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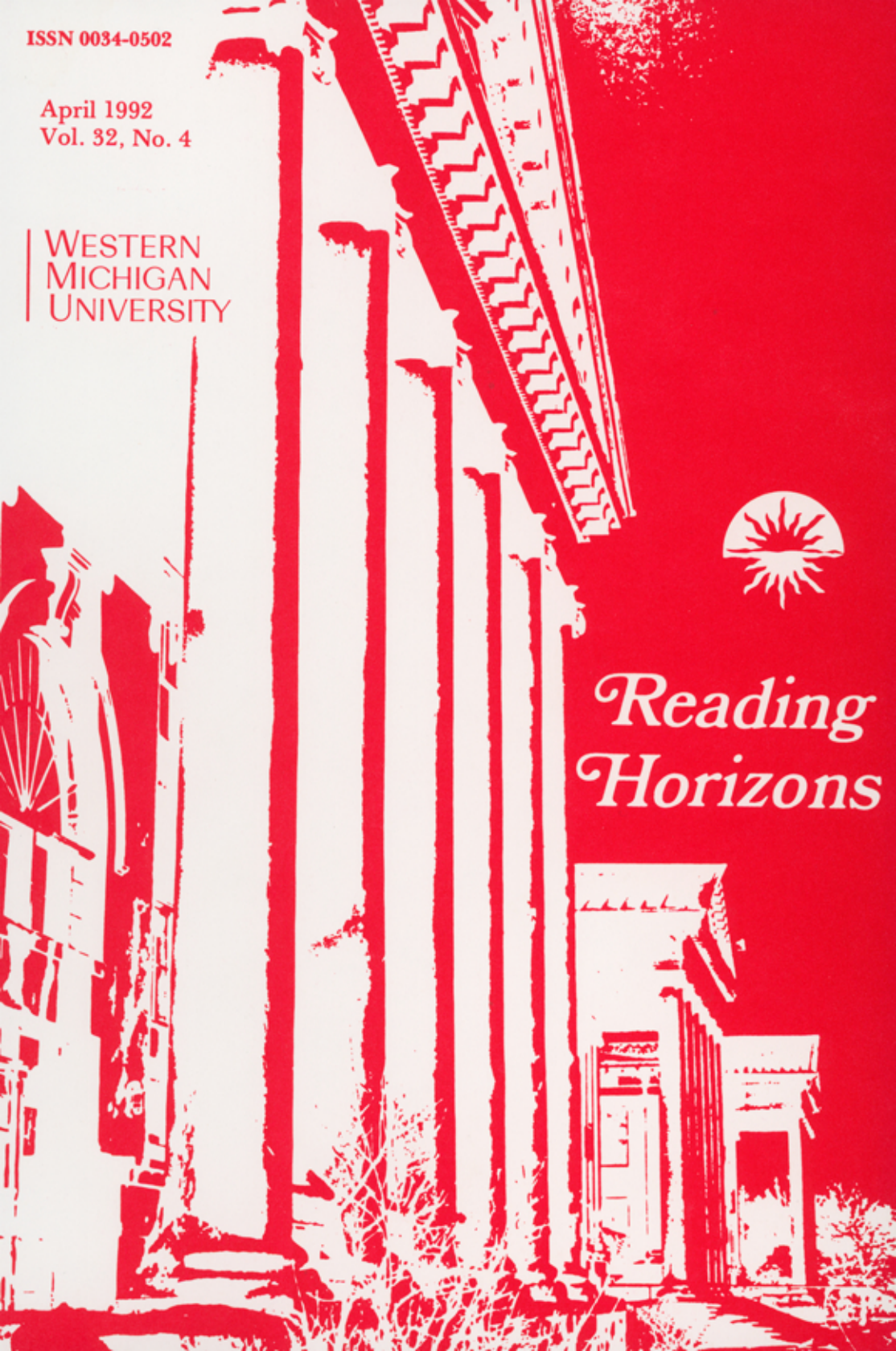
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READING HORIZONS

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Reducing the Risks: Reflections on Bridging Home and School Communication

**S. Kay Dunlap
Beverly J. Bruneau**

Recent scholarship on literacy development has focused on studying young at-risk learners (Allen and Mason, 1989; Clay, 1982; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Swap, 1990; Teale and Sulzby, 1986). Marie Clay (1982) has defined "at-risk" children as students who have not had the kinds of early language experiences which lead to success in school. She contends that limited experiences in oral language and book language can impair the child's ability to grasp concepts of how print "works." This gap impedes the child's ability to predict or connect meaning with print.

More recently researchers have begun to reexamine the lens from which at-risk children can be viewed. Rather than focusing on what children cannot do, researchers have challenged educators to examine school practice to focus on how teachers can reduce the risk for students (Allen and Mason, 1989; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). It seems to us that this more recent perspective encourages a qualitatively fresh look at what teachers can do to enhance the literacy development of children. Rather than focusing on children's deficits we believe this viewpoint challenges us as teachers to examine our own practice to search for means

to build bridges between children's home lives and their early school experiences.

As kindergarten and first grade teachers we worried about many of our students whose families were not in the cultural mainstream and whose literacy backgrounds appeared different from those of our more successful children. As we thought about how we might better teach our children we began to consider how we could improve our communication with the children's parents to begin to build a partnership between home and school literacy experiences. We wanted to be supportive and invitational with the parents. We hoped to provide the parents with information which they could use in helping their children interact with print, and, importantly, we wanted to learn from the parents. We valued their input and welcomed information that they could provide which would allow us to build our program to support the home. We wished to begin to build a two way bridge that would connect home and school literacy practice.

Moving from goals to practice is not easy. In this article we describe what we have learned during the past three years and are still continuing to learn as we build communication with parents through our Literacy Outreach Program. We hope our reflections will be helpful to other teachers attempting to communicate with parents in new ways.

The Literacy Outreach Program

The Literacy Outreach Program (LOP) is a summer program developed by the first author, who is a first grade teacher, and a kindergarten teacher, Suzanne Fitzpatrick, to provide support for students entering first grade the following fall. We hoped that by providing a specialized summer program and by working cooperatively with parents we could reduce the risk for our students who were already

struggling with literacy development. The program, funded through the Jennings Foundation, has operated during the past three summers.

The LOP contains two components, an emergent literacy instructional component and a parent participation component. Briefly, our goals for the emergent literacy strand include providing a print and literature rich environment, providing oral language activities which focus on pre-reading and prewriting experiences, providing mini-author units which feature minority authors, and integrating writing experiences with play. The program runs half-days for six weeks. Ten students meet with one teacher and one teacher-aide. Through student participation in this program we hoped students would develop confidence, build self-esteem and, importantly, come to perceive themselves as readers and writers.

Our goals for the parent participation component, on which this article focuses, include direct teacher to parent and parent to teacher communication, parental empowerment, and the building of parental confidence, within an atmosphere of mutual respect. We wished to include home visits as well as encourage parental classroom visits. In the spirit of Lisa Delpit's work (1988) we wished to increase our knowledge as to how we could best work with the parents of our students. We recognized that this would require subtle, but significant, shifts in redefining our roles.

Our reflections on the program

At the completion of each summer we've reflected on our experiences. We acknowledge that with each summer we've learned and grown along with our students and families. Our learning has especially concentrated on parental participation. As a result of our self reflections we have

made small but important changes which have increased parental involvement. These changes involved a different approach toward home visits, parental classroom visits, and the use of "Story Book Kits." During our third summer we felt secure that we were more successfully able to meet our parent involvement goals through these revisions.

Home visits revisions. We had wished to make one home visit for each child. The purpose of the visit was to demonstrate interest in the child's home culture and to model strategies that involved the child in reading and writing. During the first summer we simply announced that we'd be calling to schedule an appointment. We were fairly assertive about obtaining this appointment because we believed that our good intentions would be perceived and trusted. We were wrong. As Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) acknowledge about their work with Shay Avenue families, gaining access to the homes was not always easy.

Further, once successful in scheduling a visit, we sensed that several parents were uncomfortable. Although we believed that the story reading we did with the child during the visit, in which we modeled strategies for actively involving the child with the story, went well, we had the feeling that we had been intrusive. Although the children seemed very eager to share their home space with us, we observed that the parent or guardian seemed to be more comfortable in interacting with the teacher aides. This seemed reasonable because the aides came from the same community as the parents. In hindsight, we believe that as teachers we represented the "school authority" and we were viewed as outsiders who might be critical or judgmental. We learned that trust takes time and comes from multiple connections between home and school. Swap emphasizes that this kind

of trust demands "long term investments of time and energy from families and educators..." (1990, p. 64).

As a result of our reflections we made two small changes in our patterns of visiting. First, in place of our asserting ourselves as visitors we asked the parents to choose between a home visit or to visit us at the school. In this way, the time and place were controlled by the parents. Second, we encouraged the teacher aides to take a greater leadership role during the visit. With the aides taking a more prominent role, we believe the visit was better received. The interaction between the aide and the parent/guardian was more that of a friend-to-friend, than that of an outsider who might be considered an authority. Furthermore, this change in roles allowed us to be listeners. This provided us with a greater opportunity to learn from these family visits.

Revisions in parent school visits. Initially, we requested the parents to visit the classroom once during the six week session. We soon began to change our minds about just one visit and began to encourage the parents to visit more frequently. We learned that through an increased number of visits parents became increasingly more active and participated more within the classroom.

Classroom visits became an important vehicle for two-way learning. We learned about our families. As we observed adult-child interaction we grew to appreciate different interactive styles between adults and children, to learn of outside family interests, and to address concerns and provide school community resources for problem solving of family concerns. All of this was mutually satisfying and helped in reaching our goal of a joint mission to support children.

Not only did the increased number of visits allow us to learn about the families, they also provided increased opportunity for us to model interaction with children and texts. Parents had opportunities to observe and interact with children in an instructionally supportive manner. It was pleasurable for us to share both the social and the instructional context of a classroom and to observe the parents' growth in confidence as they learned specific ways to support their children's literacy development.

A second major change in facilitating school visits involved providing the parents with access to school bus transportation. Through the cooperation of our department of transportation, we were able to offer parents the opportunity to ride the bus to school with their children. This increased the frequency of school visits as well as the length of time the parents were able to stay. The parents stated that this simple change in policy provided the support and freedom to make the school visits.

The story book kits. Based on the work of McCormick (1989) we ordered simple predictable books for our children to use. We used these often in a variety of contexts in the classroom. Each day the children selected one or two books to read to someone at home. We believed this frequent and successful encounter with print strengthened the child's self perceptions of being a reader.

In reflecting on how we might further engage families in literacy events, we decided to continue the home readings, and to add in a response to literature activity. As Goldenberg (1989) and Henderson (1987) emphasize, we wished to mobilize home resources. During the second summer we developed two take-home kits, one based on the book *Good-bye House* (Asch, 1986) and the second

one on the book *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968). We chose *Good-bye House* because so many of our children moved frequently and we believed they could relate to the events of the story. We included precut flannel pieces in the kit, to help the children retell the story. The *Corduroy* kit contained the book and material for making a small stuffed bear. The kits were put together by a parent volunteer. This was a valued labor intensive process and we were fortunate to be able to reimburse the parent for her time and talent.

The children enthusiastically took home these special kits. However, as we talked with children, we perceived that little was being done with the *Corduroy* project. Therefore, we talked more actively with parents as they brought their children to school or attended a class session. This additional one-on-one communication encouraged participation. We also scheduled a final day for a bear parade based on the *Corduroy* kit. As a result of our increased communication each child took part in this individual project, and the parents enjoyed adding their individual creative fashion statements to our generic Corduroy.

Improving communication. Our final area of reflection focused on how we believe we improved our over-all communication with parents. We began our six week session with an orientation session. We recognized that our first meeting with the parents was very important. We wanted to tell them a lot about our program and to listen to their concerns. Although we had mailed reminders of the meeting to each of the homes, we began to be afraid that the letters would not reach parents or that the parents would not feel personally invited to attend. Because of this concern we decided to place individual phone calls. In this initial call we introduced ourselves, reminded parents that babysitting would be available, and offered to provide

transportation assistance. We also responded to individual questions and concerns. As a result, attendance was high at this important initial meeting. Furthermore, several parents said they appreciated the personal phone reminder.

Building on this successful experience we decided to phone parents before each meeting. The parents again responded that they appreciated the phone reminder more than a written reminder. Furthermore, it seemed to us that through phone calls we were able to establish a warmer personal relationship with the parents than if we had relied solely on written messages.

Implications

In this article we have summarized our own reflections about how we might better support our “at-risk” students’ learning through attempting to build bridges between the home and the Literacy Outreach Program. We believed that parents would both be motivated and able to participate in their child’s literacy development. Through our project we learned of the importance of inviting parents to join us, as well as modeling for them appropriate strategies involving children’s literacy learning.

Although we wanted parents to attend our literacy meetings and to share our teaching strategies with them, we learned that these events must be invitational, not mandated. For example, we believe our initial policy of mandated home visits was perceived as too intrusive. Through changing our policy by allowing parents to decide when and where we would interact, we received more favorable responses. We further learned of the importance of personal invitations. Our phone calls, a seemingly minor innovation, seemed to communicate to the parents that we really did want and expect them to attend. Furthermore our attention

to details of their lives, providing baby sitting and transportation to meetings and class sessions, allowed the parents to participate actively and confidently. Although we wished to implement an invitational approach from the beginning, we were able to do so much more fully during the second year. As we continue to listen to and learn from our parents we hope to further our ability to build interpersonal relationships and to redefine our roles.

Second, we realized how valuable modeling literacy strategies were in involving parents successfully with their children and literacy. As we actively demonstrated interaction possibilities for parents, we observed that they became more enthusiastic and confident within the classroom. The classroom became a collaborative setting where we all became risk-takers as we grew in our abilities to interact with children and print. We were able to extend our scaffolding of interaction with print through the specific activities we designed as part of the take-home kits. These kits allowed parent and child to experience a successful home literacy event.

Our program is now in its third year. We believe we have much more to learn in developing home school literacy relationships. However, we do believe that by using an invitational approach, providing models for literacy instruction, and listening to our parents' voices, we have begun to build bridges between home and school in our community. We asked our parents to talk about their perceptions of the program. We believe one mother's description illustrates her growing feeling of connection and empowerment with her child's literacy learning:

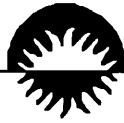
I want all the good things for E.J. He is my first. I got so many ideas. I learned about how much he has

retained. I learned how I can help with vocabulary. He always ask me "What does this mean?" It just all helped me... it helped his self-esteem. He can get lost in a crowd and get discouraged. He is a busy little guy. The one-to-one attention helped him to focus. I like how he says "Now I can do this" (reading).

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Concept Question Chain: A Framework for Thinking and Learning About Text

Barbara E. Johnson

Teaching students to think and teaching students to develop concepts from text are important parts of reading instruction (Brozo and Simpson, 1991; Herber, 1978; McNeil, 1987). Teachers can guide students' conceptual learning by designing questions that focus on a specific concept and use these questions to stimulate postreading discussion. Research indicates the positive influence questioning has on students' comprehension and retention of prose (Anderson and Biddle, 1975).

Since questioning can enhance comprehension, it is useful to create a framework for developing a coherent set of questions focusing on a specific concept. The Concept Question Chain provides such a framework for thinking and learning about text. It is a set of questions, used for discussing narrative or expository text, that enables students to develop, learn, and apply a text-based concept (Barr and Johnson, 1991). It is based on Gagné's (1970) premise that details are linked together to form concepts and concepts are then linked together to form generalizations, and on theory espoused by Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1971) that learning is enhanced when adults gradually direct and build a framework or "scaffold" for students. Through the use of the Concept Question Chain, the teacher provides a

scaffold for developing concepts from text. When the strategy is used with different texts over an extended period of time, students learn to recognize the relationships among questions and can be encouraged to model similar questions as they read and think about text.

The Concept Question Chain consists of three levels of questions: literal, interpretive, and applied. The literal level might also be called *reading the line*; it is concerned with facts and ideas either explicitly stated or paraphrased. The interpretive level might be called *reading between the lines*; the reader makes inferences or perceives relationships about the author's ideas. The applied level is known as *reading beyond the lines*; the reader is expected to apply, create, or evaluate text-based information. All questions in the Concept Question Chain are designed to help students discover the text-based concept and apply it to another situation. Each question serves as another piece of the puzzle, so when questioning is concluded students understand and can apply the concept.

An overview for developing and implementing a Concept Question Chain

To develop a Concept Question Chain, read the text selection and identify one important concept students can develop from text. Use the text-based concept as a framework for writing literal, interpretive, and applied questions. Begin by designing questions for the interpretive level, since this level provides direction for developing appropriate literal and applied questions. Write questions that cause students to connect important information together and interpret it so they develop the concept.

Literal questions should derive from the interpretive questions; these should be designed to identify the essential

facts or details students need to answer the interpretive questions. Do not design literal questions that are not pertinent to developing the concept. This type of questioning detracts from the goal.

Finally, develop the applied questions. These should encourage students to apply the concept beyond the text selection, to create and expand the concept learned from text, and to evaluate the concept based on a set of criteria. Applied questions should cause students to think about the text-based concept in a broader perspective than the limited scope of the text selection.

Now consider implementation of the Concept Question Chain technique. After the students have read the text selection, initiate a discussion by asking the literal questions, followed by the interpretive, and concluding with the applied. Ordering the questions in this manner can help students to focus initially on the important facts or details, then weave together the literal information to formulate the concept, and finally apply the concept beyond the text selection.

The Concept Question Chain has some fundamental relationships to Herber's (1978) three level reading guide. In his guide, literal, interpretive, and applied statements, rather than questions, are written to illuminate the text-based concept. However, questions and not statements are a predominant tool teachers and students use for comprehending and learning from text. Thus, questions seem to be a more pragmatic tool to facilitate comprehension and learning. The Concept Question Chain differs from other instructional strategies that employ questions such as QAR (Raphael, 1982), Reciprocal Teaching (Palincsar and Brown, 1986), and Response (Jacobson, 1989). The goal

of QAR is to enable students to label and find the appropriate source for responding to questions as well as providing an acceptable answer. This instructional strategy may be helpful to employ in conjunction with Concept Question Chain if students have great difficulties answering questions. Both Reciprocal Teaching and Response strategies are more comprehensive than questioning but focus on students developing their own questions rather than teacher-designed questions. Both student- and teacher-driven questions are important to instruction. Teachers need to establish models and students need opportunities to demonstrate and receive teacher feedback on designing and responding to questions.

Developing the Concept Question Chain

The Concept Question Chain shown in Figure 1 was developed for the article "Deciding Who Shall Come" from *Cobblestone*, a magazine written for fifth through eighth graders. (The text selection is shown in the Appendix.) The first step in developing the Concept Question Chain is to read the text selection and identify an important text-based concept students can learn from reading this article. Of course, there is more than one concept to be learned from any text. The teacher simply chooses one to be learned by all students.

For this article, I selected the concept *Immigration policy is affected by social, political, and economic needs that continuously change throughout history*. This concept is important within this selection because since the author emphasizes how immigration policy has changed from the 1700's to the present and gives the reasons for such changes.

Figure 1: Sample Concept Question Chain

Concept: Immigration policy is affected by social, political, and economic needs that continuously change throughout history.

Literal

1. Define *xenophobia*.
2. Who built the transcontinental railroad?
3. What was the Chinese Exclusion Act?
4. Did the immigrants make better wages in their own country or in the United States?
5. Why were Americans concerned about immigrants wanting to maintain their own languages, traditions, and neighborhoods?
6. What did the literacy test require of immigrants?
7. During World War I, did Americans want immigrants to come and live in the United States?
8. Define the quota system.
9. Were many immigrants allowed to come to the United States during World War II?
10. What happened to the individual quota system?

Interpretive

11. What are the causes of xenophobia?
12. How did the building of the transcontinental railroad affect immigration?
13. Why did industrial companies hire immigrants?
14. America has been known as a "melting pot." Why was this concept being challenged in the late 1800's?
15. How did World War I affect immigration?
16. Why did World War I affect people's feelings about immigration?
17. How did World War II affect immigration?
18. How did Americans' interests in human rights affect immigration?

Applied

19. Do Americans still exhibit feelings of xenophobia?
20. What are the causes for antisentiment toward today's immigrants?
21. Why is the United States providing amnesty to illegal immigrants?

The second step involves writing questions. Begin by writing interpretive questions, using the text structure to help develop the identified concept about immigration. The author uses the time-order pattern to help readers understand this concept, so the interpretive questions follow the sequence of immigration policy changes in history, encouraging students to hone in naturally on the text structure. Questions 12 through 17 in the Concept Question Chain

illustrate how the text-based concept and time-order pattern are used in the development of interpretive questions. Questions 11 through 13 focus on economic factors (jobs, wages) while questions 14 through 18 highlight the social aspects (people, culture and humanitarianism). Questions 15 through 17 also reflect the political factors involved in immigration during war time. For each historical problem, an interpretive question is designed so students can put the information together and discover the concept.

To design the literal questions, I analyzed the interpretive questions to identify explicit facts and details students must know to answer them. For example, to answer question 11, students must be able to define the term *xenophobia*; thus, the first literal question requires a definition for this term. To answer question 12, students need to know that many Chinese immigrants built the transcontinental railroad; they need this information in order to understand the ensuing policy, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and what this act meant. Can you see the link between each subsequent interpretive question and one or two literal questions? In Figure 2, the linkages among the literal and interpretive questions are provided. Frequently, there is more than one literal question associated with an interpretive question.

**Figure 32 Links between
literal and interpretive questions**

Literal	Interpretive
Question 1	Question 11
Questions 2-3	Question 12
Question 4	Question 13
Questions 5-6	Question 14
Question 7-8	Questions 15-16
Question 9	Question 17
Question 10	Question 18

To design the applied questions, consider how students might apply the text-based concept beyond the text selection. Look at questions 19-21. Questions 19 and 20 require students to integrate their present knowledge about this topic with the author's ideas; in question 21, students must apply their knowledge and information from the text to current changes in immigration policy. Note that all questions go beyond a *yes* or *no* response and require more critical thinking. Students must explain and provide reasons for their responses if they are to remember what they have read and to note its importance in everyday life.

To use the Concept Question Chain for "Deciding Who Shall Come," remember to order the levels of questions beginning with literal, continuing with interpretive, and concluding with the applied. This set of questions is only a plan that may require adjustment as it is used in discussion. Depending on the students' responses, you may add, delete, or rephrase questions to ensure that students develop the selected concept.

One group's discussion

Consider one teacher's implementation of the Concept Question Chain as part of the instructional framework of pre-, during-, and post-reading instruction provided for the selection "Deciding Who Shall Come." Prior to reading this text, the seventh grade teacher, Ms. Kent, conducted a brainstorming discussion that focused on immigration. The seventh graders identified and explained vocabulary and ideas related to immigration. To guide the seventh graders' reading, Ms. Kent described different types of text structures authors employ in their writing and suggested that the text structure often highlights important text-based ideas. She pointed out that the author of the text "Deciding Who Shall Come" used the time-order pattern to organize

reading and learning. Ms. Kent then modeled for her students how to use the time line to construct meaning from text. A time line was drawn on the chalkboard, and students were directed to draw their own time lines. She read aloud the first two paragraphs stopping and explaining how dates and words indicating a time period provided clues for immigration changes. On the chalkboard, Ms. Kent noted the specific time period and wrote a short phrase to label it. The students read independently the remainder of the article, and noted the immigration changes on their own time lines. The teacher told them to consider the reasons for such changes as they read.

For postreading instruction Ms. Kent used the Concept Question Chain in discussing the article. She suggested that the time line they constructed during reading could help them as they discussed the article. Ms. Kent began the discussion with literal questions and the time line enabled the seventh graders to answer the literal questions quickly and easily. The answers to these literal questions focused students' thinking on the important and relevant details from the text that were to facilitate inferences and concept development for the major and latter part of the discussion.

To learn how these seventh graders developed an understanding of the selected text-based concept, read the discussion that occurred in Ms. Kent's classroom. Ms. Kent asked the interpretive questions to continue class discussion. As you read this classroom dialogue, note how the students "pulled out" the text-based ideas to focus on the social, economic and political factors affecting immigration.

Ms. K.: What are the causes of xenophobia? You have already told me what the definition is, but what do you think are the causes? Molly?

Molly: A lot of people have xenophobia because they are so afraid of spies and people who are going to come into their country illegally and the foreigners are going to change their country.

Ms. K.: OK. Andy.

Andy: Basically, there are a few reasons. One is they are not Americans. People aren't usually ready to take things that aren't like them. Another reason is that they took their jobs from them. And they were afraid if they ever went on strike, the owners would say forget it. And the foreigners would take their jobs. Basically, it was just malice towards them because it wasn't good for them when the immigrants came in.

Ms. K.: Good. How did the building of the transcontinental railroad affect immigration? Terry.

Terry: That's when the Chinese settled in California and took the jobs from the Americans who already had been there and so they decided that because they took their jobs while working on this railroad they wouldn't allow the Chinese to come in anymore.

Ms. K.: Kim, do you want to add to that?

Kim: It also says that in the early 1870's there was organized violence in the Chinese communities. So there was also a lot of violence and that's why they also decided not to let any more Chinese in.

Ms. K.: Why did the industrial companies hire immigrants?

Megan: They might want to see how good workers they were.

Ms. K.: That's a good idea but that's not exactly why they hired them – not to find out how good they were, but... Kim, go ahead.

Kim: Because they didn't have enough workers so they needed to look for more workers.

Ms. K.: OK, but it wasn't just more workers. Let's reread the second paragraph on page 34 and think about the reasons industrial companies may hire immigrants.

Andrew: The immigrants did get more money in America, but the factory owners didn't have to pay the immigrants as much as they would have to pay the American workers. They got better pay in America but not as much pay as they would if they were Americans.

Ms. K.: Right. So it was cheaper for industry.

Kim: They cheated sort of.

Margaret: They cheated them.

Mark: Not necessarily cheated them. I guess they did kind of cheat them. But, it's not like the immigrants didn't know about it, and they were mad at them because of it. They were happy to get it because it's more than they had at home.

Ms. K.: But were the Americans cheated?

Andrew: The Americans felt very cheated because number one not only did they take their jobs, but it kind of guaranteed they wouldn't get them back.

Ms. K.: You've already answered my next question so I'll move on. America has been known as the "melting pot." Why was this concept being challenged in the late 1800's?

Andy: The Americans felt that everybody is going to learn English and the customs and everybody would live happily ever after type thing. But, in the late 1800's things turned into a small disaster. There were too many immigrants coming in and the Americans were jealous that the foreign immigrants were getting their jobs and so it wasn't becoming a "melting pot."

Margaret: The melting pot ideas were that everyone should speak English if they came to America, but the immigrants who were coming in said, "No, we don't want to speak your language. We'd like to speak our native language and maintain our own traditions and customs and language and everything." So they, the Americans, were being challenged because these people were saying they just don't want to do it.

Ms. K.: Good ideas! Let's go on. How did World War I affect immigration?

Bill: After the world war, they didn't want the immigrants to come in and that's why the quota of 1910 came in. There were just too many immigrants coming to America so they decided on a quota allowing so many in.

Ms. K.: Does anyone want to add anything?

Andrew: In World War I, it wasn't really a popular one, people were suspicious of immigrants at the time. They were really paranoid towards foreigners. They were our enemies.

Ms. K.: Contrast that with World War II. How did World War II affect immigration?

Mark: That was a more popular war, and they felt sorry for the Jews and all their homes being seized in Europe. That was a popular war. Everyone knew what they were fighting against. They thought they were right; therefore, they allowed these people to come in.

Before continuing with the final part of the discussion, consider the students' thinking as they discussed the interpretive questions. Molly's response provided an initial indication of the social factors associated with immigration. Andy's response supported Molly's ideas but also went beyond the social factors associated with immigration as he explored the economic effects immigrants have on American citizens. As other interpretive questions were discussed, other students provided additional evidence that increased their understanding of the text-based concept. Each of the students' responses reiterated the central components of the text-based concept and provided additional elaboration. Typically, students used examples from different time periods which acted as building blocks for concept formation.

During the discussion, Ms. Kent also asked students to look back at text, encouraging them to refine their ideas by accurately describing the social, economic, and political factors influencing immigration policy changes. She then deviated from the set of questions to refine students' thinking about industry's main interest for hiring immigrants.

Ms. Kent concluded the discussion with the applied questions. Her task was to engage her students into applying the text-based concept to ideas and events that occur in daily life. As you read this dialogue, consider how the seventh graders were able to apply the text-based concept to daily life.

Ms. K.: Now let us consider another set of questions. There are three in number, and these get a little bit tougher. Do Americans still exhibit xenophobia? I want you to think about how we exhibit it, if you believe that we do, or if we don't exhibit xenophobia, provide examples to support this point of view.

Andrew: Well, it depends on... there are certain kinds of xenophobia and who does it. It's not like America is the perfect country where nobody does it. It's a very racial country where people are prejudiced. Well, there's not any more violence than there was. If there is violence it's probably in one – jobs and two – politics. You don't see too many immigrants in high political status. It's especially true in jobs especially in big companies. The factories will have the immigrants working in the low class jobs and the Americans working in the high class jobs. It's so hard for a person from another country to come in and go right into a high class job.

Ms. K.: Why?

Andrew: Many don't speak English.

Margaret: It's always going to be exhibited because there's always some people who have constant fear of terrorists, and these people are coming into their country.

Mark: I think it still does exist, and I think that people still get upset and even just jokes. There are some really nasty jokes against some countries and their people.

Ms. K.: Why is that?

Mark: Because they are different and a lot of people have problems with people who are different. It's not only in America. It's all over! Like Hitler. He had a problem. Anybody who wasn't German he didn't like. It always exists.

Ms. K.: What are the causes for anti-sentiment for today's immigrants?

Ben: Well, one of the reasons is jobs. They think the immigrants are going to come in and take their jobs. Well, that's what happens because the American bosses can cheat the immigrants out of their wages. There is xenophobia which causes people to feel anti-sentiment toward immigrants.

Andy: It goes two ways. Basically it's fear. The Americans don't feel good about them coming into their country because they are not like themselves. Any race is like that. But, it also works the other way around too. Like races stick together. They really don't socialize with other races naturally. It's not just the Americans and the immigrants. You have all kinds of immigrants. And even the Americans were once immigrants. Nobody is really an American except the Indians. Even the immigrants feel funny about it because they are from different countries.

Ms. K.: Why has the US provided amnesty to illegal immigrants?

Kim: What's amnesty?

Margaret: No penalties for being here illegally.

Ms. K.: Give them the ability to become US citizens saying there is no penalty or imprisonment for confessing to being here illegally.

Nathan: To give these people a chance, to stop possible violence against these people.

Margaret: You have to know the story behind it. Some of these immigrants are here because they were forced or had to get out because they were going to get killed. There is a lot of that going on such as wars.

Andy: One of the main reasons is jobs. If somebody hires someone who is illegal, they can be fined and they are trying to get it so lots of these people can make a contribution to this society, and they can really work hard. But nobody is going to give them a chance because they suspect that they are illegal. There is also so many people that the government wants to get it out of the way. You might as well have them live here legally.

In this latter part of the discussion, Ms. Kent helps the students apply the text-based concept to events and ideas that are occurring in their daily lives. Students are integrating their prior knowledge and experience to what they have learned in text so that concepts are easily remembered. Moreover, the students recognize the relevance reading can have for their own lives. Reading serves a function and purpose.

Ms. Kent's use of a time line to guide independent reading and her class discussion employing the Concept Question Chain developed conceptual thinking about a text selection. Depending on students' responses to specific questions, the teacher may need to eliminate or ask additional questions that cause students to focus, extend, or lift thinking so that the text-based concept can be formulated. Therefore teachers need to observe and assess students' responses.

The Concept Question Chain provides a framework for thinking and learning about text. The questions direct students' thinking about a particular concept so that important facts are identified and woven together during class discussion to highlight the text-based concept which is then linked to daily events and ideas. Such a framework focuses students' thinking, develops a coherent understanding of text, and promotes conceptual learning. In addition, teachers may want to use Concept Question Chain with an instructional strategy as Ms. Kent did. Focusing students' reading on text organization may enhance comprehension and further facilitate concept development.

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Appendix

*Deciding Who Shall Come**

by Elizabeth Hagner

Has the United States always lived by the words on the Statue of Liberty? From the start, immigration policy was a widely debated topic in America. People could not agree whether limits on immigration were needed. George Washington viewed unrestricted immigration with caution; Thomas Jefferson thought it unwise to encourage immigration from countries that were monarchies. The subject of immigration has always caused controversy.

Originally the English settlers believed our new nation was a "melting pot" where immigrants would learn the English language and "American" customs. We had both an enormous frontier and rich natural resources, and our nation was underpopulated. Immigrants were needed to work in the mines and factories, to build the railroads, and to settle the towns along the railroads.

But in the 1800's, feelings that limitations on immigration were needed began to increase. There were several reasons for this. One was xenophobia (ze-no-FO-be-uh), which is a fear and distrust of foreigners. Another reason was the fear of unemployment.

After the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, many people were out of work. Large numbers of Chinese immigrants, who had helped to build the railroad, settled in California where they were resented by the people who believed the Chinese had taken their jobs. In the early 1870's, organized violence against the Chinese communities broke out. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which prohibited Chinese immigration for many years.

In industry, other concerns about immigrants surfaced. Many immigrants had been encouraged to come to this country by American companies looking for workers. The companies offered wages which were higher than what the immigrants could earn in their countries, but lower than what the companies would have had to pay American workers. Because of this, American workers resented the foreigners. Americans also feared the immigrants would be given their jobs if Americans went on strike.

Objections grew stronger in the years 1890 to 1917 as a result of what was known as the "new immigration." During this period, a tremendous number of immigrants from southern and eastern European countries came to the United States. These newcomers generally preferred to maintain their own languages, traditions, and neighborhoods. Americans were uncomfortable with their different ways. The idea of the "melting pot" did not seem to be working.

To restrict this wave of immigration, Congress passed a law in 1917 requiring that all immigrants must pass a literacy test in order to be admitted in this country. Each immigrant would have to be able to read and write in his or her native language, and many could not. Many poor immigrants had not had the opportunity to attend school in their homelands.

During World War I, even more people began to disagree with the idea of allowing immigrants to come to this country. After the war, in 1921, the government began using a new means for limiting immigration – the quota system. A quota is a limit set on the number of people who may be admitted to a particular place or organization. For its quota system, Congress used the United States population figures from the year 1910. Congress decided on a three per cent quota, which meant that for every one hundred members of a certain group in the United States in 1910, three new members of that group (three per cent) would be allowed to immigrate to the United States each year.

In 1924, Congress carried the new policy a step further by reducing the quotas to two per cent. This time the population from the year of 1890, instead of 1910, was chosen. Because there were far fewer immigrants from southern and eastern Europe living in America in 1890, the new quota meant fewer new immigrants from those areas would be allowed to come. It also now became necessary for any person wishing to immigrate to the United States to obtain a visa from an American official in the immigrant's native land.

The removal of such barriers to immigration began in 1943 when Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion laws. Further strides were made as a result of World War II when sentiment toward helping war refugees was strong. The new spirit of "internationalism" led to acts of Congress which enabled more than 4,000,000 refugees to come to the United States.

In the 1960's, Americans became particularly interested in issues of human rights, both at home and in other countries. In 1965, Congress ended the system of individual quotas for each country and created a single quota for countries of the Western Hemisphere, and a single quota for the rest of the world. This system was changed once more in 1978 when a single, worldwide quota was established. This is the basis of our immigration policy today.

America is no longer seen as the "melting pot" where cultural differences vanish, but as a place where a rich variety of cultural backgrounds can exist together. The United States today has the most lenient policy toward immigration in the world. Still, our government faces a constant challenge to enforce old immigration laws, to create new ones, and to try to control immigration as well as to welcome it. How to open the door, and to whom, remains a complex problem.

*Hagner, E. (January 1983). Deciding who shall come. *Cobblestone*. © Peterborough NH: Cobblestone. Reprinted by permission.



“Real-Life” Reading Software and “At-Risk” Secondary Students

Shelley B. Wepner

Given that “in some inner-city public schools, more than 50 percent of the students leave before graduating” (Bialo and Sivin, 1989a, p. 35), educators are constantly searching for intervention programs and resources to reverse this trend (Moskowitz, 1989; Ryan and Brewer, 1990; Vescial, 1989). Because the computer has been lauded for its ability to assume different software-driven roles, it is especially well-suited to the needs of at-risk students (Bialo and Sivin, 1989a, 1989b; Knights, 1988; Brooks, 1989; Knights, 1988).

Notwithstanding technology’s capability to provide at-risk students with varied multi-sensory opportunities to read and write about their own concerns and issues, many educators resort to using basic skills software to remediate these students’ reading and writing deficiencies (Bialo and Sivin, 1989a, 1989b). While this latter type of software addresses specific curricular objectives, its content typically is not written to address the needs and interests of this special population. Research is needed to determine whether reading software, written specifically for this population, affects students’ attitudes and achievement.

This study was designed to examine the effects of "real-life" reading software versus skill-based reading software. One purpose was to determine whether software makes a difference in students' attitudes toward their work with computers and themselves as readers and writers. Another purpose was to determine whether software affected students' achievement in reading and writing.

Methodology

Subjects and procedures. Seventy-three eighth grade students (86 percent Afro-American, 14 percent Hispanic) from an inner-city school in Paterson, New Jersey, participated in this yearlong study which was funded in part by the New Jersey Department of Higher Education. These students were part of a special project that qualifies them for support services (e.g., tutoring; educational, recreational and enrichment activities; preparation for college entrance examinations) to help them succeed in school. If these students get into college, they will be awarded a full tuition scholarship to a New Jersey state college or any one of 40 or more other participating colleges.

Before the 1989-90 academic year, students were grouped by their teachers according to their *California Achievement Test* (CAT) scores into three sections: above average, average, and below average. Students within each section then were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control groups, thereby forming six groups. Groups varied in size from 11 to 18 students. Because of absenteeism and student work schedules, group size varied from week to week.

Once a week, during students' regularly scheduled reading time, I met with the six student groups in the Apple computer lab for approximately 40 minutes, alternating

between experimental and control groups within each section. During the rest of the week at reading time, all students worked with the district's basal series. The basal activities did not resemble students' software reading experiences.

In the computer lab, the experimental group worked with 14 stories from *Reading Realities* (Teacher Support Software, 1989), a software package that uses a Directed Reading-Thinking Activity framework (Stauffer, 1975) for stories built around three themes: real-life issues such as cheating, stealing, addiction, and pregnancy, jury series (real court cases with students acting as jurors), and careers such as lawyer, secretary, hairdresser, pilot. Students read 12 stories from the real-life issues theme and one story from each of the other two themes. The control group worked with 10 reading skill-based software packages from Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium as well as test preparation software for the reading portion of the High Schools Proficiency Test (HSPT), New Jersey's statewide test for high school graduation. Control students spent 85 percent of their time with the MECC software and 15 percent of their time with the HSPT software. Each group had 20 instructional sessions in the computer lab.

All students had folders in which to record their reactions to each computer session. To keep the sessions similar for both groups, I used the same daily procedures: 1) students recorded computer assignment in folder; any new procedures were explained; 2) students engaged in computer activity while I walked around to troubleshoot computer and/or procedural problems; and 3) students reacted to the session in their folders. Any individual discussions and reading/writing assistance occurred spontaneously for

both groups. I also kept a journal to record observations and students' comments during each session.

Instruments. To determine differences in students' attitudes and interests toward reading and writing with computers as well as their perceptions of themselves as readers and writers, a 22-item pre-post teacher-designed survey was used. All students completed this survey anonymously by circling one of five numbers for each item, with "5" meaning "all the time" and "1" meaning "never" (see Appendix). To control for students' response accuracy, sixty percent of the statements were positive (e.g., "I read material on the computer that is interesting," "I'm getting better as a reader") and forty percent of the statements were negative (e.g., "I don't read material on the computer that is interesting," "I'm not getting better as a reader"). Since Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .92 for the pretest and .97 for the posttest, the survey was treated as a unitary factor.

To determine differences in students' reading achievement, alternate forms of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests* (Gates-MacGinitie), Levels 7-9, were used. Both multiple-choice subtests, the 45-item vocabulary and the 48-item comprehension section, were administered.

To determine differences in students' writing ability, Part 1 of the writing section of the HSPT, in which students have to write an essay on a stated topic, was administered. Two different essay topics, used in previous statewide assessments and available to all students in New Jersey as practice exercises, were used. Two readers – teachers from a different New Jersey district trained in registered holistic scoring – rated students' essays for organization/content, usage, sentence construction, and mechanics.

Scores for both essays could range from "1" ("inadequate command" of written language) to "6" ("strong command" of written language). All assessment measures were administered in September, 1989 and June, 1990.

Results

Results for the three assessment instruments were subjected to separate analyses of variance (ANOVA). There was a significant main effect for group for the attitudinal survey ($F(1,72) = 26.67$, $p < .001$), indicating that the experimental group felt significantly better than the control group about their work with the computer and themselves as readers and writers.

There were no significant differences attributable to group for the posttest vocabulary and comprehension scores of the *Gates-MacGinitie* (vocabulary $F(1,72) = 0$, n.s.); comprehension ($F(1,72) = 2.98$, n.s.), indicating that the experimental group did not do significantly better than the control group with identifying synonymous words or understanding passages of prose and simple verse respectively. However, analysis of total reading scores for the CAT (administered schoolwide in May, 1990) indicated that, when the vocabulary and comprehension scores of the *Gates-MacGinitie* served as covariates (to adjust for reading scores prior to entering into program), there was a two-way interaction between section and group ($F(2,71) = 5.90$, $p < .01$), with the below average group doing significantly better.

There were no significant differences attributable to group for the posttest writing samples of the HSPT ($F(1,72) = .43$, n.s.), indicating that the experimental students did not have a stronger command of written language than the control students.

Discussion and implications

Significant attitudinal differences indicated that the content of the software can make a difference in students' work with technology. Inasmuch as the experimental group was reading stories about their own real-life experiences, they could and did relate personally to the content. For example, as one student read the story entitled "Deserted" about a father who is estranged from his wife and turns to alcohol, he told me how his own dad had just gone through the same experience. Another student told me about her pregnant friend whose boyfriend left her the way the boy left the girl in the "Pregnancy" story.

The experimental group also had options for manipulating how they read (e.g., speech, control for reading rate, type of reading mode such as word-by-word, phrases, or whole screen), which also may have contributed to their positive attitudes. Interestingly, by the midpoint of the year, the above average students use of these options was different from the below average students manner of use. Because the above average students were more confident with their reading, they no longer used the speech option. They also chose to read in the whole screen mode so they could monitor their reading rate. In contrast, the below average students continued to use the speech option throughout the year and read in the word-by-word phrase reading mode so that the computer was reading aloud more slowly to them.

On the other hand, the control group was reading content which eluded them much of the time (e.g., information about Albert Einstein's work or facets of Julius Caesar's life). Students often could not even pronounce words that were critical for understanding a passage or

sentence, let alone bring any prior knowledge to their reading. Yet the readability level of the control software was similar to the experimental software, since both were developed for students reading between the second and sixth grade levels.

Informal observations and students' journal recordings revealed that the computer became much more invisible for the experimental group than the control group, with the experimental group relating to the content of the stories rather than the technology *per se*. Experimental students would write in their journals, "I was upset because the mother shouldn't have left the kids," while control students would write, "the computer was good today."

Although students' reading achievement scores were not significantly different, possibly because of the sensitivity of the assessment instrument and the experimental students' completion of only one-third of the package, this should not discourage teachers from working with this type of software since students' interests were piqued, which is an important first step in getting them to read..

One way of encouraging at-risk students to read more is to use "real-life" stories on disk as a stimulus for reading fictional and nonfictional trade books about similar topics. For example, Stephen Roos' (1987) *Confessions of a Wayward Preppie*, written at the sixth grade level for secondary students, deals with the issue of cheating, and Joan Phipson's (1985) *Hit and Run*, written at the same level, deals with the issue of stealing. Both narratives provide students with insights about other teenagers' experience with these issues.

Interestingly, after working with students for a few months, the lack of difference in writing scores was expected based on my observations of how students used the experimental software. Students' writing experiences with the experimental software was not as frequent as I had anticipated at the beginning of the study. Experimental students had four activity choices: 1) multiple choice; 2) cloze (every 5th, every 9th, or highlighted vocabulary from story); 3) discussion (questions about the main character(s) and events from the story); or 4) creative writing (open-ended questions about the main issue from the story). The latter two options require students to word process their answers. Invariably, students chose to do only the multiple choice and cloze activities, for which they were reinforced with some type of accuracy score. Since this study was developed to observe students' reactions and work with software written specifically for them, I gave very little teacher direction. Although students reacted orally to what they were reading, they did not choose to record their feelings in writing.

In addition to giving more teacher direction so that students know that they need to engage in the writing portion of a package, there are ways to encourage students' written responses. Besides orally discussing open-ended questions before recording answers, students can work in cooperative learning groups to discuss and write responses. Students also can record their ideas from the creative writing questions before introducing one of the previously mentioned books. For example, before students read a book about cheating, students can respond to the question, *What would you do if you were asked to cheat on an exam?* For stealing, students can respond to the question, *What would you do if someone tempted you to steal something that you*

had wanted for a long time? Discussion can precede or follow students' written responses.

Because the content of software for at-risk secondary students does seem to impact on how students respond to the computer, it is important to use software that is sensitive to their needs and cognitively respectful of their background experiences so that they want to keep reading.

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APPENDIX

Attitude Survey

ID# _____ Date _____

Directions: Circle the number that tells how you feel about each item.
 ("5" means "all of the time," "4" means "most of the time," "3" means
 "sometimes," "2" means "infrequently," and "1" means "never.")

1. I like to work with the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
2. When I read, I think about what I'm reading.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I can write about things that I read.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I read material on the computer that is interesting.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I don't like to work with the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I write about interesting things on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
7. When I read, I don't think about what I'm reading.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I enjoy writing on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I'm getting better as a reader.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I don't read material on the computer that is interesting.	5	4	3	2	1
11. When I read, I can tell a friend what the story is about.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I'm not getting better as a reader.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I don't write about interesting things on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I like to read on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I don't like to read on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I like to read interesting material on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
17. When I read, I can't tell a friend what the story is about.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I can't write about things I read.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I'm not getting better as a writer.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I don't enjoy writing on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
21. I don't like to read interesting material on the computer.	5	4	3	2	1
22. I'm getting better as a writer.	5	4	3	2	1



Can You Tell A Book By Its Cover?

**Jeanne M. Gerlach
Steven D. Rinehart**

Book fairs are great fun, and they offer students a chance to explore a world of books in a more exciting atmosphere than the school library. Today, many schools have self-selection programs and activities to suit the wide range of student reading abilities and interests. Multilevel materials are used, and students are encouraged to read as much as they can. Teacher advice and guidance is usually available as the need arises. Consequently, numerous schools have book fairs to stimulate reading through self-selection, and equally important, educators hope to promote reading interest and future reading growth. Accordingly, books for the fairs are usually carefully selected by librarians, reading and English teachers on the basis of adolescent interests and tastes.

Young adult reading interests

During the last decade there have been dozens of surveys and studies investigating young adult reading interests and tastes (Conner, 1989; Fuchs, 1987; Gallo, 1983; Johnson, 1984; Mellon, 1987; Samuels, 1989; and Thomason, 1983). Their research findings indicate that: 1) adolescent interests vary with age and grade level; 2) girls read more than boys read, but boys have a wider interest range and read a greater variety of materials; 3) girls are

more interested in romantic fiction than are boys; 4) boys prefer adventure stories; 5) mystery stories are popular with both genders; 6) boys seldom show preference for “girl” books, but girls will read “boy” books.

The burgeoning of reading interest studies comes partially from the belief that interest greatly influences behavior and is capable of either increasing or reducing student motivation to read. If this is true, then research that focuses on how and why students choose reading material is important because it can help teachers include in their courses material which has a great deal of meaning to their students.

Book fairs and self-selection

Educators who host book fairs and other self-selection activities hope to promote student reading. They anticipate that the right book will be matched with the right reader. Recently we overheard students make comments similar to those that follow about some of the book stock at a recent middle school book fair: *Wow, this book looks scary; Look at this title – it sounds really funny; Read the plot summary – see if you can tell what’s going to happen.*

As the young people passed through the lines with book selections tucked under their arms, the researchers in us came alive. Why had students selected certain works? Did the chosen books match their interests and tastes? Perhaps the adolescents were using cover clues such as title, cover illustration, or plot summary to make their choices. Information of this nature could help teachers help their students to determine whether a book is worth reading. To explore these questions, the present investigation was conducted in the same middle school that had hosted the book fair.

Method

The participants involved in this study were 31 seventh and eighth graders from a large, middle-class suburban public school. Students were chosen randomly from two participating classrooms. Their reading ability ranged from fifth to ninth grade instructional levels according to placement tests and other assessment information shared by their teachers.

In order to observe the process of book selection by these students, we chose ten books of fiction for them to examine (see Figure 1) and established a protocol for data collection. Fiction was used because it makes up one of the largest categories of adolescent literature. The ten books were randomly chosen from recent publications available at an area bookstore. Only recent publications were selected with the anticipation that students would be less familiar with them. Also eliminated from our selection were recent books by more commonly recognized authors such as Judy Blume, Richard Peck, S.E. Hinton, Robert Newton Peck, M.E. Kerr, and the like.

Figure 1: Books used in the survey

- Burns, A. (1988). *The defeat and triumph of a fugitive slave*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Cameron, E. (1988). *The private worlds of Julia Redfern*. New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Dyzard, T.J. (1988). *The rookie arrives*. New York: William Morrow.
- Hahn, M.D. (1988). *Following the mystery man*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Lucas, G. (1988). *Willow*. New York: Random House.
- Myers, W.D. (1988). *Fallen angels*. New York: Scholastic.
- Pfeffer, S.B. (1987). *The year without Michael*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Rinaldi, A. (1988). *The last silk dress*. New York: Holiday House.
- Ruckman, I. (1988). *No way out*. New York: Thomas Crowell.
- Shura, M.F. (1988). *The Sunday doll*. New York: Dodd & Mead.

Each of the 31 students came individually to meet with one of us in the Media Center at the school where a private work area had been prepared for the selection task. With the ten books laid out on a table, the students' task was to select books they might want to read and to think aloud while making selections. We explained to students that they could help us to learn more about how readers choose what they want to read. Having further explained that a think aloud involved talking aloud as though to one's self and sharing ideas or thoughts as they naturally occur, we emphasized that in this case we wanted to know what it was about the books that made the student want to read them. We then sat with each student and taped the protocol. Following collection of data, we listened to the recorded information to infer the mental processes of the student and thereby inductively determine the kinds of clues these students used to make selections.

Results and discussion

Choices for reading material came more from cover clues than from interest in the topic (see Table 1). The summary inside the cover flap was the predominant cover clue, accounting for 49 percent of the references. The second and third most frequent clues mentioned were cover illustration and title, respectively. Interest in the book's topic ranked only fourth among the protocol criteria, followed by size of the print, and vocabulary difficulty.

The following comments exemplify student perceptions:

If I don't like the summary, I won't read the book.

Sometimes the writers tell you the most important stuff about their book on the inside of the book covers. I like that.

I think the writers tell you just enough on the cover to "trick" you into reading the book.

I like the pictures on the cover; they are the best part of the book.

Pictures on the covers tell me the most about the books I read.

References to titles included:

I like mysterious titles. I like to try to figure out what the book is about by reading the title.

Titles tell you everything sometimes; sometimes they don't.

I would like to make up titles for books.

Table 1
How often students mentioned criteria

Criterion	Rank	Percentage of references to criterion
Summary inside flap	1	49
Cover illustration	2	22
Title	3	18
Interest in the book's topic	4	9
Size of print	5.5	1
Vocabulary level	5.5	1

A few students mentioned vocabulary or print:

If I don't know the words, I won't read the book.

I read anything with big print and lots of white spaces; it's easier.

Other protocols indicated that many students felt they did not have enough time to read. One student put it bluntly: "I don't have time to read. I always have too much homework. I hate to read for homework. I want to read about going camping and hiking and mountain climbing." Another commented, "I never read for fun; I don't have time."

Most students said that they did not use the school library unless forced to do so. For some students, it was a

place associated with boredom or even trouble. The following student responses indicated these feelings:

I haven't been to the library in two years. It's a boring place to go.

I hate the library. You just sit and try to be quiet.

Sometimes I get in trouble in the library.

At the same time, however, the total number of books read by the surveyed students during the particular school year ranged from 16 to 39 (excluding textbooks) with an average of 23.

While engaged in choosing books, several students indicated they read books suggested by their friends. Most students also said they would read books suggested by their friends. The majority of students also said they would read books suggested by their teachers but that most of their teachers did not recommend books.

Conclusions and implications

Many teachers have taken advantage of interest surveys to help them select a variety of books that would promote independent student reading. Effective teachers will continue to keep informed about books students might find interesting. While it is important that teachers start with children's interests in promoting independent reading, this study suggests that teachers should go one step further and find ways to help their students determine whether a book is worth reading by examining cover clues.

Because our findings indicate that the summary on the inside flap and the cover illustrations are the most frequently used cover clues for book selection, teachers will want to use these topics for class discussion and to develop lessons that include discussions and related language activities to

help students understand what constitutes a good summary and how the cover illustration complements the text.

Many commonly known activities can be used for such purposes; it is not always necessary to develop new or novel ideas. For example, students can be encouraged to produce summaries and illustrations for their favorite books. Tasks that integrate reading and other language activities can be used for this purpose. Teachers may want to create classroom situations where students can explore these concepts by using all language skills. To illustrate, suppose a teacher wants the students to understand the concept of "summary" and how it is used by publishers on book covers. First, the students in any content class can be asked to read a self-selected young adult novel. After reading the novel, students can be asked to describe and summarize the book for their peers or other audiences.

The teacher can encourage the students to review the work orally not only to reveal what they know about the work being reviewed but to begin to gain a perspective about how much to tell or not to tell about a work in order to summarize and create interest for perspective readers. By explaining their ideas orally students can strengthen their knowledge about both the content of the book and about the elements of summary. This knowledge can be reexamined and extended during the talking and writing processes.

Once students orally present their individual book summaries and listen to peer presentations, they can be encouraged to talk with their peers about the summaries – what information was included, what was omitted. As Britton and others (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, and Rosen, 1975) have explained, "it is by means of talking it in speech that we learn to take it in thought" (p. 14). That is, by orally

explaining their ideas to others students can strengthen their own knowledge. If this is true, then student "talk" should reveal what the students know and do not know about summaries and course content so that the teacher will know what guidance or additional instruction the students need.

Another way of helping the students understand elements of summary is to have them write summaries for their classmates, for their parents, and for the school newspaper. When students are asked to write summaries, they not only explore subject matter to connect old ideas to new ideas in order to reach an understanding of a story, they also learn to make decisions about what the audience knows, what the audience needs to know, and what they want to tell them.

By involving students in both oral and written activities, the teacher can encourage students to use their natural learning inclinations to promote an understanding of the concept of summary within the reading/responding context. Of course, teachers can use the same kinds of reading and responding activities to help the students understand what constitutes a good book title or an effective cover illustration.

While those activities already described involve analysis of book summaries and illustrations, further attention to analysis can come from other, not so commonly used activities. For instance, teachers may ask each student to read a book summary and then predict what the book will be about. After making the prediction, the student then reads the book and checks to see if the prediction was correct, and perhaps revises the book's summary to produce a more accurate description of what the book was about. In a like manner, students can try to guess what a book is about from analyzing the cover illustration. If they feel the

illustration is not representative of the book contents, they can be encouraged by the teacher to draw a more suitable illustration. By using a range of language activities like these, along with careful planning, teachers can help students to understand how book summaries, titles, and illustrations can help them decide if they want to read the book.

Findings of this study also indicate that young readers will value peer and teacher opinions about books; therefore, teachers and librarians should not hesitate to suggest good books to their students. In addition, the environment of the classroom should be conducive to reading and talking about books read. Teachers should allocate ample class time for reading, library visits, and authentic discussions of books.

Knowledge of children's literature, common sense, and professional dedication to student learning and reading successes will guide teachers in their efforts. Teachers are sometimes limited in their selection of books by the publishers, however. Not all publishers include summaries or illustrations on their books and book covers. At times, both teachers and students may need to select reading materials without the benefit of these kinds of resources. Publishers need to provide more appropriate summaries and illustrations for their books. They might consider whether or not the summary is accurate and complete, or if the illustration relates to the contents of the work. Authors, too, need to be sensitive to reader needs when choosing titles for their books. Does the title give readers any insights about the contents of the book or is it simply used to catch the attention of the reader or for sensational purposes? Well-meaning people working together can encourage students to read and reflect on many good books.

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Planning Effective Whole Language Staff Development Programs: A Guide for Staff Developers

Barbara Moss

Whole language is sweeping the country. It has been described as part of a “revolution in teaching and learning” (Hiebert and Fisher, 1990), “an exciting grass-roots teacher movement that is changing curricula around the world” (Watson, 1989), and “the newest manifestation of progressive education” (Veatch, 1991). Several factors help provide evidence for its impact. First, approximately five percent of elementary teachers nationwide are using aspects of whole language and more are becoming users daily (O’Neil, 1989). Second, twenty-three states have literacy programs centered upon the use of literature (Cullinan, 1989). Third, membership in the Teaching About Whole Language Umbrella, a network for whole language groups, is numbered at 20,000 (D. Watson, personal communication, 1990). Whole language is clearly the classroom innovation of choice for many teachers in the 1990s.

Whole language is mandated in some states or districts, but is more commonly “a grass-roots movement led by teachers” (O’Neil, 1989, p. 1). It began as a “bottom up” innovation, with individual teachers initiating implementation on their own. The enthusiasm and success of these

teachers has brought whole language to the attention of educators at all levels of the power structure.

As the movement has gained momentum, the heightened interest of teachers, administrators, and curriculum directors has intensified the need for well-planned, effectively-delivered staff development programs. This article will provide some principles, considerations, and cautions for those creating staff development programs in whole language.

Understanding whole language

Whole language represents "a view of literacy, literacy learning, and teaching that is driven by key assumptions about how students learn" (Tierney, Readence, and Dishner, 1990, p. 26). Whole language is more than an "approach" to teaching reading; it represents a philosophical orientation toward teaching and learning in general. Edelsky (1990) describes whole language as originating with Goodman's (1969) work on a psycholinguistic model of reading, evolving into a view of reading (Harste and Burke, 1977), emerging into a view of literacy education (Watson, 1982), and finally coming to represent an overall perspective on learning and teaching in general (Newman, 1985).

The assumptions undergirding the whole language approach include the views that 1) the child's language is the basis for all reading instruction; 2) language is used primarily for communication, and meaning is central to all language development; 3) speaking, reading, writing, and listening are interrelated; 4) writing is a central component to literacy learning; 5) skill instruction is presented not through isolated drills, but within the context of the material being read (Klein, Peterson and Simington, 1991). The goals of whole language instruction typically include involving

children in reading and writing on a daily basis, helping children develop the desire to read and write, providing opportunities for children to interact meaningfully with texts, helping children develop strategies for identifying words as well as comprehending text, and encouraging children to take risks as literacy learners (Routman, 1988).

Prerequisites for success

Staff development is the vehicle whereby change is most readily effected (McLaughlin and Berman, 1977); it can inform, support and promote efforts to move toward whole language. However, the successful implementation of whole language, or any innovation, requires the active support of the school district, particularly the building principal, as well as a positive school climate which encourages teacher change (Loucks-Horsley, et al., 1987). Additionally, it requires time for allowing school personnel to adjust to change. Change must be viewed as a process, not an event. According to Ohio teacher Diana Budney (personal communication, 1990), successful implementation of a whole language program requires four years: one year to master teaching through literature, a second to develop skill in process writing instruction, a third year for integration of content area instruction, and a fourth year devoted to "refinement." Finally, successful implementation requires parental involvement in the initiation and implementation phases. In schools where whole language implementation has been successful, parent involvement has been substantial (Routman, 1988).

A model for whole language staff development

Siedow's (1985) content reading inservice education model provides a framework for developing a whole language staff development plan. The six stages in the model

include 1) assessing staff needs; 2) determining inservice objectives; 3) planning content; 4) choosing methods of presentation; 5) evaluating inservice effectiveness; 6) providing follow-up assistance and reinforcement. The advantages of this model are that its elements are cyclical rather than linear, it represents an integrated, long-term approach to staff development, and it provides opportunities for participant feedback at every stage (see Figure 1) (Siedow, 1985).

Needs assessment. The first stage in the Siedow (1985) model is needs assessment. The needs assessment stage is crucial for staff development efforts, since through careful needs assessment schools and individuals can clearly identify where they are in terms of whole language and where they want to be. Needs assessment can be divided into three components: creating awareness, data collection, building-level needs assessment and individual needs assessment.

The first step in creating interest in whole language is to build awareness of the innovation. One technique is to provide an inservice session which gives an overview of the concept. Another is to encourage teachers to attend workshops, seminars, university courses, or T-A-W-L (Teaching About Whole Language) group meetings and share what they have learned with other staff members. A third way to enhance awareness is to involve teachers in reading professional journals such as *The Reading Teacher* and *Language Arts*. Finally, teachers can visit whole language classrooms (Heald-Taylor, 1989).

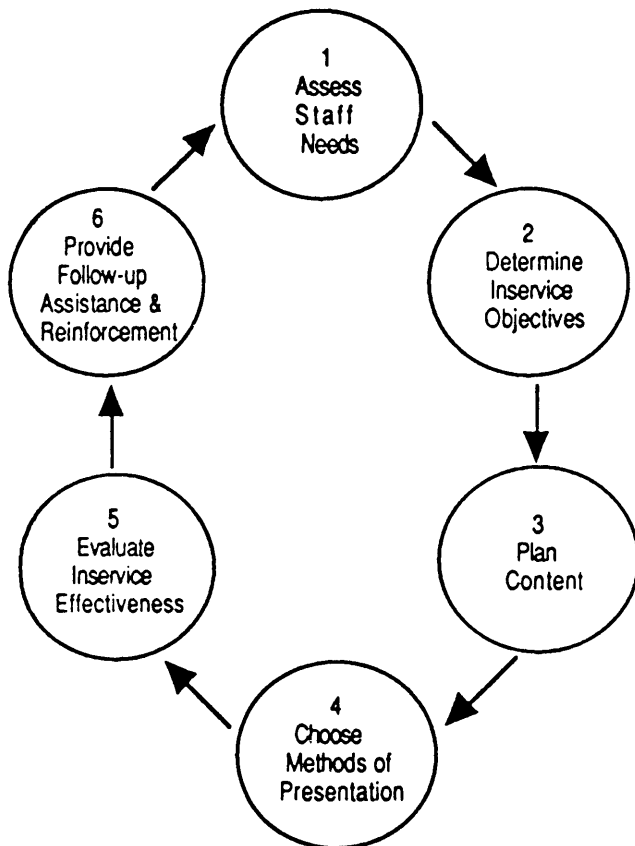
Building awareness. After general awareness of whole language has been developed, a committee of interested teachers, administrators, staff developers, and parents should be formed. This committee should represent

teachers from a variety of grade levels and disciplines. Its members will first decide whether or not whole language should be implemented; if they decide to try whole language, they will be responsible for charting the course for its implementation. Next, the committee needs to determine who will carry out the innovation. Rather than requiring all teachers to use whole language, it is often best to begin implementation with individual volunteers or with a particular grade level team. As Carnine (1988) points out, "Starting out small enough to succeed may allow the innovation to grow large enough to survive" (p. 89).

Data collection. Needs assessment provides the baseline data which the staff developer needs in order to promote change effectively (Witkin, 1975). Through the collection of data, the committee responsible for planning the implementation of whole language can find out the level of teacher interest in the innovation, the extent to which the innovation is already being used, and teacher concerns about the innovation. Ultimately, the data collected during this phase can be used to formulate building-level and individual objectives for implementation of the innovation.

During the data collection phase of needs assessment, committee members must be trained to gather the information the committee will need to formulate its objectives. Data collection can be informal as well as formal; it can be as simple as asking interested teachers to brainstorm ways in which they could use whole language, or it can involve the use of interviews, classroom observations (Hollingsworth, Reutzel, and Weeks, 1990) or questionnaires. All of these forms of data collection can help provide needed information about building-level as well as individual needs.

Figure 1
A model for planning, implementing and evaluating whole language staff development



Adapted from Siedow, M.D., Memory, D.M., Bristow, P.S. (1985). 'Inservice education for content area teachers. Newark DE International Reading Association.

Building-level needs assessment. The best building-level needs assessment provides planners with a portrait of present school practice in language arts instruction compared to an ideal vision. This ideal whole language program, for example, might include all of the characteristics

for effective language arts programs identified by the *California English Language Arts Framework* (see Figure 2) (California Department of Education, 1987). Because of limitations including time, resources, etc., not all schools will be able to achieve their ideal vision of whole language instruction. They can, however, identify realistic goals based upon their own unique situations.

Figure 2
Guidelines for effective language arts programs

- An integrated literature based program.
- A systematic kindergarten through grade twelve developmental language program.
- A process writing program.
- An integrated oral language program.
- A phonics program taught in meaningful context and completed in the early grades.
- A school environment where teachers of all subjects encourage reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- A school environment where parents model effective speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- An assessment program providing alternate forms of testing.

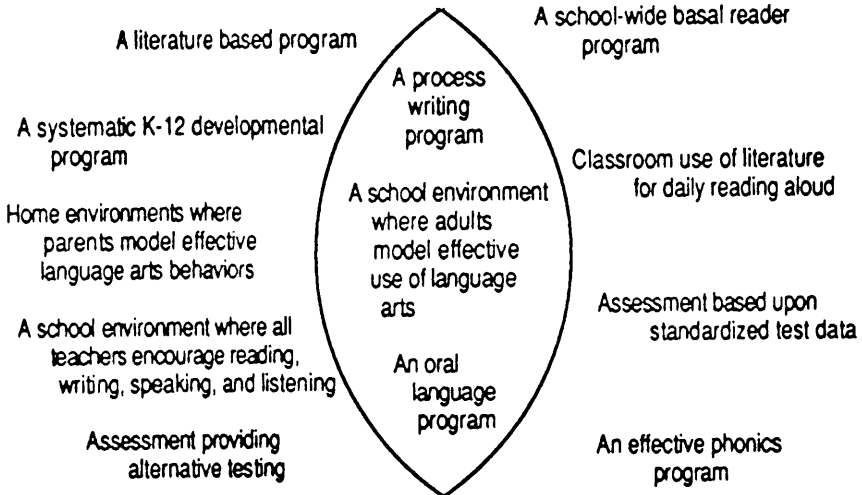
Adapted from California State Department of Education (1987). English Language Arts Framework. Sacramento: CA California State Department of Education.

The use of a Venn diagram, a visual organizer often used in whole language teaching, can provide a means of comparing a school's present literacy instruction program with an ideal one. This comparison, coupled with information collected during the data collection phase, can help a district or school identify goals for implementation of whole language.

Figure 3
Venn diagram comparing ideal whole language programs with one school's reading/writing program

Characteristics of Whole Language Programs

Our School Program



The left circle of the Venn diagram identifies characteristics of an effective whole language program, while the right circle indicates actual practice in a given school. The overlapping portion of the diagram illustrates those areas in which the ideal is being achieved. For example, Figure 3 illustrates a school which presently uses a school-wide basal reader, but has already implemented a process writing program. They do not yet have a literature based program. From this comparison, committee members can see which aspects of whole language are being addressed and those which need further attention. This information will be used to identify objectives for the staff development program.

Individual needs assessment. The committee must be careful not to only identify general needs through examination of aggregate data, but also consider individual needs of teachers, many of whom may already be using some or many aspects of whole language (Lentz, 1983). Classroom observation and questionnaires can provide information about teachers' perceptions of this innovation. For example, by using a brief structured interview with interested teachers, committee members can determine their extent of knowledge about whole language, their use of whole language, and their willingness to learn more. Moreover, this information will help the committee identify teachers' understandings and misunderstandings about whole language. Questions such as: 1) *How would you define the term whole language?*; 2) *What do you already know about whole language?*; 3) *Here are some techniques associated with whole language – language experience approach, shared reading experiences, process writing, sustained silent reading. Are you already using some of these? Which ones?*; 4) *Which aspects of whole language would you like to learn more about?* can provide data gatherers with valuable information about a school's readiness to implement whole language.

Determining objectives

Stage three of Siedow's (1985) model involves determining objectives for the staff development program. Examination of building-level and teacher needs can help the committee identify and prioritize objectives. This process is particularly complex because whole language represents not just one innovation, but a variety of innovations. The guidelines for the California Language Arts Framework, for example, address the use of literature, process writing, oral language, higher-order thinking skills, and informal assessment, each of which constitutes a possible topic for a

long term staff development program. Again using the school in the Venn diagram as an example, a school which has predominantly used basal readers may identify several possible building-level goals including implementation of a literature based program, development of an alternative assessment program, creation of a systematic K-12 developmental program, or a parental awareness program designed to help parents model effective language arts behaviors. At this point, the school must determine which objectives will have priority. To do this, the committee must consider at least two issues. First and foremost, they must consider their own resources. It is impossible, for example, to implement a literature-based program without having a great many trade books available. Therefore, a district which cannot readily acquire those books may wish to make implementation of a parental awareness program, a virtually cost-free innovation, a priority instead. Second, the committee should consider teachers' present use of various aspects of whole language. If a number of teachers are already implementing literature based units, for example, they can serve as "in-house experts," thus providing assistance for other teachers just beginning such use.

Once building-level goals have been determined, the committee needs to identify the steps required to meet these goals. To do this, each goal may be divided into sub-goals which can be put on a time line and be considered in terms of materials, beliefs, methods and student outcomes (Siedow, 1985). Likewise, teachers, in concert with their building principal, may identify individual goals pertinent to this building-level goal. A teacher who already uses literature extensively may choose to identify the development of literature units as her goal; one who uses very little literature may make providing time for sustained silent reading of literature a goal.

Planning content

Stage three of the Siedow Model involves planning the content for the staff development program. Prioritized building goals provide direction for the type of content to be included in staff development sessions. Planning of program content should proceed collaboratively with the identified staff developer. If, for example, classroom use of literature is a goal, the following topics might provide the framework for year-long staff development sessions: reading aloud to students; learning about recent children's literature; integrating literature with the basal reader; building reading/writing connections through literature; developing classroom literature units; and using literature across the curriculum. If sessions are presented in the order given, content will be sequenced so that participants are taken gradually from familiar, easier to implement ones. This practice is consistent with Goodman's (1986) suggestion that teachers move from the basal reader to authentic reading in a gradual manner, and with research indicating that teachers implement easier aspects of innovations more rapidly than more difficult ones (Moss, 1988).

Choosing methods of presentation

Stage four of Siedow's model involves making decisions about how effective inservice can best be delivered. During this stage, planners must consider the *where*, *when*, *who* and *how* of staff development. Staff development sessions should be held in areas with comfortable physical surroundings; they should be presented at times most convenient to participants. This may be on Saturdays, during the summer, or in the evening. After-school inservice programs are generally undesirable.

Selecting presenters. Determining who will conduct staff development sessions is crucial. Teachers prefer

presenters who are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, organized and actively involve learners rather than those who simply lecture (Vacca, 1981). Schools should carefully screen potential presenters to ensure that they possess these characteristics. A district may wish to engage a single presenter for the entire program or have a variety of presenters with expertise in particular aspects of whole language. They may also elect to combine the use of outside consultants with local talent.

Content delivery. How staff development is delivered is yet another crucial consideration. Good teaching and good staff development are parallel processes (Carnine, 1988). Therefore, principles of good teaching should apply to all staff development efforts. Three components of good instruction which should be considered include: 1) linking new information to the known; 2) presenting information in ways consistent with program objectives and whole language practice; 3) allowing teachers to practice new learnings in a non-threatening setting.

Link new information to the known. Good staff developers, like good whole language teachers, consider participants' background knowledge when presenting new information. K-W-L (Ogle, 1986), a content area reading strategy, can help to achieve this goal. In an inservice program on literature, the staff developer might ask teachers to brainstorm in small groups what they already *know* about using literature in the classroom. This helps teachers recognize they already have a storehouse of information about this concept. Step two, *Want to know?* requires that teachers formulate questions indicating what they want to know about using literature in the classroom. These questions provide a framework for the staff developer, clearly identifying teachers' interests. Finally, at the end of the session,

teachers brainstorm a list of *learnings* derived from the session. Through the modeling of K-W-L, teachers' background knowledge is activated, questions are formulated, new learnings are summarized, and an excellent classroom strategy is modeled.

Present information in ways consistent with whole language. Material should be presented in ways consistent with the objectives of the program and with instructional precepts associated with whole language. Andrea Butler (1988) suggests that whole language learners benefit from demonstrations, require time and opportunities to practice what they are learning, and learn best when assured that learning represents the process of "approximating" particular behaviors, not replicating them. These guidelines closely parallel Joyce and Showers' (1980) five components for effective staff development: presentation of theory or description of skill or strategy; modeling or demonstration of skill or strategy; practice in use of the strategy; structured or open-ended feedback; and coaching for application and transfer of the strategy to the classroom.

Provide time to practice new learnings. Teachers involved in staff development programs must practice what they have learned and obtain feedback on their performance. Teachers need "coaching" in order to gain feedback (Joyce and Showers, 1982). Ideally coaching should come from peers who observe the introduction of new strategies in the teacher's actual classroom and should continue until the teacher gains control over the innovation.

Evaluating inservice effectiveness

The fifth stage of the Siedow model involves evaluation of the staff development program's effectiveness. The

evaluation phase mirrors the needs assessment stage. Attainment of identified building-level and individual objectives is assessed at the end of the staff development program, using many of the same instruments suggested for the needs assessment phase. At this point, committee members might again use the Venn diagram to identify their progress toward various goals and conduct further classroom observations and interviews. Other aspects of the program which must be assessed include the content of the program, the effectiveness of presenters, and student learnings resulting from teacher implementation of new instructional strategies.

Providing follow-up assistance and reinforcement

The final stage of the Siedow model involves providing teachers with assistance and reinforcement following the staff development program. In many ways, classroom implementation of whole language represents the beginning of the staff development process rather than the end. Implementation does not equal delivery of an innovation (Hord and Huling-Austin, 1986) and the first year of implementation is usually the most stressful and anxiety producing (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975; Orlich, 1989). According to Fullan (1990), implementation of innovations requires that teachers change their methods, materials and beliefs. For example, teachers incorporating a literature program may be using new instructional strategies such as thematic units or shared readings, substituting children's trade books for the basal reader, and struggling with the disequilibrium created when teachers change the way they teach. Not surprisingly, such teachers require active support from their building principal, peers, and parents. The lack of such support may cause teachers to abandon innovations long before they have had a chance to get

results. Barriers to whole language implementation include lack of resources, teacher concerns regarding accountability, misconceptions about whole language, and resistance to change (Ridley, 1990). Effective follow-up and reinforcement of inservice learnings can help teachers to overcome many of these obstacles. Such efforts may take many different forms; they can include, for example, informal buzz sessions, demonstration lessons, and parent information sessions.

Summary

According to McCaslin (1989), "the future challenge for whole-language advocates as I see it is to attend to issues of practice from the perspective of teacher learning and feasibility of implementation" (p. 228). Effective implementation of whole language programs is predicated upon well-designed staff development programs. To be successful, whole language staff development programs must be long-term sustained efforts which follow the six stages of the Siedow model. In addition, whole language staff development programs should effectively model the tenets upon which whole language is based; they should be participant-centered, effectively move learners from the known to the new, and provide opportunities for participants to try out new learnings. Staff development programs based upon the principles described herein will require time and commitment on the part of all school personnel. Change is never easy, but effective staff development can make it less difficult. Moreover, long-term staff development programs which consider the needs and concerns of teachers and approach the change process through incremental steps will be more likely to result in the successful initiation of whole language programs than those which do not. Through effective staff development, school personnel can obtain the skills, attitudes, and values which will make their

involvement in this innovation a rewarding opportunity for professional growth.

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Metacognitive Strategies and Reading Achievement among Developmental Students in an Urban Community College

Stephen P. O'Neill

Several empirical studies have demonstrated positive relationships between the use of metacognitive strategies and reading achievement among both elementary and secondary school subjects (Bean, Singer and Sorter, 1986; Cross and Paris, 1988; Palincsar and Ransom, 1988) and college students (Nist, Simpson and Hoglebe, 1985; Palmer and Goetz, 1985; Weinstein and Underwood, 1985). Gambrell and Heathington (1981), and Long and Long (1987) have observed that good readers characteristically monitor their comprehension and retention of material. On the other hand, poor readers have been described as not using metacognitive strategies effectively (Campione, 1987; Cohen, 1988; Kaufman, Randlett and Price, 1985). A related body of literature suggests that metacognitive strategies can be taught to college students (Baker and Brown, 1984; Burley, 1985; Everson et al., 1992 Nist, Simpson and Hoglebe, 1985; Simpson, 1984). Several investigations of interventions aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of metacognitive training have suggested that students who have the poorest reading skills initially tend to benefit most (Andre and Anderson, 1979; Brown, 1985). Wong (1985) has suggested that such findings may be explained by the fact that the better readers in these studies were already

using some metacognitive strategies, so that their growth might not be as dramatic as that of students who were employing no strategies initially. However, Wong also suggested that instruction could be structured so as to enable students at various levels of reading ability to use more sophisticated metacognitive strategies.

These considerations suggest a need for additional research on these topics: the use of metacognitive strategies among readers of differing reading abilities; investigations of the relative impact of metacognitive interventions versus alternative remedial approaches on poorer and better college readers; and the relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension among readers of differing skill levels. Research in these areas is particularly important in view of the challenges presented by the increasing number of underprepared students entering urban community colleges (Collinson, 1989; Jaschik, 1987). The community college offers a vehicle for enhancing the occupational and social mobility of underprepared urban students (Veltman, 1980), but in an era of financial constraint it is critical that developmental reading interventions used with these students be as efficient as possible. While the utility of metacognitive interventions has been demonstrated for various populations of underprepared students there is evidence that a metacognitive approach may not represent the most efficient method of improving the reading achievement of developmental students in an urban community college setting. O'Neill and Todaro (1991) conducted a study of comparing the relative effectiveness of a metacognitive intervention and a traditional direct instruction remedial reading program in improving the reading skills of students enrolled in required developmental reading courses at a city community college. These students had been assigned to either the most basic

developmental course, RDL 01, or to a second level developmental course, RDL 02. Those students assigned to RDL 01 were reading at or below the seventh grade reading level, based on the CUNY Reading Assessment Test. Those assigned to RDL 02 were reading at or below the eleventh grade level, based on the same measure.

The researchers assessed gains over a semester, 75 hours of instruction, in both the use of metacognitive strategies of previewing, monitoring and summarizing and reading comprehension, including the comprehension of main ideas, direct statements and inferences. The results of the study provided little support for the use of metacognitive training with these two levels of developmental students. The metacognitive intervention did not result in significantly greater gains than the direct instruction intervention in the use of previewing or summarizing. The metacognitive intervention produced greater gains in monitoring than the direct instruction condition for the higher level developmental students but not for the lower developmental students. With respect to gains in reading comprehension, the metacognitive and direct instruction conditions did not differ significantly with respect to comprehension of main ideas. There was a significant interaction with respect to the comprehension of direct statements, such that the metacognitive approach yielded greater gains with the lower level students, while direct instruction produced greater gains with the higher level students. For inferences, the direct instruction condition produced significantly greater gains among both the lower and the upper level developmental students.

These data suggest that metacognitive training is no more effective than a traditional direct instruction approach in developing reading comprehension skills among college

students in these reading ability groups. A question left unanswered by the study is that of the relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension among these groups. Given that findings for these students with respect to the effectiveness of metacognitive training appeared to differ from the findings of previous studies on other college populations, it seemed reasonable to investigate the more fundamental question of whether the use of metacognitive strategies was related to reading comprehension within the populations of urban community college students with seventh and eleventh grade level reading comprehension. The study reported here sought to address this question by reanalyzing the data of the previous study focusing on the relationships among measures of use of metacognitive strategies and measures of reading comprehension.

Method

Subjects. Participating were 151 students enrolled in reading and study skills classes at a community college. Sixty-five of the students (43 percent) were in RDL 01 classes; thus they had initial reading comprehension scores on the CUNY Reading Assessment Test (RAT) below a scale score of 7, indicating less than a seventh grade reading level. Eighty-six of the students (57 percent) had been assigned to the RDL 02 classes, as a result of a scale score of below 12 on the RAT. These students were reading below the eleventh grade level. A total of 102 participants (38 RDL 01 and 64 RDL 02) were assigned to one of five class sections in which the metacognitive intervention was used, while 49 participants (27 RDL 01 and 22 RDL 02) were assigned to one of four class sections in which the direct instruction method was used. Assignment to classes was self-selected in that students chose their sections at registration time unaware of the study. Only those classes taught

by cooperating teachers were eligible for participation in the study. The instructors who participated were solicited by a general invitation to the Reading faculty. All respondents were assigned to a treatment group after a discussion with the researcher during which they indicated their instructional preferences. During the experiment, periodic conversations with the cooperating instructors enabled the researcher to monitor the classroom activities.

Most of the students in both the metacognitive group (64.4 percent) and the direct instruction group (54.3 percent) were female. Approximately half of the students in each group were between 17 and 25 years of age, and the other half were over 25. The modal category with respect to ethnic background was Hispanic, comprising 46.1 percent of the metacognitive group and 45.9 percent of the direct instruction group. African-Americans comprised 42.2 percent of the metacognitive group and 38.9 percent of the direct instruction group. English was the primary language of 57.8 percent of the metacognitive group and 52.1 percent of the direct instruction group. More than one-third of each group indicated that their primary language was Spanish.

Instructional procedures. The classes employing the metacognitive intervention were designed to teach students what metacognitive strategies are as well as why, how and when to use them. Students learned how to formulate a problem or set a goal in workable terms for their reading. They were also taught to recall prior knowledge that might be related to the reading material while they preview. They were taught monitoring, the habit of checking their reading consciously to determine if they were comprehending. Finally, they learned to summarize and evaluate what they learned and were encouraged to relate this new knowledge to other knowledge. These strategies were taught initially

by direct explanation depending on the needs of students. During the instruction, instructors modeled the cognitive strategies in conjunction with the reading tasks to show students how to incorporate the strategies into a reading task. Eventually, students were encouraged to model these same strategies (previewing, self-questioning, monitoring, summarizing) in both whole class and small group formats (Dansereau, 1985; Lochhead, 1985) using articles or textbook selections.

For example, in small groups of three or four, students took turns modeling aloud their thinking strategies for comprehending a textbook selection. As one student modeled, the other members provided feedback at appropriate intervals. Using headings, subheadings, italics and visuals, they demonstrated awareness of the organization and the major topics to be discussed. Competence in establishing goals and monitoring one's reading were reflected in the students' previewing and ongoing self-questioning. In addition, monitoring was demonstrated by periodic summaries about what was being read, and answering preview questions and other ongoing questions that emerged. Closure thinking was indicated by conclusions about the author's purpose, the value of the material and whether it related to other material read by the students. Students in classes using the direct instruction method were taught the same reading and study skills as the metacognitive groups but without explanation of the underlying strategies or explicit reference to strategic conscious monitoring of their cognitive activities. Instructors explained the skills and demonstrated the procedures of the task but did not model their mental processes during the explanation of a skill. There were opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback on the accuracy of their work. However, thinking aloud exercises and small group work for the purpose of receiving feedback

on one's thinking processes were not used in these groups. The direct instruction classes experienced a more teacher-centered approach, while the metacognitive groups experienced a more student-centered approach. In each treatment group, instructors chose reading texts from a selection of departmental offerings appropriate for each level. Supplementary material was chosen on an individual basis.

Testing materials

How I read scale. Metacognitive activity in reading was measured by the How I Read Scale (Everson et al., 1992). This 32-item scale assesses how students think before, during and after they read by requiring students to respond to the degree of frequency with which they use various metacognitive actions of previewing, monitoring and summarizing. Responses are arranged on a 5 point Likert scale format with options ranging from *never* to *always*. The internal consistency reliability has been assessed at .90 by computing Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Sample items from the scale are listed below.

I quickly look over what I'll be reading.

I think: "What do I already know about this topic?"

I look for things that might be important, like words in dark print, headings, charts, and pictures.

I think "Do I understand everything?"

I think "What should I remember?"

I think about what I already know about when I'm reading.

From time to time, I summarize what I've read so far.

I think "Should I reread or review anything?"

I think "Did everything make sense?"

(Responses: Always, Most of the time, Sometimes, Hardly ever, Never.)

CUNY Reading Assessment Test. Reading achievement was measured by the City University of New York Reading Assessment Test (RAT). The RAT is comprised of several short passages followed by three or four

multiple choice questions testing for main idea, direct statement or inference skills. Students are given 30 minutes to read and respond to the questions. The RAT yields scores for comprehension of main idea, direct statements and inferences. The forms of the test used in the study were selected independently by the Director of Testing and the Chairperson of the Reading Faculty and were administered during general college testing periods. The reliability estimates for Form A of the test was .89 based on the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. The same form of the pretest was not given to all students. The form of the test depended on when an individual last took the test. For example, entering students' scores were their placement scores while continuing students who might have taken a lower level reading course had a different form of the test. There is a university conversion scale to convert raw scores to scale scores for the various forms of the test. The form of the posttest was the same for all the students in the study.

Results

Table 1 presents the correlations among the pre-treatment metacognitive measure (How I Read Scale) and the pre-treatment scores on the comprehension measure (RAT). None of these correlations were significant. Thus, contrary to the results of other studies which have indicated positive relationships between the use of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension (Nist, Simpson and Hogrebe, 1985; Palmer and Goetz, 1985; Weinstein and Underwood, 1985), in the present sample of developmental reading students attending a community college there was no relationship prior to treatment between the use of metacognitive strategies and performance on the RAT measure of reading comprehension.

Table 2 presents correlations between metacognitive measures and comprehension measures at post-treatment. Here there were a number of significant negative correlations among the lower level (RDL 01) students. Among RDL 01 students in the metacognitive group, comprehension of main ideas at post-treatment was correlated negatively ($r = -.35, p < .05$) with the use of previewing. This same skill was also correlated negatively with monitoring ($r = -.36, p < .05$). In addition, comprehension of direct statements was related negatively to use of monitoring ($r = -.38, p < .05$) and summarizing ($r = -.32, p < .05$) for RDL 01 students in the metacognitive group.

Table 1
Correlations between pre-treatment measures of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension *

Strategy	Comprehension Variable	Correlation Among			
		RDL 01		RDL 02	
		Metacog. (N = 38)	Direct (N = 27)	Metacog. (N = 64)	Direct (N = 22)
Previewing	Main Idea	-.11	.06	.09	.06
	Direct Statement	.04	.14	.09	-.31
	Inference	-.14	.06	-.14	.27
Monitoring	Main Idea	-.14	-.07	.06	-.04
	Direct Statement	-.08	.04	.13	-.26
	Inference	-.01	.03	-.18	.23
Summarizing	Main Idea	-.21	-.13	.12	.03
	Direct Statement	-.11	.08	.12	.04
	Inference	.04	.04	.00	-.08

*All correlations are non-significant.

In contrast, among RDL 01 students in the direct instruction condition, a single positive correlation was significant: comprehension of main ideas at post-treatment was related significantly to the use of summarizing ($r = .39, p < .05$).

Thus, among the lower level students exposed to specific instruction in the use of metacognitive strategies, greater use of such strategies at post-treatment was associated with relatively poor reading comprehension for main ideas and direct statements. Among these readers not exposed to metacognitive training, but to traditional direct instruction, the one significant relationship between metacognitive processes and comprehension was positive; most of the nonsignificant correlations were also positive. Thus, the trend among lower level readers in the direct instruction condition was toward a positive relationship between metacognitive processing and comprehension.

Table 2
Correlations between post-treatment measures of use of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension

Strategy	Comprehension Variable	Correlation Among			
		RDL 01	RDL 02		
		Metacog. (N = 38)	Direct (N = 27)	Metacog. (N = 64)	Direct (N = 22)
Previewing	Main Idea	-.35*	.10	.11	.13
	Direct Statement	-.27	.21	.16	-.14
	Inference	-.06	.10	-.16	.02
Monitoring	Main Idea	-.36*	.21	.19	.15
	Direct Statement	-.38*	-.01	.16	-.11
	Inference	.15	.26	-.12	.08
Summarizing	Main Idea	-.33*	.39*	.18	-.32
	Direct Statement	-.32*	.22	.06	-.42
	Inference	.18	.10	-.17	-.23

*p < .05 (two-tailed)

Among those in the higher level RDL 02 developmental reading classes, there were no significant relationships between the metacognitive processing measures and any of the comprehension measures.

Discussion

The findings obtained with respect to pre-treatment measures of metacognitive processing and reading comprehension may reflect the quite low comprehension scores achieved by both RDL 01 and RDL 02 students. Previously reported positive relationships between metacognitive processing and reading comprehension may have reflected greater variability in comprehension level of the subjects. Findings obtained with respect to post-treatment relationships between metacognition and reading comprehension may be understood in the context of gains in both areas in the study reported by O'Neill and Todaro (1991), where experimental RDL 01 subjects registered significant pre-treatment to post-treatment gains in comprehension of main ideas and inferences, as well as in the use of previewing. Thus these students used previewing more frequently and had better comprehension for main ideas at post-treatment than at pre-treatment in spite of the observed negative relationship between the use of previewing and comprehension of main ideas. This finding suggests that perhaps the students who made the strongest effort to master the use of previewing strategies were somewhat distracted from the task of comprehending.

The use of metacognitive strategies is a learned skill which must become habitual to be effective. It is possible that over time those students utilizing metacognitive strategies more frequently will be able to integrate these strategies more efficiently to improve reading comprehension. In this context, it would be very interesting to follow up on the metacognitive processing and reading comprehension performance of these students over a longer period of time. Until such follow-up studies are carried out, it should not be concluded on the basis of the observed negative correlations that direct instruction is

necessarily preferable to metacognitive instruction for use with developmental students at the RDL 01 level. In fact, O'Neill and Todaro reported that RDL 01 students exposed to metacognitive instruction made significant gains in the same areas of comprehension (main ideas and inferences) as RDL 01 students exposed to direct instruction.

It is noteworthy that among the relatively high level RDL 02 students, no significant relationships were observed at post-treatment between use of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension. Again, O'Neill and Todaro reported that both RDL 02 groups made gains in reading comprehension. Apparently the higher level developmental readers exposed to metacognitive training were somewhat better able to integrate and use this instruction than their RDL 01 counterparts. Thus, the students making the greatest strides in the direction of mastering metacognitive strategies did not suffer any relative performance decrements in comprehension. These findings suggest that the type of metacognitive training employed in this study may be relatively more effective for higher level developmental readers than for lower level readers. Here again, however, the relative effectiveness of metacognitive and direct instruction interventions in the long term can be determined only through studies employing measures of metacognitive activity and reading comprehension taken one or more semesters after the conclusion of the intervention.

It is clear from the results of the present study that the impact of metacognitive training may differ depending upon the initial reading skill level of the student. Further research must be done to determine the optimum developmental intervention to employ with students having differing skill levels. Research efforts should be directed at identifying specific metacognitive strategies which might be mastered

readily by students at differing developmental levels. It does not appear that any one form of intervention provides the optimum approach for all developmental students. Much work remains to be done to determine the most effective teaching strategies to use with differing students.

In addition, greater attention to research design is needed to increase the validity and reliability of metacognitive studies. Pre and post comprehension and metacognitive data are needed for measuring growth accurately. Where self-reports are used, concern must be given to reducing the illusion of knowing (Glenberg and Epstein, 1987), thereby insuring a more accurate self-assessment. In correlational studies, the important relationships among subskills should not be overlooked. There is a lack of research on the relationship between the various levels of metacognitive activity and literal and critical reading achievement. Future research should explore the use of several dependent measures to study the relationship of the use of metacognitive strategies to reading achievement. The use of a standardized reading test as the sole measure of comprehension raises some questions (DeFina, Anstendig and DeLawler, 1991; Byrnes, Forehand, Garrison, Griffin, McFadden and Stepp-Bolling, 1991; O'Neill and Hynes, 1985). Can urban developmental students who have experienced a one semester comprehensive metacognitive program select and apply appropriate strategies in a timed standardized reading test condition more effectively than those who have received specific concentrated instruction (King, Biggs and Lipsky, 1984)? Moreover, does this sole dependent measure truly reflect a natural reading condition during which students have an opportunity to apply a wide range of metacognitive strategies? In this regard, researchers and practitioners also need to develop reliable textbook-formatted instruments for

pre and posttesting reading skills and that also are compatible for use with metacognitive self-report scales. Question material should assess students' literal and critical abilities as well as their knowledge of the relationship of the organization of the material to its comprehension. Efforts should be made to identify specific metacognitive strategies which result in the greatest improvements in literal and critical reading skills.

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REVIEWS

Professional Materials

Food for thought: Reading and thinking critically.

Written by Esta De Fossard.

South-Western Publishing, 5101 Madison Rd., Cincinnati OH 45227.

1992. ISBN: 0-538-70412-8. 375 pp.

Reviewed by Jerry Phillips

University of Arkansas at Monticello

De Fossard offers the reading/language arts community a study manual designed to accomplish several objectives. First, it proposes to strengthen a student's ability to comprehend and recall; second, it delivers an introduction to clear and logical thinking; and third, it provides hands-on experiences in several elements of clear and logical thinking. This contribution is a comprehensive textbook-workbook designed to reach and assist two audiences. It is for students who already have well-developed language abilities, but for whatever reason are reluctant readers. An example of this audience might be a remedial reading class of secondary students who are experiencing difficulty in satisfying state literacy test requirements. It is also for adults who have practical knowledge of how to read and write, but desire to acquire more depth in a supervised environment; for example, adults enrolled in community or county-wide literacy courses who want to strengthen literacy abilities in order to pass a GED or civil service exam.

The text's introduction invites the student to work through an example of the lesson structure. There are nine additional lessons and each has a central topic. These topics include *Thinking about reading* and *Thinking about sports*. Each lesson is about twenty pages long and contains eight parts:

introduction, thinking skills, word study, article, consider the thinking, recall the details, summarize, and express yourself. In addition, each lesson contains three articles related to its topic. Each article is designed to strengthen students' skills in understanding and recalling what they have read. The articles provide the opportunity for engaging a particular thinking skill that will develop a student's ability to think more clearly and logically. Each lesson also contains a developmental chart that allows the student to record scores after completing each lesson. The scores are intended to indicate the student's reading and thinking skill progress and designate areas needing improvement.

From this reviewer's perspective, De Fossard has offered a useful workbook approach to critical reading and developing thinking skills. The student reads controversial material written with the intent to cultivate critical thinking and then is given the opportunity to express reactions through writing. It seems that this book is an appropriate vehicle to accomplish its objectives.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Alef-bet. Written by Michelle Edwards.

Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books
105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. 1992.
ISBN: 0-688-09725-1. 32 pp. US\$15.00

Both monolingual and bilingual children will learn from and be delighted by this charming family-oriented addition to the world of alphabet books. Author and illustrator Michelle Edwards provides an informative introduction to the Hebrew language and to the family she has created to illustrate letters, words and concepts:

The family in this book speaks Hebrew. They may know English, French, Spanish, or other languages, too. They may live in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, New York or Amsterdam. Almost anywhere in the world, there are Israelis and others who speak Hebrew as their daily language.

Although they are fictional, these characters have become my friends. Hannah is the ema, the mom. Matan is the abba, the dad. Then comes Uri (age 9), the oldest; Gabi (age 5); and little Lev, the toddler (almost 2).

Hannah is a children's-book writer like me, and Matan owns an art-supply store. Uri goes to school and is quite a good artist. He uses a wheelchair because he was born with spina bifida and can't move his legs. Gabi likes polka dots, dancing, make-believe, dressing up, and goofing around with Uri when he lets her. Lev likes his tire sandbox, stroller rides, kicking his feet at the moon, and goofing around with Uri and Gabi when they let him.

Our English language word *alphabet* is derived from a transliteration of the names of the first two letters in the Greek alphabet: *alpha* and *beta*. The corresponding letters in the Hebrew letter system are *alef* and *bet*, so the Hebrew alphabet is an *alef-bet*. (Hebrew, like Greek, uses a writing system which is different from English, necessitating the transliteration, or phonetic spelling of words, from those alphabet systems to our own.) To illustrate the consecutive letters *resh* (sounded like *r*) and *shin* (sounded like *sh*) the facing pages in this alef-bet book show a snow scene. On one page we see a mittened, booted, carrot-nosed snow figure gazed at by a tiny rabbit which has left tracks in the snow; Lev, the toddler, is warm in his blue snowsuit, the footprints from his small boots leading up to the spot where he has fallen back blissfully to make a pattern in the snow; footprints of Gabi's larger boots lead out of the picture. The word to illustrate *resh* is *feet* (rah-GLAH-yeem). On the facing page Uri and Gabi are sliding down hill on circular sleds; the word to illustrate *shin* is *snow* (SHEH-legg).

There is much here to learn and enjoy about language and about caring families, from the cover page showing Gabi hitching a ride on Uri's wheelchair, through the last page where Gabi holds up her own message to readers, written in English and Hebrew letters: *Shalom*. (JMJ)





**Stories to solve: Folktales from around the world;
More stories to solve: Fifteen folktales from
around the world.**

Told by George Shannon. Illustrated by Peter Sis.
Greenwillow Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. 1992.

ISBN: 0-688-09161-X. 64 pp. US\$12.95;

ISBN 0-688-10496-7. 55 pp. US\$3.95

Reviewed by Alisa M. Wilkins
Western Michigan University

Three women were mysteriously turned into rosebushes, identical in every way. One of the women was allowed to turn back into a woman from sunset to sunrise and visit her husband and child. How did the husband figure out which rosebush was his beloved wife, and thus free her from the spell? His dilemma is described in one of fourteen folktales, each presenting an unusual situation to be pondered by both a story character and the reader. Following each story puzzle is a "how it was done" page that explains how the problem was solved.

George Shannon's second collection of stories is dedicated "to all who smiled and asked for more." Now readers have, between the two books, 29 intriguing and informative puzzles. All of the problems are solvable; all require careful consideration of the clues and information and some visualization of the events. The stories are challenging and enjoyable, and the books could easily be used to sharpen problem-solving skills. Both books are sure to bring a smile to any face, and would be excellent additions to home, school, and public libraries.

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You'll Soon Grow Into Them, Titch.

Written by Pat Hutchins.

Mulberry Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019.

ISBN 0-688-11507-1. 1992. US\$4.95.

But Not Kate.

Written by Marissa Moss.

Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN 0-688-10600-5. 1992. US\$14.00.

Reviewed by Karen Welch
Western Michigan University

Titch is an adorable little boy who finds, over the course of several months, that he has grown out of some of his clothes. He is offered hand-me-downs from his sister and brother but can't wear them because they are too large. The response is always "You'll soon grow into them, Titch." Through all of this the very colorful illustrations tell the reader that much more is happening: the garden is growing, the tree is budding, the potted seeds are sprouting, the bird is nesting, and Titch's mother is preparing for a new baby. Titch's dad takes him shopping for new clothes and he presents the new baby with his old clothes along with the common refrain, "He'll soon grow into them." This is a delightful story to which children with siblings will be able to relate.

But Not Kate covers the span of one day at school. It starts out with little mice children getting off the bus with their special possessions. Everyone brought something, but not Kate. In the classroom everyone participated, but not Kate. In art class everyone knew what to paint, but not Kate. In the lunchroom everyone had some special dessert, but not Kate. Kate was not feeling very special even when the magician asked her to be his assistant at the special assembly. Then Kate made things happen with the magic words and magic wand. Flowers and rabbits came out of the hat and "a thousand stars" appeared on a scarf. Kate went home feeling very special and children will, too, after sharing this story. Children often share the same feelings that Kate felt and so they will be thrilled to see how Kate's day ends.

