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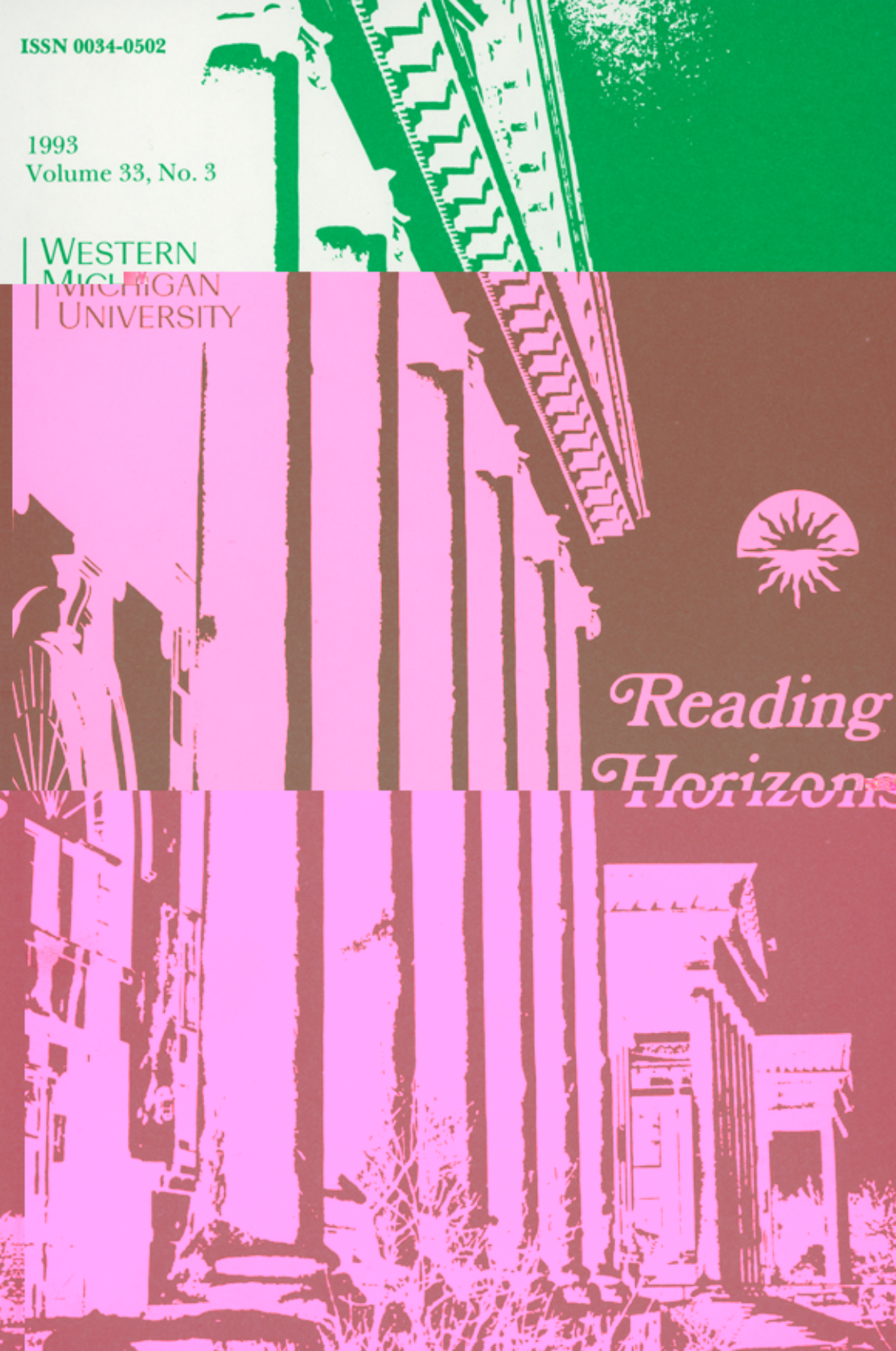
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READING HORIZONS has been published since 1960, on the campus of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo Michigan. As a journal devoted to teaching reading at all levels it seeks to bring together, through articles and reports of research findings,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

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Assessment: Insights Into Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

**Sally E. Lipa
Rebecca Harlin**

It is well established that instruction in process writing is important from the primary grades through the high school years. The work of Graves (1983) and Calkins (1986) provides teachers with a theoretical framework for implementing process writing instruction. However, wide variation in translating theory into practice is evident among teachers (Mangano and Allen, 1986; Bridge, Hiebert and Chesky, 1983). Research reveals that teachers seem to maintain their preset notions about writing conventions such as correct spelling, proper grammar and neatness while attempting to incorporate process writing into the curriculum (Ray, Lee and Stansell, 1986). Thus, teachers' conceptualizations seem to affect the way writing is taught (Bridge, Hiebert and Chesky, 1983).

Earlier studies examined teacher beliefs about writing. Three main points can be determined from these studies: 1) teacher reports regarding classroom practice can be depended on to be accurate (Bridge, Hiebert and Chesky, 1983); 2) there is a relationship between teacher beliefs, instructional practice and their impact on student perceptions (Fear, Anderson, Englert and Raphael, 1988); and 3) there is wide variation in teaching writing among teachers. These studies revealed baseline information about teacher

beliefs and instructional practices in writing as well as the need for further in-depth research. They also indicated that additional research is needed using larger samples. Mangano and Allen (1986) recommend that assessment instruments such as interviews be used for data gathering rather than a point scale technique.

Interviews have several advantages as assessment instruments. The interviewer brings expertise to the interview and reduces the likelihood of ambiguity in questions and responses. Individuals' perceptions, attitudes and opinions can be clarified. Festinger and Katz (1953) state "...if the focal data for a research project are the attitudes and perceptions of individuals, the most direct and often the most fruitful approach is to ask the individuals themselves." In the field of reading, interviews have long been recognized as assessment techniques regarding teachers' practices and beliefs (Harste and Burke, 1977; Duffy and Metheny, 1979; Fear, Anderson, Englert, and Raphael, 1988). Interview data have been instrumental in linking instructional practices with teacher beliefs (Swanson-Owens, 1986), teachers' knowledge structure and their organization of those structures (Johnson, 1986), and their philosophical beliefs (Harste and Burke, 1977). For these reasons it was decided to use an interview approach to data gathering.

The recent trend towards process writing has received attention in language arts, reading and English professional journals, professional educational conferences and workshops. Preservice and inservice teachers in some geographic areas have received instruction in the teaching of process writing. New York and California have adopted a process writing approach for school use. Other states such as Florida, Vermont, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Wisconsin and Michigan support process writing in

elementary and secondary classrooms. The effect of state support for instructional practices in process writing, including the effect on teachers' beliefs, is not known. This study was undertaken to investigate teachers' attitudes, beliefs and instructional decisions about process writing.

Method

A 19-item interview schedule, *Teachers' Concepts About Writing*, was developed by Lipa and Harlin (1988) to record and assess teachers' statements regarding their 1) beliefs and understandings of process writing; 2) their instructional decisions for teaching writing; and 3) the training and support within their school system. The interview form was administered by a trained group of graduate students from reading education courses to a sample of 66 teachers, grades K-7, teaching in urban, suburban and rural schools in western New York state. Responses to questions were analyzed based on the above three categories: A) teachers' beliefs and understanding; B) instructional decisions for writing; and C) training and support for teaching process writing. Category A responses were coded as *primarily process emphasis* or *skills emphasis* responses. Category B responses were coded primarily as *management emphasis*, *instructional emphasis* and/or *motivation emphasis* responses. Category C responses were coded as *yes/no*, and *much, some, little*.

Questions based on the three categories were developed for the interview instrument. Teacher responses to each of the questions were read by four evaluators and coded as Category A, process/skills emphasis; Category B, management/instructional/motivation emphasis; Category C, yes/no or much, some, none responses. Consensus of the four evaluators was needed before an answer was coded as belonging in one of the responses categories. For

example, Question 3A (*What does a good writer do?*) was analyzed based on process vs. skills emphasis responses. Answers that reflected the thinking, ideas and creativity of a writer were coded as process responses; answers that reflected the mechanics of writing such as punctuation and grammar were coded as skills based responses.

Responses to Category B, instructional decisions for writing, were coded as primarily management/instruction/motivation. For example, Question 1B (*What is the hardest part about teaching process writing?*) was analyzed based on management, instructional and motivation emphases. Answers that reflected time and organization problems were coded as management responses; answers that reflected direct instructional procedures were coded as instructional emphases responses. Skills vs. process responses in this category were based on the same characteristics for Category A.

Responses to Category C, training and support for the teaching of process writing, required direct responses of positive/negative; much/some/none and percent of respondents replying to specific choices. The answers to these questions clearly belonged in one of the designated response modes.

Results and discussion

Results were based on 19 questions; nine in Category A, seven in Category B, and three in Category C. Frequency tabulations were transformed to percentages for consistency in reporting. The appendix shows the percentage of responses to the questions in Category A, *Teachers' Understandings and Beliefs About Writing*.

Category A. What are teachers' beliefs and understandings about writing? The results shown in the Appendix revealed that most of the teachers in this sample (94 percent) understood that writing was a communication act, a process, in which thoughts, ideas and feelings were expressed on paper. This viewpoint was supported by the teacher responses to other questions in this category. Questions which asked *What does a good writer do; What is the hardest part about writing; What is the easiest part about writing; What is a child's intent when he draws and labels a picture* and whether teachers revise their writing were answered as process based responses by more than 60 percent of the respondents.

A second major question in Category A included showing teachers an emergent form of scribble writing, and asking them if this was writing. Primary and intermediate grade teachers differed as a group in their response to this question with 70 percent of the primary teachers indicating that scribble was writing and did communicate an author's message. Intermediate grade teachers were not as sure with 40 percent stating scribble was writing; 37 percent indicating it wasn't writing. Clearly, there was a difference between primary and intermediate grade teachers' perceptions of what constitutes writing. Training and experiences with process writing may have helped broaden some views about scribble writing but many intermediate grade teachers view writing as legible letters with understandable content.

Another question within Category A was *How is process writing different from traditional writing?* The answers differed considerably with almost equal numbers reporting about process writing in skill based terms, process based terms and others stating that they didn't know how they differed. At first glance responses such as "process writing

has steps which *have* to be taught in sequential order" seemed like a process response. Responses such as "It is a series of steps which takes time and evaluation at each step" led to further analysis. Many respondents view process writing as *going through* and *completing steps* but miss the holistic nature of the process. These answers were considered skill based because the respondents appeared to have partitioned the concept of process writing into several discrete, linear steps, to be taught as separate steps out of the context of writing.

Another question/response of interest was *How do you (the teacher) know when a piece of writing is finished?* More than 50 percent of the teachers responded with a process based statement, e.g., *when the message is complete, when I can't make it any better*. However, these same teachers changed their responses when asked *How do your students know when a piece of writing that they are working on is finished?* Seventy-two percent of these teachers answered with a skills based response for their students. Some comments included the following: *if it's OK'd by the teacher, when the first draft is written; when you come to the end of the page; when the five steps are completed*. This suggests the need to examine whether teachers understand the concept of process writing or whether they are reifying the concept by teaching process writing as a skill.

In summary, most of the responses in this category reflected an understanding of writing to be a communication act. This was stated whether teachers responded to additional questions with a skills or process based emphases. Interesting shifts in responses to additional questions were noted suggesting that many teachers translate their beliefs and understanding about writing, viewing it as a procedural, skills based communication act.

Category B. The second major category addressed in this interview, *What are teachers' instructional decisions and practices in teaching writing* reflects the individual attitudes of teachers within their own classrooms.

Forty percent of the teachers responded that managing process writing was the hardest part of teaching writing, while 55 percent selected instruction, namely one of the steps — e.g., *conferencing*, as the hardest part. At the same time, instructional practices were also identified as the easiest parts of teaching process writing. Several stages/steps identified by some teachers as the hardest part of teaching writing were identified by others as the easiest. One item, *motivation*, stood out as the easiest part of teaching process writing. Individual differences were paramount in responses to this question. Broadly speaking, different aspects of instruction and management represented the diversity of teacher responses.

Teachers expressed their writing beliefs as well as their instructional decisions in their responses to the question, *If you were going to teach someone to write, what is the first thing you should do?* These answers, coded as skills/process, revealed that 67 percent of the teachers responded with a process response, e.g., *get them to talk; get ideas; think; read to them; model writing*. These responses seem to be consistent with the overall beliefs of this sample about writing.

Teachers reported that they included a scheduled writing time during the day. Fifty-seven percent of the teachers provided from one-half hour to an hour or more time for writing each day. Including writing time in the instructional plan suggests that instruction in process writing has influenced teachers' curricular decisions. Given that 67

percent of the teachers reported that their children spent the writing time doing process writing activities (e.g., journal writing, writing folders, personal writing, writing workshop) also suggests that teachers are engaging children in writing activities that are considered aspects of process writing.

A majority of the teachers (59 percent) reported that they also engage in personal writing or instruct children during writing time. Of concern is the 24 percent of the teachers who engage in routine clerical or reading group teaching during writing time. Customary practices are still followed by many teachers as they assign independent work time for children while they engage in clerical duties.

To summarize Category B, teachers' decisions and instructional practices reflect a strong tendency toward process writing activities. Approximately 25 percent of the teachers remain management or skills driven in their instructional practices. However, movement seems to be toward process writing strategies being implemented in the classroom. The information from the teachers interviewed in this sample suggests that teachers know what teaching strategies to use and understand the time needed for process instruction. As noted earlier, many of these concepts seem to be understood as skills or instructional formats developing out of a theoretical construct.

Category C. The final major question, *What is the extent of the training and support for teaching process writing within schools?* reveals that 92 percent of the respondents had received some form of training in process writing. The major learning came from 1) inservice workshops; 2) undergraduate classes; 3) graduate classes; 4) conferences; and 5) professional journals. Generally, teachers were positive about teaching process writing with 61

percent stating their enthusiasm for it. Negative responses represented some fears or reluctance by teachers to instruct in a process that they didn't fully understand. Many of the *don't know* responses revealed that they were not asked to teach process writing in their classrooms. This was a surprising answer, since New York state's syllabus presents the teacher with theory as well as instructional practices in process writing.

Fifty-two percent of the teachers reported a highly supportive school system (superintendent, principal, reading teacher or classroom teacher). This support was considered a very positive aspect of their training and, in part, responsible for their positive attitude. Note that 48 percent of the group reports *some/none* or just *doesn't know* if they are supported.

Summary and conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from these data. Most importantly, teachers seem to understand that writing is primarily a communication act. This was evident whether or not they had instruction in process writing or knew how process writing differed from traditional writing. The teachers in this sample were sophisticated in that most had received instruction in process writing and used strategies associated with process writing for instruction. Analysis of the responses suggested that teachers' instructional decisions often represented a skills translation of process writing. These teachers seem to confuse the concept of process writing with instructional sequences. Calkins (1986) described process writing as a "process of craft" (p. 16). This sample of teachers appeared to identify and label the processes involved in writing as if they were fixed and linear. Yet in practice writers can use all elements of the process at different moments, or at the same moment (Grasser, 1983).

Teachers in this sample may be confusing the concept of process writing with several instructional skill sequences.

Many responses seem to pattern textbook or popular statements about writing rather than the teachers' own thinking. The data suggests that teachers may be experiencing levels of depth in their understanding of process writing which, in turn, may affect their instructional practices. Apparently, understanding and teaching writing process develops over time. First, a knowledge base provides an awareness of theory, principle, etc. With time and practice a skill level of understanding and implementation develops; finally, there is a refinement, integration and/or translation between theory and instructional delivery. Johnson (1986) writes, "What influences teacher thought and action is the interplay between the context and the teachers' evolving organization of knowledge rather than their beliefs."

The teachers in this sample appear to be progressing toward a level of integration between theory and instructional delivery. Teachers' beliefs and understandings about process writing do appear to reflect their instructional decisions. Does instructional and school support help a teacher learn new concepts and translate theory into instruction practice? Apparently, yes.

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Further information about this research will be presented in a second article by Lipa and Harlin, "Assessment: Insights into children's beliefs and perceptions about process writing," which will appear in the next issue of *Reading Horizons*.

Appendix

Category A Understandings and Beliefs About Writing

1A. What is writing?

<i>Skills Based Response</i>	<i>Process Based Response</i>	<i>DK</i>
6%	94%	0

Process response: Writing is for communication, e.g., putting ideas and thoughts on paper for someone to read.

2A. How is process writing different from traditional writing?

<i>Skills Based Response</i>	<i>Process Based Response</i>	<i>DK</i>
36%	34%	28%

Skills response: A new name for reworking compositions; process writing includes steps which are taught separately.

Process response: Process writing includes writing and editing rather than grammar; ideas to skills rather than skills to ideas; individual and developmental; emphasis is on "how to" rather than on product; child-centered rather than teacher-centered; more interesting.

3A. What does a good writer do?

<i>Skills Based Response</i>	<i>Process Based Response</i>	<i>DK</i>
9%	71%	18%

Skills response: Incorporates skills such as punctuation, grammar; uses the mechanics of writing; neat; uses a writing checklist; looks words up in the dictionary.

Process response: A good writer has good ideas, good vocabulary, polishes one's ideas; has a sense of audience; has clarity of thought and expression; is a risk taker; a good observer, good reader, good listener.

4A. (Show scribble writing) Is this writing? Why/why not?

<i>Primary Teachers</i>	<i>Intermediate Teachers</i>	
Yes 70%; No 8%; DK 22%	Yes 40%; No 37%; DK 23%	
<i>Skills Based Response</i>	<i>Process Based Response</i>	<i>DK</i>
24%	62%	14%

Skills response: Not decipherable; doesn't say anything; not writing.

Process response: It's an attempt to communicate; express ideas; communicate for a special audience.

5A. (Show drawn picture with labeling) What is this writer trying to do?

<i>Skills Based Response</i>	<i>Process Based Response</i>	<i>DK</i>
12%	72%	15%

Skills response: Get attention; identify objects, spell.

Process response: Describe the picture; illustrate feelings; express oneself visually and with words; clarify, tell a story.

6A. What is the hardest part about writing?

<i>Skills Based Response</i>	<i>Process Based Response</i>	<i>DK</i>
32%	56%	12%

Skills response: Rules and grammar; physical coordination; edit, final copy.

Process response: Organizing, getting the ideas, finding topics; communication/using the right words; creativity.

7A. What is the easiest part about writing?

<i>Skills Based Response</i>	<i>Process Based Response</i>	<i>DK</i>
18%	67%	15%

Skills response: Mechanics/penmanship; outlining ideas; editing; final copy.

Process response: Personal writing; getting ideas (pre-writing); maintaining the main ideas; expressing oneself; first draft; publishing and sharing.

8A. Do you ever revise your writing?

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Student</i>
Yes 94%; No 4%	Yes 71%; No 24%

9A. How do you know when a piece of writing is finished?

<i>Teacher Skills Response</i>	<i>Teacher Process Response</i>
41%	59%

<i>Child Skills Response</i>	<i>Child Process Response</i>
72%	28%

Teacher skills response: The End, Sincerely, sign, tired of it; corrections made.

Teacher process response: Reread and it's acceptable; last section has closure; message is complete; can't make it any better; confident and pleased/satisfied.

Child skills response: It's ok'd by teacher, don't know, first draft is written; if it's written they're done; come to the end of the page; looks long enough; completed the five steps.

Child's process response: Message is complete; if writing makes sense.

Category B Instructional Decisions

1B. What is the hardest part about *teaching* process writing?

Management 40%; Instruction 55%; DK 5%

Management response: Very time consuming activity; organizing the classroom; giving up control/being an observer; lessening student inhibitions about writing.

Instruction response: Conferencing; revision; organizing thoughts; first draft; teaching children to go through steps; phonic applications.

2B. What is the easiest part about teaching process writing?

Management 7%; Instruction 49%; Motivation 38%; DK 8%

Management response: Process writing is organized and sequential (easy to teach); less planning and more repetition; more individuality/less grouping.

Instruction response: Prewriting and brainstorming is the easiest part about teaching process writing; writing the first draft; the sharing experience.

Motivation: Motivating children is the easiest part of teaching process writing.

3B. If you were going to teach someone to write, what is the first thing you should do? Why?

Skills Based Response

27%

Process Based Response

67%

DK

6%

Skills response: Teach words and objects; teach letters of the alphabet; teach the basics; teach reading.

Process response: Help them get ideas/talk/brainstorm/think; read to them; saturate them with others' writing; teach them to observe; interest them; model/write for them to show them how.

4B. Do you revise your writing? Do your students revise their writing?

Teachers

Yes 94%; No 6%

Students

Yes 71%; No 24%

5B. How much time do your students spend writing during the day?

Less than 1/2 hour 14%; 1/2 - 1 hour 27%; + 1 hour 30%; DK 15%

6B. How do they spend their writing time?

Workbook/Skills 18%; Process Activities 67%; Content Subjects 9%; DK 6%

7B. What do you do during regularly scheduled writing time?

Conference 35%; Write 24%; Other (Attendance, etc.) 24%

Conference response: Circulate to see what children are doing; guide them; listen; help them get ideas.

Writing: Teacher writes himself/herself to model; responds to children's journals.

Other: Lunch money; attendance; reading groups; teach printing; give extra help; check workbooks; "We do whole language instead."

Category C

What training is available for the teaching of process writing?

1C. How do you feel when your school district asks you to teach process writing?

Positive 61%; Negative 11%; DK 28%

2C. How much support have you gotten for implementing process writing?

Much 52%; Some 20%; None 15%; DK 12%

3C. Where did you learn about process writing?

Ninety two (92) respondents answered that they had information on process writing: a) undergraduate classes 33%; b) graduate classes 33%; c) preservice workshops 3%; d) inservice workshops 36%; e) student teaching 3%; f) professional journal 24%; g) conference 20%; h) no information 8%.



Relationships Among Need Achievement Themes and Ethnic and Gender Identities in Elementary Literature Series

**Kathleen E. Eyia
Lois A. Bader**

Educators agree that students succeed when reading materials are suitable to their backgrounds and contain ideas that are motivating. Interest in achievement motivation dates back to at least 1910, but until the pioneering work of Atkinson and McClelland, little progress was made in developing achievement motive theory emphasizing both clinical and experimental models (Heckhausen, 1967). McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell (1953; 1976) formulated the theory of achievement motivation through the use of the Thematic Apperception Test (Murray, 1938) measuring individual differences in the motive to enter an achievement situation. McClelland (1961) defines *n*-Ach (need achievement) motivation as competition with a standard of excellence. The individual strives to do something well or to accomplish a goal for personal satisfaction, for intrinsic rewards. Achievement motivation theory emphasizes the importance and measurement of individual differences in assessing people's interactions with their environment. The strength of *n*-Ach is measured by a score devised by coding the thought content of imaginative stories.

Adapting McClelland's scoring procedure for the examination of the achievement motive in adolescent high-interest, low-level fiction, Bader (1981) reported a great deal of variability with regard to presence of need achievement motive in materials intended for poor readers. Bader found that most stories focused on middle class, white, male characters. In another comprehensive study focusing on adult remedial readers, Kruch (1992) found that out of 120 stories, 72 contained need achievement. Kruch established that the most common protagonist was a white, young adult male with a middle-socioeconomic status.

Reading materials should coincide with learners' backgrounds and interests to activate prior knowledge and motivate further learning (Bond, Tinker, Wasson and Wasson, 1989; Goodman, 1986; Harris, 1970; Smith, 1973; Vacca and Vacca, 1989; Veatch, 1966). Many reading authorities agree that children need strong positive role models for the development of self esteem. Limited ethnic and gender roles in literacy materials may be a true disadvantage for learners. Though stereotyping and bias have been a concern for many years, recently Gollnick, Sadker and Sadker (1982) suggested that when females and minorities are omitted from textbooks, a hidden curriculum is created. This hidden curriculum teaches children that minorities and females are less important and less significant in our society than are Caucasians and males. Treatments of *n*-Ach, ethnic identity, and gender roles, are crucial factors to consider when selecting literature series for elementary grades.

The purpose of this study was to examine a sample of widely used elementary literacy materials to determine the extent to which they include the *n*-Ach motive across gender and ethnic groups. For this study, three widely used literature series were selected. In each series, 80 percent of

the stories were analyzed for grades 2, 3, and 4 according to McClelland et al. (1953; 1976) procedures for scoring. The investigators achieved interrater scoring reliability of .9+ in one week, the time stated by McClelland for acquiring proficiency. In addition to scores for *n*-Ach, the stories were also categorized by identification of the protagonist's ethnic group and whether the gender role was traditional or nontraditional. The data analysis used the Pearson correlation coefficient with the conventional 0.05 level of significance set for testing the relationships.

Scoring for *n*-Achievement

According to McClelland et al. (1953; 1976), in analyzing need achievement there first must be some indication of an achievement goal. The goal of some individual in the story is to be successful in terms of competition with a standard of excellence. The individual may fail to achieve the goal but it is still identified as an achievement goal if there is concern over competition with a standard of excellence. A standard of excellence may imply that there is competitive activity where winning or doing as well or better than someone else is the primary concern. This desire to win need not be explicitly stated as long as there is effective concern for goal attainment and a desire to achieve the goal thoroughly and with great care (standard of excellence).

There need be no explicit statement of concern over the outcome that a good job is desired when a person is working on a new invention or unique accomplishment because of the implied desire for success. The other exception would be in the attainment of a long-term goal (being a success in life). In both cases competing with a standard of excellence is inferred due to feelings of failure experienced if the goal is not reached.

Gender and ethnic bias

Ethnic identity was scored by identifying the ethnic background of the protagonist. The categories selected for categorization were Caucasian, African, Native American, Hispanic, Asian American, and "other." Protagonists' portrayals in traditional and nontraditional gender roles were examined. Many times boys are portrayed as exhibiting one set of values, behaviors, and roles, and girls as exhibiting another and different set of attributes and characteristics (Gollnick et al., 1982; Sadker and Sadker, 1982). Boys and girls have been portrayed in reading texts as follows:

Boys

ingenious

creative

brave

persevering

achieving

adventurous

curious

autonomous

athletic

self-respecting

problem solver

Girls

dependent

passive

incompetent

fearful

victims

docile

concerned with domesticities

objects of scorn and ridicule

aimless

concerned with

physical appearance

In the present study, each story was scored as a traditional male or female role if the major characteristics of the protagonist followed these attributes. The story was scored nontraditional if the protagonist differed from this list. The story would be scored as a nontraditional role if one attribute which the story was built around differed greatly, even though the others were more traditionally characteristic. For example, an adventurous, athletic, brave

boy who took up knitting while home sick, and then pursued this hobby (much to the ridicule of his peers), would be scored nontraditional. An athletic girl going out for the boys' basketball team would also be scored as a nontraditional gender role.

Methodology

Three publishers of children's literature series were selected: Silver, Burdett and Ginn (1991); Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1989); and Houghton Mifflin (1989). Between 21 to 25 stories were analyzed in each grade level for each publisher. This constituted over 70 percent of the total selections available for each grade.

A gridded chart was used to analyze the variables of *n*-Ach, ethnic identity, and male and female roles. The publisher, grade level and title of each story was recorded vertically with the variables along the top of the grid running horizontally. Data were statistically analyzed to determine frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and the Pearson correlation coefficient. Chi-square was used for categorical data. Several crosstabs were used to test for the presence of *n*-Ach and its relationship with ethnic identity and gender roles.

Results

A statistically significant difference was found among series in relation to the presence of need achievement ($p < .05$). Silver Burdett and Ginn had *n*-Ach in 80 percent of their stories for grade two, and 72 percent for grade three. Holt, Rinehart and Winston had *n*-Ach in 32 percent of their stories for grade two, and 44 percent for grade three. Houghton Mifflin had *n*-Ach in 61.9 percent of their stories for grade two and 76.2 percent for grade three. All series showed similar findings for grade four although they were

not statistically significant. In all three series a statistically significant correlation was found between *n*-Ach and the male role ($p < .01$). This indicated that whenever there was a nontraditional male role there also existed a need achievement motive. Although there were too few stories regarding female roles for statistical analysis, the findings revealed a similar trend toward *n*-Ach and nontraditional female roles. There were very few stories overall in which there existed nontraditional female roles. When there was a nontraditional female role, however, there was always a need achievement motive. A significant correlation existed between male role and ethnic identity in all publishers ($p < .05$). When there was a nontraditional male role, 88.9 percent of these males were white.

A statistically significant relationship was found between *n*-Ach and ethnic group for Houghton Mifflin ($p < .001$). In this series, *n*-Ach was more prevalent in nonwhite stories. Though there were not statistically significant findings for the other series, Silver, Burdett and Ginn had an even distribution of need achievement motive in both white and nonwhite stories. Holt, Rinehart and Winston had more *n*-Ach in stories which involved white characters rather than nonwhite characters. A great variety of ethnic backgrounds were represented in the Silver, Burdett and Ginn series, and it appeared that these stories contained *n*-Ach. The other two series seemed to have less *n*-Ach in nonwhite stories.

Conclusions

Literature series do differ in the presence of the need achievement motive. If educators feel that it is crucial that children's literature contain *n*-Ach, then it is essential that educators analyze instructional materials for this element. McClelland (1961) states that once *n*-Ach scoring is

learned, it can be done in about the time it takes to read a story.

In our diverse culture major characters who exemplify achievement motive should be role models with whom all children can identify. The presence of a female or an African American in a story is not sufficient. We should consider the values they represent.

This study indicates that when there are nontraditional male and female roles portrayed in elementary literature series, *n*-Ach tends to be present. The majority of these role models, however, tend to be Caucasian. It is important for children to understand the complexity and the diversity that exists within groups to cope effectively in our ever-changing society. One way that this can be done is by reading literature in which characters are depicted as multidimensional human beings. It is vital that educators confront sex-role stereotypes and the lack of female and minority role models in textbooks. Motivational role models should be available to every student. Teachers, as influential instructional decision makers, need to educate themselves (through the use of exercises and activities) to help them be more aware of bias, as well as the need achievement motive in textbooks.

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**READING HORIZONS
VOLUME 33, NUMBER 3**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Assessment: Insights into Teacher's Beliefs and Practices <i>Sally E. Lipa</i> <i>Rebecca Harlin</i>	195
Relationships Among Need Achievement Themes and Ethnic and Gender Identities in Elementary Literature Series <i>Kathleen E. Eyia</i> <i>Lois A. Bader</i>	209
When Thematic Units are Not Thematic Units <i>Arne E. Sippola</i>	217
Children's Knowledge of Environmental Print <i>L.D. Briggs</i> <i>W.D. Richardson</i>	224
African-American Stories and Literary Responses: Does a Child's Ethnicity Affect the Focus of a Response? <i>Jennifer L. Altieri</i>	236
Reading Disabilities: Are There Fewer in Japan? <i>E. Marcia Sheridan</i>	245
Chapter One Reading Programs: Do Student/Family Factors Make a Difference? <i>Linda Thistlethwaite</i> <i>Myron Mason</i>	258
Reading: The Conferences	278
Reviews	282

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When Thematic Units Are Not Thematic Units

Arne E. Sippola

Thematic units are omnipresent in today's elementary classrooms. We theme in our units on bears. We theme in our units on monsters. We even theme when we present a unit of study featuring the children's novels of Beverly Cleary. Or do we? The practice of having children systematically studying a topic, a recurring literary phenomenon, or an author's collective works is worthwhile and laudable. It helps children organize their world by providing experiences that are connected by some central focus. However, I contend that educators are using the term thematic unit too broadly. A majority of thematic units developed and presented by teachers are really not thematic units at all. They are centrally focused, but on something other than a literary theme.

Literary themes

A theme is the underlying idea of a story. It is what remains after the details of the characters, the plot, and the setting have faded away. It is also a unifying phenomenon. Supporting these contentions, Norton (1991) has written that a theme "is the underlying idea that ties the plot, characters and setting together into a meaningful whole" (p. 98). A theme may address specific issues or human conditions. It is the response to the question "what does this story mean?" It is not a concrete object that can be seen. A theme is an abstraction. Stewig (1988) has written:

After all the details of which people, what places, and when the story happens are stripped away, what a reader is left with is the theme. The theme is the underlying idea, the foundation upon which particular information rests. Theme deals with major issues, such as the importance of standing up for what one believes. Specific details may set the story in the sixteenth or the twenty-first century; the main character may be a young woman or an old man; the environment may be here or in another world. But when these particulars are set aside, the theme of two apparently diverse books may in fact be the same (p. 19).

It should be clear that neither bears, monsters nor Beverly Cleary are themes. Their systematic study involves something other than a theme. An analysis of the types of centrally focused units used by elementary teachers reveals eight different categories of focus. Although there is bound to be a minor amount of overlap in some of the categories, recognition of these categories should assist elementary educators in discussions of what we are using to foster literacy in children. These categories are presented below.

The topical unit. The topical unit is found with great regularity in kindergarten and primary-level classrooms. The topic unit focuses upon a specific concrete phenomenon in nature. Our unit on bears would fit nicely within this category. So would a unit of study on dinosaurs, rocks or weather. A teacher using a topical unit approach would read aloud Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* and Ward's *The Biggest Bear*, write stories about bears, and integrate the topic of bears into other curricula. The topical unit is perhaps one of the easiest types of unit for teachers to construct. Materials abound for use. A topical unit shows children how literacy resources can contribute to their knowledge of a specific topic. Through this exploration, children should become aware that they can explore books to answer questions they

might have about a specific topic. However, it should be noted that an appreciation of character, genre, theme or author in the topical unit is ancillary at most. A topical unit teaches about just that: a topic. Literary understanding and appreciation are of secondary concern.

The form unit. Teachers may develop and guide children's explorations of the different forms or genres found in literature. Children are guided through traditional forms of literature such as the folktale, fable, myth and legend, or they might explore poetry, fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fictions, or tall tales. After hearing, reading and discussing stories such as Bowman's *Pecos Bill, the Greatest Cowboy of All Time* and Kellogg's detail-packed *Paul Bunyan*, children apply what they have learned to write their own form stories. The form unit can identify and clarify the different kinds of literature that exist. This is important in discussions of literature, but can be limited to the extent that grouping literature for study by form may result in reading a number of texts that share nothing in common *other than* genre.

The structural unit. Children may experience literature containing recurring literary structures. Johnson and Louis (1990) have written:

The appeal of a structural approach to literature comes from a delight in rhythm and pattern — particularly when the underlying structures aren't immediately evident. Why do so many folk stories have handsome princes and fearsome forests? Why does the Rule of Three appear in folk tales and resurface again and again in modern stories? Why do so many stories involve quests? Why do so many protagonists experience exploration, oppression, struggle, and victory? (p. 95)

The teacher organizes the literature program around such motifs as quests, heroes, underdogs, evil forces, or family dynamics. Young readers exploring literature about families can compare the Moffats with the Quimbys, or develop an understanding of different family configurations by reading and discussing the problems facing Carlie in Byars' *The Pinballs*. The structural unit can offer readers an historical perspective of literary components. Structures of literature recur from the heroic quests of Ulysses to the travels of Bilbo Baggins. An understanding of these recurring literary phenomena allows the reader to recognize and appreciate important elements in literature.

The concept unit. Concept units focus upon developmentally relevant concepts. For example, the teacher presents a unit on the concept of changes. Second graders might read and listen to books such as Peet's *The Wump World* and Cooney's *Miss Rumphius* and discuss the different ways change takes place. Fifth graders discover how Sarah not only changes herself, but affects the lives of all of the characters, in MacLachlan's *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Other types of focus might include time, space, exploring, sensing and creating. The concept unit's focus is upon conceptual elaboration and not necessarily upon literary appreciation. This type of unit is, however, useful for children. As changes occur within themselves, for example, they can read related literature revealing that changes are, in fact, normal. They are not odd; all people go through changes. Well-chosen literature can facilitate this understanding.

The picture book unit. The picture book unit is another heavily-used focus of study used by primary school teachers. A trade book, such as Galdone's *The Gingerbread Boy* is introduced to, and read by, participating students. The teacher provides follow-up activities such as

writing an alternative ending to the story, taking advantage of the repetitive refrain in the story by having the children engage in choral reading, or cooking gingerbread cookies. The picture book unit is perhaps the simplest of all of the units presented. It can be, however, a pleasant experience for young children. It can be a very positive first experience with the study of literature. In isolation, however, it does not assist children in seeing the connections that do exist in literature. Preferably, teachers will use a particular picture book along with other picture books that share common topics, concepts or structures.

The novel unit. A teacher may select a particular children's novel as a focus of study. Children are guided through a book such as *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean George. Since the novel unit is a lengthy undertaking, teachers involve children in extension activities throughout the unit. Children discuss the theme of humans, with the help from an unlikely source, overcoming the hazards of nature, or they may explore the myths about wolves. Children can experience the art and music of the Innupiat. Traditional Innupiat customs and traditions rediscovered by Miyax can be investigated and discussed. Survival stories can be written by the children. The novel unit can be a rewarding experience for mature primary and intermediate students. As students read a novel, they can discover more about themselves and about life. They can learn different perspectives when they hear different interpretations as shared by their literature group peers. Additionally, meaningful engagement with a substantive work in itself is a worthy objective.

The author unit. A teacher can foster appreciation of a particular author by developing literature units based upon the works of that author. The teacher may involve

children in the guided reading of several books written by Bill Peet while reading aloud to the class other selections written by that author. The teacher informs the children about the life of Bill Peet by providing information and reading excerpts from *Bill Peet: An Autobiography*. A “Bill Peet station” is located in the classroom reading center containing a collection of Bill Peet books, book jackets, and illustrations of favorite Peet characters. Self-selection and reading of Peet’s books is encouraged. The cultivation of love of author is an important literacy objective. If we are able to “hook” children on a particular author, we can stand back and allow the delightful transaction between reader and author to take place.

The thematic unit. The true thematic unit will focus on a literary theme — an underlying idea that ties the characters, the setting, and the plot together. Children might explore the theme that “friendship assists individuals in overcoming obstacles” by listening to and reading books such as Marshall’s *George and Martha*, Lobel’s *Frog and Toad are Friends*, and Steig’s *The Amazing Bone*. Extension activities might include independent selection and reading of an additional book having the same theme and involving children in composing stories about how friends have assisted them in overcoming obstacles. The concept of theme involves substantial abstractions (Johnson and Louis, 1990). It is important for teachers to consider the amount of abstraction inherent in a particular theme. The theme of “friendship assists individuals in overcoming obstacles” discussed above can be made relatively concrete to younger children because it’s likely that they have experienced such a phenomenon. It is less likely that young children will understand the theme of “cooperation is necessary for a society to survive.” Care

must be taken, therefore, in matching children with age-appropriate thematic material.

Conclusions

Educators are busy developing and implementing units of literary exploration and calling them thematic units. However, few of these units are truly thematic in nature. Eight different types of units involving literature are described here. Each type of unit has a different focus, age-appropriateness, and inherent worth. This descriptive framework may assist teachers in categorizing and discussing the types of literature units they develop and present. It may also assist them in clarifying the central focus of their literature units.

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Children's Knowledge of Environmental Print

**L.D. Briggs
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Children spend a large portion of their time in the home environment where they engage in many activities. Teachers hope that these learning experiences will reinforce the concepts, skills and values that constitute the school curriculum. The greater the correspondence between environmental learnings and school activities, the more likely that transfer will take place. Children's contact with words in the environment builds a foundation for literacy because "all meanings that are attached to the words that we use in language are obtained through experience" (Ross and Roe, 1990, p. 6). But the question, *Do teachers use children's environmental experiences to enhance instructional activities?* is one that should be asked.

The environment contributes greatly to the educational and socialization process. Smith (1992), for example, stated that "four-year-olds learn about 20 new words a day" (p. 434), and children learn these words when they are involved in daily activities. Vacca, Vacca and Gove (1991) asked the question "When aren't children confronted with written language in some form in their immediate environment?" (p. 65) to show the ever-presence of environmental print. The daily routines of preschool children build an experiential foundation for future learning activities. Although

many of these activities are incidental in nature, these experiences are neither trivial nor unimportant. Parents can play a vital role in enhancing this learning by using positive reinforcement and, more specifically, by providing planned or contrived activities. As Mason (1980) stated, "Children who are guided by parents to attend to letters, signs and labels, and are given opportunities to read, spell and print words, learn some of the essential rudiments of reading even before going to kindergarten" (p. 203).

Parents are not constrained to wait for literacy to develop because they can take their children to print-rich places (e.g., zoos, airports or shopping centers). With their parents, children regularly visit grocery stores, variety stores, hardware stores, and fast-food restaurants. Most of these businesses are rich sources of print and offer children many chances for literacy experiences. In addition to the previously named private establishments, Tinker (1971) recommended libraries, fire stations, police stations and natural history museums as being good places for children to visit. The public print usually names products, shopping specials or commercial enterprises. Even cereal boxes contribute to the introduction of reading because "the sides of these boxes now display cartoons, riddles and jokes which must be read to be understood" (Tinker and McCullough, 1975, p. 405). The environment is a cornucopia of words and children can easily find print "in books, supermarkets, department stores, fast-food restaurants and on television, signs and a variety of printed materials from *TV Guide* to labels on household products" (Vacca, Vacca and Gove, 1991, p. 65).

The importance of children's knowing environmental words prior to entering school should not be overlooked; as Mason (1980) observed, "It is entirely possible that children

entering school who are able to read words from cereal boxes, restroom doors, store fronts and traffic signs have an important advantage over other children in learning words and reading stories" (p. 206). Children's future reading performance, more than likely, can be enhanced by parental use of environmental print for educational purposes. Reading has been recognized as the key that unlocks the door to learning; hence, every opportunity should be taken to develop this skill. As Brown and Briggs (1991a) stated, "Children should be encouraged to participate in environmental literacy activities because these experiences are indispensable to language development" (p. 152).

In a normal and natural way in their environment, children are taught the importance of reading. By listening and talking to others in school and outside of school, "children come to expect language to be used in certain ways and for certain purposes" (Piazza and Tomlinson, 1985, p. 151). Milner (1951) suggested that teachers provide "extensive opportunities [for the child] to leaf through, explore and ask questions about briefly-captioned picture books depicting objects and situations close to the child's experience" (pp. 111-112). In school, children see their classmates, teachers and children in other classrooms reading books, magazines, newspapers, and other printed materials. Consequently, "by observing... others interacting with print, children learn that reading and writing have functional environmental uses" (Brown and Briggs, 1987, p. 278).

The environmental vocabulary

Many children enter school with a number of words in their sight word vocabulary. A sight word is "a word memorized or recognized as a whole, rather than by its parts blended together to form the whole" (Good, 1973, p. 650). The sight word vocabulary, accordingly, is composed of

words which the child recognizes immediately in reading. There is a vocabulary that children develop as a natural consequence of interacting with print in the home, neighborhood, and community — the environmental vocabulary. Children acquire this vocabulary naturally as they encounter printed words during daily activities. These words become part of the speaking and the recognition vocabularies as children hear the words spoken, see the words in print, and connect or associate the two. Children develop meaning for these words as a result of having sensory contact with things in their environment; such as eating candy, ice cream and fresh fruit; drinking cold drinks; visiting museums, fire stations and shopping centers. Indeed, these activities would reinforce the children's knowledge of environmental print because children quickly associate products and places with printed words.

Adults and children mutually share contact with environmental print. Because of the individualization of these experiences, the environmental vocabulary, in any case, would have an idiosyncratic nature because children develop this vocabulary as they interact with rather specific print. Logically, then, this vocabulary would vary from child to child, but some of the same words would be found in the environmental vocabularies of many children. The number of environmental words that children learn would be determined by the size and clarity of the print, the precociousness of the children, the familial structure and level of verbal interaction, the frequency of contact with print, the social and emotional consequences related to the print, the positive or negative reinforcement received when the printed words are seen, and the literacy experiences provided by teachers. The purpose of the present study was to determine the type and number of words that were in the environmental vocabularies of a selected group of second-grade students.

The findings of this study should alert teachers to the fact that children have an environmentally-developed vocabulary that could be utilized in planning literacy experiences.

The sample and the method

To determine what print children see, read and remember, a random sample of 46 second-grade children, 24 boys and 22 girls, was selected. Representing lower, middle and upper socioeconomic classes, the children came from a city of less than fifty thousand population. All the students attended the same elementary school, which was located in the most affluent section of the city; thus, many of the children were from the higher socioeconomic level. To determine which words compose the environmental vocabulary, the children were asked to write all the printed words that they remembered seeing in their environment. No attempt was made to assess word production by sex or ability. The children compiled their word lists during the spring semester of the second grade. The words were not just recognition words because the students had to recall and write each word without any visual or verbal stimulus. This would, after all, restrict the number of words but would ensure that only the best-known environmental words would be listed. The present research was different from other studies that have used environmental logos and other print to determine the sight word vocabularies or the discrimination abilities of preschool children (e.g., Goodall, 1984; Hiebert, 1981; Masonheimer, Drum and Ehri, 1984; Wepner, 1985).

The words that the children wrote were arbitrarily divided into nine groups. Most of the words were put into eight specific categories; "miscellaneous" was used to group those words that could not be classified otherwise. The divisions gave order and structure to the environmental

vocabulary and helped present a clearer picture of the words that the children were attracted to or, perhaps, merely the words which were most often seen and recalled.

Table 1
Environmental Vocabulary Production by Category

<i>Category</i>	<i>Total # of Listings for Category</i>	<i># of Different Items</i>	<i>% of Total Word Production</i>
1. Stores	111	39	27.28%
2. Meat	59	17	14.50%
3. Vegetables	46	15	11.30%
4. Fruits	44	9	10.81%
5. Desserts	37	15	9.09%
6. Road signs	34	19	8.35%
7. Other grocery items	31	22	7.61%
8. Drinks	28	14	6.88%
9. Miscellaneous	17	8	4.18%
Grand Total	407	158	100.00%

Findings

The second-grade pupils observed, remembered and wrote more names of stores than the words in any other category of environmental print. The store names written by the children represented 27.28 percent of the total word production (see Table 1, Category 1), and this group had the greatest variability with 39 different listings. Possibly the large production for this category could be explained by the size of the store signs, the eye-catching colors and designs of the signs, and the frequency with which the signs were seen. The children ($n = 46$) listed one store — Safeway— more often than any other environmental word with 45 percent of the children writing this store name. Obviously, on many occasions, the children went shopping at this particular store, and each trip reinforced the children's word perception and understanding as the name of the store was

said and the sign was seen. The next most listed words in this category were *store*, *Piggly Wiggly*, and *Wal-Mart*, with a frequency of 11, 9 and 8 respectively (see Table 2).

The second largest category of environmental words was classified as "meat." The children wrote 59 words related to meat products, and this category represented 14.50 percent of the total word production. Twelve of the children wrote *fried chicken* and *eggs*, which were the most frequently appearing listings in the meat group (see Table 2). The children wrote the generic term *meat* as the third most frequently appearing word, followed by *ham*. Vegetables made up the third largest group of written words. The children wrote the names of 15 different vegetables, with *green beans* having the highest frequency with 13 listings. *Tomatoes*, *beans*, and *onion*, with a frequency of 6, 5 and 4, respectively, were the next most frequently listed vegetables. The children listed 46 vegetables and this category represented 11.30 percent of the total word production.

The children's fourth largest group of written words was fruits. This category made up 10.81 percent of the students' total word production ($n = 407$) and had the least variability among the eight designated classifications. The students ($n = 46$) listed a total of 44 words in this category, which had 9 different fruits. The most frequently appearing fruits were *apples*, *bananas*, *pineapple*, and *watermelon*, with a frequency of 13, 7, 6 and 5, respectively (see Table 2, Category 4). The children's fifth largest group of vocabulary words was desserts. This category had 37 words which represented 9.09 percent of the children's total word production. The children most often wrote *ice cream*, *cake*, *popsicle*, and *candy*, with a frequency of 9, 5, 5 and 4, respectively.

Table 2
Four Highest Frequency Environmental Words by Category

<i>Category</i>	<i>Specific Environmental Words</i>	<i># of Students Listing</i>	<i>% of Students Listing</i>
1. Stores	Safeway	21	45
	Store	11	23
	Piggly Wiggly	9	19
	Wal-Mart	8	17
2. Meat	Fried chicken	12	26
	Eggs	12	26
	Meat	11	23
	Ham	6	13
3. Vegetables	Green beans	13	28
	Tomatoes	6	13
	Beans	5	10
	Onion	4	8
4. Fruits	Apples	13	28
	Bananas	7	15
	Pineapple	6	13
	Watermelon	5	10
5. Desserts	Ice cream	9	19
	Cake	5	10
	Popsicle	5	10
	Candy	4	8
6. Road signs	Stop	10	21
	School	5	10
	Yield	2	4
	Hospital	2	4
7. Other grocery items	Sugar	4	8
	Soap	3	6
	Bread	2	4
	Salt*	1	2
8. Drinks	Milk	9	19
	Cokes	6	13
	Tea	2	4
	Dr. Pepper*	1	2
9. Miscellaneous	Books	10	21
	Exxon*	1	2
	Mailbox*	1	2
	Shirt*	1	2

*These items were arbitrarily selected to represent the category.

The children wrote the words found on street or traffic signs as the sixth largest category of environmental print.

This group had a total production of 34 words with 19 different items. The children most often recalled seeing *stop*, *school*, *yield*, and *hospital* with a frequency of 10, 5, 2 and 2, respectively. The word *stop* probably had the highest frequency because this traffic sign is the most often used and, without doubt, the most observed in the neighborhoods where the children lived. The three remaining categories — “other grocery items,” “drinks,” and “miscellaneous” — had 18.67 percent of the total word production and were characterized by rather low frequency in specific word listings (see Table 2). The words in these three divisions were more individualized than the words in the other six groups and for this reason, the most idiosyncratic in nature.

Conclusions

Parents have prime responsibility for helping to develop children's literacy during the formative years. According to Bloom (1964), “in terms of intelligence measured at age 17, about 50 percent of the development takes place between conception and age 4” (p. 88). Many parents are keenly aware of the educational value of children's activities and, as a result, provide the best learning experiences, as well as extra encouragement and support, for their children. Parents, then, can make a positive contribution to literacy development. Furthermore, “parents who behave in a warm, democratic manner and provide their children with stimulating, educationally oriented activities, challenge their children to think, encourage independence, and reinforce their children, are preparing them very well for school” (Rubin, 1990, p. 17). Additionally, children can easily learn words “when they live in a clearly-labeled, sign-laden environment with helpful adults” (Mason, 1980, p. 221). Elementary teachers can easily build on this literacy foundation that was developed in the home environment.

Teachers should provide instruction based on the children's experiential background. Children should be encouraged to use their total repertoire of words in their written work, especially those familiar words that are regularly seen in the environment. Admittedly, the particular environmental words and the number of words that can be written will differ among children, but this variability should be considered an asset rather than a liability. Teachers can easily determine the specific words that make up the environmental vocabulary by asking the children to write the printed words that they remember seeing in the neighborhood and city as they travel to school, to grocery stores and to shopping centers.

To help develop the environmental vocabulary, classroom teachers can take their children for "walks around the school and neighborhood, with children searching for examples of environmental print" (Searfoss and Readence, 1989, p. 63). When returning to the classrooms, the children can be encouraged to use these newly-encountered words in their original written compositions detailing their rendition of the neighborhood excursion. Younger children can dictate their stories to their teachers who can make an experience chart; "the involvement of the teacher as a scribe could promote a united collaborative effort" (Brown and Briggs, 1991b, p. 336). On the other hand, older children can write their own stories with little, if any, assistance from their teachers. This activity should provide the children with a dynamic writing experience; or as Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) stated, "Children learn best in a language- and print-rich environment, with many opportunities to observe, try out and practice literacy skills in genuine communication situations" (p. 147).

Children should and will continue learning words from abundantly-available print seen in the home and neighborhood; "these [words in print] include environmental words (on road signs, billboards, fast-food restaurants and so forth), family-oriented words (names of family members and their addresses), book-related words (titles of favorite books and repetitive words in some stories), and words of special significance (holidays and words associated with meaningful experiences)" (Ross and Roe, 1990, p. 185). This knowledge will accelerate the growth of the children's environmental vocabulary; and "the more words they [the children] know, the easier it is to recognize and learn other words, based not on sound correspondences but on syllabic and semantic resemblances" (Smith, 1992, p. 439). Educators should realize that "the quality of the child's school experience appears to be related to the school's recognition that it is not the sole educative force in a child's life" (Florio and Shultz, 1979, p. 234). The educational activities in the home, neighborhood, and community are of paramount importance in promoting the child's language growth. The elementary curriculum, therefore, should be adjusted to make optimal use of the child's environmental learning experiences. As Aldridge and Rust (1987, p. 326) succinctly stated, "Using an environmental print supplement to the reading program may be just what they [the young children] need!"

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African-American Stories and Literary Responses: Does a Child's Ethnicity Affect the Focus of a Response?

Jennifer L. Altieri

The importance of using multicultural books with children has become of increasing concern to the educational community. "Within the past year multiculturalism has been the focus of articles in many important shapers and reflectors of public opinion including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*, *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Republic*" (Taxel, 1992). A criticism frequently found in such writing is the lack of multicultural books published. During a three-year period in the 1960s only four-fifths of one percent of the books published dealt with contemporary black Americans (Larrick, 1965). Even though the situation has slightly improved for all minority cultures, the percentage of books published about people of color continues to remain between one and two percent (Bishop, 1992). The most dramatic increase has been in the number of quality African-American books produced. In the last ten years, seven of the Caldecott Award winners or Honor Books contained African-American characters.

Even though there are now a number of award winning African-American books, the debate continues on whether or not multicultural literature can be effective with all children. Very few research articles dealing with this type of

literature have been published in the field. Research which has been conducted tends to focus on the attitude changes and ethnic understanding which can result from children being exposed to African-American stories (Bazelak, 1974; Litcher and Johnson, 1969; Walker-Dalhouse, 1992). While this is important, key questions still remain unanswered. This study represents a look at the literature from a different perspective. It is not examining the value of such literature to teach or to instill specific values. If multicultural literature is to be used in education it needs to be as literary works, not merely in lessons designed to modify attitudes or as didactic materials. The researcher is interested in using the literature just as any other literary work might be used, as an opportunity for a literary experience.

Research from a reader-response perspective focuses on the fact that the meaning does not lie in the text but rather is a result of a transaction between the reader and text (Rosenblatt, 1983). This study focused on the aesthetic transaction which can occur when reading literary works. In this type of transaction, readers' attention is focused on what they are living through during the reading event. To obtain a high quality aesthetic transaction, the reader must be engaged in the text.

The purpose of this study was to examine the written responses of Hispanic, African-American and Caucasian elementary students after listening to various African-American stories to see if engagement with the text was related to student's ethnicity. Specifically this study sought to determine if a relationship exists between the ethnicity of a student and the level of engagement achieved after listening to an African-American story as demonstrated in free responses given in writing. Furthermore the researcher examined the complex aesthetic responses to the stories in

light of the factors enabling that complexity to be reached to see if the focus of response was related to the student's ethnicity.

Method

Subjects. Subjects for this study were 60 third-grade students in three self-contained classrooms in an urban elementary school in the Southwest. The majority of the children come from homes with a low socioeconomic status. The school contains approximately 1,000 children pre-kindergarten to fourth grade. The subjects were categorized according to ethnicity of the student as provided by parent information. The ethnic groups included Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic. Two of the students in the study could not be classified as one of the above ethnicities, and their responses were not included in the data analysis.

Materials. Six African-American stories were selected for this study. The books were chosen because of their literary quality and because they were age appropriate. The books represented a variety of content that might be found in African-American literature. Two of the books, *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (McKissack, 1988) and *Flossie and the Fox* (McKissack, 1986) contained African-American characters but did not make race an issue. Two others, *Amazing Grace* (Hoffman, 1991) and *The Black Snowman* (Mendez, 1989), dealt with characters who needed to develop pride in their cultural background. The final two, *Teammates* (Golenbock, 1990) and *The Gold Cadillac* (Taylor, 1987), dealt with issues of prejudice.

Procedure. The three teachers involved read two African-American stories a week for three consecutive weeks to their class. After each story was read, the students were directed to "write anything you want to about the

story." The stories were read in the order listed above. This sequence remained consistent for all three teachers so that the stronger subject matter of the later books would not affect the students' responses to the other stories. To maintain consistency among the classes, teachers did not discuss the stories with their students.

Table 1
Aesthetic Levels of Responses

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Little or no evidence of story experience: <i>I like the book.</i> |
| 2 | Slight evidence of story experience: <i>I did not like the story because I did not like the characters.</i> |
| 3 | Evidence of story experience with little presence of aesthetic elements: <i>She wants to be Peter Pan. The kids voted for her.</i> |
| 4 | Some presence of aesthetic elements which directly relate to the story experience: <i>I liked the story because I liked when Lois was holding on to the knife.</i> |
| 5 | Detailed presence of aesthetic elements which give evidence of the personal significance of the story experience: <i>I liked when Pee Wee put his arm around Jackie Robinson and they began to be friends. I think other players will want to be friends with him too.</i> |
| 6 | Highly inventive and mature presence of aesthetic elements which enhance the personal significance of the story experience: <i>It was not nice for those people to say that about Grace. Color does not matter to me. No matter what color you are. Like Nana said, you can be anything you want to be no matter what color you are.</i> |

Data analysis. After all responses were gathered, data were analyzed for the complexity of the student's aesthetic responses using an instrument developed in earlier research examining third-grade students' responses to literature (Wiseman, Many and Altieri, in press). The instrument examines the degree to which a response reflects a personal aesthetic experience of the literary work (see Table 1). The first two levels represent very superficial evidence of story experience. Although specific characters or objects from the story might be mentioned at Level 2, no attempt is made to show a connection between them. Often

the response consisted of a list of words. Level 3 and Level 4 represent clear evidence of story experience. These responses not only make reference to the story but connections are made. At the latter level students go so far as to discuss certain parts which were personally relevant for them. Often it involved discussing their favorite part. At the last two levels, there is evidence of personal involvement in the story experience. At Level 5, the response is much more detailed. It not only discusses parts which are personally significant but discusses why these connections can be made. At the highest level, the response is highly inventive and exemplifies a mature presence of aesthetic elements. Here one can see a weaving of the response from the text to a personal experience and back into the text.

Individual analysis of variances were used for each text to examine if a relationship existed between ethnicity and level of complexity achieved. Then all responses which achieved a level of five or six in aesthetic quality were then sorted by content using Beach's (1985) clustering technique. This allowed for an individual examination of the responses, and responses were sorted according to their focus. A chi square analysis was used to examine possible relationships which existed between the content cluster and a student's ethnicity.

Results

The analysis of variance revealed that no significant difference existed between ethnicity and level of complexity. Therefore students were equally capable of engagement in the African-American stories regardless of ethnicity.

These data-driven clusters emerged as a result of the content analysis: 1) humor; 2) transference of idea in book to "real world"; 3) evaluation; 4) inferencing; 5) discussion of

likes/dislikes; 6) putting themselves in the story. The chi square results revealed that there was not a significant relationship between the factors enabling the complexity to be reached and student ethnicity (see Table 2).

Table 2
Percentage of Responses in a Cluster for
Each Ethnic Group

	African-American	Caucasians	Hispanics
1 humor	15.1%	11.5%	13.6%
2 transfers occurrence(s) in book to real world	22.6%	34.6%	27.3%
3 evaluative	30.2%	15.4%	18.2%
4 makes inferences	13.2%	11.5%	13.6%
5 discusses likes & dislikes	18.9%	19.2%	22.7%
6 puts self into story	0.0%	7.7%	4.5%

Responses which were placed in cluster one focused on an incident or character in the story in which the student found humor. The second cluster involved responses where the student chose to take an occurrence in the story and apply it to the everyday world with which the student is familiar. The third cluster contained responses written by children which focused on making a judgment of events or characters. A value statement was made about incidents in the book. Responses which were mainly the result of the student drawing inferences were placed in cluster four. The next group of responses, cluster five, contained responses in which the student chose to focus on what was enjoyed and/or disliked about the book. Finally, cluster six dealt with responses where students placed themselves into the story. They often discussed how they would react if they had been a character in the story.

Summary and implications

The least common type of response for all children involved putting themselves into the story. An example of this is as follows:

If I caught Brother Wind I would ask for uhundred wishes. Then I would tell him clean up the house...I am stell not going to let you go untell you build me a toy store...After he would building I would let him go...

This is interesting to note because although the books contained black characters, African-American students were no more likely to put themselves into the story than the other ethnicities represented in the study.

Also since two of the books dealt with the issue of prejudice, and two others dealt with children who needed to develop pride in their culture, one might expect African-Americans to find less humor in the books. Once again this was not the case. Focusing on incidents or characters which were funny was as common as a type of response as inferencing characters' feelings.

The most common type of response was transferring an occurrence in the book to the real world. For example:

I think Grace could play Peter Pan even if she was black or if she was a girl... I think every one should be able to do any thing they want. I'm going to be an artist when I grow up and Grace can be anything she wants.

A significant relationship did not exist between the ethnicity of the student choosing to transfer an incident in the story to the real world. It was a very common choice of response for African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian subjects.

After a look at the last ten years of Caldecott winners, it is obvious that there are more award-winning books about African-Americans than Native American, Hispanic and Asian combined. Certainly those books are the most readily available for teachers to use in their classrooms. If teachers are starting to use these multicultural books with their students, it is important to find out how children from different cultures will respond to the various subject matter presented in the stories and the books in general.

These books represent a variety of subject matter that can be found in African-American books. Since the use of multicultural literature in the classroom can be a very controversial issue, research needs to be conducted to see if certain ethnicities encounter difficulty in becoming engaged in the text. While some research has been conducted with multicultural literature, no studies prior to this have examined aesthetic quality. The results of the study support the idea that multicultural literature is for all children regardless of race because the responses of Caucasian and Hispanic students were not found to be significantly different from those of African-American children.

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Multiculturalism and Literacy

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Reading Disabilities: Are There Fewer In Japan?

E. Marcia Sheridan

Comparative reading research offers us an avenue to study a universal process — learning to read — in cultures and societies with different customs, traditions and writing systems. Such studies provide insights into how we learn, and fail to learn, and information about methods for meeting the reading needs of different students in our own country. In studying learning to read in another writing system there is always the temptation to make comparisons in terms of which is better or worse, easier or harder. In the past, research from Japan indicated that learning to read in Japanese produced fewer reading disabilities due to its writing system. Both past and more recent research on comparative differences in reading disabilities, particularly in Japan, have been examined to determine whether in fact more recent findings corroborate these beliefs.

Different writing systems

The study of the evolution of writing systems shows historical development from pictographic or ideographic orthographies, to the development of syllabaries, to the development of alphabets. Syllabaries are orthographies in which the symbol represents a syllable as opposed to an isolated phonemic sound as in an alphabet. Japanese is an example of a modern day syllabary which in addition also uses Chinese characters for about 30 percent of its written language. Most of the remainder of written text is written in

either of two syllabaries. The *hiragana* syllabary is used to write syntactic morphemes such as the endings of verbs and other necessary grammatical functions of the language. This syllabary, widely used, constitutes about 65 percent of the written text in Japanese. The second syllabary is called *katakana* and is used to write foreign loan words and onomatopoeic words. This comprises only four percent of written text. *Kana* is the term used to refer to both syllabaries (Sheridan, 1985; Taylor and Taylor, 1983). Because of its blend of Chinese characters, or *kanji*, with its own syllabaries or *kana*, Japanese has a unique place on the linguistic continuum between ideographic and phonetic writing systems. Because of this it has often been used in comparative reading research on orthographies.

Beginning reading instruction in Japan

When children are taught to read in Japan, the *hiragana* syllabary is introduced first. Both the *hiragana* and *katakana* syllabaries have 46 different symbols. When various diacritical marks are added to these symbols, they can represent 71 different syllables (Sakamoto, 1976). Each *kana* symbol is simple in appearance with from one to six strokes per letter and an average of three strokes necessary to write them (Muraishi, 1976; Stevenson, Stigler, Luckier, and Lee, 1982; Taylor and Taylor, 1983). They are almost always read the same way and begin with a consonant and end with a vowel (Sakamoto, 1976). Another advantage of the *kana* syllabary is that mirror images of the letters do not exist, so that if a child does reverse a letter it does not become a different letter, only one that is backwards (Sakamoto and Makita, 1973). So the problems associated with letters such as *p*, *q*, *d* and *b* do not exist in learning *kana*. The fact that *hiragana* is relatively easy to learn to read has been supported by the work of Japanese researchers in the past who reported that only

one percent of the children who entered first grade could not read *any* hiragana symbols, and in the past some Japanese experts reported that they had never seen a dyslexic (Makita, 1968; Sheridan, 1982). As a unit of pronunciation, the syllable is considered to be easier to learn, and results in less cognitive confusion than does learning a phonemically based alphabet (Downing, 1973).

Preschool education in Japan

Since 1960 there has been a boom in preschool education in Japan. Although it is not compulsory, 64 percent of children between three and five years old attend some kind of nursery, kindergarten or day care center (Izumoji, 1981). Sakamoto (1981) reports the research of Sugiyama and Saito and of Izumoji who found that mothers in Japan began reading to children usually by age one and generally from the child's own books. Japanese mothers of preschoolers report that the reason they give their children books is to help them develop appreciation for and interest in reading (Izumoji, 1981). One preschool publication for children sells over a million copies a year (Sakamoto, 1981). Half of children's publications in Japan are intended for preschoolers and primary age children (Namekawa, 1976). Sakamoto (1981) states that in Japan mothers are considered to be the most important factor in children's learning to read.

Reading readiness

Probably as a result of this early childhood education, Japanese children were reported, based on a standardized reading test, to be ready to begin reading instruction by age 4.5 (Sakamoto and Makita, 1973). Various researchers report that 83 percent of five years olds and 31 percent of three year olds can read all the hiragana letters (Sakamoto and Makita, 1973; Sakamoto, 1981; Sheridan, 1982). Namekawa (1976) stated that almost all first graders in

urban areas could both read and write the hiragana letters, enabling them to read the many books for young children which are printed entirely in hiragana (Namekawa, 1976). As mentioned earlier, in one report only one percent of five year olds could not read any hiragana five months before they entered first grade (Sakamoto, 1981).

In elementary schools in Japan, children are taught all the hiragana letters before any kanji characters are introduced. Groups of kanji are introduced beginning in first grade. By the end of elementary school, children are expected to have learned 1,000 characters. The official list of kanji characters is 1,945 kanji which students are expected to master by the end of ninth grade (DeFrancis, 1984; Sheridan, 1985). Perhaps because they have perceived so few children as having reading problems per se, the Japanese note other kinds of problems. They report concern for children who read excessively, those who do not finish books they start, those who only read one kind of book, and those who want to read books for older children or adults (Sakamoto and Makita, 1973).

Early reading disability research in Japan

One of the earliest reports of the low incidence of reading disability in Japan was the research of Makita (1968). He conducted a survey of 247 primary school teachers of over 9,000 students in the metropolitan Tokyo area, asking them how many of their students showed evidence of reading disabilities. They were specifically asked whether students experienced more difficulty in reading either the kana or the kanji. The teachers reported slightly less than one percent of the children as experiencing reading difficulties, and a smaller percentage of that number were reported as mentally retarded. Difficulties with kana decreased by grade level so that by fourth grade no

children were reported as dyslexic in either kana script. Eight children were reported as having difficulty with kanji in fourth grade and above out of the 9,195 children whose teachers were surveyed. No doubt as a result of findings such as this, reading disabilities were not perceived to be a serious problem in Japan (Makita, 1968).

Cognitive processing of different scripts

Some interesting reading research has been conducted with brain injured Japanese subjects to determine whether kana or kanji reading was more affected. In the first study, Sasanuma and Fugimura (1971) studied patients in a large metropolitan rehabilitation center who suffered from aphasia, some of whom also had apraxia or speech disabilities. Lhermitte and Gautier (1969) defined aphasia as a disorder in the reception and expression of spoken and/or written speech resulting from a cerebral lesion. Both reading and writing were assessed in the Japanese study. Those aphasics with speech difficulties made significantly more errors in reading and writing kana, the syllabic script, than in kanji, the morphemic script. Aphasics without apraxia exhibited no such discrepancy. In a follow-up study, Sasanuma and Fujimura (1972) examined the writing errors in both kana and kanji among aphasics and non-aphasics. Both groups made the most errors in kanji in a visual or graphical way. There was a difference between the performance in writing of aphasics and non-aphasics in favor of non-aphasics. Aphasics with apraxia, compared to those without, made a much higher percentage of errors in kana, demonstrating phonological confusion, substantiating the results of the earlier research that there is selective impairment and that the two scripts can be processed differently.

Sasanuma (1974) studied impairment in written language in adult Japanese aphasics and found that selective

impairment in kana script was related primarily to patients experiencing damage to Broca's area of the frontal lobe in the left hemisphere. These people also had problems with speech difficulties (Sheridan, 1983). Sasanuma also found that selective impairment in kanji of adult aphasics was related to damage in the temporal-parietal lobes of the left hemisphere, a rare condition called Gogi's aphasia. A third type of impairment to the temporal lobe of the left hemisphere resulted in Wernicke's aphasia, a condition which resulted in impairment in both kana and kanji. While these results suggest different areas of the brain differentially affecting kana or kanji scripts, Sasanuma also stated that it was reasonable to assume some phonological activity in the processing of kanji characters. A similar conclusion was drawn by Hung and Tzeng (1981) who reviewed studies dealing with comparisons between ideographic, syllabic and alphabetic scripts. They found that differences existed in processing in lower level activities such as visual scanning but not in higher level concept driven processes. No differences were found with respect to word recognition, comprehension, inferences and working memory strategies. They concluded that the evidence suggested that reading was "a universal property, a culture-free cognitive activity, once people in different language systems (had) acquired the ability to decipher written systems" (p. 406).

Cross-cultural comparisons in reading disability

Until recently we have not had any truly valid comparisons on the incidence of reading disabilities in learning to read in different orthographies. Kuo (1978) in Taiwan claimed similar findings to the Japanese for the rarity of reading disabilities in learning to read in Chinese. Since, depending on the criteria used, anywhere from 10 to 25 percent of American school children are considered to have some kind of reading problem, these reports have been

troublesome (Sheridan, 1983). They have suggested that learning to read, at least in the Latin alphabet, is more difficult than learning in other orthographies.

Recent research conducted by Stevenson and co-researchers (1982; 1984a; 1984b; 1984) has provided much insight and data on the nature of reading disabilities related to literacy acquisition in different writing systems. Stevenson, Stigler, Lucker and Lee (1982) sought to find evidence to support the hypothesis that orthography was a major factor in the incidence of reading disabilities in countries with different writing systems. Stevenson et al (1982) compared the reading ability of first and fifth grade children in the United States, Taiwan and Japan. Since the Japanese and Taiwanese children were a very homogeneous group, the American children studied resided in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a more homogeneous population than usual in the United States. Comparable reading tests were constructed to assess the reading abilities of children in Taiwan, Japan and the United States. Fifth grade children were studied, and those children whose IQs were below 70 were eliminated from the study. Children with average IQs who were reading more than two grades below their current grade placement (a traditional definition of reading disability in the U.S.) were compared to average readers at the same grade level in the same country (Stevenson, 1984b; Stevenson et al., 1982).

While the Taiwanese have not adopted the simplified characters used in mainland China but maintain the traditional characters, Taiwanese children also learn 3,000 characters during the course of elementary school. As there is no achievement testing of a comparable nature in the People's Republic of China, the Stevenson et al. study (1982) is the only one to date which so thoroughly

compares learning to read in Chinese, Japanese and English. In fact, prior to this study no individually administered reading test existed in Taiwan or Japan though group tests are used in Japan (Stevenson, 1984a; Hirose and Hatta, 1988). Identifying those who were more than two years behind grade level, Stevenson et al. (1982) found that the percent of fifth graders in the study who were found to meet this description were three percent of the American children, two percent of the Taiwanese children, and eight percent of the Japanese children. There were no significant differences in the incidence of reading disabilities found among the three countries.

Based on a battery of tests given to the children in each country, the causes of reading failure tended to differ among the countries. Chinese children had more problems with comprehension, while Japanese and American children had problems in both vocabulary and comprehension. There was a significant correlation between the scores of Chinese children on the reading test and a test in math indicating a more general learning problem than among Japanese and American children. From this battery of cognitive tests, several factors were found to significantly affect reading ability in the three countries. These included general information for all three countries, verbal memory for Japan and Taiwan, memory for words in Taiwan, and coding (which is often a cue for a learning disability on the WISC) in the United States.

Since the degree of reading disability in English could not be predicted from cognitive scores, reading speed or math achievement, the data tended to support the idea that reading disabilities in English were a more distinctive feature than among the Chinese and Japanese. Interestingly, there was also much less variance in the

scores among the children in Taiwan with a much larger percentage of children scoring at grade level. A possible explanation for the reduced variance in the scores of Chinese children might be due to the fact that while new words written in an alphabet or a syllabary can be sounded out, in Chinese this is much more difficult and more dependent on instruction.

There were different kinds of reading problems for the children in the three places; for example, phonetic coding was a problem for some children learning the alphabet, but not a problem for children in Japan or Taiwan. However, Stevenson et al. (1982) found no support for the belief that there was a greater incidence of reading disabilities in English as compared to Chinese or Japanese or that such disabilities were related to the particular writing system. To the contrary, they found that problems occurred regardless of whether the children learned to read in characters, a syllabary or an alphabetic system.

The Stevenson et al. (1982) study represented a contradiction of the previous research on reading disabilities in Japan and Taiwan. While no comparable experimental data on reading disabilities are available from China there are some statistics on literacy. The mainland Chinese census data report that 23.6 percent of their population is illiterate (State Statistical Bureau of China, 1982). The actual figure is probably higher since the same census data reported that only 40 percent of the total Chinese population have completed elementary school (Guthrie, 1984). However, while the language is the same as in Taiwan, China is an entirely different population from either Taiwan or Japan. The latter two are smaller, more urban, more economically developed and have had mandatory primary education for many years.

Both the Kuo (1978) and the Makita (1968) studies reporting extremely low incidence of reading disability explained their findings as attributable to the characteristics of the writing systems. Makita cited the Japanese syllabary's sound/syllable consistency, and Kuo the fact that Chinese characters represent morphemes instead of just phonetic elements. While there is consistency in syllable/sound in Japanese, nonetheless readers must still recognize characters as well. However, DeFrancis (1984) reports that while average Japanese adults can probably read the 1,945 official kanji, they can probably only write about 500 of them and must resort to writing them in kana. In the Chinese case, the fact that characters are morphemes doesn't necessarily make them easy to learn.

Using a newly developed standardized test of reading ability and an intelligence test, Hirose and Hatta (1988) conducted a study of the incidence of reading disability of Japanese fifth grade 11 year olds with IQs of 85 and above. According to their criteria for a reading disability, the child had to have an IQ of 85 or above and be two or more years below the grade level score. They found approximately 11 percent of the children in their study had reading disabilities. Males were almost twice as likely to have a reading disability as females with no difference between rural and urban children. The incidence of reading disability was strongly associated with sentence memory and reasoning ability and not with word discrimination abilities, suggesting a cognitive as opposed to a perceptual factor.

In light of the Stevenson et al. (1982) and the Hirose and Hatta (1988) studies, the previous research about the low incidence of reading disabilities in Japanese must now be regarded as questionable. In discussing their results Stevenson et al. (1982) proposed several explanations for

this disparity. One problem in making comparisons across cultures is that there is no direct linguistic equivalent of the term *reading disability* in Japanese. They mention the fact that the closest translation for reading disability in Japanese is *nandokusho* which means that the reader is having a problem reading the kanji characters, not the kana syllables. Some Japanese researchers have suggested that the eight percent of Japanese children in the Stevenson et al. (1982) study who were reading below grade level were slow learners, not reading disabled. Considering that 63.6 percent of the children who were found to have reading disabilities in the Hirose and Hatta study (1988) had IQs below 100, this may be a more accurate description. Hirose and Hatta state that previous misconceptions regarding the incidence of reading disability in Japan have been due to the lack of translation of such studies into English and the fact that only since 1984 has there been a standardized group reading test available in Japan.

There are some cultural factors at work here. In the United States educational funding formulas are often based on categorizing children. Of course standardized testing has long been a tradition. There is no equivalent in China, Taiwan and Japan to the large-scale testing and classification of elementary school students into special reading programs which occurs in the United States. Stevenson et al. (1982) point out some other cultural factors affecting perception of reading problems in Taiwan and Japan. They found that Asian parents were more likely to attribute a reading problem to lack of effort or improper teaching (Stevenson et al., 1984). They speculated that perhaps the Asian parents viewed a reading problem as something that could be overcome rather than as a lasting disability.

Of course there are other cultural differences between the United States and Japan which also make comparative reading and educational research interesting. Japanese schools encourage more conformity than do American schools. Respect for discipline, teachers and authority figures is more common in Japan and other Asian countries than in the United States. Factors which complicate comparative reading research include the lack of parallel concepts and culturally different perceptions of human nature as well as the difficulty of constructing parallel testing instruments. What the recent comparative studies of the incidence of reading disabilities in Chinese, Japanese and English suggest is that there is no perfect orthography, and that a small percentage of children will have difficulty in learning to read regardless of the script used to write it.

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Chapter 1 Reading Programs: Do Student/Family Factors Make A Difference?

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Supplementary programs in basic skills, currently the Educational Consolidation Improvement Act – Chapter 1 – have been offered for over 25 years. Chapter 1 programs are typically in reading and math with the majority focusing on reading. School qualification for receiving federal Chapter 1 funds is based on whether or not the school serves low-income families; however, student eligibility to participate in a given school's program is based upon student level of achievement.

Criticism of Chapter 1 programs

Recently Chapter 1 programs have been severely criticized (Allington, 1987; Passow, 1990). Richard Allington, himself a Chapter 1 teacher in the 1970s, says that these programs are ineffective and costly, that time-on-task is minimal, that students spend too much time on skill and drill workbook activities, that Chapter 1 students miss more from leaving the regular classroom than they gain from the specialized attention in the Chapter 1 program, and that these students do not significantly increase their reading abilities while receiving special help in Chapter 1. Similarly, Passow (1990) describes Chapter 1 programs as providing a less challenging curriculum and limited achievement

goals, asserting that the typical pull-out nature of the programs actually hampers the ability of low-achieving students to develop critical thinking skills, lowers their learning expectations, stigmatizes them as inferior, and presents a fragmented program because of the lack of coordination between the classroom and the Chapter 1 program.

Three areas of Chapter 1 evaluation

The criticisms of Allington and Passow show that careful evaluation of the effectiveness of Chapter 1 programs. is needed. Program evaluations during the last 25 years can be divided into three general areas: evaluation based upon compliance/funding issues; evaluation based upon student test score data; and evaluation examining characteristics that might influence student test score data.

Federal evaluations, based on state-collected data, typically evaluate effectiveness in terms of compliance with guidelines or financial issues (South Carolina State Department of Education, 1986; Brown, 1987; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1987). Other evaluations focus on level of achievement (North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, 1988; Hawaii State Department of Education, 1988; Kaemper and Morse, 1985; Lewis, 1985; Ohio State Department of Education, 1985). The general achievement objective is 1.0 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) gain per month for every month of instruction, or an average gain of 7 NCE points from pre-test to post-test (Lewis, 1985), or, according to Chamberlain, Beck and Johnson (1983), a 1.5 NCE gain per month of instruction.

Yet other studies have attempted to isolate student and program characteristics that were associated with success. They have examined general program characteristics such as instructional focus (Leitner and Ingebo, 1984;

Slaughter and Haussler, 1984; Allington, Stuetzel, Shake and Lamarche, 1985; Kushmuck, 1985; Yagi, Dey, Mitchell, Leitner, and Kushmuck, 1986; Brown, 1987; Nechworth, Cisneros, and Sanchez, 1989), hours of instruction (Lewis, 1985; Himley, McClanahan, Tack, and Pfannenstiel, 1986; Davidoff and Fishman, 1988), and attention to the affective domain (Gibbons, 1984; Lewis, 1985). Others examined student characteristics such as grade level and sex (Ashby, Levitt, Naya, and Wardell, 1985; Halfar and Collins, 1987; Michigan Department of Education, 1989) and engagement in positive behaviors (Yagi and Kushman, 1988). Yet others examined personnel characteristics such as teacher training (Castelda and Wagner, 1990) and use of tutors (Leitner and Ingebo, 1984; Kushmuk, 1985). A final area of evaluation has focused on parental/community involvement (Ohio State Department of Education, 1988; Christner, Luna, Washington, and Moede, 1989; New York City Board of Education, 1990).

Allington (1984) suggested examining characteristics of effective remedial instruction in the areas of setting, curriculum, instruction, time, students and evaluation. He argued that Chapter 1 programs have remained static for too long with too little systematic investigation by members of the reading profession. In response, evaluations have been increasing in depth and breadth as researchers look at a variety of factors. For example, the Saginaw public schools took a macro-perspective in their program evaluation by extending the needs assessment far beyond looking at student test scores. A 65-item needs assessment questionnaire indicated that there were high priority concerns in the areas of professional development; parent and community involvement; program goals and objectives; recognition and reward of excellence; coordination with other school programs; instructional materials, methods and approaches;

leadership; and expectations of students (Michigan Department of Evaluation Services, 1987).

A closer look at student factors

One of the areas Allington noted as needing more rigorous investigation was the evaluation of the students themselves. Although program characteristics are certainly important, a complete look at the Chapter 1 picture must also consider the characteristics of the students who participate in these programs. Are students with a certain profile more likely to benefit from Chapter 1 reading services than students with a different profile? The influence of the following student factors might affect academic progress: entering achievement level; IQ; sex; general health; vision; hearing; grade; number of grade retentions; number of schools attended; number of years enrolled in a Chapter 1 program; level of attendance in the Chapter 1 program; general self-concept; attitude toward reading; level of effort expended in the Chapter 1 classroom; willingness to take a risk (try to guess, try new methods, etc.); and study habits, time-management and general organization. Family/parent factors may also affect achievement: level of interest of the parents in schooling; attitude with respect to the student being in the Chapter 1 program; parent-teacher contacts; parental difficulty with reading or learning to read; the family constellation; and socioeconomic background.

Prior studies have dealt with some of these student/family factors. A 1988-89 evaluation of gain made by Chapter 1 students in the Saginaw Michigan public schools (1989) indicated that overall the greatest gains in reading were made at the first grade level. New York City's program also showed initial gains being greater for students in the first year of Chapter 1 service (Halfar and Collins, 1987). On the other hand, Ashby (1985) reported that secondary

grade level gains were greater than elementary gains. Female gains were reported larger than male gains at both the elementary and secondary levels for Dade County Public Schools (Ashby et al., 1985). Students in two different three year longitudinal studies in the Portland public schools made greater gains when they were in the Chapter 1 program than after they were released, but these gains were attributed to the extent that Chapter 1 students engaged in positive behaviors rather than to the curricular quality of the programs (Yagi and Kushman, 1988).

The Cincinnati public schools set as two goals for 1985 for students in Chapter 1 programs to be as positive as their non-Chapter 1 peers in a) attitude toward self and b) attitude toward school. These goals were not met and the year-end report recommended that additional effort be expended to improve student attitude (Lewis, 1985). Similarly, the Elementary Counseling Project of Columbus Public Schools sought to improve the level of reading achievement as well as the social and personal behavior of students in 14 Chapter 1 eligible schools (Gibbons, 1984). The Ohio State Department of Education (1988) found that some of the most profound program benefits result from the involvement of parents and other community members in classroom activities as well as educational planning and funding. Similarly, the 1988-89 evaluation of Chapter 1 programs in the Austin Texas public schools (Christner, et al., 1989) showed impressive gains and was linked to the doubling of the number of parents who participated in the PAC advisory meetings and training sessions. In New York City's non-public Chapter 1 corrective reading program, parents' reading aloud in grades 1-3 was an important component. Achievement gains were greater than average and were statistically significant; thus, vigorous expansion of the

parent read-aloud component was a key recommendation (New York City Board of Education, 1990).

The present study

Any practitioner will note that some students make great NCE gains in reading achievement through being enrolled in a Chapter 1 program. Others not only do not gain, but fall farther behind. In a recent national study by the federal government (Sinclair and Gutmanns, 1991), for grades 2-12, average gains were from a low of -0.3 NCE gain for grade 12 to a high of 3.5 NCE gain for grade 6. Yet some individual students made 40-50 NCE gains for highs and others had a 40-50 NCE loss for lows. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to isolate student and family characteristics that might have an impact upon student achievement in the Chapter 1 reading program. Often a school cannot adequately serve all of the students who are in need of remedial reading services. If characteristics of students likely to benefit from Chapter 1 reading services can be identified, then consideration of these factors and careful selection of students could generally increase the effectiveness of Chapter 1 programs.

Methodology

Teachers in eight different Chapter 1 programs were asked to complete questionnaires for the five students who had made the greatest gains in their program and for the five students who had made the smallest gains or who made no gain at all. The sample included 38 students in the high-achieving group (due to one teacher identifying only three high-achievers) and 40 students in the low-achieving group. All schools used spring-spring test results of a reading comprehension subtest of a general achievement test given in the regular classroom. School size ranged from under 300 to over 800 students. First, student data were

collected regarding sex of student, grade in school, the number of schools attended, IQ, and pre- and post-test scores in reading comprehension. Data were also collected for 19 student and parent/family characteristics that might impact upon student achievement: student self-concept; student risk-taking; student effort; student attitude toward reading; student study habits, time management and general organizational skills; student interest in program participation; general health of the student; vision; hearing; length of enrollment in the Chapter 1 program; number of times the student was retained; number of parent-teacher contacts; parental attitude regarding student placement in the program; amount of parental help with homework; parental difficulty with learning to read or write; family socioeconomic background; and family constellation. A two-tailed *t*-test was used to compare the mean gains for male and female students and to compare the means of high achievers and low-achievers with respect to the 19 analyzed factors.

Figure 1 Informational Data for High Achievers and Low Achievers in Chapter 1 Reading Programs		
FACTOR	HIGH ACHIEVERS	LOW ACHIEVERS
Sex	55% males	62% males
Number of schools attended	1.4	1.5
Student grade in school (yr/mo)	4.7	4.7
Student IQ score	97	93
Student entering NCE pre-test score in reading comprehension	29	39

Results and discussion

Informational data for both high- and low-achievers are presented in Figure 1. Fifty-five percent of the students in the high-achieving group were males and 62 percent of

the students in the low-achieving group were males. Both high-achievers and low-achievers had attended the same number of schools. The mean grade in school for both groups was the same, 4.7. The IQ scores for the high and low groups were 97 and 93, respectively. Thus, the two groups were similar for several important factors. The mean pre-test reading comprehension score for the high-achieving group was 29 NCEs; the mean for the low-achieving group was 39. For high-achieving students, the average NCE gain was 20, and for the low-achieving group, the average NCE gain was -15. Thus, in this sample, students who were lowest in reading comprehension, by pre-test scores, made the greatest gains. Gains made by males were similar to those made by females, 1.11 NCEs and 3.56 NCEs, respectively. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2

Comparison of Reading Comprehension Gains for Males vs. Females Enrolled in Chapter 1 Reading Programs (NCE's)

Males		Females		<i>t</i> -score	Level of Significance
Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
1.11	22.15	3.56	17.91	-1.62	NS

Although the highest and lowest scores were from different teachers, all teachers in the study had some students demonstrating great success and others demonstrating lack of success. The change in high achievers' scores ranged from -1 NCEs to +63 NCEs; for low achievers, changes ranged from -44 to +3. The largest difference for students in the same program ranged from a -23 NCE to a +63 NCE gain. The range of scores for the 78 students in this study underscores the need to further study of the students' personal and family characteristics (as well as of program characteristics). Figure 3 shows the level of

significance for the 19 student and parent/family factors analyzed. Factors are arranged in descending order, according to strength of the significance. The levels of response for the each factor are also noted.

Figure 3
Student/Family Characteristics and Student Achievement in
Chapter 1 Reading Programs

Factors Examined	High Achievers Mean (s.d.)	Low Achievers Mean (s.d.)	t-value	Level of Significance
Student self-concept 4= very positive; 3=somewhat positive; 2=somewhat negative; 1=negative	3.2 (.71)	2.2 (.89)	5.41	.001
Student risk-taking 3=high; 2=moderate; 1=low	2.4 (.74)	1.6 (.63)	5.10	.001
Student effort 4=above average; 3=moderate; 2=low; 1=non-existent	3.3 (.84)	2.7 (.71)	3.37	.001
Parent attitude regarding student placement in the program 4=positive; 3=somewhat positive; 2=somewhat negative; 1=negative	3.5 (.85)	2.6 (1.41)	3.36	.01
Student attitude toward reading 4=likes to read/reads on own outside of class; 3=somewhat interested in reading; 2=neutral about reading; 1=verbally expresses dislike of reading	3.1 (.94)	2.4 (1.08)	3.00	.01
Student study habits/time-management/general organizational skills 4=above average; 3=average; 2=below average; 1=non-existent	2.6 (.63)	2.1 (.84)	2.94	.01
Student interest in program participation 4=very interested; 3=somewhat interested; 2=not interested; 1=negative	3.4 (.67)	2.8 (.93)	2.67	.05
Parent interest in schooling in general 4=high; 3=medium; 2=low; 1=non-existent	3.0 (.84)	2.5 (.97)	2.39	.05

Parental help with homework	2.8	(1.24)	2.0	(1.50)	2.39	.05
3=supportive assistance; 2=minimal assistance; 1=too much assistance or no assistance						
General health of student	3.4	(.59)	3.2	(.69)	1.36	NS
4=excellent; 3=good; 2=fair; 1=poor						
Student level of attendance	3.7	(.58)	3.5	(.72)	1.35	NS
4=regular; 3=moderate; 2=irregular; 1=brief initial attendance						
Family constellation	2.7	(.50)	2.5	(.77)	1.33	NS
3=two parent; 2=single-parent; 1-other						
Parental difficulty with learning to read or write	3.0	(1.18)	2.7	(1.42)	1.00	NS
4=parents appear to have no difficulty; 3=judgment cannot be made; 2=behaviors indicate difficulty; 1=parent(s) volunteered information about own or spouse's difficulty with reading/writing						
Student retention	2.8	(.61)	2.7	(.56)	.74	NS
3=never retained; 2=one grade retention; 1=two or more grade retentions						
Length of student's enrollment in Chapter 1	2.6	(1.59)	2.5	(1.58)	.21	NS
Student vision	2.9	(.00)	2.9	(.00)	.00	NS
3=no apparent problems; 2=did not pass vision screening; 1=possible serious difficulty						
Student hearing	3.0	(.00)	3.0	(.00)	.00	NS
3=no apparent problems; 2=did not pass hearing screening; 1=possible serious difficulty						
Number of parent-teacher contacts to discuss/note student's progress during the year (by phone; in person)	4.8	(3.89)	4.9	(3.84)	-.11	NS
Family socio-economic background	1.4	(.49)	1.6	(.49)	-1.76	NS
2=qualifies for free/reduced lunch; 1=does not qualify for free/reduced lunch						

*One teacher recorded information for only three high-achieving students.

Factors affecting student achievement: Nine factors were found to affect student achievement in the Chapter 1 program significantly (See Figure 3.) Three factors had a significant and positive bearing on student achievement at $p < .001$: 1) the student's self-concept; 2) the student being described by the teacher as an academic risk-taker, willing to predict/hypothesize, make educated guesses; and 3) a high level of student effort. Three other factors had a significant effect on student achievement at the .01 level: 1) the parents wanting the student to be in the program; 2) the student having a positive attitude toward reading; and 3) the student having good study habits, time-management skills and general organizational abilities. Three factors were significant at the .05 level: 1) the interest the student had in participating in the program; 2) the level of interest of the parents in schooling in general; and 3) the amount of parental help the student received with his or her homework. Six of these significant factors were student-oriented, and three were parent/family-oriented.

Significant student characteristics. Six student characteristics most significantly affecting student achievement are particularly interesting because they are ones that might be characterized as being within the teacher's sphere of influence. Significant at $p < .001$, were student self-concept, academic risk-taking behavior (willing to guess, trying new methods, etc.), and student effort. While the teachers rated the self-concept of those in the high-achieving group as *somewhat positive*, a mean of 3.2, the mean of those in the low-achieving group was rated as *somewhat negative*, a mean of 2.2. High-achieving students were viewed as *moderate-to-high* risk-takers, with a mean of 2.4, and low-achieving students were viewed as *low-to-moderate* risk-takers, with a mean of 1.6. A related influencing factor was

level of effort expended in the Chapter 1 classroom, with the high-achieving group viewed as expending greater effort. The high-achieving group mean was 3.3 compared to the 2.7 mean for the low group.

Significant at $p < .01$ were student attitude toward reading and study habits/time-management/general organization skills. Students in the high-achieving group were viewed as being *somewhat interested* in reading and students in the low-achieving group were viewed as being *neutral*, with means of 3.1 and 2.4, respectively. Although study habits/time-management/general organization skills were not particularly strong for either group, the high-achieving students were rated *somewhat below average*, a mean of 2.6, while the low-achieving students were rated as *definitely below average*, a mean of 2.1.

A last characteristic, significance at $p < .05$, was the student's attitude toward participating in the reading program. Students in the high-achieving group were *somewhat to very interested* with a mean of 3.4; students in the low-achieving group were *not interested to somewhat interested* with a mean of 2.8.

Student factors not significant. Six student factors were of interest because they were not found to vary significantly for the 38 high achieving Chapter 1 students as compared to the 40 low-achieving Chapter 1 students: 1) health, 2) vision, 3) hearing, 4) grade retention, 5) length of enrollment in the Chapter 1 program and 6) level of attendance.

The general health of both groups was rated as good, with high achieving students having a mean of 3.4 and low-achieving students having a mean of 3.2. Similarly, no

apparent vision or hearing problems were noted for either group, with both groups having means of 2.9 for vision and 3.0 for hearing.

Neither did grade retention have an effect. The mean for high achieving students was 2.8 and for the low-achieving students was 2.7 (3 = no retentions), indicating that few students had been retained. Related to this, the number of years enrolled in a Chapter 1 program did not differ for the two groups; the high-achieving students had been enrolled for a mean of 2.6 years and the low-achieving students for 2.5 years. The hypothesis that the longer a student is in a Chapter 1 program, the less likely the student is to continue to achieve did not appear to be valid for this sample. Interestingly, level of attendance in the Chapter 1 program did not differ for the two groups. The means for the high-achieving group and for the low-achieving group were similar, 3.7 and 3.5, respectively, indicating a *moderate to regular* level of attendance for both groups.

Significant parent/family characteristics. Of the parent/family characteristics assessed, the ones that had the greatest effect were ones which the teacher might influence (see Figure 3). Significant at $p < .01$ was the attitude of the parent about the student being in the Chapter 1 program. Parents of high-achieving students were more interested in having their sons and daughters in the Chapter 1 program than were parents of low-achieving students. Although the parents of the high-achieving students were rated as midway between *somewhat positive* and *positive*, parents of low-achieving students were rated midway between *somewhat negative* and *somewhat positive*, with means of 3.5 and 2.6, respectively.

Significant at the .05 level were the interest of the parents in schooling in general and level of assistance with homework. The level of interest of the parents in schooling was somewhat higher for the high-achieving group than for the low-achieving group, means of 3.0 and 2.5, respectively, with 3.0 indicating *medium* interest and 2.0 indicating *low* interest.

High-achieving students were likely to receive minimal parent assistance with homework; on the other hand, low-achieving students were likely to receive either too much assistance or no assistance at all. The two groups had means of 2.8 and 2.0, respectively. The reader should note that neither parental group was viewed as giving supportive assistance. Also of interest is that teachers were able to note the level of assistance for all but two of the 38 students in the high-achieving group; however, they indicated that they did not know the type of parental assistance that was given for 10 of the 40 students in the low-achieving group.

Parent/family characteristics not significant.

Other family/parent factors assessed are noteworthy because they did not significantly relate to whether the student was in the high-achieving group or the low-achieving group: 1) number of parent-teacher contacts; 2) parental difficulty with learning to read; 3) family socioeconomic background; and 4) family constellation.

The number of parent teacher contacts was not significantly different for the two groups. The high-achieving group had a mean of 4.8, and the low-achieving group had a mean of 4.9. Neither was a difference noted with respect to parent difficulty with reading. Parents in both groups were viewed as evenly divided between those who did and did not have difficulty learning to read. Socio-economic

background was not a significant factor; 42 percent of students in the high-achieving group and 60 percent of students in the low-achieving group qualified for a free/reduced lunch. Similarly, family constellation was not a significant factor; 76 percent of the students in the high-achieving group were from two-parent families, and 58 percent in the low-achieving group were from two-parent families. Although differences in socioeconomic status and family constellation were noted, the differences were not great enough to reach significance.

Summary

Study results show that student and parent/family characteristics affecting achievement in the Chapter 1 program can be identified. Although personal to the students and their families, these characteristics are ones that the teacher can possibly influence. Most important were the student's self-concept, the student's ability to take a risk, the student's effort, the student's study habits/time management/organizational skills, the student's attitude about reading, and the parent's attitude about the student participating in the reading program. On the other hand, those characteristics not within a teacher's ability to influence were found to be ones that did not have a significant effect on student achievement.

Limitations of the study. The sample of this study is relatively small. Thus, caution must be exercised when generalizing results. Also, student and parent/family characteristics were determined by school records and teacher perceptions rather than documented by student and parent response. An additional limitation is that the study was not longitudinal. Continuing to follow the high-achieving group and the low-achieving group may show in succeeding years that students in both groups regress or

advance to their personal means. Replication of this study will show whether or not the factors noted as significant or not significant are consistently true.

Educational implications. As we look at the variety of variables that might impact upon Chapter 1 effectiveness, we will learn more about the value and worth of Chapter 1 programs. Student experiences both in and out of school and both student and parent attitudinal factors need to be considered when evaluating a school's Chapter 1 program effects on student achievement (Yagi, et al., 1986).

As teachers and administrators consider ways to help students in their Chapter 1 programs make greater progress, they should consider affective student and parent characteristics. Central to the program, regardless of the instructional focus, should be encouraging a student's positive self-concept and a love for reading. A program where students have a choice of reading materials, one where they spend most of their time reading real literature, and one where they also have an opportunity to listen to good children's literature should help to promote this love of reading. Instruction which encourages students to take risks (to make educated guesses and to predict) invites increased achievement. Teachers need to encourage students to be active in their learning, to make use of their prior knowledge and experiences, and to think. A focus on organizational skills, good study habits, and time management should also be a part of the Chapter 1 program. These aspects of study skills are ones that are appropriate for students of all ages and should be directly taught and modeled for Chapter 1 students. All of the above will be likely to have an impact on student effort which, in turn, impacts upon student achievement.

Chapter 1 teachers should also consider the attitude and needs of the parents. Teachers might help parents to understand the program and the teacher's philosophy of teaching through friendly letters, newsletters and meetings. Parents can also be encouraged to be involved in the curriculum. Perhaps parents could get together via the Parent Advisory Council and collaboratively make books for the children to read. Various parents might contribute a story about a favorite relative to a book entitled *People We Love*. Or perhaps parents could compile a book of favorite rainy day things to do. Parents might also be more personally involved as they come to the Chapter 1 room to listen to their own or other children read. Teachers and interested parents together probably could compose a list of ways to involve parents that would surpass what teachers or administrators alone might devise. Parent involvement on more than just a nominal basis might greatly affect parental attitude toward school as well as toward their students' Chapter 1 program participation.

Also important is communicating to the parents the type of assistance with homework that is most beneficial to the student. Although teachers frequently send home ideas for parents regarding how to help their children with reading, a discussion of the level of help that is either supportive or detrimental to student achievement should be considered. Teachers should also share ways that parents who are not able readers themselves can help their students.

Positive feelings on the part of both Chapter 1 students and their parents is the place to begin. The next step is to consider how particular programmatic considerations can positively influence this affective domain as well as be based upon effective instructional principles.

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Journal of Reading **Call for Papers**

The *Journal of Reading* has planned a themed issue for April 1994 on the topic of how teenagers and their teachers interact through talk, especially talk about the things teens are reading in and out of school. Guest editor Rosalind Horowitz has issued an open call for papers related to the topic. Papers must be received by **May 15, 1993**.

Mail papers to Dr. Rosalind Horowitz, Reading and Literacy Education, The University of Texas-San Antonio, San Antonio TX 78249-0654, USA. Further information is available by phone at (512) 691-5418.



READING: THE CONFERENCES

Paul Wilson

<p>National Reading Conference Annual Meeting — San Antonio Texas December 2-5, 1992</p>

During its more than 40 year existence, the National Reading Conference has become one of our premiere avenues for stimulating and reporting on advances in reading research, reading instruction, and reading policy. The 1992 annual meeting, with 142 sessions, is the most recent contribution to NRC's fine reputation. The following highlights are presented with apologies to the many fine researchers, scholars and teachers whose work cannot be mentioned.

There were two interesting symposia on Reading Recovery. Billie J. Askew and her collaborators from Texas Women's University documented sustained effects of Reading Recovery instruction into second grade, effectiveness of text introductions on oral readings, and use of Reading Recovery procedures in Spanish. The other, with Carol Lyons, Gay Su Pinnell, and Diane DeFord, all of The Ohio State University, contributed to the increasingly detailed investigations of how and why Reading Recovery instruction works so effectively with high risk students.

Dale M. Willows, of The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, was an effective discussant in a symposium on spelling development organized by her colleague Esther Geva. Dr. Willows pointed out methodological difficulties in

using word recognition as a measure to assess letter and sound knowledge, and in relying only on spelling in isolation vs. in spontaneous writing.

Darrell Morris and his colleagues from Appalachian State University presented some very effective, carefully worked out research in the area of spelling. Their most important finding involved third grade "poor" spellers: When these children received a second year of instruction using the second grade spelling materials, not only did they improve significantly on their second grade spelling, but they also made greater gains on the third grade words (that they had never studied) than did a control group of third grade poor spellers who received instruction with the third grade materials. Among the many sessions I attended, this one had the most direct positive implications for instruction.

Peter Dewitz, University of Toledo, compared the recently advocated analogy approach to a traditional phonics approach to word recognition instruction. First graders do not gain any extra benefit from analogy instruction because they lack the base of phonetic knowledge that analogy instruction depends on; however, second and third graders who scored lower in phonemic awareness did gain some benefits from an analogy approach.

Both the speakers and the discussant achieved a heightened level of discourse in a symposium addressing historical perspectives on text commentaries and how they relate to comprehension and the audience. Ann J. Pace, University of Missouri-Kansas City, reviewed the Jewish tradition of text study and commentary. Anthony V. Manzo, University of Missouri-Kansas City, described the dialectical process and its role in generating new knowledge. Rosalind Horowitz, from the host city's University of Texas-San Antonio, examined how the structure of classroom

discourse might be explored in relation to the structure of written text. In a penetrating and scholarly discussion, Richard L. Venezky, University of Delaware, surveyed different modes of commentary and audience participation ranging from the mediated interpretation of the Catholic tradition to the very recent Hypertext books that allow for a variety of paths through the text, along with audience participation in creating different variants of the text on every machine where the text resides.

As in previous years, there was a Town Meeting for discussions related to the goals, organization, needs, and future directions of the National Reading Conference. The meeting was facilitated, not moderated, by Jerry Harste, Indiana University, and Rosary Lalik, Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The chief topic of discussion focused on whether the NRC annual meeting should continue to be scheduled the week after Thanksgiving. Anyone with continuing thoughts on this issue might write to the NRC Board of Directors at 11 E. Hubbard St., Chicago, IL 60611.

Another event that is becoming an annual tradition is The Lighter Side of NRC. James Hoffman and several University of Texas-Austin collaborators dramatized an odd variation of *Miss Nelson Is Missing*. John Konopak, Louisiana State University and his "band" performed the Content Reading Blues. Lee Gunderson of the University of British Columbia ran an auction of personalized t-shirts (with photographs of present day NRC luminaries) that were bid on primarily by graduate students; the bidding war was particularly intense between the graduate students from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland.

Ofelia Miramontes, University of Colorado at Boulder, delivered a plenary address on how schooling affects

linguistically diverse students. She emphasized the need for strong oral language development, discussed 10 principles for more effective instruction, and cautioned that assessment of ESL children in both the first and second languages is instructionally dependent: A child may be orally fluent in the home language, yet not able to perform on school tasks in that language because of a lack of school-related instruction.

Two plenary addresses focussed on the quantitative vs. qualitative paradigm debate currently raging in educational research. Donna Alvermann, University of Georgia, in her Presidential Address, "Researching The Literal: Of Muted Voices, Second Texts, and Cultural Representations," expressed concerns about how the background experiences of researchers not only predisposed them to ask certain questions but also how those same experiences could constrain the researcher's ability to discern the truth of a situation. She urged researchers to make clear their own biases so that their readers could be more clear on the limitations of their work.

The Research Address by Peter Johnston, SUNY at Albany, was on the language of assessment and the assessment of language. Johnston related the two sides of the quantitative-qualitative debate to the objective-subjective, reality-relativity and male-female dichotomies. Considerable heat was generated not only in the discussion directly following the talk, but also out in the halls of the conference hotel and the streets and restaurants of San Antonio: Are there any questions of serious worth that can be addressed through quantitative methods. Come to the Omni Hotel in Charleston, South Carolina, December 1-4, 1993, to find out if this debate has been in any way resolved.



REVIEWS

Professional Materials

Literature Based Reading Activities. Written by Ruth Helen Yopp and Hallie Kay Yopp. Allyn and Bacon, 160 Gould Street, Needham Heights MA 02194. ISBN: 0-205-13238-3. 1992. 142 pp. US\$9.00.

Marcia A. Smith
Gull Lake Community Schools
Western Michigan University

One popular battle cry today in education is "outcomes based." What better place to start than by declaring the love of reading as an outcome for reading instruction? Research (Higgins, 1986; Smith-Burke, 1987) has shown consistently that by using a literature based program as opposed to a basal based program, this outcome is more likely to be attained. A literature based program can bring real meaning and appreciation to the reading process. However, a literature based program is only as good as the strategies and techniques used to implement it. Instructional decisions need to be made and often teachers and educators need support in determining which teaching techniques are sound and effective. On the market today are a variety of books which present various literature based strategies. One such book is *Literature Based Reading Activities* by Ruth Helen Yopp and Hallie Kay Yopp. This is a wonderful collection of activities compiled from workshops, professional journals, classroom teachers and student teachers. Each one has been classroom tested and can be applied to all grade levels and any type of literature.

The activities are clearly presented and the suggested use is described for many of the popular trade books used in classrooms today. The activities are divided into three categories: pre, during, and post-reading activities. All of these are student centered, concentrating on reading, writing and

discussion, thus integrating the language arts and promoting higher level thinking skills. The pre-reading activities set the stage for the reader by building background knowledge and interest. The anticipation reaction guide, for example, is easy to create and provides a powerful vehicle for discussion. The during-reading activities such as double entry journals, character maps and literature maps enhance the students' understanding of the reading selection and help teachers focus on particular literary aspects such as theme, author's purpose and character analysis. The post-reading activities are designed to help students evaluate and access what they have learned. The literary report card, the knowledge chart and the Venn diagram help the student assimilate the material, promoting a complete understanding of what has been read. As a bonus, the book contains a section on bookmaking with instructional drawings on how to create pop-up, accordion and fold-up books as well as retelling picture books. Bookmaking and publishing is a delightful way to help give students complete ownership in the total learning process. Also, two indexes are available, one which presents a concise list of professional resources and the second an annotated list of award-winning literature.

All in all, this is an excellent resource book which can help teachers key in on a successful literature based reading program. This will result in students wanting to pick up a book and read for enjoyment. What better outcome than that!

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Children's Books

The Noisemakers. Written by Judith Caseley. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-09395-7. 1992. US\$14.00.

Elsa Geskus, Western Michigan University

Noise, noise and more noise! Sam and Laura pretend to be many characters or animals — always with appropriate sounds. Each selection, whether cow, monster, jack-in-the box or rooster is accompanied by a loud *moo*, *gr-r-r*, *pop*, or *cock-a-doodle-doooo*. Sam and Laura's mothers try persuading the children to be **quiet** animals. They visit a library, restaurant and store but each time are asked to leave. The mothers are very discouraged, but have an idea; they go to a park where Sam and Laura can pretend and make noise to their hearts' desire. Primary children will easily identify with Sam and Laura — teachers might ask children to predict a noise Sam and Laura will make. The second reading could include children actually acting out the noises — at an appropriate decibel level!

Lightning Inside You: and Other Native American Riddles. Edited by John Bierhorst. Illustrated by Louise Brierley. Morrow Junior Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-09582-8. 1992. 112 pp. US\$14.00.

Far more than a book of riddles, *Lightning Inside You* offers readers a detailed description of the art form of riddling in Native American cultures, a glossary of the tribes whose riddles are represented, and an extensive list of sources. Evocative black and white drawings enhance the text. Two riddle stories — in which one character challenges another with a story composed entirely of riddles — conclude the book. Individual riddles about animals include these intriguing items —

What is it? A black stone with its head to the ground, listening to the sounds of the underworld.

Wonder, wonder, what can it be? An upside-down house with fifty thousand owners.

Who's the good-looking young person in the striped blanket?

— to which the answers are: a beetle, a beehive, a skunk. There's much here to delight and much to learn from. (JMJ)

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