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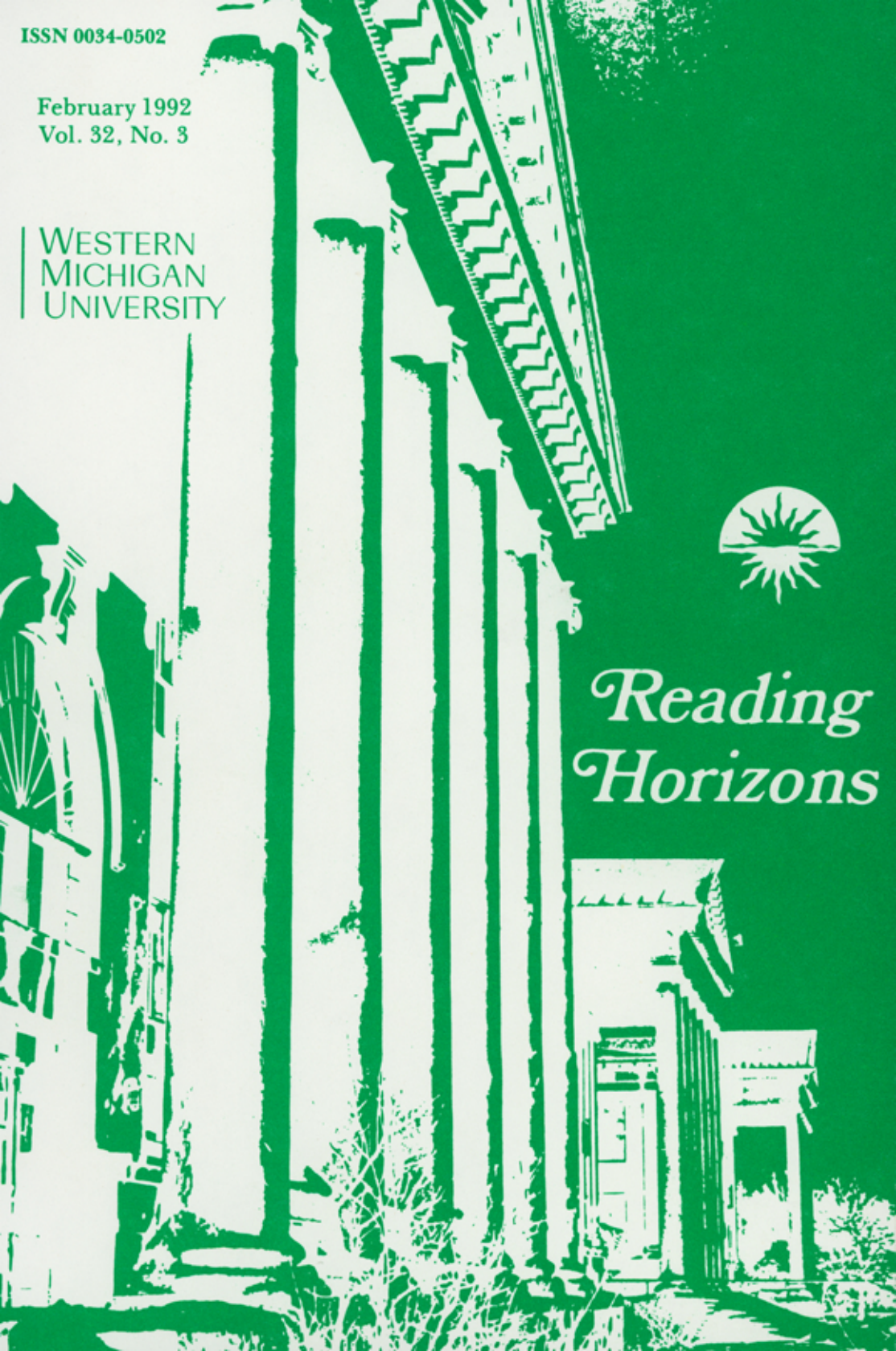
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# *Reading Horizons*







# **READING HORIZONS**

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# **Living Through Literacy Experiences Versus Literacy Analysis: Examining Stance in Children's Response to Literature**

**Joyce E. Many**

In her transactional theory of reader-response, Rosenblatt (1978) has hypothesized that a reader's stance, or focus of attention when approaching literature, affects the individual's reaction to and understanding of a work. An efferent stance indicates the reader's attention is focused on the information to be learned and can lead to a study of the text. From an aesthetic stance, on the other hand, the reader's focus is upon the lived-through literary experience and the experiences, thoughts, feelings, images, and associations which are evoked.

Although theorists, researchers, and practitioners interested in response to literature have focused on the aesthetic stance as a point of discussion or as an underlying assumption in their works (Corcoran, 1987; Probst, 1988; Rosenblatt, 1938/1983, 1978) only recently have Rosenblatt's concepts of efferent and aesthetic been investigated through research. Cox and Many (1992) found fifth-grade students' written responses to range from efferent to aesthetic, with some mingling aspects of both. The more aesthetic responses correlated with higher levels of



personal understanding. Many, examining the responses of eighth-grade students (1990) and fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-grade students (1991), found the relationship between stance and level of understanding to be consistent across texts. She also noted (1990) a high degree of creativity in the aesthetic responses and a shallowness and analytical distance in many of the efferent responses. Rhodes (1990) analyzed the oral responses of six eighth-grade students to one novel, through individual interviews and group discussions. She found that students often used overlapping stances, with both efferent and aesthetic stances occurring concurrently.

The purpose of this study is to add to the literature on the stances students take when responding, by analyzing the complexity of responses written from different stances by students at different grade levels. Specifically this study sought to: 1) analyze the effect of grade on the stances students take when responding to literature; 2) investigate the qualitative differences found in responses written from different stances and determine if any differences are related to the grade of the responder.

## Method

**Subjects.** Subjects consisted of 43 fourth-grade, 47 sixth-grade, and 40 eighth-grade students in six intact classes. A stratified cluster sampling was obtained by choosing classes from one elementary and one middle school from a low socioeconomic area and one elementary and one middle school from a middle to upper socioeconomic area. Two classes at each grade level were chosen at random from available classes. All students in each class participated in the data collection but only data from on-level subjects (as determined by standardized test scores given the previous spring) were used in the data analysis.

**Materials.** Three realistic short stories were chosen through a field testing of possible selections and a pilot study. Research indicates realistic stories to be preferred reading in the upper elementary grades (Golden, 1979; Purves and Beach, 1972). The initial field testing provided feedback on appropriate story length and student interest and led to the selection of six stories which were used in the pilot study. These stories were examined by a panel of three reading experts and were rated as above average using a story evaluation instrument (Sword, 1985) on the criteria of plot unification, plot believability, imaginative plot, main character portrayal, believability of main character, use of vivid imagery, and establishment of mood.

The stories rated highest by all students from the fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-grade classes used in the pilot study (one class at each grade level) were chosen for use in the study. The ratings of the three selected stories (1 = high, 5 = low) were: *The Runaway* (Holman, 1976) rated 2.63; *The Dollar's Worth* (Werner, 1979) rated 2.72; and *The Secret of the Aztec Idol* (Bonham, 1976) rated 2.72.

**Procedure.** For each story, subjects read and then responded freely to the following probe, "Write anything you want about the story you just read." Data were collected on three occasions across a nine-week period. Story order was counterbalanced to account for possible effects of story sequence on response.

Responses were analyzed according to the stance taken using the following classification (adapted from Cox and Many, 1992): 1) primarily efferent (responses analyzing the text as an object or relating what the story was about; 2) no primary focus (responses containing no identifiable stance or responses including both efferent and aesthetic

elements); 3) primarily aesthetic (responses giving clear evidence of the lived-through experience, sometimes by giving attention to specific parts). Interrater reliability for the holistic rating was established at  $r = .79$ . To examine for possible qualitative differences, responses written from the same stances were then sorted using Beach's (1985) clustering technique. Repeated passes were made through the data checking for similarities with regard to the specific content with clusters emerging based on the content of the response.

## Results and conclusions

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for grade and text on the variable of stance revealed no significant main effects for grade. Main effects were found for text, indicating text to be a factor which can significantly affect the degree to which students assume an efferent or aesthetic stance,  $F(2,344) = 6.53, p < .01$ . These findings were not surprising given the body of research documenting the effects of text on students' response to literature (Golden, 1979; Purves, 1981). It is interesting, however, that no interaction effects were found between grade and text. This indicates that, for at least these three texts, students tended to assume similar stances when responding, regardless of their grade levels.

Although no significant differences were found between grade levels in terms of the range of efferent to aesthetic responses, close examination of the responses within each stance type using the cluster analysis technique revealed qualitative differences in the content and the complexity of the responses written from each stance. Some of these differences did seem to be related to the grade of the subject.

**Efferent response clusters.** As shown in Table 1, in terms of the efferent responses which focused on relating the story, fourth graders seemed less likely than the older subjects to write a synopsis of the story, focusing instead on elaborate retellings. This is consistent with earlier research (Applebee, 1978) which has found that a focus on retelling and summarizing decreases with age.

**Table 1**  
**Analysis of Efferent Responses by**  
**Grade and Response Cluster**

<b>Content Cluster</b>	<b>Grade</b>		
	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
Responses focusing on what the story was about	35 (77.1%)	21 (55.3%)	31 (70.5%)
Retelling	(33)	(16)	(26)
Synopsis	(2)	(5)	(5)
Literary analysis	11 (23.9%)	17 (44.7%)	13 (29.5%)
No reference to story content	(8)	(9)	(4)
Analysis ties into story content	(3)	(8)	(9)
Total efferent responses	46	38	44

The second content cluster of efferent responses focused on literary analyses. Sixth graders seemed more likely to write about the literary elements when writing efferent responses than did either the fourth graders or the eighth graders. When examining the responses within this cluster, strong differences in the complexity of the responses were also noted. Students at the fourth-grade level tended to write simplistic responses which did not make any references to the actual story content. For example, one

fourth grader wrote, *"It was a very good story. It had a very good plot and setting. Well definid characters. The story was well told. The story was very good itself. I think if thay had a contest it would be in the top ten mabby even nubember one."* In such responses, the subjects were so detached from the text that the response itself gave no indication of the story which had been read. In contrast, the majority of the eighth graders' literary analyses were more complex, with references to certain events or characters used to substantiate specific aspects being critiqued.

**Table 2**  
**Analysis of Responses**  
**No Primary Focus by Grade and Response Cluster**

Content Cluster	Grade		
	4	6	8
Focus unable to be determined	13 (54.2%)	11 (44.0%)	4 (25.0%)
Efferent and aesthetic elements	11 (45.8%)	14 (56.0%)	12 (75.0%)
Unrelated efferent/aes- thetic elements	(11)	(11)	(8)
Efferent analysis based on aesthetic evocation	(0)	(3)	(4)
Total responses with no primary focus	24	25	16

### **Cluster of responses with no primary focus.**

Unlike Rhodes' (1990) study, which found that students' oral responses tended to reveal overlapping stances, the written responses coded as having no single primary focus made up the fewest number of responses at each grade level (see Table 2). When these responses were sorted into clusters, strong qualitative differences were apparent both between

and within the clusters. The majority of the fourth graders' responses fell into the cluster in which the focus of the response was unable to be determined because of brevity or because of the vagueness of what was written (e.g., "I enjoyed this story... I'd like to hear it again," etc.). In contrast, only 25% of the eighth-grade responses with no primary focus were included in this group.

The second content cluster was made up of responses which contained both efferent and aesthetic elements. Within this cluster, differences in sophistication of responses was also evident. In some responses, as illustrated below, the distinct efferent and aesthetic elements were unrelated bits of information.

*I think this story was wonderful. I mosly like the characters, espeacialy Mr. Watts. All of these characters have parts in the story. The characters in this story are Trish, Mr. Watts. I like the part when she finds the 20 dollar bill and when Mr. Watts comes back to get it. This story tels you about onasty that is why I like it. (Emily, Grade 4 - The Dollar's Worth).*

Emily's identification of the characters and of an "honesty" theme is characteristic of an efferent stance. Her attention to the part of the story which drew her attention, however, can be described as having a more aesthetic focus. While these efferent and aesthetic elements seem unrelated, in other responses the efferent analysis was clearly built upon an aesthetic evocation. This is evidenced in Kathy's response below to *The Secret of the Aztec Idol*, a mystery story about two boys who are tricked by an old con man when they agree to buy a secret from him.

*...I think the best thing about this story was that it is creative. I hope to be a writer someday myself and wish*

*to have stories as creative as this one. One of the things I saw when I was reading it was that you didn't feel for the characters. You didn't feel silly or angry or scared for them or anything. I felt puzzled but that was all.*

*In a way the story was unbelievable because no one cared about the Aztec Idol except the boys and Secrets. I think if you were supposed to get the feeling that it was meant to be prise-less, he (Secrets) could have told the boys that Scientistes across America were looking for it and if the boys found it they would become heros. I just think this story had a good plot but to an adventurous reader it was nothing. I don't mean that every adventurer has the same opion but as for me I just though it was good. Nothing more. (Kathy, grade 6)*

In this response the elements were integrated in what would be characteristic of what Rosenblatt (1978) has described as *transactive criticism*. In such responses the reader/critic keeps in mind that the object of analysis is the aesthetic evocation, the personal experience which occurred between the reader and the text. This type of critique was only evident in a small number of responses written by subjects at the sixth- and eighth-grade levels.

**Aesthetic response clusters.** Responses coded as primarily aesthetic were sorted into five clusters: focusing on favorite parts, associations made, making judgments, interpretation, or responses which integrated a number of such elements. The primary qualitative differences between responses written by students at different grade levels occurred in three content clusters (see Table 3).

In responses clustering according to a focus on associations, students either connected characters or events with people or occurrences in their lives, or they put themselves in the character's shoes and related what they would have done in such a situation. These associations were

subdivided as to whether the association seemed pointless, or if there was any indication that the association added to or enhanced the students' experience of the story.

**Table 3**  
**Analysis of Aesthetic Responses**  
**by Grade and Response Cluster**

<b>Content Cluster</b>	<b>Grade</b>		
	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
Favorite parts	12 (27.3%)	6 (10.5%)	2 (4.2%)
Associative	6 (13.6%)	12 (21.1%)	5 (10.4%)
Pointless	(6)	(8)	(1)
Increased understanding	(0)	(4)	(4)
Judgments	8 (18.2%)	9 (15.8%)	6 (12.5%)
Characters	(5)	(1)	(0)
Events	(3)	(8)	(6)
Interpretative	4 (9.1%)	4 (7.0%)	11 (22.9%)
Integrative	14 (31.8%)	26 (45.6%)	24 (50.0%)
Rambling	(12)	(21)	(12)
Development of topic	(2)	(2)	(4)
World/literary knowledge into unified whole	(0)	(3)	(8)

When responding in such ways, fourth graders and sixth graders were more likely to make such associations without giving any indication the connection added to their understanding of the story. Either the association led to an elaborate retelling of an experience which was never connected back with the story itself or one associative comment after another was briefly noted. Such a response is exem-



plified in the following reaction by Bart, a fourth grader, "I wish I could have the \$35.00. I like the story because it was like a mystery... I wish I could have Secret as a slave and get him to tell me every secret he knows."

Responses such as Bart's are similar to what Smith (1992) describes as association-driven orientation. In association-driven reading, a reader brings a succession of personal experiences to mind while reading. These associations, however, do not seem to inform the reading of the text, nor is the reading of the text used to help the student reflect on these experiences. The associations are merely noted and then the reader moves on. In contrast, the associative responses written by the eighth graders tended to reveal an increased understanding as a result of the association made, indicative of what Rosenblatt (1978) calls *selective attention*. The associations brought to mind in response to the text are focused upon in order to create a more unified whole. The associations are "...woven into the relevant structure of idea, feeling, and attitude" (p. 43). In Amy's free response below, for instance, she puts herself in the story world of *The Secret of the Aztec Idol* as did Bart in the earlier response. Her response, on the other hand, reveals a deep understanding of the characters' feelings as she speaks from her perception of the character's point of view.

*"Curses," said Secrets.*

*"Why do the good guys always win?"*

*"I'm a pretty good guy once you get to know me."*

*"Go on" said the officer, "get in the van."*

*"We're taking you to the county jail."*

*"It was my first experience with crime, and I had solved it myself!" thought Charlie.*

*"The next day an article was printed in the paper, saying I was a hero."*

*It felt good. Very good.  
But it scared me, people like "Secrets" and  
that "lipless" man scared me.  
I could never go into crime-fighting.  
Even with the satisfaction it gave me,  
I could never be a part of a world like that."  
(Amy, Grade 8)*

Subcategorizing the responses focusing on judgments also revealed qualitative differences which seemed to be related to subjects' grade level. The fourth-grade responses tended to be brief, superficial statements judging characters as mean, greedy, nice, etc. In contrast the sixth- and eighth-grade subjects' responses tended to be more representative of elaborative judgments, with students giving their opinions concerning specific story incidents.

The integrative aesthetic responses included elements which were found in isolation in the other aesthetic responses. These were further subdivided into three categories: rambling, development of topic, and world/literary knowledge into unified whole. The majority of the fourth- and sixth-grade responses tended to ramble from one topic to another. Some of the eighth-grade responses were also of this type, but eighth graders also focused on the development of a topic through the use of a number of elements. For instance, one student expressed her feelings towards a character by including her opinions of the character's actions (judgments), relating how she would have reacted to the character (associative), and commenting on the motives behind the character's behavior (interpretive).

Other responses in this cluster included integration of world knowledge. In these responses students synthesized their real life experiences and their story world experience

in a manner consistent with what Cochran-Smith (1984) describes as life-to-text connections.

*...I didn't realize the secrets would be something like where an ancient idol was, if it would have been secrets about silly things or just dumb thing you can goof off with I would have bought one from the old man. But only if he was nice and sold secrets to the kid because he enjoyed seeing them get a thrill. If the man was as much as a jerk as the man in this story was and if the secrets were so dumb I wouldn't have bought one. That man was so conceited and concerned about himself that I hated him. You could tell from the beginning by the way he talked about welfare, it was the way he said it and what he said about it that made you know he was a jerk. A friendly old guy who enjoyed kids might have had a different approach for selling a secret. He would have been nicer and more interesting. Like an old man who loves to see kids steal peaches off his tree because he likes seeing the kids so joyful and then right when the kids get just one peach he runs out of his house and shouts, "You rotten little brats! I'll get you good for this" even though he really doesn't mean it, he just likes to give the kids a good time and make them feel important like. (Herbert, Grade 8 - The Aztec Idol)*

Herbert integrates his personal knowledge of welfare and what people are like into his response to the story. He understands that some people in real life might act one way on the surface, simply to give kids a thrill, and yet he also realizes such people and their motives are very different from the person described in the story. These understandings are used as he formulates his response to the actual character. Such responses, where an integration of knowledge about the world was evident, were more prevalent at the eighth-grade level and did not occur at all at the fourth-grade level.

## Summary and implications

This study indicated that students at different grade levels did not differ significantly in their choice of stance, whether efferent or aesthetic, when responding to three literary texts. However, close analysis revealed that differences did exist between the grade levels in terms of the content and complexity of the responses. While some variations across grade levels can be expected due to differences in students' abilities or willingness to express themselves in writing, the findings do shed light on the differences in sophistication which can exist within responses written from the same stance. Also, the grade-level tendencies give us a clearer indication of what might be expected from fourth-, sixth- and eighth-grade students when they freely respond to literature. Familiarity with the types of complexity which might exist within both efferent and aesthetic responses of students at different grade levels can provide educators with a sense of direction as they endeavor to implement approaches which develop students' ability to analyze literary works and which focus students' attention on the aesthetic evocation.

For instance, in light of the responses described in this study as efferent analyses based on aesthetic evocation, teachers might have students go beyond showcasing a knowledge of literary terminology by weaving into literary critiques evidence of a personal lived-through story experience. Such responses differ from the efferent responses which simply mention story content in that the reader/critic is not referring to the *text* but to the *experience* which that particular reader had with that particular text, on that particular occasion in time. This approach would allow students to work on and develop analytical skills, while not losing sight of the fact that literature is first meant to be experienced. Teachers could initially introduce a story and encourage

students to actively envision the story world and to reflect on their own reaction to it. Next, the students might reflect on specific artistic or literary elements which significantly affected their particular story experience. Thus, continual connections could be made from the technique or aspect being discussed and the corresponding effect on the individual reader's transaction with the text.

To focus on developing aesthetic responses, teachers could encourage students to use selective attention, and to continually bring the associations made, emotions evoked, and ideas which surface, back to bear on the story experience. In such an atmosphere, children are invited to use personal literary and life experiences, and their unique perceptions and reactions to what they are reading, to create a rich experience from each literary work. Such an aesthetic approach would not encourage an "any-thing goes" attitude toward response; instead, students would continually connect the emotions, associations, thoughts, and visualizations evoked back to the story world, enriching rather than distracting from the original story experience. By encouraging the development of mature and sophisticated responses, like the aesthetic responses which demonstrate the use of selective attention or the efferent responses based on aesthetic evocations, teachers could support and enrich students' growth as they interact with the secondary worlds they create from each text they experience.

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# **Using Poetry in the Intermediate Grades**

**Luethel M. Kormanski**

Poetry is the natural language of children. When children are observed at play, their enjoyment of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and other elements of poetry is obvious. For example, children delight in reciting jump-rope jingles, rhymes for hide and seek, and refrains to popular verse. One would assume that poetry would be emphasized in language arts instruction; however, this literature form is often a neglected aspect of this curriculum. Survey research suggests that the sharing of poetry by teachers with their classes decreases as students enter the intermediate grades and middle school grades (Kutiper, 1985; Terry, 1974). Terry (1974) notes that 75% of surveyed teachers read poetry to their students nine times or less during the academic year.

In interest surveys, students often rank poetry near the bottom (Terry, 1974). Teachers who are not interested in poetry or who know little about poetry may feel hesitant to use this literature form in the classroom. Often poetry is an optional element in the curriculum; therefore, many teachers do not feel the need to include poetry in their classroom routines. Thus, many children do not have the opportunity to read and to share poetry. Since most students do not have experience with poetry on a regular

basis, interest in poetry declines as students progress through the grades (Kutiper, 1985; Terry, 1974).

The goal of this article is to enable intermediate teachers to become more comfortable using poetry in their classrooms. Criteria for selecting poetry appropriate for use in the intermediate grades will be included; guidelines for presenting poetry will be suggested; and strategies for involving intermediate students will be noted.

### **Selection criteria**

There is little difference between poetry that is enjoyed by adults and poetry which is appropriate for intermediate students. A key rule of thumb is that teachers should enjoy the poetry that they choose to present to their classes. If the teacher likes a poem, it will probably be enjoyed by the children. Poetry for children should appeal to their interests and meet their emotional needs. Children tend to enjoy poetry that has rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. Often they do not care for poetry that includes abstract or figurative language. Research surveys indicate that teachers sometimes present traditional, meditative poetry that children don't enjoy rather than contemporary, humorous poetry that delights students (Bridge, 1966; Fisher and Natarella, 1982; Terry, 1972). When teachers present poetry that is appealing and consistent with their students' interests, students develop healthy attitudes about poetry (Matanzo and Madison, 1979; Shapiro and Shapiro, 1971; McCall, 1979).

Children's preferences for poetic form appear to be similar across demographic data, age, sex, and time. They are attracted to poetry that contains humor, nonsense, familiar experiences, imaginative story lines, animals, holidays, and people. Children prefer narratives and



limericks to less concrete forms such as haiku and free verse (Terry, 1972; Ingham, 1980; Simmons, 1980; Fisher and Natarella, 1982; McClure, Harrison, and Reed, 1990).

Children should be introduced to a variety of poems. Teachers should select poems that are both short and long. They need to include ballads, narratives, and nonsense poetry as well. Children need the opportunity to become familiar with as many poets, topics, themes, forms, and literary devices as are found in the anthologies. An excellent source for teachers is *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children* selected by Jack Prelutsky (1983). Other thematic anthologies such as *Nightmares: Poems to Trouble Your Sleep* written by Jack Prelutsky (1976); *Munching: Poems about eating*, selected poems by Lee Bennett Hopkins (1985); and *Cat Poems* selected by Myra Cohn Livingston (1987) provide the intermediate teacher with a wide variety of poetry from which to choose. Once teachers become familiar with children's poets and poetry, they will discover a vast amount of appropriate poetry available for children in the intermediate grades.

### **Guidelines for presenting poetry**

An important step to having students enjoy poetry themselves is reading poetry aloud in the classroom. Reading poetry aloud should become an integral and routine part of the school day. Hopkins (1987) suggests a few simple guidelines for introducing poetry into the classroom. First, a poem should be read aloud several times so that the teacher "feels" the words and rhythm. Teachers may wish to mark words or passages that they want to emphasize. Second, teachers should follow the rhythm of the poem. Poetry should be read naturally without artificial exaggeration. The physical appearance of the poem may dictate the rhythm and mood of the words. Third,

teachers need to plan pleasing pauses in their reading. Fourth, teachers should read poems in a natural, sincere voice. Students need to know the teacher's feelings about the poem. Sharing can model personal ways to appreciate poetry. Finally, pause after reading the poem. Teachers should be careful not to ruin the mood of the poem by asking a lot of questions at its conclusion. Too often teachers think that poetry needs to be analyzed and dissected.

### **Strategies for using poetry in the classroom**

McClure, Harrison, and Reed (1990) note that the poetry curriculum should include a mixture of reading and writing, sharing and listening, structure and freedom. Introducing children to poetry should be seen as an artistic endeavor. Teachers should read poetry with feeling and drama. Poetry needs to be read aloud several times to be enjoyed.

Rereading is one strategy to use to increase children's appreciation of a particular poem. Each time the poem is read, a different word, phrase, or idea can be emphasized. Children should be encouraged to join in on repeated or familiar lines. After several readings children should be encouraged to talk and write about their favorite parts.

Another related strategy for sharing poetry in the classroom is choral reading. Although almost any poem can be read using choral reading, *Joyful noise: Poems for two voices* written by Paul Fleischman (1988) is a collection of poems about insects that intermediate children typically enjoy. Poems can be broken down by line, couplet, stanza, or parts of verses. Children can be divided for reading poetry by rows, the front of the room and back of the room, or the left side of the room and right side of the room.

Children can be assigned reading lines or verses by the colors they are wearing. Ways to assign parts for choral reading are endless.

Reading poetry aloud is the first step to the enjoyment of poetry. However, passive listening frequently does not provide children with a depth of understanding or appreciation. Children do need help to comprehend subtle nuances and to understand the emotional connection between the poet and reader. While dissection, line-by-line analysis, and meaningless memorization is not recommended, children need opportunities to discuss poetry in both large and small groups. Children need to understand that there is no one correct interpretation and that an understanding of poetry is often a very personal experience.

Another way teachers and students can share poetry is through the use of the poetry journal or notebook. Poetry journals or notebooks can contain poems studied in class as well as poems children have discovered on their own. Children may not always write the complete poem but may choose to write a favorite word or phrase from the poem. Students can be instructed to write the poem on one page of their notebook or journal and write their response on the opposite page. Children should be encouraged to write anything that appeals to them. Feelings, ideas about the poem's meaning, and descriptions of how the poem related to their own lives are appropriate responses. After a class discussion, children may be directed to record the class response and compare their ideas to those of the class. Teachers should be willing to accept the responses of each student. Some students may only be willing or able to respond on a literal level; other students will be able to respond more critically.

In addition, students may want to develop their own thematic anthologies. After the teacher shares themed anthologies such as *Mice Are Nice* compiled by Nancy Larrick (1990) or *Best Witches: Poems for Halloween* by Jane Yolen (1989), children might be encouraged to collect poems about a particular topic. These poems may be included in their class poetry journal or kept in a special notebook and can be shared with the entire class after the student has developed his theme or topic.

## Conclusion

Poetry is a natural language of children. Teachers can enhance this simple form of literature for children by simply sharing appropriate poetry. Teachers can become more familiar with poets and poetry by collecting poems they enjoy. Teachers who include poetry as part of their teaching strategies become more open to sharing poetry with students. When teachers share a variety of poems with children several times a day, children develop positive attitudes about this genre of literature. As poet Beatrice Schenk de Regniers (1989) has written, "Put a poem in your pocket and a picture in your head."

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# **Can Middle School Students Summarize?**

**Andrea Giese Maxworthy  
Arlene Barry**

A large portion of students' time in the middle school is spent reading textbooks to acquire information. According to Adams, Carnine, and Gersten (1982):

*Beginning in intermediate grades and continuing through high school and college, a large part of students' time is spent in reading textbooks to acquire information. The process by which students learn information from textbooks is commonly referred to as study skills (p. 29).*

One frequently needed study skill is summarization. Summarizing text information is a valuable study activity which helps students understand and remember important ideas. In order to summarize, students must reduce the text to its main points. This requires an ability to analyze text structure and discard inessential information (Vacca and Vacca, 1989).

Six basic rules for summarizing text developed by Brown and Day (1983) are suggested in Richardson and Morgan (1990): 1) delete all unnecessary materials; 2) delete redundancies; 3) substitute a term for a list of items; 4) use a superordinate term for a list of actions; 5) select topic sentences from ones provided in the text; 6) construct

topic sentences when not provided explicitly in the text (p. 331).

The complex task of summarization is difficult for middle school students. According to Irvin (1990): "High school students are more able than middle grade students to produce summaries that contain main ideas." The older or more skilled reader is a better summarizer. Unskilled readers tend to retell rather than condense information and often include concrete details. Skilled readers are able to create their own topic sentence to reflect the main idea when it is not stated in the text (Vacca and Vacca, 1989).

The authors used the opportunity provided by a Saturday enrichment program designed to teach study skills to investigate the ability of middle school readers to summarize and learn from text. The participants in this research project were seventh, eighth and ninth graders enrolled in a six week workshop held on a university campus for which a tuition fee was charged. As teachers of this workshop, the authors sought to assess and develop students' abilities to summarize text. Although students' attendance and participation in the project identified them as motivated and cooperative, no information about their reading abilities was available. Students were asked to summarize the important points from a paragraph in a history text, *Land of Promise* (Berkin and Wood, 1987). This section of the text entitled "Mass Production and Immigration," compares the world of work before and after the Civil War. Important concepts discussed in this section were division of labor, mass production, old immigrants, new immigrants, nativism, contract labor, and the Chinese Exclusion Act.

The specific paragraph students summarized described the manufacture of shoes before the Civil War:

*Let us go back to our pre-Civil War shoes factory, but this time to see things from a different point of view. Imagine that you are a shoemaker, or "cordwainer," as the trade was called then. Most likely you live in that small town we described earlier with several other cordwainers. In the shop, too, are one or two young apprentices who are learning the trade by working under your direction. As a skilled shoemaker, you know every aspect of making a shoe, for you, too, once studied the craft as an apprentice. Each person in the shop creates his or her own product from start to finish, beginning with cutting out the leather pattern and ending with sewing on the soles. In the course of the day, you might stop for a moment to take in the view from the window by your workbench, or pause to sip a drink for refreshment. The time it takes you to make a pair of shoes and the way you work depends on your skill. You have a day-to-day relationship with your employer, and when problems or grievances come up, you and your employer settle them directly (p. 443).*

The course instructors found the paragraph to be very clearly written and expected students to have no trouble with their summaries. However, this was not the case and students exhibited a variety of difficulties writing summaries. Five trends were noted. 1) Only 41% of the students were able to produce the unstated topic sentence of the paragraph. The following summary was a typical response of students: *First, it tells you to imagine that you're a shoe-maker. You'd be called a "cordwainer" who lived in a small town and worked in a shop. You have an apprentice or two to teach. You're a skill[ed] shoemaker and create your own shoes from start to finish. You may stop for a moment during the day. Depending on your skill you may finish late or early. If there is a problem you settle it directly.* An ability to produce an unstated topic sentence was cited as necessary by Brown and Day (1983) for writing a summary. 2) Students exhibited difficulty choosing the most important



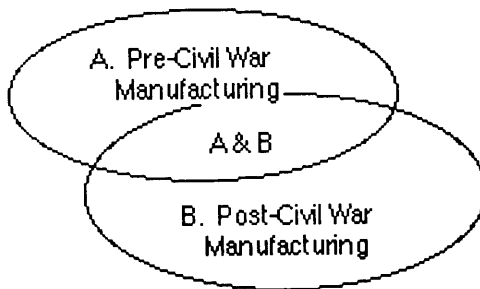
information in the article. Taylor (1986) explains that students may remember and focus on details because of the high imagery value contained in details. The following examples show this tendency: *A shoemaker in the Civil War lives in a small town usually has two apprentices trying to learn the trade. You don't take many brakes you work the whole day and maybe take a refreshment brake. If something is wrong they take care of it right away.* 3) A good summary should delete important information. Information was copied almost verbatim. The following example could more accurately be described as paraphrasing: *"Cordweiners" were most likely to live in a small town, and work with other "cordweiners" in a workshop.* 4) Students did not possess the background knowledge needed to write accurate summaries about pre-Civil War occupations. Instead of talking about "shoemakers," "apprentices" and "cordwainers," students discussed "shoestores," "craft-shops" and "shoe repair shops" as in the following example: *This paragraph is about what the atmosphere would be like in a shoe store in the 1800s. About the people who worked there and what they did.* 5) Students were not able to substitute a superordinate for a list of items or actions (e.g., the superordinate "pets" would be used in place of cats, dogs, turtles, lizards, birds, etc.) In the following example the individual steps of shoe construction are listed: *Manufacturing before the Civil War. This paragraph is about the life of 2 shoemaker. They also could be called cordwainer. They lived in a small town and worked in a workshop. One or two apprentices would be there learning the trade. Each person does his own project from start to finish. They start with cutting out the leather pattern, and ending with sewing the soles together. They do take a look out the window and eat lunch. They had a day-to-day relationships with your employer, so when they have problems you settle them directly.*

These experiences verified those of others who concluded that middle school students are generally not skilled in summarizing textbook selections (Brown and Day, 1983) or in comprehending textbook material (Bauman, 1983; Taylor, et al., 1985). This is an issue of great concern because middle school students spend much of their day learning from textbooks.

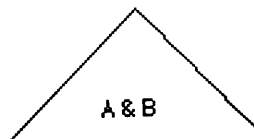
However, the difficulties exhibited by these students, and those of other students described in the literature, have provided educators with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and adjust instructional procedures accordingly. Based on what has been learned from this action research, the following recommendations are given: 1) Teach study strategies in the content area classroom. This allows students to practice with the materials they must learn. 2) Provide students with the background knowledge appropriate to the reading selection. Demonstrations, field trips, movies, filmstrips and other activities are helpful for giving students a picture of the time and place being discussed. Students in the midwest might visit Old World Wisconsin, a "living history" museum developed by the Wisconsin State Historical Society just outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In a replicated village, students could actually enter an 1800's shoe shop and watch the tedious process of making shoes by hand. They would be allowed to try their own hand at forming shoe leather onto a last and stitching with hog bristles. This arduous procedure could then be compared to the mass production of shoes with a visit to the Freeman Shoe Factory in Beloit, Wisconsin. 3) Focus student attention on a limited number of new concepts. Many content textbooks cover an extensive array of new concepts in a few pages. For example, the authors of the social studies textbooks in this study covered the very broad topics of manufacturing and immigration before and after the Civil

War. The teacher needed to focus on a smaller amount of information and allow for a more thorough analysis of the information. This procedure would have made the complex information less confusing for students. 4) Help students select and organize key ideas into meaningful structure. Students need to see how all the important facts fit together to make the big picture. The information on manufacturing before and after the Civil War would have fit well into a compare-contrast format. Either of the following diagrams could have been used to allow students to visualize the similarities and differences between the two eras of manufacturing (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Alternative diagrams to encouraging visualization**  
**of compare/contrast text**



Pre-Civil War  
Manufacturing  
A.



Post-Civil War  
Manufacturing  
B.

5) Model the study strategy deemed most useful. Teachers should think out loud as they proceed through a strategy. If students see and hear exactly how an expert extracts and organizes important information, the study process will not be a mystery. 6) Provide repeated guided practice with the study strategies taught. Taylor (1986) found that her middle school students needed five or six sessions of practice on writing hierarchical summaries before they could confidently write their own summaries. Palincsar (1984) provided 15 sessions of practice for her students before they could use a reciprocal teaching strategy independently. Days and even weeks of guided practice may be needed before students internalize specific study strategies.

Directing middle school students to read a chapter and complete end-of-chapter activities is ineffective. The authors of this article found that middle school students could not easily read a text selection and summarize the important information. Continuous and specific teacher guidance is essential. It is recommended that teachers teach study strategies in context, provide appropriate background knowledge, focus on a limited number of new concepts, select and organize key ideas into meaningful structures, model effective study strategies, and provide repeated guided practice with the strategies taught. Continuous and specific teacher guidance is essential in order to teach study skills to able learners.

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Our "Expanding Horizons" feature enables *Reading Horizons* readers to share exciting teaching ideas with one another. In this issue (beginning on p. 225), we share views on "Mother Goose," "Predictable Books," and "Computers and the Developmental Learner."

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# **School-Based Staff Development to Encourage Reading in Elementary and Middle Schools**

**Linda Mixon Clary**

Recent educational reports, conferences, and articles have urged schools to allow students to read more than the seven to eight minutes per day currently allocated in many schools. According to the authors of *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson, 1984) motivation is a key element in becoming a skilled reader, and students will read when books are accessible. Unfortunately, the basic skills emphasis of the last several years has drawn our attention away from emphasizing wide reading in school and allowing allowing school time for students to read. This article contains several ideas for staff developers to use in helping schools plan how to encourage wide reading.

## **Needs in reading**

The distinction of a successful reading program is developing students who like to read well and who will read often (Winograd and Greenlee, 1986). In recent years, in approximately 95% of the elementary schools in this country, the reading process has been taught with basal readers (Aukerman, 1981). These readers have a well-defined, systematic scope and sequence of skills that students must

master when tested. The stories are relatively short with controlled vocabulary. While publishers do not intend that they become the total reading curriculum, time constraints often allow for few other reading activities. Yet most basal reader authors agree that the skills taught in the basal need to be practiced and extended in additional reading from quality books. Time pressures, however, often lead to the omission of that practice.

Basal reading instruction has been common in this country since the 1950's. However, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson et al., 1984) reviews the poor showing of American students in reading when their achievement is compared to other countries. An estimated 20% of the adult population have reading difficulties that impede their daily functioning in society (Stedman and Kaestle, 1987). The reading demands of daily life grow more and more complex as our world becomes more information-oriented. Reed (1988) suggests that as students get older, they often "...are not motivated to read; even if they are motivated, they can't find books they want to read." Given these problems, something needs to be improved in our current reading instructional programs.

There is a startling contrast when we compare students who are read to often as young children and who read independently as they get older to those taught only through school instructional programs. The "readers" learn to read more easily (Durkin, 1974-75; Teale, 1981; Freeman and Wasserman, 1987), they have more extensive vocabularies (Nagy, Herman and Anderson, 1985; Cullinan, Jaggard and Strickland, 1974), and they are more interested in reading while learning to use written language proficiently (Tierney and Pearson, 1983). There is a dire need for students to spend far more time in independent

reading, both in and out of school, in order to achieve gains in reading achievement (Anderson et al., 1984). Along with higher test scores, wide reading yields great enjoyment and appreciation of reading (Aaron, 1987) and a better understanding of self and others (Winkeljohann and Gallant, 1981).

## Reading activities

School-based staff development is needed to help develop ideas to promote and motivate wide reading so that all students can reap the benefits of that practice. The following activities represent a school-based program designed to focus attention on wide reading of quality literature and motivate youngsters to read for pleasure and practice. These activities can be explored in short staff development sessions and implemented immediately with relatively few resources other than the time and effort involved.

- View the videotape *Booktalks* by J. Brodard (1986) as a kick-off to these activities. These short, interesting excerpts of books, presented in ways to entice the audience to read the book itself, are motivating to students and teachers. Not only is the tape instructional for learning to do booktalks, it is interesting as well and includes several sample presentations in the printed materials that accompany it. See and react to the video one week, work on preparing and practicing some booktalks the next week, and then present them to students. Meet with other teachers to get reactions and make modifications.

- Hold a book-making workshop where teachers learn to make and bind their own books. If someone on the staff or in the school district can act as a leader, provide released time for preparation. Concise directions can be found in sources such as *Children's Literature in the Elementary*



*School* (Huck, Hepler and Hickman, 1987). If teachers do not have a story or a collection of their own or of their students to bind, bind a blank book that can be written later. Allow about two hours of time one week or two one-hour sessions over a couple of weeks. Place the finished books in circulation in the library. Publicize the news that they are there, and watch enthusiasm grow for reading them. Encourage teachers to teach their students the bookbinding process, and follow the same procedure with students' compositions.

- Work in your local community with Adopt-a-School sponsors, PTAs, civic groups or a publishing company to pay for inviting an author popular with students to school for a luncheon or breakfast. Sell tickets if necessary to offset the expense. Have students and teachers read the author's work before the affair, and then have both groups, plus interested community members, attend, ask questions, buy autographed books, and meet in small classroom groups. If a visit is not possible, follow the format above but use a conference telephone call as the contact. The pamphlet *Dial an Author* by Pat Scales (1981) is an excellent resource for planning such an exciting event.

- Have teachers think of their favorite book when they were the age of their students. Hold a staff development session where they make an art project such as a small quilt or collage with individual sections about the favorite books. Follow up with a second session to complete the project and hang it in a prominent place in the school. Such a large display attracts students' attention and often motivates them to read a favorite teacher's book selection. Classes might follow up with a similar project within the class.

- Ask a librarian to talk about the selection aids available for choosing books appropriate for certain ages, interests, sexes, and developmental levels. Emphasize those already available in the school, and/or allow teachers to order those that they think will be helpful. References such as those found in Figure 1 can be very helpful in supporting teachers as they work toward more emphasis on reading.

### **Figure 1: Selection Aids**

- Dreyer, S.S. (Ed.). (1985). *The bookfinder: A guide to children's literature about the needs and problems of youth aged 2-15*. Three volumes. Circle Pines MN: American Guidance Services.
- *Junior High School Library Catalog*, 5. (1985). Bronx NY: H.W. Wilson.
- Monson, D. (Ed.). (1985). *Adventuring with books*. Urbana IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Reed, A.J.S. (1988). *Comics to classics: A parent's guide to books for teens and preteens*. Newark DE: International Reading Association.
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- Winkel, L. (Ed.). (1984). *The elementary school library collections*. Williamsport PA: Bro-Dart Foundation.

- Use one or more short sessions for every teacher to prepare a booksharing activity appropriate for certain levels. These are motivational "book reports" that may take many formats. Some possible ways of sharing a book would be to dress as a favorite character and share a favorite scene in which the character appears. The teacher could tell a portion of the book with a flannel board, shadow box, or

even a puppet show. Use a Friday afternoon for teachers to share their activity with as many classes as time allows by circulating every ten minutes or so. A few weeks later, let students circulate among classes to share a book that they have read recently.

- Have an idea swap for a couple of weeks. Ask teachers to come to the staff development session with their favorite way of encouraging youngsters to read described in a one-page handout. Have each teacher briefly present the idea and share copies with everyone present. Have folders or notebooks available for collating the copies.

- Ask parents, students and school neighbors to donate old but still usable books to school. Prior to the staff development session, assemble them in the lunchroom or gym where there is plenty of space. Give every teacher a box and some colorful paper to cover it. Then, let them make a "start shelf" (Bishop, 1981) of books about a certain topic (perhaps one in the content areas) or by a particular author or of a certain type. Duplicate a master list of the "shelves" (boxes) when they are completed so that teachers may borrow from one another.

- Provide all the necessary materials for a "Make and Take" workshop for bulletin boards. If you use a basal series in your school, use it as a guide for books that correlate to stories. These are good ones to publicize. Have a media specialist as a resource for new ideas. Allow enough time for each teacher to make at least one bulletin board. When the finished products are put up, take pictures and compile them in an album for future reference. Teachers who use the same basals might then be able to trade with one another.

- Divide the faculty into groups. Have the necessary supplies and computer programs available for teachers to generate some word finds, crossword puzzles, banners, posters, and bingo cards about books. Follow this session with a second one where a master list can be made and a file set up with one copy of each idea that would be available to all teachers when they wanted to make transparencies, handouts, or games.

- Focus on the content areas for at least two sessions. Share selection aids such as those in Figure 2 that make it easier to relate books to the non-language arts areas. Then divide into small groups by subject areas of interest which select books for a short bibliography related to particular units of study. Follow up by brain-storming ways to work the books into the curriculum. Ask each group describe to the best strategies on paper, index cards or a database. Categorize by subjects, unit, and grade levels.

**Figure 2**  
***Selection Aids for Content Area Books***

- Kobrin, D. (1988). *Eyeopeners: How to choose and use children's books about real people, places, and things*. New York: Penguin.
- Elleman, B. (Ed.). (1985). *Children's books of international interest*. Newark DE: International Reading Association.
- Mathias, M., & Thiessen, D. (1979). *Children's mathematics books: A critical bibliography*. Chicago IL: American Library Association.
- Metzner, S. (Ed.). (1973). *World history in juvenile books: A biographical and chronological guide*. Bronx NY: H.W. Wilson.
- *Subject guide to children's books in print*. (Annual). Ann Arbor MI: R.R. Bowker.
- Wolff, K. (1983). *Best science books for children*. Washington DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science.

• As a culminating activity, encourage teachers to develop plans for each grading period to incorporate what they have learned in their classrooms. A handout such as Figure 3 is helpful in organizing plans. These might be prepared in grade levels or individually and coordinated across grades so that there is not a lot of undesired repetition as students progress through school.

**Figure 3**  
***Plans for Promoting Wider Reading***

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Dates</i>
1. Genres to be used _____		
_____		
2. Specific titles for reading aloud _____		
_____		
3. Bulletin boards to highlight reading (sketch)		
_____		
4. Booksharing activities for this period _____		
_____		
5. Book extension activities that students will do _____		
_____		
6. Booktalks to be presented _____		
_____		
7. Special projects involving reading _____		
_____		
8. Ways to correlate wide reading to our primary instructional program		
_____		

## **Recommendations for staff development**

This school-based staff development program can be easily implemented by staff developers within a school, district level personnel, principals, and/or outside consultants. It is planned with attention to the characteristics of effective programs (Hinson, Caldwell and Landrum, 1989). Use of these activities as an ongoing program presumes that the participants have acknowledged a need for this content and have helped plan how the activities will be used at this particular site. Such plans should include specific, local objectives, selection of activities to be used, scheduling modifications, and ways to share. The nature of these projects makes them informal and non-academic, characteristics of non-threatening workshops. The opportunities for released time, if used, would validate the importance of the project to the teachers involved. There are also built-in assignments for applying the strategies in the classroom and sharing results. This factor allows participants to do the activities themselves, observe others as they do theirs in the school, and discuss ideas and outcomes. Since most of the activities are done in groups, there is a support system that promotes collegiality inherent in the organization of the process. Almost every session has specified, hands-on components that participants can try immediately to see if they bring about desired results. Therefore, the most recognized characteristics of good staff development have been used in planning this program.

Youngsters in today's schools need to have wide reading emphasized in their instructional programs. Since this type activity has not been a priority in many schools in recent years, there is a need for school-based staff development that stresses specific ways of getting students motivated about reading. The activities presented here meet

those criteria and will have a positive impact on the reading habits of the young people in schools where they are used.

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# **The Development of Basal Reader Teacher's Manuals**

**Lynda Stratman Robinson**

Textbooks for teachers have been around for a long time. Mulcaster's *Elementarie* was originally printed in 1582 and Hoole's *Some New Discoveries on the Old Art of Teaching* was printed in 1660. This kind of book proliferated with the rise of the Normal Schools in the 1800's, but the idea of teaching directives to go with a particular reader did not become common until the twentieth century. Graded reading series came into use in the mid-1800's, but teacher's manuals did not accompany them. These graded reading series represented the first systematic attempt to provide materials for children which varied in difficulty so that children could systematically develop reading skills as they progressed from level to level (Mathews, 1967).

Trends leading to the development of teacher's manuals can be seen in the 1800's (Smith, 1965). Some kind of directions to the teacher were becoming more common, although they consisted of only a few paragraphs at most. These directions usually took the form of remarks at the beginning of the book, although occasionally questions were found within the body of the text which appeared to be for use by either the teacher or the student. It is not uncommon in many series today for questions to appear in the child's book as well as in the teacher's manual.



As the 19th century drew to a close, some rudimentary teacher's manuals began to appear. There were several reasons for their appearance at this time. First, professional books on teaching reading first appeared during this time period (Smith, 1965). Second, as the controversy grew over teaching methods, authors may have felt it necessary to delineate their viewpoints more clearly with regard to the children's readers they were publishing. Third, whereas in earlier years information had been disseminated to teachers and others interested in the teaching of children through lectures and sermons, people were now realizing that this could be done through books and a larger audience would be reached (Smith, 1965).

By 1910 it was increasingly rare to find a child's reader published without any teacher directions, although the earliest separate teacher's manuals generally had only one manual that covered the entire series (Elson, 1915). Between 1915 and 1925 major textbook companies began publishing one manual for each child's reader. Such manuals were brief in early series, usually 20 to 30 pages (Fassett, 1922; Elson and Runkel, 1921a).

In the early years of the twentieth century, manuals for children's readers could be purchased in many different forms. A separate manual could be purchased for each reader. This manual could be purchased hard-bound together with a copy of the child's reader, or it could be purchased separately as a paperback. A single paperback manual could be purchased, or several manuals from the same series could be purchased bound together in a variety of ways. Some were bound with primer through grade 4 in one volume, grades 5 through 7 in one volume, or grades 1 through 3 in one volume (Elson and Runkel, 1921a).

One major company titled early teacher's manuals *The Rural School Teacher's Manual* (Gray and Liek, 1931a). Did they consider that urban teachers had no need for a manual? This is a possibility, since many teachers in the early years of the twentieth century had very little training. The urban school districts paid more and therefore could be expected to attract more qualified people (Cubberley, 1920). Some paperback editions of teacher's manuals continued to be called *The Rural School Teacher's Manual* until the 1940's. From these small beginnings teacher's manuals have expanded until they are, in some cases, many pages longer than the children's reading material that they are intended to explain. This article attempts to delineate when, and in which areas of the reading program, changes occurred.

### **Areas of little change**

These earliest manuals contained much that is found in today's manuals. There has been little change in areas such as lesson plan format, controlled vocabulary, and the proportionate amounts of teacher directions between grade levels.

**Lesson plans.** In the earliest manuals, one lesson plan followed another on the same page. No space was wasted. If Lesson 1 ended in the middle of the page, the directions for Lesson 2 began on the next line. Paragraphs were indented, but no other indenting was used. If there were six questions for the teacher to ask the children, all six were strung together in one paragraph; this contrasts with today's method of indenting each in a list-like format (Elson, 1915; Fassett, 1922). It is even common today to separate each question by double spacing. These changes over the years represented not so much an increase in quantity as an attempt to present a similar amount of material in a

different and presumably more convenient format. Changes over time appeared to be geared toward the convenience of the teacher in using the manual as a ready reference.

While the arrangement of words on the page changed dramatically over the years in the lesson plan section of the teacher's manual, the underlying content of the lesson plan has remained virtually unchanged from 1915 to the present (Aaron, et al., 1970; Durr and Pikulski, 1986; Elson, 1915; Elson and Gray, 1930; Gray and Gray, 1946b; McKee, Harrison, Lehr and Durr, 1966; Ousley and Russell, 1960). Lesson plans consisted of 4 or 5 steps: vocabulary/background; guided reading/comprehension questions; skills development; enrichment. Some teacher's manuals such as *Beacon Readers* (Ginn, 1921) arranged these components as text sections with all vocabulary/background for all lessons together (See Appendix A). Other manuals arranged all components of a lesson in one section and all components of the next lesson in the next section. This arrangement is used in most manuals today.

**Vocabulary.** Vocabulary was always controlled for beginning readers. This controlled vocabulary was usually eliminated from the series around the 3rd or 4th reader. Middle and upper grade teachers were encouraged to present stories in an order that suited their classroom rather than being constrained by the order of the reader.

**Proportionate amount of teacher directions.** Readers for the higher grades contained more lengthy passages; however, the amount of teacher directions per reader decreased. It appeared that the authors felt that teachers needed more information and materials for beginners. If today's readers are considered, this is still the

pattern. It is not uncommon to have seven readers for the first grade, each with its accompanying manual. At the sixth grade level, there is usually only one reader and one manual. The sixth grade manual is larger than any one of the first grade manuals, but when the first grade manuals are all considered together as one grade, they are about double the volume of the sixth grade manual.

### **Areas of major change**

While different publishers have chosen different teaching methods according to their philosophies for how to best meet the needs of children, the net result in all cases has been the proliferation of materials and directions accompanying these materials. This is the largest change that has occurred in the development of teacher's manuals. These materials designed to meet the needs of individual children can be considered under the headings of more materials for beginning readers, more materials for older children, and multiethnic materials.

**Beginning readers.** The graded series which began to appear in the mid-1800's had one book for each grade in grades 1 through 6. Primers were also used for beginning readers from colonial times (Reeder, 1900). However, teacher's manuals in the early years of the twentieth century provided a section of suggestions to the teacher for how to prepare children for reading before they began the primer. This was called the preprimer section (Elson and Runkel, 1921b; Fassett, 1922).

**Preprimers.** In the 1920's children's readers were developed to accompany the preprimer section of the teacher's manual. These readers were called preprimers (Gray and Liek, 1931b). Preprimers gradually expanded until today a reading series commonly contains three similar

readers called preprimers (Allington et al., 1989; Pearson et al., 1989).

**Prereaders.** Prereaders were developed in the 1930's. These were workbooks designed to prepare children for reading. Prereaders contained pages which introduced the letters of the alphabet and exercises which were designed to teach reading skills such as left-to-right orientation — exercises which the authors felt would provide children with skills needed to be successful with reading (Elson, Gray, and Keck, 1937). In the 1930's teacher directions were found on the front and back inside covers of the child's book. There was one short paragraph for each page. Occasionally the directions for a certain page would refer the teacher to a "model" that had been presented for an earlier page. By the 1940's prereaders no longer contained teacher directions on the inside of the front and back covers. Instead, these directions were found in a separate section of the preprimer teacher's manual (Gray and Gray, 1946a; Russell and Ousley, 1948). By the 1950's prereaders had their own teacher's manuals. These manuals generally contained a full page of teacher directions for each page in the child's prereader (Arbuthnot et al., 1956). Today, prereaders are usually called a kindergarten book or a readiness book (Allington et al., 1989; Durr and Pikulski, 1986; Pearson et al., 1989). Some reading series have both.

In the 1960's publishing companies began to develop "programs" for the kindergarten. What had formerly been one prereader with one teacher's manual now became a "kit" or set of materials. These sets often included such items as storybooks, children's activity kits, records, audio-tapes, and games. Some kits attempted to provide an entire kindergarten program instead of just the reading readiness

component (Aaron et al., 1970; Durr, Windley and Yates, 1976).

**Selections.** Both the number of reading selections available in each child's reader and the amount of supplementary materials that accompany each child's reader have increased greatly throughout the years. The largest increase in number of selections per reader occurred in the 1940's and 1950's. Although the number of children's readers for grades 4 – 8 remained the same, more stories were added to each reader with each series update (Gray and Gray, 1946b). The total number of selections nearly doubled between the years of 1940 and 1960 (Hildreth et al., 1940; McKee et al., 1951; O'Donnell and Carey, 1936; Ousley and Russell, 1960). As the content of the readers increased, the teacher's manuals grew accordingly. The 1970's and 1980's have seen a vast expansion in the availability of both materials and suggestions to teachers on how to use them (Aaron et al., 1978; Durr and Pikulski, 1986).

**Supplementary materials.** In the 1960's and 1970's supplementary materials proliferated. Workbooks increased in both size and number. Ditto masters were often available to provide remediation for children who were not working up to grade level expectations. These materials, of course, required page by page explanations in the teacher's manuals. This increased the size of the teacher's manual (Aaron et al., 1970, 1978; Allington et al., 1989; Durr and Pikulski, 1986). Occasionally separate manuals were provided for each supplement. By the 1980's some companies were providing not only a teacher's manual, but also a teacher's resource book or kit (Allington et al., 1989; Durr and Pikulski, 1986). Occasionally separate manuals were provided for each supplement. By the 1980's some companies were providing not only a teacher's manual, but also

a teacher's resource book or kit (Allington et al., 1989; Durr and Pikulski, 1986; Pearson et al., 1989). This resource book or kit contained information such as a program preview, scope and sequence charts, and placement tests to determine the reader in which a child could most profitably be placed. While the placement tests were a new development in the 1970's (Aaron et al., 1970; Durr, Windley and Yates, 1976; Early, Cooper, Santeusanio and Addell, 1970), much of the information in the resource guide had been found in teacher's manuals for many years. However, it was now presented in greater depth. Throughout the decade of the 1980's teacher's manuals *per se* have more and more been devoted simply to lesson plans to accompany the literary selections. As research has delineated skills involved in reading comprehension, publishing companies have responded by adding not only more skills, but varied ways of teaching those skills to meet the needs of all children — gifted children and children needing remediation, as well as children who are reading at grade level.

**Multiethnic concerns.** Prior to the 1960's, virtually all people depicted in children's readers were Caucasian. However, the civil rights movement worked for equality in education as well as other areas during the 1960's. Some series in the 1960's were published in two editions. One edition was multiracial and the other edition contained only Caucasian people (Artley, Monroe, and Robinson, 1964). This involved changing the pictures and in some cases, adding characters to the stories. The teacher's manuals, however, remained identical except where added characters had to be taken into account (see Appendix B). In the 1970's multiethnic editions which reflect our increasingly multiethnic society became the norm.

## Conclusion

Teacher's manuals were developed in the early years of the twentieth century to provide teachers with information on how to present new teaching techniques in reading. Over the years, these manuals have continued to attempt not only to present new techniques and ideas in response to research but also to provide teachers with increased amounts of materials so that teachers can offer instruction to meet the needs of individual children. No manual can ever take the place of a well-prepared teacher, but most manuals provide suggestions and supplementary materials which can be valuable to teachers.

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# Appendix A

This early teacher's manual (Ginn, 1921) covered grades 1-6 in one book. The Table of Contents (page vii) shows teacher directions for grades 1-3. Note that lessons for each year are divided in two main sections: "Reading and Expression" (guided reading/comprehension and enrichment) and "Phonics and Word Study" (vocabulary and enrichment). Page 121 gives teacher directions for three selections from the Beacon First Reader. This is from the "Reading and Expression" section.

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## BEACON READING

3. After the story has been thus prepared there should be a recitation for its real reading. At this time it is well for the pupil who reads to stand before the group and read in a way to entertain the others. Their books should be closed, so that the reader may feel that the others are relying on him for the story. Do not interrupt him to make corrections unless he needs help. For example, if he reads *said she* as though it were *she said*, pay no attention to the mistake. But if his error affects the sense of the sentence, it should be corrected before the child is excused.

The class should now be able to "dig out" the words containing a short vowel, and those with a long vowel spelled with final *e*. During the study lesson encourage the children to "sound out" words: but after the lesson has been studied and the children are ready to read it for enjoyment, as little delay on the words as possible should be permitted. If a child hesitates on a phonetic word, it is far better to assist him to get the word from the book than to write the word on the board and develop it in script form. The next time he comes to this word it will be in type, so the type form should be mastered.

The afternoon is the better time to study and read the stories from the First Reader. This leaves the more difficult lessons in phonics and phonetic application to be given from the blackboard and the Primer during the two morning periods. If the First Reader stories seem difficult, lay the book aside for a time and read an easy primer or two while the Beacon Primer is being completed. The Browne Readers, Book One, and the Field Primer fit in well at this point.

**"The Old Woman and her Pig."** Before this lesson is begun, the story should have been told several times, and the children should have been given an opportunity to play it. First turn the pages to study and enjoy the pictures. Let these help tell the story. "Notice the old woman talking to the ox, or to the rope. What is the cat on page 19 saying? Do you think the little pig

## THE BEACON FIRST READER

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understands her? See how intently he listens! What does a stile look like?" Make a definite point of studying the pictures as a means of story interpretation. It is sometimes possible for children to cut or color pictures illustrating some parts of the story that particularly please them (see Chapter V).

Proceed with the reading of "The Old Woman and her Pig" much as you did with "The Pancake" story, the children working out the lines independently and then answering well-framed questions to prove their knowledge of the story. Finally, have the story read in an intelligent manner. It may be well to delay the reading until the next day, leaving the children a little further time for study at their seats.

**"The House that Jack Built."** This story will require considerable study. If it is partially memorized as a preparation, all the better. The words listed will easily swing into the reading if the children know the rime fairly well. A drill on the past-tense verbs, page 156, will fit in here nicely. If the story seems too hard, no harm will result in delaying it for a time. The next lesson is merely a memory exercise. The children will enjoy reading it a little later. This is true also of other poems in the First Reader.

**"Chicken Licken."** This story is a great favorite. Study the pictures to get the movement of the story. Notice, on page 39, the crafty old fox leading the flock to his den. The proper names in this story are unimportant. The children will not meet many of them again. It is important, however, that the reading should move along smoothly. Because there are several quoted sentences, the class may be able to dramatize portions of the story. This phase of interpretation is very helpful in securing good expression.

**"Titty Mouse and Tatty Mouse."** It will require several days to read this story. The introductory words should be developed, as usual, at the outset.

## Appendix B

Compare the two pictures on this page and the next. They appear in different 1965 editions of *Fun With Our Friends* (Scott Foresman, 1965). Though the pictures contain different children, the text of the teacher's manual (shown on page 224) is identical in the two editions.



"Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday, dear Pete.

Happy birthday to you!"





"Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday, dear Pete.

Happy birthday to you!"

—How can you tell how old Pete is?

—Why do you think Pete's mother decorated his cake with little animals?

draw reasonable conclusions...

—Why do Pete's friends have their mouths open so wide?

Since the last page will be singing in children's heads as they read, suggest they join the party and sing "Happy Birthday" to Pete.

join the party...

#### WHOLE STORY

Review details that gave this gathering of Dick, Jane, and Sally and their friends its special character.

—How could you tell as soon as the story started that it was going to be about a party?

link story to personal experience.

—What did Pete's friends bring him?

—What did Pete's mother make especially for the party?

—What do you like best about a birthday party?

Reactions will depend on whether a child takes the point of view of host or guest, and this should be brought to youngsters' attention as the discussion goes along.

Before the oral reading, ask the group to turn to page 75 and read the first sentence. Explain that this sentence tells how Pete felt. Have the last sentence on the page read and point out that it tells what happened. With the parts of all characters assigned and arrangements made for the reading of the first and last sentences on page 75, suggest that children remember their own pleasure in a party when they try to show what a good time everyone was having at Pete's.

read the story aloud.

Pupils who are using *Learn to Listen, Speak, and Write* have probably finished Book 1<sup>1</sup> of that series or have only one or two pages remaining. If so, they have discussed Jane's birthday party and have learned to write the phrase *Happy Birthday*. Let the youngsters demonstrate their skill by writing the greeting *Happy Birthday*, transcribing it from a model you write on the board. Some children may prefer to transcribe the first line of the birthday song from page 76 of the Primer. A few pupils may wish to make a birthday card for Pete and put it on the bulletin board.

write Happy Birthday.



# EXPANDING HORIZONS

## Mother Goose is Alive and Culturally Relevant

Sharon Crawley

I was surprised and dismayed when I read a feature article in a recent issue of the *Palm Beach Post Newspaper* (Hiaasen, 1991) titled "Has Mother Goose Lost Its Use?" Robert Shockey (past president of the National Middle School Association) made the following statements while being interviewed, "I doubt seriously if they (Mother Goose rhymes) are being used extensively... I don't see much value in them." (Many other negative comments regarding Mother Goose were contained within the article.) The feature was written in such an authoritative manner that I began to wonder if I were out of touch with recent trends in society and if "Mother Goose" actually were dead. It was not a week later when I came across a Hallmark greeting card which pictured Snoopy reading: "Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard, to get her poor dog a bone. But when she returned, that's when she learned..."

You'll have to find the card to find out what she learned. Two weeks later I turned on the TV and there was a HUGGIES commercial advertising Mother Goose nursery rhyme disposable diapers. Yes, I was confident that Mother Goose was alive and culturally relevant. A recently published reading series, *The Jamestown Heritage Readers* (1991), includes a number of Mother Goose nursery rhymes and suggestions for using them with students.

Publications during the past five years have dealt with cultural literacy and its importance. To be culturally literate, as E.D. Hirsch (1987) writes, is to have the basic information used



in communication. It is, in part, to give our children “the elements of our literacy and mythical heritage that are often alluded to without explanation, for example, Adam and Eve, Jack Sprat, Jack and Jill, Little Jack Horner” (Hirsch, 1987, p. 30). As you can see, Mother Goose is a part of this literary heritage. Even the name, Mother Goose, appears in Hirsch’s list of 5,000 items which represent cultural literacy. The book *What Do Our 17 Year-Olds Know* (Ravitch and Finn, 1987) highlights the importance of exposing young children of all socioeconomic levels to good literature. Poetry and rhymes are included in good literature. Mother Goose is a classic.

Dougherty and her colleagues (1989) write that using nursery rhymes helps children: develop a familiarity with good literature; understand the concept of story because nursery rhymes are short and have a clear beginning, middle and end; develop graphophonemic skills through the rhyming patterns; learn that separate words are used in written communication; develop oral communication skills because nursery rhymes are rooted in oral tradition. Galeano (1983) adds that nursery rhymes provide opportunities for students to act out the actions of the rhyme, thus connecting physical movement activities to the use of nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes also provide opportunities for vocabulary development.

Rogow (1982) used nursery rhymes to encourage developmentally delayed blind and physically handicapped children, between the ages of 15 months and 7 years, and their mothers and teachers to interact socially. Glenn and Cunningham (1982) report that handicapped infants with Down’s syndrome recognized and preferred listening to rhymes rather than regular talk by their mothers; and they found that nursery rhymes are important to word recognition and social routines (Glenn and Cunningham, 1984).

### **Using Mother Goose**

Various authors (Galeano, 1983; Haake, 1990; Hall, 1985; Zjawin, 1980) describe ways in which Mother Goose can be used in the classroom. Let’s look at some suggestions.

**Language arts.** 1) Categorize or develop word lists related to nursery rhymes (action words, names of people, names of places, names of items). 2) After students have memorized the words to a nursery rhyme, print the rhyme on a chart. Children can "read" the chart. Children can identify words they know. These words can be printed on cards by the teacher and placed into word banks for children. 3) Linguistic spelling patterns can be used for teaching word recognition and spelling. Categorize rhyming words (e.g., crown, down, town; horn, born, corn). 4) Collecting and labeling objects identified in Mother Goose rhymes leads to word recognition. 5) Nursery rhymes can be extended by having students add a middle or ending line. Why did Jack and Jill fall? How did Jack feel when he jumped over the candle stick? 6) Teachers and students can tell felt board stories using Mother Goose nursery rhymes. 7) Students can create their own nursery rhymes by using Mother Goose rhymes as patterns. 8) Students can compare and contrast Mother Goose rhymes from different countries.

**Movement.** 1) Encourage students to act out the rhymes. They can "jump over the candle stick," "sit on a tuffet," "fall and tumble down the hill," or "blow their horns." 2) Encourage students to act out, or pantomime, Mother Goose rhymes while other students guess the nursery rhyme.

**Art.** 1) Using papier maché to make Humpty Dumpty eggs can be an interesting activity for students. A balloon can serve as the base around which papier maché is placed. 2) Students can be encouraged to draw sequential cartoon strips to illustrate favorite nursery rhymes. 3) Students can compare and contrast the different artistic renditions of Mother Goose.

**Music.** 1) Students can recite, or sing, nursery rhymes to music they create. 2) Certain nursery rhymes, such as "Three Blind Mice," can be sung in the round. 3) Rhythm instruments can be used by students to keep beat with the rhyming.

**Science.** 1) Students can find out what animals lay eggs, the nutritional value of eggs, and make deviled eggs after learning "Humpty Dumpty." 2) "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" can lead to a discussion of plants, their parts, how they grow, how to

care for them, and their uses. 3) After reading "Jack Sprat" students can find facts about the four basic food groups, and the role of fat and lean meats in our diets.

**Mathematics.** 1) Nursery rhymes such as "One, Two, Buckle my Shoe" can be used for counting. 2) Students can measure the different sizes of eggs after reading "Humpty Dumpty," or different sizes of candle sticks after reading "Jack Be Nimble."

### Figure 1 Collections of Mother Goose Rhymes

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It is obvious, from the twenty-one activities listed above, that Mother Goose nursery rhymes can be connected with many activities from a variety of subject areas. They provide a solid basis for engaging in many whole language activities. Where can you find Mother Goose rhymes? There are many versions of Mother Goose from which to choose. Several sources are presented in Figure 1.

Mother Goose rhymes are suitable for children and students of all ages. They offer springboards for learning vocabulary, listening, writing, creative dramatics, science and math. They provide a natural avenue for engaging in whole language activities. The rhythms of Mother Goose rhymes stay on the tongues and in the hearts of young and old alike. Yes, I am happy to report that Mother Goose is alive and culturally relevant.

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## Predictable Books in a Middle School Class Writing Program

Linda Jones McCoy  
Victoria Hammett

It is January 29th at reading time. Vicky gathers the students near her. She recites *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin, Jr. (1967) to them and then displays a large copy of the poem and reads it, while they follow along. The students are encouraged to join in on the reading. After the reading of the poem has been completed in this way, the teacher invites the students to look more closely at the literary pattern the author has used. She leads a discussion of the pattern of repetition which has been used in each episode and how each episode interlocks with the next (Martin and Brogan, 1972).

This step is followed by a brainstorming activity where class members name the state symbols for Kansas because January 29th is Kansas Day, the date Kansas became a state. The teacher writes *buffalo* by the space marked *State Animal* on a prepared chart followed by all of the other state symbols, including such obscure symbols as the state rock. Then she invites them to hang their own words on the Brown Bear pattern to write a new version of the poem which will include the Kansas state symbols. This is an excerpt:

*Kansas, Kansas, what do you see?  
I see a Jayhawk looking at me.  
Jayhawk, Jayhawk, what do you see?  
I see a sunflower looking at me.  
Sunflower, Sunflower, what do you see?  
I see a buffalo looking at me.*

You might expect this scene to take place in a primary grade classroom, probably first grade. But these children were sixth graders in a heterogeneously grouped classroom in southeast Kansas working under the direction of an experienced teacher who was just beginning to incorporate structural linguistic predictable materials into her reading program. The Brown Bear material and the follow-up rewriting projects are often viewed by teachers as primary grade work,

but the strategies used are not grade specific. Nor is the reading material. They may be used for reading and writing instruction at any grade level where a skillful teacher shares a good piece of children's literature with the class, leads them to discover the literary pattern used by the author, and then invites the class or an individual to use that same pattern to develop a story or poem of their own.

January 29th in Kansas means a review of the state symbols in classrooms all over the state. In many classes, children will color in or draw their own pictures of Jayhawks and buffaloes and sunflowers and the state seal. Native Kansans know the major state symbols (although they may falter on such things as the state rock or the state insect) because they have had some sort of review every January throughout their school days. To make this review interesting and worthwhile, Vicky's lesson provides the yearly review at a level sophisticated enough for middle schoolers while incorporating whole language techniques increasingly found in classrooms throughout the nation.

This lesson may be followed by another Kansas whole language exercise the next day. While the lesson may be used at nearly any grade level, our example again takes place in Vicky's sixth grade classroom. Vicky is a history buff, and her students have been doing an in-depth study of early Kansas history. She reads to the class the classic picture book *Over In The Meadow* (Keats, 1971). She shows and leads discussion about the pictures in the beautifully illustrated book and again invites the class to discover the author's literary pattern. The book begins:

*Over in the meadow, in the sand, in the sun,  
Lived an old mother turtle and her little turtle one.  
"Dig!" said the mother. "I dig," said the one.  
So he dug all day,  
In the sand, in the sun.*

Displaying a chart on which the few key words in each episode are written along with blanks for all other words, she asks the class to work together to change *Over In The Meadow* into another Kansas poem under their authorship. As they

dictate, she writes the words in the proper spaces on the chart, helping the class to make it seem that this is about Kansas while maintaining the original rhythm and rhyme scheme. After one or two episodes are completed in this way, the students are assigned a number. (*Over In The Meadow* starts with one turtle and works up to ten fireflies.) They may then work in groups of two or three or work individually, if they choose, to complete a stanza. The teacher circulates the room, helping individuals and groups when needed and encouraging their efforts. The following poem, "Over in Kansas," incorporating some lively elements of Kansas history, results.

*Over in the meadow in the grass and the sun,  
Lived an old mother sunflower and her little flower one  
"Bloom," said the mother. "I'll bloom," said the one.  
And they bloomed all day in the grass and the sun.*

*Up in the sky in the clouds in the blue,  
Lived a mother tornado and her little 'nados two.  
"Blow," said the mother. "We'll blow," said the two.  
So they blew all day in the clouds in the blue.*

*Over in the prairie in a nest by a tree,  
Lived a mother meadowlark and her little larks three.  
"Chirp," said the mother. "We chirp," said the three.  
So they chirped all day in the nest by the tree.*

*Over on the plains where the meadowlarks soar,  
Lived a father pioneer and his children four.  
"Sow," said the father. "We'll sow," said the four.  
So they sowed all day where the meadowlarks soar.*

*Over in the prairie where it's hard to stay alive,  
Lived a cottonwood tree and her seedlings five.  
"Grow," said the mother. "We'll grow," said the five.  
So they grew all day where it's hard to stay alive.*

*Near Stafford County by the old salt licks,  
Lived a Cheyenne woman and her children six.  
"Hunt," said the woman. "We'll hunt," said the six.  
So they hunted all day by the old salt licks.*

*Home on the range there beneath the heaven,  
Lived a herd of bison and their calves seven.*

*"Graze," said the mother. "We'll graze," said the seven.  
So they grazed all day there beneath the heaven.*

*Just below the mounds where the grasshoppers ate,  
Lived a gal named Bender and her corpses eight.  
"Flirt," said her father. "I'll flirt," said Kate.  
So she flirted all day where the grasshoppers ate.*

*Over in the field where the wheat grows fine,  
Lived old farmer Jones and his children nine.  
"Thrash," said the farmer. "We'll thrash," said the nine.  
So they thrashed all day where the wheat grows fine.*

*Here in Kansas, long ago, way back then,  
Lived a gal named Carrie and her hatchets ten.  
"Chop," said Carrie. "We'll chop," said the ten.  
So they chopped up saloons here in Kansas way back then.*

While rewrites of pattern books are fun, resulting in fine products from the students' creative efforts, they cannot, of course, constitute the whole writing program in this sixth grade class. Other process writing activities such as those suggested by Graves (1983) must also take place so the students do not come to view writing as only pattern writing. Pattern writing, however, can provide many excellent opportunities for the class to look closely at interesting literature and use their own creative efforts to produce a worthwhile piece of writing in a situation where every student can experience success – success in reading and success in writing. As the students' skill in writing improves, more sophisticated writing patterns can be explored.

Using Laura Joffe Numeroff's *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* (1985) as a pattern, a girl in Vicky's class wrote:

***If You Give A Kid A Driver's License***

*If you give a kid a driver's license, he will want a used car.  
If he gets a used car, he will want a Ferrari instead.  
If he gets a Ferrari, he will want a totally rad corvette.  
If he gets a corvette and you refuse him another car,  
he will want a radio to go in his corvette.  
If he gets a radio to go in his corvette, he will want a tape  
player.  
If he gets a tape player, he will want tapes to go with it.  
Now he will want a c.b.*



*If he gets a c.b., he will want a car phone.*

*When he gets the car phone, he will want a portable t.v. for the car.*

*Then a c.d. player and some c.d. tapes.*

*Now he will want some loud speakers.*

*While he's occupied with these, he will have a wreck and want another used car.*

Vicky's sixth graders now demonstrate to themselves and their audience that they are both readers and writers. Pattern writing using predictable text helped to get them started writing. To broaden the writing program beyond pattern writing, daily sessions of Marathon Writing (McCoy, 1988), where the students and the teacher all write without stopping for about ten minutes each day on any topic they wish, can help develop writing mileage in a non-threatening way. Additional writing assignments or establishment of a Writing Workshop (Hansen, 1987) where the students write about the books they are reading can combine with pattern and marathon writing to make a well-rounded reading and writing program in a middle school class.

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# Computers and the Developmental Learner

Mary P. Deming  
Maria Valeri-Gold

Even though the results of current research investigating the effectiveness of computers in the classroom are mixed, most studies report the popularity of computers with both teachers and students alike. Additionally, some studies validate the successful intervention of computerized instruction in reading and writing classrooms (Valeri-Gold and Deming, 1990, 1991; Deming and Valeri-Gold, 1990). Because of the computer's ability to make instruction more flexible and versatile, computer learning can be used to move college developmental writers away from restricting pen and paper writing tasks or "drill and kill" types of exercises. Computers can also help developmental educators teach college-level content area materials and reinforce the basic reading and writing techniques in the classroom or in a learning laboratory setting. In addition, specific computer activities can be developed for college developmental learners to aid students in the communicative arts.

## Figure 1 Computer Self-Awareness Survey

**Directions:** Please respond to the questions stated below concerning the use of the computer for your reading and writing assignments.

1. What experiences do you have with the computer?
  2. How will writing on the computer differ from writing with a pen or pencil?
  3. How do you feel about using the computer in this class?
  4. Will the computer affect your attitude and practices about writing? Why or why not?
  5. What are the advantages of using the computer for writing? Why?
  6. What are the disadvantages of using the computer for writing? Why?
  7. Have you taken any computer courses? When? Where?
  8. Do you know any wordprocessing programs? Which ones?
  9. Do you know any other computer programs? Which ones?
  10. Do you know how to use a computerized spellcheck or thesaurus?
- (Lansing, 1984; Deming, 1987; Gold and Deming, in press)

Gerrard (1989) notes that the computer can assist basic writers because it can help control the writing process by dividing it into its stages: prewriting, drafting, rewriting, and proofreading, while using commercially-produced software designed for each stage. Deming and Valeri-Gold (1990) recommend using a variety of business computer software, especially database programs, with basic writers to design a whole language curriculum.

### **Figure 2** **Computer Exercises for Narrative Selections**

**Directions:** Take your writing folder and floppy disks from the file cabinet in the learning lab. After reading the narrative selections in your anthology, do the following exercises on the wordprocessor. Remember to imagine a reader as you write.

1. Write a personal narrative and print a copy. Take it to the lab tutor or a friend to read. Write a second draft and print a copy of all drafts to your reader.
2. Compose a narrative poem (one which tells a story). Do not worry about rhyme or meter. Use a graphics program to decorate it.
3. Choose your favorite narrative from this chapter or a narrative of your choice. Create a new narrative by changing its beginning and ending. Make copies and share your writing during group conferences.
4. Create a collaborative narrative by connecting computer terminals. Students can alternatively write sentences or work in groups of three at one computer. Print copies to share aloud with your peers in class.
5. Select a narrative in this chapter and write new sentences using the vocabulary words listed in your selections to demonstrate your understanding of the unknown words. Save your vocabulary words in your vocabulary database.
6. Keep a journal about your everyday experiences (good and bad) using the wordprocessor. Share your concerns and discoveries with others in your class.
7. Write a review of a narrative. Save it on a disk, so that other students can read it. Submit your review to the school's desktop publishing newsletter.
8. Write a letter to your pen pal using the electronic bulletin board sharing your "Most Embarrassing Moment!" or "Greatest Moment."

Now return your folders to the file cabinet.

Many software programs and techniques can be creatively designed to teach students the necessary reading and writing skills to succeed in college. The following computer exercises are suggested for either classroom or laboratory use with college developmental readers and writers.

**Figure 3**  
**Computer Exercises for Process Writing**

**Directions:** Work in small groups; use your computer.

1. Word process a "how to" essay. Take it to the lab tutor or a friend to read. Write a second draft incorporating your friend or tutor's suggestions and give a copy of all drafts to your teacher.
2. Find an example of a process essay or article from a newspaper or magazine. Use the outline function on your wordprocessing program to outline the major divisions of the text or write a summary of the author's main points. Or leave parts of the outline out to be filled in by other students.
3. Wordprocess a process essay, using a recipe format, on non-food topics such as "How to have a happy relationship" or "How to make a million dollars," or "How to drive your English teacher crazy." Remember to include the necessary "ingredients" and a step-by-step plan to follow. Save your recipes in your database file on process essays. Decorate your essays using a desktop publishing or graphics program.
4. Pretend that your state has been selected to host the Olympic Games. Wordprocess an editorial for your school newspaper detailing how members of your student body can become actively involved in planning the games. Or write a letter and send it to the Olympic Committee.
5. Imagine you are interviewing for a job as a sports announcer for a local television station. Choose a partner to role play the job interview, with one person acting as the employer and the other as the potential employee. Write a dialogue for this interview and dramatize it for your classmates.

## Computer activities

At the beginning of the academic term, instructors might assess their students' computer expertise many times. Often educators either overestimate or underestimate their students' computer abilities or they do not realize the range of technological expertise in their classes. To individualize instruction in the computer classroom, a computer self-

awareness survey, such as the one shown in Figure 1, can be administered to the students during the first week of class. The same survey can be administered at the end of the course to measure students' growth in computer knowledge. Furthermore, this survey can provide educators with a more accurate picture of what experiences their students have with different types of computer software, particularly word-processing and other applications software.

In order to foster a whole language curriculum, computer exercises can be introduced to the class. The computer exercises shown in Figure 2 can be used with students after they have read a potpourri of literature selections in anthologies. The exercises can be adapted for a variety of literary selections identifying particular rhetorical modes. Additional activities can be added or deleted based on the individual needs of the students and the learning environment. Students can also use the computer for projects related to process writing exercises, such as those shown in Figure 3. These exercises and those shown in Figure 2 are adapted from Valeri-Gold and Deming (in press).

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# REVIEWS

## Professional Materials

### ***Science Learning: Processes and Applications.***

Carol Minnick Santa and Donna E. Alvermann (Eds.)

International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark  
Delaware 19714-8139. ISBN 0-87207-366-1. 164 pp. 1991.

Reviewed by Robert Hafner  
Western Michigan University

*Science Learning: Processes and Applications* is described in its foreword as a combination of the “why” and “how” of learning from science texts and materials. The sixteen chapters which comprise the book represent a blending of the theoretical and the practical, the views of science educators and reading educators, and the concerns of elementary, secondary and teacher educators at the college level. Insight into the “why” and “how” of learning from science texts is much needed given the fact that printed text materials remain the most widely used of all teaching aids in the science classroom and that, by and large, science educators do not explicitly teach their students how to read those materials. The authors succeed in providing insight into the “how” of learning from science texts; however, this science educator came away from the book with severe reservations as to “why” much of the existing text material in science should be used by teachers.

The authors share a constructivist view of learning and thus there are a number of themes which run throughout the chapters. Two themes are of particular importance: 1) the role of prior knowledge in the construction of meaning from text and 2) the importance of students becoming aware of, and taking control over, the metacognitive strategies necessary for that

sense-making. Learning from text material is viewed as an active process in which individuals construct meaning by using prior knowledge to help them interpret incoming information. This requires that students become aware of their own understanding (cognitive structure), recognize the organization of knowledge represented in the text, and finally negotiate the nature of the relation between those two entities. The authors provide a number of visual tools for representing knowledge (for example, frames and the Concept Structure Analysis Technique) which can help students in that process. These tools share essential features with the concept mapping techniques with which many science educators are familiar (Novak and Gowin, 1984).

The book is also informative with respect to the metacognitive heuristics and strategies which skilled readers employ to make sense of text material. Such strategies and heuristics are used implicitly by experienced readers and thus need to be made explicit to students. The approaches which the authors advocate to accomplish this appear to fall within the cognitive apprenticeship model (Collins, Brown and Newman, 1989). Cognitive apprenticeship refers to the adaptation of apprenticeship methods to the teaching and learning of cognitive skills. This requires the externalization of processes that are usually carried out internally. Cognitive apprenticeship teaching methods are designed to bring these tacit processes into the open, where students can observe, enact and practice them with help from teachers and from other students. This approach is characterized by three phases: modeling, coaching and fading. In this sequence of activities, the apprentice (student) repeatedly observes the teacher modeling the target process, which usually involves some different but interrelated subskills. The student then attempts to execute the process with guidance and help from the teacher (coaching). Once the student has a grasp of the target skill, teachers reduce (or fade) their participation.

These tools and strategies are largely presented in the context of helping students deal with poorly written text materials. Collectively, the chapters indicate that fundamental differences exist between the nature of science texts and the educational goals those texts are meant to serve. Thus we are told

that very few texts have well written descriptions and explanations of phenomena; when explanations are provided, they are devoid of the context or problem for which those explanations were developed; many questions that are incorporated into texts encourage rote recall rather than meaningful learning; main ideas are either obscured by extraneous information or merely implied within poorly developed paragraphs; texts do not take into account the common alternate conceptions of scientific phenomena which students bring to their reading.

There is certainly value in providing teachers with critical insight into the difficulties which students face in dealing with such text material and this book succeeds admirably in that endeavor. However, it would seem much more productive to incorporate the insights derived from research on reading and science education into the development of pedagogically sound written materials – materials which facilitate meaning-making on the part of students by acknowledging and addressing the importance of prior knowledge, that use concept maps to represent knowledge, and that prompt students to utilize the heuristics and strategies that have proven effective.

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## Books for Children and Young Adults

***The Day Patch Stood Guard;  
The Day Veronica Was Nosy;  
The Day Sidney Ran Off;  
The Day the Ducks Went Skating.***

Written by Elizabeth Laird. Illustrated by Colin Reeder.  
Tambourine Books, William Morrow and Company, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. 1991. ISBN 0-688-10239-5, 0-688-10248-4, 0-688-10241-7, and 0-688-10246-8, respectively. 32 pp., US\$11.95 each.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Gibboney  
Western Michigan University

Gosling Farm comes to life when Duncan the little red tractor – protagonist of the *Little Red Tractor* series – ventures out to work. A new adventure comes about each morning when Duncan and Stan the farmer go off to do the daily chores.

In *The Day Patch Stood Guard*, Duncan, Stan and Patch the sheepdog go down to the brook to mend the old bridge. When Stan forgets to set the little red tractor's handbrake, Duncan rolls down the hill and crashes into a tree. While Duncan is being mended, Patch demonstrates his abilities as a guard dog. As Stan and Duncan set out to mend the cow pasture fence in *The Day Veronica was Nosy*, Veronica, a curious cow, unwittingly disturbs an insect nest sending everyone running in all directions. A mischievous piglet and a hungry fox sidetrack Stan and Duncan from their work in *The Day Sidney Ran Off* and *The Day the Ducks Went Skating*.

These pleasing adventures are wonderful read-alouds for early elementary programs. Each story depicts farm life, while colorful illustrations reveal the countryside during each season. A unique feature is the two-page map which appears inside the front and back covers of each book, showing an aerial view of Gosling Farm and the surrounding countryside. These maps help readers follow Stan, Duncan, and their friends as they stumble upon new adventures.



***The Pumpkin Man and the Crafty Creeper.***

Written by Margaret Mahy. Illustrated by Helen Craig.

Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016.

ISBN: 0-688-10347-2. 32 pp. US\$14.95.

Reviewed by Sherry R. Myers  
Western Michigan University

When Mr. Parkin, the pumpkin man, passes Lily Rose Willowherb's house on his way home with a wheelbarrow of dirt, a flowering creeper complains to him of its treatment by owner Lily Rose and hops into the wheelbarrow. Mr. Parkin takes the plant home and puts it in a nice big pot, but the plant is not content. It demands first more water, and then less water, and then entertainment. Appalled that Mr. Parkin does not have a TV, it whines that it will die if it does not have music and dancing, poetry, light, and laughter. Mr. Parkin, who really wants some time with his pumpkins, eventually resorts to renting an orchestra to entertain the plant. Though the plant loves the music, it is still not content and demands that Mr. Parkin forget his pumpkins and read poetry to it instead. Just as Mr. Parkin reaches his wits' end, Lily Rose appears, tells the plant that it has been treacherous and ungrateful, and that it is so tough it is practically a weed. As she leaves with the Crafty Creeper, Lily Rose offers Mr. Parkin a clipping. He declines and returns to the peace and companionship of his pumpkins.

Margaret Mahy's colorful and finely detailed illustrations add greatly to this story of a selfish and demanding plant and the sensitive man who tries to make it happy. The rich detail of the watercolor pen and ink sketches gives the young listeners plenty to engage their eyes as they sympathize with Mr. Parkin. *The Pumpkin Man and the Crafty Creeper* is an engaging story, and can be enjoyed simply on that level. It is also, however, a deft look at people who ask for too much and appreciate too little what they receive. The book could be used equally well in the home or in the classroom. Higher level thinking can be engaged by pondering what else the plant might have demanded had Lily Rose not appeared when she did. Discussion, writing, or drawing could be centered on what children would demand if they were crafty creepers. This is an ideal book for the early elementary grades.

***Monster Goes to School***  
***Monster's Birthday Hiccups.***

Written by Virginia Mueller. Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger.  
 Albert Whitman and Company, 6340 Oakton Street, Morton Grove IL 60053.  
 ISBN 0-8075-5264-X and 0-8075-5267-4. US\$10.95.

Little Monster attends a pre-school cleverly peopled with many little monsters of all shapes and colors – one even flies through her day instead of walking. When asked by his teacher to draw something special about his school, Little Monster decides to draw a school clock, and divides his day into pictured sections. He makes sure to include his favorite activities – music, lunch, and going home. Of special interest to young readers will be lunch boxes decorated with the “in” characters for monsters – bats, witches and the like, and the nap-time toys of stuffed creatures.

In *Monster's Birthday Hiccups*, Little Monster's friends are having great fun; however, during a rousing game of “pin the forked tail on the dragon,” the birthday boy succumbs to a case of the hiccups. All the old-fashioned methods are tried, but until he holds his breath and blows out the four candles on his birthday cake, nothing works. Written for preschoolers and early elementary children, the *Little Monster* books are affectionately drawn and should provide much amusement. (SDC)



***Fast Forward.*** Written by Jenny Pausacker.  
 Illustrated by Donna Rawlings.

Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016.  
 ISBN: 0-688-10195-X. 82 pp. US\$12.95

Reviewed by Sherry R. Myers  
 Western Michigan University

Kieran, the hero of *Fast Forward*, is a high energy twelve year old who loves his three sisters and his parents in spite of the fact that they are so laid back. He spends his life tap-tap-

tapping his fingers waiting for them – that is, until Kieran's grandmother introduces him to her latest invention, the Anti-Boredom Machine (ABM), which he steals from her workshop. The ABM is a VCR remote control device that works on the person holding it rather than on the TV, allowing the owner to fast forward through the boring parts of life and to pause the action, thus being the only one not frozen in time, and to rewind and repeat "the good parts."

Kieran is delighted... at least to begin with. Fast forwarding through bus stop waits and boring stories told by friends is great; zipping through boring lectures in school or whole class periods with a substitute teacher means school is over in a flash. Then Kieran discovers the down side of the ABM. There is no one to laugh with about the jokes; his friends are angry with him for giving them blank stares and ignoring them while he is on fast forward; rewind makes him dizzy and sick – and besides, he can't change things when he rewinds, only live them again. Worst of all, he is failing at school from having fast forwarded through too much material. He decides it is time for drastic action and rewinds to do it all again and pay attention.

In a chapter reminiscent of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Kieran reviews his past and learns some unpleasant truths about himself. As he reapproaches the day when he got the ABM, he is seized by a new terror: will he reach that point in time and be forced to loop for eternity? With his grandmother's help and some clever thinking, he manages to break the loop, and he and his grandmother destroy the ABM, leaving Kieran not one second older than when he started his adventure, but definitely much wiser.

*Fast Forward* is a delightful book. It is short enough to be very manageable for an elementary reader and works well as a read-aloud for children six and up. The joy in reading this book aloud is that it is just as much fun for the adult reader as it is for the listener. Anyone who fast forwards through FBI warnings and previews on movies, who pauses to answer the phone or get a snack from the kitchen, will delight in the idea of being able to control the speed of his or her real life, and so will be

caught as Kieran is, discovering that life at its own pace may be better after all.



## Classics Retold

***Reynard the Fox.*** Written by Selina Hastings.

Illustrated by Graham Percy.

Tambourine Books, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. 1991.

ISBN 0-688-09949-1. 80 pp. US\$16.95.

Selina Hastings introduces her tale of Reynard, the wily fox, with a brief history of the ancient tradition of tales in which animals behave like people, while maintaining their animal characteristics. "In all these stories the plot depends on the principal that brute strength is inferior to wisdom. We know that the Fox, however wicked and greedy, will always get the better of the Lion, however noble, and of the Wolf, however brave..." Hastings' text and Percy's illustrations are well-matched. The story is lengthy and dramatic — enough for bedtime reading over a period of days — and each animal is portrayed lovingly in both words and pictures. (JMJ)

***Androcles and the Lion and Other Aesop's Fables.***

Written by Tom Paxton. Illustrated by Robert Rayevsky.

Morrow Junior Books, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. 1991.

ISBN 0-688-09682-4. 40 pp. US\$13.95.

The tale of the slave Androcles, whose courage in pulling a thorn from a lion's paw was later rewarded in a dramatic escape from death in the arena, is the first of ten fables retold in lively rhyme by Tom Paxton. The style of the illustrations is reminiscent of Randolph Caldecott's humorous, grotesquely angular people and animals. This book is not designed for youngsters, but an audience composed of young adolescent readers is likely to be amused, intrigued, and informed. The final illustration, standing alone without text, shows a human figure in the background, tossing a basketball, while a sinister looking wolf, dressed in jacket, chains, jeans and sneakers, departs from the scene in a stealthy manner,

clutching a boombox and pursued by a scruffy-looking bird. Here's an opportunity for readers to create their own modern fable. (JMJ)

## Classic Collections

### **Tales of Edgar Allan Poe**

Illustrated by Barry Moser

Morrow Junior Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. 1991.

ISBN 0-688-07509-6. 312 pp. US\$19.95.

### **Oscar Wilde: The Happy Prince and Other Stories**

Illustrated by Charles Robinson

Morrow Junior Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. 1991.

ISBN 0-688-10390-1. 144 pp. US\$16.95.

Fourteen of Poe's most compelling tales are collected in this impressive collection. Like Poe's stories, Barry Moser's gorgeous, brooding illustrations are hauntingly memorable. On the cover, beneath the author's name in blood red calligraphy, a gleaming blade attached to a pendulum swings toward us out of the darkness. Four paintings accompany "The Murders in the Rue Morgue": a view of the street itself, a horrifying corpse hanging upside down ("Mlle. Camille L'Espanaye, Murdered"), the ourang-outang, and a somber Auguste Dupin. Illustrations for "The Pit and the Pendulum" include a close up vision of a ragged-fanged rat ("Their Red Eyes Glaring Upon Me"); those for "The Fall of the House of Usher" portray "Lady Madeline in Her Coffin" in monochromatic shades of red blending into black, and the mansion itself silhouetted in black against a foreboding red sky. The book is a treasure, which would make a handsome addition to any family library.

A briefer selection of Oscar Wilde's tales — "The Happy Prince," "The Nightingale and the Rose," "The Selfish Giant," "The Devoted Friend" and "The Remarkable Rocket" — is accompanied by Charles Robinson's beautiful, mystical illustrations in many modes: silhouettes, line drawings, illuminated initial letters, and pastel color plates. Artwork underscores Wilde's themes: in the painting captioned "the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates" gleaming, flowery luxury is dominated by a pair of bleak figures crouching in the foreground. (JMJ)

## SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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