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# **Modeling an Expository Text Structure Strategy in Think Alouds**

**Christine J. Gordon**

Several current notions used in combination can contribute to better teaching of comprehension of expository text. These include knowledge of text structure, strategic reading, and the think-aloud procedure. Knowledge of text structure is knowledge of the author's underlying organization of the ideas presented. The think-aloud procedure is suggested as the vehicle by which to demonstrate a strategic readers' use of text structure knowledge while reading. It's a "talk-as-you go" or "talk-as-you read" procedure. Strategies are defined as systematic plans that readers can use flexibly, adapting them to particular reading situations or contexts (Duffy and Roehler, 1987). Strategies are thus generalizable beyond any one task.

A strategic reader is consciously aware of strategies (such as use of text structure knowledge, drawing inferences, making predictions) and the reasoning involved, and applies that knowledge when and where necessary. In becoming a strategic reader, awareness of strategies often precedes control over them in the reasoning process.

One method of promoting strategic reading involves the modeling of thought processes to make explicit what is

invisible. Modeling involves explaining the kinds of strategies used and the reasoning involved in the process of making sense of text. The think-aloud is an instructional procedure in which the teacher orally describes thought processes when reading, revealing strategies used and the reasoning processes involved, while highlighting the problems encountered and the "repair" strategies used to deal with these problems. It is the mental corollary of a physical demonstration.

Of course, think-alouds are not limited to the teaching of strategic reading. Think-alouds are general instructional procedures which are used to teach a number of human activities that have cognitive components which can be brought to consciousness. Activities such as card playing, sports activities (to teach specific skill components), and more recently the writing process can be taught using think-alouds as an accompaniment check to the physical demonstration. Thus, in reading, it is important that not only the physically observable aspects of reading be modeled but, using a think-aloud, invisible cognitive/metacognitive processes also be made visible (Duffy, Roehler, and Herrmann, 1988). Modeling in the think-aloud "minimizes the guesswork in learning how reading works" (p. 763) because it makes explicit the mental activities which undergird strategic reading.

### **Types of expository text structures**

Expository text is written to inform the reader about a specific subject. Generally speaking, expository text contains an explicit or implicit topic sentence with the main idea and the supporting ideas. These ideas are organized into text structures. Text structures are author's arrangements or organizations of ideas in text. These organizations or patterns include listing of ideas, sequencing of ideas ac-

cording to a time order, comparing and contrasting ideas, describing characteristics of ideas, discussing causes and effects of ideas and addressing the problems certain ideas present as well as their solutions. Often the writer provides key or signal words that identify the structure of a paragraph. For example, a paragraph organized into a sequence states its main idea in the topic sentence, and to support the main idea the author sets out details in a specific order that carries the correct meaning of the text. Key or cue words include *first*, *second*, *third*, etc., plus *next*, *then*, *finally*, *last*, *after that*, etc.

If a reader knows how to use the author's structure, the reader is more likely to build a coherent model of text. The better organized the text, the more apparent will the structure be for the reader's use. For example, if a reader is cued by the passage that the text presents a sequence, prior experience with sequence leads the reader to anticipate and search for a time order during the reading. Alternately, if the underlying organization is a problem/solution, then this schema may be activated by the structure and/or directional words in the text, in turn generating expectations that the problems will be stated and that one can anticipate and search for solutions (Meyer et al., 1980). The strategic use of expository text structure knowledge can be modeled in a think-aloud.

According to Piccolo (1987), students should have knowledge about six text structures, each of which has critical attributes:

- **Description** A specific topic and its attributes are presented in such a topic. No specific key words identify a descriptive paragraph.

- **Enumeration** In this type of paragraph, the main idea can be found in the topic sentence. A number of ideas

are listed to support the key idea. Signal words include *first, second, third, next, then, last*.

- **Sequence** This kind of paragraph or selection, while stating the main idea in a topic sentence, contains supporting details which must be presented in a specific or temporal order. Signal words include *first, second, then, next, finally*.

- **Cause/effect** The main idea is provided in the topic sentence. The main statement gives the reason or tells the why the statement is correct and the details provide the consequences/results/outcomes. Signal words include *so, so that, as a result, thus, since, because of, in order to*.

- **Comparison/contrast** The topic statement provides the topics to be compared or contrasted. The supporting details address the similarities or differences or both. Key words include *is like, same as, similar to, different from, unlike, compared to*.

- **Problem/solution** In the topic sentence the problem is outlined. The supporting details focus on causes of the problems and address solutions. Signal words include *a problem is, a solution is, the problem was solved by*.

## The wider context

Readers should be encouraged to develop a scheme for the various structures in expository texts through independent experience with texts. To this end teachers should provide opportunities for students to experience the richness of expository writing, to choose expository texts as their leisure and school reading material, and to share their sustained reading experiences with others through discussion and writing. In conjunction with such wide reading of informational materials, a more direct teaching approach may be required to develop a schema of expository text structure and an ability to use such knowledge strategically. This approach may be particularly important for students

who have had limited experiences with reading informational materials. Modeling expository text structure use in think-alouds is one method of direct teaching.

### **Modeling text structure use in think-alouds**

Think-alouds have often been used as a data gathering method in research studies. However, many good teachers have always used think-alouds intuitively in instructional situations to explain how they think as they read. Think-alouds are thus appropriate for modeling text structure use and the reasoning involved. That is, a teacher explains how ideas are grouped together and how clusters of text are meaningfully combined. In addition the teacher shows how signal words are used to determine the underlying organization and the functions served by these words in directing the thinking process.

Think-alouds are particularly appropriate as a modeling device because, more than any other technique used to teach students about text structure, think-alouds show the *use or application* of text structure knowledge. Otherwise text structure knowledge could remain as relatively inert or static knowledge. Moreover, think-alouds can demonstrate *flexibility* in strategy use. Strategic readers use their knowledge flexibly and do not approach each instance of text structure identically – sometimes opting to use one cue word but not another when using knowledge of text structure.

For think-alouds to be effective instructional tools in teaching reading processes, Ehlinger (1988) found that they must 1) focus the attention of the learner by promoting the functional value of the task being modeled (e.g., indicating when, where, and why the strategy can be used), 2) instill self-sufficiency in the student (e.g., place responsibility

on the students to apply the strategy by involving them in modeling situations and independent application), and 3) provide feedback in the form of assessment or evaluation. Verbal modeling through think-alouds must thus induce metacognitive involvement of the student with the structure of text.

### **Suggestions for developing think-alouds using expository text structure knowledge**

*Well-organized text with sub-headings* Students first need to be shown how to detect and use knowledge of text structure on well-organized text, chapters or passages whose structure is readily apparent. In this way, students develop or expand their schema of expository text structure. Catterson points out (Shapiro, 1989) that text structure should be addressed at two levels. The macrolevel consists of the headings and subheadings of a chapter. The microlevel, perhaps the paragraph level, is where such structural patterns as description, collection (listing or enumeration and sequence), causation, problem solution, comparison/contrast are found. The think-aloud should make explicit the thinking involved by beginning at the boldface heading level and progressing through the organizational structures within paragraphs. Usually, at the beginning of the think-aloud, the teacher should indicate when, where and why the text strategy should be used. Having selected or designed a passage that contains one underlying text structure with explicit and appropriate key words, the teacher should think aloud while reading aloud. To show how to use a text structure strategy, the think-through should focus primarily on the structure. Students should follow along reading the passage. The sections below present an example of a passage with an enumeration pattern, followed by a sample think-aloud on this text.

## Sample of well-organized text with subheadings

### Ways to earn money

Money is important, but how do we get it? A student may choose from several ways to make some money.

**A paper route** One good way to make a steady income is to have a paper route. This means that you have to wake up early every morning and deliver papers whether it is in the cold of winter, the rainy spring, the hot, humid summer or the windy autumn.

**Arts and crafts sale** Another good way to earn some money is to make crafts all year. Then you can have an arts and crafts sale. With a lot of crafts you can make a lot of money and have had the fun of making the crafts, too.

**A car wash** A further way to make money is to have a car wash. You can go around the neighborhood and ask your neighbors if they would like their cars washed. Nearly everyone drives a car — some families have two or three of them — and nearly everyone's car gets dirty.

**Babysitting** Also, if you are twelve years or over, you can be a babysitter. To get work as a babysitter it is usually necessary for you to take a babysitting course so that you know what your responsibilities are and how to carry them out. If you are a good sitter, people will tell each other and the requests for your babysitting services will increase.

**Odd jobs** Finally, you can do a variety of odd jobs in your neighborhood. Offer to mow people's lawns for a price, walk their dogs, or weed their gardens and flower beds. Besides these jobs, there is leaf-raking in the summer and snow shoveling in the winter.

These are several easy ways that teenagers can earn some money.

### Sample think-aloud, at macrolevel, on well-organized text with subheadings

(Text is in standard style; instructor's words are italicized.)

*We are going to read about ways to earn money. Take a look at the text in front of you on this topic. I will show you how I think as I use a text structure strategy when reading. The first thing to do is to get a quick overview of the text by using the subheadings. Once you know the organization of this text you can connect all the ideas you*



*learn from reading, or know from your experience, to this framework of headings.*

*The title is Ways to Earn Money. The first subheading is A paper route. I predict that one good way to earn money is by having a paper route. The next four headings are Arts and crafts sale, A car wash, Babysitting and Odd jobs. It seems that the author is providing a listing of several ways to make money. When I look at the first sentence under the first subheading, I see words such as one good way, then I see the words another good way under the next subtitle and down through the final three subtitles I read a further way, also, and finally. These words support my thinking that the author will list ways of earning money. The order in which the listing is presented really doesn't matter. The author could have begun with baby-sitting. So, to summarize, the author will describe four main ways for students to earn money. Then the author will give a listing of some odd jobs students can do. Now let's go back and read all the information in the article. I will think aloud again as you follow along.*

**Well-organized texts with no subheads** Some well-organized selections that can be used in think-alouds contain no subheadings but are still tightly organized. They contain a superordinate structure such as a listing, within which exists a subordinate structure such as a sequence. In addition, each test structure is explicitly cued by appropriate directional words or phrases to which attention can be drawn in the think-aloud. For example, in the passage below, notice the key words (for our purposes, they are italicized) explicitly cueing the student-composed piece, "How to wash your dog," which contains an enumeration structure followed by sequential structure.

### **Sample of well-organized text without subheadings**

There are *two methods* that can be used to shampoo your dog. The *first* method is the "outside tub" method. To wash your dog outside the house, you will need a tub, some warm water, a large towel and, of course, your dog, if you can find him.

In the *second method*, the "inside house" method you will need to use your bathtub. The bathtub should not be filled too full and the amount of shampoo used should not be large because an active dog

can spray water and shampoo all over your bathroom. In each of these two methods there are several steps to follow. *First* fill the tub with 10 cm. of warm water. *Then* take the dog's collar off and put him in. *Third*, shampoo the dog's back, legs, feet, and head. *Fourth*, rinse off the shampoo. *Next*, take the dog out of the tub and let him shake. *Finally*, dry him off with a towel.

### **Sample think-aloud on well-organized text** **with no subheads**

(Text is in standard style; instructor's words are italicized.)

*In this article, How to wash your dog, the structure has not been made "visible" through the use of subheadings. However, the structure has been made visible through the author's use of some very good signal words in each paragraph. I will think aloud to show you how I use a text structure strategy to understand and remember this selection. First I predict that the selection will describe how to wash your dog. The first sentence says There are two methods that can be used to shampoo your dog. Okay, so there are two ways to wash your dog. Perhaps there will be a description of "how" in each method.*

*I keep reading. The first method, there is my key word first, and if I skim down to the second paragraph, I see, In the second method, so in the next paragraph the second method will be described. I go back to the first paragraph and keep reading The first method is the "outside tub" method. Okay. Now I can jot down a subtitle in the margin. It is Outside Tub Method. I guess the author will describe how to wash the dog using the outside tub method. I will keep reading. To wash your dog outside the house, you will need a tub, some warm water, a large towel and, of course, your dog if you can find him. So the author still does not describe how to wash the dog as was suggested in the title; rather the author lists the items I will need to do the washing outdoors. I will go on to the second paragraph and read. In the second method, the "inside house" method you will need to use your bathtub. There is my cue word, the second method and it is "the inside house" method. I'll jot that subtitle next to the margin of the second paragraph. Then I read on in the second paragraph. The tub should not be filled too full and the amount of shampoo used should not be large because an active dog can spray water and shampoo all over your bathtub. So now I'm not getting a listing of items I'll need; I guess I will need most of the items that I used in the "outside tub" method but I will have to be more careful about how much water and how much shampoo I will use.*

*Well I still did not find out how much shampoo I will use. I still did not find out how to do the actual washing or shampooing. I wonder if that is what I will find out in the last paragraph. Let me see. Yes, in the first sentence I read In each of these two methods there are several steps to follow. I notice that the key words first, then, third, fourth, next and finally signal the order in which I do the washing. So the sequence is important to note in this last paragraph. I jot down in the margin next to the last paragraph that the subheading is Steps to Follow. Then I read on. First, there's my key word, fill the tub with 10 cm. of warm water. Then, so that's second because it continues the thought, take the dog's collar off and put him in. Third, another key word, because that's the next step, shampoo the dog's back, legs, feet, and head. Fourth, another key word, rinse off the shampoo. Next, again the thought is continued and that's fifth in the order, take the dog out of the tub and let him shake. I wonder if you let him shake when you are giving him a bath inside your bathroom? That's a good question. Finally, this key word tells me the thought or the sequence is being concluded by the author, dry him off with a towel. So this is the actual procedure and sequence to follow when washing the dog outdoors or inside the house.*

Some strong examples of text which can be used in think-aloud lessons can be found in magazines (that is where I once located selections on "how to build an igloo" and "how to make paper"), newspapers, some basal reader expository selections, and students' own content area textbooks. In such selections, the structure is made explicit, so that the reader can grasp it and use it for sound understanding of the passage. A well-organized explicit text structure enhances the understanding of the difficult ideas in a selection.

When modeling text structure strategy use at the paragraph level, the teacher should call attention to any signal words that assist in detecting which type of organizational pattern an author used to frame information and indicate if the word signals that a thought is to be continued, illustrated, concluded or reversed. By using the cue words,

strategic readers grasp potential frameworks (in the form of structures) that enhance comprehension.

After the teacher has modeled the text structure strategy several times, it may not be necessary for the teacher to work through a whole text in every lesson. The teacher could think through one paragraph, another paragraph could be done by students under teacher direction, and the final one left for independent or paired think-alouds. Nevertheless, in modeling how to use text structure, a sufficient amount of text will need to be used to show how structure comes into play in the reasoning processes. One particular text structure should be modeled until students are comfortable with the use of the strategy on such a pattern before proceeding to modeling the use of another structure.

### **Using the think-aloud strategy with less well-organized text**

Expository text at the elementary school level can be organized in such a way that comprehension is affected adversely. The organizational structure of a whole selection is sometimes not made explicit through the use of main headings and subheadings. At the paragraph level, too, underlying patterns are not readily apparent. Signal words may be sacrificed in the shortening of sentences and thus relationships are not always explicitly stated. However, students do encounter such texts and need to be able to make sense of them particularly in their independent reading. With instances of text that are not as well structured, the teacher can explain how the strategic reader imposes structure on the text. Think-alouds on less well-organized text should be done only after students have developed a scheme for expository text structure on well-organized selections and know how to use that knowledge to enhance comprehension of well-organized selections. Once readers

know how to use knowledge of structure strategically on well-organized selections, they need to be shown how to impose structure and identify implicit structural patterns in less well-structured selections. They need to learn how to impose headings and subheadings, to insert their own directional words and to impose an organizational framework if necessary. Schema theory suggests that strategic readers impose structure on less well-organized texts to make sense out of them. Such think-alouds should enable students to transfer their knowledge (schemata) to expository texts that are less well-organized.

The same procedure of teacher modeling, followed by shared teaching responsibility with students and then more independent practice when silent reading, should be used. In addition, monitoring activities such as checklists, and annotating the text with instances of strategic thinking discussion (which are described below) apply when students are reading poorly structured text. The student-composed selection which follows provides an example of interesting but poorly structured text.

### **Sample of poorly organized text**

#### **Public Sports**

Hockey is one of our most popular community sports in fall and winter. The Minor Hockey Association sets up hockey teams which you can join in your community. You are put into teams according to your skills. Hockey is exciting because of the thrill of team competition and the enthusiasm of the crowd watching you play.

You can also join community soccer. Again you try out for a team and then you are put at the level you can do best. Soccer is usually played outdoors in the spring. Most of the big soccer leagues are in Italy.

Baseball is a good sport and a good way to get exercise. If you do not want to play soccer, you can join a community baseball team. Baseball is a popular spring and summer sport but most community

leagues finish in June. No organized community baseball is played over the summer holidays because too many team members would be missing as they go away on holidays with their parents.

The enumeration organization has not been made explicit through the use of subtopics or key words and must be uncovered by the reader. In addition, some ideas are somewhat off topic and may need to be discounted by the reader in the comprehension of a text about community sports activities. There is no introductory paragraph, nor does the author provide any concluding or summary statements. A think-aloud imposing a text structure on the piece as one reads might sound like this:

### **Sample think-aloud on less well-organized texts**

(Text is in standard style; instructor's words are italicized.)

*We are going to read a selection that is not as well-organized as it could be. As I read I will think of subheadings for the passage and key words to use in the sentences to make the organization clearer. This is what a reader sometimes has to do to make better sense out of selections written such as this one. I will show you in a think-aloud how I use what I learned about expository text structure to help me understand a selection that is not so well organized. The title of this selection is Public Sports. That's very general. I wonder if the author is writing about how to play them, the kinds there are, or some other topic.*

*The first sentence reads Hockey is one of our most popular community sports in winter. The word one suggests that there are others and that this train of thought on kinds of community sports will continue. I will skim ahead and see if the first sentences of each of the two following paragraphs will give me a hint as to the organization of this selection. So I read You can also join community soccer. Then I read Baseball is a good sport and a good way to get exercise. Okay, it seems that I'll be reading about three types of public sports: hockey, soccer and baseball. So it's a listing of public sports and possibly a description of each one. The word community seems important, too. I will go back to the first paragraph and read. Hockey is one of the most popular community sports in fall and winter. The Minor Hockey Association sets up hockey teams which you can join in the community. You are put into teams according to your skills. So*

*this tells me when hockey is played and about the organization of community hockey teams. Hockey is exciting because of the thrill of team competition and the enthusiasm of the crowd watching you play. This sentence says nothing more about organization of hockey teams but tells me why hockey is exciting to play.*

*The second paragraph begins with You can also join community soccer. It seems to me it makes better sense to change that sentence into "Soccer is another community sport." The key word another would be an important one here to show the listing is continuing. For example, another community sport is soccer. But also does give me a clue that the author is continuing with the listing of public sports. I read on. Again you try out for a team and then you are put at the level you can do best. Like the first paragraph, this section has to do with a way of organizing community soccer teams. Then I read Soccer is usually played outdoors in the spring. This makes sense. Hockey, the author said, was played in the communities in winter. Now I find out that soccer is played in spring. The next sentence reads Most of the big soccer leagues are in Italy. That thought does not fit in because we are talking about community sports so I'll just forget about that sentence. It's not really important here.*

*Now let me see, where am I? I could have two subtitles, Hockey and Soccer. Could the last paragraph be subtitled Baseball? Yes. I read Baseball is a good sport and a good way to get exercise. It makes better sense to insert the key word finally to conclude the listing and say "Finally, baseball is a good sport played in community teams" because this passage is about community sports. I could leave and a good way to get exercise in that sentence as well. Then I read if you do not want to play soccer, you can join a community baseball team. Okay, that fits. Baseball is a popular spring and summer sport but most community leagues finish in June. Okay. That's an explanation of the time of year in which baseball is played – probably in countries and states that have snow during the winter time. No organized community baseball is played over the summer holidays because too many team members would be missing as they go away on holidays with their parents. Okay, so that's an explanation of why league games end in June. Now to my way of thinking a better title would have been Community Sports and an introduction could have been added to make clear the organization by stating: "There are three main kinds of sports activities organized by communities over the seasons."*

An excellent follow-up activity that teaches and reinforces restructuring of text is a writing activity. The teacher

might first be the scribe for a whole class rewriting a piece of text such as the one above to make structure explicit and/or to restructure poorly-organized text. Once comfortable with such class activities, students might work in pairs using their knowledge of text structure to rewrite some texts or portions of them so that the texts are better organized and so that the underlying organization is more clearly revealed.

### **Shared responsibility for modeling**

Students need to assume as quickly as possible some responsibility for the modeling on well-organized texts. They can be involved in shared teaching situations, with the teacher gradually releasing more and more modeling responsibility to students. They can share their reasoning orally so that other students can see that strategic readers are flexible, but not identical, in strategy use and in methods of reasoning. Some readers make the decision to monitor differently, at different points, for various reasons. Teachers should provide students with regular verbal feedback on their efforts and continue modeling intermittently (and frequently) as students will require this type of teacher input both before and when they encounter processing difficulties. The sooner students are invited to make their thinking explicit, the sooner can they gain metacognitive control over strategy use.

Teachers need to continue to help students to develop independence in strategy use. While some measure of independence is placed on students in the shared teaching situations during the oral reading of selections or portions of them, expository text structure use should be expected during silent reading in teacher-guided activities. Students can practice such thinking silently when reading content area materials independently.



While reading silently, older students could be encouraged to annotate the text every time they used some type of strategic thinking (O'Brien, 1989). These records could stimulate follow-up discussions in pairs, small groups or the whole class. In addition, students should note each time they became aware of key words that signal a particular text structure and indicate if these words signaled that ideas would be illustrated, continued or concluded.

The aim of modeling text structure strategy is for students to move from dependence to independence; from successful performance under guided practice to successful performance without guidance (Vygotsky, 1967); from an intermediate step of being consciously metacognitive about strategy use to internalization of text structure knowledge for automatic use in proficient reading.

Monitoring to determine if students are internalizing text structure knowledge and applying it independently is necessary. First, frequent student modeling with oral feedback from the teacher permits the teacher to monitor through observation student progress in strategy use during the oral reading sessions. The use of teacher-posed questions within the modeling of oral reading permits not only student involvement in the initial modeling process conducted by the teacher, but also enables the teacher to monitor the learning taking place.

In order for the teacher to monitor whether students are indeed moving towards internalization of strategy use in silent reading activities and to encourage independent strategy use, students can use a checklist similar to the one developed by Davey (1983). The checklist, shown in Figure 1, includes reference to use of signal words, noting whether

thoughts were continued, concluded or reversed, and what types of structures were noted in the texts.

### Figure 1 Self-Evaluation of text structure use

*How did I use text structure when I was reading?*

Signal words noted:                      not much                      a bit                      most of the time                      always

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Function words noted:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Kinds of text structures noted:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

A good follow-up to the silent reading is a discussion of the notes made on the checklist so that students can reveal the differences among their lists and flexibility in strategy use. Use of the checklist should also be expected when students are reading expository text in content area materials independently at home and at school. Eventually students can be expected to keep a mental version of the checklist shown in Figure 1. Occasional class discussions related to "who uses the strategy and how" when reading newspapers and magazines might be profitable.

## Conclusion

Some students will indeed become strategic readers by emulating the cognitive moves made visible by their teachers in the modeling process. Others will require a more broadly based approach in order to learn to use expository text structure strategically. Therefore, it is always important to embed the think-aloud strategy within an environment rich in expository reading and writing. The modeling of expository text structure use should not be considered as a technique unto itself; it represents only one procedure in a wider effort to enhance comprehension of expository text.

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### **. . . . Expanding Horizons . . . .**

#### **Using Venn Diagrams as Children Analyze Children's Literature**

*This teaching idea is shared by Betsy Flikkema who teaches second graders at Holland Heights Elementary, in Holland Michigan.*

At a whole language workshop, I learned about using Venn diagrams in the language arts field. Venn diagrams are circles which can be arranged in patterns to show interrelationships among items, or ideas. At the simplest level, two non-overlapping circles can be used to sort items into two separate categories. However, when the circles are placed or drawn so that there is an overlapping area, the analysis is more complex — some things can be placed in the parts of the circles that are separate, but items which belong in both categories are placed in the overlapping section.

Even very young children can understand and use this kind of analysis, and it can be applied to thinking about children's literature. For example, I often read children two versions of the same fairy tale. (*Editor's note: See pages 170-171 of this issue for a list of various versions of the Cinderella story.*) When both stories have been read and discussed, I encourage children to brainstorm ways the two stories are different, and ways they are the same, and to record their ideas in Venn diagram form. The diagrams can also be used in comparing characters within a story (e.g., Cinderella and her step-sisters), characteristics of different stories (The Three Bears and The Three Pigs), or, as children learn more about genres, characteristics of different forms of literature (poetry and stories).

