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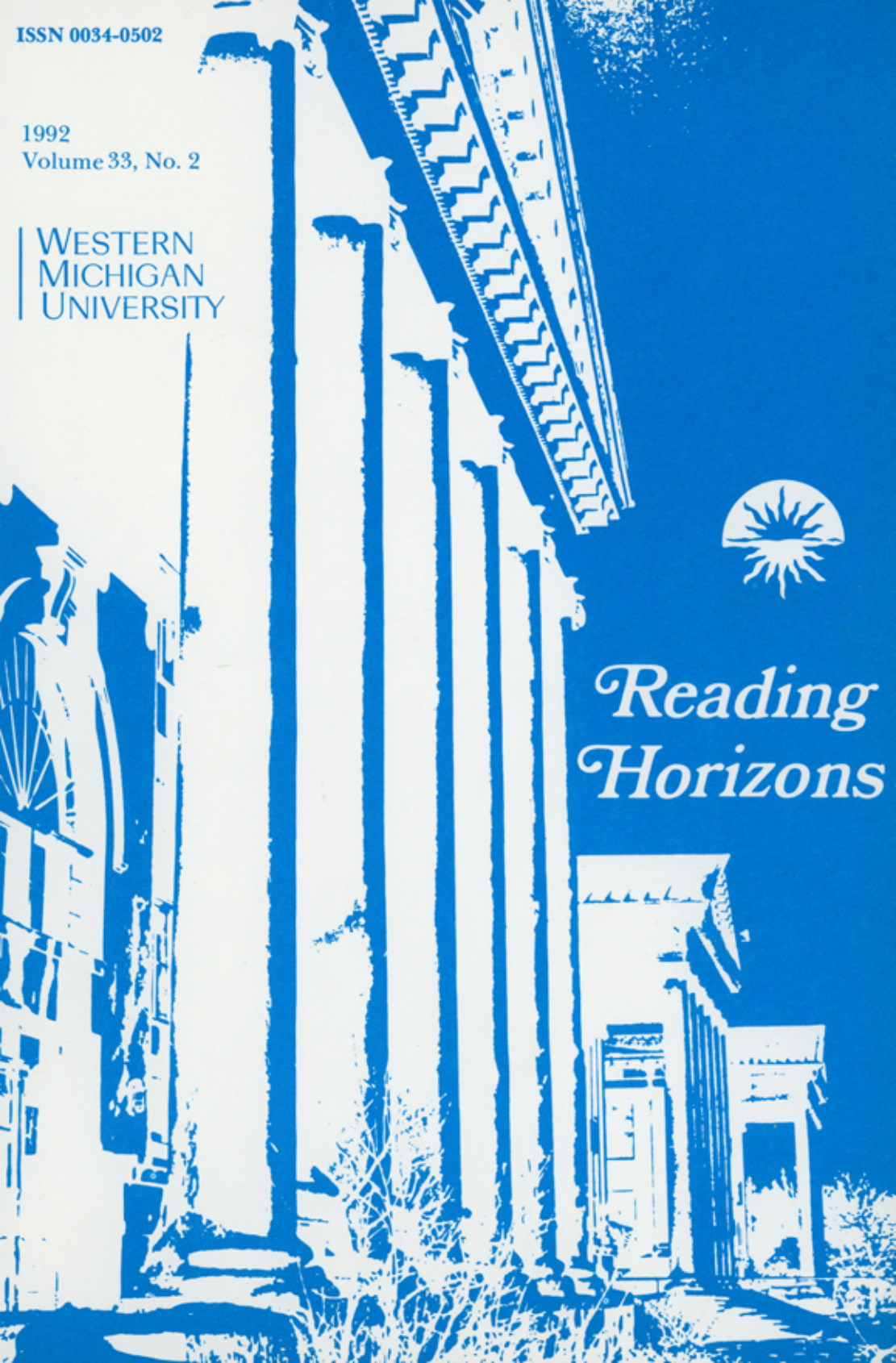
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# *Reading Horizons*







## **READING HORIZONS**

Editor — Jeanne M. Jacobson

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Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

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

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# **An Analysis of Children's Responses to Storybook Characters in Non-Traditional Roles**

**Dianna D. Anderson  
Joyce E. Many**

Sex role stereotypes have been investigated in text materials (Rupley, Garcia and Longnion, 1981; Scott and Feldman-Summers, 1979; Taylor, 1973) and in children's literature (Ashby and Wittmaier, 1978; DeLisi and Johns, 1984; Donlan, 1972; Key, 1971; Kropp and Halverson, 1983; Styer, 1975; Weitzman, 1972; Winkeljohann and Gallant, 1980). These studies have examined the stereotypical roles portrayed by male and female characters, in terms of the way the males and females are presented in the material. Findings indicate change in sex roles to be slow; males still tend to be viewed as active and achieving while girls are passive and emotional (Weitzman, 1972, p. 1125). According to social learning theory perspective, such stereotyped views of sex roles are incorporated into a child's repertoire of behaviors. Children selectively imitate what they perceive as culturally designated appropriate sex role behavior (Hartley, 1959; Weitzman, 1972). In support of this theory researchers have also found children exposed to material containing non-traditional roles have been influenced by the stories that they hear (Berg-Cross and Berg-Cross, 1978; Kropp and Halverson, 1983; Litcher and Johnson, 1969; Styer, 1975). In these studies, hearing

socially relevant stories containing sex equitable roles, roles which reflect the changing roles for men and women, changed children's attitudes and values toward the character in the non-traditional role. If society has indeed reacted to findings such as these by exposing students to more sex-equitable literature and ideas, it may mean that children today have less sex-typed attitudes and are less likely to find such roles novel. One way of determining if this is the case would be to examine the ways in which children freely respond to such literature.

Having children respond to literary works is inherent in a reader-response approach to the study of literature. Such a perspective results in having children construct their own personal meaning through a transaction with the text (Cooper, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1983, 1985). "Trans-active response to literature asserts that the reading of works is not merely the communication of a message to a passive receiver; the transaction is an internal activity in which the reader recreates the text and confers meaning on the work" (Webb, 1985, p. 274). In such a way, literature becomes a personal experience for the reader, in which the words on the page are internalized, and not merely heard. In using a reader-response perspective with non-traditional literature, children are allowed to construct their own views of the world suggested by the text and to respond accordingly. The purpose of this study was to analyze, from a reader-response perspective, children's responses to story characters in non-traditional roles and to investigate the relationship of gender for these responses.

## **Method**

**Subjects.** One hundred fifty-four subjects, from diverse cultural and SES backgrounds, between the ages of eight and 10 years participated in this study. Subjects



included 67 males and 87 females in eight intact classrooms. All attended third grade at an elementary school in a suburban community in the southwest.

**Materials.** In order to examine children's responses literature, existing works were preferred over contrived text. Two picture books which focus on non-traditional roles were selected. These were *William's Doll* (Zolotow, 1972) and *White Dynamite and Curly Kidd* (Martin and Archambault, 1986). *William's Doll* portrays a young boy's experiences associated with wanting a doll. His brother and neighbor call him a sissy. But his grandmother understands and buys him the doll, convincing everyone else that it is okay for a boy to have a doll. *White Dynamite and Curly Kidd* is the story of Lucky Kidd. She watches her father ride an ill-tempered bull at the rodeo and thinks perhaps that she might want to be a bull rider someday. The reader does not know that Lucky is a female until the last page of the story when she removes her hat.

**Procedure.** Each story was read orally by the researcher with no discussion during the reading period. The following probe was given on an overhead: "Write anything you want about what I just read." Then the procedure was repeated for the second story. The order of stories was counter-balanced across classes to account for possible influence of story sequence on response.

**Data analysis.** Data were analyzed to determine positive or negative reactions to the non-traditional role portrayed in the story. In cases where the responses did not refer to the non-traditional role, they were classified as either descriptive/evaluative or connecting. Description of the coding system and examples are found in the Appendix. In a few cases, responses were too vague to be classified

(e.g., the book was good) and were not included in the data analysis. Both researchers coded the data and consensus was reached upon any that had disagreement. An independent rater was trained in the use of the classification system and coded one-fourth of the data. Interrater reliability was established with a 95 percent agreement on coding the categories.

## Results

### Responses to a male in a non-traditional role.

Chi square analysis of the free response to *William's Doll* indicated a significant relationship between gender and the categories of response ( $\chi^2$  (d.f. 3, N = 154) = 10.64,  $p < .01$ ). The percentages of responses in each category by gender are found in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Categories of Children's Responses by Gender**

	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Descriptive/ Evaluative</u>	<u>Connecting</u>
<i>William's Doll*</i>				
Male	16%	8%	67%	9%
Female	9%	26%	53%	12%
Total	12%	18%	59%	10%
N = 154				
<i>Curly Kidd**</i>				
Male	5%	13%	70%	12%
Female	2%	25%	61%	12%
Total	3%	20%	65%	12%
N = 154				

Note: \*Significant difference between males & females was at the .01 level.

\*\*No significant difference between males & females.

Only 16 percent of the males and nine percent of the females responded negatively to the non-traditional role of the main character in the story *William's Doll*. There was a higher percentage of positive reaction in responses written by females.

A small percentage of responses were categorized as connecting responses. In these responses, students made personal connections with the events in the story without making either a positive or negative comment about the main character being in a non-traditional role. This type of response clearly indicated that these students found personal significance in these stories. They focused on their own aspect of the story that was important to them, but which had nothing to do with their reaction to the main character in the non-traditional role.

The largest percentage of responses fell under the category of descriptive/evaluative, with 53 percent of the females and 59 percent of the males responding to the story in this way. Most of the children's responses in this category resulted in a retelling of the story. In other responses, children commented on a part of the story, such as *A boy wanted a doll*. Although these children mentioned the doll, they did not express a positive or negative reaction to the character owning one.

### **Responses to a female in a non-traditional role.**

Chi square analysis of the free responses to the story *White Dynamite and Curly Kidd* resulted in no significant difference between males and females. In the total analysis, only 23 percent of all students reacted to the non-traditional role. This is important in light of the fact that such a small number of the total subjects responded in either a negative or positive way. Of the few negative responses, the children

questioned the fact that the girl in the story would want to be a bull rider. There were more positive reactions with children commenting on the fact that they liked the idea of the girl being a bull rider. As in the case of *William's Doll*, most of the responses resulted in describing or evaluating the story.

In the connecting responses, the children did not react to the non-stereotyped role; instead these subjects were able to relate their responses to a personal experience or to situations which they could imagine.

## Discussion

Traditionally, research examining the effects of sex-equitable literature has explicitly called attention to the non-traditional roles portrayed in such literature and required that children react to this role. In such studies, students were often required to articulate opinions regarding the appropriateness of males or females being engaged in non-traditional behavior. From a literary response perspective, little has been known regarding children's response preferences to such works. The findings from this study indicate that expressing opinions regarding the appropriateness of such roles is not a common focus of elementary children. Role appropriateness was an issue in only 25 to 30 percent of the responses; the most common response type was descriptive or evaluative in nature. Other studies examining students' responses to literature (not necessarily sex-equitable in nature), have found that retelling, summarizing, and expressing opinions on specific parts are the most common type of responses expressed by children in the elementary grades (Applebee, 1978; Cullinan, Harwood, and Galda, 1983; Many, 1989). In comparison, when framing their response to sex equitable literature, subjects in this study seem to view such works in the same way they do literature in general.

It is also interesting to note that some children were able to make personal connections between their lives or their own literary creations and the non-traditional works used in this study. When students are able to place themselves in non-traditional roles, as Misty did when she said, *If I was Curly's daughter, I'd follow his lead and look up to him when I was in trouble*, they are making the types of life-to-text connections encouraged by many reader-response proponents (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Many, 1990, 1992). Such personal associations with text help the students see how the world offered by the text and their own personal worlds relate, thus often allowing them to expand their own world horizons in meaningful ways. Interestingly, children also expressed that they would or would not be involved in the activities represented in the story giving explanations other than gender as a reason. For example, Robert wrote, *I want to be a bull rider some day but I think it is too dangerous for me*. These responses support Bem's (1981) gender schema theory view in that the readers seem to be using criteria other than gender when making their decisions regarding behaviors.

Chi square analysis revealed a significant relationship between sex and the types of responses for *William's Doll*. Males tended to be more likely to react negatively and less likely to react positively to the non-traditional role than did girls. This pattern was repeated for the second story but the results were not significant.

Overall, only 12 percent of the total responses to *William's Doll* contained any negative reactions to the non-traditional role. This is in marked contrast to Styer's (1975) study which examined kindergarten children's reactions to the same book. When asked, 59 percent of the boys and 52

percent of the girls contended that William should not want a doll. Although Styer's findings were in response to a specific probe question and not a free response format, the contrast of her findings with the low percentage of negative reactions in this study could be an indication that more flexible attitudes are evident in students today than in earlier times.

Recent research has suggested that students are being exposed to a greater amount of sex-equitable literature (Scott, 1986) and that such material results in less stereotyped attitudes (Schau and Scott, 1984). Earlier studies examining the effects of literature containing characters in non-traditional roles (Jennings, 1975; Koblinsky, Cruse and Sugawara, 1978) cited the novelty of the main character as a limitation to the study because the main character of the story appeared in a role that was in conflict with the familiar traditional role. Due to the novelty of the main character's role, the children's recall of the story was improved. This, in turn, was viewed as a limitation because they then focused on this aspect of the story. In this study, only 24 percent of the male's response to *William's Doll* and 18 percent of the male's response to *White Dynamite and Curly Kidd* contain a reaction, either positive or negative, to this non-traditional role. Females were more likely to react to the non-traditional role in both texts, but still almost two-thirds of the female students did not express a specific judgment regarding the non-traditional role. This may be an indication that students today have been exposed to such roles and consequentially this image is less novel.

## Conclusions

The reader-response techniques used in this study allowed close examination of the subjects' unique focus on the story experience and may provide promising alternatives for analyzing the effects of sex-equitable literature in

future research. In summary, the findings from this study suggest that when students are asked to write a free response to a story containing a main character in a non-traditional role, they may not react to that aspect of the story. Instead, they relate the story to their own lives (such as wanting to own an object mentioned in the story), or comment on events in the story (such as a retelling). Such findings make us, as teachers and researchers, reevaluate which aspect a child might become involved with when reading and responding to a piece of non-traditional literature. Children may not focus on what the teacher has in mind. As teachers we need to be willing to put control in the hands of the child. Instead of guiding children into judging appropriateness of roles and telling children what to react to in non-traditional literary work, teachers should allow children time to make decisions as to what is personally relevant. Children should have opportunities to be problem solvers; as they must be in life. In this study, the judgmental decision regarding appropriateness of the non-traditional role was not an issue for most children. Very few children focused on the moral decision of whether the behaviors of characters were right or wrong. Instead, the majority of male and female responses focused on whether or not they could or they could not do something, or what the story was about.

By empowering students in such ways, students who find such roles novel are allowed to reflect and react to the issues raised and consequently be exposed to the opportunities for attitude change or value clarification. Children who do not find the gender issue personally relevant are still able to have a valuable literary experience even though the non-traditional role itself is not of primary significance to them.

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## APPENDIX

### Coding of Free Responses to Story Characters in Non-traditional Roles

#### *Directions:*

- 1) Read each response.
- 2) Determine if the response contains a positive or negative reaction to the non-traditional role of the story character as described in categorization scheme below.
- 3) If the response does not contain a positive or negative reaction to the non-traditional role of the story character, examine the response to see if it contains any elements which would exemplify a connecting type response.
- 4) If not, the response should fit into the descriptive/evaluative category.

#### Categorization of Responses

##### *Negative reaction*

These responses contain a negative reaction to the non-traditional role of the story character. The response must mention the non-traditional role and must imply rejection or dissatisfaction towards portrayal of the character in that activity. Responses may make a general negative evaluation of the book as a whole and then go on to mention a number of aspects of the story, including the non-traditional content. Responses can include statements in which the student makes connections between their own lives/preferences and the story but because they also include a negative reaction to the actions of the story character, the response falls into this category. Examples: *I didn't like this story. The girl wanted to be a bull rider. I like when he got a basketball and net and a train. I did not like when he got a doll. He was a sissy. I don't blame the kid across the street.*

##### *Positive reaction*

These responses contain a positive reaction to the non-traditional role of the story character. The response must mention the non-traditional role and must imply acceptance or approval of the portrayal of the character in that activity. Responses may make a general positive evaluation of the book as a whole and then go on to mention a number of aspects of the story, including the nontraditional

content. Responses can include statements in which the student makes connection between their own lives/preferences and the story but because they also include a positive reaction to the actions of the story character, the response falls into this category. Examples: *The girl was going to be a bull rider when she grew up. It was a good story. William wanted a doll and didn't want anything else. He was going to be a good father.*

### *Connecting responses*

In these responses students make personal connections with the events of the story. Such responses may take the form of students describing similar events in their lives, telling what they would have done in similar instances, or describing similar stories which they have experienced or which they create out of their own imaginations.

Students may talk about themselves in terms of what they would have done in the non-traditional role but they do not make a positive or negative comment about the story character being in the nontraditional role. Responses may also contain descriptions of the story or evaluations of the story but the response is coded here because it includes the connecting type response. Examples: *I want to be a bull rider some day but I think it is too dangerous for me. There was once a boy named John and he wanted a doll. (Continues to create a new story from his/her imagination which may parallel the shared story. The new story is not retelling the shared story; it is an original creation.)*

### *Descriptive/evaluative responses*

These responses are made up of descriptive or evaluative responses to the story. They may mention the non-traditional nature of the story character's role but a positive or negative reaction to that portrayal is not evident in the response. When reactions are made to the nontraditional role, the reactions are neutral or vague, such as *I thought it was funny, surprising, interesting, etc.* Students may detail their positive or negative reactions to elements other than the non-traditional roles of the story. These responses do not contain connections to the story. Examples: *The book is good if it was a first grade book. William wanted a doll.*



# **Thematic Units: A Scottish Approach to Literature-Based Education**

**Barbara Erwin  
Cheryl Hines  
Carol Curtis**

Lisa Nicoli and Sara, both aged seven, stood at the computer composing the following retelling of the story *Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers* by Mairi Hedderwick.

## **LISA NICOLI AND SARA**

*Katie Morag McColl helps her mother in the post office. She helps her mother deliver the mail. Soon Katie Morags Granma was coming to stay with her. Granma Mainland was her uther Grannie. Granma mainland was coming on a ferry to the Isle of Struay Granma Mainland brot her brush and comb Katie Morag was fascinated. Grannie Island said ok her in her fancy ways. The days went by quickly and soon it was Show Day. katie morag hat to run round the bay to give Alecina an extra special brush and comb but on the way Alecina went into the Boggy Loch. Grannie Island was furious Grannie Island said a hole hill side of grass to eat and she has to go for that piece of grass. Katie Morag said Granma Mainland has sume fancy stuff. We could use her stuff so every-thing went well when it was Show Day the judges could not believe there eyes. Alecina was definately the winer. they had a ceilidh everybody caime Neilly Beag said my youre still a smart wee Bobby Dazzler. How do you do it*

*a thats my secret said Granma Mainland Katie Morag  
and Grannie Island smiled there new haff of the secret  
but they could never tell. The End.*

The girls, pupils in Carol Curtis' Primary II class (composed of six and seven year old children) at Tillicoultry Primary School in Scotland, had no trouble at all reconstructing the plot of the original story. While the pupils had not thoroughly mastered the mechanics of writing (periods or full stops, capitalization, spelling, etc.), they enthusiastically used language to write and read. Using a literature-based thematic unit to teach language arts in concert with science, social studies, mathematics, and art this Scottish teacher instilled in her pupils an understanding of their own lives, a love for language, and a feeling of satisfaction and pride in their accomplishments.

### **Using themes to integrate instruction**

The idea of integrating instruction is not a new one. The American Progressive Education movement of the early twentieth century proposed a project approach to instruction which led to units being taught in science and social studies in the 1960s and 1970s (Spodek, 1972). The use of units in early childhood programs was (and still is) seen as a way to coordinate activities, strengthen and reinforce desired teaching concepts, and meet the specific needs of young children (Eliason and Jenkins, 1986). Pappas, Kiefer, and Levstik (1990) write that thematic units link together content from many areas of the curriculum, depict the connections that exist across disciplines, and provide children a sense of ownership over their own learning.

Using children's literature as a method for coordinating instruction has been suggested by several sources. Zarrillo (1989) describes literature units written around a unifying

element such as genre, author, or theme from social studies or science. He recommends that teachers read aloud books that are good examples of the unifying element. Literature is indicated as a rich source of ideas and starting points for thematic units by Pappas and others (1990). Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991) state that if literature is associated with many curricular areas, it can become an important part of every school day for children.

Advice about how to plan such programs is provided by Kenneth Goodman in a discussion of thematic units in *The Whole Language Catalog* (1991). Goodman suggests that in planning units, teachers need to show how thematic units 1) build knowledge; 2) develop problem solving and other cognitive strategies; and 3) improve self-confidence in the learner. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that process by describing one classroom where a literature-based, integrated approach to instruction provided an exciting and meaningful program for Scottish children. This program not only improved the pupils' schema for the world around them and their understanding of the organization of text; it aided the development of their ability to solve problems and work cooperatively; and it improved their self-concept as they became more proficient users of language.

### **Integrated instruction in a Scottish classroom**

In May 1991 as part of a research project sponsored by a grant from the Texas State Reading Association, one of the authors spent some time working with teachers and students at Tillicoultry, a small town northwest of Edinburgh, Scotland. Tillicoultry Primary School, a large school of approximately 600 pupils, serves children from Nursery (4 year olds) through Primary VII (12 year olds). It is staffed by 18 teachers, two teachers who also function as Assistant Head Teachers, a Deputy Head Teacher, and a Head

Teacher. While there she observed for several hours each day in Carol Curtis' Primary II classroom.

During the early spring, head teacher Janet Bennie encouraged Carol to develop a topic based upon Mairi Hedderwick's book *Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers*. The idea of novel studies or units constructed around pieces of literature was one used frequently in classes for older Scottish pupils. Mrs. Bennie thought that the concept might also be applicable in classes for younger children. To assist Carol, Mrs. Bennie bought for the classroom a copy of the study guide *Novel Ideas* by Margaret Burnell and Sallie Harkness (1990) and a big book version of *Katie Morag*. This picture storybook about Katie Morag McColl (as are all of the others in the series) is set on a mythical island off the coast of Scotland (See Figure 1). This particular Scottish version of the book describes a conflict between two very different grandmothers and contains many words and concepts with which Scottish children are familiar such as *tartans*, *ceilidhs* (Scottish dances), and raising sheep. We might note that many terms which are specific to the Scottish language and culture do not appear in the American version of the same book.

**Figure 1**  
**American Versions of Books Cited**

- Hedderwick, M. (1985). *Katie Morag and the two grandmothers*.  
Hedderwick, M. (1986). *Katie Morag and the tiresome Ted*.  
Hedderwick, M. (1987). *Katie Morag and the big boy cousins*.  
Hedderwick, M. (1988). *Katie Morag delivers the mail*.  
Hedderwick, M. (1989). *Peedie Peebles' summer or winter book*.

All books published by Little Brown, Boston MA.

Armed with these resources, the enthusiastic ideas of her students, and her own creative imagination, Carol turned her classroom into a reader/writer's dream. She covered walls in the classroom and hall with large colorful displays that the pupils helped to construct. Many examples of the children's artwork and writing adorned the displays. During the first three weeks of the unit, Carol's class of six and seven year olds broadened their understanding of the Scottish culture, geography, science, mathematics, art, language arts, and literature through activities based upon the book. Described below are just a few of the activities and projects that the children enjoyed. While each activity integrated a number of curricular areas, each is categorized by its predominant content focus.

**Social studies and science.** After reading the story and using visual descriptions from the book, the children created a mural of the island Struay, using tempera paint and bits of colored paper. They labeled all of the major buildings and areas: the mainland, the post office where the McColls lived and worked, Granma Island's house and farm, the bay (complete with boats), the jetty, the boggy loch (lake), and the fair grounds on Show Day. This activity provided an introduction to the story, gave the pupils a mental image of the setting of the book, and developed an understanding of what it is like to live on an island.

Because Struay was an imaginary island, the class studied islands and the sea. They were very interested in the concept of Great Britain being a very large island surrounded by water. The teacher put a British map, seashells found on the west coast of Scotland, and books about the sea in a geography/science center. The pupils drew and painted pictures of their own islands and wrote about what it would be like to live there.



Figure 2  
Illustration and text about Nicola's Island



my island is called  
Wales. It has trees  
a fox and houses and a  
lighthouse and a little bit of  
sand and mountains.

Figure 2 shows Nicola's story about her own island. She called her island Wales and described it as having trees, sand and mountains. There were also a fox, houses, and a lighthouse on Nicola's island.

To reinforce the sea concept, the pupils created seashell pictures. At the water table, the children worked in cooperative groups of four choosing small items from around the room, predicting and then confirming whether or not the items would float or sink.

The class discussed Scottish history, specifically the Jacobite rebellion and "Bonnie Prince Charlie" (Prince Charles Edward Stuart). They located the Isle of Skye (off the west coast of Scotland) on a British map. They also learned the Scottish folk song "Over the Sea to Skye."

To reinforce their knowledge of the Scottish culture (Katie wears a kilt in the book), a display of tartan cloth was placed in another center. Because Tillicoultry has a number of tartan mills in the town, it was easy for Carol and the children to get samples of the cloth. To extend the concept the pupils created their own tartan patterns using crayons and a tempera wash.

Several different activities were based upon the topic of sheep and the processing and uses of wool. The pupils made a large picture of Alecina, Granma Island's prize sheep, and in cooperative groups covered the picture with unprocessed wool. They also created first place medals for her. The children dyed wool using natural substances such as red cabbage, onion, beet root, raspberries, etc. Using a spinning wheel, they spun wool and then using a simple loom they wove the dyed wool into cloth. They also learned the parts of the spinning wheel and after discussing simple

machines, drew diagrams of a spinning wheel and labeled the individual components.

**Mathematics.** In the math center Carol placed a model post office. (In the story Katie's family ran a post office/store on the island.) The children made potatoes and sweets (candy) out of papier-maché to sell in the post office. They also created stamps and postcards. Using British "play" money they sold the items to each other making change in the process.

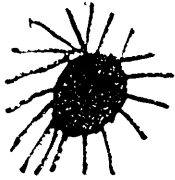
**Language arts.** During the first weeks of the topic, the teacher read the book to the children many, many times. Each time she asked them to listen for some particular aspect of the story such as characterization, setting, or specific details. By the third week of the topic, each child in the classroom could read the original story. Many of them could also read the other Katie Morag books which the teacher placed in the reading center. The other books were *Katie Morag and the Tiresome Ted*, *Katie Morag and the Big Boy Cousins*, *Katie Morag Delivers the Mail*, and *Peedie Peebles*. Several of the children sequenced the books in the series using only the illustrations and then discussed how the characters changed over time.

The class carefully studied each of the three primary characters in the book: Katie, Grannie Mainland, and Granma Island. The teacher introduced each character with a large life-sized drawing. The children decorated each character's drawing using information from the text and the illustrations. The pupils then wrote detailed descriptions of the characters and their actions. These written descriptions along with the large pictures were placed in the classroom and in the hall. Katie's picture wore a kilt made of real tartan cloth and Grannie Mainland's character wore a fancy hat.

Each day the students composed short selections about some literary characteristic of the story: plot, setting, characters, etc. Carol wrote a topic sentence on a portable chalkboard for the children to copy. These beginning sentences helped the children to discover characteristics of the story that they might have missed or misunderstood. Among the story starters used were 1) *Grannie Mainland brought some fancy stuff with her when she came to Struay for the holiday.* 2) *Neilly Beag said "You're still a smart wee Bobby Dazzler"* (something special). 3) *Grannie Mainland lives in a big city. She came to Struay for a holiday.* The pupils wrote these selections first as drafts either in their copy books or on unlined paper. Then they illustrated the selections. Figure 3 shows an example of Adam's story about Grannie Mainland written in his copy book. Adam told where Granma Mainland lived; why she came to Struay; what she thought of the island; and what Katie thought of her. He added something of his own to the story by illustrating it with a picture of an airplane flying toward the sun.

To teach specific language arts skills, Carol created task cards using words from the story. One set which reinforced the *ee* sound in sheep contained 1) a group of *ee* words from the story; 2) instructions to draw pictures of words that contained double *ee*'s, and 3) cloze sentences which supported the meaning of the words. Once a week each pupil worked on one of the sets of cards. The integration of reading and writing was always present. The class used a computer (which they shared with the other Primary II class on an every other week basis) to compose stories. To assist the children in creating their own stories, the teacher placed frequently used words such as Katie Morag, Granma Island, Grannie Mainland, Alecina, and others on a storyboard connected to the computer.

Figure 3  
Adam's story about Granma Mainland



Granma Mainland Lives in a  
big City She came to  
struay for ahdiday. To see  
Katie Morag and baby Liam

On Sunday Granma Mainland  
took a Walk in the farm  
and She thought it was nice



and Katie Moray thought  
Granma MainLand was very  
nice and That is The end  
of the Story.

By simply pressing the word on the storyboard, the word appeared on the screen. The students used the storyboard for common words, sounded out phonetically regular words, consulted a word bank that was hanging on

the wall next to the computer, were free to use invented spellings, or asked the teacher how to spell words that they could not figure out themselves. Freed from worries about spelling, the pupils concentrated on the content of their stories. Able pupils were paired with less able pupils allowing all of the children to be successful. The children read and reread their stories, revised them as they liked, illustrated their finished products, and placed them on display.

## Conclusion

Our purpose as reading and writing teachers is to help children become proficient users of language who can talk and listen, read and write, not only about their own thoughts but the ideas of others, and get pleasure and satisfaction in doing so. The look on Matthew's and Kris' faces when they finished the following retelling clearly reflected this sense of accomplishment.

### MATTHEW AND KRIS

*Katie Morag McColl lives on the Isle of Struay. And she has to Grannies one is called Grannie Island and the uther one is called Granma Mainland. One day the ferry came to Struay and Katie Morag got on to see hur Granma Mainland. and she got hur hair kut and she went to hur Grannie houes to help Alecina get redae for Show Day wen Katie Morag got thear Alecina was in the Boggy Loch. Grannie Island was furious. Alecina fleece had peaty stains on it. They went to the Post Office. and they went to Katie Morag bed room they yoois Granma Mainlands perfume and shampoo and brush and comb and they got Alecina to the show field in time for the judging and Alecina won her 8th trophy.*

These pupils know that they are successful users of language. Not only were they able to reproduce the plot of the original story, they were able to relate the story to their

lives in Scotland. The idea of getting “peaty” stains from a boggy loch (loosely translated as grassy stains from a muddy lake) might be foreign to children in the United States, but it is real to children living in Scotland.

The topic was so successful for both Carol and her pupils that at the end of the allotted time, no one was ready to give it up. When Carol was notified that a study of safety was being suggested for the end of the spring term, both teacher and pupils replied, *We will study safety on Struay!*

Yetta Goodman in an article in *The New Advocate* (1988) describes how to help children become aware of the power of language:

*It is only as students become actively engaged in wondering why and for what reasons people read and write and how such processes affect their own lives that they understand the power of language (p. 263).*

The pupils in Carol Curtis’ class discovered the power of language. During this thematic unit, they learned about living in Scotland, developed a better understanding of the organization of text, worked cooperatively to solve problems, and became more self-confident as they related the language of literature to the language of their every day lives. By doing so all – teacher and children – were enriched in the process.

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# **Teachers Reflect on Their Experience As Readers: The Literacy Club Luncheon**

**Carolyn S. Andrews-Beck  
James Rycik**

Just as teachers who write are best able to act as guides for less experienced writers (Graves, 1983; Murray, 1985; Calkins, 1991; Atwell, 1985), teachers who see themselves as readers – who are aware of the requirements and strategies of the reader's role – are best able to guide young readers (Smith, 1982; Bleich, 1985; Hansen, 1987). For this reason, it is important for teachers to keep their membership in the “literacy club” (Smith, 1985) current by attending regular meetings.

Fortunately, this is easy to do. All that is required is for two or more people who believe that they are members to get together and talk about a text. Conversations (but not interrogations) with friends, colleagues, and of course students all qualify as literacy club meetings.

## **A literacy club meets**

From time to time it may be useful to provide occasions for teachers to celebrate their role as readers a little more self-consciously. At the recent Whole Language Umbrella Conference in Phoenix Arizona 51 teachers from all over North America invited themselves to attend a “share a book,

make a friend" luncheon where they found a welcome chance to reflect on their reading in the company of other long-time active literacy club members. Participants represented teachers of kindergarten through high school and college and a few administrators as well.

### **What makes a book memorable?**

The theme for discussion was "What Makes a Book Memorable?" Conversations at big round tables began with simple reminiscences of some books that had lingered in the readers' mind, the circumstances under which the books were read, and the reasons why they had "stuck." The books cited represented a wide range, from Fred Gwynne's *Chocolate Moose* to Lucy Calkins' *Living Between the Lines* to Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*.

The accompanying appendix lists the individual books chosen, by category. Categories are arguable and fluid: many children's books are poetry, books that started out as adult best-sellers (*To Kill a Mockingbird*, for example) are now read more by young adults, and some young adult books like *Johnny Tremain* can be considered traditional classics. Educators at all levels are represented in each category: high school teachers often chose picture books while kindergarten teachers chose adult trade best-sellers. The unifying principle is that participants found all of these books especially memorable in their lives.

After sharing individually memorable books at each table, groups generalized from their experience by working together to create and display a list of things that make books memorable. According to participants, books are remembered not so much because of plot and illustrations, but because of how they fit into readers' lives at the time they were read. Most comments fell into three categories:

books that affirm readers' identities, books that connect people with each other, and books that extend and expand readers' lives by taking them – emotionally or intellectually – into other times and places.

**Memorable books help sort out who we are.** To the teachers who gathered in Phoenix, books *matter*. They are as much a part of daily life as food. Participants used terms such as *identification*, *remembering connections*, and *personal association*. Memorable books speak to readers, stir their emotions, and reflect and touch many stages of their lives. "I read McCaffrey's Pern (science fiction) series, especially *Dragonsinger* at a time when I needed to identify with a talented, self-sufficient woman," said a high school teacher from Virginia. Two kindergarten teachers each found their personal beliefs clarified by very different books: Tom Robbins' *Skinny Legs and All* and Pete Seeger's *Abiyoyo*. A college professor read Don Coldsmith's *Saga of the Silver Bit* series. "They are about where I live and they speak to my Indian heritage. I've read all eighteen books in the series." A reading supervisor from southern Ohio identified with the West Virginia setting of Cynthia Rylant's poem *Waiting to Waltz*: "I saw my own adolescence in them. Maybe I wasn't so weird after all. What a relief!" Poetry also "touched the core of who I am" for a New York second-grade teacher who remembered *Honey I Love* by Eloise Greenfield. Professional books can touch educators just as profoundly, according to teachers who recalled Tracy Kidder's *Among Schoolchildren* ("The author's thoughts and feelings confirmed my own") and the personal impact of Lucy Calkins' *Living Between the Lines*. These teachers confirm that we read to validate and affirm ourselves.

**Memorable books connect us with others.** Responses confirmed that reading is intensely social. In

many ways, readers mentioned over and over how books have connected them with other people – family, colleagues, students, authors. Whether they were required reading or gifts, memorable books celebrated a sense of community. Sometimes they even created that sense: a New York teacher recalled “the stillness that permeates any group when this book (*Honey I Love*) is read” and an Oregon fourth-grade class used *The Reason for a Flower* as the organizing metaphor to unify them as a community for their whole year’s study.

**Connections with authors.** Several teachers knew or had met the authors of their memorable books. A New Jersey fourth-grade teacher met Jerry Spinelli and had students correspond with him even before Newbery-winning *Maniac McGee* was published. The educators who found books by Cynthia Rylant and Don Coldsmith memorable both said that they were acquainted with the authors. A high school English teacher from Massachusetts heard Bruce Brooks speak, then read *The Moves Make the Man* – a novel whose sustained metaphor compares moves in life to moves on the basketball court: “It was *my* free choice when my students were reading theirs.” Personal connection with the author was important for professional books too: a first-grade teacher was moved by Denny Taylor’s *Learning Denied* after hearing Taylor speak. Said a high school English teacher: “I loved *Uncommon Sense*, but it meant more to me because John Mayher had been my masters advisor’s professor.”

**Recommended or required books.** Books that were recommended or even assigned by someone else also became memorable. A second-grade New Mexico teacher said that Regie Routman’s *Transitions* read by a discussion group hostile to whole language not only sup-

ported her in moving toward whole language but also led her to a team partner who was another minority in the group. Four different people mentioned *Living Between the Lines* by Lucy Calkins, and three of them had met it as part of coursework. Constance Weaver's *Understanding Whole Language*, an assigned textbook, "connected and explained a lot of things that had been rattling around in my mind." A college professor from Kansas recalled a summer school class for which she read Don Graves' *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*. She said simply, "This book changed my life."

### **Memorable books celebrate friends and family.**

Books were cherished gifts. "A student gave *Ira Says Goodbye* to me when I was moving from Texas to Tennessee," said a teacher of second-graders. From Georgia and Ohio: "My mother gave me *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day* during my master's work," and "I gave *Love You Forever* to my son when he became a father." From Virginia: "My mother gave me *Tale of Two Cities* for my high school graduation and I didn't even want to read it. When my last child left home after college, we were packing after selling the house, and I found it again and read it within two weeks of moving." An Iowa teacher was given Bill Martin's *Knots on a Counting Rope* by a colleague: "Each year I share the book with my class and we add a knot to our rope. I read this book with my son, who was seven years old, the same age as the students I teach. We both cried. My father-in-law had passed away the previous year. We remembered the stories he shared with us."

### **Memorable books have changed our worlds.**

Finally, a book might be memorable for its power to open alternative worlds that forever altered the reader's perspective of this world. For some memorable books, participants

used terms such as *living in another time and place*, *vision*, *vicarious experience*, *new perspective*, *escape*, even *enchantment*. Some books, they said, “just grab you; you can’t get out of them.” A college professor recalled her first love: the title character in *Johnny Tremain* in eighth grade. Another teacher was a teenager all over again with Mark Childress’ *Tender: A Novel* about Elvis; yet another re-lived memories of Viet Nam with *December Stillness*.

Memorable books extended readers’ intellectual worlds. A kindergarten teacher recalled being “thrilled with increasing political awareness” upon reading *Animal Farm*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Lord of the Flies*. Other readers recalled books that puzzled them, made them question their own ideas, or “flat out contradicted what I had believed.” Said one: “I *still* don’t like it, but it made me grow in ways I’ll never forget.” Still others took a more pragmatic view: memorable books “extend your ability to deal with your environment, whether it’s desert or inner city.”

## Implications

As they pursued the question of what general qualities make a book memorable, participants found three important ways in which their own experiences agreed with the views of readers and reading they’d been attempting to pass on to their students.

Clearly, reading has been powerful in the minds and lives of these educators. Memorable books can forge and celebrate human relationships; they can challenge or strengthen intrinsic personal values; they can literally change the reader’s life by providing experiences that are not so much vicarious as (according to one participant), “the closest thing I know to teleporting.” Against this standard,

most traditional measures of reading comprehension seem limited indeed.

Second, a book is often memorable because of the company in which it was read. When the book is discussed and debated, recommended by someone respected, or shared with others, it becomes intertwined with the reader's own life story. Such a view validates the belief that sharing one's reading is one of the most crucial activities of any literacy environment. Novice readers, no less than advanced literacy club members, need to have lots of time allocated for talking about reading.

Finally, the memorability of a book often was not a product of the book itself so much as it was a happy match between the text on the one hand and the needs, preoccupations, and background of the reader. When reader and text come together in the right circumstances, there can occur that spontaneous combustion that Rosenblatt (1978) calls "the poem" – the transactional meaning-making that is not in the text or in the reader, but in the event that happens when they meet.

Therefore, recommending an interesting or appropriate book to another individual might be more problematic than it would first appear. Professional reading was the only category in which assigned books became memorable, and even then the educators had had a voice in selection because they chose the courses to take. If the impact of a book is so strongly dependent on the reader's life situation, then teaching self-selection is clearly an instructional mandate (Hansen, 1987; Turbill and Butler, 1988) far more valuable than simply assigning books "on the student's reading level."

## Conclusion

When invited to examine their lives as readers in the company of others, literacy educators can validate by their own experience a transactional view of reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and classroom practices that uphold the personal and social needs of readers. This suggests that such opportunities to read and reflect should be one component in the on-going growth of literacy educators as they help to induct others into active membership in the literacy club.

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## APPENDIX

**Books chosen as memorable** by educators participating  
in the Second Whole Language Umbrella Conference:  
*Share a Book, Make a Friend* Luncheon,  
Phoenix, August 2, 1991.

### **Author**

### **Title**

#### **ADULT TRADE BOOKS**

Mark Childress	<i>Tender: A Novel</i>
Annie Dillard	<i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i>
William Golding	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>
Helen H. Santmyer	<i>...and Ladies of the Club</i>
Harper Lee	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
James V. Marshall	<i>Walkabout</i>
Tom Robbins	<i>Skinny Legs and All</i>
Scott Turow	<i>Presumed Innocent</i>
Leon Uris	<i>Mila 18</i>
P.G. Wodehouse	anything by Wodehouse

#### **CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

Byrd Baylor	<i>Another Way to Listen</i>
Jean Brett	<i>The Mitten</i>
Margaret Wise Brown	<i>The Important Book</i>
Barbara Cooney	<i>Miss Rumphius</i>
Crescent Dragonwagon	<i>Half a Moon and One Whole Star</i>
	<i>Home Place</i>
Mem Fox	<i>Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge</i>
Fred Gwynne	<i>Chocolate Moose</i>
Ruth Heller	<i>The Reason for a Flower</i>
Bill Martin Jr.	<i>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i>
	<i>Knots on a Counting Rope</i>
Patricia McKissack	<i>Flossie and the Fox</i>
Eve Memling	<i>Hi All You Rabbits</i>
Robert Munsch	<i>Love You Forever</i>
Patricia Polacco	anything by Polacco
Pete Seeger	<i>Abiyoyo</i>
Chris Van Allsburg	<i>Just a Dream</i>
Judith Viorst	<i>Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day</i>
Bernard Waber	<i>Ira Says Goodbye</i>
Jane Yolen	<i>Owl Moon</i>

**POETRY**

Jo Carson	<i>Stories I Ain't Told Nobody Yet</i>
Chief Dan George	<i>poems</i>
Eloise Greenfield	<i>Honey I Love</i>
Adrienne Rich	<i>Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law</i>
Cynthia Rylant	<i>Waiting to Waltz</i>

**PROFESSIONAL BOOKS**

Lucy Calkins	<i>Living Between the Lines</i>
Bobbi Fisher	<i>Joyful Learning</i>
Donald Graves	<i>Build a Literate Classroom</i>
	<i>Writing: Teachers and Children at Work</i>
Georgia Heard	<i>For the Good of the Earth and Sun:</i>
	<i>Teaching Poetry</i>
Tracy Kidder	<i>Among Schoolchildren</i>
John Mayher	<i>Uncommon Sense: Theoretical Practice</i>
	<i>in Language Education</i>
Regie Routman	<i>Transitions: From Literature to Literacy</i>
Denny Taylor	<i>Learning Denied</i>
Constance Weaver	<i>Understanding Whole Language</i>
Gordon Wells	<i>The Meaning Makers: Children Learning</i>
	<i>Language</i>
	<i>Using Language to Learn</i>
Whitin, Mills & O'Keefe	<i>Living and Learning Mathematics</i>

**TRADITIONAL CLASSICS**

Charles Dickens	<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>
George Orwell	<i>Animal Farm</i>
John Steinbeck	<i>The Pearl</i>

**YOUNG ADULT BOOKS**

Natalie Babbitt	<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>
Bruce Brooks	<i>The Moves Make the Man</i>
Don Coldsmith	<i>Saga of the Silver Jit (series)</i>
Esther Forbes	<i>Johnny Tremain</i>
Mary Downing Hahn	<i>December Stillness</i>
Marcia Keegan	<i>Mother Earth, Father Sky</i>
Anne McCaffrey	<i>the Pern series</i>
Marie McSwigan	<i>Snow Treasure</i>
Gary Paulsen	<i>Canyons</i>
Jerry Spinelli	<i>Maniac McGee</i>
Jane Yolen	<i>Children of the Wolf</i>



# **Basal Reader Alteration: A Creative Way To Put Schema Theory Into Classroom Practice**

**Sandra K. Moser  
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Alteration of the typical basal lesson format is an outgrowth of research on schema theory. Reutzel (1985) has suggested that while most basals emphasize post-reading assessment, "schema theory punctuates the importance of the prereading stage of the reading lesson" (p. 194). One reason for the alteration of the traditional basal format is that basal instruction often fails to compensate for inadequate student background knowledge. In a study of three elementary basal series, Afflerbach and Walker (1990) found that in 407 instructional units assessed, over half assumed that students possessed the prior knowledge necessary to understand the text. This finding may be linked to the contention that teachers frequently eliminate background knowledge-building activities from the prereading phase of instruction (Mason, 1983; Durkin, 1984). If basal publishers overestimate the adequacy of student background knowledge, it seems reasonable that teachers might also assume that students have adequate schema for understanding text selections. An honest assessment of what students already know or do not know about a topic before reading should give the teacher the impetus needed for altering the instructional format presented in the basal manual.

## **Reluctance to alter the basal lesson format**

The tendency among teachers to adhere to the basal format has been the focus of research into the master developer phenomenon (Duffy, Roehler, and Putnam, 1987). Because the basal text has been authored, promoted and implemented by largely invisible policymakers, teachers often do not regard alteration of the basal format as an option. Teachers often feel pressured to comply with demands for accountability; as a result, instruction is geared to testing, and teachers find it difficult to make independent decisions about lesson content or sequence. The issue of teacher adherence to the basal manual is one that complicates decision-making and at the same time makes it desirable. If teachers can overcome their reluctance to challenge the traditional format, they may be better able to serve the needs of students.

## **Why should teachers alter the basal lesson?**

Mason (1983) recommends reorganization of the basal lesson, with new emphasis on text-specific prereading work that activates or builds prior knowledge. Osborn, Jones, and Stein (1985) cite the importance of background knowledge as a necessary consideration in the organization of basal readers. They believe basal manuals should include more instruction relevant to current findings about schema theory and metacognition. This, they contend, will help students activate background knowledge prior to reading, and become more aware of how their prior knowledge aids in understanding. Despite the findings and recommendations of researchers, basal publishers have not been guided as much by the study of schematic and other comprehension processes as by concerns for teachers' accountability and assessment (Durkin, 1987). The result is less instructional time on prereading work than on postreading assessment.

The rationale for altering basal lesson plans might be summed up in this way: Student background knowledge necessary for understanding text is often inadequate. The traditional basal format typically does not provide for this lack of background, and teachers, feeling the pressure of accountability, do not often challenge the test-dominated basal program. The results of a creative alteration of the basal format could be improved decision-making skills on the part of teachers, as well as more effective preparation of children for reading.

### **How have basal lessons been altered?**

One approach to basal alteration is to shift emphasis from postreading assessment to prereading preparation (Reutzel, 1985; Prince and Mancus, 1987). Basal lesson structure can be altered to put postreading enrichment suggestions into the prereading phase. Among the "Curriculum Connections" suggested after reading *Mitchell is Moving* (Sharmat, 1989) is a math activity that, if taught before the introduction of the story, would enable students to grasp the important time-distance element of the selection. For *Animals that Migrate* (Arnold, 1989), the teacher's manual suggested a postreading language arts activity in which students make world maps, tracing the routes of migratory animals. Students are also invited to log observations made during neighborhood birdwatches. Both activities, if done as a part of prereading instruction, could increase the students' involvement in and comprehension of this selection.

A second approach to basal lesson alteration is to emphasize central story elements in prereading instruction, rather than extraneous details about character or plot (Beck, Omanson, and McKeown, 1982). *Oxcart Man* (Hall, 1989) tells the story of an early American farmer who sells

the year's crafts and produce in town. The basal emphasizes the folktale nature of the selection and includes activities and discussion questions along that line. The teacher might shift attention to the actual content of the selection which contains a wealth of information about early American rural life. Activities and discussion about weaving, candle making, woodcarving, and bartering could acquaint students with the central ideas of this story.

Another way in which the basal lesson can be altered is to pare the list of phonics, structural and study skills suggested by the basal teacher's manual, to determine the few relevant textual skills in that list and to introduce them before reading the selection (Spiegel and Fitzgerald, 1986; Reutzel, 1986). For the basal selection *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (Friedman, 1989), five phonics skills and one comprehension skill are suggested for teaching either before or after reading. One of the skills, learning the sounds *ou* and *ow*, is represented by several examples in the story. This skill, as well as the comprehension skill suggested (cause and effect), should receive the instructional emphasis. Determining the most useful skill in a list of several is only the first step; to make that skill work for readers, the teacher must often move it from the postreading extending skills section into the prereading phase. Thus, long word decoding, the most relevant of five phonics skills suggested for *Soccer Sam* (Marzollo, 1989), would be a logical part of prereading instruction rather than postreading skill extension, where it is found in the basal format.

Finally, the use of concrete experience, related to story content and presented before the reading, can provide the schema necessary for the student to comprehend and connect emotionally with the text. *Oxcart Man* (Hall, 1989)

exemplifies the potential for the use of hands-on activity in conjunction with children's literature. The basal lesson introducing the story suggested that students discuss and name things that they have made by hand. Using a concrete experience approach, the teacher would extend the discussion into activity, inviting students to make many of the things mentioned in the story (candles, weavings, carvings) and to role-play trading their crafts in a make-believe country store. Before teaching *Soccer Sam* (Marzollo, 1989), the class could be divided into small groups, with each group attempting to teach a new game to another group. Both of these examples point to the need to determine the central story concept and plan concrete experiences that will make that concept come alive for students.

### **Benefits of basal alteration**

For students, the activation of prior knowledge and the development of new schema can help in overcoming the cultural and socioeconomic differences that might have made the understanding of a basal selection difficult (Prince and Mancus, 1987). Diverse student backgrounds necessitate the presentation of experiences that will give the reader the prior knowledge to assimilate important concepts, and accommodate new and possibly incongruous information.

For teachers, a benefit of basal alteration has been discussed by Duffy and his colleagues (1987). Teachers can become instructional decision-makers, with one possible outcome being the eventual modification of the basals themselves by publishers. Teacher demand has the potential to force basal writers and publishers to revise the script-like and assessment-oriented nature of basal readers. These instructional tools can be changed to reflect current study on schema theory, and the classroom teacher has an important role in effecting that change.

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# **Documentary Perspective of Bibliotherapy in Education**

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Implemented correctly, bibliotherapy may prove one of the better techniques in dealing with emotional conflicts among children and adolescents, as research reminds us that periods of development are critically contingent upon self-concepts and how individuals believe they are perceived by significant others. Because many individuals (children and adolescents) are reluctant to verbalize emotions such as fear, rejection, and depression openly, carefully selected books allow these individuals to understand themselves better, learn from the experiences of others and contemplate possible solutions to problems (Schrank, 1982). The purpose of this article is to provide knowledge and understanding of the history, concept and intent of the bibliotherapeutical processes.

## **History of bibliotherapy**

The idea of reading for satisfying personal needs is not new. It has appeared over and over again throughout history. Around 300 B.C., an inscription was found on a library in Alexandria. It read, "The nourishment of the soul" (Cardenas, 1980, p. 3). The Greeks were also well aware of this concept. Aristotle recorded the therapeutic value of reading and stated that it aroused emotions within the person which did, in effect, heal (Cardenas, 1980). A library at Thebes bears the inscription, "The healing of the soul"

(Zaccaria and Moses, 1968, p. 12). Another similar inscription was found in a medieval abbey in Switzerland, "The medicine chest of the soul" (Salup and Salup, 1981, p. 3).

The Romans thought that reading orations to the mentally distressed was beneficial. Religious reading was a common practice in prisons and mental institutions during the Middle Ages (Gornicki, 1981). Even Shakespeare attested to this concept when he stated, "Come, and take choice of all my library and so beguile thy sorrow" (Cardenas, 1980, p. 4).

The first printed treatment using bibliotherapy was published by John Galt in 1840. Bibliotherapy became accepted as part of librarianship in 1904. The author of the term bibliotherapy was Crothers in 1916. Pomeroy made an important advancement in the 1930s with a study entitled "Bibliotherapy: A study in results of hospital library service." In the 1940s articles began to address both the philosophical and psychological bases of bibliotherapy, and in the 1950s graduate students completed dissertations on the topic. In the 1960s and 1970s case studies led in the contributions (Cardenas, 1980).

## **What is bibliotherapy?**

Wolverton (1988) provided objective perspectives of bibliotherapy: 1) guiding through reading; 2) using books to help solve personal problems; 3) developing life skills; 4) improving self-concept and personality, a dynamic interaction between readers' personality and literature. Like so many other big words, bibliotherapy represents a basically simple idea: the use of books to help people (Cornett, 1980). The term bibliotherapy, also referred to as bibliocounseling, is a method by which children and adolescents undergoing emotional stress, anxiety or maladjustment

may seek therapy through readings of selected books in which main characters are experiencing problems the same as or similar to those of the readers. Following the readings are guided discussions and activities to allow students opportunities to express their reactions and offer solutions to the characters' problems (Keats, 1974).

Educational settings for bibliotherapy have been popular since the 1940s, with groups led mostly by the classroom teacher (Peryon, 1982). Schools have been obvious sites for bibliotherapy because of the educational goals, which include fostering development of a whole person able to deal with today's world (Rubin, 1979). The type of bibliotherapy that is often provided in schools is known as developmental bibliotherapy, which refers to the use of both imaginative and instructive materials with groups of normal individuals. The goal of developmental bibliotherapy is to promote normal development and self-actualization, as well as to maintain mental health in stressful situations (Rubin, 1979).

Schultheis (1970) states that one of the best ways for individuals to gain insight into themselves and to have a better understanding of themselves and others is for them to identify with a character in a story. This then becomes an experience through which they can share the feelings of others. The author believes that storybooks about everyday people, their hardships, self-sacrifice, and persistence when they are faced by great trials are valuable to children for guidance in their own lives. Bibliotherapy consists of three processes of interactions between the reader and literature; these are known as identification, catharsis and insight. In order for bibliotherapy to be effective and successful, these processes should occur in a sequential and ordered fashion.

**Identification.** According to Russell (1979), the identification process begins with a relationship between a reader, or listener, and a story character. The purpose of this relationship is to expand one's self-concept as readers are made aware that their situation is not a unique or isolated problem and that there are others who have experienced like or similar situations. Through identification, individuals are less inclined to consider themselves different in a negative sort of way.

**Catharsis.** Following the process by which readers establish a sense of identity with a story character, they begin to experience feelings and emotional ties for that character because they are now able to relate to the situation. Often times, the reader is able to understand the motives and options of the story character. Cianciolo (1965) asserts that when readers become emotionally involved, literature may have the effect of purging or purifying their emotional status. Following this release of emotions, the reader may be in a position to look for solutions to the story character's problem (Nickolai-Mays, 1987).

**Insight.** At this point readers become aware that the problem they are experiencing does not have to remain static, since storybook characters usually solve their problems and thus become positive role models for children to follow (Russell, 1979). According to Baruth and Phillips (1976), insight allows readers the opportunity to analyze the character and situation, and subsequently develop opinions regarding behaviors or actions adopted by the character in their attempts to deal with problems. As readers place themselves in positions to evaluate conditions and circumstances, they then begin to view themselves in control of the situations in terms of the story outcome. These feelings of control may be transferred into individuals' real-life situa-

tions and thus generate awareness that just as they felt in control of the character's best interest, so could they take charge of their own problem in terms of coping and searching for alternative solutions. Finally, insight may be viewed as maturation from a sense of helpless submission to that of hopeful objectivity (Cornett, 1989).

### **Techniques in administering bibliotherapy**

In order to use bibliotherapy effectively, the administrator (i.e., the adult who guides the process) should be knowledgeable about the processes involved and have an in-depth understanding of basic guidelines that are necessary to promote favorable outcomes. The administrator has the responsibility of matching the appropriate book to the right individual so that the reader progresses from the identification stage of maturity to insight (Cornett, 1980).

All those who use bibliotherapy should understand that the process does not consist merely of selecting a book relative to a child's problem, but must also include frequent interaction and communication between the administrator and the student. Ouzts (1991) suggests that readers should be given the opportunity to verbalize their reactions to the literature as it relates to their situations. Planned follow-up discussions and activities must guide students through the fundamental processes of identification, catharsis, and insight. "We cannot ignore the emotional aspect of learning and adjustment" (Ouzts, 1991, p. 200).

The students should be encouraged to relate the situation of the story to their own situation and discuss possible measures by which the conflict can be resolved. It is equally important that administrators have prior knowledge of the book's content, as well as an understanding of the problem experienced by the student. The reading ability of the

students and their psychological, physical and emotional status of development should also be considered. This information is likely to have an impact on the effectiveness of bibliotherapy for specific individuals. As Schrank (1982) has pointed out, no single approach to resolving conflicts is a panacea.

The following guide, derived from Bohning (1981) is recommended for use by administrators or bibliotherapists.

- 1) The administrators should have sufficient knowledge of the background and history of bibliotherapy prior to implementation, and they should believe in the effectiveness of this approach. Bohning suggests the following sources to develop background knowledge: Shepherd and Iles (1976), Brown (1975), and Riggs (1971).
- 2) Administrators of bibliotherapy must recognize the importance of prior knowledge of the contents of books assigned to students so that follow-up activities and discussions can yield the greatest advantages. In addition to familiarity with books, administrators should have knowledge of the intended age range of readers for whom the book is most suited.
- 3) When matching a book with a reader, the administrator should be sensitive to the student's personality. Techniques are offered in the *Classroom Teacher's Manual for Bibliotherapy* (Schultheis and Pavlik, 1977). This manual is also helpful in developing follow-up lessons which include planning, assimilating techniques, and evaluation methods.
- 4) Following reading assignments, students should be assigned the tasks of probing the emotions and motives of the characters, identifying causes and effects of situations, drawing conclusions as to possible alternative solutions to problems, and dramatizing events involving main characters.
- 5) Preparation should be made to help students cope in desirable ways and enhance positive and acceptable attitudes of adjustment through this guided reading approach.

Because administrators now have improved knowledge of the problems and concerns of their students, they are better prepared to extend discussions and activities transferred from the stories' situations to the students' actual situations. 6) Administrators should keep abreast of current research, information and trends regarding bibliotherapy to maintain success in its use. Such broadening of knowledge can be obtained through the Institute for the Study of Bibliotherapy which publishes current information through newsletters. Other sources for staying informed include workshops, in-service sessions, and conferences pertaining to bibliotherapy.

### **Bibliotherapy implementation precautions**

Prior to implementing bibliotherapy, administrators should be aware of several factors that could determine its degree of effectiveness. Edwards and Simpson (1986) have stressed the importance of administrators' realization that bibliotherapy is not simply a matter of assigning books to be read. Happy endings that are so common in literature do not always become manifested in real-life situations. As mentioned earlier, matters that should be considered before using bibliotherapy include an in-depth knowledge of the student's background and a clear understanding of the nature of bibliotherapy.

After gaining clear and thorough information on a student's background, careful selections of books should be made. This requires the administrator to have excellent book sources and to be able to recommend literature in good judgment (Edwards and Simpson, 1986). Nickolai-Mays (1987) asserts that administrators should be sensitive to students' abilities to see their own problems. Students unable to do so see no purpose in therapy. Therefore, they may reject reading assignments and become ill-tempered

or despondent in nature. Edwards and Simpson (1986) contend that not all counselors, teachers or parents are qualified to administer bibliotherapy. Certain personal traits of administrators are necessary for success in this area; such traits are patience, self-confidence, emotional stability, and tendencies to empathize with students.

### **Limitations of bibliotherapy**

According to Edwards and Simpson (1986), bibliotherapy is not intended for severe emotional disorders. When such situations exist, parents should seek consultation from appropriate professionals. Teachers and administrators should be familiar with students' personality traits and problems when using the method of bibliotherapy. Many students may be introverted by nature rather than as a result of external forces. To force bibliotherapy upon such students could compound existing problems. Bibliotherapy should not be viewed as a cure-all for all emotional problems. It has been reported that in some situations, reading about problems related to those of the readers could have adverse effects which may intensify those problems (Bohning, 1981).

### **Studies of bibliotherapy**

Many studies have been completed which deal with the effects of bibliotherapy on an individual's self-concept, which plays a major role in academic achievement. Queen (1976) believes that the reading or sharing of a story that depicts children with similar fears and tensions lessens pain caused by feeling that one's sufferings are unique. Fears are further lessened when the child realizes that someone cared enough about these situations that bother children to take the time to write about them.



Use of fairy tales in bibliotherapy focuses on the concept that using imaginative literature can give the child a safe way to experience new thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. They can be used with all age groups, allowing individuals to take from each fairy tale the things they need. Fairy tales also give people a way to use the imagination to deal with problems and help them find deeper meaning in their lives and struggles (Gornicki, 1981).

Bibliotherapy can aid in reducing the feelings of isolation and shame that the maltreated or abused child experiences. Because the teacher often spends more time with the child than other adults outside the family, teachers may be influential in helping them through the adjustment period (Neely, 1985). Karlin (1985) points out that children who are suffering from physical, psychological, or sexual abuse need to realize that they are not alone, that someone else has experienced and understands their situation. In this situation the teacher should be alert as to what to look for with regard to abuse.

With behaviorally disordered youths, it is often difficult for them to realize their own problems without attempting to relate to those with similar ones. Due to this, the introduction of personal growth literature aids them in identifying with a character suffering personal difficulties similar to their own. It also aids children in that they gain insight into their own problems after seeing or reading how someone else copes with the same situation (DeFrances, 1982).

Bibliotherapy has also been shown to improve the self-concept of the timid or rejected child.

*The value of bibliotherapy may lie in its ability to bridge the gap in developing deeper involvement in*

*interpersonal relationships and more accepting activities toward each other. The real or imagined association with a character in a story may increase the feelings of belonging by reducing the sense of difference from others (DeFrances, 1982, p. 15).*

In addition to improving self-concept and needs, the development of values is enhanced through the use of bibliotherapy. Children learn to know themselves better, understand human behavior, find interest outside themselves, promote techniques of identification, and contribute to the socialization of the individual (DeFrances, 1982).

Bibliotherapy has also been shown to aid in the area of academics. Garagn (1983) found that bibliotherapy aided in improving the self-esteem of junior high students enrolled in remedial reading classes. These are among her suggestions: if bibliotherapy is used as a classroom procedure, supplement it with a supportive process; investigate individual cases where self-esteem has been improved; and measure the self-esteem of the subjects when they are in senior high school to determine if self-esteem has improved longitudinally.

Ray (1983) found that reading readiness was improved through the use of bibliotherapy with kindergarten children. He found a favorable impact on pupil perception, as well as achievement. A similar study by Peryon (1982) focused on the reader's attitude and self-concept. It was concluded that bibliotherapy and guidance treatment could yield positive and social adjustment.

Lindsey and Frith (1981) believe that since reading books helps students identify and model appropriate behaviors of both real and fictitious characters, it can be extremely helpful to those students who are struggling with

self-identification. It also helps result in a closer bond and acceptance level of the child and parent. This increased acceptance should, they feel, improve the students' self-concept and academic performance.

## Conclusion

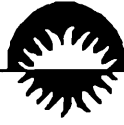
Bibliotherapy is a useful technique by which children and adolescents may learn to cope with some of the many emotional problems today's youth frequently encounter. Bibliotherapy, as with any therapeutic approach, has its limitations. Openly presenting these limitations guards against misleading interpretations and implications of educational outcomes in all situations.

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# **Oral Language, Literacy and Schooling: Kindergarten Years**

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This article reports the findings from the second year of a three year study following four children from a pre-kindergarten Headstart program through first grade. Grounded in the developmental theories of Vygotsky (1986), who has asserted the importance of social interaction and language learning, and Halliday (1975), who has provided a sociolinguistic framework for children learning language in social functions that promote meaning in their lives, it is an attempt to document the impact of oral language on young children's reading and writing. In the initial year of this study, we identified four children who demonstrated varying levels of Halliday's oral language functions and compared their use of talk with their understanding and performance of literacy tasks (Thomas and Rinehart, 1990). We used Halliday's (1975) seven functions: 1) *instrumental*, to have needs met; 2) *regulatory*, to regulate behavior; 3) *interactional*, to establish a me-and-you relationship; 4) *personal*, to assert one's self in opinion and feelings; 5) *heuristic*, to ask questions fostering learning; 6) *imaginative*, to play; and 7) *informational*, to pass on information, to screen over 40 children to select subjects who displayed varying degrees of the seven

functions. We selected four who provided us with varying uses of oral language demonstrated in classroom exchanges, classroom activities, writing activities, and reading activities. As participant observers, we collected over 36 hours of talk on audio and video tapes as well as hand tallied accounts from personal participation and observation. The selected four subjects were then ranked as numbers one, two, three and four with one representing full control of all seven functions. Subjects numbered two, three and four exhibited decreasing use of functions in social settings in the classroom with number four representing restricted use of language functions. In addition to the data collected in the classroom, we held interviews with parents in the first year of our study. The results of the first year indicated: 1) Subjects with the most developed use of language functions have the best understanding of the writing and reading process. 2) As oral language function use decreases so does the understanding of the writing and reading process. 3) Subjects who are frequently read to have better oral language development. 4) Subjects who wrote/scribbled at home as part of adult activities had a better understanding and performance in writing. 5) Subjects who spent more time actively engaged with adults in talk had a heightened sense of language development. 6) Talk was necessary to help subjects begin and sustain writing. 7) Heuristic, interactional and personal language functions best served subjects' writing. 8) Understanding of and performance in print awareness tasks paralleled the level of use of language functions. 9) Classroom activities and time devoted to oral language growth promoted writing interest.

The aim of the second phase of this study was to investigate the impact of kindergarten instruction on the development of literacy in our four subjects one year later. After a year in the same Headstart, these four children went

on to three different kindergartens with different instructors. Exploring the interplay among the changes in relationships of talk, writing and reading behaviors as a result of formal instruction in kindergarten, we asked the following questions: 1) how does kindergarten instruction influence our subjects' seven oral language functions?; 2) how is oral language used in kindergarten to facilitate literacy in the four subjects?; and 3) how has the understanding of literacy changed in these four subjects from Headstart to kindergarten?

## Method

**Subjects.** The subjects for this second year study were the same four students from the initial year so that comparisons could be made. Gary, who ranked as the number one language user of Halliday's seven functions, was five years seven months at the time of this study and maintained his standing in oral language development. Seth, who ranked number two in uses of Halliday's language functions was five years nine months at the time of this study and shared the second place this year with Polly in language function use. Polly was five years eight months and shared the second place with Seth in oral language. Robbie, who ranked in last place in oral language function use, was five years five months at the time of this study. All four children now attended different kindergartens. Polly and Robbie shared the same kindergarten teacher in a setting characterized as a traditional skills based, basal-driven classroom. Seth attended yet another kindergarten in a neighboring city that is also characterized as a traditional skills based, basal-driven setting. Gary attended a third kindergarten best characterized as an eclectic setting.

**Materials and measures.** *Oral language.* Halliday's seven classifications of language functions served again as

the basis for measurement of oral language development. In transcribing their oral language from tapes, we obtained a measure of their language functions in the writing center. In addition, we used tally sheets outlining Halliday's seven oral language functions to mark which functions were employed in classroom oral language exchanges as we observed them. These tally sheets allowed for a frequency count of the seven language functions. In both instances, the classroom and the writing center, we tallied the occurrence of talk that demonstrated a particular function. All functions were agreed upon by two of the researchers. When there was a question regarding a function, the third researcher resolved the matter.

*Print awareness.* Students completed two print awareness tasks. The first measure involved student reaction to print information on index cards. These cards were initially developed by Freeman and Whitesell (1985) based on the work of Ferreiro and Teberosky (1983). For this task, children were to decide whether print presented on index cards could be read or could not be read. The cards had examples of lower and upper case print number, cursive and manuscript words (see Appendix A).

The second measure for print awareness called for children to recognize logos on cards. We developed the cards to exemplify print seen and experienced in everyday life. Two sets of cards were involved. In the first instance each card had the actual logo and the accompanying print. For example, one card contained the yellow arches from McDonald's and the word McDonald's printed on the card just as it is seen in advertising. The second set of cards only contained the decontextualized print of the name of the product, brand or service offered.



*Print concepts.* In order to determine reading behavior involving books, we used 19 items from Clay's (1985) *Concepts About Print Test* (CAPT). Not used in the first study year because children were not in the stages of beginning reading, we decided to use this test now that our subjects were involved in beginning reading instruction. Using an age appropriate tradebook, the four subjects attempted to identify nineteen different print concepts (see Appendix B).

*Writing samples.* We collected writing samples from all of the children for comparison with written products from the first year of the study. Children wrote in response to topics we suggested, topics they generated and stories we read to them. We categorized elements of each written product using Clay's (1975) classification protocol, which involved code; language level; message quality; and directional principle (see Appendix C for description and instrument).

## **Procedures**

Having received permission from appropriate elementary school personnel and the parents, we began to collect data in the three different classrooms. Gary attended one kindergarten while Polly and Robbie shared the same kindergarten class. Seth had moved to a neighboring city attending yet a third kindergarten. For a period of two to three days a week during the last three months of school we went to these classrooms where we were participant observers becoming a part of these children's circle time, reading time, special activities time, recess and lunch time.

In addition to these routines, we set up a writing center consisting of a small work table, chairs and writing material. The center was located in a private niche of the room. At the writing center we kept a full supply of pens, pencils, magic

markers, crayons, unlined paper and various trade books which we brought. From writing center activities we gathered writing samples and audiotaped children's language while they wrote. The four children wrote for us at the writing center during every visit to the school. The print awareness and print concepts tasks were also administered in the writing center.

Thus, data collection for oral language came from observations of all four children in the classroom setting and audiotapes of their work in the writing center. Tallies of language functions came from talk observed in the classroom and tape recorded talk in the writing center. Analyses were conducted qualitatively by comparing student performances across identified categories and judging differences and changes in performance. The findings are described below.

## **Results**

**Instructional settings.** Gary, as the only subject who demonstrated use of all seven functions, continued this same pattern in kindergarten. Gary's classroom practices were teacher-led and involved the following routines: 1) large group activities with teacher-led discussion; 2) teacher-led ability-grouped reading instruction following a phonics approach adhering to the reading basal manual; 3) whole group LEA activities; 4) teacher-led reading-to-students experiences; 5) letter-formation exercises emphasizing tracing and correct position and formation of alphabet; 6) coloring pictures; and 7) peer interaction characterized by a good deal of freedom for students reading together in classroom library as well as playing games together and generally engaging in any of the teacher-provided activities. The presence of print in Gary's room was limited to a small classroom library and occasional LEA activities. Print was

displayed rarely. The chalk boards were usually bare as were the bulletin boards.

Seth, rated as second in use of language functions, now shared this ranking with Polly. Seth's classroom was also designated as teacher-led involving the following activities: 1) small group activities grouped by ability for instruction in math, reading, science, health, and handwriting organized around a rotating basis as students went from table to table under supervision of teacher and teacher aide; 2) structured basal lessons in all academic subjects; 3) teacher-led large group discussion; 4) free play time allowing children social interactions daily; 5) teacher-led reading-to-students once a day; 6) seat work time involving quantities of worksheets/workbooks. Seth's room had several visual representations of print on the chalk boards, bulletin board and walls.

Polly, who demonstrated a growth in oral language functions used, now rivaled Seth in oral language functions in the classroom while Robbie still ranked fourth in use of language functions with a definitive growth in oral language. Polly and Robbie share the same kindergarten session. Their teacher conducted the following routines: 1) small highly-structured ability-reading groups; 2) math, handwriting, and art work completed at assigned small table seats through worksheets; 3) teacher-led reading to students once a day; 4) small classroom library used during free play time as well as quiet social interaction activities allowed at this time. This room also had print displayed on all available bulletin boards, chalk boards and walls.

A comparison of the oral language functions from the first year with the language functions from the second year showed both a decrease overall in child-initiated talk and a

decrease in some specific functions used in kindergarten. After tallying frequencies of the specific language functions used by each subject during the initial year and during the kindergarten year, we saw a pattern of reduced talk altogether as well as a decrease in the rough percentages of the certain language functions. The most notable changes involved an increase in the informational function and a decrease in the imaginative, interactional and heuristic functions (see Appendix D).

**Writing episodes.** One year later, Gary, clearly the most prolific writer in Headstart, now viewed himself as "not a very good writer." In fact, he appeared to avoid writing completely. This represented a dramatic change from the first year when Gary's compositions in mock linear had a complete story line with beginning, middle and end. Only when Gary was presented with a "magic pen" this year could he write. His form of writing again represented mock linear with no growth represented in topics, interest or excitement. Gary's talk during writing again represented the imaginative as well as the personal and heuristic. Seth also tried to avoid writing with statements such as "I may do the writing next time," and "I'm not good at writing stories." When Seth did consent to write, he insisted on copying from books or any piece of print in sight. Last year, Seth eagerly drew and wrote stories making marks representing his text. Seth insisted on spelling correctly. Seth's stories this year had no accompanying drawings, just letters (e.g., NO EBB). He clearly stuck to letters that he knew how to make with a story line to go with the letters. Polly also commented that she did not know how to write a story and that spelling had to be correct or else she did not consider it as writing. Polly also copied from any piece of text in sight and a story that she finally consented to write had the following text according to her reading of it: "Polly saw a bee in the flowers."

However, her text looked like this: "Polly ABSC Crayola Polly." She wrote her name and copied the word crayola from the coloring crayons on the table. She only attempted what she knew to be correct and what she could copy. Robbie, on the other hand, viewed himself as a writer. Interestingly enough, Robbie — as the least developed user of language functions — was at the point that Seth and Polly were last year at this time. Now Robbie made random marks and upper case letters to represent his writing.

None of the three instructional settings provided writing time for children to explore print nor did the teacher encourage children to compose stories. Only an occasional LEA lesson in Gary's room fit a description of children composing. There were no students' models displayed in the classrooms as well as no writing centers nor time devoted to writing. The only writing accomplished by these four subjects was structured handwriting exercises and copying and tracing of letters on dittoed worksheets or workbook pages. Correctness of form predominated. The only composing these subjects did occurred in the writing center we established for this study.

Because three of the four subjects were concerned with not being "good writers," their talk in the writing centers evolved around questioning their writing. They attempted to elicit clarification in what they were doing when they wrote with us using heuristic and regulatory functions of language.

**Print concepts.** Using an age appropriate trade-book, the four subjects were asked to help identify nineteen different print concepts (see Appendix B). This print awareness task was not administered last year. We decided to use it because the children were into beginning reading and Clay's (1985) task was appropriate. Gary was able to iden-

tify thirteen concepts followed by Seth who identified twelve. Polly and Robbie identified ten print concepts each. Robbie, the least developed in using seven language functions, was the only child who did not have any idea what the story was about.

Logo recognition again proved to be an easy task for Gary followed by Seth, Polly and Robbie. However, Gary was the only one who could read three names from the de-contextualized logos. The other three could not recognize any of the brand names or businesses without the accompanying colorful logo.

The cards to be identified *for reading or not for reading* proved quite a different task this year. The result of formal letter and word recognition instruction figured prominently in these four children's rationale in determining what was or was not for reading. Gary clearly lead in correct responses as well as explanations followed by Seth, Polly and Robbie. Gary and Seth focused on letters as the marks for reading but not numbers. Polly and Robbie had no consistent set of rules for what was to be read and what was not for reading but clearly displayed knowledge of each letter name and number. This represented little change from last year. Gary and Seth retained their edge in this task.

## **Discussion and implications**

We noticed a glaring difference between the practices of Headstart and these three public school kindergartens. Headstart clearly emphasized socialization with attendant language activities allowing talk and play which fostered the seven language functions while kindergarten practices fostered formal introduction to literacy through basal readiness programs with a prescribed sequence of skills to be covered. Hence, oral language in these kindergartens fostered

instrumental and regulatory functions almost exclusively. On any given day in the kindergarten classes, the predominant use of the instrumental and regulatory phrases of all three teachers included *I want, do this, do exactly as I say*. The third oral language category of all teachers involved the informational function. Teachers appeared to be compelled to pass on information to the children in isolated bits and pieces regarding the separate skills comprising all of literacy. Unfortunately, there was little time provided for the children to talk and explore different social settings to foster other language functions and development. The models provided by the teachers for these children set the tone for instrumental, regulatory and informational functions.

Secondly, writing was not a part of these kindergarten programs. The only writing (i.e., composing) and exploration of print done by these children occurred when we set up our writing corners in each of the classrooms. As we asked children to write with us we noted a conflict in what the kindergarten teacher presented as writing and what we practiced as writing. In Headstart invented spelling, scribbling, marking and drawing poured forth from our four subjects with accompanying text provided orally (Thomas and Rinehart, 1990). Now the conventions of orthography and the writing system have become important as Gary, Seth and Polly struggle to write. Only Robbie appears unfettered by writing tasks. Possibly, the three most developed in oral language are in the process of changing their control over writing while Robbie has not reached this level. More likely, Dyson (1985) has offered the plausible explanation that "...writing is a matter of social learning, of playful exploration and self expression." With this in mind, after one year of formal education, three of these four children appear to have lost this sense of playful exploration and self expression which they demonstrated in Headstart. Quite clearly, formal

instruction in literacy skills has taught these three that there is only one correct way to write and the way they used to write is wrong.

Our third observation indicating a difference from the first year to this year involved the print concepts task. Gary was the only child in the initial study who could identify a main idea from a story read to him. A year later, Seth and Polly join Gary in understanding and recognizing that a story has a main idea. Also, all four children indicated some knowledge of punctuation as part of the writing system along with directionality (left to right, top to bottom). Formal education seems to have enhanced these children's understanding of story print.

Next, we observed that all four subjects viewed themselves as readers this year whereas in the first year they did not see themselves as readers. However, after formal teaching of various letter names and a few simple words, including their own names, these subjects were now beginning to identify themselves as readers. Along with this recognition of their own reading ability, however, they were also discovering a correct way of reading. They define this as pronouncing the words correctly and quickly.

Finally, the two who made the greatest gains when compared with last year's results, Polly and Robbie, attended the same kindergarten class with an instructor who allowed more play time during which children could talk to each other than the other kindergarten instructors. Gary, the most advanced in oral language, made the least gains while enrolled in a kindergarten whose instructor openly admitted displeasure with Gary's frequent and advanced language. Gary's kindergarten teacher reported that through her instruction she hoped to make him less



inquisitive and more like the other children. Seth, in yet a third kindergarten, went through a year of adjustment with a move to another city and a whole new neighborhood of changes. His year of formal instruction offered him structure; however, he did lose some of his playful exploration with print.

Even though three of our four subjects appeared to lack confidence in their writing, they anxiously awaited our coming to their classrooms so that they could scribble and explore print. The only other opportunities we witnessed for using paper and pencil involved matching pictures to letter sounds, underlining responses, filling in boxes, or coloring existing pictures. There appeared to be little freedom to explore print in these three kindergarten classrooms. Instructional emphases showed little evidence of knowledge of invented spelling, the reading-writing connection, or whole language beliefs.

Our results suggest that these children may define writing and reading as their instructional programs dictate. Clearly at this point, three of our four students perceive writing as form and do not see it as a function of expressing meaning. Similarly they seem to view reading as sounding out the new letters learned in reading groups. In revealing literacy to these young learners piecemeal, not at all in the natural way they learned oral language through meaningful social settings with accompanying context, these teachers appear to be limiting how these children define literacy.

Teachers of young children must listen to their children to determine developmental progress in oral language and provide models for language development. In addition, teachers must provide opportunities for students to explore print and allow oral language development during

composing. Furthermore, teachers must bring talk and writing into the proper perspective. Finally, teachers must align literacy instruction in keeping with how children learn language – in meaningful social contexts that touch children's lives. This second year study clearly demonstrated that teachers have a tremendous impact upon children's literacy learning and teachers' instructional practices do make a difference in how children define and accomplish literacy.

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## APPENDIX A

## ITEMS INCLUDED ON PRINT AWARENESS TASK

Letters in Lower case	Letters in Upper case	Words in Lower case	Words in Upper case	Letters in Cursive	Words in Cursive	Numbers
t t	BBBB	circle	TOO	<i>lll</i>	<i>man</i>	2357
oso	GDY	duck	AN	<i>tra</i>	<i>of</i>	5
csf	P	to	CAT	<i>sss</i>	<i>something</i>	6
			LOOK	<i>a</i>		

“Expanding Horizons,” a feature included periodically in *Reading Horizons* (see pages 174-177 in this issue), enables our readers to share exciting teaching ideas with one another. If you have a short practical article to submit to “Expanding Horizons,” send three typed copies, with a self-addressed stamped envelope, to: Editor, *Reading Horizons*, Reading Center and Clinic, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo MI 49008.

**APPENDIX B**  
**PRINT CONCEPT CHECKLIST**

Concept	Subjects			
	Gary	Seth	Polly	Robbie
Front of book	+	+	+	+
Print carries message	+	+	+	+
Start at top left	+	+		+
Progress left to right	+	+		+
Return to lower line left	+	+		+
Points to individual word	+		+	
First/Last word of page	+		+	
Beginning/End of sentence	+			
Beginning/End of Paragraph				
Left page before right	+	+	+	+
Question mark	+		+	
Period	+		+	
Comma				
Quotation Mark				
Upper /Lower case Match	+	+	+	+
1 letter/ 2 letters	+	+	+	
1 word/2 words	+		+	
First/Last letter	+	+		
Capital Letter	+	+	+	+
Totals	13	12	10	10

+ correct response  
after Clay (1985)

# APPENDIX C

## DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING STEPS AND ORAL LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS USED IN CHILDREN'S WRITING

* FUNCTION USED WHILE COMPOSING	Gary	Seth	Polly	Robbie
-instrumental	+	+	+	+
-regulatory	+	+	+	-
-interactional	+	+		
-personal	+	+	+	+
-imaginative	+	+	+	
-heuristic	+	+	+	+
-informative	+	+	+	+
** CODE				
-scribble				
-linear mock	+			
-mock letters				
** LANGUAGE LEVEL				
-alphabetic (letters only)	+	+	+	+
-word (any recognizable word)	+	+	+	+
-word group (any 2 word phrase)				
-sentence (any simple sentence)				
-punctuated story (2 or more sentences)				
-paragraphed story (2 paragraphs)				
** MESSAGE QUALITY				
-concept of signs	+	+	+	+
-concept of message conveyed	+	+	+	+
-repetitive, independent use of sentence patterns (e.g. "here is a ...")				
-attempts to record own ideas				
-successful composition				
** DIRECTIONAL PRINCIPLES				
-no evidence of directional knowledge				
-knows: -to start top left	+	+		+
-to move left to right	+	+		+
-to return down	+	+	+	+
-reversal of: -right to left				
-return down right				
-correct directional pattern	+	+		
-correct directional pattern & spaces between words				
-appropriate extensive text				

\* Halliday (1975) \*\* Clay (1975, pp. 66-67)

## APPENDIX D

### PERCENTAGES OF LANGUAGE-FUNCTION-USE WITNESSED IN HEADSTART AND KINDERGARTEN

Language Function	Gary	Seth	Polly	Robbie
Instrumental				
in Headstart	15%	10%	18%	12%
in Kindergarten	13%	20%	16%	12%
Regulatory				
in Headstart	15%	25%	20%	12%
in Kindergarten	27%	17%	20%	20%
Interactional				
in Headstart	15%	14%	18%	5%
in Kindergarten	11%	5%	10%	3%
Personal				
in Headstart	17%	10%	10%	3%
in Kindergarten	10%	14%	10%	12%
Heuristic				
in Headstart	18%	20%	18%	6%
in Kindergarten	14%	23%	12%	5%
Imagination				
in Headstart	10%	6%	6%	0%
in Kindergarten	5%	1%	10%	0%
Informational				
in Headstart	10%	15%	10%	62%
in Kindergarten	20%	20%	22%	48%
<b>Totals</b>				
in Headstart	100%	100%	100%	100%
in Kindergarten	100%	100%	100%	100%



# **The Multidimensional Reading Instruction Observation Scale**

**Patrick P. McCabe**

The Multidimensional Reading Instruction Observation Scale is a formative evaluative instrument which can be used to judge the quality of reading instruction by recording the nature of the interaction between the student and the teacher along three dimensions critical to quality instruction: cognitive processes, affective processes, and management skills. Cognitive processes are those behaviors which are directed toward acquiring strategies or skills (to improve reading). Affective processes are those behaviors which influence the self-concept of the learner. Management skills are those behaviors which demonstrate ability to utilize components of the learning environment effectively.

In part a response to Guthrie's (1987) call for a quantification of indicators of quality in reading programs and McGreal's (1988) plea for specificity of focus when making observations, the Multidimensional Reading Instruction Observation Scale (MRIOS) provides specific foci for evaluating reading lessons. According to Guthrie, "process indicators should be defined as metrics rather than as principles. A vague generality such as 'teacher warmth fosters learning' is an inadequate ground for an indicator" (1987, p. 13). McGreal (1988) noted that high quality evaluations are based on a specific focus and are descriptive rather than judgmental observations.

The indicators of quality reading instruction enumerated in the MRIOS grow from other evaluative instruments in the field of reading education as reported below. For example, Burns and Womack (1979), McCormick (1979), Criscuolo (1984), and Corboy and Mangieri (1984) reported the use of checklists to which the evaluator responds with a yes or no to components of a reading program. (Corboy and Mangieri also included a column for comments by the observer.)

While these yes or no checklists are useful because they enumerate those factors which are important in reading instruction, they fail to help teachers recognize their areas of relative strength and/or weakness. For example, a yes rating on a checklist on two successive observations does not reflect progress in spite of the fact that instruction may, in fact, have improved; a *no* response to an item does not give the teacher specific enough feedback so that instruction can be modified. An improved question might be: "To what degree is the teacher using...?" A response to this question would serve to demonstrate to teachers the extent of their effectiveness in a given area, not merely to indicate if the behavior was observed.

In one example of an improved format, Bagford (1981) reported the use of a checklist on which a rating from one to ten indicated teacher effectiveness in reading instruction. In another example of an improved format, Blair and Rupley (1980) encouraged teachers to rate their classroom reading instruction by using two self-evaluation scales, noting that by connecting the x's indicating the ratings in these scales, teachers can see a graphic profile of their strengths and weaknesses. An advantage of both the Bagford and the Blair and Rupley instruments compared to the other mentioned above is that the degree to which a given behavior is



present during reading instruction is indicated along a continuum.

Although not developed specifically for evaluating reading instruction, an additional example of an improved evaluation format is Ysseldyke's and Christenson's Instructional Environment Scale (1987). While this instrument does provide a structure for recording the degree to which a behavior associated with quality instruction is present and while numerous behaviors are included, the format of the page does not provide enough space to record ratings of specific sub-categories of behavior.

### **The Multidimensional Reading Instruction Observation Scale**

The Multidimensional Reading Instruction Observation Scale (MRIOS) is an attempt to synthesize those indicators of quality reading instruction reported in the reading education literature in a format which avoids some of the problems noted above. Construct validity for the teacher and learner behaviors included in MRIOS has been established in the reading education literature through the work of Rowell (1972), Burns and Womack (1979), McCormick (1979), Rupley and Blair (1980), Bagford (1981), Rauch (1982), Criscuolo (1984), Corboy and Mangieri (1984), Hoover and Carroll (1987), and Stieglitz and Oehlkers (1989). Additionally, those behavioral indicators of effective instruction in general written by Rosenshine and Stevens (1986), Ysseldyke and Christenson (1987), and McGreal (1988) complete the rationale for the inclusion of the items in the MRIOS.

As McGreal has stated, "Evaluators can obtain reliable student information if they concentrate on describing life in the classroom rather than making judgments of the teacher"

(1987, p. 20). Since teaching should not be thought of as unrelated to learning, observation of learner behavior as well as teacher behavior during the time reading strategies are taught provides additional data on the probable effectiveness of the reading instruction. When using MRIOS, cognitive processes, affective processes, and management skills during reading lessons are observed from three perspectives: 1) teacher behavior; 2) learner behavior; and 3) time.

The MRIOS provides a framework for observation of life (the teaching/learning environment) in the classroom for one or for many learners. It is used to describe both teacher and learner behavior during one or during many formal reading lessons (such as DRAs) or less formal reading activities over a number of days, weeks or months depending upon the needs of the individual(s) observed.

In MRIOS a number of indicators of quality reading instruction and learner behavior are identified and a continuum is used to report the degree to which each is present during a reading instruction activity. Positive behaviors are listed on the left side of the continuum and negative behaviors are listed on the right side. During the lesson the observer records the behavior(s) by putting the day's date on the appropriate place between the positive and negative poles. The MRIOS can be used by teacher, student-teacher supervisors and administrators to evaluate instruction and learning.

**Teachers.** Upon completion of an activity, teachers can make a judgment about the effectiveness of their instruction as well as its effect on student learning using MRIOS retrospectively. (While this may be subjective, it does provide a baseline for self monitoring.) Groups of

teachers might also observe each other. When teachers decide to observe, the teacher observed and the observer each complete a MRIOS form for the session and comparisons are made. The teacher's perceptions are compared to the observer's recordings on the MRIOS and collegial discussions follow.

**Student-teacher supervisors.** When working within a clinical supervision framework, such as that described by Lindsey and Runquist (1983), the student-teacher supervisor can guide the neophyte teacher more effectively. By using MRIOS, expectations are clearly enumerated, strengths and weaknesses can be pinpointed, and a framework is provided so that feedback can be very specific. This is especially beneficial for student-teachers who may become so overwhelmed when assuming the responsibilities of management of actual students that they may not use skills taught during the teacher education program.

**Administrators.** A school administrator can use the results of MRIOS over a period of time with a number of teachers to determine staff needs. For example, if it is discovered that questioning techniques are an area of relative weakness for the staff of a school, then workshops can be planned to address that skill.

The use of MRIOS has two major benefits: 1) relative strengths and weaknesses of the teaching/learning situation are reported in an easily readable format, and 2) by using the original MRIOS form on subsequent observations both the teacher and the observer can immediately see progress over time in relation to a given indicator(s) of quality teaching behavior.

Dates of the observation(s) are recorded on the appropriate place on the line between the negative and positive behaviors instead of checks or numerical ratings; color coding of different dates makes a visual survey of the completed observation form(s) more graphic.

As an example, if on September 28th the teacher does not draw upon relevant experiences of the learner to provide readiness for reading specific material, the observer would put the date of the observation, 9/28, using a green marker; on part *F* of "Section I: Cognitive Processes" toward the right side of the scale. If the teacher is a skilled questioner, than 9/28 should be entered also in green in the appropriate section close to the left hand side of the page. If the teacher is an unskilled questioner, than 9/28 should be entered close to the right hand side of the page on the appropriate line. In this manner, relative strengths and weaknesses become apparent for that session. If, on a subsequent visit, that teacher was observed to "draw upon relevant experiences..." frequently, then the observer would enter the date, say 11/3 in the appropriate place on the original scale, using a different color ink.

Since these behaviors may occur with varying degrees of frequency during a single observation, the observer can quantify each of those behaviors along with the date of occurrence. An example of such a code could be 10/4-4, indicating that on October 4th, the behavior was observed four times.

The three dimensions (teacher behavior, learner behavior, and time) of MRIOS when viewed from the three perspectives (cognitive processes, affective processes, and management skills) provide the teacher, student-teacher

supervisor, and the administrator with a description of the learning environment.

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## APPENDIX

### The Multidimensional Reading Instruction Observation Scale

#### I. Cognitive Processes

##### *The teacher...*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>A. clearly states objective of the lesson _____</p> <p>B. provides an overview of the learning activity _____</p> <p>C. provides an example of strategy to be taught (context clues, metacognitive activity, etc.) _____</p> <p>D. uses "independent" level material to demonstrate how the strategy can be used _____</p> <p>E. provides the opportunity for transfer of the newly learned reading skill to the reader's text(s) _____</p> <p>F. draws upon relevant experience of the learner to provide readiness for reading specific material _____</p> <p>G. asks a variety of questions (literal, interpretive, applied) _____</p> <p>H. asks probing questions to follow an incorrect response _____</p> <p>I. rephrases questions which are too difficult _____</p> <p>J. asks metacognitive questions, such as "what made you come up with that answer?" _____</p> <p>K. provides "think time" _____</p> <p>L. often asks students about the accuracy of their predictions _____</p> | <p>A. does not clearly state the objective of the lesson</p> <p>B. does not provide overview of the learning activity</p> <p>C. does not provide example of the strategy to be taught</p> <p>D. uses material which is too difficult to illustrate how the strategy can be used</p> <p>E. uses skill activities exclusively; does not allow transfer of the newly learned skill to the reader's text(s)</p> <p>F. ignores relevant experiences of learner when providing readiness for reading specific material</p> <p>G. asks one type of question</p> <p>H. does not use follow-up questions; goes immediately to another unrelated question without trying to elicit answer</p> <p>I. does not rephrase questions; repeats original question</p> <p>J. does not ask metacognitive questions</p> <p>K. answers own question; does not allow student time to reflect; calls on another student</p> <p>L. rarely asks students about accuracy of their predictions</p> |
|---|---|

##### *The learner...*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>M. demonstrates awareness of the purpose of the lesson _____</p> <p>N. demonstrates the ability to use a variety of word recognition strategies (context, structural analysis, phonics) _____</p> <p>O. demonstrates the ability to read at the literal level _____</p> <p>P. demonstrates ability to read at higher levels of comprehension _____</p> <p>Q. demonstrates ability to apply newly learned skill(s) to _____</p> | <p>M. is not sure about what he/she is supposed to be learning</p> <p>N. relies upon one word recognition strategy</p> <p>O. does not demonstrate the ability to read at literal level</p> <p>P. cannot respond to reading selection at higher comp. level</p> <p>Q. does not apply newly presented skill material; continues</p> |
|---|---|

reading material

R. demonstrates ability to monitor learning of objectives; says "I don't get it," etc.)

S. demonstrates ability to monitor comprehension of passage (utilizes metacognitive strategies)

to get "answer" wrong

R. gives no indication of ability to monitor own learning of objective

S. gives no indication of monitoring comprehension; does not stop to reflect upon what has been read

## II. Affective Processes

### *The teacher...*

A. smiles; addresses learners by name

B. makes eye contact with all or most learners

C. treats learners with dignity (says "thank you" and "please" when appropriate)

D. laughs with learners; enjoys learner's humor

E. demonstrates a professional interest in learners' personal well-being (asks "how are you feeling," etc. when appropriate)

F. uses praise frequently

G. provides regular feedback on learner success

H. expresses criticism in a positive manner; is constructive (says "Can you think of another answer?" "You're on the right track," etc.)

I. encourages all learners to participate an express self; says "Yes that was a good question," etc.)

J. is enthusiastic

A. does not smile; addresses learner without using name

B. teaches to a small group of learners

C. does not treat learner with dignity

D. does not laugh at learner's humor

E. does not ask questions about learners' well-being when possible

F. rarely, if ever, uses praise

G. rarely, if ever, provides positive feedback

H. expresses criticism in a negative way; inculcates a feeling of "being dumb" (says "How could you think that?" "I never heard of such a silly answer," etc.)

I. is discouraging; frowns when an incorrect answer is given

J. is unenthusiastic

### *The learner...*

K. makes voluntary contributions to the group

L. accepts "corrections" gracefully; may nod head in agreement

M. helps others in room (if permitted)

N. asks other learners for help when necessary

O. interacts with the teacher

P. is not easily distracted

Q. asks to do additional reading

R. without being told to do so does additional reading in class

K. rarely, if ever, contributes to the group

L. gets angry when his/her "error" is pointed out

M. refuses to help others

N. does not ask others for help; does not seek assistance from peers

O. doesn't interact with teacher

P. is easily distracted

Q. does not ask for more reading; finishes the task at hand

R. never does additional reading in class

S. mentions "outside" reading \_\_\_\_\_

S. rarely, if ever, demonstrates "outside reading"

### III. Management Skills

#### *The teacher...*

A. makes learners aware that a learning activity is about to begin \_\_\_\_\_

A. makes no attempt to make learners aware that a learning activity is about to begin

B. makes good use of at least two different types of media or materials \_\_\_\_\_

B. does not make good use of media or material

C. encourages all learners to become involved \_\_\_\_\_

C. makes no attempt to involve all learners

D. calls upon volunteers in a non-threatening manner \_\_\_\_\_

D. calls upon volunteers in an intimidating manner; learners feel "on the spot"

E. addresses the group as a whole as well as communicating on an individual or small group basis \_\_\_\_\_

E. communicates solely with group as a whole; rarely if ever communicates on an individual or small group basis

F. seats learners so that they see and hear comfortably \_\_\_\_\_

F. seats learners so they can't see and hear comfortably

G. arranges the room so that material is easily accessible \_\_\_\_\_

G. has arranged the room so material is hard to get to

H. maintains a clutter free room \_\_\_\_\_

H. maintains a room which is full of clutter

I. has clear record of test results \_\_\_\_\_

I. has no clear record

J. employs a variety of tests (formal and informal) \_\_\_\_\_

J. uses one type of test

K. moves about the room to implement instruction \_\_\_\_\_

K. remains stationary; teachers from one location

L. responds to requests for assistance in a timely manner \_\_\_\_\_

L. does not respond to requests for assistance in timely manner

M. is able to provide for developmental, corrective, remedial and accelerated readers \_\_\_\_\_

M. is unable to provide instruction for all types of readers

N. entices learners to read through the use of "advertisements," such as book jackets strategically placed, dioramas, a circulation library, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

N. fails to make reading "appetizing" through advertisements

O. uses instructional time effectively \_\_\_\_\_

O. does not use instructional time effectively

#### *The learner...*

P. moves around the room in a constructive manner \_\_\_\_\_

P. rarely leaves his/her seat for constructive reasons

Q. has an accurate, organized system of record keeping \_\_\_\_\_

Q. does not have an accurate, organized system of record keeping

R. consults personal records for strengths and weaknesses \_\_\_\_\_

R. does not consult personal records for strengths and weaknesses

S. appears to be involved in the learning activity \_\_\_\_\_

S. does not appear to be involved in the learning activity

T. follows a sequence of learning activities \_\_\_\_\_

T. does not follow a sequence of learning activities



### **Call for Manuscripts: 1993 Themed Issue *Exemplary Teaching and Exemplary Teachers***

The June 1993 issue of *Reading Horizons* will be devoted to the theme of exemplary teaching and the exemplary teacher, focusing on reading and language arts instruction. Contributions in the form of research reports, commentaries, case studies, and articles discussing theory and practice of exemplary teaching are welcomed.

Manuscripts should be submitted following *Reading Horizons* guidelines: send four copies and two stamped, self-addressed business-size envelopes; include a cover sheet with author name and affiliation; use a running head (without author identity) on subsequent pages; follow APA guidelines for references and use of gender-free language.

Manuscripts intended for the themed issue should be postmarked by March 1, 1993. Address all manuscripts to Dr. Jeanne M. Jacobson, Editor, *Reading Horizons*, Reading Center and Clinic, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo MI 49008.

Guest editor for this issue will be Dr. Suzanne F. Davis. Dr. Davis is a faculty member in the Department of Education and Professional Development at Western Michigan University. Her background in education is wide ranging, with experience as teacher, counselor, child care director, and principal of a magnet school. Her teaching and research interests include school-university collaboration, classroom organization and management, and supervision and guidance of student teachers.



# ***Expanding Horizons***

## **Writing Cliffhangers**

**Jerry Phillips**

Cliffhangers are story points which leave the reader in suspense. I recommend writing cliffhangers as a way of engaging students in the writing process. In this exercise students take three steps recommended by writing educators toward effective writing. First, they develop raw written material during several minutes of nonstop freewriting (Elbow, 1981). Second, they reread material, searching until they find a focus to develop further (Murray, 1987). Third, they publish a book when finished (Calkins, 1986). Here is a typical cliffhanger paragraph four students created:

*The telephone rang, but Jana was afraid to move. She watched it patiently, hoping the ringing would stop, but it didn't. The noises outside grew louder and louder, and...*

*Jana leaped from the couch. The thunder sounded like a huge airplane tunneling through the apartment. Jana...*

*...picked up the phone, but never said a word. The deep voice on the other end said...*

*"What took you so long? I knew you were there." Jana felt tears roll down her cheek. Her father was on the line.*

Students begin writing, establish a story line, leave it incomplete, and allow peers to read and extend the story.

Peers repeat this process until they exhaust the story line. The first student then has responsibility to edit the story. This exercise usually takes three class periods. The first day students select a topic and write a story for ten or fifteen minutes, develop a story line, and try to leave it hanging. Second, they place the unfinished story on a table somewhere in the classroom, and then select a peer's story. Third, peers read the unfinished story, further the story line, and leave the end hanging. Repeat this process until finished.

Next day return the cliff hangers to those who started the first paragraph, and tell them the cliff hanger story belongs to them. This may throw some off balance because they have never before heard this approach. Therefore, explaining they have complete control over their writing may be appropriate at this time. Allow students to take the stories home, make revisions thought necessary, such as rewriting into one cohesive story, and bring the revised ones back the next day.

The third day students allow peers to read the revised editions and make written suggestions for improvements. The original author may make several revisions before turning in an easy-to-read draft at the beginning of the fourth class. Finally, students use the fifth and sixth class periods to bind the cliffhangers into a book.

There are roadblocks to this exercise. Some students worry about their writing. They may not like the idea of writing cliffhangers. This distaste probably comes from a lack of writing experience, and arises because students are not sure how to start. Teachers must be patient because these students may not realize this is an enjoyable way to write until they are well into the project. Some students may

worry about pleasing others, not realizing that the purpose of the assignment is to let them write. Others may worry because they do not understand the editing process. Although teachers should explain there is more to the writing process than the first draft, students will still worry from the first because they do not know how to progress beyond a first draft. Others will want to edit as they write, continually focusing on making corrections. This is probably a carry-over from traditional instruction where the instructional stress is on writing conventions rather than fluency and creativity.

However, there are pleasures in this exercise. Students typically enjoy reading what peers have added. Some find it fun to try to add something exciting and interesting to their peers' story. Others may have had a hard time coming up with ideas for their paper, but will be full of ideas for expanding their peers' stories. Some students experience fulfillment later during the editing sessions, and become impressed with the difference between the original and final draft. Most students find satisfaction in publishing the book. Writing cliff-hangers can go a long way toward helping students change their attitudes toward writing.

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# The Reading Bookbag To Go

**Char M. Lemons**

Now your student can take you home — your voice, that is — when you tape record yourself reading or storytelling your favorite read aloud.

The *Reading Bookbag To Go* can be tailored to fit your classroom's needs. Create a theme, include puppets, posters, store bought taped stories and blank story writing books — whatever coordinates with your curriculum or season of the year. The Reading Bookbag that I have used consists of a compact and simple (goof proof) cassette recorder and a durable, waterproof tote bag. Laminated identification tags are attached to the tote bags and each cassette recorder is engraved with an identification number. A teacher can arrange for a different student to take the bookbag home nightly, or use the bookbag as a good behavior reward incentive.

I am a Chapter One Reading Specialist, and the Reading Bookbag To Go has made a difference for my struggling readers. Reluctant students feel at ease moving at their own pace with the taped stories. Comprehension skills, fluency of language, and most importantly self-esteem are all reinforced and strengthened through this at-home reading experience. Feedback from parents indicates that they appreciate having the convenience of a professional storyteller to help out with bedtime story hour.

Busy parents can create their own version of the Reading Bookbag. A blank cassette tape and storybook sent to special relatives can turn an ordinary story into a special personalized experience for your child on those busy evenings when parents need to be away from home at story hour.

*Char M. Lemons is a Chapter One Reading Specialist in the Allegan Public Schools, Allegan Michigan.*



# **READING: THE CONFERENCES**

**Jeanne M. Jacobson**

## **International Reading Association Fourteenth World Conference on Reading Maui, Hawaii, July, 1992**

Among the presentations at the International Reading Association's world conference held last summer in Maui were a series of round table sessions sponsored by the Organization of Teacher Educators in Reading (OTER). One focus of the papers shared by members of the OTER Special Interest Group was on issues in assessment.

In their paper titled "Authentic Assessment vs. Traditional Assessment: A Conflict in the Preparation of Preservice Teachers in Reading," Evelyn F. Searls of the University of South Florida, and V. Mil Searls of the Florida Reading Association contrasted assessment paradigms students encounter, through textbooks and from instructors, in courses on educational measurement and other courses in education. They called attention to problems raised by the conflicting views of what constitutes appropriate assessment, and presented a series of recommendations to achieve greater coherence in the instruction preservice teachers receive.

Referring to teacher educators, they noted, "We have moved away from an emphasis on the product of reading (e.g., the one right answer on an objective test) and writing (e.g., the technically perfect written composition on a topic assigned by the teacher) to an emphasis on the process in which readers

and writers engage," yet measurement courses and textbooks continue to stress so-called objective testing, advocating multiple choice, short answer testing of a series of subskills.

"Preservice teachers in our methods classes are being instructed in how to teach and assess reading and writing according to the model of literacy learning," the presenters pointed out. "They learn to use direct observations of behavior, portfolios of student work, logs and journals, student interviews, and other types of performance assessment to ascertain whether students are becoming active, strategic, meaning-making readers and writers. However, this model is in direct conflict with the model that underlies the current assessment practices that our preservice teachers are taught in their measurement courses."

Searls and Searls recommended five changes in the course content presented in preservice courses in educational measurement:

- Measurement courses should teach students to match assessment methods with differing instructional purposes. An emphasis on multiple choice testing can mislead students into thinking that all testing should be focused on the isolatable skills which multiple choice tests measure.

- Course instruction should emphasize the use and analysis of classroom performance techniques. Despite the widespread use of commercially prepared standardized tests, the preponderance of assessments are devised and conducted by classroom teachers.

- Students should learn, in their measurement as well as their methods courses, "to use authentic performance assessments whenever possible." Well-designed learning tasks can also serve as assessments.

- Students should be taught about administration of standardized tests, and interpretation of test results. Such tests will continue to be used, and teachers will be expected to use test information to plan instruction, and to explain test results to parents.

- Information should be included about national and state performance assessments, since teachers will be required to administer and score such tests.

## Multiculturalism and Literacy

### A Worldwide Pattern of Play

**Hopscotch Around the World.** Written by Mary D. Lankford. Illustrated by Karen Milone. Morrow Junior Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, NY NY 10019. 1992. ISBN 0-688-08419-2. 48 pp. US\$15.00.

Games which require only a playing area, an object to toss, and an energetic group of friends don't depend on parental affluence and access to a garish toy store featuring heavily advertised, plastic, battery-powered wanna-haves. They are played everywhere, and across time — so that they link memories across generations. Nineteen variations of hopscotch are presented in this delightful book, each with a full-page, full-color illustration showing children playing the game, coupled with a facing page presenting an explanation of the game's history and terminology; clear, child-oriented directions; and a map showing how the playing area is to be drawn.

A double-page map of the world highlights the countries, on five continents, where the intriguingly named games are played: *Escargot* in France, where children hop along a pattern like a snail's shell; *Gat Fei Gei* ("one foot jumping flying machine") played by Chinese children; U.S. versions ranging from Alaska to Texas. Karen Milhorne's painting of Aruban children playing *Pele* shows the island's twisted trees:

*The island of Aruba in the Netherlands Antilles is just twenty miles north of the coast of Venezuela. Many of the trees on the island have been bent into unusual shapes by the strong winds that blow across the island. Because of these winds, an object that will not blow or roll away must be used as a puck. A stone or coin makes a good puck for the children of Aruba.*

Learning about the games, from text and illustrations, introduces information about language, climate, costumes, and ways of life. In Nigeria, for example, *Ta Galagala* is played by tossing a *kwalo* into a series of circles called *kurtus*, and an inexperienced player can have just as much fun as the most talented hopper: "If you toss your *kwalo* and it doesn't land inside a *kurtu*," Lankford writes, "someone will put it in for you, and you can take your turn anyway." (JMJJ)





# Reviews

## Professional Materials

**Reflective Teaching: Becoming an Inquiring Educator.** Written by James G. Henderson. Macmillan, 866 Third Avenue, New York NY 10022. ISBN: 0-02-3535-11-3. 182 pp. 1992.

Reviewed by Paul Farber  
Western Michigan University

*The following review is one that might, at first glance, seem out of place in a journal addressing issues of theory and practice of literacy. However, if we are to understand the dilemmas related to literacy instruction today, then we need to address the issues related to the role of the practitioner within the institution of education. This book, as well as the following review, encourages us as educators to examine that role more thoughtfully. — Kathryn Kinnucan-Welsch, Reviews Editor.*

This book is written for people contemplating a career in teaching, and those who work with them. It is a book avowedly opposed to approaches to such matters that share a presumption that what future teachers need is to learn some particular set of skills, techniques, or methods. It presumes instead, that what is needed most of all is to learn how to begin thinking in and about school practices. This is not a new idea of course, but in recent years we have witnessed a flowering of terminology for talking about it. Henderson, with the help of a glossary, leads readers through a thicket of terms, and assists prospective educators to enter the emerging discourse of education. Teachers are to be reflective of course, which for Henderson involves some mix of an ethic of caring

(including confirmation and dialogue), a constructivist approach to learning, and artistic problem solving. Such notions, along with an array of related terms, are embedded in chapters exploring how one might become a student of one's own teaching; inquire into educational problem solving, curriculum leadership, classroom community leadership, and forms of collaborative inquiry; reflect on student learning problems; and inquire into teaching professionalism.

The text provides clear evidence that the educationist armory is well stocked to carry on the war against mindlessness in schooling. How does Henderson set about using such notions? Most of the terminology of the text is introduced by way of brief, surprisingly didactic passages. The work is not structured to advance reflection on the language itself. Rather, the central interest of the book centers on livelier material interspersed throughout the chapters involving lengthy passages devoted to particular persons, viewpoints, and cases. This includes depictions of two actual teachers reflecting on what they do and why. There are also characterizations of four viewpoints written so as to represent distinct approaches to teaching. These viewpoints are offered in simulated first-person accounts in several chapters (on classroom problem solving, curriculum, and classroom community leadership). Several cases are also presented which describe teachers in realistic and uncomfortable or challenging situations calling for reflection and action. Finally, in a number of places, the comments and reflections of preservice teachers are presented as these bear on topics in question. These devices all provide numerous opportunities for discussion and commentary. It is in the prospects for such critical discussion that I can most easily imagine this text fulfilling its stated goals; a book that encourages future teachers to celebrate the possibilities of fresh questions and serious inquiry is welcome indeed.

But a pair of related problems diminish my enthusiasm. First, as I have already suggested, this is a text which is thick with special terminology. By way of design, the specialized vocabulary of educational discourse presumably is offered to facilitate thoughtful attention to the particular cases, approaches

and perspectives, while being in turn clarified in the process. I am not convinced that this is likely to occur for most readers. The problem as I see it is that Henderson takes a remarkably casual stance with regard to the presence of conflicts and complexities in educational thought and practice. To take one example, the text embraces both an ethic of care and principles of justice without ever acknowledging the tensions, uncertainties, and practical trade-offs these different orientations involve in practice. In defense of the text, one might at this point note that it is after all a book calling for inquiry: have I not simply underscored one of the kinds of inquiry the book encourages and spurs? Perhaps, but a second, deeper problem raises doubts about the likelihood of such inquiry resulting from use of the text.

This problem centers on a current running through this text embracing a genre of romanticizing individualism. The central notion of "constructivist learning" is taken to mean the process of individual sense-making, what things mean for individuals given their particular background and purposes. Early and often the text embraces the desirability of this pervasive orientation: How can one find one's way in teaching, so that one's best self can emerge in practice? Readers are encouraged to reflect on personal anecdotes, role models, and purposes; they are regularly queried as to what meaning particular notions have for them personally, and how they feel about aspects of the work of teachers; and in relation to their professional growth, each is urged to become the "master of your own fate" (p. 158). Now these are not bad things. But as a refrain they contribute to the sense that it does not matter very much how the terminology fits together, or what the overarching aims of the practice of teaching are. What matters is sincerely trying to make sense of it for oneself: if you are sincere, it seems, you can scarcely be wrong.

The language of the text reenters here of course. An ethic of caring, for example, or notions of professionalism seem to speak to larger purposes and values. They suggest why it matters how people learn to inquire about the overarching social, political and structural features of education. But the text veers away from such questions — or better, it is permissive

insofar as readers may be inclined to avoid or downplay difficult questions as to the larger purposes and struggles of practice. The world of practice serves as a backdrop as Henderson takes us into exploration of self and leaves us there. How else could he suggest that one might emerge a master of one's own fate as a teacher, except by pretending that the world outside one's immediate experience is not, in the end, one's concern.

In the end what is lost is one vital spur to inquiry in teaching. This involves the understanding that, beyond one's own struggle to make sense of things, the soul of the practice of teaching itself is in question: How can we reconcile our fundamental differences concerning the meaning of what we do and the norms that we would have define membership in the community of teachers? For the most part, Henderson's text shies away from this kind of question. What makes such a question uncomfortable, and vital, is the presumption it contains that teachers ought to take some responsibility for, and strive to articulate and embody the norms of, a practice that supersedes the interests of individual practitioners. If reflective inquiry is to contribute to progress in practice it must in the end move beyond a preoccupation with self, and revitalize the shared meanings of the institutions and traditions we inhabit.



*Reading Horizons* is interested in publishing articles, anecdotes about teaching, and annotated bibliographies supporting the development of literacy through multicultural educational practices. Prospective contributors should follow guidelines for submission of manuscripts, given on the inner front cover of this issue.



## Children's Books

*Beware of Boys.* Written and illustrated by Tony Blundell. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. 1991. ISBN: 0-688-10924-1. 32 pp. US\$14.00.

Reviewed by Rick Kowalski  
Lawton Community Schools, Lawton Michigan

Who can resist a story that begins *Once upon a time, not so very long ago, nor so very far away, a small boy took a short-cut through a forest...?*

Sound vaguely familiar? Well, this opener combined with a drawing of a little boy in a red sweater about to enter a deep dark forest immediately brings to mind the classic tale of Red Riding Hood. However, this is no ordinary fairy tale and the little boy is no naive little waif about to be done in by the big bad wolf. In fact, our hero is a very ingenious little boy who soon realizes that the wolf is not very clever. He convinces the wolf that a little boy would taste much better if prepared in some elaborate culinary concoction instead of being eaten raw. He sends the wolf on a scavenger hunt looking for all the elaborate ingredients needed to prepare such savory dishes as "Boy Soup," "Boy Cake" and "Boy Pie." The end result is one very exhausted wolf who falls prey to the boy's mischievous plans and ends up being the victim.

Tony Blundell has created a book full of delightful illustrations that complement the text and bring the story to life. The wolf is wonderfully zany both in looks and actions and the reader is captured by the vividness of the drawings.

This story would fit nicely into thematic units dealing with fairy tales, cooking and wolves. Children would enjoy writing their own recipes for "Boy This" and "Boy That" as well as using this story as a model to rewrite other fairy tales. The story is predictable and children soon find themselves involved in the action. They begin to discuss what will happen next before you have a chance to turn the page. This is a good book to get kids actively involved in reading.

## Four Books for Friends

***Fighting Words.*** Written by Eve Merriam. Illustrated by David Small. William Morrow and Company, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. 1992. ISBN 0-688-09676-X. 32 pp. US\$12.95.

***Alex Is My Friend.*** Written and illustrated by Marisabina Russo. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. 1992. ISBN: 0-688-10418-5. 32 pp. US\$14.00.

Reviewed by Karen Welch  
Western Michigan University

Leda has curly hair and lives in the city. Dale has straight hair and lives in the country. Each sees the other as having everything and their envy leads them into a large-scale, name-calling fight. Their argument covers the area of the city and the country and sends citizens of both areas into a tizzy. Insults such as DIMWIT, OAF, and LUMMOX are just a few of the *fighting words* spoken. When Leda's and Dale's voices weaken, they decide to shake hands and be friends again. The story is hilarious, with perfect illustrations to go along with the text. The characters are oversized for the settings and they both have a tough, bullylike appearance. The pictures comically show the upheaval in the city and the country that is caused by two little kids and their mighty big *fighting words*.

*Alex Is My Friend* is a heartwarming story about two young boys who develop a friendship while their sisters play on a Sunday soccer league. As time goes on, Ben notices that Alex is different – not only does Alex like different things, he also isn't growing like Ben. Alex then undergoes a serious operation on his back. This story portrays a confused little boy who, with the guidance of his mother, comes to understand that people may be different but are still loving, caring friends. This story is certainly an aid for teaching children diversity of humans and expression of care to others.

Materials reviewed in the review section of the journal are not endorsed by *Reading Horizons* or Western Michigan University. The content of the reviews reflects the opinion of the reviewers whose names or initials appear with the reviews. To submit an item for potential review, send to Kathryn Kinnucan-Welsch, Reviews Editor, *Reading Horizons*, Reading Center and Clinic, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo MI 49008.

**Monty.** Written and illustrated by James Stevenson. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. Reissued 1992. ISBN: 0-688-11241-2. 32 pp. US\$14.00; paperback \$4.95.

Reviewed by Rick Kowalski  
Lawton Community Schools, Lawton Michigan

James Stevenson's illustrations are so crisp and expressive that the reader can't help being drawn into the story. His formats are eye-catching and there is a marvelous balance between the illustrations and the text, both of which contain a message that even the youngest of readers will understand. The story of Monty the alligator is no exception to the Stevenson rule. A duck, a rabbit and a frog have been asking their friend Monty to ferry them across the river on their way to school and back each day. However, the three friends are constantly complaining that either Monty is going too slow, or too far to the right, or that he is getting their books wet. So much for trying to do someone a favor! Monty decides that he is tired of all this complaining and announces that he is going on vacation, leaving the duck, the rabbit and the frog to find another way to get across the river. Each of the animals tries to think of an alternative way of crossing the river but none of the plans are successful. What they do discover, however, is that they had not realized how much they were complaining. No wonder Monty wanted to go on vacation. This is an excellent book for a unit dealing with friends, feelings or cooperation.

**Tigers.** Written by Roland Edwards. Illustrated by Judith Riches. Tambourine Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-11685-X. 1992. 32 pp. US\$15.00.

A father tries to explain the winter furnace sounds to his young son; the boy, however, knows there may be another reason for muffled sounds in the night. Silent, graceful tigers roam the house — sly and gleeful, they “circle softly” in and out of rooms, only occasionally letting out a “whispered roar.” Judith Riches' soft, colorful drawings capture perfectly the curious, curious tigers — so clearly harmless and fun-loving, they should quickly become favorite bedtime friends. (SDC)

## Celebrating Nature

*An Ocean World* Written and illustrated by Peter Sis. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. 1992. ISBN: 0-688-09067-2. Unpaged. US\$14.00.

Dedicated "to all who care about our world," Peter Sis' gorgeous picture story shows a whale raised in captivity and released into the wilderness of a great, ever-changing, multi-colored ocean and sky. Fittingly, there are words only while the whale is a part of the human world: a plane trailing an ad for "OCEAN WORLD," a postcard to "Family Sis" telling about the whale, one page of text paralleling pictures of the whale's growth. Then even the whale is dwarfed by the vast, wordless ocean as it searches sea and sky for its own kind. (JMJ)

## Mystery and Adventure

*The Thirteenth Clue.* Written by Ann Jonas. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. 1992. ISBN: 0-688-109742-1. 32 pp. US\$14.00. *Cynthia and the Runaway Gazebo.* Written by Elsa Marston. Illustrated by Friso Henstra. Tambourine Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. 1992. ISBN: 0-688-10282-4. 32 pp. US\$14.00.

In a pell-mell hunt through a deserted house and into the woods, eager readers will follow clues written in twined electric cords, mowed into the lawn, and spelled out in rebuses created from plants and garden objects. The mystery's solution, as the thirteenth clue is revealed, turns a sad puzzling day into a joyous occasion. When children have read Ann Jonas' clever, vivid story, they will want to reread by sharing it with friends.

Whatever happened to Horatio and Algernon? Proper British tots, their favorite spot was the gazebo on the lawn of their spacious family estate — until they ran away to sea. Years later their niece Cynthia, "so frail and delicate a child," is hostess at a garden party when a storm causes the young guests to shelter in the gazebo. Washed away to the river and thence to the sea, their croquet mallets are insufficient to protect the children from attack by a pirate captain who has always fancied a gazebo. Elsa Marston's elegant plot twists eventually reunite a separated family, and show Cynthia to be far from frail. (JMJ)



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