose of these groupings was for discussing books and other times for skills instruction.

The findings about teachers' use of professional resources imply that most teachers we interviewed did develop their own literature programs. Furthermore, these teachers believe that they have freedom to make decisions concerning how to teach reading and language arts. At the same time, however, they expressed perceptions of constraint about what to teach from state and local curricular guidelines or mandates, standardized tests, the district structure, the school schedule, and other teachers' concerns about children's

preparation. Lack of money for materials and books and parental or community concerns about the content of children's books or the absence of dittos also posed constraints for these teachers, and some admitted to self-restraints in order to avoid community controversy.

Assessment. In the interviews, the 10 teachers told us what they wanted to learn through assessment: overwhelmingly, their priorities reflected a skills and comprehension orientation, rather than a literary focus. This fact is not consistent with their reasons for choosing books and authors which, as noted before, were much more evenly divided among enjoyment, literary, and educational foci. Their means of assessment, however, correlated well with the questionnaire findings: the five most frequently used means involved observation, conferences, reading journals or response logs, and book projects. Other kinds of writing and records of books read by children were mentioned several times, while worksheets or written answers to questions about books were low on the list. Only one mention each was made of portfolios or student self-assessment and group book discussions. These teachers indicated that they used assessment mostly in planning for instruction or for grades, report cards, and communicating with parents. Less important was using assessment to get to know children, to watch their progress, or to provide feedback to children.

In addition, although there was strong agreement on the questionnaire about the importance of teaching critical thinking when children read books, this was not supported by the interviews. Nine of the 10 agreed on the questionnaire that "children should be taught how to use critical thinking skills when they read books," but only three of these teachers indicated in the interview that they considered critical thinking as an area they wanted to follow in terms of children's growth

and progress in a literature-based program. Also, the *Amos and Boris* data revealed that teachers' questions did not require children to support their answers with evidence from the story. Nor did their suggested activities for the book require critical thinking; most would not require re-examining the book, while some could be done without even reading the book.

A last insight from the interviews is that none of these 10 teachers had a primarily literary focus in their literature-based teaching. Instead, most had either a balanced (and fairly well-integrated) literacy-literary focus or a stronger literacy than literary perspective. A couple of the teachers viewed literature and literacy more separately, rather than in an integrated manner. One teacher focused mainly on reading and enjoying books, though not in any systematic literary way.

Conclusions

As we analyzed all the components of this investigation, several overall conclusions began to emerge.

Agreement. The teachers who participated in the questionnaire part of this study widely agreed to certain beliefs and practices: that teachers should develop their own literature programs, that children's literature should be the major component of elementary reading programs, that children should be taught to think critically about books, that these teachers read aloud to their students daily, and that their children independently read books of their own choosing every day.

Disagreement. These teachers disagreed considerably on other practices and beliefs as reported on the questionnaire: on the importance of reading many books versus studying one book in-depth, on the importance of recommended grade level reading lists, about their own confidence level for

teaching literature, about the role of basals in a literature-based program, about how children are grouped for instruction, and about how to assess children's learning in literature-based reading.

Teacher perceptions and teacher practice. We found with the questionnaire that there is congruence between teacher perceptions and teacher practice regarding literature-based reading instruction in areas where beliefs predicted practice. Specifically, beliefs predict practice in six areas: two issues related to teacher-versus child-centered instruction (time for children to read books they choose and who selects the book extensions children do); three items related to materials used for planning and instruction in literature-based classrooms (whether teacher-developed or commercially prepared and the role of basal readers); and one practice related to using conferences in assessment. At the same time, we found (as expected) that, among the 10 teachers we interviewed, there were various interpretations of literature-based instruction that included both literary and literacy perspectives.

Teacher variables. We discovered (as did Buike and Duffy, 1979, and Richards, Gipe and Thompson, 1987) that certain other teacher variables relate to their beliefs and practices. In particular, teaching location correlated with teachers' perceptions of the need for structure. Suburban and urban teachers felt more confident than rural and small city teachers about developing their own literature programs without the benefit of book lists, published programs, or tightly sequenced curricula. (The suburban and urban teachers who participated in our study tended to have had more experience with literature-based teaching as well as more support from their districts and contact with nearby universities.) Also, more experienced teachers believed more strongly in the importance of children reading widely, and they were more apt to use

observation as an assessment tool. On the other hand, less experienced teachers were more inclined to evaluate literature work through projects, and teachers of older children used observation in assessment less often.

Assessment. On the issue of assessment, the 10 teachers we interviewed were able to talk more specifically about how they assessed (projects, book discussions, etc.) than *what* they assessed. Their ideas about what they were looking for in children's development in literature-based programs were not clearly defined. For example, as noted earlier, one area that they largely overlooked for assessment was critical thinking, although this was identified in their questionnaire responses as something that should be taught.

Experience. The 10 teachers we interviewed represented a high level of experience: nine had five or more years' teaching experience, while five had more than 15 years of experience. Thus, they were not likely to have received much exposure to literature-based ideas when they were in their preservice teacher education programs. Yet we found them to be motivated, supported by their belief in teacher-designed programs, to continue their professional development through conference and inservice attendance and reading current professional literature. It is clear that they are interested in and say they espouse literature-based reading and language arts, but most are still in a state of transition. Their comfort level with using literature in their teaching and their literary understanding are not yet solid. This conclusion related to Rupley and Logan's (1985) finding reported earlier that knowledge relates to beliefs, which influence instructional decisions. It also supports Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd's (1991) suggestion that, at transitional points, teachers' beliefs and practices may appear incongruent. Thus, if

teachers' own literary knowledge is still maturing, then their beliefs and practices may not yet be well integrated.

Implications

This study has important implications for those involved in teacher education programs at both preservice and inservice levels. Clearly, as more and more schools are moving to the use of literature, teachers need to acquire a solid framework for a critical understanding of literature. What makes a book strong? What are the special qualities of particular books? What knowledge can/should children acquire about the writer's craft? Furthermore, they need to link this knowledge with the framework they have about language and literacy. Otherwise, there can be dissonance when a teacher holds a view of literacy development that is skills-based and tries to link literature into that system. For example, some teachers believe that certain books should be taught exclusively at one particular grade level. Or sometimes they seem to be using children's literature as just another program for teaching reading.

Secondly our research suggests that teachers' perceptions do influence their practices, and therefore more self-awareness about their beliefs will benefit their practice. Teachers need time to sort out their beliefs and to reflect upon their practices. Teacher education programs need to emphasize reflection, promote integration of subject matter with methods for teaching that content, and offer a seamless and coherent view of curriculum.

Finally, universities and schools need to work together to develop appropriate assessment strategies that will help teachers answer such questions as: What growth points in children are they looking for? How do they use this knowledge to move children ahead? Do they look at what children

could do on their own and contrast it with what children could do with support either from the teacher or peers?

If we are able to do the above, it will provide support to teachers at both the preservice and inservice levels as they work: 1) to develop a literature-based program that helps children draw meanings and make connections, and 2) to plan and implement such programs.

Suggestions for further research

Because of the relatively small sample size and the possibility of sample bias, a follow-up investigation could extend this research to a wider area with a larger sample of randomly selected teachers. The results of such a study among teachers who may or may not profess interest in literature-based teaching would surely make for interesting comparisons with this study.

Finally, additional research should explore how teachers help children use and understand literature from multiple perspectives: knowledge about the content of literature itself; literature as it supports children's growth as readers and writers; literature as it supports the curriculum; and literature as it supports children's understandings of self and others. The trend toward literature-based reading is laudatory, we believe, but the implementation of such programs should be scrutinized carefully, for interpretations of what "literature-based" instruction means vary widely. Our study supports other findings that teachers' beliefs do influence their practices and extends that research to the arena of literature-based literacy instruction.

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APPENDIX A

Teachers' beliefs and practices about the use of children's literature

Directions: Please read carefully each of the following statements. We want you to tell us how much you agree or disagree with each statement. To respond, circle the number that best corresponds to the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following scale to make your responses: 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *moderately agree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *moderately disagree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*.

		SA		N		SD
1.	I believe that teachers should develop their own literature programs rather than relying on published programs.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Children's literature should be the primary component of a reading/language arts program.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	It is more important for children to read widely than to engage in an in-depth study of one work.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	It is important for schools to have a suggested list of children's books by grade level.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Children should be taught how to think critically about books they read.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I feel confident about teaching literature without benefit of a published program.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	It is more important for children to informally experience literature for themselves than to receive direct teacher instruction in literature study.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The purpose of activities and questions for a book is more to assess comprehension than to develop literary understandings.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Children's literature should be taught in a separate program from reading/language arts instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	There are certain books that every child should read.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Children should learn how to analyze books by their literary elements (i.e., theme, style symbolism).	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Children's literature should be studied using a structured, sequential curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: For this next set of items, please circle the item that best answers the question or that best completes the sentence.

1. How would you describe students' attitudes toward reading in your classroom?
 - a. very positive
 - b. moderately positive
 - c. neutral
 - d. moderately negative
 - e. very negative

2. I read children's books aloud to my class
 - a. at least once a day
 - b. about 3 times per week
 - c. at least once a week
 - d. occasionally (not on a regular basis)
 - e. hardly ever

3. Students in my classroom have time to read a book of their choice
 - a. at least once a day
 - b. about 3 times per week
 - c. at least once a week
 - d. occasionally (not on a regular basis)
 - e. hardly ever

4. The role of the basal reader in my classroom can best be described as follows:
 - a. the basal reader is used more frequently than literature
 - b. the basal reader is used as frequently as literature
 - c. the basal reader is used less frequently than literature
 - d. only the basal reader is used in my classroom
 - e. basal materials are not used in my classroom

5. In planning my literature program, the resource I primarily use is
 - a. my own teaching guides/lesson plans
 - b. a published teacher's guide of my own choosing
 - c. a district-provided teacher's guide(s)
 - d. a published literature program (e.g., *Scholastic Bridges*)
 - e. other (please describe) _____

6. In doing extensions of books (activities after reading a book), children in my classroom most frequently:
 - a. develop their own ideas for activities
 - b. select from a list
 - c. are assigned a specific activity or activities
 - d. do some combination of a, b, c
 - e. do not do extensions

7. When I group students for literature, the groups are determined primarily on the basis of:
 - a. student reading ability
 - b. student interest in the book or project
 - c. student social interaction skills

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- d. flexible grouping depending on the specific project or activity (a combination of a, b, c)
e. I do not use grouping
8. The most important thing I do to prepare for teaching literature is
- a. read a wide variety of children's literature
b. read primarily those books used in instruction
c. read reviews of children's books
d. follow a published teacher's guide or commercially developed program
e. other (please specify) _____
9. I believe the most important reason for using children's literature is
- a. student enjoyment/enrichment
b. for students to gain knowledge
c. to teach children how to read
d. for literary study
e. other (please specify) _____
10. I use the following materials in literature instruction: (check all that apply)
- _____ teacher made worksheets/activity cards
_____ commercially prepared worksheets/activity cards
_____ multiple copies of books
_____ filmstrips/videos of books
_____ classroom library
_____ basal reader
_____ other (please specify) _____
11. Look over the reasons why you select children's books. Rank order these reasons from 1-5 in terms of the frequency with which they guide your choices. Use 1 for MOST FREQUENTLY USED reason and 5 for LEAST FREQUENTLY USED reason. Do not repeat ranks — each number should appear only once. Rank only those that apply.
- _____ my curricular needs
_____ the skills that the books can be used to teach
_____ the literary quality of the books
_____ children's interest in the books
_____ mandates from my district or building
12. Look over the following types of assessment procedures. Rank order these from 1-7 in terms of the frequency with which you use them in your classroom. Use 1 for MOST FREQUENTLY USED and 7 for LEAST FREQUENTLY USED. Do not repeat ranks — each number should appear only once. Rank only those that apply. If you do not assess literature, check the appropriate space.
- _____ projects/extension activities
_____ conferences with students
_____ book reports
_____ reading logs/journals
_____ paper and pencil tests
_____ observation
_____ worksheets
_____ I do not assess literature

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

1. What grade level do you teach?
 - a. Kindergarten
 - b. 1st grade
 - c. 2nd grade
 - d. 3rd grade
 - e. 4th grade
 - f. 5th grade
 - g. 6th grade
 - h. 7th grade
 - i. 8th grade

Other (reading, split, etc.) _____
2. Where do you teach? a. public school b. private/parochial school
3. How would you describe your school?
 - a. rural
 - b. suburban
 - c. small city
 - d. urban
4. How many years have you been teaching?
 - a. 0-4 years
 - b. 5-10 years
 - c. 11-15 years
 - d. more than 15
5. What preparation have you had to teach literature-based reading? Circle all that apply.
 - a. undergraduate coursework
 - b. post graduate coursework
 - c. inservice programs
 - d. conferences and/or seminars
 - e. professional materials
 - f. assistance from other teachers
 - g. other (please describe) _____
6. Would you be willing to participate in an individual interview?
 - a. yes
 - b. no

If yes, please provide the following information.

Name _____
 School name and address _____
 Home phone _____ Work phone _____

APPENDIX B
Teacher interview

- 1. Teacher's knowledge and understanding about literature
 - a. What three children's books would you choose as outstanding?
What sets these books apart from others?
 - b. Which children's authors are ones that you think all children
should be acquainted with? Why?
 - c. What is a literate person? What behaviors would you expect of
such a person?
 - d. What professional resources would you recommend to another
teacher who is interested in using literature as a part of the
reading program?

- 2. Teacher's instructional decisions
 - a. How do you select children's literature for use in your
classroom?
 - b. How do you group children to read and talk about books?
 - c. What kind of freedom do you have in making programmatic
decisions? What constraints?
 - d. What are the most difficult instructional decisions you make?
What are the least?
 - e. What kinds of support are available to you?
What kinds of help do you want that you do not currently have?

- 3. Assessment of children's growth
 - a. In terms of assessment, what do you want to find out about
children's growth and progress in a literature-based program?
 - b. How do you gather this information?
 - c. How do you use the information?

- 4. Other information
 - a. How long have you been using children's literature as a major
component of your language arts/reading program?
 - b. Is there anything else that you would like me to know?

APPENDIX C
Classroom inventory checklist

	PRESENT	ABSENT
1. Displays about children's literature		
a. children's own work		
b. teacher-made		
c. commercially-prepared		
d. other		

	PRESENT	ABSENT
2.	Children's books in the classroom	
	a.	How are these organized?
	b.	How are these displayed?
	c.	How many books are there?
	d.	What types of books are there?
3.	Other classroom materials or equipment that support children's interactions with books	
	a.	centers (i.e., listening)
	b.	furniture (i.e., cushions)
	c.	props (i.e., puppets)
	d.	art materials
	e.	other equipment (i.e., tape recorder)
4.	Evidence of cross-curricular links involving children's literature	
5.	Teacher-created planning materials for literature-based lessons	
	a.	Schedule
	b.	Plan book sample pages
	c.	Web, unit plan, teacher's guides
	d.	Other
6.	Resources for literature-based teaching	
	a.	school library (how used, how extensive)
	b.	public library (how used)
	c.	professional books, journals, published teacher's guides or programs
	d.	other
7.	Artifacts of children's literature-related work	
	a.	artwork
	b.	writing
	c.	videotapes of literature events
	d.	other



Combining Reading and Writing With Science to Enhance Content Area Achievement and Attitudes

Valerie J. Bristor

Reading through science is different because you are reading and learning science at the same time. And plain reading is boring because you do reading book and when the teacher says group two we have to go up to the reading table. And read for a half hour then she makes us do a reading work sheet about the story we read. And reading science is better because... the activities and experiments we did helped me understand science better.

A fifth-grade drop-out prevention student wrote the preceding reflection after participating in a research study investigating the effects of combining language arts with science on achievement and attitudes (Romance and Vitale, 1992; Romance, Vitale, and Bristor, 1992). Recognizing the need for improved reading comprehension, more efficient writing, and increased content knowledge, Romance, Vitale and Bristor conducted a five-year research project to study the effects of an integrated curriculum strategy on the achievement, attitudes, and self-confidence of fourth and fifth grade students.

The experimental science/reading students received in-depth instruction in science and reading including numerous opportunities for hands-on science, writing, and discussion of ideas and concepts. Teachers guided students in directed reading in the content area related specifically to the science concepts being learned. Teachers also used trade books and other print materials as well as visual technology materials such as cable television, videotapes, laser videodisks, filmstrips, and computers to access prior knowledge and augment background experiences to enhance comprehension of the science text.

Control students received their regular basal reading and science programs separately. The comparison groups were selected from schools whose demographics matched those of the experimental groups. All groups used the following standardized achievement tests: Metropolitan Achievement Test-Science subtest; Iowa Tests of Basic Skills-Reading subtest; and a 6-scale affective inventory which assessed attitude toward learning in science, self-confidence in learning science, attitude toward reading, self-confidence in reading, attitude toward learning science out of school, and attitude toward reading out of school. The covariate was the previous year's ITBS-Reading subtest.

During the first two years (1988-89 and 1989-90), science/reading students obtained significantly greater levels of achievement in both reading ($F [1,125] = 8.14, p < .01$) and science ($F [1,125] = 13.62, p < .001$) than students who received instruction through their regular basal reading and science programs separately. When drop-out prevention students were included during the third year (1990-91), the science/reading at-risk students in fifth grade significantly outperformed comparable control groups in science ($F [1,148] = 30.36, p < .001$) and reading ($F [1,161] = 7.16, p < .001$) achievement.

During the fourth year (1991-92) the research effort encompassed more school sites to include students whose abilities ranged from at-risk/below-average to average/above-average. Fourth and fifth grade students receiving the science/reading strategy displayed significantly greater performance in science ($F [1,438] = 52.79, p < .01$) and reading ($F [1,497] = 18.18, p < .01$). Throughout the study the science/reading students also displayed more positive attitudes and greater self-confidence ($p < .01$) toward science and reading. Data from the fifth year (1992-93) of the study are currently being analyzed. What follows are some examples of reading and writing activities conducted by some of the teachers participating in this study.

Science reading activities

Pre-reading strategies. Many experimental teachers used PReP, or the Pre-Reading Plan (Langer, 1981), to determine what students already knew about a topic and to help expand the knowledge of those students with limited backgrounds. Teachers simply wrote the science topic or concept on the board (for example, *weather*) and asked the students to say any words that came to mind. After students reflected on why they thought of those words or ideas, they refined and expanded their concepts. Graphic organizers help students visually construct relationships among words and concepts prior to reading the science texts (Pearson and Fielding, 1991). Teachers used semantic maps, story maps, organizational patterns, semantic feature analysis, Venn diagrams, K-W-L, imaging, and graphic aids such as photographs, tables, charts, margins, and boldfaced type (Gunning, 1992).

Hands-on activities usually preceded the textbook reading to promote concept understanding by providing common experiences for all students. These activities encouraged students to use operational definitions for understanding concepts rather than stale, meaningless dictionary responses.

Fifth grade students studying the respiratory system made models of lungs and diaphragms with plastic containers, balloons, and straws. They observed what happened to the lung when the diaphragm was pulled down, then up. Students also pressed on their chests lightly while taking deep breaths to feel their ribs and diaphragms working together to pull air into the lungs and to expel air from the lungs. After everyone obtained some prior knowledge through these activities, the class was ready to read the following from their science text (Shymansky, Romance, and Yore, 1988):

Another part of your body that helps you breathe is a sheet of muscle called the diaphragm. The diaphragm lies just below the lungs. In fact, it separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. Look at the picture on this page. When the diaphragm relaxes, it moves up toward the lungs, so the air is pushed out. The diaphragm, therefore, acts like a pump (p. 272).

Using their own words based on their own experiences gained through the activities, students were able to provide an operational definition of diaphragm which was more meaningful and useful than a memorized dictionary or text definition.

Reading/language arts objectives. Teachers in the experimental group referenced the district-wide skills-based curriculum objectives in reading/language arts to specific science activities and taught those objectives as they were naturally embedded within the science text and activities in place of workbooks and worksheets. Identifying the main idea, using context clues to determine word meanings, identifying cause and effect, punctuation, capitalization, and other reading/language arts skills were more relevant and motivating when conducted in the context of meaningful activities and purposeful reading.

Several teachers used QAR to help children put together several pieces of information from the reading or use their background experience plus that information to answer higher levels of questions such as inferencing and evaluating (Raphael, 1986). Other comprehension strategies included reciprocal teaching, retelling, text structure instruction, Directed Reading Activity, Directed Reading-Thinking Activity, and cloze (Gunning, 1992).

Teachers used words from the science textbook for spelling lists, often providing students with the opportunity to select some of the words to be included on the lists. Adults expressed amazement as these elementary students easily spelled out words such as *amoebae*, *chlorophyll*, *photosynthesis*, and *protozoan*.

Literature. Independent reading activities using trade books and other science print materials supported the science lesson. Some teachers began with basal stories correlated with the science topic being studied. Other teachers used special resources to connect literature to the science topic such as *Science Through Children's Literature: An Integrated Approach* (Butzow and Butzow, 1989) and a variety of published thematic units available.

The *Reading Rainbow* videos and the corresponding sourcebooks (Schweiger, 1988, 1991; 1992) were a popular resource for literature related to a science topic. After viewing the "Hill of Fire" *Reading Rainbow* video (Liggett, 1985) and browsing through the book (Lewis, 1971), the students in Eulalee Burke's at-risk fourth grade pretended to be on-the-scene reporters recounting the events surrounding the eruption of a volcano in Mexico. Children usually reluctant to write were excited about the assignment. One student

combined the background knowledge (facts concerning the event as well as vocabulary words such as *village* and *abandoned*) provided by the video and book with scientific concepts (how volcanoes are formed) from the science textbook:

On February 20th 1943 a farmer was plowing in Mexico. Then the plow got stuck in the earth crust and the earth began to shake. Then smoke came from the ground. A hill came up from the ground and shooting rocks from the ground. And the heat and the pressure formed a volcano. The volcano erupted and the volcano covered the vilige was destroyed. The people abanded their homes. No people were hurt but their homes were destroyed. Now 50 years later you can go see the volcano and the covered vilige.

Afterward, children read their news reports before a video camera.

Science writing activities

Learning logs. Each student in the experimental classrooms had a learning log for science. The children used the logs in a variety of ways: to write predictions before an experiment, write observations during an experiment, write conclusions after the experiment, state what was learned after a lesson, describe favorite experiments, write summary paragraphs using main ideas and details discussed in class, and so on. One fifth-grade student in Connie Robinson's class wrote:

[November 6, 1991] My prediction was that the yellow balloon will not float. The reason why I thought the yellow balloon wasn't going to float because it was smaller than the rest of the balloons.

The activity was placeing a yellow balloon in the water to see if it will float.

The conclusion was that the yellow balloon did not float.

(November 8, 1991) Today I learnd about density. I found out why one of the yellow balloons sanked. The reason why one yellow balloon sanked because one was more denser. One balloon had salt water in it. Salt makes water more dense and thats why one of the yellow balloons sanked.

Paraphrasing/summarizing science learning. Kim Perdue, a fourth grade science/reading teacher, directed her students to paraphrase what they had read about erosion. One student wrote the following:

Leveling the land. Rocks fall into a big valley. Gravity pulls down the rocks into the water and to the valley. If I put a nail into water it gets rusty and gets loose. If lime stone is put into a thunder storm it gets smaller. If you freeze milk the milk gets hard and pops open. And if you freeze water in a glass jar it does not get hard but it brakes and spills. A rock that have been wet it cracks. Enofe rock to make a mountain has been washed away. After it rains the rocks turn into mud.

After discussing the grouping of living things, Kim's students summarized what they had learned about various animal groups. One student summarized what was read about "Big Animals of Africa" (see Figure 1).

Applying science to real life. Making learning purposeful and meaningful creates interest as well as increases comprehension and retention. Kim Perdue's fourth grade students wrote several pieces concerning the application of what they had learned to their own lives and the world around them. In one assignment students wrote a "Diary of my Past" to help them understand a Geologic Time Table. Some amusing samples from one student are the following:

I hated milk when I was a baby and I hate it now. My mom said I had really thick and curly hair. And I was chubby. I was born on January 7, 1982.

When I was eight I had two teachers. Because Ms. Shecter was here so long she retired. An then we got Ms. Bruno. We had treats every Friday unless we got are name on the board. And I just moved into my new house.

Now I'm ten all grown up. Past all those baby stages. I'm in fourth grade living my own life. I just got to do one thing get taller.

Kim Perdue emphasized the relevance of science in the children's own lives. One of Kim's students wrote an "I'm no fool with electricity!" piece after studying electricity (see Figure 2).

Language experience. Group experience stories are a terrific way to promote cooperation as well as the reading-writing relationship. As part of a class assignment, a reading methods student visited a classroom participating in the research project. Cindy Borthwick's fourth grade students were studying weather at the time, so she suggested that Kim Shewak guide the students in making an ABC Big Book on the weather. The class first brainstormed weather-related words, then students chose a letter and a word. Students created sentences with the selected word, proofread the sentences, copied the sentences in their page of the book, and created a picture related to their words and sentences. After mounting the pages on construction paper, the students placed them in alphabetical order to make a Big Book.

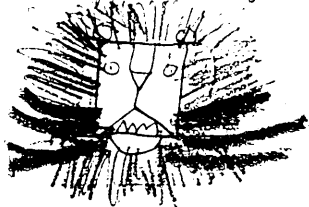
Figure 1

An example of "Summarizing Science Learning" from Kim Perdue's
fourth grade

5-19-92

Big Animals In Africa

A large part Africa is called the plateau. There are many different kinds of animals live in Africa. African elephants ears are bigger than their Indian cousins. Africa has some animals that only can survive there so when photographers come they only can just take pictures. Some people took feathers off birds so they made a law that they couldn't. Most zoos have animals from different countries. The piece of meat that is left over the volchuk eat, some people call the volchuk garbage eaters.



A few letters stumped the fourth graders, but the final product was a delightful and informational book on the weather that they could read with their first grade "reading buddy" class. Some excerpts follow:

Aa Andrew

Hurricane Andrew struck South Florida in August 1992. Many areas in Miami were destroyed. In places like Homestead, Kendall and Cutler Ridge, people do not have homes any more.

Bb Blow

Moving air causes the blowing wind. The wind blows the clouds away. I like my hair to blow in the wind.

Just for fun. Teachers participating in the research project also enjoyed guiding students through creative writing activities. Connie Robinson's fifth grade students had fun comparing science topics to non-science ideas. When asked to compare science to a trip to the fair, one of Connie's students wrote:

I think science and the fair are simerler because they are both fun. I also think that they are both exciting and instruresting. I think science and the fair are both challengeing, and I think they can be like magic because at the fair some rides you can go up-side down and not fall out of your seat, and the science experiments can be like magic because in science no man can streach out a metal bar but tiny molecules can just by heating them.

Fourth grade teacher Laura Saef enjoyed the creative descriptions her students composed. Here is what it might feel like to be a human cell, according to one of Laura's students:

I am a cell. I live in the curculatory system. I am a bright red blood cell. I am very round and tiny. My job is to carry oxygen to all of your cells. I stay very busy. I travel all over the human body. Once I had a great travel. It was my favorite travel. I went to the nerve cells, to give them oxgen. It was my favorite because on my way there I past a lot of neat joints. I past a hinge joint and a ball-and-socket-joint. I liked the hinge joint because it moved around and around. I saw an immovable joint too but it was borring. My two best friends are the platelets and white blood cells. Together we work hard to help the human body live.

Laura tied in science with Halloween by having her students dress up as either a famous scientist or piece of science equipment. Each student wrote important facts concerning their costume. Laura's students also enjoyed writing riddles:

Hi! I am a pretty famous person. I invented over 300 ways to use the peanut. I was an agriculture teacher in a black school in Alabama. My secretary there became vice-preisident of the United States of America. I am a very good artist. My favorite things to draw are flowers and other natural things. I crossed almost all the states while looking for a college to go to. Who am I? George W. Carver.

After the authors read their riddles to the class, students tried to guess "Who am I?"

Conclusion

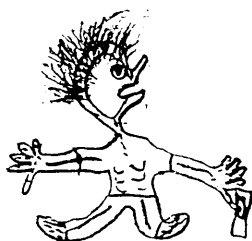
Some essential assumptions of the whole language approach are that the language arts should be integrated, writing

Figure 2

An example of "Applying Science to Real Life" from Kim Perdue's fourth grade

330/42

I'm no fool with electricity!
 One way I can prevent an accident would be if there was a lightning storm don't go under a tree go in a car or your house. Don't ever stick anything in a plug hole. If you're playing with your toys turn them off when you leave or this may be a fire. Don't ever put too many things inside a plug hole !!!!!!!
 water plus electricity + you = accident.



is a central component of literacy learning, and that skills instruction should be contextually based rather than developed in isolation (Moss, 1992). The science/reading strategy implemented in this longitudinal study integrates the language arts through science as well as other content areas, emphasizes the importance of writing as a central component of literacy learning, and encourages the development of skills through content-based context instruction.

The qualitative results of this project have been very positive. The children are writing more. In turn, the children are reading more as they read their pieces to partners, peers, primary buddies, principals, and parents. The teachers in the project during the fifth year conducted more writing activities than ever before. The researchers look forward to analyzing the results both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. But perhaps a fifth grade student in Connie Robinson's class summed it up nicely when asked to write a response concerning reading through science: *Reading through science is different because when I was in fourth grade we didn't use reading, science, spelling, and language arts with science and reading. In fifth grade we use all four subjects. Yes, I would do it again next year because it was fun doing reading through science.* And so the research project continues.

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Reading Aloud to Low Achieving Secondary Students

Deborah Phelps Zientarski
Donald D. Pottorff

Information abounds about the benefits of reading aloud to elementary children (Kimmel and Segel, 1988; Trelease, 1985), but very little has been written on the merits of reading to older students. Undertaking a read aloud project with secondary students, then, is likely to raise questions such as the following: 1) will students be annoyed and feel that listening to a story is not age appropriate?; 2) will reading to students waste valuable time that could be used more wisely in reading and improving comprehension in content materials?; 3) will reading to students really motivate them to want to become independent readers?

All of these questions were concerns early in the school year when the decision was made to incorporate reading aloud as a regular component of three classes totaling thirty-one secondary students with low reading performance scores as measured by the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA). The results were extremely encouraging and the practice has now become a permanent part of this high school remedial program.

The decision to undertake the project was based both on personal experiences with reading to younger children and two recent articles which brought new awareness of the idea. In an interview, Bill Martin, Jr., a well-known children's author (Collins and Lubuda, 1990), revealed that he was a non-reader until he was twenty years old. He credits a high school English teacher for nurturing his desire to read and for his love of the written language by her reading aloud to classes on a regular basis. In a second article, Jennings (1990), a seventh grade language arts teacher from Houston, Texas, described how she managed to "hook her seventh grade students on books" by reading aloud to them and has committed herself to reading regularly to her classes. She expressed the belief that these efforts helped students to increase awareness and appreciation of good literature.

Research also validates the importance of proficiency in listening comprehension (Bagford, 1968; Lohnes and Gray, 1972). In a study reported by Atkin, Bray, Davison, Herzberger, Humphreys and Selzer (1977), involving a nationwide sample of thousands of students, listening comprehension in the fifth grade was the best predictor of performance on a range of aptitude and achievement tests in high school. When the present project was undertaken it was hypothesized that focusing on listening comprehension would be a first step toward improving academic success for the students in the project.

Developing appreciation

The first priority was to interest students in books and to help them develop an appreciation for the written language. Reading aloud was selected as the primary strategy to meet this goal. Additional decisions had to be made about what to read. "Drama In Real Life" stories printed in issues of *Reader's Digest* were selected initially because they were

generally short, simple in language and presentation, and most often included elements of the sensational, bizarre, gruesome, heroic, or inspirational. They also tended to include intense action.

Although the announcement that reading aloud was going to take place for a portion of each class period on a regular basis was met with no spirit of celebration, students did listen once reading aloud was begun. During the initial weeks of the project, little was done to expand the activity to anything more than a listening experience. It was hoped that students would listen because they wanted to, rather than because they were going to be tested or expected to perform a related task. Within two or three weeks, some of the students were leafing through the rather large supply of classroom *Reader's Digests* to "find another good one for the teacher."

When the supply of "Drama in Real Life" stories was exhausted, the decision was made to experiment with different genres. The novel *Killing Mr. Griffin* by Lois Duncan was selected because reading specialist Jim Trelease (1985) had recommended it and described its use in a similar situation. The reading of this novel did not immediately invoke enthusiasm, but as the story progressed toward more intense action, student attitudes improved. For the first time, students began to become interested in discussions about characterization, plot, theme, vocabulary and resolution. They also suddenly became Lois Duncan addicts, and eventually three more of her novels were read aloud.

It was apparent by this time that students were becoming proficient critical listeners. This was evidenced by their evaluative comments, higher level questioning, and improved competence in predicting. These poor readers had also shown that they would appreciate a good novel when given the

opportunity to do so, and began to engage in discussions of increasing sophistication. They compared author styles and talked about purpose and point of view with a certain quality that did not typify previous discussions. In short, they began to interact personally with the characters and action of the story. Perhaps the greatest reward was in finding that some of the "least likely" students began making a concerted effort to cooperate with the regular classroom agenda in order to negotiate more listening time.

Developing a sense of cultural literacy

Reading aloud to older students permits them to build background knowledge in areas which may have been inaccessible to them either because of difficulty with reading level or lack of topic exposure. Strong readers have well-stocked storehouses of background knowledge and are able to draw on that knowledge to infer information (Rumelhart, 1984). Unfortunately, many poor readers expend so much effort in decoding and focusing on the act of reading that comprehension is lost. This in turn further limits the amount of new knowledge which they are able to incorporate.

A recent national study assessing cultural literacy in American history and Western literature involving nearly 8000 high school juniors revealed students were woefully lacking in knowledge in these subjects (Ravitch and Finn, 1987). This is probably not atypical. Students with reading problems often have significant gaps in general knowledge. These students are unable to integrate new information because their existing information in certain content areas is so limited.

If students are to become culturally literate, they need to be able to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge with greater ease and with a greater degree of sophistication.

The *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Hirsch, 1988) can be a valuable tool for teachers who want to determine which areas merit attention. After an informal survey confirmed that essentially none of the students in the project had adequate background knowledge in mythology, a unit was begun on Greek and Roman Mythology. The value of this endeavor was explained in terms of history, geography, astronomy, word origins, and in what Russell (1989) describes as "the thread that ties the human struggle to ancient times." Later when students heard references to "Achilles heel," "Pandora's Box," and an "Adonis," they had the background needed to understand information that had previously been impossible for them to comprehend in context.

Developing vocabulary

The use of high-interest, controlled vocabulary materials serves purposes in practice and in building reading skills, but does very little to enrich speaking and listening vocabularies. Those students with a good command of the language who possess larger vocabularies tend to achieve greater success in their content courses. The complexity, subtlety, and vocabulary of a literary work that older students find difficult to read can be understood and appreciated when read aloud. When read aloud, it can offer a galaxy of new words formerly not integrated into their own vocabularies (Russell, 1986).

Our John Willie, a Catherine Cookson novel, was read to the class. The setting is in the mid-1800s in an English mining town where conditions were reprehensible, child labor was common, and many hungry people were left with no alternative but the workhouse. The story enriched students from a historical perspective, included unfamiliar speech patterns and phrases, and new vocabulary. In many situations, the new and unfamiliar vocabulary was not explained to the students, but rather they were asked what they thought a

word meant after hearing it used in context. When dialect was part of characterization, students enjoyed imitating dialogue appropriate for that character and comparing how different characters might have sounded using similar ways of speaking.

Developing metacognitive strategies

While students may have difficulty with reading, the assumption cannot be made that they also have difficulty with thinking. As the project progressed, it became apparent that the quality of student discussion was very much linked to the quality of literature being used.

During read-aloud experiences, metacognitive strategies can be implemented by stopping at key points to identify important information, clarify purpose, and make predictions about the upcoming text (Savage, 1988). Students can listen to the thought processes of their classmates as they make hypotheses or explain and support their viewpoints with examples from the story. Some students lack personal strategies for unlocking text and benefit from opportunities to hear their peers model how they arrive at conclusions and interpretations. On more than one occasion students were observed rethinking their positions after listening to other students share their opinions. This modeling helped them with developing personal strategies for optimal comprehension.

Conclusions

Reading aloud has long been the domain of elementary teachers in elementary schools, but this project provided convincing results that reading aloud has merit with older students. Certainly, sustained silent reading time becomes more important with older students and provides them with opportunities for enrichment and a chance to pursue their own interests. However, reading aloud can provide students with

a common experience conducive to group activities and with material that they are unlikely to read independently.

Although it is too early to substantiate the success of this single program, the results give real reason for optimism. The reading aloud experience has created a deeper sense of appreciation of written language for the students involved. This is evidenced through student comments and interest in each succeeding personal choice for classroom reading.

Vocabulary has been enriched as students have been provided with a chance to hear new words both naturally and in context, words which were too difficult for them to read independently. These words which have then been added to their speaking vocabularies through activities and exposure serve as a foundation for acquiring additional vocabulary.

When literature is carefully chosen, schemata are broadened and students naturally integrate new words, facts, concepts, and ideas more readily than they are able to do without this valuable background information. Expanding background knowledge is likely to help students improve performance in other content courses as well.

Metacognitive strategies are active strategies possessed by successful students. Much has been written on the topic of teaching these strategies to students to assist them in the improvement of reading performance. The read-aloud experience offers a group exposure to common material, and as students share their thoughts and ideas and model how they arrived at their conclusions, others can learn through peer modeling.

The learning that results from an encounter with a good book is one of the most valuable experiences that schools can

provide (Matthews, 1987). This project has provided convincing evidence that reading aloud to secondary students works and a commitment has been made to continue this practice in the classroom.

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Literacy Education in Kindergarten Classrooms

Arne E. Sippola

A survey of literature regarding contemporary thought in early literacy acquisition reveals a strong focus upon emergent literacy. Emergent literacy theory asserts that literacy concepts are being developed at virtually all ages. Knowledge of communication functions and forms are being learned as an individual listens and speaks, and makes transactions with print. Life experiences, as well, affect the ways in which we will interpret communicative episodes. All of these are developing as an individual experiences life. No longer do early literacy theorists associate the onset of literacy learning with an age or stage (Raines and Canady, 1990). Literacy acquisition is a lifelong endeavor, emerging as early as when a child first comes into contact with printed forms (Teale and Sulzby, 1989).

Early childhood literacy programs are thought to be effective when they immerse children in authentic transactions with print. Teale and Sulzby (1989) have written:

The early childhood literacy program must adopt as its foundation functional, meaningful activities that involve reading and writing in a wide variety of ways. A priority for the early childhood curriculum should be ensuring that all children become capable and willing participants in the literate society of the classroom, home, and community. Even before children can read

and write conventionally, the curriculum can foster these knowledges and attitudes. Overall skill in reading and writing grows from this kind of start (p. 6).

However, this author's observations in numerous early childhood education settings, particularly kindergarten, over the past eight years revealed that although many teachers did, indeed, practice the principles of emergent literacy, many more involved their children in activities quite removed from the principles and practices of emergent literacy or applied them in a haphazard manner. What was particularly interesting was that three different programmatic patterns in the treatment of literacy development soon became evident.

The following descriptive study is based upon eight years of observing in early childhood education settings in eastern and central Washington state and the Puget Sound region of Washington state. A total of 37 kindergarten classrooms were observed. The purpose of this paper is to describe the discerned categories of literacy programs and provide a perceived rationale for their existence.

Maturationist teachers

The term *maturationist* is used here to describe one group of kindergarten teachers who continue to practice the traditional conceptualization of reading readiness. The concept of reading readiness evolved from the developmental theories of G. Stanley Hall and Arnold Gesell (Durkin, 1993). In essence, young children were thought to be not "ready" to read due to a lack of maturity. The solution was to postpone reading instruction until a time when children were "ready" to read. Washburne (1936), based upon one collaborative research study (Morphett and Washburne, 1931), summarized the essence of the reading readiness movement:

Nowadays each first grade teacher in Winnetka has a chart showing when each of her children will be mentally six and a half, and is careful to avoid any effort to get a child to read before he has reached this stage of mental growth (p. 127).

As maturationists before them, current maturationists observed in this study avoided reading-specific activities. Children's play was thought to be central to learning. Many social, cognitive, and linguistic activities were offered to their students in a classroom typically organized by learning centers. Typically, these teachers included the following centers in their classrooms: houseliving, block, manipulative, music, art, and book. Children learned developmental concepts through interaction with the environment with the teacher acting as environmental arranger and labeler/communicator. Children's cognitive development was facilitated by their physical manipulation of classroom materials while the teacher labeled objects, discussed relationships, and generally communicated with children. In many of the centers, children were learning about social relationships as cooperation was necessary in sharing classroom materials and in cooperative play.

Literacy development was not ignored, but was simply not a conscious focus. As mentioned above, teachers did encourage communication by allowing children to interact verbally and by the teacher communicating, describing, and labeling. Listening and speaking opportunities were consciously supported.

These teachers typically read to their children at least once a day. The objectives of their readings seemed to be enjoyment and physical and spatial concept development. Metalinguistic concepts such as *book, letter, word, or author*

were not emphasized. Activities constructed to facilitate word identification were absent. The typical teacher housed a number of children's books in a comfortable book corner where children perused materials. Occasionally a parent volunteer or university student read a favorite story.

Traditional reading readiness exercises were often offered in the typical maturationist's classroom. Children colored, cut, visually discriminated between geometric forms and pictures, and participated in activities requiring gross auditory discrimination of environmental sounds to ready children for reading instruction in first grade.

Although the percentage of teachers adhering to a maturationist position was relatively small (approximately 20 percent), it was surprising to see that many of these readiness-type activities persisted despite the evidence questioning their usefulness in actually establishing a foundation for reading success (Brewer, 1992; Durkin, 1993; Sippola, 1985; Stewart, 1985).

Basal teachers

Not surprisingly, teachers using commercial basal programs to develop kindergarten literacy outnumbered all of the other categories combined (55 percent). Although classroom environments varied dramatically, the thread tying this group together was the basal program. Basal reader programs have monopolized American reading education since the 1920s (Davis, 1988). Basal reader programs have traditionally assumed a sub-skills orientation to the teaching of reading (Robinson, 1984). Early reading readiness basal workbooks typically attempted to teach children to perform non-reading specific tasks such as color identification, shape discrimination, patterning, and discerning differences in environmental sounds (Durkin, 1989; Sippola, 1985). These

skills and abilities were thought to be prerequisites for success in beginning reading (a thought shared by many maturationists). In addition to such activities, kindergartners eventually completed exercises on letter identification, phoneme discrimination, sound-symbol relationships, rhyming, and sight words thought to be essential to success in reading pre-primers.

Basal programs published in the late 1980s and early 1990s typically reflect a similar bottom-up theoretical foundation found in their predecessors, although numerous improvements can be identified (e.g., use of Big Books, story tapes, literature-based stories). Additionally, most of these contemporary basal programs have eliminated such dubious practices as having children discriminate between shapes, colors, and environmental sounds, but retain a letters and sounds first orientation.

How children were instructed varied little in most programs. Most often, teachers used whole group instruction on specific skills using skills charts. Practice was done by the use of workbook pages typically worked upon by the children at desks or tables. Although the basal series used changed from district to district, the organization used for instruction remained fairly similar. The similarities may be due to the bottom-up nature of these programs. In spite of the claims of many basal programs to be whole language-like, their materials and objectives do not reflect this at the kindergarten level. Typically, students begin by identifying letters and sounds, move up to learning a few sight words, and eventually begin reading rebus sentences.

Some recent basal programs do include a number of activities requiring top-down processing. The teacher will read a story (typically from the manual) to the children followed by

guided discussion and extension activities. Several contemporary basal programs also incorporate shared reading activities where children are able to listen to and choral read an authentic children's book. Additionally, some basal programs encourage teachers to involve their kindergartners in language experiences and beginning writing.

Emergent literacy teachers

Emergent literacy theory holds that individuals evolve in literacy sophistication as they mature, beginning with their communicative transactions. In this investigation, emergent literacy kindergarten teachers (about 25 percent of those observed) shared a number of pragmatic interpretations of emergent literacy.

Like their maturationist counterparts, whole language teachers provided an environment of learning centers inviting active learning. The learning centers provided were similar to those offered by maturationists with a number of significant additions. A writing center housing paper, pencils, crayons, marking pens, paste, magazines, hole punches, a stapler, construction paper, and a variety of posters was added. Children drew pictures and wrote using invented spelling. These children also used their language experience word banks to aid in their writing.

Emergent literacy teachers typically included a larger and more varied collection of books than did maturationists. Picture books, fairy tales, fables, informational books, magazines, and poetry books were housed in a comfortable, inviting book center. The book center also contained individually published and experience stories dictated by the children. Many emergent literacy teachers placed letter and word games in their book corner for children to play. Emergent literacy teachers also typically provided a listening center for their

children. Commercial and teacher-made story tapes were placed in this center. Many teachers encouraged their students to follow along with the print in the books.

Children were engaged in authentic, purposeful language activities that were provided for enjoyment and "finding out." Children listened to stories frequently. As they participated in shared reading experiences teachers often pointed out and discussed metalinguistic concepts such as *word, letter, left-to-right, top-to-bottom, page, author, and illustrator*. Language experience activities were provided on a group and individual basis. Children's stories were read and re-read frequently and adorned the walls of the classrooms.

Most emergent literacy teachers involved their children in the systematic study of particular themes. Children would listen to, speak about, read, and write about a selected topic or concept. Many of the activities for classroom learning centers reflected the current topic or concept of focus. Essentially, the practices of emergent literacy teachers could be seen as being developmentally appropriate (Spodek, 1991). These teachers were child-centered and their activities and teaching strategies reflected contemporary knowledge about literacy acquisition (Morrow, 1991).

Discussion

If, indeed, the practices of emergent literacy teachers reflected the best of contemporary knowledge regarding literacy acquisition, why were they a minority? Results of this observational study show that 75 percent of the kindergarten teachers observed were doing something other than what would be perceived as being developmentally appropriate. This was as evident in 1993 as it was in 1985 when the study began. The reading readiness practices of maturationists certainly do not match what is known about literacy acquisition (Stewart, 1985)

nor do the skills and drills of the basal teachers (Morrison, 1991). Several reasons why these questionable practices continue in spite of the evidence can be provided.

One plausible reason for a continuation of outdated practices could be tradition. American schools are difficult to change (Durkin, 1989; Shannon, 1990). For example, the time-honored practice of teaching traditional school grammar remains in place in our schools despite ninety years of research evidence refuting its efficacy (Hillocks and Smith, 1991). Likewise do the reading readiness practices of the maturationists and the skills and drills of basal teachers have a tradition in American education.

Another possible reason for maintaining questionable practices may lie in teachers themselves. There was a tendency for those teachers adhering to a maturationist position to have encountered their teacher training twenty to twenty-five years ago. Teacher educators *were* discussing reading readiness concepts in this era. Although our knowledge base regarding early literacy acquisition has changed, many long-time teachers have not.

Basal teachers have numbers on their side. A majority (95 percent) of American elementary school teachers still use a basal reader approach to reading instruction (Rubin, 1993). It has been speculated that American educators have a great amount of faith in the publishers of commercial reading programs (Shannon, 1992). It is not unlikely that many kindergarten teachers share a similar faith. If they fail to use the commercial kindergarten materials, their children may not be ready to succeed in first grade. Others may simply use the materials because they are purchased by their schools (Durkin, 1989).

Implications

A number of implications may be drawn from the findings of this study. First, potential kindergarten teachers in preservice training must become aware of the historical antecedents of contemporary kindergarten practices in order to understand how the past affects, both positively and negatively, what we do in classrooms. Professors of early childhood literacy will need to articulate carefully how a developmentally appropriate curriculum can be established and why it is necessary. Second, preservice and new kindergarten teachers need model teachers of emergent literacy in order to provide an example, and also to validate knowledge and beliefs acquired in preservice education. A last implication involves school administrators. Although some larger school districts employ kindergarten supervisors, most kindergarten teachers are supervised by building principals. It is important for building administrators to be aware of contemporary theories and practices of kindergarten education so that they can provide the leadership, evaluative abilities, and reinforcement to encourage kindergarten teachers to use the best practices available.

Perhaps our newer cadre of kindergarten teachers can have an affect on early literacy practices. Teacher educators and supervisors of these teachers need to offer their support for the efforts necessary to change literacy environments. As the authors of *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) concluded, "America will become a nation of readers when verified practices of the best teachers in the best schools can be introduced throughout the country."

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Dialogue Journals as a Vehicle for Preservice Teachers to Experience the Writing Process (I Like Him; Should I Tell Him at Recess?)

**Mary Ann Wham
Susan Davis Lenski**

Basic to the tenets of wholistic literacy instruction are the beliefs that reading and writing should be relevant to the learner, should serve real-life purposes and, consequently, should be meaningful (Goodman, 1986). Dialogue journals, described as written conversations between two or more people over an extended period of time (Staton, 1988), fit this description. Communication within a dialogue journal is informal and focuses on topics of mutual interest. They provide an arena for young students that is risk-free and empowering as new readers and writers are encouraged to use their invented spelling and to learn about literacy in an integrative manner (Bode, 1989). Dialogue journals serve as bridges between spoken conversation and written expression and help students develop an awareness of the real purposes of reading and writing (Gambrell, 1985). In addition, these journals provide a forum for sharing ideas, developing literacy skills and

enhancing participants' abilities to interact on paper in a warm and human way.

Traditionally, dialogue journals have been used within a classroom for correspondence between teachers and students or between two students. As an instructor of two language arts classes composed of elementary education majors, I decided to combine the concept of dialogue journals with the traditional activity of letter writing between pen pals. During the first week of the semester, the students in my classes were introduced to the dialogue journal project. My thought was that this project would serve several purposes. First of all, despite more than a decade of emphasis on the writing process, many of my elementary education students received their early education in traditional classrooms where a focus on written products was the accepted norm. They had been taught to read and write by traditional methods and consequently regarded these methods as the appropriate way to teach. A part of their schooling experience had been the development of the mindset that a good teacher corrected all spelling and grammatical errors made by pupils. Many of the language arts students believed it to be the teacher's responsibility to teach students to produce compositions that are error free (Crowhurst, 1991). Consequently, few future teachers are initially able to look beyond their pupils' errors to the meanings that the youngsters are attempting to convey.

Although we had talked at length about process writing within the language arts classes, this project seemed likely to make process writing come to life by supporting the approach in a variety of ways. Students would assume ownership over their writing rather than just writing to complete a class assignment. Students would be writing for a genuine audience, their elementary pen-friends. They would also experience peer editing when they read each others' journal

entries prior to sending them to the elementary school participants. In addition, these future teachers who were learning about literacy would have the opportunity to integrate and apply their knowledge through reflecting, analyzing and responding to the written work of real elementary children.

For the elementary students, the journal project would also provide valuable educational opportunities. They, too would experience sharing their thoughts with another person and would be encouraged to grow in their abilities to communicate effectively through writing. In addition, the journal would provide a risk-free environment where they could practice their emerging literacy skills and experiment with writing for an appreciative audience.

Subjects

Eighty-seven elementary students who were residents of a small midwestern community participated in the project in conjunction with the members of two language arts methods classes at a local university. All of the elementary students attended an elementary school where the overall teaching atmosphere can best be described as traditional. A few of the teachers in the school, however, were beginning to move in the direction of wholistic instruction and those who were contacted for the project were eager to experience an aspect of process writing.

Implementation

During the first week of the semester, the students in my language arts classes were introduced to the pen-friend project. They were asked to bring a bound composition book to class to use for corresponding with an elementary student. Every language arts student was randomly paired for correspondence with at least one first or second grader. The names

of the elementary student and the university student partners were placed on the fronts of the journals. The university students initiated the first journal correspondence by writing an introductory letter in which they introduced themselves and described the project. They also included questions such as *Do you like school?* and *What is your favorite book?* in order to provide some structure for the first responses from their elementary pen pals. The journals were delivered to the elementary school and the project was underway.

Between twelve and fifteen pen-friend correspondences were exchanged weekly throughout the semester. The language arts students eagerly awaited the weekly journal entries from their elementary counterparts and enjoyed sharing many of their journal letters with their classmates.

During the course of the semester, the future teachers used the journals to explore various developmental aspects of literacy which were apparent in the writings produced by their young friends. One focus of investigation was the varieties of invented spellings that the children produced. On several occasions in the language arts classes, we put large sheets of butcher block paper around the room and listed examples of the various stages of spelling development that we were able to identify in the journal entries. As the months went by, the class noticed that many of the first grade children appeared to be moving from a phonetic stage of spelling construction toward the transitional stage (Gentry, 1981), and several of the second graders were beginning to use the conventional spellings of words.

The future teachers were also able to note differences in the quality of the journal entries produced by the children. As they wrote weekly in their journals, the children's sentences became longer and their paragraph formations gradually

improved. The language arts students were careful to avoid stilted, unnatural writing when they made a journal entry and frequently were able to provide models of conventional spelling and sentence formation for their young correspondents. During the 15 to 20 minutes spent writing in the journals in the language arts classes, it was not uncommon to overhear such questions as *How do you spell armadillo?* or *Read this. Is this a complete sentence?* as these students also experienced the peer-editing phase of the writing process.

On several occasions I interrupted the interactions of my language arts students in order to draw their attention to what they were encountering. I urged them to place the importance and the pleasure of this activity into their "teacher memory banks" so that they would be able to provide a similar atmosphere in their future classrooms.

As the weeks went by the journal entries moved from safe, generic subjects such as hobbies, favorite television shows and physical descriptions to more personal topics, some of which were emotional in nature. The uninhibited writing of the first and second graders provided our class with a great deal of enjoyment. The students also learned a lot from their young friends about the changing family structure that many of the children were experiencing. There were frequent descriptions of non-traditional families that included weekend excursions to visit fathers and step-mothers or descriptions of outings that included "Mom's boyfriend" or "Dad's girlfriend." Sometimes the death of a pet was shared and on occasion, very personal questions were asked by our young correspondents. One first grader asked in her journal if her university pen-friend had a bank account and another, whose mother was expecting a baby, asked my student if she, too, were pregnant. Of course, the usual advice to the love-lorn was a subject of many exchanges. Six and seven year-olds

seemed well versed in the perils of mate selection and often sought advice from their older, more experienced pen-friends. "I like him. Should I tell him at recess?" was not an uncommon inquiry.

Figure 1

Responses (in percentages) to a questionnaire on writing enjoyment

	<i>Strongly agree</i>			<i>Strongly disagree</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoyed the journal writing activity.	72	24	1	1	0
I had trouble knowing what to write about.	4	29	29	23	13
I thought about the mechanics of writing as I wrote in the journal.	26	48	19	4	1
I went back to revise/edit entries after writing.	33	35	12	12	6
I answered the questions my pen-friend asked in the journal.	90	5	2	0	1
I wrote about things that I thought would interest my pen-friend.	74	21	3	0	1
I wrote about things that happened in my everyday life.	53	33	10	1	1
I think this is a valuable activity for a language arts class.	84	13	0	0	1
This project helped me see the value of journal writing for elementary students.	72	24	1	1	0
I noticed some changes in my pen-friend's writing as the semester progressed (e.g., improved penmanship, longer entries, more questions).	17	30	38	9	4

The project was completed in early May and the conclusion was celebrated by a get-together in the campus dining room. Conveniently, the participating elementary students

attended a school only a few blocks from the university. One sunny May morning, 87 first and second graders and their teachers and aides arrived to meet their somewhat nervous university counterparts. After initial introductions were completed, fruit juice and cookies were served and the journals were presented to the elementary students as mementos of their pen-friend experience.

Figure 2
Responses (in percentages) to a questionnaire on journal enjoyment

	Grade 1		Grade 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
I enjoyed the journal pen-friend activity.	100	0	97	3
I looked forward to reading my journal.	100	0	97	3
I liked writing in my journal.	100	0	88	12
My pen-friend wrote interesting letters.	100	0	99	1
I liked meeting my pen-friend.	100	0	100	0
I would like to do this again next year.	100	0	97	3

Results

In an effort to evaluate the journal writing project, questionnaires were distributed to all of the participants. The questionnaires evaluated the project from a variety of standpoints as I was eager to determine if the expended effort was educationally worthwhile for future teachers and early readers and writers. Results of the questionnaires were very gratifying and support repeating the project in future semesters.

All 68 language arts students involved in the project were asked to evaluate it based on 10 statements to which they responded on a Likert scale from (1) *strongly agree* to (5) *strongly disagree*. The questionnaire and the percentage of responses to each statement was included in Figure 1. Ninety-six percent of the respondents enjoyed the journal project and 97 percent considered it a valuable activity for a language arts class. Thirty-three percent of the students however, indicated that they occasionally had trouble knowing what to write about, but an overwhelming 96 percent of the future teachers indicated that the project helped them see the value of journal writing for their future elementary students. Almost none of the undergraduates expressed any serious dissatisfactions.

The first and second grade journalers were also asked to evaluate the journal experience. A copy of their evaluation form and the percentages of their responses are included in Figure 2. It was interesting for the researchers to note that the first graders overwhelmingly enjoyed all aspects of the project while the second graders were a little more reserved. Because we wonder about their less enthusiastic responses, when we repeat the activity we plan to evaluate it with a combination of questionnaires and personal interviews.

Conclusion

The classroom teachers who collaborated with us asked that we repeat the project soon. They thought that their students were personally invested in their journals and had experienced in an unthreatening way the natural relationship between reading and writing.

The use of dialogue journals helps both future teachers and emerging readers and writers to develop their literacy skills. Through the dialogue journal experience, prospective

teachers are provided the opportunity to engage in writing in a purposeful context where they are able to examine the literacy skills and interests of their future students. For the elementary students, dialogue journals illustrated the national relationship between reading and writing with a focus on meaningful communication rather than only on mechanical correctness.

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Instituting Whole Language: Teacher Power and Practice

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In response to calls for literacy education reform, many schools across the nation have begun to implement whole language classrooms. This reform has touched off a series of responses from educators regarding teachers' roles, power, and empowerment. Whole language teachers, as co-learners in a learner-centered classroom, assume that language, reading, and writing acquisition are parallel processes that grow out of pursuing meaning in social situations (Harste, 1989; Newman, 1985; Goodman, 1986; McCaslin, 1989).

Many traditional classrooms remain basal-based. They are largely curriculum-driven with teachers as managers of a scope and sequence of reading and writing skills. In these classrooms, teachers usually implement someone else's program to teach a prescribed set of language skill objectives. In so doing, these teachers abdicate their decision-making power in matters of literacy instruction to the authors of such materials.

Clearly, the roles of whole language teachers and traditional reading basal program teachers differ. On one hand, whole language teachers are empowered teachers in control of learning in their classrooms, while on the other hand, teachers in traditional, basal-driven reading programs are held

accountable for program dictates and objectives written outside their power. At the core of this issue is the role of the empowered teacher — that is, one who will be in charge of the classrooms.

The idea of power in education has been a "neglected" and "indelicate topic," according to Nyberg (1981), who furthers his point by saying "when power does become a topic [in education circles] it focuses on other people's power, rather than one's own" (p. 537). Consequently, when classroom teachers speak of power, it often involves, as Nyberg explains, "complaint about undeserved, misused, excessive... usurped, or dangerous power" (p. 537) usually leveled at administration, central office, or state departments of education. However, when whole language proponents speak of power, they refer to *empowering* teachers as the persons responsible to make literacy decisions that best facilitate their students' literacy learning (Clarke, 1987; Maeroff, 1988; Rich, 1988).

There are those in literacy education, however, who contend that teachers do have power and influence and exercise this power daily. Lipsky (1980) in his treatise on social institutions, presents the school as a public service institution in which teachers function as "street-level bureaucrats whose actions *are* the policies" and "who may be understood to make the policies they are... charged with implementing" (p. xvi). Cowin (1981) also depicts teachers as agents in control of power to evaluate others and create concepts that attribute motivation to others. In addition, Fraatz (1987) persuasively presents a model of power and influence exercised by teachers regarding reading instruction. She places teachers at the center of educational policy-making in their role as the power agent in charge of literacy instruction. Fraatz sees the highest level of power for reading teachers in their ability to plan and to set instructional agenda, saying "The teacher's right to plan

is at the heart of the structure of power in the classroom" (p. 31). Applying Fraatz's model of power, Thomas, Barksdale-Ladd, and Jones (1991) found that teachers of literacy do indeed have power over literacy instruction planning and need to become empowered in making decisions regarding literacy instruction. "It is this planning which allows teachers degrees of power and influence over student learning" (Thomas, et al., 1991, p. 386). On the other hand, literacy educators such as Shannon (1989) view teachers as deskilled in teaching and planning reading instruction who have "relinquish[ed] some or most of their control over reading lessons and their work" (p. 92).

Given these diverse views, we sought to investigate issues of power and empowerment regarding literacy practices in a school district struggling with instituting whole language. This school district came to us soliciting university collaboration in identifying some issues germane to instituting literacy reform. This paper, therefore, describes some of the issues and concerns regarding power and empowerment in one school district striving to institute whole language.

After an initial meeting with the entire faculty designed to explore issues in instituting whole language, we sought to investigate if teachers already have a good deal of the power necessary to implement whole language classrooms. We set out to survey their perceptions of power, as well as their professional background and personal literacy habits, to help determine some of the conflict in implementing whole language classrooms. Therefore, after total faculty consent, we surveyed the faculty in the following three areas: 1) teacher perception of administrative power in implementing certain literacy practices; 2) teacher professional training and personal literacy pursuits as personal empowerment issues; and 3) current classroom literacy activities.

Method

The surveyed population consisted of 100 kindergarten through ninth grade teachers charged with teaching reading and writing to students in a school district comprising six elementary schools and one junior high school. The school district is directly adjacent to a large northeastern metropolitan hub and serves a city population as well as a substantial suburban population. The area is influenced by a large university school of teacher education as well as several other colleges and universities with education departments. Over recent years it has enjoyed a reputation as a model district.

The survey consisted of two basic parts: 1) open-ended questions to ascertain teacher perceptions of (a) the power inherent in administrative constraints on whole language and (b) the empowerment factor involved in teacher's own person/professional constraints; and 2) teacher professional and personal literacy background along with their current roles in literacy instruction through classroom activities and practices they employed. The open-ended questions asked teachers to: 1) rank the three most important needs that their administration had power to address in order for teachers to create a whole language classroom; and 2) list the three specific learning and training experiences that they need personally for their role in whole language instruction. Teachers then indicated their professional training and experience as well as their personal literacy habits.

Teachers were also asked to indicate whether they employed eight particular classroom activities that we had selected as being easily accomplished in any classroom, regardless of administration, texts, or materials and were viewed in the literature as empowering and sound literacy practices. They included: 1) sustained silent reading; 2) reading with

students during sustained silent reading; 3) reading aloud to students; 4) having students write (compose) daily; 5) writing with students; 6) sharing writing with students; 7) having writing related to reading; and 8) having students share and read each other's writing.

Data analyses are descriptive. We have tallied the responses for the two open-ended questions, and we have described and discussed teacher demographics, professional and personal literacy behavior, and classroom activities. These results provide a profile of one school district's K-9 teachers and their roles in literacy education.

Results

Population. Women comprised 85 percent of this teacher population. Teachers had taught an average of 16.9 years with 30 percent holding bachelor degrees, 58 percent holding master degrees, and 12 percent holding reading specialist degrees. Forty-three percent of the teachers reported that they had had an undergraduate course in integrating reading language arts from a whole language prospective, while 35 percent indicated a graduate course in this approach. On the average, teachers reported spending less than 1 hour (.87 hour) per week reading professional journals.

Perceptions of administrative constraints on whole language. Teachers identified three constraints: 1) class size; 2) time; and 3) evaluation/grading requirements. Although all teachers named these three constraints, teachers identified other constraints peculiar to grade level. Teachers in K-5 ranked the next constraints in this order: 4) lack of curriculum guide, resources, and articulated guiding philosophy; 5) mandated standardized testing; 6) lack of support system, and 7) lack of parental understanding/awareness. The constraints listed by the 6th-9th grade reading teachers involved lack of 4)

staff development with inservice programs especially designed to teach the writing process; 5) supportive building principals; 6) classroom aids; and 7) computers.

When asked to identify personal constraints on their roles in instituting whole language/integrative approach in their classroom, teachers identified the following top five concerns: 1) curricular expectations; 2) evaluation guidelines; 3) time to set program in motion; 4) motivational techniques for students; and 5) inservice help to address the writing process method.

Teachers' personal literacy attributes. Teachers responded *yes*, *no*, or *very much* to the item indicating enjoyment of reading. One teacher (one percent of this group) responded *no* (did not enjoy reading). The majority (77 percent) reported that they enjoyed reading very much, while the rest (22 percent) reported that they enjoyed reading. The results for whether or not teachers enjoyed writing were very different. The majority (52 percent) reported that they did not enjoy writing, while 32 percent said they did enjoy it and 16 percent said they enjoyed it very much. Teachers spent 8.99 hours per week on the average reading books, magazines, and newspapers. The same teachers spent 2.2 hours per week on the average engaged in writing activities.

We also analyzed the relationships between these personal literacy practices and selected classroom literacy activities. Information in Table 1 shows how much time (in weekly hours) particular teachers devote to these activities. Those teachers who spent more time in their own recreational reading appeared to also devote more classroom time to reading aloud to students and involving students in sustained silent reading than did teachers who spent less time in their own recreational reading. Teachers who spent more

time in personal writing than did other teachers had their students involved in more classroom writing time.

Table 1
*Relationship of Teacher-Personal Literacy Practices and
Average Weekly Hours Devoted to Classroom Literacy Activities*

Personal Literacy Practices of Teachers	Activities		
	Reading aloud to Students	Having SSR	Having Students Write
Those reading above average time	1.62	1.05	2.16
Those reading below average time	1.33	.66	1.61
Those writing above average time	1.76	1.37	2.28
Those writing below average time	1.30	.58	1.61

Information in Table 2 shows relationships between these personal practices and whether or not teachers implemented certain classroom activities. We will first compare teachers who read more to teachers who read less. Teachers who read more also read along with students during SSR and incorporated writing activities that were related to reading. Teachers who wrote more involved students in daily writing, wrote with students, and had students read other students' writing. These same teachers included writing that was related to reading. We also asked teachers to indicate whether or not they enjoyed reading and writing. Because the great majority of teachers enjoyed reading, comparisons were possible only between those who said they enjoyed it and those who said they enjoyed it very much.

Table 2
Relationship of Teachers-Personal Literacy Activities and Percentage of Percentages of Teachers Who Implement Classroom Literacy Activities

Teachers' Personal Literacy Practices	Activities					
	Students Write Daily	Teachers Write w/ Students	Teachers Share Writing	Teachers Read During SSR	Writing Related to Reading	Students Read Others' Writing
Those reading above average time	47.1	60.6	44.5	84.4	84.4	62.5
Those reading below average time	53.8	53.8	53.8	63.8	80.6	76.6
Those writing above average time	48.3	64.3	50.0	81.5	74.1	64.2
Those writing below average time	46.4	52.1	50.7	68.6	85.3	62.3

As indicated in Table 3, a higher percentage of teachers enjoying reading had writing related to reading, and had students read other students' writing. A higher percentage of teachers enjoying reading very much read along with students during SSR. Comparisons were also made among teachers who said they enjoyed writing, those who did not enjoy writing, and those who enjoyed writing very much. Results were mixed. There was a trend on the part of those teachers who did not enjoy writing: a) they had fewer students writing daily; b) they did not write with students; and c) they did not share their own writing with their students.

Teachers who enjoyed writing had the highest reported percentage for: a) writing with their students; b) having writing related to reading; and c) having students read other students' writing.

Table 3
*Relationship of Teachers-Personal Response to Reading and Writing
 and Percentages of Teachers Who Implement Classroom
 Literacy Activities*

Teacher Personal Literacy Characteristics	Activities					
	Students Write Daily	Teachers Write w/ Students	Teachers Share Writing	Teachers Read During SSR	Writing Related to Reading	Students Read Others' Writing
<u>Enjoy Reading</u>						
Yes	47.5	42.3	50.0	52.9	94.1	60.0
Very Much	46.5	56.4	71.8	72.5	80.0	59.0
<u>Enjoy Writing</u>						
No	46.0	49.0	41.2	71.4	81.6	59.0
Yes	56.2	73.0	64.0	67.0	96.0	79.2
Very Much	56.2	60.0	66.7	73.3	66.7	60.0

We also explored the relationships between selected classroom literacy activities and the following professional factors: 1) professional studies (whether or not they had taken an undergraduate and/or graduate course concerned with how to integrate reading/language arts with whole language emphasis); 2) teaching experience (above or below average years of experience); and 3) professional reading (above or below average time spent reading professional journals or related

sources). Teachers who had taken an undergraduate course (43 percent) in whole language or a graduate course in whole language (35 percent) reported that they spent more hours per week reading aloud to their students, devoted more time to sustained silent reading, and devoted more hours in the classroom to having their students write. Teachers with more years of teaching experience also devoted more classroom time to these three activities. Teachers who spent more time than average reading professional journals also reported more classroom time devoted to reading aloud to students, SSR, and student writing. Table 4 details how these professional factors related to whether or not teachers implemented the reading and writing activities. Teachers who had taken an undergraduate course or a graduate course were more likely to include the following six activities: writing daily, teacher writing with students, teacher sharing writing with students, teacher reading with students during SSR, having writing related to reading, and having students read other students' writing. Greater percentages for positive responses were evident, in particular, for teachers with graduate level training.

Years of teaching experience also appeared to be related to whether or not teachers included these activities. A greater percentage of the more experienced teachers reported that they included the activities, except in the case of reading with students during SSR. Teachers who spent more than average time reading professional journals also were more likely to include these activities. While all teachers saw these eight activities as part of their roles in literacy instruction, professional background and personal literacy habits made a difference in the time involved in these practices.

Discussion and implications

This survey represented a seasoned faculty averaging nearly 17 years teaching, with well over two-thirds holding master's degrees. Yet these veteran teachers in response to the

Table 4
Teacher Background Related to Percentage of Teachers Who Implement Classroom Literacy

Professional Factors	Activities					
	Students Read Others' Writing	Students Write Daily	Teachers Write W/ Students	Teachers Share Writing w/ Students	Teachers Read During SSR	Writing Related to Reading
Took Under-graduate whole language course						
Yes (a)	57.5	58.5	56.0	84.2	82.5	65.8
No (b)	39.3	53.6	50.0	61.1	81.1	40.0
Took Graduate whole language course						
Yes (c)	53.1	70.5	61.8	90.6	94.1	74.5
No (d)	43.8	47.6	42.6	60.0	74.5	54.8
Taught years above average	50.9	62.5	60.7	70.4	85.2	65.5
Taught years below average	42.9	47.6	40.5	71.8	77.5	56.1
Spend above average time reading journals	52.3	62.8	51.2	87.8	85.4	64.3
Spend below average time reading journals	43.4	50.0	50.9	57.7	79.3	57.4

(a) Represents 43%; (b) represents 57%; (c) represents 35%; (d) represents 65%

open-ended questions regarding constraints to whole language seemed to look to administration for the necessary impetus for whole language classrooms. They did not appear to view their roles as change agents for initiating whole

language reform. When teachers list grading, lack of curricular guides, and insufficient time as constraints to whole language, they seem to be lacking in an understanding of the concept of whole language. In addressing concerns like these, Rich (1985) has pointed out that there are no questions about where to find the time to read to the children and how to accommodate children's writing.

The reading teachers, however, for grades 6-9 ranked staff development and inservice as their fourth concern, indicating a need for growth in their knowledge base in whole language reform. They aptly put the onus on themselves and saw change within their ability to implement and as part of their roles. This group's acknowledgment of their need to know more about integrating whole language is encouraging. In the second open-ended question intended to get teachers to look at themselves and their personal and professional needs in implementing whole language, teachers turned to administration "to provide programs." On the one hand, teachers viewed the administrative requirements of grading, standardized testing, and departmentalized curricular concerns as barriers to whole language, while on the other hand they asked for administration to provide curricula, evaluation guidelines, and motivational techniques for students in attempts to implement whole language classrooms.

Given these responses by the teachers to the open-ended questions, it appears that this faculty does not see that the power resides within their roles as instructional leaders with a sense of professional responsibility to implement whole language processes. As instructional leaders with the ability to plan for and implement instruction, faculty have the power of knowledge on their side. Faculty have the power to provide curricula based on informed decisions, to evaluate with informed guidelines, and to motivate students with

knowledge they are responsible for obtaining in pursuit of their profession. The real issue then becomes empowerment, that quality to effect change based on knowledgeable choices. Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas (1993) point to a sense of confidence as a key element in their definition of empowerment indicating that an empowered teacher is an individual who has developed confidence in a personal knowledge of reading, teaching, and learning and is able to confidently make instructional decisions and take actions in delivering reading instruction based upon this personal knowledge.

The result of this faculty's personal literacy habits may also be a key to understanding individual constraints in initiating whole language when viewing personal literacy practices as part of one's professional background. As readers, this faculty averaged almost nine hours per week on personal reading with three-fourths indicating they enjoyed reading very much. However, as a group, these teachers reported spending only .8 of one hour per week on SSR. In that brief average time, close to three-fourths of the teachers engaged in reading when their students did, but those teachers who read above the group average reading time spent almost twice as much time engaged in SSR in the classroom. Even the percentages for those who indicated they enjoyed reading very much were higher for SSR than the percentages for those who indicated a "yes" response for enjoying reading. This finding indicates that teachers' roles in literacy instructional practices reflect personal literacy habits. The paramount issues in this case then may involve the recruitment, selection, and training of those who enter the profession. Not only should professional schools of education seek out the literate members of the literacy community, but those teacher educators must themselves be models of literacy in their reading and writing assignments, practices and habits.

Clearly, as role models for literacy, teachers who engage in SSR with their students and for longer periods of time show ownership and membership in the literacy community. Simply, teachers who themselves read more apparently have their students read for longer, more meaningful units of time. True to whole language principles is the reading of whole texts for unbroken units of time. In addition, a greater percentage of those teachers who personally read more also wrote with their students and devoted more time per week to students' writing. Teachers who are readers invest their classroom time wisely in their students' reading and writing/reading relationship. Whole language classrooms are marked by teachers who teach by example and teachers who participate with students in literacy events. Therefore, schools whose faculties are themselves readers, perhaps have a better understanding of what is involved in whole language classrooms.

In contrast, this faculty fared less well in writing with over half indicating that they did not enjoy writing. This personal attribute seemed to have a dramatic influence on teachers' classroom practices and beliefs regarding writing. Over half of this faculty did not have their students write daily. When students did write, 44 percent of the teachers did not write with their students, and for those who wrote with their students, 49 percent did not share their writing with their students. The literacy event of writing suggests communication and audience, yet in almost half of these teachers' classrooms, this aspect is missing. This finding also seems to suggest teachers are not aware of or not teaching the writing process as a process with its attendant components.

This faculty's concern with students' writing and how they can help students in their writing are supported by teachers' responses to the open-ended questions. Twice the

teachers listed inservice needs for writing instruction for both the administrative constraints and their personal constraints. It appears that this faculty may realize their needs in this area of writing instruction — an area self-reported as not one of their strengths. Bridge and Hiebert (1985) have provided a revealing study of teachers' perceptions regarding writing instruction concluding that "students seldom compose discourse level texts and rarely write for a real audience" (p. 169). This may hold true for this faculty as borne out in the responses to the survey and indication of help needed in instruction in the writing process. As might be expected, teachers who personally read more tended to emphasize reading activities over writing activities. Likewise, teachers who wrote more emphasized writing and sharing their writing with students. Whole language classrooms are reading and writing environments where teachers see their role as reading and writing with students in shared episodes. Large percentages of this faculty do not provide the needed setting for such experiences. Because whole language programs are not easily implemented and maintained even by teachers who invest time in providing literacy episodes, the challenge is even greater for teachers who do not participate in personal reading and writing.

The professional background variable of having had courses in integrative language arts/reading, appeared to have an impact upon teachers' classroom literacy practices. Teachers who had such courses invested more time in practices having students read and write. In addition, these teachers also shared in literacy episodes and provided audiences for students' writing. Research in the areas of language arts, reading and psychology have flourished in the past two decades with instructional implications for both undergraduate and graduate students. The teachers in this survey who took such courses indicated classroom activities

that reflected such coursework. This feature of the findings may also be part of a larger picture indicating that those teachers who are the professionally responsible ones are committed to furthering their professional growth through continuing coursework. Given the average years teaching experience and percentages of master's degrees held by this faculty, graduate courses and intense inservice are mandatory for whole language implementation. If the teachers in this survey are indicative of many faculties in this country, it is noteworthy to point out two encouraging aspects: 1) faculty did recognize their need for instruction in the writing process and asked for inservice, and 2) they did indicate benefits from taking courses in whole language approaches by responding positively to engaging in the activities on the survey.

Other encouraging outcomes point out that teachers who taught longer, who had graduate courses in whole language approach, or who spend more time reading professional journals overall tended to have classrooms which engaged students in whole language literacy episodes. It appears that veteran teachers can and do learn and practice new approaches. This has implications considering the ages of today's school teachers holding master's degrees. Professional journals also appear to be important in teachers' implementing and practicing whole language principles. Given the great strides in research in the past decades in the area of literacy (e.g., emergent literacy, writing process, whole language belief systems, readers' response to literature) it is imperative that teachers see their role in keeping up with the research in their field through reading the literature of their profession.

Some obvious implications prevail for those who prepare and those who hire teachers. Teacher educators must determine ways to assure that well-balanced literate persons are coming into the profession and being turned out as models

who can introduce our students into the literacy community by example. Moreover, once these teachers are hired, administration must provide and value time for teachers to grow professionally and develop through coursework, inservice, and teacher collaboration. The real power in literacy education is having knowledge of the reading and writing processes and their relationships as well as collaborating in the efforts to share this knowledge. Teachers' roles in good literacy instruction call for teachers first to look to themselves as the true leader in instruction in the classroom and second to be professionally responsible for the knowledge of the developmental process of literacy. It is this knowledge that truly empowers teachers in their role in literacy instruction.

The education of school administration personnel, principals, supervisors, and superintendents also should be scrutinized. Do we prepare this personnel as managers in educationally sound models that share decision-making? Or do our educational models present telling and dictating rather than negotiating and sharing as viable frameworks in our schools? If teacher-education instructors and administrative-education instructors adhere to an *ex cathedra* model of instruction then power and authority appear to set the tone for school administrators and their faculties. When power is perceived to be in the hands of one group (administrators), then the other group (faculty) see themselves as powerless to institute change. However, when empowerment is the issue, teachers, teacher educators, parents, students, principals, supervisors, and administrative personnel collectively share and negotiate change and learning.

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Professional Materials

The Whole Language Journey. Written by Rebecca Harlin, Sara E. Lipa, and Rosemary Lonberger. Pippin Publishing Limited, 150 Telson Road, Markham Ontario. 1991. ISBN: 0-88751-034-5. Paperbound.

While it is the policy of *Reading Horizons* to only review the most current materials, the professional resource reviewed below is one title from the Pippin Publishing series we have featured in recent issues.

Jennifer R. Stell
Plainwell Community Schools

For teachers looking for a short but informative introduction to whole language, *The Whole Language Journey* is a good choice. For those already familiar with whole language practice and theory, this text will provide some useful ideas and references. The authors begin by discussing the concept of whole language, pointing out that the roots of the movement are found in different theories of how we learn to read. Theories based in psycholinguistics, developmental and cognitive psychology, and sociolinguistics are discussed, showing how they fit into the whole picture of whole language.

In discussing ways to begin using whole language in the classroom the authors suggest not switching entirely to whole language practices at first, but rather gradually beginning to modify and adapt individual classrooms and school curricula

to include one or two whole language pieces. For example, teachers can begin with sustained silent reading — a time when everyone, including the teacher, reads uninterruptedly. Teachers may modify the basal program by including whole language practices such as introducing vocabulary as the need arises, rather than all at once in the beginning of a lesson. Other features of whole language which the authors discuss are cooperative learning, and flexible grouping based on children's interests and not on their reading ability.

One section of the book is devoted to methods of evaluation used in whole language classrooms. Whole language assessment, based on the belief that no two children are identical, uses measures to affirm that learning is actually happening in the classroom. Standardized testing is not condemned but the sole use of it to evaluate a child's learning is. Evaluation methods discussed include informal observations, interviews with children to glean knowledge of how they are learning, checklists to keep accurate records of what has been learned, and portfolios. Appendixes include samples of some of these evaluation methods, and a checklist for creating a whole language environment. A useful annotated bibliography, divided into whole language areas (writing, thematic units, etc.) contains some 30 references.

Throughout the book, the authors stress the importance of having support when beginning a whole language journey. They advise teachers who are beginning to use whole language to keep in touch with other teachers using whole language practices, to keep administrators well informed, and to read professional journals on whole language practice and theory. Especially important is the need for teachers to believe in themselves and their ability to create a good learning environment, using wonderful children's literature.



Children's Books



Dinosaur Encore. Written by Patricia Mullins. Harper Collins Publishers, 1000 Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton PA 18512. 1993. ISBN: 006-021-0699. 32 pp. US\$15.00.

William P. Bintz, Western Kentucky University
Patricia A. Rice, Western Kentucky University

By popular demand and after millions of years, a cast of dinosaurs are back for a repeat performance. This time, however, they share center stage with a host of other reptiles and animals that currently roam the earth. The juxtaposition of the old with the new raises lots of fascinating questions, and poses lots of interesting possibilities. Technically, *Dinosaur Encore* is designated as an information book for preschoolers and young readers in elementary school. After several readings, however, we have come to believe that this picture book has much to offer both young and old readers alike. Readers, for instance, will delight in the innovative title of the story and the playful nature of the text, the tissue paper collage illustrations, and the imaginative page design of the book. This design gives readers some "entertaining surprises" by including both fold-out and lift-up pages. Several pages fold out sideways providing readers with a visual sense of the length of the height of dinosaurs.

In many ways, this simple picture book attempts to carve out new terrain by stretching the existing boundaries of information books. Text questions successfully focus reader

attention on unique characteristics of different species of dinosaurs. For example, *Which dinosaurs would be angrier than a butting billy goat? Which one would be crueller than a crocodile? Which one would run faster than an ostrich? Which ones would thunder louder than a wild stampede? Which one would stand taller than a teetering tower?* These questions introduce readers not only to a variety of dinosaurs, but also to a number of animals they may not often read about or be familiar with, like an emu, kangaroo, cockatoo, mongoose, and koala bear.

The book ends appropriately with the names and a brief description of the "cast" of dinosaurs in order of appearance. This concluding section is replete with lots of interesting information about each member of the cast, and extends the information readers naturally construct about dinosaurs during reading. Although this resource appears at the end of the book, it is an excellent starting point for readers to construct new questions and start new conversations about dinosaurs. Originally published in Australia, *Dinosaur Encore* was, not surprisingly, short-listed there for the 1994 Book of the Year award by the Children's Book Council of Australia. It is a well-deserved nomination for a book which expertly combines the joy of learning to read with the satisfaction of reading to learn.



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