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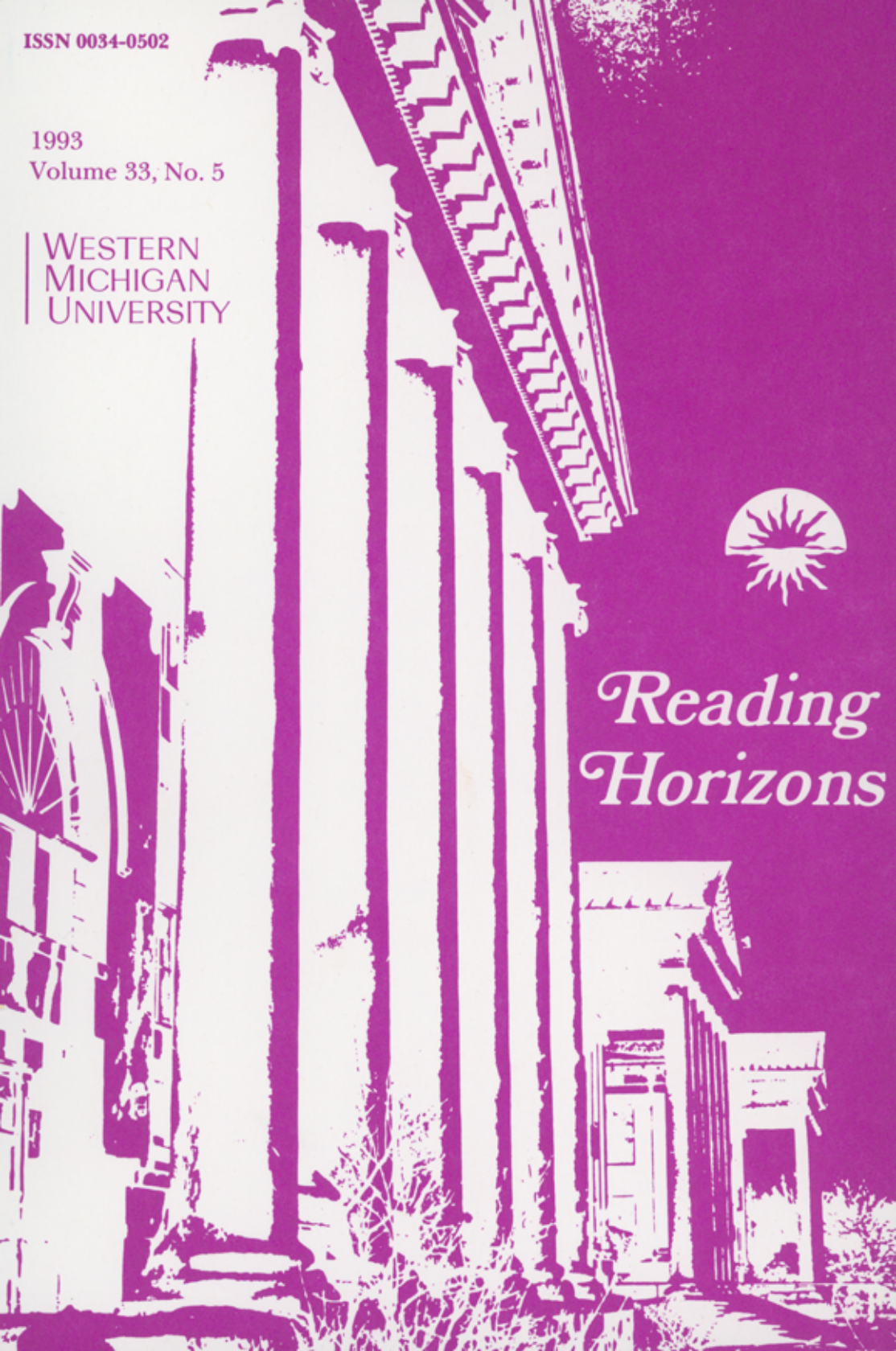
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Reading Horizons





READING HORIZONS

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READING HORIZONS has been published since 1960, on the campus of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo Michigan. As a journal devoted to teaching reading at all levels it seeks to bring together, through articles and reports of research findings, those concerned and interested professionals working in the ever widening horizons of reading and related areas of language.

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**June 1993 Themed Issue
Exemplary Teaching and Exemplary Teachers**

Beginning in 1991, *Reading Horizons* added a fifth issue annually, devoting that issue to a theme. This third themed issue of *Reading Horizons* focuses on examples of exemplary teaching and exemplary teachers. Our lead article is contributed by John D. Beach, a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Nevada in Reno Nevada. Guest editor for this issue is Dr. Suzanne F. Davis from the College of Education at Western Michigan University.

**Call for Manuscripts for the 1994 Themed Issue:
Literacy Through
University-School Collaboration**

The 1994 themed issue of *Reading Horizons* will be devoted to efforts that promote literacy through university-school collaboration. Guest editors are Janet Dynak and Ronald Crowell of Western Michigan University. Contributions in the form of research reports, commentaries, case studies, and articles discussing the area of literacy relating to university-school collaboration are welcomed. Preference will be given to manuscripts co-authored by classroom teachers and university faculty. Manuscripts should be submitted following *Reading Horizons* guidelines: send four copies and two stamped, self-addressed business-size envelopes; include a cover sheet with author name and affiliation; use a running head (without author identity) on subsequent pages; follow APA guidelines for references and use of gender-free language. Manuscripts intended for the themed issue should be postmarked by **March 1, 1994**. Address all manuscripts to Dr. Jeanne M. Jacobson, Editor, *Reading Horizons*, WMU, Kalamazoo MI 49008.

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Exemplary Teaching and Exemplary Teachers

Guest Editor: Dr. Suzanne F. Davis

Suzanne F. Davis brings a wide background in both teaching and administration to her role as guest editor of the *Reading Horizons* themed issue on exemplary teaching and exemplary teachers.

She has been teacher, counselor, and program coordinator, and for many years she was principal of a public Montessori school in Benton Harbor Michigan.

At Western Michigan University, Dr. Davis teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the Early Childhood Education Program and is active in university-school collaboration. She is a frequent presenter at professional conferences. Her research interests include study of school restructuring, the evolution of Professional Development Schools, and exploration of the use of holistic scoring as a means of writing assessment.

Dr. Davis' article, "Can Good Become Better?: The Progression Of An Exemplary Teacher" begins on page 441 of this issue and details the career of an educator striving for excellence in her field.



The Paradox of Exemplary Practice

**Jeanne M. Jacobson
Suzanne F. Davis**

Exemplary teaching is paradoxical. What is it like, in such a complex activity as teaching, to “get it *right*?” How can we learn from study of theory and practice, from observation of others and reflection on our own teaching, to become and remain an exemplary teacher? For classroom practice to serve as an example of excellent teaching, what occurs must be observable and describable. Yet to identify all the elements of even a single teacher’s skillful teaching, for even a single day, would be a mammoth undertaking. Moreover, once those elements were captured they would not represent in detail the classroom practice of other teachers, nor would they be replicated on subsequent days by the teacher originally observed. Excellence in teaching is not attained through training in a packaged set of behaviors. How can we learn? From study, observation, and reflection — and from the desire and energy to become and remain an exemplary teacher. The articles that we have chosen for our themed issue illustrate the blending of sound theory and good practice in different facets of language arts.

John Beach describes a method of structuring a reading program to encourage higher level thinking through comparing alternative versions of a similar text. His ideas weave together the important strands of attention to multicultural literature and use of “text sets,” collections of reading material which are similar in theme. Marjorie Wynn offers a wealth of possibilities for developing depth in vocabulary learning. Her suggestions incorporate important

learning strategy such as semantic mapping, and are applicable in both content area learning and literature study. Like other articles in this issue, Wynn's contribution presents alternatives to dull, inadequate and superficial instructional methods which unfortunately remain all too common. Swafford and Paulos show us exemplary technique and exemplary teaching simultaneously in a detailed description of a skilled teacher's use of a Structured Listening Activity. Their article, like the others, implicitly stresses the importance of time in the learning process — not time consumed in dull repetition but time *allowed* for students to explore, enjoy, and master new learning. Smith and Herring demonstrate the value of linking fields which have traditionally been separated. They provide a theoretical rationale for using drama in instruction and a practical structure for doing so. To conclude the set of articles on exemplary teaching, we chose an article by Johns and VanLeirsburg on the topic of assessment both for the information the authors provide about the development of the portfolio method and as a reminder that assessment is an integral part of good teaching. To remain bound to rigid methods of testing is to risk narrowing our teaching to fit the molds of the tests. Our issue's final article is focused on an exemplary teacher. In discussing exemplary teaching during the preparation of this issue we have become aware that it is a characteristic of excellent teachers with many years experience that their teaching has changed dramatically across the years. Such teachers tend to be remorseful about not having known earlier what they know now. Eventually they come to accept that each year they will know more, make new mistakes, and make new progress. Although good teaching cannot be packaged we can see it — fluid, lively, welcoming. Through study, observation and reflection we can strive for such excellence in ourselves and applaud it in others.



Literacy Through Literature: The Role of Comparison

John D. Beach

The adequacy of elementary teachers' preparation to work with literature and literature-based literacy programs has recently been called into question (Beach, 1992; Walmsley, 1992; Walmsley and Walp, 1990; Zarillo, 1989). When visiting elementary classrooms categorized as literature-based one may well recognize a number of teachers who are doing an excellent job. However, one is perhaps more likely to encounter whole classes reading the same novel followed by worksheets that address only literal level questions, literature units focused on inane themes such as "Stuffed Animals That Come Alive" (Zarillo, 1989, p. 26), or self-selected and self-paced reading followed by activities which are fun but that lack any learning focus, such as writing fan mail to the author and making crayon portraits of favorite characters.

In far too many classrooms, it is rare to encounter a true consideration of an author's or illustrator's art in portraying character or setting, or an in-depth analysis of the theme or point of view of a literacy work. As a result, children often lack true appreciation of books and the most basic understandings about how literature creates its effects. The potential which literature holds for developing comprehension, composition, and critical thinking abilities is squandered because so many teachers lack the experience with literature and the training to address these possibilities

effectively. Recently, a senior elementary education major confided to me that my children's literature course requirement to read two children's novels a week was a great challenge to her, because she had not read an entire novel until two years ago, when she was a college sophomore. Experience has taught me that there may be many more students than we usually suppose with this same background. This article presents some specific teaching ideas that I hope will serve three functions. First, the suggested activities provide a model for better literature-based instruction through comparison of well-chosen books that foster curiosity, which will lead to significant thought and conclusions about literature. Second, the activities offer classroom literature experiences that will foster both enjoyment and learning for children. Third, implementing these ideas in the classroom will assist teachers to learn by doing — to improve their own notions about and facility with literature in the classroom.

Scope of the problem

Recently, elementary teachers in New York were interviewed by researchers who concluded that they "did not have either an instructional philosophy for the teaching of literature or a well-developed practical scheme for integrating it within the elementary curriculum" (Walmsley, 1992, p. 510). Another researcher visited 23 literature-based classrooms in California and found that teachers were using the same label to describe at least three distinctly different versions of this program concept (Zarillo, 1989). While the teachers in this study had all moved to programs "where the literature supplanted, not supplemented, the basal reading program" (Zarillo, 1989, p. 23), a third of the classrooms were not considered successful. This is especially significant when one considers that only a small minority of American classrooms have eliminated basal readers

entirely. It appears to be the case that, at least in some parts of the country, teachers' preparation for engaging in literature-based teaching lags far behind the demand to offer such programs.

Despite the recommendations for courses in children's literature by the International Reading Association (1986, p. 5) and the National Council of Teachers of English (1986, p. 9), there are still many teacher education programs where such a course is not required. Even in those programs where a children's literature course is mandated, a single course may not offer enough time and space to cover what future teachers must learn by today's standards. In addition, most elementary education majors frequently take no other courses in literature that would help to deepen their understanding of how authors communicate their art and how readers might legitimately interpret it.

As a case in point, I recently worked with an exceptional elementary teacher in my graduate level children's literature course. This experienced and successful teacher submitted a paper in which her main thesis hinged on the notion that a male author for children was remiss in not writing more books where females were the main characters. It was difficult for her to grasp the idea that authors write about what is close to them. It is simply not possible for a single book to carry all the themes and ideas with which we should be familiar. In conversation, she still had difficulty accepting that many other authors (both male and female) have written books with females as the protagonists, and that it was all right for things to be this way. She was apparently applying to single tradebooks the same standards we have developed to apply to series of textbooks. Gender balance is certainly desirable if one is buying a single set of textbooks for all grades in the school, but in the library we

expect that children will choose a variety of different books by different authors; gender balance is thus achieved through variety. In literature we have the opportunity to savor the different voices of individuals who write from personal experience and independent focus. What was apparent to me was that this teacher had had too little experience with literature herself, and her readiness to teach a literature-based program was debatable.

Teachers, however, are not to be blamed for this state of affairs, since teacher education programs often spend too little time on cultivating appreciation and understanding of literature, and school leadership — especially as manifested in curriculum guides — is frequently remiss in its attention to literature goals and issues. Among many other factors that contribute to the problem are the quality of textbooks that tend to anthologize and decontextualize literary excerpts, hastily contrived commercial materials from teacher stores that focus on the surface characteristics of literature, and individuals such as those Bergeron (1990) and Sumara and Walker (1991) cite as confusing the real issues. The bottom line is that teachers need assistance with using literature in their classrooms until other factors succeed in making improvements to the general preparation of those responsible for overseeing children's first experiences with books and stories.

Understanding the elements of literature

Familiarity with the elements of literature (Lukens, 1990) and the ways in which authors manipulate them to achieve artistic and communicative effects is essential to success in the areas of understanding and interpreting literature, written composition, and critical thinking and discussion. Classroom programs that do not deal with these elements and their ramifications offer only inadequate literature experiences and learning to students.

Unfortunately, in many children's literature courses too little time is sometimes spent on helping future and in-service teachers understand the elements of fiction (conflict and plot, characterization, theme, the role of the setting, point of view, and style) and their impact in stories and books. In addition, the predominant spiral curriculum design in the public schools mediates against an extended focus on learning a major concept in favor of moving quickly from topic to topic and then returning next year to add more superficialities to those inadequately covered previously.

A variety of methods for addressing the elements of literature with children may be found in current textbooks (e.g., Cullinan, 1989; Huck, Hepler and Hickman, 1993; Norton, 1991; 1992). Comparison is an age-old teaching method (Alberti, 1966, first published in 1435) that enjoys the blessing of Piagetian scholars who emphasize the central role of disequilibrium in motivating learning (Richmond, 1970). Beach (1991) offers a comparison method originally developed for university children's literature students where paired children's picture books or novels are read in order to make discoveries about the elements of literature and their impact on readers. This method is easily adapted and can be equally successful in elementary, middle and secondary schools when books are chosen that meet these students' interests and abilities. For example, when elementary students compare versions of *The Three Little Pigs*, they discover that in some the wolf is cooked and eaten while in others he merely runs away. This discovery is a stimulus for discussion of which version is preferred and why, or for creating a third version with an even better ending. Middle school students can become involved in debating the pros and cons of first versus third person narration by comparing similar stories that exemplify each option.

An excellent place to begin exploring the possibilities of the elements of fiction is in comparing different versions of the same folk tale. Take for example the Walt Disney version of *Snow White* (Grimm, Grimm, and Werner, 1952) and the version produced by Randall Jarrell and Nancy Ekholm Burkert (Grimm and Grimm, 1972). After listening to both versions or reading them, children will be able to list the differences between the two versions immediately. A good place to start is with the illustrations: the Disney version flits back and forth in mood from light to dark while the Burkert illustrations maintain a uniformly somber and serious mood throughout. Children can be invited to debate which set of illustrations better fits the text. The events in the two versions are also slightly different. For example, the Disney version describes Snow White as rather helpless; she is pitied by the woodsman who is sent to kill her and told to flee into the forest without her needing to utter a word. In the Jarrell translation, however, Snow White actively pleads for her life and offers to run into the forest and never come home again. She offers the woodsman a way to ease his own guilt and please the queen at the same time. This is an important difference between the two versions and points to different ways authors portray characters. Listing the differences in the illustrations and the story versions provides a concrete starting place for an in-depth discussion of which version is preferred and why. Children can then debate the merits of the artistic styles chosen for each. This type of discussion is valuable in developing sensitivity to literature, understanding of the artistic choices an author or illustrator must make, and critical thinking. Many examples of competing versions of the standard folk tales provide ample opportunity for comparisons.

Stories often share a similar theme but provide different settings, characters and plots. Take for example the

Japanese tale *The Stonecutter* (McDermott, 1975), and the German story *The Fisherman and His Wife* (Grimm and Grimm, 1978). Both of these stories share the theme that greed does not pay, but present it in different ways. Even upper elementary and high school students can appreciate these picture books and the ways in which they play out the theme of greed. *The Stonecutter* tells of a lowly laborer chipping away at a mountain who dreams of being more powerful. His wish is granted by the spirit of the mountain, but he becomes greedy and progresses from prince, to sun, to storm cloud, to the mountain itself when he wishes to be more powerful than each past incarnation. The story ends with the laborer, transformed into the mighty mountain, trembling as a lowly stonecutter chips away at his foot. *The Fisherman and His Wife* is the famous story of a man who catches a magic fish that transforms his home into successively larger residences at his wife's insistence. Her greed, however, eventually lands them back in the same tiny hovel they began in. Comparing these stories on the same theme from different cultures offers a valuable stimulus to a discussion on the topic of greed. Children should be invited to discuss the styles of the storytellers and the plot development in each tale.

Strega Nona (dePaola, 1975) and *The Funny Little Woman* (Mosel, 1972) make an excellent pairing of books for children to consider since each deals with a particular culture's reverence for food, the staff of life, yet in quite different ways. In *Strega Nona*, a village witch with a magic pasta pot leaves her inexperienced and vain helper in charge one day and returns to discover that the entire town is covered in pasta. This is a version of the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" motif. In *The Funny Little Woman* a rice cake falls through a crack in a poor woman's hut and she follows it because it is so precious. Under the earth, the woman is

captured by goblins who give her a magic rice paddle and make her their cook. The woman eventually escapes with the magic rice paddle, opens a restaurant and becomes rich. These two stories contrast in characterization (the simpleton vs. the wily poor woman), setting (Italy vs. Japan), a plot (a single day vs. a year spent in the underworld), and theme (obeying orders vs. sticking up for oneself). Yet the two stories do have connections that would motivate a valuable discussion focused on literature, culture and lessons life offers us.

There are a wealth of books and stories to tell that offer worthwhile opportunities for comparison and learning for all age levels. Teachers should try pairing such books as *Jumanji* (Van Allsburg, 1981) and *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* (Ness, 1966) for a discussion of the issues regarding reality vs. fantasy, or *Miss Rumphius* (Cooney, 1982) and *Mirette on the High Wire* (McCully, 1992) for an analysis of hopes, aspirations, and accomplishments in life. The more children of all ages read, listen, compare, discuss and respond, the better prepared they will be to attempt similar effects in their own compositions and interpretations, and their thinking will be broader and deeper as well.

Developing a philosophy of literature study

Developing a clear notion of the purpose and function of literature and literature study in the school curriculum will assist teachers to choose effectively those objectives, materials, and activities that will foster children's enjoyment and learning. A philosophy about literature will also assist the teacher in deciding whether literature is a cultural duty (Hirsch, 1987), entertainment, a vehicle for instruction, or something else. Purves (1990) identifies three major viewpoints on literature as a school subject. First, literature may be viewed as a body of knowledge which children must acquire (e.g., studying the classics for purposes of cultural

heritage). Second, it may be perceived as a vehicle for critical thinking and interpretation, or for social and moral development (e.g., studying books for the ethical questions they address and the process of intellectual debate about these questions). And third, in a viewpoint that is related to individualized reading programs and the educational philosophy of Rousseau (Walmsley, 1981), literature may be considered in terms of the student, as a self-selected and self-paced student choice or preference (e.g., reading for entertainment and personal reasons).

Teachers need to consider and debate these three major philosophies, at the very least, in terms of developing their own list of purposes and functions for dealing with literature in school. It is quite likely that a combination or balance among the three major viewpoints will prove to be the most satisfying philosophical stance of all (Purves, 1990; Zarillo, 1989). My personal vision is for an elementary classroom where children have some time to choose and read what they want, some time for exposure to classics and knowledge about literature, and some time for discussions about books that offer ideas and the sharing of aesthetic experiences. I hope that the teacher will be the prompter and facilitator of these activities through choosing pairs of books that stimulate thinking and the development of personal tastes in literature.

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Proprietary Vocabulary Acquisition: A Creative, Thematic Adventure

Marjorie J. Wynn

Teachers have discovered that proprietary vocabulary acquisition by elementary students is enhanced through participation in a creative, thematic approach to learning. Proprietary vocabulary is a collection of words over which the owner has mastery of understanding in listening and reading and mastery of use in speaking and writing. This definition is based on the meaning of proprietor, *an owner who has mastery and control over a possession*, and vocabulary, *a stock of words*.

In-depth vocabulary knowledge is an important component in reading comprehension (Carr and Wixson, 1986; Heimlich and Pittelman, 1986; Nagy, 1988) and written composition (Duin and Graves, 1988; Tompkins and Hoskisson, 1991). Vocabulary growth is stimulated through repeated exposure to words within meaningful contexts. A thematic approach to vocabulary instruction provides a meaningful context for repeated exposure to words while activating students' prior background knowledge and providing a framework for acquiring new vocabulary (Duin and Graves, 1988; Nagy, 1988; Pappas, Kiefer and Levstik, 1990; Tompkins and Hoskisson, 1991). A variety of creative experiences promoting active involvement of students in their learning will provide interest in vocabulary acquisition

(Duin and Graves, 1988; Pappas, Kiefer and Levstik, 1990). This article's purpose is to examine proprietary vocabulary acquisition, a thematic approach to vocabulary development, and teachers' use of creative experiences to enhance acquisition of proprietary vocabulary.

Proprietary vocabulary acquisition

A model was developed by the author to enhance teachers' understanding of proprietary vocabulary acquisition. Teachers were asked to visualize an elementary student's brain as having three cognitive baskets. In each of these cognitive baskets there are vocabulary word-blocks from which the student may choose in building effective communication skills. The first cognitive basket contains receptive vocabulary word-blocks. Receptive vocabulary includes words which are understood in listening and reading. This basket contains the largest number of word blocks, because these words are heard or read in context, and the context surrounding the vocabulary words helps the listener or reader determine their meaning. When the meaning of a word stored in the receptive vocabulary basket is internalized to the extent that the student can make some use of the word in speaking and writing, the word block is transferred to the student's second cognitive basket. The second cognitive basket contains expressive vocabulary word blocks. Expressive vocabulary includes words which are used in speaking and writing. Students may make limited use of these words in speaking or writing. Often these words are used when their use is suggested by the classroom teacher or a peer. When a mastery level of understanding and use of a word is reached, the word block is transferred to the student's third cognitive basket. The third cognitive basket contains proprietary vocabulary word blocks which the student retrieves and uses automatically and frequently in speaking and writing.

Although the traditional three-step approach to vocabulary development (look up the word, copy the definition, and write a sentence in which the word is used correctly) provides exposure to new words, word blocks may remain in their students' second cognitive basket, and students' proprietary vocabulary may not be increased. Teachers should encourage the transfer of word blocks to the third cognitive basket, so that students have a plethora of word blocks from which to choose to convey their thoughts to others. As Mark Twain said, "The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is like the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." Making the right choice is essential in effective communication. Repeated experience with and exposure to vocabulary in meaningful contexts will increase student discernment in selecting the right word blocks with which to build and will enable students to develop their communication ability. One way to provide for vocabulary development in meaningful contexts is through the use of creative experiences in thematic units.

Themes. Enjoyable and meaningful exposure to words may be enhanced through the development of themes. Themes are topics or units of interest on which student learning is focused. Themes may be content area or literature based. Examples of content area topics are in health, a unit on the human body; in science, a unit on jungle animals; and in social studies, a unit on patriotism. Literature units may be based on an author, a single book, a genre, or a theme. An example of a unit about an author would be a unit based on books written by Katherine Patterson. An example of a unit on a single book would be a unit based on the book *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry. A genre unit could be a poetry unit using books by Jack

Prelutsky, Shel Silverstein and other well-known children's poets. A thematic unit might be developed on survival, using books such as *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor and *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell. Themes encourage the integration of learning across content areas. A choice of themes may be made using suggestions from curriculum guides, textbooks, or students in the class. Using a thematic approach in the classroom will provide an organizational structure for expanded experiences with new vocabulary within a meaningful context.

Creative experiences. The use of creative experiences as vehicles for exploring topics in thematic units is stressed by Pappas et al. (1990). Taking advantage of students' enthusiasm for art, teachers may provide a variety of creative experiences to involve students actively in the acquisition of proprietary vocabulary. Participation in art activities using a variety of media and media techniques makes learning exciting as students illustrate the meanings and use of vocabulary words in novel and original ways. Participation in music activities will enable students to sing, as well as compose, lyrics for vocabulary songs. Creative activities allow student work to be shared, published, and displayed, and students are rescued from the doldrums of the dittos and drills approach to learning.

Students learn through their senses. Active participation in a variety of art activities provides students with sensory experiences involving the learning modalities of seeing, touching, hearing, smelling and tasting. The arts provide for learning through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modality strengths. Wankelman and Wigg (1989) found the use of creative art programs across content areas enriches academics. Participation in a variety of enjoyable and meaningful experiences and repeated exposure to the

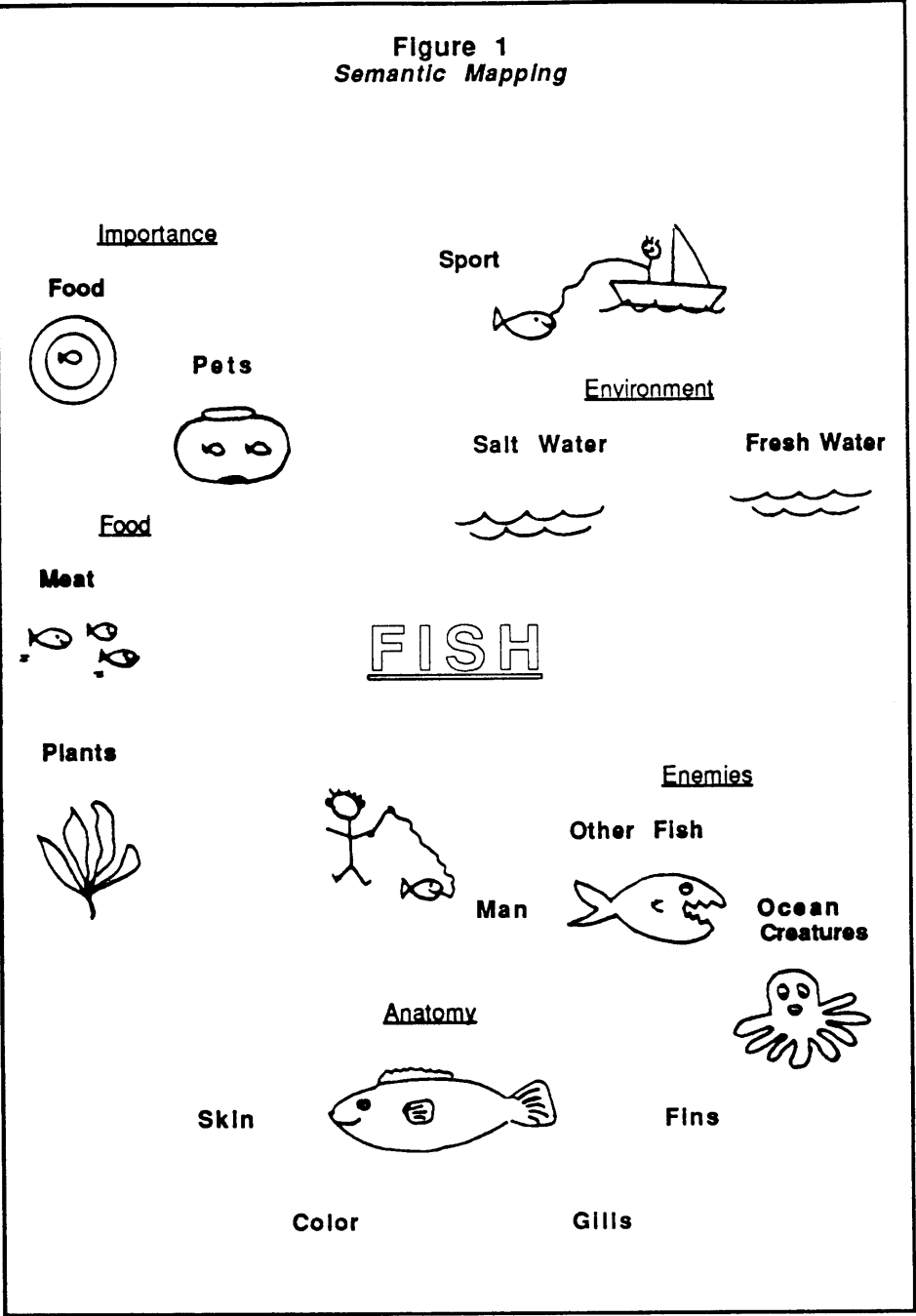
words in a variety of contexts facilitates vocabulary development (Hillerich, 1985; Tompkins and Hoskisson, 1991).

Instructional organization

Teachers, taught by the author, used *oceans* as a thematic focus. The steps followed for stimulating elementary students' acquisition of proprietary vocabulary were: 1) choose a theme and related vocabulary appropriate to the elementary grade level; 2) provide a variety of creative experiences. The grade level of each teacher determined specific vocabulary selection, creative activities, and literature book choices. Areas for which activities were designed included: semantic mapping, synonyms, homophones, multiple meaning words, idioms, propaganda, sentence expansion, and poetry. Examples of creative experiences used by teachers are included in the following sections.

Semantic mapping. Thematic planning may be aided through the development of a semantic map. A semantic map is a graphic organizer on which the central topic forms a nucleus and categories related to that topic radiate out from the nucleus forming a web. As students brainstorm about information to put on the map, they pool their knowledge about the topic, activate prior knowledge and experiences related to the topic, and expand their knowledge of the topic. Vocabulary words are added to the map as reading, study and research by the class provide information for web expansion. Semantic mapping has been found to be a valuable strategy in vocabulary development, as the words are being taught 1) using examples linked to students' prior knowledge and experiences; 2) relating new vocabulary to background knowledge; 3) involving students in constructing meanings of new words; and 4) providing a rich basis for further reading and writing (Heimlich and Pittelman, 1986; Johnson Pittelman and Heimlich, 1986; Nagy, 1988).

Figure 1
Semantic Mapping



The development of a semantic map enabled students to represent visually, in a variety of creative ways, knowledge they currently possessed about the ocean or a related ocean topic. As new knowledge was gained, students added to their maps. To represent categories on their semantic maps pictorially, students used the technique *collage* that creates design by pasting scraps of paper and other materials to a surface. Some of the collage materials used were magazine pictures, wallpaper, construction paper, and scraps of fabric. Figure 1 shows a semantic map on fish, in an early stage of development.

Synonyms. The study of synonyms enabled students to become more discerning in expressing themselves clearly and precisely. Projects for publishing, displaying and sharing synonym projects included pop-up books and flap books, books with windows, doors and a variety of flaps that open. Synonym possibilities and answers for riddles were written on notches of pop-up books and under the flaps of flap books. Evans and Moore (1985) have information for making a variety of pop-up books and flap books. Developing hink-pinks for types of fish and ocean creatures was a popular synonym activity. Hink-pinks are riddles with two one-syllable rhyming words for the answer. Students made up their own hink-pinks by brainstorming a pair of rhyming words first, then making up a question stem to go with the pair. As students searched for synonyms to put in the question stem of their riddles, the thesaurus became a popular resource. Experts in hink-pinks progressed to hinky-pinkies, riddles with two two-syllable rhyming words for the answers. Examples: *Question:* What is a fish playground? *Answer:* Shark park; *Question:* What is incessant crustacean chatter? *Answer:* Crab blab; *Question:* What is a member of the ocean criminal underworld? *Answer:* Lobster mobster. Another synonym activity children

enjoyed was working with passages from children's literature in which words had been deleted. Children suggested word choices the author might have made. Then a comparison was made with the author's choice, and students discussed why the author might have made that particular word choice. Examples:

At the edge of the woods there was a pond, and there a minnow and a tadpole swam among the weeds. They were _____ friends. (Suggestions: good, best, happy; author's choice: inseparable)

The minnow too had grown and had become a _____ fish. (Suggestions: big, large, huge; author's choice: full-fledged) (Lionni, 1970)

Homophones. Composing homophone songs to be sung to familiar tunes provides young composers an experience in the correct use of homophones. Children learned to use lists of homophones and find those that related to oceans. Students enjoyed singing and composing songs and/or additional versus for songs. Example:

Fish-aphones (Tune: "Doe, Doe a Deer")

Mussels — shellfish are good to eat

Muscles — hurts when you exercise

Wail — a cry of deep distress

Whale — a fish of immense size

Roe — fish eggs are good to eat

Row — to paddle in a boat

Pole — a line to catch a fish

Poll — where people go to vote.

Multiple meaning words. Words often have more than one meaning. Johnson and Pearson (1984) noted poor readers had a problem with "word rigidity," knowing only one meaning for a word with multiple meanings.

To compose lyrics for songs, students used lists of words with multiple meanings and found those that related to oceans. Example:

Fishy Fun (Tune: "Turkey in the Straw")*Dive — to go down in the sea**Dive — to jump into a fray**Cast — to throw a net for fish**Cast — the people in a play**Bait — you use to catch a fish**Bait — to tease or to torment**Scales — the covering on a fish**Scales — get on; my weight I'll get*

Idioms. Students searched for idiomatic expressions related to oceans. They illustrated the literal and figurative meanings of an expression using a variety of crayon and paint techniques found in Wankelman and Wigg (1989). Crayon pictures covered with a blue wash of tempera or watercolor paint were realistic in depicting underwater ocean scenes. An additional challenge was to write idiomatic expressions synonymously and have peers decode the expressions. Examples:

<u><i>Synonymous</i></u>	<u><i>Idiomatic</i></u>	<u><i>Illustration Possibility</i></u>
<i>Seek praise</i>	<i>"Fish for compliments"</i>	<i>Fisherman catching fish labeled with complimentary terms</i>
<i>Other matters requiring attention</i>	<i>"Other fish to fry"</i>	<i>Cook at stove with frying pan, piles of fish</i>
<i>Out of accustomed environment</i>	<i>"Fish out of water"</i>	<i>Fish with feet walking on land</i>

Propaganda. Developing commercials to sell ocean products provided a challenge for students. A submarine puppet theater with portholes offered a view of the performance of students and/or ocean puppets. Puppets were created from materials such as envelopes, paper bags, paper plates, popsicle sticks, and bathroom tissue rolls. Costumes were created from paper bags, boxes and construction paper. Commercials provided an opportunity to

play around with language and use alliteration and idiomatic expressions. Example: Duck selling crackers.

Do you "quave" quality quacks? In your quest for quality quacks, check out the Surgeon General's Report, developed by qualified quacks, in which these quacks discovered that eating your quota of quackers will improve your quacking quality. No longer will you hear "I don't want to hear a quack out of you!" in "one fowl swoop" you will have developed quality quacks.

Sentence expansion. Developing expanded sentences from noun/verb sentences provided an opportunity for students to use colorful adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases. Word banks were built on charts. Sentence expansion books were constructed. Sentences were illustrated with thumbprint pictures (Emberley 1977). On each succeeding page of the books illustrations and sentences became progressively more detailed. Here is an example:

<u>Describe?</u>	<u>Noun?</u>	<u>Verb?</u>	<u>How?</u>	<u>When?</u>	<u>Where?</u>	<u>Why?</u>
enormous	shark	swam	swiftly	yesterday	beneath	pursu-
white					waves	ing
						minnows

<u>Page#</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Sentence</u>
1	Noun/Verb?	A shark swam.
2	Describe noun	An enormous, white shark swam.
3	How?	An enormous, white shark swam swiftly.
4	When?	An enormous, white shark swam swiftly yesterday.
5	Where?	An enormous, white shark swam swiftly yesterday beneath the waves.
6	Why?	An enormous, white shark swam swiftly yesterday beneath the waves pursuing a school of minnows.

Poetry. Students enjoyed a variety of poetic experiences. Class and/or individual collections of poetry were published in accordion books and shape books made in the form of ocean creatures. Evans and Moore (1985) have

information for making a variety of shape and accordion books. Poetry was also displayed on mobiles, book marks and poetry cubes. Children sat in an author's chair to read their poetry. Teachers found that children were receptive to revising poetry and playing with word choices to make meaning more clear and precise, because the limited number of words required in writing poetry did not make the revision task cumbersome. Acrostic, cinquain, concrete, and diamante poetry was written in the shapes or on the shapes of ocean creatures. Examples:

Acrostic

C-rustaceans

R-ude

A-nxious

B-oisterous

S-tinking

Concrete

waves wandering wistfully

whispering whirling waves.

Summary

Students participated enthusiastically in the creative experiences that were developed for the ocean unit. Teachers observed an increase in spontaneous oral and written use of vocabulary related to oceans. Often students would get caught up in the excitement of the vocabulary activities and expand the activity and use of vocabulary beyond that originally designed and planned by the teacher. Display of student work heightened interest in vocabulary, and students had a marvelous time in their creative, thematic adventure. The impact of words can be summarized as follows:

Words have a powerful influence on every aspect of our lives. Words can entertain or instruct us, anger or soothe us, excite or calm us, inspire or bore us, cheer or sadden us, enlighten or mislead us, confuse or amuse us! Words build bridges between people and pave roads for the flow of ideas. Words give us opportunities

to expand our minds, stretch our imaginations, and experience a sense of playfulness (Schevitz, 1982, ix).

This power of words makes it incumbent upon teachers to motivate students to continually acquire building blocks for their ever-expanding repertoire of proprietary vocabulary.

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Creating Experiences for Listening and Learning

**Jeanne Swafford
Tamara Paulos**

What am I? I am the often neglected component of language arts. I am a complex process that involves constructing meaning. I am an active and even interactive process. Response is one of my essential features. At one time I was considered passive. I am not reading, writing, or speaking. I am listening.

Throughout the school day, children are asked to listen. In fact, listening often dominates classroom time. Unfortunately, little research has focused on listening since the 1950s and 1960s (Pearson and Fielding, 1982; Strother, 1987). Nor has listening received substantial attention in textbooks and professional journals, even though educators believe that listening is important for the development of oral language, reading and writing. The emphasis on reading and writing has crowded out attention to listening (Pinnell and Jaggar, 1991). It is our belief that listening deserves to receive attention of teachers and researchers as a necessary, integrated part of the learning process.

To insure that active, purposive listening becomes an integral part of the learning process, teachers should plan carefully to encourage active listening. Plans should include experiences where children are required to listen not only to the teacher but also each other. In this article we describe a

listening experience that was part of a first grade science unit about the earth. It was designed to facilitate active listening within the context of content learning. The listening experience integrates science content, oral reading of a tradebook, and components of a Structured Listening Activity (SLA) to promote active listening and learning.

The listening experience described here included all the components of a Structured Listening Activity (Choate and Rakes, 1987). These components include: 1) activating and building background knowledge; 2) setting a purpose for listening; 3) reading aloud by the teacher while highlighting visuals and encouraging students' predictions; 4) asking questions during and after reading; and 5) summarizing the story. These components were chosen by Choate and Rakes because they reflect previously established good practice for teaching comprehension. Although we used all the components of an SLA in the listening experience, we did not view the components as steps in an ordered procedure. Rather, we found that it was useful to think of the components as elements that should be included in the listening experience. Therefore, we used components of the SLA in a flexible way, at appropriate times and places in the lesson rather than in an ordered sequence; sometimes the components were used more than once. In addition, at the end of the listening experience, activities were provided for students to become actively involved with the concepts they learned through listening. It has been proposed that active involvement after listening promotes listening comprehension (Pinnell and Jaggar, 1991).

The teacher and students

Tamara Paulos, an experienced elementary school teacher, planned the listening experience described below

to demonstrate an SLA to her peers in a graduate level content area reading course. Because she also wanted to use the lesson in her first grade classroom, she planned the listening experience with her students in mind. The students in Tamara's classroom were children of varying abilities, including those served in the gifted program and in special education.

The tradebook

Although there are a number of tradebooks we could have used to integrate listening and science content, we chose *The Magic School Bus at the Waterworks* by Joanna Cole (1986), for three reasons. First, it fulfills many of the characteristics described by Elley (1989) as important for a read aloud book. The book is novel, humorous and includes elements of conflict, surprise and action; the characters are easy for students to identify with; and the plot is easy to follow. Second, the story is coherent, an important element for listening comprehension (Pinnell and Jaggar, 1991). Researchers have found that texts with coherent structures are easier to remember than those which simply present a string of facts. Third, the book extends information presented in chapters from the first grade science book about the earth and weather and this helps students understand the connection between the two chapters. The content of the book was also consistent with the state science curriculum for first grade.

In the *Magic School Bus* books content information is skillfully blended into a humorous fictional story. The bizarre teacher, Ms. Frizzle, plans special field trips for her class. A magic school bus takes students to very unusual places (e.g., through the waterworks, inside the earth) depending on what Ms. Frizzle's class is studying. The *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks* focuses on two major concepts: the

water cycle and how water is purified and travels to homes. In the book, these concepts are explained as the magic bus evaporates into the air, and there children shrink and travel in raindrops from a stream to a reservoir, through various water treatment areas, and into the pipes that lead to the school. The children arrive back at school through faucets when someone turns on the water in the restroom.

The listening experience

The remainder of this article describes the listening experience that was planned to facilitate listening and learning of science concepts related to the water cycle, how water is purified, and how it gets to people's homes. First we will describe the unit to give the reader a sense of the context of the listening experience. Then we will discuss the elements of the listening experience as they relate to the components of a Structured Listening Activity. Excerpts from the lesson dialogue are used to illustrate students' responses during the lesson and provide evidence that they listened and learned from the teacher and from each other.

The unit. The general topic of the unit was the earth. In this unit students studied about concepts such as the layers of the earth, oceans, mountains, the weather, and the water cycle. Tamara used various tradebooks and reference books at varying reading levels to build students' knowledge about these concepts. Sometimes she read the books orally and other times she used the pictures and diagrams from the books to enrich students' knowledge. To assess students' understanding of the concepts, they drew pictures and discussed them.

Structured Listening Activity. The focus of the listening experience was on the water cycle, how water is purified, and how it gets to people's homes. These concepts

are rather complex and could be somewhat overwhelming, and perhaps even meaningless, if not taught in an appropriate manner. *Building students' background knowledge*, one component of an SLA, is extremely important when concepts are complex and if students are expected to learn as they listen. Tamara prepared students for the content of this listening experience well before the lesson described here. She structured the unit so that students would have some knowledge about the layers of the earth, oceans, mountains, weather and the water cycle. With this background knowledge, students were prepared to learn related concepts.

Activating students' background knowledge, another component of an SLA, is also important in enabling students to learn new concepts through listening. Tamara carefully built students' background knowledge about the earth and the water cycle during earlier parts of the unit. To help students make connections with their background knowledge, she knew it was important to activate students' knowledge about the concept before she read *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks*. Tamara accomplished this by asking students to recall the steps in the water cycle. As students offered information, Tamara drew the water cycle on the chalkboard. This experience not only activated students' background knowledge about the water cycle but the drawing also provided a frame of reference for students as they listened to the story. They could relate information in the book to the different parts of the water cycle.

In addition to activating background knowledge about the content of the book, Tamara activated students' knowledge about the structure and format of the Magic School Bus books. As she introduced the waterworks book, she reminded the class of the *Magic School Bus Inside the Earth*

(Cole, 1987) which she had read earlier in the unit. Tamara compared the format of the two books and told students that she would only read the story (and not the conversation bubbles or the fact sheets). Activating students' background knowledge about the format of the book helped the class listen more effectively as she read the book.

Two other components of an SLA are *setting a purpose for listening* and *reading aloud*. Setting a purpose for listening is essential if students are expected to learn from listening. The water cycle is explained in the first part of the *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks*. To set the purpose for listening to this part of the book, Tamara asked the class to listen for information about the water cycle. She did not simply tell them the purpose for listening once, but repeated the purpose several times, in different ways, before she read. Tamara continued using components of an SLA as she read the book aloud and highlighted the illustrations to help students make the connection between the parts of the water cycle and the magic school bus' journey. When she came to the part of the book where the bus evaporated into the air, two students commented (without being prompted by the teacher) that "the bus was going through the water cycle" and "it was evaporating." It was obvious that giving students a purpose for listening helped them focus on the main points in the book and facilitated listening.

After Tamara finished reading the first part of the book about the water cycle, she reviewed the concept to make sure all students made the connection between the parts of the water cycle and the story. To review she included *questioning* and *summarizing*, two components of an SLA. She questioned students about what happened as the bus traveled through the water cycle. The questions, in turn, led students to summarize the story. To help students clarify

what they remembered about how the bus went through the water cycle, Tamara referred to the book's illustrations and to the drawing of the water cycle on the chalkboard.

The dialogue below illustrates what students remembered from listening to the book and that they achieved their purpose for listening. It also demonstrates how the teacher uses the illustrations in the book to help children verify their recollection of the school bus moving through the water cycle. The dialogue reveals that students listen to the teacher and to each other. At one point in the dialogue, one student disagrees with another about what happened in the story. The dialogue also illustrates how the teacher encourages students to consider each other's responses. She repeats their responses and uses their ideas to form new questions. Finally, the dialogue illustrates how the teacher uses questions to review the concepts from the book and uses scaffolding to help students summarize the story.

Teacher: Did you see the water cycle?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: Where do you remember that it began in the story? Let's go back to the beginning. Where did it start?

Kristen: They were riding on the magic bus.

Teacher: Okay. Someone add on to that. What happened next?

Clay: They landed on a cloud and started to fall down into the water.

Teacher: Okay, let's go there. (She turned back to the page in the book where the bus went into the air.) They're on a school bus. Clay says next they landed on a cloud.

Cory: No.

Teacher: No? What, Cory?

Cory: It (the bus) evaporated. (The illustration showed the bus moving into the air.)

Teacher: Do you all agree that they (students on the bus) are evaporating?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: OK. Do you see the sun? Do you see the steamy marks going up into the air? (She pointed to the picture that illustrated the sun played a part in evaporation.) And then...?

Clay: They are in the cloud and they fall down in the raindrops.

Teacher: They're in the cloud. Erica, what happens after that?

Erica: They're shrinking.

Teacher: What are they becoming?

Stephanie: Little.

Teacher: Little.

Stephanie: And raindrops.

Teacher: What's going to happen next in the water cycle?

Paige: They're going to go to a waterfall.

Teacher: It looks like a waterfall, doesn't it? (The illustration depicted a stream flowing down the side of the mountain.)

Teacher: Does anybody remember what they're traveling down?

Students: Mountain.

Teacher: All right. They're traveling down the mountainside. Have we completed our water circle? (Pointed to the board where she had drawn the water cycle.)

Students: Yes.

Teacher: That's the first half of the story. You did a really good job of finding the water cycle in the story.

At this point in the lesson, Tamara prepared students for the second half of the book which focused on a new topic: how water is cleaned and how it gets from lakes and rivers to people's homes. Because of the shift in emphasis, she reused three components from an SLA to facilitate listening and learning. She set a new purpose for listening by asking students to make predictions about how water gets to their houses. The predictions also served to activate students' background knowledge.

The dialogue below reflects students' predictions about how water gets from lakes and rivers to people's homes. Students' comments reveal that they listen to each other. They use each other's ideas as they make new predictions about how water gets to people's houses. The dialogue also illustrates that students refer to information they learned earlier in the unit and from their personal experiences outside school. At the end of the dialogue, the teacher uses students' remarks to direct their ideas from

how the water gets to homes to the fact that water needs to be cleaned before it gets to people's homes.

Clay: The pipe is underground and it goes to your house and it has a hole in it.

Teacher: How do you know that?

Clay: I read it in the earth book. (Refers to one of the books introduced earlier in the unit.)

Cory: There's a pipe underground that goes to the river. (Builds on Clay's comment and adds information from his background knowledge.)

Jaime: Sometimes ducks live at the river. (Adds information from personal experience and builds on Cory's comment.)

Kristen: Sometimes fish might get in the water. (Branches off of Jaime's comment and adds an idea from personal experience.)

Teacher: Does a fish ever come out in your glass of water? (Uses students' comments to direct students' thinking toward water purification.)

Students: NO! (At this point, several students suggest that something cleans the water before they drink it.)

The discussion that resulted from students' predictions about how water gets to people's homes served to activate students' background knowledge and to arouse curiosity so that students wanted to listen to the rest of the story. At the same time, the purpose for listening to the second half of the book (i.e., how water is cleaned and how it gets to homes) was introduced.

The last half of the book presents six new key concepts represented by unfamiliar vocabulary: reservoir, mixing basin, settling basin, sand and gravel filter, storage tank, and water mains. Because these concepts were unfamiliar to the students and were rather complex, Tamara felt an introduction to the concepts would help students understand more of what they heard. To do this, she decided to use a component of the SLA that she had included before: *build and activate students' background knowledge*. Tamara used a discussion that included ideas from students' background knowledge, picture cards with enlarged illustrations

duplicated from the book, and mini-demonstrations and activities to build and activate background knowledge. For example, the class participated in an activity based on students' existing knowledge of the word *settle* to suggest what happens in a settling basin. Tamara referred students to what they knew about the word *settle* when she asked them to settle down in the classroom. To illustrate, the students stood up, moved around, and talked the way they do before she asks them to settle down. When she said "settle down" they sat down quietly. Then the class discussed what happened when they settled down and what they thought would happen in the *settling basin*. (Tamara chose to introduce the key concepts and build background knowledge before she continued reading the book because of the students' lack of familiarity with the concepts and their complexity. However, the introduction of the concepts could have been done as she read a story.)

Before reading the rest of the book, Tamara gave students a *purpose to listen* (an SLA component), which made use of the picture cards of the key concepts. (Again, she used a component of the SLA, *pictorial clues*, to enhance students' listening and learning.) She directed the class to listen to find out what happened to the water in each of the places represented in the pictures (e.g., *reservoir*, *mixing basin*). Tamara gave the cards to students and asked them to raise the cards (and their hands if they did not have a card) when they heard one of the new words illustrated on the cards. Students listened actively as Tamara read the last half of the book because their curiosity was aroused when they made predictions, they had a purpose for listening, and they had to respond actively as they heard the words in the story.

After Tamara finished reading the book, she returned to the questioning component of the SLA. She asked questions to determine if students understood each of the new concepts introduced in the second half of the book. Students described each concept and used the picture cards for clues. Below are excerpts from the lesson that illustrate children's understanding of the concepts. Although it may appear that students merely recall what happens in the various places where water is cleaned, we believe that the complexity of the concepts did not lend themselves to rote learning. Evidence from the dialogue reveals that students made their own links with and used their own words to explain the concepts. The dialogue also provides evidence that students listened during the introduction of the key concepts because they included answers to Tamara's questions that were not mentioned in the book.

Teacher: Can you show me how the water gets to our houses? What do you know about a reservoir?

Cory: It's a deep hole. It's manmade. [The idea that a reservoir is a deep hole was introduced in the book; the idea that it is manmade was introduced by Tamara and not by the book. The student connected what he learned from listening to the book and from Tamara's introduction.]

Teacher: What do you know about the mixing basin?

Paige: It has those little white balls — alum. (Alum was mentioned briefly in the book.)

Teacher: What is the job of alum? (An idea discussed in the book.)

Kristen: The alum drops little balls... it mixes.

(To provide scaffolding so students could relate more ideas to the word *alum*, Tamara reminded students of the demonstration she used to illustrate what happens in a mixing basin.)

Kellan: It (alum) collects all the dirt. [The book discussed the fact that dirt sticks to alum and forms globs. Kellan used his own words to describe alum's job in the mixing basin.]

Teacher: What happens in the settling basin? Remember what (the activity) we did in class. (Refers to the "settling down" activity described above.)

Kristen: It's where alum goes to the bottom...

Teacher: What is a sand and gravel filter?

Allison: Where all the sand and gravel stay and the water goes.
[In other words, the water flows through the sand and gravel filter. This concept was discussed in the book and demonstrated during the background building component of the listening experience. Allison uses her own words to explain the concept.]

Teacher: What is a storage tank?

Mikey: It keeps the water inside.

Teacher: Until?

Students: Someone uses it.

Teacher: What do you know about water mains?

Clay: They go up in buildings and come out in faucets.

At this point in the lesson, it was time for the students to demonstrate what they learned from listening to the last half of the book. Could students remember how water gets to their homes, their purpose for listening? Tamara asked students to put the picture cards in sequence to summarize the second half of the book. As they decided what came first, second and third, students holding the appropriate picture cards moved to the front of the class. First students summarized by explaining that water was in the reservoir and then went to the mixing basin. Then they hypothesized that either the sand and gravel filter or the settling basin was the next place that water traveled. However, they were not sure whether the water went to the filter or the basin first. Cody suggested that the sand and gravel filter could not come before the settling basin. Building upon this suggestion, Tamara led the children to discover the solution to their problem by asking questions, pointing out illustrations in the book, and referring to the demonstrations she used during the background building component of the lesson. The following dialogue represents the discussion that ensued as children solved their problem.

Teacher: Why can't the sand and gravel filter go before the settling basin? [She pointed to the picture card to provide students with clues to help them solve the problem they confronted.]

Cody: There's no alum in the sand and gravel picture.

Jaime: It [water] goes through there (pipe) and then...

[Tamara turned to the picture of the mixing basin in the book and suggested that they think back to the mixing basin and consider what happened there. Some students referred to the "globs" in the mixing basin.]

Cassie: It (the water) would be dirty. It (the globs of dirt and alum) would have to settle.

Dan: One (picture card) has a pipe at the bottom and the other has a pipe at the top.

Teacher: What would go out at the top?

Students: Clean water.

The students concluded from the discussion and from the clues in the illustrations that the cleaner water would be in the sand and gravel filter. Therefore, they decided that the water went to the settling basin first and then went through the filter. (Without a clear understanding of the concepts illustrated in the pictures, the students would have been less likely to have solved this problem.) Students agreed about the sequence of the next two picture cards, the storage tank and water mains. Finally, students confirmed the sequence of the cards by matching them with the illustration on the last page of the book that showed the places water is cleaned and how it travels to homes. Students were successful with the sequencing activity because the lesson was carefully planned to facilitate listening and learning.

Extending and evaluating a listening experience

Although Tamara had finished reading the book and students had summarized it, that was not the end of students' experience with the key concepts from this book. Because research (McKeown, Beck, Omanson and Pople, 1985) has shown that students need multiple and varied encounters with concepts for learning to occur and because listening comprehension is enhanced when active involvement follows listening (Pinnell and Jaggar, 1991), Tamara provided situations so students would continue using the concepts in the *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks* for

several weeks. She put numbers (indicating sequence) on the back of the picture cards and placed them in a learning center. She told students the cards and a classroom set of the book would be in the center, and they could put the cards in sequence using the book to help them, when necessary. She also suggested that they could use the cards to write their own stories about how water is cleaned and travels to people's homes.

During the next three week period, students went to the learning center and manipulated the picture cards. A number of self-initiated activities ensued. Students put the cards in order and checked their work by using the numbers on the cards and/or by reading the book. They also put the cards in order and drew their own renditions of the water purification system. Some students labeled their drawings with the vocabulary they learned from listening to the story. They read and reread the book individually and to each other. In one instance, two students compared the *Magic School Bus Inside the Earth* (used earlier in the unit) and the *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks*. They searched for comparisons and discussed their findings.

During the second week of this same period, Tamara planned a drawing activity to evaluate students' understanding of the concepts they learned from listening to the story and participating in the extension activities. First she divided the chalkboard into seven sections. Students discussed how water gets to homes beginning with the water cycle without referring to the book or the picture cards. As they named and discussed the seven key concepts from the book, Tamara labeled each section of the board with one concept. Students volunteered to be experts for the concept they understood best and drew a picture illustrating that concept. Each group of experts drew their rough drafts

of the concepts on the chalkboard. When they were satisfied with their drawings, they drew a picture that represented their concept on one section of a large piece of paper and labeled the concept. When all the drawings were complete, the class had constructed a mural that summarized what they knew about the water cycle, the water purification system, and how water gets to homes. The class mural illustrated what students learned from the experiences that were based primarily on listening to the *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks*. Tamara was able to evaluate students' understanding of the concepts from their drawings.

Summary and recommendations

This article describes a listening experience that was designed specifically to facilitate listening by integrating it within the context of a science lesson. The teacher planned the experience so that the children were not simply encouraged to listen. Rather, students were provided with a situation that enabled them to listen effectively.

The teacher used components of the Structured Listening Activity to enable students to listen and learn. The teacher developed a unit, sequenced so that previous knowledge was used to build new understandings. These understandings became background knowledge for the concepts students would learn later in the unit. Tradebooks, reference books, diagrams and pictures were used to build background knowledge. The teacher activated students' background knowledge about key concepts in the *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks* by using a drawing that illustrated the parts of the water cycle and by asking students to make predictions before she read to them. Students' background knowledge was also activated by the teacher's questions. The questions served as scaffolding to help

students relate their knowledge to concepts in the book. The teacher also used the illustrations in the book as clues to enhance students' understanding of the difficult concepts presented in the book. Questions were used to help students review and summarize what they learned. Finally, the teacher provided opportunities for students to become actively involved with the concepts after the listening experience was completed so that listening comprehension would be enhanced.

From this illustration, it is easy to see that Tamara used many different ways to enable students to listen effectively and, consequently, learn. It is unfortunate that listening is typically thought of as the responsibility of the listener. We suggest that if students do not listen effectively, teachers need to reevaluate the experiences they provide for students in which listening is an essential component. The questions listed below will help teachers plan lessons in which listening is of prime importance.

Do students have necessary information (background knowledge, purpose for listening) that will enable them to learn new concepts that are presented orally?

What kinds of learning experiences can I provide to help build students' background knowledge?

How can I sequence those experiences so that students can use their new knowledge as they listen?

What strategies would be effective for activating students' background knowledge?

What kinds of questions would be appropriate to facilitate listening?

When would be the best time to ask questions?

What clues are available in a book (e.g., illustrations, context clues) to help students learn as they listen?

What kinds of activities could be used to summarize what students learn from listening?

What kinds of activities can I use to get students actively involved with concepts after listening is completed?

In the listening experience described in this article, listening was facilitated because science content was presented in an interesting story, students' background knowledge was activated, pictures were used, purposes were set, predictions were made, and active involvement (discussing, summarizing, writing, drawing) was allowed and encouraged. In effect, listening was an integral part of the entire learning experience. If any of the components of the experience had been omitted, listening and learning would have been less effective. Because we believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to provide situations in which listening is facilitated, we recommend that teachers use components of a Structured Listening Activity to plan experiences that will promote listening and learning. If teachers expect students to listen effectively, they can not merely implore students to listen but must provide conditions that *enable* students to listen.

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Using Drama In The Classroom

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Drama is a potentially powerful tool for connecting students with learning and content. We know that learning is an active, constructive process of coming to know. And through our classroom involvement with students, we have found that drama can provide a process for learning by living through or experiencing an event. Drama by its very nature involves students in social contexts where they are required to think, talk, manipulate concrete materials, and share viewpoints in order to arrive at decisions (Siks, 1983). Thus, through drama, students explore both factual knowledge and content concepts while “trying on” social experiences. Heathcote (cited in Johnson and O’Neill, 1984) believes that drama confronts students with situations that may change them because of the issues and challenges they must face in the dramatic playing.

The classroom teacher must address the challenge of creating an instructional environment that bridges what students know with what they want to know (Cooter and Chilcoat, 1990). Beane (1992) states that genuine learning involves an interaction between the learner, the environment, and the content; this interaction integrates what we experience into our system of meanings. Drama can initiate this interaction. It empowers students to learn new knowledge and also, as Bolton (1984) has noted, enables them to understand more deeply what they already know. Dramatic

episodes actively engage students and contribute to ownership of the educational process (Atwell, 1987).

Thus, drama is action in the present. This action prevents academic content from appearing lifeless, abstract and beyond understanding. Piaget (as cited in Wadsworth, 1979) points out that physical activity can lay the groundwork for developing abstract mental concepts. Thus, drama provides students with a means of living through content in a way that deepens their understanding and appreciation of the subject. Although teachers may recognize the power of learning through drama for students, dramatization is still a relatively rare event in most classrooms (Collins, 1992). Our goal in this article is to present two approaches for integrating drama into the classroom curriculum.

Linear drama approach

One way to initiate drama in content studies is through a linear approach (Ward, 1957). The teacher initiating drama into the classroom for the first time may prefer this approach. With this structure, drama activities are primarily planned and outlined by the teacher before involving the students in the dramatic playing. This tends to give the teacher great control while allowing the students creative input. The linear drama session resembles a recipe, with a series of steps that produce a selected learning outcome. The stages include planning, playing, evaluating and, optionally, replaying.

Planning stage. The first stage begins with selecting a theme or concept for students to explore through drama. This theme may reflect content under study, as well as issues or conflicts presented in content readings, or it may build on students' interests. Poems, short stories, selected

textual passages, or original improvisations drawn from content are suitable materials. The selected materials build on the theme and provide opportunities to extend learning.

The teacher outlines a strategy for engaging the students with the drama materials. A good beginning point for developing a linear session is to focus on the physical characterization of the theme or concept (Siks, 1983). In the linear drama session example below, the unifying theme is *insects*, which we explore through creative movement and poetry (see Figure 1). Motivating and focusing the students for dramatic activities is essential. The warm-up moves students through physical activities that loosen the body, and uses visual imagery activities to encourage mental concentration. Students' performance skills including voice, sensory awareness, movement, memory and characterization are nurtured. In our example, the warm-up uses guided imagery to help students physically create an insect.

The teacher's role during a linear drama session is usually as narrator or side-coach. In this role, the teacher is able to orchestrate the action by giving instructions and cueing students as needed. The teacher may also narrate the text that is part of the dramatic activity and help students stay focused on their roles.

Playing stage. The teacher begins this stage by sharing the material to be dramatized with the students. Methods for sharing include reading, telling or choral reading. For original improvisations, descriptive instructions focus on character, setting and action development. After sharing the material, the teacher leads students through a trying-on of the characters to acquaint them with the roles to be dramatized. The trying-on is structured so that students briefly encounter life as the character, enabling them to find

the elements of voice and body that work in portraying the character. In our example, students explore their space as a cricket.

After the trying-on period, the selected dramatic material is brought to life as the students develop the theme through their dramatic actions. This can be done in a number of ways. Small groups might act out a particular section of the material or small groups might dramatize the entire piece. Or the group as a whole could enact parts or the entire piece. The playing also may be structured as duet dramatizations. In our cricket example, students are divided into small groups where they develop a dramatic enactment of a stanza of the verse which the small groups then perform sequentially as part of the whole group dramatization.

Evaluation stage. Involving students in assessing the session encourages reflective analysis of their learning experience. The content of the dramatic session guides the evaluation which may involve discussing topics related to concepts of language arts, science or social studies. During this reflective evaluation, students discuss their personal reaction, the content and theme, and how they can extend the experience or skills to other situations often including real-world circumstances.

Replay stage. A linear session may employ a replay stage following the evaluation stage. This permits further development of the initial dramatization by incorporating observations from the evaluation into further dramatizations. This stage can be a second enactment of the first dramatization or a new drama using other materials.

Holistic drama approach

In contrast, the basic holistic method has students drop into a role at the "gut level" (Wagner, 1976), without

Figure 1
Example of a Linear Drama Session

- I. **Objectives** To construct insect characters through physical movement; to foster group cooperation and communication through creative dramatization.
- II. **Planning**

Warm-up. Students listen to appropriate music while the teacher uses guided imagery to assist the students in visualizing an insect character of their choosing. This includes verbally walking the students through the transformation from a person to an insect.

Teacher dialogue. "In your own space with your eyes closed, think about how your body can become the body of your insect. What can you do with your arms? Show me. Now, show me what your legs would look like. Don't forget that your face is a part of your physical character. Now, as the music continues to play, move around the room and explore it as the insect would." The students move through the space portraying their insects.
- III. **Playing**

Sharing of the material. The teacher reads the poem, "House Crickets" (Fleischman, 1988).

Trying-on. The teacher uses guided imagery to assist the students in picturing a cricket in their minds. In their own space, students create a statue of a cricket. When the teacher gives a signal (hand clap), the cricket statues come to life and move about the playing area. After this, the teacher signals the students to add sound effects to their crickets.

Dramatization. Students are placed in groups of about five. Each small group of students is given a section of the poem, "House Crickets" (Fleischman, 1988) to develop for a large-group presentation. The working groups are given ample time to prepare. Each group then presents their portion of the poem in sequential order which constitutes the large-group playing. The small group's enactment may be done in several ways: one person reading, two voices reading, choral reading, or dueling voices as group members perform their stanza dramatization.
- IV. **Evaluation** After the dramatization, the teacher and students discuss the experience. This discussion focuses on interpretations and characterizations that were effective as well as drama skills that were used in developing the dramatizations.
- V. **Replaying and evaluation**

The same groupings of students may be given a copy of the poem, "Fireflies" (Fleischman, 1988), for developing a second group dramatization. After the groups work through how they will handle verse reading, characterization, and physical interpretations, they share their dramatization with the class. The group discusses the interpretations, characterizations, and other drama elements including sound, movement, sense awareness, concentration, and group cooperation, which may vary considerably.

instruction in dramatic skills. Students are encouraged to live the life invented through the drama. This improvisational framework creates an element of surprise that can lead to new understanding of the concept being dramatized. In a holistic session, students assume the attitudes of a character, display external actions that symbolize internal meaning and develop an understanding of the themes, values and issues surrounding the material enacted (Wright and Herring, 1987). *Teacher in role* is a key element in holistic drama. The teacher takes on a role as a character within the improvised drama which helps focus the students' attention while challenging feelings of apathy or uncertainty. This unites students in problem solving and propels them into action (O'Neill, 1991).

The *tableau* or frozen picture is another effective strategy in holistic drama. By stopping the action, students gain an opportunity to reflect on what has happened in the dramatization and plan for what may occur next. During the tableau, the teacher supplies students with comments or questions to develop their characters, examine their characters' emotional states and propel them into the next episode or scene.

Planning a holistic drama session begins with identification of a theme that is selected jointly by the teacher and students. The holistic episode might be to examine some aspect of the curriculum being studied. An example is to explore the depths of the oceans as a part of a science unit. Once the theme is identified, the teacher studies the topic and prepares dramatic structures that provide focused learning episodes including development of the role the teacher will play during the improvised drama.

Figure 2
Holistic Drama Structure

- I. *Objectives* To create an historical event through dramatization; to develop realistic 3-dimensional characters and "walk in their shoes."

- II. *Structure I* **Tableau.** Students sit with their eyes closed, and the teacher explains that they are crew members on the voyage of Columbus in 1492. The teacher guides them in visualizing the crew member they have chosen to portray. The guided imagery could include known historical facts, suggestions for character development, and establishment of the setting that begins the dramatization.
Playing. Students board the "ship" (designated playing area) with their gear. Columbus, the teacher in role, welcomes them aboard, gives them directions for storing their gear and encourages them to become acquainted with the different areas of the ship. Then Columbus answers their questions about the voyage ahead. The action of the characters is spontaneous and develops as the structure is played.

- III. *Structure II* **Tableau.** After the question and answer scene is played out completely, the teacher freezes the action and steps out of role. In this tableau, the teacher reports on the first days of a successful voyage — beautiful weather, bountiful supplies, and smooth sailing ahead.
Playing. Crew members are celebrating at a banquet in honor of Christopher Columbus. Crew members salute Columbus, acknowledging him as a great admiral. These unrehearsed acknowledgements may be short speeches, cheers, salutatory comments, or whatever evolves as the scene is played.

- IV. *Structure III* **Tableau.** The teacher propels the students into creating the mood of an unhappy crew ready for mutiny. Information used to create this mood includes the description of a longer journey than anticipated, announcement of rationed supplies, and recalling of bad weather that damaged one of the ships. Students have time to reflect on this information before action resumes.
Playing. Crew members begin the scene boisterously demanding an audience with Columbus. They shout and chant their demands until Columbus appears and a confrontation occurs between the crew members and Columbus. This scene continues until Columbus refuses to answer and leaves the main deck.

- V. *Structure IV* **Tableau.** The teacher suggests the crew has come to a state of despair and doom culminating in fears that death at sea is imminent.
Playing. Disheartened crew members are bemoaning their doom. They speak of their homeland, families, and curse their unfulfilled dreams of wealth and fame. The dramatization is open to allow each student to respond as their character might in these circumstances. As the action evolves, land is sighted by Columbus who calls to his crew. An impromptu celebration unfolds.

In our holistic drama example, the theme is the voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492. We begin by studying the man and his time using an adolescent literature thematic text set that includes *Christopher Columbus* (Haskins, 1990) and *The Story of Christopher Columbus* (Osborne, 1987). Other resource materials include *Rethinking Columbus* (Bigelow, Miner and Peterson, 1992) and *Foreigners: A Play of Christoforo Colombo* (Schlitz, 1991). The literature is reviewed by the teacher and passages are chosen that will generate the most playable dramatic action. These become dramatic structures that will be developed by the students and teacher. Opportunities to develop an original character and experience varying emotional states associated with the 1492 voyage are desirable features in selecting passages. Examples of playable passages include boarding the ship and meeting Christopher Columbus, celebrating after several days of smooth sailing, confronting Columbus after many grueling weeks at sea, and sighting of land. Before playing Structure One (see Figure 2), the tableau technique is used to get the students into role. Stopping the action allows students to move from one structure to the next and allows the teacher to step out of the dramatic role and coach the students. For example, during the tableau between Structures Two and Three (see Figure 2) the teacher enhances the dramatic action by describing the bad weather experienced, the damaged ship, and rationed supplies. In our example, the teacher orchestrates dramatization of the structures in the role of Christopher Columbus.

Conclusion

Both linear and holistic drama can enrich and sustain students' understanding — not only as they develop their own dramatic interpretations, but also as they contemplate the work involved in dramatization. Providing opportunities

for learners to engage in dramatic activities tends to improve students' attitudes toward learning. This improvement stems from the opportunity to make unique, individual contributions to their learning through drama. The holistic and linear formats differ in approach. The former offers a flexible framework while the latter provides a step-by-step sequence. Clearly, both offer teachers a practical technique to implement an active approach that engages students as they seek to master content.

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What Teachers Have Been Telling Us About Literacy Portfolios

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An increasing number of educators have begun to use portfolios to chronicle the literacy development of students within their classrooms. Such alternative assessment may more closely reflect current research in the field of reading because it serves as a tool for both students and teachers to document and monitor learning over time (Bintz and Harste, 1991). Teachers, instead of developing test wiseness for standardized tests, use portfolios to gather data that mirrors the reading/writing curriculum and chronicles individual student development (Johns and VanLeirsburg, 1991b; Willis, 1992). Though unanimous agreement as to what data should comprise a portfolio does not exist, a consistent theme is apparent in the definitions of a literacy portfolio: a portfolio is an alternate approach to assessment using a collection of information about performance to describe growth in literacy learning (van Kraayenoord and Paris, 1992). As a collection of data reflecting literacy growth, portfolios must represent shared communication between teacher and student about individual goals and progress. Documentation of growth in reading and writing ability serve as evidence and information that is both useful and specific when conferencing with parents, reporting student progress, and assessing curriculum effectiveness.

Portfolios as an alternate form of assessment may be applied at the classroom, school or district level with varying degrees of interest and investment. Four years ago, Crow Island School in Winnetka began a project which grew out of dissatisfaction and frustration with traditional, standardized tests. The Winnetka Illinois Public Schools augmented their reporting with student portfolios and found a powerful and positive tool expressing the fundamental values of the school and complex issues of children and their learning (Hiebert, 1992). Further, the Winnetka project reflects a priority on the developmental aspects of learning for the individual child and a high regard for teachers as professionals. Using portfolios as an alternate form of assessment requires the empowerment of classroom teachers to evaluate individual student growth and to communicate this valuable information to parents and school personnel. Under such circumstances, the opinions of teachers as professionals are essential. Do teachers believe literacy portfolios should be used to evaluate individual student progress? How widespread is the actual use of portfolios? What practical problems do teachers report with the use of portfolios? Specifically, which pieces of documentation do many teachers choose to include in literacy portfolios? The above questions guided the following investigation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, the information gained served to extend two previous studies by Johns and VanLeirsburg (1991a; 1991c) surveying educators about their use of and reaction to classroom literacy portfolios. Second, additional information was collected from educators regarding their perceptions about the use of portfolios to assess literacy development. The importance of portfolios in literacy assessment has grown in recent years. Little research, however, has been accomplished

relative to the reactions professionals may have toward using literacy portfolios as assessment devices.

Method

Subjects. A total of 140 subjects enrolled in a week-long literacy workshop sponsored by a midwestern reading council participated in this study: 68 subjects (49 percent of the total group) reported experience with the actual use of literacy portfolios and 72 subjects (52 percent of the total group) had no previous experience with portfolios. Nearly half of the subjects reported the decision to use portfolios was theirs alone and the remaining half were required by their school and district to use literacy portfolios. Information about portfolios was not shared with this group of educators prior to the administration of the questionnaire.

The workshop participants came from various school districts in northern Illinois. Nearly 60 percent of the group were elementary school teachers. Of these elementary teachers, 48 (or 59 percent of this group) had previous portfolio experience and 34 (or 42 percent of this group) reported no experience with portfolios. Almost 14 percent of the workshop participants taught in grades 7 through 12. Only four secondary teachers, or 21 percent of this group reported experience with portfolios. About 11 percent of the workshop participants were reading teachers; half of the reading teachers had experience with portfolios and half had no previous portfolio experience. The remainder of the total group of subjects, about 16 percent, was composed of administrators and ESL teachers. Approximately one-third of this group reported experience with portfolios.

The total group of subjects were fairly evenly divided within their range of teaching experience: one quarter of the subjects had less than 5 years, one quarter had 6 to 10

years, one quarter had 11 to 15 years, and one quarter had 16 or more years of experience. Over half of the subjects reported completion of a master's degree or above. About 5 percent had achieved a K-12 reading specialist certificate. The remainder of the subjects, about 40 percent, had completed a bachelor's degree. Evidence of coursework in reading was reported by respondents participating in the literacy workshop. About one-third had completed 4 to 12 hours in reading and one-third had 13 to 22 hours. Nearly 15 percent had completed 22 to 30 hours in reading courses and nearly 11 percent reported more than 30 hours. Only about 6 percent of the respondents had completed 3 hours or less in reading coursework.

Questionnaire. The 1992 questionnaire administered to workshop participants was modified from both the 1990 and 1991 studies (Johns and VanLeirsburg, 1991a; 1991c). Questions dealing with the rationale and conceptual base for portfolios were deleted. Over 90 percent of both the 1990 and 1991 respondents indicated agreement with four basic premises of portfolio use in the classroom: that they are based on authenticity, are an on-going process, evidence multidimensional collection of artifacts, and provide collaboration between teachers and students (Valencia, 1990). Questions regarding artifacts that should be included in a literacy portfolio were also excluded. Instead, an open-ended question was directed to the subjects who reported experience with literacy portfolios. The experienced subjects were requested to list the sources they actually included in their portfolios.

The revised questionnaire included a new section of questions relating specifically to portfolio use in the assessment of literacy. The total number of items on the revised survey was 40, including the open-ended question

requesting subjects with experience to list specific sources of inclusion for literacy portfolios.

Findings

Assessment. The 140 subjects were asked to rate their reactions toward the use of portfolios to assess the literacy development of students within a classroom on a five-point scale ranging from *always*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, *never*, to *uncertain*. Over 90 percent of the respondents believed that portfolios should be used to assess literacy for students in primary grades, for students in intermediate grades, and for students in middle school. Nearly equal percentages of subjects with experience and subjects without experience answered *always*, or *sometimes* to these questions. Over 80 percent of the respondents believed that portfolios should be used to assess literacy for high school students; 6 percent answered *seldom* or *never* and 10 percent were *uncertain*.

About 96 percent of the respondents thought that portfolios should *always* or *sometimes* be used to assess students' writing. Nearly 75 percent agreed that portfolios should be used to assess students' spelling with slightly greater percentages reported from the group which had experience with portfolios. Just over 87 percent of the subjects thought that students' reading should be assessed with literacy portfolios. Again, slightly higher percentages were reported by those subjects who had portfolio experience. Over 90 percent of the respondents believed that portfolios should be used to assess students for language arts in general with slightly higher percentages from the group experienced in portfolio use.

Similar data were obtained for both the subjects with and without portfolio experience relating to the use of

portfolios in assigning grades. Slightly over 15 percent of the respondents believed that portfolios should always be used as a basis for grades, but about 60 percent reported that portfolios should sometimes be used as a basis for grades. Over 17 percent thought they should seldom or never be used as a basis for grades and about 6 percent were uncertain. Both the experienced and non-experienced groups reported similar opinions about the use of portfolios along with tests. About 67 percent of the group thought portfolios should be used in conjunction with standardized tests and 80 percent felt that they should be used in conjunction with classroom tests. Over 90 percent of respondents felt that literacy portfolios should be used to help with parent conferences, to collect work samples to pass on to next year's teacher, and to aid in instructional decision making. Surprisingly, over 85 percent of those answering the questionnaire believed that literacy portfolios should be used both to aid in placement for special services such as Chapter 1, and to aid in placement for alternative educational services such as special education services. Only 8 percent of the group responded uncertain to these two issues. Table 1 summarizes the data relative to portfolio use for assessment.

Practical problems. The second major area surveyed related to practical problems with the use of portfolios. Professionals were asked to rank a list of potential problems on a five-point scale ranging from *a very serious concern* to *no concern*. The greatest concern, reported by over 70 percent of the total group, was using portfolios as the sole means for student evaluation. Additionally, about half of the total group expressed very serious or serious concern with planning portfolios, developing and completing checklists used in portfolios and replacing standardized reading or achievement tests with portfolios.

Table 1
Opinions of Professionals: Portfolios for Assessment

Portfolios for Assessment	Percent of Responses					OM
	AL	SO	SE	NE	UN	
for students in K-3						
portfolio (N=68)	54	41	0	2	3	
non-portfolio (N=72)	43	46	3	0	8	
for students in 4-6						
portfolio	43	56	0	0	2	
non-portfolio	38	56	0	0	7	
for students in middle school						
portfolio	38	59	0	0	3	
non-portfolio	28	60	4	0	7	1
for students in high school						
portfolio	32	57	2	2	6	2
non-portfolio	31	44	8	1	14	1
for students' writing						
portfolio	63	32	3	0	0	2
non-portfolio	60	38	0	0	3	
for students' spelling						
portfolio	27	50	13	4	6	
non-portfolio	18	49	15	4	13	1
for students' reading						
portfolio	31	63	4	0	2	
non-portfolio	26	54	7	0	11	1
for language arts						
portfolio	43	54	0	0	3	
non-portfolio	36	51	4	1	7	1
as a basis for grades						
portfolio	18	69	4	7	2	
non-portfolio	13	54	10	13	11	
with standardized tests						
portfolio	36	37	7	12	9	
non-portfolio	26	38	11	10	14	1
with classroom tests						
portfolio	49	37	6	6	3	
non-portfolio	40	36	8	3	11	1
with parent conferences						
portfolio	78	21	0	0	2	
non-portfolio	76	21	0	0	3	
to collect work samples						
portfolio	66	28	2	2	3	
non-portfolio	67	29	1	1	1	
in instructional decision making						
portfolio	60	37	3	0	0	
non-portfolio	56	36	3	0	6	
in placement for special services						
portfolio	53	38	3	2	4	
non-portfolio	43	39	6	0	11	1
in placement for alternative education						
portfolio	52	37	3	3	6	
non-portfolio	42	40	7	1	10	

Percentages may total 99 to 101 due to rounding.

AL=Always NE=Never SE=Seldom SO=Sometimes UN=Uncertain OM=Omitted response

Little or no concern was recorded by 40 to 50 percent of the group for these possible practical problems: where to keep portfolios, talking with students about portfolio contents, using portfolios in parent-teacher conferences, using portfolios as one means to evaluate student progress, and costs associated with portfolios. It is important to note that lack of concern about these potential problems was reported by both experienced and non-experienced groups.

Table 2 organizes the responses of both groups, those with portfolio experience and those who responded that they had no experience using portfolios.

Items included in portfolios. Those respondents actually using portfolios, about 49 percent of the total group, were asked to write down items specifically included in their classroom portfolios. Only two-thirds of those involved with portfolios made a list of items for inclusion. A wide variety of artifacts were listed. Table 3 lists the most frequent choices for inclusion in literacy portfolios by workshop respondents who actually use portfolios.

In addition to listing writing samples, those who had experience with portfolios listed other types of writing: process writing, literacy critiques, structured essays, original poetry, and narrative/expository pieces. Along with informal evaluations and observations, information for next year's teacher, goals, running records and reading checklists were listed as included in portfolios. Other tests that were included in portfolios besides the informal reading inventory and standardized tests were classroom tests, skills tests and strategy assessments. Specific student assignments, as well as the broader term *work samples* were also listed. Some of the more narrowly defined work included retellings, book reports and semantic maps.

Table 2
Possible Practical Problems With Portfolios

Possible Practical Problems	VS	SC	Percent of Responses		NC	O
			S	VL		
planning portfolios						
portfolio (N=68)	18	37	35	6	4	
non-portfolio (N=72)	21	33	38	7	1	
organizing portfolios						
portfolio	16	27	44	10	3	
non-portfolio	18	26	43	11	1	
managing the contents						
portfolio	16	32	38	9	4	
non-portfolio	24	32	32	11	1	
developing checklists						
portfolio	12	38	32	16	2	
non-portfolio	8	42	40	6	4	
where to keep portfolios						
portfolio	10	3	38	38	10	
non-portfolio	13	15	29	28	15	
providing access to students						
portfolio	10	15	38	27	10	
non-portfolio	10	24	36	25	6	
discussing contents with students						
portfolio	24	18	19	25	15	
non-portfolio	13	13	31	29	15	
preparing notes/checklists						
portfolio	18	34	29	13	6	
non-portfolio	8	32	46	10	4	
school-wide						
portfolio	10	29	31	15	15	
non-portfolio	17	22	29	21	10	1
entire school system use						
portfolio	18	21	29	19	13	
non-portfolio	14	26	28	21	10	1
in parent-teacher conferences						
portfolio	15	13	13	35	22	2
non-portfolio	10	10	26	35	20	
as sole means for evaluation						
portfolio	41	25	28	3	3	
non-portfolio	42	36	17	4	1	
as one means of evaluation						
portfolio	16	9	12	35	28	
non-portfolio	6	13	29	29	24	
portfolios replace standardized tests						
portfolio	21	32	31	7	9	
non-portfolio	24	25	29	18	4	
costs associated with portfolios						
portfolio	9	7	31	32	21	
non-portfolio	8	18	38	18	18	

Percentages may total 99 to 101 due to rounding.

VS=Very serious concern, S=Some concern, NC=Not certain, SC=Serious concern, VL=Very little concern, O=Omitted response

Discussion and conclusions

Our current (1992) survey shows a growing use of portfolios to assess literacy development. Nearly half of the professionals surveyed at the workshop reported that they actually use portfolios in their classrooms. In our 1991 study, only a quarter of the group could make that same claim. This information was not available for the 1990 study.

Specific questions relating to the use of portfolios in assessment were incorporated into the current study. Results show that professionals, both with or without portfolio experience, agree overwhelmingly that portfolios should be used for instructional decision making across grade levels for language arts. However, around 20 percent of the respondents would seldom or never use portfolios in conjunction with standardized tests or as a basis for grades.

Practical problems related to the use of portfolios appear to be diminishing as more professionals put them into actual classroom use. Planning and managing the contents of portfolios are still major problems with nearly half of the respondents in each of the three studies. Our 1992 survey resulted in a very major concern: using portfolios as a sole means for evaluation. Over 70 percent of the current group identified that assessment issue as a serious or very serious concern. Less than half of the respondents in our previous survey shared that reaction. Of diminishing concern over the past three years are cost, talking with students about contents, and using portfolios in parent-teacher conferences. Artifacts for inclusion in portfolios show a common trend across all three studies from 1990 to 1992. By far the most common choice was student writing samples. Informal observations and evaluations done by the teacher, a list of books read by the student, work samples, and informal

reading inventories also continued across the three studies to rank as main choices for inclusion.

Table 3
Items Included In Literacy Portfolios

<u>Item</u>	<u>Times Listed</u> (N=46)
writing samples	30
informal observations/evaluations	13
list of books read	8
invented spelling checklist	8
audio tapes	7
interest/attitude survey	7
journal writing	7
work samples	6
end of unit reading tests	6
informal reading inventory	5
standardized tests	5

However, in our most recent survey, professionals do not rank student input to the portfolio as an important item. Less than 5 percent of those who were experienced with portfolios listed student self evaluations for inclusion. In both previous studies, student self-evaluations were chosen for inclusion by over 70 percent of professionals surveyed. The difference in the data could, in part, be explained by our format. In the previous studies, respondents reacted to a formulated list of possible items to include in portfolios. In the 1992 survey, respondents were asked instead to list items they actually included in literacy portfolios. The survey question was an open-ended one. That particular question type may have been more difficult and time-consuming for the respondents.

In summary, a growing number of professionals are actually using portfolios. The educators we surveyed agreed that portfolios should be used for assessment purposes in the language arts, including reading and writing,

from elementary through high school. They also believed that the portfolios should be used to provide information to help place individual students in special programs. The professionals surveyed responded that managing and planning may be potential practical problems, a trend which has increased over three years of our survey. The most frequently chosen item for inclusion in literacy portfolios has been writing samples of students, followed by informal observations and a list of books read.

Professionals are becoming more aware of and express positive opinions toward the use of portfolios. Perhaps continuous evaluation that is linked to instruction presents an appealing choice, one that is logical and effective for the improvement of instruction. Wolf, LeMahiue, and Eresh (1992) explain the national push to improve schools and instruction, *America 2000*, as setting high standards and using new and more probing assessments to hold districts, teachers, and students accountable. The many projects involved in making educational change have two things in common: to articulate clear, high standards for what students should know and a delivery system common to all states allowing all students to have a fair chance of achieving these standards. The suggestion that assessment be increasingly performance-based in order to affect student or system performance has accompanied the plan, urging that standards and assessment come together in a voluntary national system.

The challenges of such sweeping reform are enormous and may not be ideal or logical. Yet, the mention of performance-based assessment, like the literacy portfolio, is encouraging. Many educators and scholars (e.g., Wolf et al., 1992) encourage new assessments that will allow us to ensure that a wide range of students use their minds well,

explaining that "the design and implementation of alternative modes of assessment will entail nothing less than a wholesale transition from what we call a testing culture to an assessment culture" (Hiebert, 1992).

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Alternate Streams in Education: Instructional Flow in the Classrooms of Non-Influential and Influential Teachers

"The instructional flow in the classrooms of non-influential teachers may be described as being like a straight, yet shallow, river, whose waters are held close to a precharted course, unable to veer from the laborious goal of reaching the ocean, or as a river whose banks wind toward the sea but whose rocky bed causes the waters to splash aimlessly in all directions, easily losing sight of its elusive goal of also reaching the sea."

By contrast the instructional flow in classrooms of the influential teachers is similar to a deep full river meandering to the sea following a clear course. While bubbling waters from entering streams may gurgle excitedly as they join the river they are easily assimilated, adding a richness and complexity to the river. Even a casual observer could follow the river's flow as it reaches its destination."

Robert B. Ruddell, speaking at the annual conference of the International Reading Association, May 7, 1990. (Re-printed from *Reading Horizons*, Volume 31, No. 1, 1990, page 74.)





Can Good Become Better?: The Progression of an Exemplary Teacher

Suzanne Davis

Lakesia's planning for college began in March of her sophomore year in high school. Her first task was to collect information about available scholarships. She knew the perfect person to ask — Mrs. Waddell, her second grade teacher. Of all the teachers she had, Mrs. Waddell had impacted her life most. She had been caring, dedicated, knowledgeable and encouraging. Lakesia sat down to write her best teacher.

Mrs. Waddell is a tall, graceful African American woman who was an elementary teacher for nearly 20 years in an inner-city school. From 1965 to 1977 she taught second grade. In 1978 she took a sabbatical to complete graduate studies. She received her MA in Educational Leadership in 1978. Mrs. Waddell was promoted to teacher-consultant in the fall of the same year and remained in this capacity until 1982. She completed a specialist degree in 1981, attending part-time. In the summer of 1982 she enrolled in Montessori teacher preparation courses, and she initiated and taught Montessori kindergarten classes in her district. From 1983 to 1986, Mrs. Waddell taught primary classes at a Montessori magnet school. In 1986 she was made administrator of the Montessori preschool program in her public school district.

In the fall of 1989 she became principal of the magnet school where she formerly taught.

While she was a novice teacher, Mrs. Waddell's first effort to improve instruction was to adopt the instructional materials to reflect the learning styles of her students. Her approach involved, first, evaluation of both diagnostic and prescriptive materials and, second, careful modification to remove barriers to the learning process. During the mid 60s, Mrs. Waddell was teaching second grade in the inner-city. She found many of her students to be unmotivated, disinterested or bored. Test scores were at unacceptably low levels. Children with little exposure to standard middle-class practices were being given achievement tests based on middle-class norms. By this time federal funds were being funnelled into the public school system. Teacher workshops offered new techniques and resource manuals to be used in the classroom.

Mrs. Waddell took advantage of the innovations presented to help her second grade students, many of whom were from low-income families. She recognized the deficiencies in available instructional materials. Her decision in this case was to supplement the texts with vocabulary building exercises. Mrs. Waddell expected her students all to be readers — even the ones other educators had given up on. She developed word games derived from a popular TV show and familiar games. She began by introducing children to new concepts, words and experiences through field trips, classroom visitors, books, films and stories. The dictionary was used as a tool to build comprehension.

On designated activity days, Mrs. Waddell divided her classroom into groups of two to play team concentration. Partners were given words related to cultural events such

as symphony orchestra performances or the ballet. They took turns in matching pictures with words and meanings. Points were allotted if they could match them correctly. Such games motivated the children, helped to build vocabulary and comprehension, and the children enjoyed them. The games became the highlight of the week. At this point in her career Mrs. Waddell was convinced that stimulating activities and materials facilitate effective learning. She believed in her students regardless of background — and that education can change any life for the better. Gradually, Mrs. Waddell began to refine the diagnostic prescriptive teaching style that she would reshape and restructure for the rest of her career.

By 1977, and after many years in the classroom, she was confident that her students' potential for learning was greater than their test scores indicated. Although there was steady progress, she knew more could be achieved. The need to better serve her students fueled Mrs. Waddell's desire to increase her base of instructional methodology. In 1978 she took a sabbatical leave to obtain an MA in Education. When she returned to her school district in the fall of the same year, she was promoted to teacher-consultant. Over the course of the next two years Mrs. Waddell functioned as a trouble-shooter, coaching teachers with classroom problems. As a teacher-consultant Mrs. Waddle was shocked and discouraged to find that so many children were not learning and so many teachers had difficulty teaching.

Through her classroom teaching experience, Mrs. Waddell discovered the natural ability of children to learn through observation. She made this a principle to live by and passed that on to colleagues. In her role as peer coach, Mrs. Waddell often tells of an experience which accurately

conveys this point. She and Jimmy, a student, were seated at a child-sized table. Despite the length of her legs, Mrs. Waddell was able to reach forward with her long arms across the 10" tabletop and arrange the materials. She finished the demonstration and said, "Now, Jimmy, would you like to try?" The child nodded and immediately got up and moved his chair back, right next to his teacher's chair, and then attempted to reach the table to work with the manipulative as she had done — even though he was too small to complete the task from this position. Mrs. Waddell saw this as proof that children learn much more from watching educators in practice than teachers themselves realize. Therefore, teachers must remember that they are constant models for what their students are learning. An important function of her assistance to teachers is to stress positive modeling for impressionable observers.

In 1980 Mrs. Waddell was placed on a committee to help select programs for the magnet schools in her district. The magnet school committee work required visits to many schools across the country. This was her introduction to Montessori education. Mrs. Waddell found Montessori philosophy to be founded on respect for the self, others and the environment. Children in the schools she visited were being taught conflict/resolution tactics to promote peaceful coexistence. One very practical component of Montessori education taught children responsibility by giving them ownership of the classroom. They were expected to preserve order in their surroundings through maintenance of cleanliness, watering plants and feeding animals. The Montessori method involves promoting independent learning through the use of hands on manipulative materials for all subject matter, using a broad-based curriculum covering fine arts, social studies, sciences, and an exceptional math program

even for preschool children. Teachers, presenting precise details, model lessons to small groups or individuals.

Mrs. Waddell was so impressed with the level of learning and the ease with which the children seemed to progress that she acquired Montessori Teacher Education at her own expense. In 1982, after initial preparation to become a Montessori teacher, Mrs. Waddell was assigned to an inner city kindergarten classroom with a large number of students who had been retained. She had completed her initial preparation to be a Montessori teacher. Having no funds to purchase the necessary Montessori materials, nonetheless Mrs. Waddell began the year with new ideas, enthusiasm and determination that her children would learn. Armed with many teacher made materials — including the shelves she made for storage and a collection of reference books — Mrs. Waddell was able to help the majority of the students achieve at grade level and above.

From 1983 through 1986 Mrs. Waddell joined the public Montessori magnet school where I was principal. The staff was in transition at that time. Nearly all of the teachers were traditional teachers who had volunteered for additional training in Montessori education. They were familiar with the proven methods that had worked for years, as well as non-traditional teaching styles and innovations in education. Therefore, Mrs. Waddell and others found themselves teaching many subjects by combining traditional and Montessori methods.

She valued her broad knowledge base in the sciences, and promoted this among her students. She insisted that students learn biology, botany, and especially chemistry. For a combined first and second grade class, she collected 10th grade textbooks for chemistry experiments.

Committed to teaching children higher level thinking and advanced subject matter in interesting ways, and insistent that vocabulary be learned, Mrs. Waddell fused lessons in the basal reader with the hands-on experimental approach of Montessori reading. Her instruction focused on sound-symbol association and creative writing with invented spelling. She collected reading materials related to science and cultural subjects that matched the reading levels of her young students.

The children were given an array of the Montessori manipulative materials. A fertile environment with exercises in interactive group activity, sound spelling, and a science corner filled with pictures and printed labels was created. Mrs. Waddell's objective was to remove elementary children's fear of difficult subjects, such as science. By integrating meaningful sound/symbol pronunciation associations with complicated scientific words and phrases she was able to help her students simultaneously learn to read, and learn science and social studies.

Adjusting science experiments to a developmentally appropriate level allowed students to learn scientific concepts readily. They also learned the valuable technique of recording information. Using this method, the students were able to proceed with their work without the anxiety normally associated with reading difficult scientific terminology. To complete the science projects the students were taught to pull a card from the special box and read and follow the directions. The first and second graders worked together to complete experiments usually tackled in middle school. The students were able to read their science cards and do the work independently. This system was such a tremendous success that her class astounded a classroom visitor. Mrs. Waddell invited an African biochemist for a

discussion of careers in the field of science. When he listed the career offerings in this area — physician, pharmacist, biologist, botanist, scientist — he was amazed at the ability of such young students to read in chorus the polysyllabic words. Moreover, hands of many students were eagerly raised when he asked for definitions to the words — and they responded correctly.

Mrs. Waddell distinguished herself as a role model for her students and a model for other teachers to emulate. She won the appreciation and admiration of her peers, and the love and gratitude of her many students. After three years of positive feedback, Mrs. Waddell left the magnet school. In 1986, Mrs. Waddell was offered a position as coordinator of a Montessori preschool in her district. Provided with the opportunity to use her educational leadership experience, she assisted teachers in perfecting their own diagnostic prescriptive teaching techniques. Her experiences, innovative methods and teacher-coaching were well accepted. She left the preschool in 1989 to accept a position as principal in the magnet school where she formerly taught. Currently Mrs. Waddell is principal and instructional leader of that same magnet school. Her most recent accomplishment has been to secure a large grant to add a library, filled with hundreds of books, to the school. She is one of the few public school educators who has completed training in three levels of Montessori. Her leadership, creativity, experience and innovations have become a catalyst for a barrage of varied methodologies.

Even when she was a novice teacher, her colleagues consistently rated Mrs. Waddell among the most outstanding teachers in the school district. As a principal, she continues her search for creative and innovative vehicles to promote success for students. Mrs. Waddell still believes all

children must learn to read, and read well. She remains steadfast in her commitment to teaching science. She also encourages her entire staff to uphold these standards. Mrs. Waddell continues to be an innovator in education, a role model for students, and an inspiration to fellow educators.

In reflecting on her career, she often says that she was embarrassed by how little she taught her students in her early years of teaching. She says she sometimes thinks that she owes the tax money back to parents of her former students because now she understands how much more they were capable of learning. However, her impact continues to be evident. A recent letter from a high school student whom she taught in second grade states *I feel sure I could qualify for college because of you, Mrs. Waddell. You made me become a good student. Love, Lakesia.*

After years of teaching, Mrs. Waddell is recognized as an exemplary teacher. Although she looks back at her earliest years with some regret at all she didn't know about teaching then, she was recognized even as a novice for her fine teaching. Like many teachers she has learned and grown and changed over the years — moving from excellence to excellence.

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READING: THE CONFERENCES

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The Teacher as Professional
International Reading Association 38th Annual Meeting
San Antonio Texas — April 26-30, 1993

The theme of this issue of *Reading Horizons* is exemplary practice, and as I recall several of the sessions from the annual conference of the International Reading Association it becomes clear how central the concept of teacher as professional is to exemplary practice. One session in particular — Teacher Preparation and Staff Development: Lessons from New Zealand — presented by Debra Elliot and colleagues provided some food for thought in considering the teacher as professional. In discussing current models of student teaching, which is of course a critical component to the development of the teacher as professional, Stephanie Steffey from San Jose State University prompted our thinking through a series of questions about our own teacher preparation experience. Questions included the following: 1) Did we begin to view the teacher as risk-taker, decision-maker, facilitator and observer, or were we trained as technicians? 2) Did we have the chance in our preparation programs to see ourselves as readers and writers, as mathematicians, as social scientists? 3) Were our classes student-centered or teacher-directed? 4) Was there a focus on teacher autonomy or did we as students participate in a shared, negotiated curriculum? 5) Did we engage in the development of a theory about how children learn? 6) Did we experience congruence between teacher education and what is happening outside the university in K-12 education? 6) Did we begin to develop the concept in ourselves of teacher as researcher?

For those of us connected with teacher preparation, reflection upon our own experience serves to guide our own practice as we guide the developing practice of preservice teachers. It struck me as I pondered these questions, am I always modeling in my undergraduate classes those elements of practice that I am espousing? Could I characterize my classes as teacher directed or student centered? I am convinced that teacher educators must continually wrestle with the alignment of our own espoused theories and practice as we bring teacher preparation and the reality of K-12 education into closer alignment. Jan Duncan, an educator from New Zealand, expanded upon this notion of the importance of teachers developing a theory which will then guide their practice. Using the example of literacy education in New Zealand, Duncan suggests that there is a unifying theory across that country of how children's literacy development should be supported in the classroom. This unifying theory drives all of practice. The child is the starting point, the resources are available in the classroom (and at home) for the children to use, and the teacher is the important link between the child and the resource. This model is in contrast with the basal or literature model where the resources, or materials, drive the curriculum. The needs of the child are secondary in that model — when in fact, the needs of the child should be primary.

"What we have to do is to help teachers develop theories and understandings in their heads to know what drives their practice."

--Jan Duncan, International Reading Association Annual Conference, April 26-30, 1993.

What does this have to say about the teacher as professional? As I reflect upon this discussion of models of teacher preparation and staff development, it becomes clear to me that teachers must see themselves as the decision-maker in the classroom. Teachers must be about the hard work of uncovering their own theories, refining those theories as we expand the knowledge base, and translating that into appropriate changes in practice. Those of us involved in teacher education can model this process as well as encourage and support its development in our students.



Professional Materials Review

The following review of professional materials is the first in a series of titles from the Pippin Teacher's Library, published by Pippin Publishing Limited. Future titles will include Oral Language in Today's Classroom; Whole Language: Practical Ideas; and Infotext.

Kathryn Kinnucan-Welsch, Reviews Editor

Supporting Struggling Readers. Written by Barbara J. Walker. Pippin Publishing Ltd., 380 Esna Park Drive, Markham Ontario, L3R 1H5. ISBN: 0-88751-048-5. 1992. 91 pp.

Reviewed by Gloria L. Cottrell
Western Michigan University

Supporting Struggling Readers is a clear and coherent text illustrating the following points: an interactive view of the reading process; how individual processing, coupled with inappropriate instruction, often reinforces inappropriate literacy strategies; a developmental view of literacy; and instructional methods and authentic assessment procedures to enable us to work together to support struggling readers as they develop.

The text provides interesting, concise examples for instruction designed to aid the struggling reader in a more active reading process. The strategies and activities include the following: graphic organizers, semantic mapping, KWL techniques, questioning, directed reading-thinking activities, the Request technique and Readers Theater. All tie into the author's identifying literacy into five areas — emergent literacy, grounded literacy, expanding literacy, strategic literacy, reflective literacy — resulting in guidelines for instruction.



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