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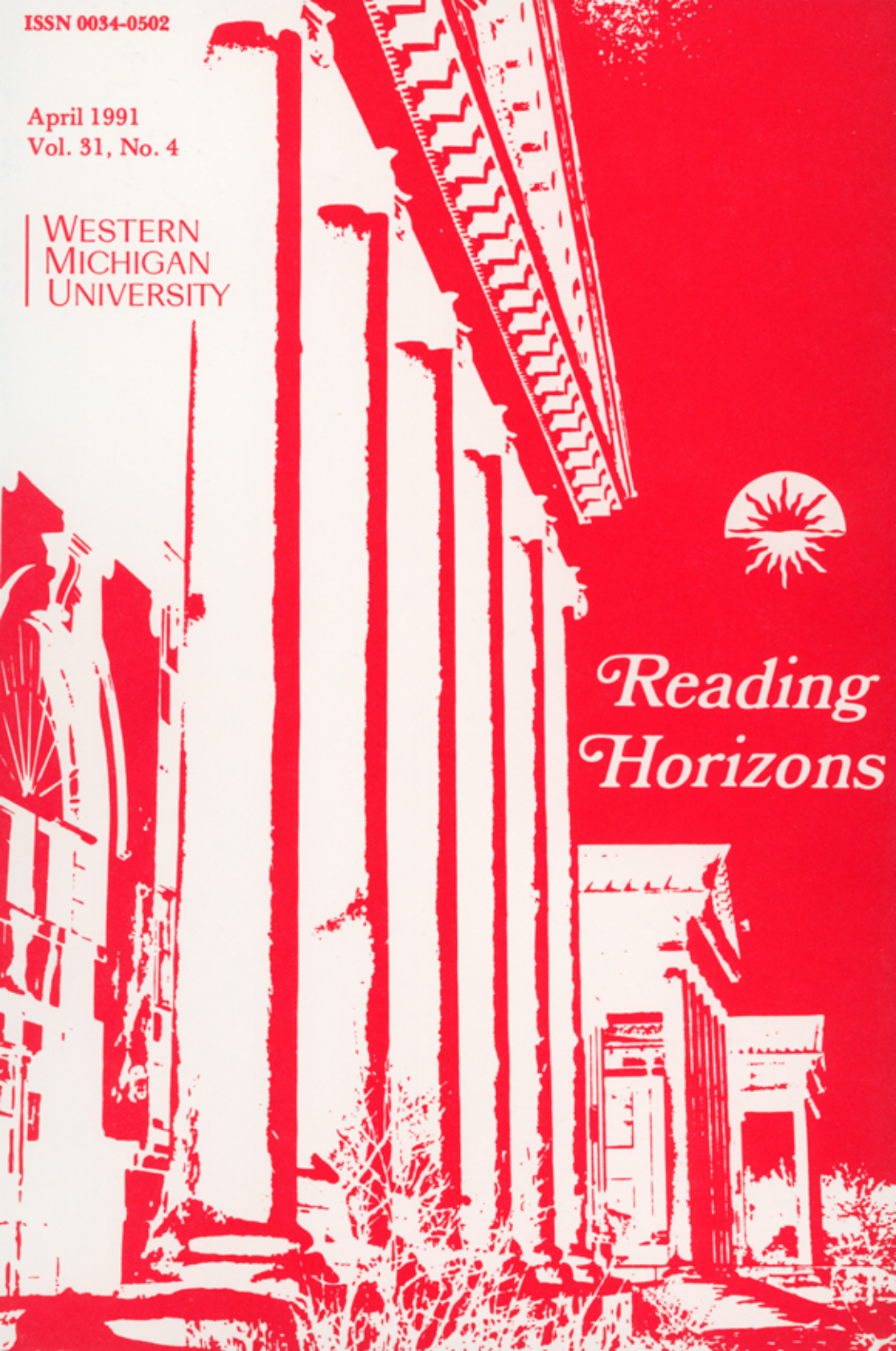
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Reading Horizons





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Editor — Jeanne M. Jacobson
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Reading Center & Clinic
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Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

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

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Reading, Writing, Discussing: An Interactive Approach to Teaching in the Content Areas

**Pamela J. Farris
Carol Fuhler
Mary Louise Ginejko**

Content area reading necessitates that students develop effective study strategies. Farrar (1986) pointed out that much of the reading in the content areas requires higher thinking skills than for narrative passages and noted that “examining one’s own opinions, judgments, and reactions in relation to what the author has presented and applying that knowledge to new situations marks a qualitative jump from the... comprehension of the basal reader” (p. 46).

The prominent study strategy in the content areas continues to be Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review (SQ3R) which was introduced by Robinson (1961) in the 1940’s, nearly five decades ago. While other study strategies have been developed, SQ3R continues to be used either as it was originally introduced or with some modification. The studies reported here investigate the effectiveness of an interactive study strategy, RESPONSE, developed by Jacobson (1989), with regular and high risk learning disabled students at the junior high level.

Reading, writing, reasoning and discussing

Real connections between reading and writing occur whenever literacy activities require both reading and writing in order that a goal be accomplished (Teale and Sulzby, 1989). Building upon this premise, Bromley (1989) wrote:

Students at all levels of literacy development benefit when they actively engage in meaning construction with language that has a purpose and for which they receive tangible feedback. As students explore blended reading and writing activities and observe each other in these explorations, classrooms become literate communities where students become increasingly able to create and deal with extended texts of varying kinds (p. 122).

RESPONSE is a study technique which provides an opportunity for students and the classroom teacher to interact as part of a study strategy which combines reading, writing, and reasoning (Jacobson, 1989). RESPONSE differs from other study strategies in that individual students cannot use the technique alone; it necessitates that the teacher provide feedback.

Students read the text and write down major points, questions, and unfamiliar terms and concepts on a RESPONSE sheet which is given to the teacher. The teacher then “responds” by writing back to the student and elaborating upon the student’s comments, questions, and vocabulary. The steps in RESPONSE are as follows: 1) As the student reads the content area material, major points are recorded. 2) As questions arise in the student’s mind while reading the text, the student writes them down along with the page number of the text. 3) Whenever a new term or concept is encountered, the student writes those down along with the page number on which the term or concept appeared. 4) Questions, terms or concepts have an

asterisk placed beside those which the student would like to have explained or defined as well as the page number from which they came. 5) The student gives the completed RESPONSE sheet to the teacher, who then writes a "response" to the student in order to clarify and/or elaborate upon the text itself. 6) The teacher returns the RESPONSE sheet to the student the following class period prior to holding a class discussion of the text material.

Because the teacher has read and reacted to all of the students' response sheets prior to discussing the text, the teacher has gained insights as to the most appropriate direction the class discussion should take. For instance, if six students are unfamiliar with the concept of the Mason/Dixon line, the teacher can help students by including it as part of the discussion.

An application of the response teaching strategy was attempted in two academic environments. A watermark of success when using a teaching strategy is its adaptability. Teacher and class personality, lesson objective, or just the time of the school year, may dictate the need for versatility. As teachers are always in search of successful strategies, RESPONSE offers an excellent opportunity for reading, writing, and discussing in the classroom.

Response and regular students

The RESPONSE technique was utilized with 36 seventh grade students of average reading ability in two social studies classes. The students had been used to using SQ3R (Robinson, 1961) on an individual basis. RESPONSE was introduced to the class and implemented in a cooperative learning setting of four students assigned to each group. The students each read the chapter, jotting down important points, questions, and new vocabulary as they

read. The groups then discussed the chapter and compiled a single response sheet which was handed in to the teacher.

The following class period, the group received the response sheet back, along with the teacher's comments. The group then had ten minutes to discuss the material prior to the entire class engaging in a discussion about the chapter. In comparing the scores on end of chapter tests using SQ3R over nine weeks with RESPONSE over a similar nine weeks period, the seventh graders scored significantly higher ($p < .01$) using RESPONSE as a cooperative learning activity.

Response and high risk students

The appeal and potential of the interactive study strategy RESPONSE is demonstrated by its adaptability within a variety of learning environments. A second example of its use is within an eighth grade skills social studies class. The class was comprised of fifteen students classified by district guidelines as learning disabled. In addition, four low achieving students were included in the group based upon teacher recommendation. The class was team-taught in the regular classroom setting where students could benefit from the content area expertise of the social studies teacher while receiving support from the learning disabilities teacher. The rationale for combining these particular students was that their learning profiles were more similar than different (Deshler, Schumaker, Alley, Warner and Clark, 1982). It was anticipated that instruction could be tailored within the confines of the class to meet the students' various needs more effectively. RESPONSE was selected as a beneficial study technique for these learners for two reasons. First, it required active involvement with the text material. Second, student responses were reinforced by both written and verbal interaction with the teachers, thus

couraging those real connections between reading and writing as advocated by Teale and Sulzby (1989).

There is a paucity of research on the best way to provide an optimum education for learning disabled adolescents (Deshler et al., 1982; Whyte, 1983). Wiederholt (in Lefstein, 1984) explains that some information is known regarding effective strategies, other information is tentative and experimental, and much remains to be discovered. In an effort to add to the meager body of existing knowledge, RESPONSE was taught and analyzed as to its effectiveness with adolescent learning disabled and low achieving populations. The results were encouraging indeed.

One marvels at the ingenuity that teachers across the country must display when faced with the array of learning difficulties and motivational concerns demonstrated by adolescents. In drawing a profile of the group involved in this study, the following characteristics would be included. First, reading levels ranged between the second and the eighth grade as measured by *The Woodcock Johnson Psycho-educational Achievement Test*. Next, there was a discrepancy between the quality of students' written and oral responses. Some students preferred talking to writing while others, as demonstrated in the example included in Figure 2, much preferred to write. (It should be emphasized that all of the participants, however, reacted positively to written comments from the two teachers on their response forms.) In addition, the group as a whole had difficulty following directions. Despite modeling the most efficient way to read, to locate important information in the textbook, and to form appropriate questions, it wasn't until the third use of the form that the majority of students were following directions as required.

Figure 1
RESPONSE completed by a regular student
RESPONSE

Name: Lindsey

Date: 1-2-90

Reading assignment: S.I. pgs 94-98 lesson 1

1. Important Points: Important Ideas — put page #'s

(Things you think are important to the topic)

- pg. 95 - at first there were no women in the colony
- pg. 95 - food ran out quickly, water was dirty, winter was coming
- pg. 96 - At the end of spring only 40 people were alive.
- *pg. 96 Captain Smith said, "He who will not work, will not eat."
- *pg. 97 The Virginia company gave permission for white, males to vote for representatives
- pg. 95 Jamestown - not in a good spot

2. Questions: Questions that come to you as you read — put page #'s.

A. Things you don't understand/words, charts, etc.

B. Things you find interesting/agree with or disagree with.

- pg. 95 - chart at bottom, what is the building in the upper left outside the fence?
- pgs. 96-97 I don't understand why people had to march everywhere after Sir. Thomas Oates arrived to serve as governor.

3. New Terms: Vocabulary, people's names, new words

- *pg 96 Captin John Smith
- pg 96 Powhatan People
- *pg 96 Sir Thomas Oates
- *pg 97 burgesses
- *pg 97 John Rolfe

*Notes: The student's answers are presented as they were written.
The RESPONSE form used has been adapted by the teacher from the original (Jacobson, 1989).*

Figure 2 RESPONSE completed by a high risk student

RESPONSE

Name: Barry

Date: 2-1-90

Chapter: (19) unit 6 402-415 American Life 1860-1900

Directions: Fill in the form as you read. The form is for notes, questions and ideas. You may write on the back if needed. Your RESPONSE will be returned to you, with comments, at the next class period.

Important points: As you read, list important information and state important ideas; write down page numbers.

- sec 1 Tenements: Large, often poorly built buildings which housed large numbers of people at low rents
Sanitation: Clean and healthful living condition.
- sec 2 Political machine: A political organization
Settlement houses: Community houses found in poor neighborhoods.
Party Boss: a strong party leader person who ran political machine was called PB.
Hull House
- sec 3 Spectator Sports: Sports that people can watch
melodrama: were plays or movies
Realistic novel: a book that describes people, places, events
Ragtime: a new style of music invented 1880's by Black Americans

Questions: As you read write down questions that occur to you along with page numbers of their source. Some questions will be ideas for discussion. For others, you will want an immediate answer; star these (*).

- * What caused the Chicago fire? pg 408
- * who invented the train? 386

New terms / concepts / vocabulary / names

Notes: The student's answers are presented as they were written. The RESPONSE form used has been adapted by the teacher from the original (Jacobson, 1989).

In general, the class had trouble completing all of the assignments. Lack of motivation was a prime concern for two-thirds of the students. Unfortunately, but probably realistically, the use of the study strategy didn't significantly impact the motivation issue for every student. It takes a longer time than the period during which the study was conducted to change firmly entrenched, detrimental habits.

In addition to the above factors, at least one-third of the class had difficulty attending to the classwork at hand. Even during the use of RESPONSE as a class assignment, several of the boys had to be redirected consistently via the teacher's presence near their desks or by specific questions designed to focus attention back on their assignment. Then, on several occasions, disorganization resulted in the loss of work. Finally, the more resistant learners in the study were characterized by passive behavior, high levels of distraction, impulsive behavior, and an occasional tendency to sleep through class. That particular trio of learners consistently handled the requirements of the response forms poorly. Despite the variety of characteristics existing in the class, however, the teaching of this study technique was valuable for the majority of students.

Findings

The overall results of the use of the response study strategy with the skills social studies group was encouraging. Following the reading of the students' work, lectures were tailored to their written questions while still highlighting critical concepts within the textbook chapter. As a result, there was a noticeable vested interest in lectures and discussion as students listened for answers to their specific questions.

Graham (1985) states that learning for students in general is a direct result of the students' activities and pursuits. Acquisition of knowledge in the skills social studies class required opportunity for, and effective use of, practice through repeated use of the RESPONSE study technique. Since learning disabled students often fail to use effective or efficient learning strategies spontaneously, teachers must instruct, review, and monitor their use during class time (Lefstein, 1984; Graham, 1985; Deshler et al., 1982). This process was followed each time the response forms were handed out. By the end of the study, it wasn't that students didn't know what was required that inhibited completion of the forms, but rather the resistant lack of motivation and follow through that impeded progress.

In looking briefly at some of the students' work, consider Rachael whose first test score was a failing grade. After the use of RESPONSE, her next written test score rose to a B, and then leveled off at C's during the rest of the study. Barry also failed the first test. Use of the technique helped him focus his attention on the material at hand; his grades rose to C's briefly, and then he stabilized at B's.

Motivated and consistent, Ken's grades remained B's both with and without the strategy. However, his verbal contributions to class discussions showed a stronger grasp of concepts after the completion of the response assignments. Ability was not an issue with Tony. When he tackled his assignments, Tony completed the forms conscientiously and tests reflected his efforts. However, his work was only sporadically turned in. Unfortunately, there were the three students who never completed a single form, rarely contributed quality comments to class discussions, and had erected barriers that even enthusiastic teachers and a high quality study skill could not penetrate. On the

positively affected their test scores and classroom discussions while facilitating concept formation.

Conclusion

With no clear-cut answers to the best way to educate learning disabled adolescents and their counterparts, the low achievers, it is imperative that viable learning strategies be researched (Lefstein, 1984; Whyte, 1983). As repeated use of the RESPONSE strategy for the majority of learners in the regular and skills social studies classrooms indicated, it is a study skill that deserves attention. It appears that with its use, regular and high risk learners can more readily contribute within a classroom literacy community (Bromley, 1989). Continued application in other content areas should be pursued to assess the benefits of RESPONSE. Upon mastery of the use of this teaching strategy, RESPONSE can be applied in a multitude of learning environments.

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Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Textbook Selection Procedures: A Smorgasbord of Suggestions and Strategies

**Jeanne Shay Schumm
Martha Doucette**

Textbook selection in the United States used to be quite simple. As Nila Banton Smith (1986) reminds us, choices in colonial America were limited to the New England Primer and a Holy Bible. Throw in a slate and a lunch pail and children were fully equipped for the school year!

However, textbook selection either for basal readers or content area textbooks is much more complex today (Farr, Tulley, and Powell, 1987). Educators charged with the responsibility of text selection are barraged with a bewildering array of textbooks. The responsibility, whether selecting textbooks for a state, school district, school, or for an individual classroom, is to make an educated choice from this bewildering array — because the consequences of the choice are monumental.

First, the outlay of expense for textbooks does not merit a margin for error. Once a decision is made, it is a decision that must be endured for five or six years due to the

economical infeasibility of reordering. Second, the texts *can* and in many cases *will* dictate the curriculum. Studies suggest that 90% of teacher decision-making is governed by textbooks (Muther, 1985c). Moreover, administrators often *expect* teachers to rely on textbooks for instructional planning (Shannon, 1987). Therefore, a simple "flip test" (i.e., a cursory examination of sample texts) is unacceptable (Powell, 1986).

In recent years, numerous professional books and articles have outlined strategies and suggestions for textbook selection. The purpose of this article is to integrate this information and to provide school or district level administrators, reading resource specialists, or individual teachers charged with the responsibility of conducting a text selection an overview of components of the textbook selection process. Readers are encouraged to select from the smorgasbord of ideas contained herein and to structure a contextually appropriate selection sequence.

The smorgasbord is organized into three sections: the salad bar, the main course, and the dessert bar. The salad bar includes topics leading to and including the initial screening. The main course incorporates methods for conducting an in-depth examination of textbooks targeted during the initial screening and then calls for a final decision. The final section, the dessert bar, encompasses plans for implementation of the textbook and an evaluation of the textbook selection process.

The salad bar

Textbook Committee. Although individual administrators or teachers may have the authority to make a text selection autonomously, more typically committees are charged with the responsibility. If the committee is limited to

administrators and teachers, then the ownership of the decision rests solely in their laps (Barnard and Hetzel, 1989). Therefore, it is recommended that the composition of the textbook selection committee represent administrators, curriculum supervisors, teachers, parents (and thus the community at large), and (to the degree that it is possible) students.

At the outset, appropriate authorities need to clarify the role and responsibilities of the committee. Will the committee make the final decision of which text to choose, make a recommendation to a governing board, or simply serve as a search and screen body? If this information is not provided automatically, the committee should seek the information out.

Selection procedure. Delineate an overall selection procedure at the first committee meeting. A proposed sequence of objectives and corresponding tasks can be presented at this first meeting, then discussed and amended. Group consensus and commitment to the procedure is critical.

Communicate the procedure (including deadline dates) to the community at large and develop a plan for keeping the community up-to-date with the procedure as it unfolds. Additionally, determine a mechanism for soliciting input from the administrators, teachers, parents, etc. who are not included on the selection committee. Devise a plan which enumerates the precise ways the communication process will be carried out (e.g., written letters, memos, public meetings).

An important component of the selection procedure is to determine the role of publisher sales representatives.

Decide if, how, and when publisher sales representatives are to be involved. Sales representatives can be helpful but, on the other hand, glitz and biased presentation can sway committee members. Barnard and Hetzel (1989) call this "the wine and cheese phenomenon."

If sales representatives are to be invited to make presentations, establish a set of guidelines. For example, if a salesperson points out flaws in the competitor's product, ask the salesperson to give specific examples of the flaw – not just to speak in generalities (Muther, 1985c). Likewise, ask for evidence to support publishers' claims about their own texts. Examine the labels – does the text really do what it claims to do? Consider timing. Should publisher representatives be present before, during, or after the time when the committee looks at materials? How many minutes will each publisher be allowed for presentation?

Needs assessment. Assessment of local needs is a prerequisite for textbook selection. Consider several areas of need, including subject matter content (what content do we want to teach?), social content (what values do we wish to impart?), readability – friendliness (are levels of difficulty and text features appropriate for the intended group of students?), instructional design (how do we wish to teach the content?), and production quality (what level of durability can we afford?) (Young and Riegeluth, 1988).

A variety of methods can be used to conduct a needs assessment (Johnson, Meiller, Miller, and Summers, 1987). A survey (open or closed-ended; telephone, face-to-face, or written) can be made of administrators, teachers, and parents to gauge their perception of needs. Focused discussions at faculty meetings or public hearings can clarify priorities and concerns.

Research update. Because the textbook selection committee is likely to be composed of members with varying levels of familiarity with current research, planning for a research update is critical. This is particularly important given the focus on classroom applications prevalent in research in recent years.

Muther (1985b) suggests limiting the research update to results only. Committees do not need to be encumbered with statistically significant differences and such. Muther provides a list of research information sources: 1) consultants from local colleges and universities; 2) consultants from local, district, or state departments of education; 3) reviews of literature from local, district, or state departments of education; 4) reviews of literature from professional organizations, and 5) *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* (Mitzel, 1982).

Defining the ideal. Information gathered from the needs assessment and research update can then be used to define and describe the ideal textbook. This "vision of the ideal" is particularly useful in guiding the committee in the selection process and, more specifically, to designate initial screening, in-depth screening, and final selection criteria (Young and Riegeluth, 1988).

Initial Screening. The final step at the salad bar is to conduct an initial screening, i.e., to target three to five texts or textbook series to scrutinize thoroughly. An initial screening checklist can be used to limit the number of texts for more intensive evaluation. Using the "vision of the ideal" as a framework, the committee can develop the checklist based on identified needs. Bailey (1988) suggests that a checklist should be relatively easy to complete and should include items relevant to each of the assessed needs.

Main course

The primary objective of this phase of the textbook selection process is to make the final decision. However, in order for this to happen an in-depth examination of each of the textbooks identified during the initial screening phase is in order.

In-depth screening. As with the needs assessment, inspect five major elements of text (Young and Riegeluth, 1988): subject matter content, social content, readability, instructional design, and production quality.

Because the in-depth examination is time consuming (but necessary), it may be prudent to appoint subcommittees to complete various examination tasks (Barnard and Hetzel, 1989). For example, one subcommittee can be charged to evaluate only the social content of all targeted series. Or, each subcommittee could be assigned one text (or one series) and be responsible for evaluating all of the five major elements.

1) *Subject matter content.* Young and Riegeluth (1988) recommend that content analysis include an examination of the depth and comprehensiveness of content coverage, currency and accuracy of information, and the credentials of author(s), consultants and reviewers. The guiding questions are, "What is being taught?" and "Is the content consistent with our designated state, district, and local curriculum requirements?"

One technique for comparing content coverage among textbooks is a story sort (Muther, 1987). With a story sort a similar story (in narrative text) or passage (covering the same content in an expository text) are photocopied and

compared. This allows for a direct examination of how different textbooks cover the same material.

2) *Social content.* Social content evaluation is guided by the question, "What values are being imparted — overtly and implicitly?" Certainly the social/content analysis of texts must reflect designated local needs and values as determined in the needs assessment. However, seek texts that offer equitable representation of races, ethnic groups, sexes, age groups, and the handicapped. Equitable representation cannot simply be ascertained by the number of pages or number of illustrations that include representation of a particular group. It is necessary to examine materials closely and systematically to detect subtle biases (Young and Riegeluth, 1988).

3) *Readability.* Students appreciate textbooks that facilitate learning. Consequently, textbook evaluation needs to identify the most "readable" textbooks by addressing three questions. The first question is *What is the approximate grade level of a textbook?* Readability levels are often reported as grade levels determined by formulas based on semantic and syntactic elements. If publishers do not provide the readability level of the textbook, committee members can estimate the grade level of the textbook by using one or more readability formulas (e.g., Dale and Chall, 1948; Fry, 1977; Raygor, 1977). Computer software is now available to avoid cumbersome hand calculations (See Figure 1).

The second question is *To what degree does the text include features that enhance comprehension?* Research indicates that text features (e.g., pre-posed questions, headings and subheadings, new vocabulary in boldface type) that make the text "friendly" or "considerate" to the

reader are critical for children with reading problems (Osborn, Jones and Stein, 1985). Several checklists for evaluating the qualitative attributes of text have been devised (Armbruster and Anderson, 1981; Bader, 1987; Irwin and Davis, 1980; Readence, Bean and Baldwin, 1985; Singer, 1986; Steinley, 1987).

Figure 1: Computer Software

Readability (Apple)
Micro Power and Light
12820 Hillcrest Road, Suite 224
Dallas TX 75230

Readability Analysis Program (Apple, IBM)
Random House
201 E. 50th St.
New York NY 10022

Reading Level Analysis (Apple)
Berta Max, Inc.
Leary Way
Seattle WA 98119

The third question is *How do students interact with the textbook?* The cloze procedure can be used to determine how well a textbook matches the reading achievement levels of students. A cloze test consists of a passage extracted verbatim from a target textbook from which words have been systematically deleted. Students' ability to construct meaning from the textbooks is gauged by how well they can supply the missing words. Readence, Bean and Baldwin (1985) provide a comprehensive description of how to construct and administer a cloze test. It is recommended that if a cloze test is used to gauge student interaction with text, the test should be administered to students of a wide range of reading abilities.

4) *Instructional design.* While content coverage refers to *what* is being taught, instructional design refers to *how* the material is being presented. An evaluation of instructional design is guided by the question, "How is content taught?" Young and Riegeluth (1988) suggest that the instructional design of texts be evaluated on three different levels: macro-level, micro-level, and message design.

The purpose of a macro-level evaluation is to get an overall picture of the instructional design of the textbook. Typically this macro-level evaluation is limited to a review of the scope and sequence chart. However, Conn (1988) proposes that an examination of various elements of individual texts should also be incorporated at this level. Textbook evaluators should survey headings and subheadings to determine the flow of presentation, and individual units to see if they are focused and manageable from an instructional standpoint.

The purpose of a micro-level perusal is to determine how a particular skill is presented. A skill trace (Muther, 1984; 1985; Cotton, Casem, Kroll, Langas, Rhodes, and Sisson, 1988) is one method for analyzing the instructional design of textbooks at the micro-level. With a skill trace the evaluator isolates a particular skill and traces it through the series of the books across all grade levels. Using this technique it is possible to evaluate systematically how a skill is introduced, developed, and reinforced.

At the micro-level it is also important to assess if adaptations for learners with special needs (e.g., mainstreamed special education students, second language learners, readers who are not yet skilled, gifted or advanced students) are incorporated in skill and concept instruction. The absence of such suggestions for adaptation will put an

unnecessary burden on curriculum supervisors or individual teachers if instructional modifications are to be developed and implemented to meet individual needs.

As skill presentation is scrutinized, it is imperative to keep in mind the implications of Durkin's classic study (1981). Does the text teach and not just test skills? In other words, are specific instructional strategies provided? Jones (1980) suggests that effective strategy instruction involves specific definition of the strategy, step-by-step instruction in using the strategy, built in opportunities for practice with specific feedback, and informing students when to use the strategy.

Message design evaluation deals with an appraisal of page layout. Does the page format facilitate learning? Are graphics in close proximity to corresponding text? Examine the message design of all major components of the text including the text itself, teacher's edition, and core supplementary materials.

Message design also encompasses supplementary materials (e.g., worksheets, workbooks, and tests). Typically publishers offer more supplementary materials than will be used. Decide which supplementary materials should be omitted from the decision making processes; examine carefully those elements that have direct impact on the quality of daily instruction. Worksheets, workbooks and other supplementary activities should be evaluated for task content, task design, opportunities for sufficient and appropriate review, clarity and consistency of instructional language, and opportunities for open ended responses (Center for the Study of Reading, 1990). Tests should include clear guidelines for administration, scoring and interpretation; unambiguous directions and item content for

students; and a distinct match between what is being taught and what is being tested (Center for the Study of Reading, 1990).

Finally, when considering message design also scrutinize teacher's manuals. Is information in teacher's manuals presented in a "considerate," usable manner? Does the teacher's manual include creative supplementary activities?

5) *Production quality.* While production quality is certainly a factor that needs to be considered, several cautions should be noted. Most texts are bound by the same companies and thus are of the same durability. Replacement and rebinding contracts are available, so if texts fall apart during the adoption cycle, they are replaced for free. You can't test durability.

Making the final decision

One of the best ways to obtain information about the worth of a textbook is to communicate with professionals currently using the text. An on-site visit to other school districts that are using the textbook can be an excellent source of information (Muther, 1985a). If on-site visits are not practical, structured telephone interviews can serve as an alternative. In either case, include at least three districts to visit or interview (Muther, 1985a).

Publishers do not have time to field test materials extensively (Muther, 1985a), nor do most text selection committees. However, it may be useful to have a limited "kid rating" to determine how children respond to the text material. Pilot testing of the text can help identify strengths and weaknesses of the text as well as student preferences.

Before the final decision is made, summarize and evaluate all data collected. Finally, reflect back on the initial designation of an ideal text, and then, *make a selection*.

Dessert bar

The selection of a text or text series is not the end. The committee should consider several additional tasks: implementation of the text, provision of suggestions for evaluation of the text while it is in use, and evaluation procedures and recommendations for successive textbook selection committees.

Implementation plan. A model for implementation of the text is mandatory for a successful inauguration. Develop an overall model for implementation that includes orientation for administrators and curriculum supervisors, in-service training for teachers, and orientation for parents. Structure a plan for distribution of new texts including early distribution of teacher's editions. Make arrangements for using ongoing support services available from publishers.

Monitoring plan. It cannot be assumed that simply because teachers and students have books in hand that all is well. Consider a model for monitoring textbook implementation. In the model incorporate short-term evaluation of textbook implementation so that adaptations and modifications to meet local needs can be made as soon as possible. Include long-term evaluation of administrator, teacher, parent, and student satisfaction with the text as well as student progress.

Process evaluation. Devote the final committee session to an evaluation of the text selection process. Document and evaluate each step of the process precisely

so that subsequent textbook selection committees have the benefit of the experience.

Conclusion

This smorgasbord is laden with a variety of selections for the salad, main course, and dessert. Some may say that it is much too heavily laden – a fast food menu would be preferable – “just give me a textbook checklist and finish the job!”

However, a fast food menu may lead to indigestion. When and if we are tapped with the responsibility of choosing a text, we need to savor each step and treat it as an opportunity to serve students, and as an opportunity for personal nourishment.

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Making Seatwork Work

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Seatwork is an activity which has very few supporters but which is a part of every school day in almost every elementary classroom. In elementary classrooms, most of the seatwork is done during the reading/language time and often occupies two-thirds of the allocated time (Allington and McGill-Franzen, 1989; Rosenshine, 1979). Seatwork serves an important management function in that it allows teachers to focus their attention on groups or individual children with varying needs and abilities. Seatwork is also supposed to provide children with some of the practice needed to become better readers and writers.

In order for seatwork activities to provide this needed practice, three criteria must be met. First, the activity must engage the child in doing something which is closely related to what you do when you read or write. Second, the activity must be something the child needs to practice. Finally, the activity must be something the child can complete successfully. Rosenshine and Stevens (1984) conclude that higher success rates are correlated with higher achievement and that a success rate of at least 80% seems necessary for optimal growth in reading. Younger and less able children need even higher success rates.

Activities which meet all three of these criteria are hard to come by. Connecting some dots and coloring a picture is

an activity most children can successfully complete but it is not related to the ability to read and write. Reading a short selection and composing a main idea is more closely related to reading and writing. For those children who can successfully do it, this seatwork activity might help them become better readers — unless they are already so proficient at doing it that they have nothing left to learn. Children who were not highly proficient at composing main ideas would probably be helped by this activity — but only if they could complete it with enough success.

Generally, seatwork activities which are assigned to individual children or groups of children with similar needs have the best chance of meeting the relatedness, need and success criteria. Activities assigned to an entire class are least apt to meet the criteria. Given the range of abilities of most classes of children, any one seatwork assignment is apt to be a waste of time for the most advanced children who already know how to do it very proficiently and also for the least advanced children who need to do it but often cannot complete it with at least an 80 percent success rate.

Elementary teachers face a difficult dilemma in providing some relatively quiet activities for the children they are not working with while they work with small groups or individuals. Though some seatwork assignments can be tailored to the individual and group needs of children, it is not reasonable (nor an optimum use of teacher time) for teachers to individualize all seatwork assignments. In *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985) include as three of their recommendations that: 1) children should spend less time completing workbooks and skills sheets, 2) children should spend more time in independent reading, and 3) children should spend more time writing.

These recommendations are noncontroversial and make sense to almost everyone. What is not clear is how to get these recommendations implemented. Over the past several years, I have worked with elementary teachers to try to find ways to implement these recommendations. In the remainder of the article, I will share with you the most practical and successful solutions I have found.

Voluntary reading as seatwork

This solution is the most obvious one and one of the least utilized. Reading is an activity which is very highly correlated with reading and writing ability. Every child, no matter how advanced, can profit and learn from doing some additional reading. If a range of books is provided and children are allowed to choose what they read, every child can succeed. Reading is also a quiet activity and reading materials are readily available in most classrooms and libraries. Since reading is so obviously the seatwork activity of choice, why is it so seldom used? Ask almost any teacher why reading is not the most commonly assigned seatwork activity and the teacher will tell you, "They won't just sit there and read!" Here is the way one fourth-grade teacher explained it to me.

I know reading is important and I know they need to do more of it but they just won't! Oh, some of them would, of course, and they'd love it but a lot of them wouldn't take it seriously. They'd read a page or two, then they'd get fidgety and start talking or cleaning out their desks. When a few started this, the others would stop reading too. They have to have something to complete and turn in and know that they are accountable for it or they just won't do it!

This explanation was typical of what teachers told me when I asked them why they didn't let the two problems of

"Not enough time to read" and "What to give them for seatwork today?" solve each other. Basically, teachers said "They won't." But we have since discovered, "They will." We have found that elementary children of all ages and ability levels will "just sit and read" if the alternative is a worksheet.

To begin, we use an analogy to explain to the children that there are many ways to become better readers. We compare learning to read with learning to play the piano or tennis or baseball. We explain that to become good at anything, you need three things: 1) instruction, 2) practice on the skills, and 3) practice doing the whole thing. To become a good tennis player, you 1) have tennis lessons, 2) practice the skills (backhand, serve, etc.), and 3) play tennis. To become a good reader you also need instruction, practice on important skills and you need to read.

We then explain to children how the teacher provides instruction, how some of the seatwork activities provide practice on important skills and we point out that we must take time each day just to read. We also point out that sometimes we get so busy, we forget to take that important time each day just to read and so we must schedule it just as we do anything else. Next, we hold up some worksheet activity (preferably one given to the whole class which has the least chance of meeting the three criteria of relatedness, need and success) and explain to the children that we will replace one worksheet activity each day with ten minutes of time just to read. We help children find books and suggest that each child choose two books since there will be no going to get or return books during the ten minutes set aside for just reading. (This rule is necessitated by the tendency we observed of poor readers to spend the entire ten minutes "looking for a book.")

When all children have their selected books, the teacher explains that the children can spend the first ten minutes of their seatwork time just reading. They will have no work to do, no questions or reports. The only requirement is that they read. The teacher then reminds the children that instruction, worksheets and reading are three ways that children become better readers and tells them that if they are not reading, they will be given the worksheet to complete. (Our experience is that without this emphasis, many children will not read. Even children who do not like to read will sit and read for ten minutes when the alternative is another worksheet.)

The teacher then calls a group of children to work with and sets a timer for ten minutes. When the timer rings, the teacher looks at the class and says something such as,

If you are ready to stop reading, you may. If you are at a great place in your book, you can continue for a minute or two but then you must stop reading and get started on your work. You can read some more when your work is finished.

The message conveyed to the children by words such as these is that "Reading is not work." When the group meeting with the teacher return to their seats, the timer is set again and they get their ten minutes "just to read" before beginning their work.

Children who read like to talk about what they read. In fact, Manning and Manning (1984) found that providing time for children to interact with one another about what they were reading enhanced the effects of sustained silent reading on both reading achievement and attitudes. Finding time for children to interact, however, is not an easy problem in today's crowded curriculum. There is, however,

a part of each day which is not well used in most elementary classrooms — the last fifteen minutes of the day. Many teachers have found that they can successfully schedule weekly reading sharing time if they use the last fifteen minutes. Here is how this sharing time works in a typical fourth-grade classroom.

Every Thursday afternoon, the teacher gets the children completely ready to be dismissed fifteen minutes before the final bell. Notes to go home are distributed. Book bags are packed. Chairs are placed on top of desks. The teacher then uses index cards on which are written each child's name to form groups of five children. The index cards are shuffled and the first five names are called. These children go to a corner of the room which is always the meeting place for the first group. The next five names which come out form the second group and go to whatever place is designated for the second group. The process continues until all five or six groups are formed and the children are in their places. Now, each child has two minutes to read, tell, show, act out or otherwise share something from what they have been reading this week. The children share in the order in which their names were called and the first person called for each group is the leader. Each person has exactly two minutes which is timed by a timer. When the timer sounds, the next person gets two minutes. If a few minutes remain after all children have had the allotted two minutes, the leader in each group selects something from that group to share with the whole class.

Teachers who have used a procedure such as this to insure that children have a chance to talk with others about what they read on a regular basis find that the children are more enthusiastic about reading. Comments such as "I'm going to stump them with these riddles when I get my two

minutes,” and “Wait till I read everyone the scary part and then leave them hanging,” are proof that sharing helps motivate the reading. The popularity of the books shared with the other children is further proof. Sharing on a specified afternoon each week puts it on the schedule and ensures that it will get done. Using the cards to form the groups is quick and easy and helps ensure that the children will interact with many different children across the year.

The procedure just described, however, worries some teachers (and me too) because it sounds regimented. What if children don't want to share on Thursday? What if what you want to share takes ten minutes rather than two minutes? What if you don't want to share with the people who end up in your group? These and other questions are valid concerns and must be considered — but we must also consider the alternative. In the best of all possible worlds, reading and sharing would take place daily in a less formal, regimented way. In the real world of many classrooms, however, reading and sharing get pushed aside for the more formal, scheduled activities. It should be the goal of every elementary teacher to be able to say at the end of each week, “All my children took time to read just for the pleasure of it this week and they all had a chance to talk with others about what they were reading and hear what their classmates were reading.” This goal can be achieved in informal, less structured ways and it can be achieved with a structure such as that described here. What matters is that reading and talking about what you read play a larger role in all children's reading experience.

Daily writing as seatwork

Elementary children are writing much more today than they were a decade ago and it is clear that writing helps children become both better writers and better readers.

Writing, like reading, tennis and piano, can be improved by instruction, by practicing specific writing strategies and by just writing. It is the "just writing" practice that we have found can become a part of the seatwork time. In classrooms where the ten minutes of just reading is established, teachers find it easy to help the children understand the parallels between how reading helps you become a better reader and how just writing helps you become both a better writer and a better reader. In classrooms which do not do the daily ten minutes of voluntary reading, you would want to use a piano, tennis or another "real-world" analogy to help children understand the role of instruction, specific practice and just doing it in becoming proficient and fluent at anything.

There are many similarities and some differences between how we structure the classroom for the daily writing and the daily reading. For both, we help the children to understand that just doing it is what counts. We don't grade what they write but we do check to see that something is written. (In some classrooms, teachers give students a point each day for writing. These points are then added as bonus points to the final language grade. This should only be used if the teacher believes "they won't do it if it doesn't count for the grade.") Children like to share what they have written so we set aside the last fifteen minutes of a designated afternoon and use the index cards to put them in groups and let them each share something they have written each week.

The daily writing is done in a spiral-bound notebook which is used exclusively for this purpose. Many teachers find that this notebook, if kept in the children's desks, is a too convenient source of paper. A sixty-sheet notebook which should last half the year is quickly used up if paper is torn out and used for other purposes. So teachers often store

the notebooks on a shelf and children pick theirs up each morning and replace them when finished. Instead of designating a time limit of ten minutes, we specify an amount. Most teachers tell the children to write "about a page." (This is not as much as it sounds because we have the children write on every other line so that if they choose to revise some of these first drafts, there is space to write in additional information or make corrections.) This "about a page" limit should not be too strictly enforced. Children should understand that they might write a little less today and a little more tomorrow but that across the week, they should average about a page each day.

The biggest problem we have encountered with the daily writing is the "what to write about" problem. Just as we let them read about whatever they choose, we want them to write about whatever they choose to write. In some classrooms, however, many children were out of things to write about after the first month of school. Some teachers found that it helped to offer a possible topic for children who "couldn't think of anything." Soon these teachers discovered that they were out of topics. To ensure variety in writing topics, we came up with a different writing stimulus for each day. This is the scheme used by one fifth-grade teacher:

Monday: newspaper day. This teacher always brought in his Sunday paper and read something that he knew would be of interest to the students each Monday morning. After some discussion, the class had two minutes to brainstorm a list of words related to the newspaper article which were written on a sheet of chart paper. Students were told that they shouldn't worry about spelling when they wrote but that this was their chance to get the teacher to spell any word they could think of that they might want to

use in their writing. Using the newspaper as a springboard to writing each Monday morning had the added benefit of bringing real world reading materials into the classroom and giving the class a weekly reminder that their teacher read.

Tuesday: literature connection. This teacher always had a book that he was reading to the class — after lunch each day and to fill little snatches of time throughout the day. On Tuesday, he would use the book currently being read as a springboard to writing. Again, students had two minutes to brainstorm any words they might need.

Wednesday: science/social studies connection. “What are we learning about and what could we write about that?” was the question this teacher asked himself while driving to school on Wednesday mornings. Students described and defended which kind of storm they thought would be the most devastating while studying weather, recorded their thoughts and feelings as a pioneer child crossing the Colorado mountains and tried their hands at verses for a “space ballad.”

Thursday: the real thing. Writing is usually much more vivid when there are real objects available to see, hear, touch, smell or even taste available to the writer. On Thursday, this teacher stimulated the writing with real objects. The objects were sometimes common (a tennis racket, a bar of soap, a guitar, a rabbit, three dozen doughnuts) and sometimes exotic (a boomerang, a 1940's radio, an odd-shaped implement the purpose of which is unknown to the students). Children in this class couldn't wait to get to school on Thursday to see “what he brought today.” (The object was always hidden under a blanket on the front table and unveiled with flourish and fanfare.)

Friday: surprise me day. On Friday, this teacher never gave the students a topic. But all during the week, when students shared news with him or when particular events happened, he would say, "that would make a great Friday topic!" As the year went on, students were often overheard to say, "I've got a great Friday topic!"

As with the reading, there are elements of structure here which are worrisome. There are some days when children are just not in the mood to write. Should they have to write even when they don't want to? Should everyone write about a page each day? Once a week for fifteen minutes is not really enough sharing time. Moreover, real writers find their own topics and children should find their own topics. Giving students varied springboards to writing and recording a two-minute brainstormed list of words, however, has definitely stimulated children to write who would not write otherwise. The best compromise we have come up with is only to suggest topics if many children run out of topics, to allow students to write about their own topics if they have them and to have at least one "Surprise Me" day each week.

Worksheet partners

There are some worksheet activities which do help children become better readers. The best candidates for good worksheet activities are those that meet the three criteria suggested at the beginning of the article. The strategies or skills practiced are clearly related to reading; the children need practice on those strategies or skills; the children can complete the activities with success. While no one worksheet activity will be appropriate for all children in a class, worksheets can be assigned to small groups based on their needs and abilities.

Cooperative learning research (Johnson and Johnson, 1985) suggests that children will learn more from these activities if they work cooperatively with someone else. Worksheet partners is a cooperative learning structure in which two students of similar ability are assigned to work together. One partner is assigned to be "the thinker," and the other partner is "the writer." The thinker reads each question aloud and gives an answer. The writer writes the answer if he or she agrees. If the writer disagrees, both partners must work together to agree on an answer. If they cannot reach agreement, they write down both answers with their initials next to each.

At a designated time, all students who have completed this worksheet meet with the teacher. Together, they go over the assignment and reach consensus on the best answers. Students who have incorrect answers do not mark anything or assign grades. Rather, upon returning to their seats, they fix any incorrect answers and turn the seatwork back in. The next time partners do a seatwork activity, they switch the writing and thinking roles.

Children like working together. (Usually, they would rather be the thinker than the writer because they think that the writer is doing all the work. We don't tell them that the thinking is the real work.) We make working with your partner a privilege and withdraw that privilege if they don't follow our three rules: 1) use whisper voices, 2) complete work with a good effort which shows that "two heads are better than one," and 3) treat others as you want to be treated. Children who lose their partner privilege do all worksheet pages alone for the rest of the week. On Monday, however, we begin a new week with a clean slate and everyone has a chance to prove that they can work with a partner.

Relatedness, need and success

Voluntary reading, daily writing and seatwork partners are ways of organizing which help meet the three criteria for useful seatwork. Voluntary reading and daily writing clearly meet the relatedness and need criteria. For voluntary reading, the success criterion is accomplished by allowing children to select what they read from a wide variety of materials. For daily writing, the success criterion is met when teachers are accepting of whatever writing the child is able to produce. Having the children complete worksheets with a partner does nothing to solve the relatedness and need criteria. Teachers must determine which worksheet activities meet these criteria for which children. The worksheet partner cooperative learning structure does, however, help children achieve success. Changing the classroom seatwork routine to include one or more of these activities results in seatwork working better for children and teachers.

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Multi-Session Reading Inservice: A Step In The Right Direction

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Teachers, like members of other professional groups, are expected to learn, to grow, and to renew themselves. Although the need for effective inservice is evident and the qualities of effective inservice appear to be well-documented (Samuels and Pearson, 1988), school administrators seem still to be relying heavily on ineffective inservice formats. As university professors, we are frequently called to present the typical "one-shot" inservice session designed to provide "something for everyone" in less than two hours, with no provision for teacher participation or for follow-up activities and discussion.

Successful staff development programs are characterized by the application of innovations in the classroom setting, local materials development, collaborative planning, observation of the innovative practices in use, and principal participation in training (McLaughlin and Berman, 1977; Meyer, 1988). When staff development activities are closely related to the day-to-day responsibilities of the participants

and involve practice in simulated and classroom settings followed by feedback and coaching, the transfer of skills and strategies to classroom instruction is most likely to occur (Joyce and Showers, 1980; Singer and Bean, 1988). Duckworth (1981) stated that the majority of one-shot inservice formats resulted in a transfer of only 5-10 percent, while in-class coaching and provision for feedback resulted in a 90% transfer to classroom instruction.

Educational change necessitates an ongoing program of staff development with ample provision for teacher-to-teacher and teacher-to-consultant interaction with a continued emphasis on feedback and discussion related to working through the problems of implementation (Fullan and Pomfret, 1977; Carnine, 1988).

Purpose of the study

Despite what we know about inservice effectiveness, many inservice programs provide little opportunity for teachers to participate actively, to practice strategies with classroom materials, and to receive feedback following classroom implementation of the strategies. The study reported here was undertaken to determine whether or not the characteristics of effective inservice could be documented in an experimental study to have an effect on use of process-oriented vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies in the classroom.

This study considers the effect of a number of inservice sessions on understanding, appeal, perceived usefulness, and planned use of the strategies taught. Of major interest were the differences among the traditional one-session inservice (where teacher time for a single session is spent in an audience-receptive role), a three session inservice (where the additional time focuses on

active participation in using the strategies), and a five-session inservice (where the additional sessions emphasize feedback regarding strategy use). This study was a joint effort between three educational agencies that deal directly with inservice: public school districts, a university, and a state Educational Service Center (ESC). Study design, follow-up, and reporting of the results were responsibilities of university personnel while the staff development sessions were conducted by the ESC reading consultant.

Subjects and their districts

The initial subjects of the study were 64 third- through sixth-grade teachers from eight Midwestern rural or small town school districts. Because not all teachers originally participating completed all of the inservice sessions for their assigned group, 58 teachers comprised the final number of subjects.

The eight participating school districts were randomly designated as either one of the two treatment groups, those receiving three sessions or five sessions, or as one of two control groups. To be involved in the study, the school district had to meet three criteria: (1) have at least two sections of grades three through six, either within the same school or by combining two elementary schools in the same district; (2) volunteer to be in the pool of districts from which the random sample of districts would be drawn; and (3) agree to the random assignment of treatment or treated-control groups.

Independent and dependent variables

The controlled independent variable of focus for this study was number of sessions. Other independent variables considered in the analysis of the results were respondents' perceived ability to teach vocabulary and comprehension

as the inservice began, prior knowledge of the strategies taught during the inservice, previous inservice in reading, number of reading inservices attended during the previous three years, and level of interest in attending this inservice.

The dependent variables considered were specifically related to the five strategies taught during the inservice: understanding of each strategy, general theoretical appeal of each strategy, perceived usefulness to students of each strategy, and planned use of each strategy.

Inservice content

The content of the inservice sessions conducted by the Educational Services Center staff member was selected from *Becoming a Nation of Readers: Training Modules for Workshops in Reading Comprehension* (Hiebert, 1986). Five strategies formed the basis of the inservice – the conceptual approach to teaching vocabulary and four comprehension strategies: semantic mapping, idea mapping, reciprocal teaching, and the content DR-TA.

For a conceptual approach to vocabulary, ties are established between the new word and familiar experiences via a number of examples and non-examples of the word and word maps (Schwartz and Raphael, 1985) that show behaviors, causes, effects, and visual descriptions of the word. Additionally, discussion focuses on appropriateness or inappropriateness of the word in a variety of experiential contexts and student-completed semantic feature charts (Johnson and Pearson, 1984) with characteristics listed across the top and the key word and related words listed down the side.

A semantic map (Hanf, 1971; Johnson, Pittelman, and Heimlich, 1986) presents a visual demonstration of an

important concept. Students brainstorm what they know about a particular topic and develop categories of their prior knowledge. The key concept is written in the middle box or circle with lines radiating to key categories.

An idea map (Armbruster and Anderson, 1982) helps students to focus on the organizational patterns of text. Idea maps might be simple lists or compare-contrast charts with similarities and differences highlighted in chart form. The map could also show a time sequence, a cause-effect sequence, or a problem-solution sequence.

Reciprocal teaching (Palincsar, 1984) aims at developing students' abilities to generate questions, summarize, predict, and clarify potentially confusing parts of the text. The teacher models these various strategies encouraging the students to be active participants. Students gradually assume the teacher role, asking their classmates questions, asking various classmates to summarize the text, asking classmates to predict what might happen or come next, and asking classmates to identify and clarify confusing parts.

Like the narrative DR-TA, directed reading-thinking activity (Stauffer, 1969), the Content DR-TA is based upon predicting and reading to discover whether or not predictions were accurate. When using this strategy, teachers have students skim the text (a chapter from a content area text or part of a chapter) for five minutes. Then the teacher and students generate questions that they think the text will answer, attempt to answer the questions, justify their answers based upon what they learned during the skimming period, and read to confirm or reject their answers.

While these were obviously a great number of strategies to present, we felt the need to attempt to simulate the

traditional "one-shot" inservice session where many ideas and/or strategies are typically presented (usually in the hope of "having something for everyone"). Since the major purpose of this study was to compare the typical one-session inservice with a multi-session plan, all groups were provided with the same first session, a typical theory-based lecture session in which the five strategies were presented.

The three-and five-session treatment groups then participated in two sessions that focused on modeling and guided practice of the same five strategies. Teachers experienced the strategies as students with time provided for participants to plan their use of these strategies in their own classrooms with their own teaching materials. Feedback, sharing and peer coaching were the focus of the fourth and fifth sessions that the five-session treatment group received. Participants shared problems and successes they had encountered with using the strategies with their own students. Peer group interaction focused on possible ways to modify the strategies to make them more successful.

Instrumentation

In order to judge teacher receptiveness to the inservice and inservice effectiveness adequately, both a pre-inservice questionnaire and a post-inservice questionnaire were administered. The pre-inservice questionnaire provided data relative to the possible influence of a number of uncontrolled independent variables upon the knowledge, appeal, usefulness, and planned use of the five strategies taught: 1) the degree to which teachers felt effective in teaching vocabulary and comprehension, 2) the degree of knowledge that the teachers had with respect to the specific vocabulary and comprehension strategies to be taught during this inservice, and 3) the degree of interest that the teachers had in attending this inservice.

The mean rating for respondents' ability to teach vocabulary was 2.228, while the mean rating for their ability to teach comprehension was 2.351, on a scale of one to four where 1 = very effectively, 2 = effectively, 3 = somewhat effectively, and 4 = not effectively. Mean ratings for prior knowledge of each strategy to be taught ranged from 4.000 to 4.776 on a five point scale where 1 = have used frequently in the classroom, 2 = have used infrequently in the classroom, 3 = know about in some detail but have never used, 4 = sounds familiar, and 5 = never heard of it.

The mean rating of teacher attitude toward attending the inservice was 2.207 on a four point scale where 1 = looking forward to it, 2 = have some reservations about it being worthwhile but am hoping to gain some new and useful ideas, 3 = have serious doubts about its usefulness but am willing to attend, and 4 = am attending only because it is required/expected. Other data obtained on the pre-inservice questionnaire concerned prior coursework and inservice in the area of reading. On average, teachers had completed 9.2 semester hours of undergraduate study and 3.0 hours of graduate study in reading and had attended 1.6 workshops in reading during the last three years.

A post-inservice questionnaire was administered at the conclusion of the inservice for each group. Participants first rated their understanding of each strategy on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 = thoroughly understand, 2 = understand well enough to try, 3 = need more information before trying, and 4 = confused. Then they rated the general philosophical appeal of each strategy, where 1 = impressed, 2 = like, 3 = no strong feelings, and 4 = do not like. Next they rated the usefulness of each strategy for their students where 1 = very useful, 2 = generally useful, 3 = somewhat useful, and 4 = of little or no use.

Table 1

Comparison of group means for treated-control and experimental groups with respect to factors that may affect understanding, appeal, perceived usefulness and planned use of the strategies taught

	Total n=58	Treated Control Groups		Experimental Groups	
		#1	#2	#1	#2
Ability to teach vocabulary	2.228	1.867	2.625	2.250	2.100
Ability to teach comprehension	2.351	2.267	2.625	2.313	2.100
Knowledge of concept approach to teaching vocabulary	4.000	4.077	3.833	4.077	4.000
Knowledge of semantic mapping	4.172	4.400	4.312	4.000	3.909
Knowledge of content DR-TA	4.776	5.000	4.750	4.687	4.636
Knowledge of reciprocal teaching	4.259	4.400	4.250	4.375	3.909
Knowledge of idea mapping	4.155	4.333	4.000	4.250	4.000
Years since a course in reading	8.396	6.833	12.000	7.438	6.400
Undergraduate hours in reading	9.200	13.692	8.857	6.067	8.300
Graduate hours in reading	3.019	3.000	1.789	4.750	1.900
Number of reading workshops (last 3 years)	1.600	1.357	2.533	.800	1.727
Attitude toward participation in this workshop	2.207	2.667	2.750	1.688	1.545
Groups 1 & 2:	Received one inservice session				
Group 3:	Received three inservice sessions				
Group 4:	Received five inservice sessions				

Finally they rated their planned use of each strategy, where 1 = frequently, 2 = sometimes, 3 = rarely, and 4 = never. The lower the rating for each dependent variable, the greater the understanding, the more positive the general appeal, the greater the perceived usefulness for

their students, and the more frequent the planned use of the strategy.

Results and discussion

Participants' responses to the pre-inservice questionnaire indicated that these teachers were fairly confident of their ability to teach vocabulary and comprehension even though they had very limited prior knowledge regarding the strategies of focus for the inservice. The teachers were not actively involved in reading inservice and advanced study in reading and had reservations about the usefulness of attending the inservice. Table 1 lists means for the various non-controlled independent variables for the experimental and control groups. For purposes of analysis, perceived ability to teach vocabulary and comprehension were combined to form the independent variable Teaching Ability, and prior knowledge ratings of the five strategies were combined to form the Prior Knowledge Variable.

Several findings of this study are noteworthy. First, with respect to the dependent variable of Strategy Understanding, a step-wise regression analysis (Table 2) indicated that only the number of sessions and the number of undergraduate hours in reading accounted for a significant amount of variance among the groups. Another significant finding involved the significance of teacher attitude toward inservice (Table 2). For the dependent variables of Strategy Appeal, Perceived Usefulness of the Strategies to Students, and Planned Use of the Strategies, the independent variable of Attitude Toward Attending the Inservice was the only factor that accounted for a significant amount of the variance found among the groups. The importance of attitude is certainly not surprising and must

be seriously considered when planning future studies and inservice programs.

Table 2 Stepwise regression for the dependent variables of understanding, appeal, perceived usefulness, and planned use of strategies taught			
Dependent Variables	Independent Variables Affecting the Dependent Variables		
	Number of Sessions	Undergraduate hours	Attitude toward attending inservice
Understanding	p=.0079 (F=7.604)	p=.0001 (F=10.873)	NS
Appeal	NS	NS	p=.0130 (F=6.590)
Perceived Usefulness	NS	NS	p=.0086 (F=7.434)
Planned Use	NS	NS	p=.0002 (F= 15.975)

An analysis of variance of group means (Table 3) indicated that the only areas of significance were in favor of Group 4, the group receiving five inservice sessions. Participants' understanding of both semantic mapping and idea mapping was significantly greater ($p<.05$) when compared to the understanding of these two strategies by the other treated and treated-control groups. Similarly, Group 4's planned use of idea mapping was significantly greater ($p<.05$) than the planned use by the other three groups. Though most differences among means were not statistically significant, inspection of group means indicated that the group receiving five sessions (Group 4) generally rated the five taught strategies more positively in terms of

degree of personal understanding, theoretical appeal, perceived usefulness to students, and planned use, as compared to ratings by the treated and treated-control groups.

Table 3

Comparison of group means for the experimental and treated-control groups with respect to: understanding, appeal, usefulness, and planned use of strategies

	Total (n=58)	Treated - Control Groups		Experimental Groups	
		#1 (n=15)	#2 (n=16)	#3 (n=16)	#4 (n=11)
Understanding of					
Vocabulary	1.875	2.182	1.692	2.000	1.500
Semantic Mapping	1.759	2.000	1.983	1.813	1.091*
Content DR-TA	2.172	2.333	2.250	2.188	1.818
Reciprocal Teaching	2.086	2.133	2.188	1.875	2.182
Idea Mapping	1.776	2.200	1.875	1.688	1.182*
General Appeal of					
Vocabulary	1.902	1.846	1.917	2.100	1.667
Semantic Mapping	2.035	2.286	2.000	2.125	1.636
Content DR-TA	2.293	2.400	2.375	2.438	1.818
Reciprocal Teaching	2.190	2.200	2.438	2.063	2.000
Idea Mapping	2.086	2.333	2.188	1.938	1.818
Usefulness to Students					
Vocabulary	1.550	1.615	1.583	1.700	1.000
Semantic Mapping	1.772	1.929	1.875	1.813	1.364*
Content DR-TA	2.103	1.867	2.375	2.313	1.727
Reciprocal Teaching	1.982	1.867	2.125	1.800	2.182
Idea Mapping	1.776	1.933	2.000	1.688	1.364*
Planned use of					
Vocabulary	1.667	1.667	1.643	1.900	1.333*
Semantic Mapping	1.895	1.929	2.000	2.063	1.455*
Content DR-TA	2.121	1.867	2.250	2.375	1.909
Reciprocal Teaching	2.103	2.067	2.375	1.750	2.273
Idea Mapping	1.897	2.200	2.063	1.750	1.455*

Groups 1 & 2: Received one inservice session
 Group 3: Received three inservice sessions
 Group 4: Received five inservice sessions

* $p < .05$

The only exceptions to this finding were for planned use of the Content DR-TA and understanding, usefulness, and planned use of Reciprocal Teaching. Negative ratings by the five-session group for Reciprocal Teaching may have been due to recognition that this approach includes four distinct strategies. Although teachers may feel upon introduction that they understand Reciprocal Teaching, continued work with the approach makes its complexity apparent.

Summary and conclusions

The findings of this study confirm initial expectations about the qualities of effective staff development programs. As expected, the five-session treatment group had a significantly greater understanding of the strategies taught as compared to the other treated or treated-control groups even when the effects of influencing factors were removed. Five sessions, where the fourth and fifth sessions focused on additional practice, feedback, and peer coaching, seem to have been needed to produce a significant increase in understanding of the strategies taught during the inservice.

Neither the experimental group receiving three sessions nor either of the treated-control groups receiving one session were significantly more positive in their understanding, theoretical appeal, perceived usefulness, or planned use of any strategies taught. A need for future research studies involving both multi-session designs and verification of the specific contributions of characteristics of effective inservice offerings remains. As teacher educators, we have a responsibility to see, and to *heed* the documented qualities of effective staff development. Multi-session inservice is one small step in the right direction.

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Using Writing as a Clinical Intervention

**Michael P. French
Kim E. Reinhart**

The programs at the Bowling Green State University Reading Center are designed to help both elementary and secondary children improve their literacy skills by offering a variety of assessment and developmentally appropriate reading programs. These programs include individualized instructional programs which utilize a variety of language-based teaching strategies and techniques, including the use of writing as a clinical intervention.

According to Heller (1990), reading and writing are interconnected pathways to literacy. For many children enrolled in special reading classes (e.g., Chapter 1 or a learning disability resource room) this literacy pathway has become obstructed. For these children, reading has become a succession of stops and starts, changes in direction, and failed trips. Accordingly, the goal of instruction at the Reading Center is to help children find their way through these road blocks and detours. In a very short time, we have found that the writing process has provided just the "vehicle" for this journey to literacy.

The use of writing with children at-risk is not a new concept (Heller, 1989; Roser, Hoffman and Farest, 1990;

Tierney, Readence and Dishner, 1990). In programs such as Reading Recovery, writing is used to establish an understanding of the literacy process. According to Tierney and his colleagues, in learning to read by writing, children are able to see the interconnections between the two processes (p. 371). Likewise, at the Bowling Green State University Reading Center, writing is used to teach basic reading skills, to promote strategic reading, to develop metacognitive awareness and schema, and to develop a sense of ownership and pride in the children (See Figure 1).

How does writing promote skilled reading? One set of skilled reading characteristics is provided by Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985). According to this report, skilled reading is an interactive process which is constructive, fluent, strategic and motivated, and a lifelong pursuit. In developing each aspect, writing can provide access to reading proficiency.

Skilled reading is constructive

In writing stories, poems, and expository texts, the child constructs meaning. One type of activity we use to promote constructive comprehension is providing text for wordless picture books. In order to complete this reading/writing activity, the child must demonstrate comprehension of the story as shown through illustrations.

Skilled reading is fluent

Authors read what they write. They read to themselves as one method for revising; they read to others in order to gain assistance in editing their work; and they read to various audiences. In developing written work at the Center, children have many opportunities to read their work throughout the writing process. In each oral reading activity, students receive support and feedback from their audience.

According to Rasinski (1989), providing support to students during oral reading can facilitate growth in fluency (p. 691). In addition to reading to their clinician or to another teacher, they read to their parents, the directors, and, of course, to other children enrolled in the program, process which usually takes place as part of a formal author's chair activity.

Figure 1 Sample Activities

Traditional language experience activities Working with their clinicians students participate in a variety of experiences which promote writing. Cooking activities include making sandwiches, salads, and s'mores. Other activities include nature walks, tours of local stores, and scavenger hunts in the Education Building.

Writing comics Developing their own comic strip is a motivating activity for the children. Working with their clinician or with other children, the students read published comics, develop master templates and compose story strips. Some children use the *Disney Comic Strip Maker* (Sunburst) to publish their work.

Writing stories and poems All children write at least one story or collection of poems. In developing these written products, a conventional five-step writing process is used. Students share their writing during the author chair activity with their classmates and parents.

Computer-assisted writing Students use a variety of computer programs to assist in their reading and writing development. Traditional word processing programs allow students to enter text, edit, and format pages. In addition, students use story-makers like *Once Upon a Time* (Compu-Teach) to write stories which integrate text, sound and graphics. *The Print Shop* (Broderbund) is used to publish poetry or shorter pieces of text. Hypertext programs such as *The Manhole* (Activision) are also used to motivate student writing.

Other writing experiences Recently the children in the Reading Center went "to the end of the sidewalk." After reading Shel Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, students went outside and created a sidewalk quilt outside the education building. Within each sidewalk square, the children wrote their own poems, stories, and reactions. Some children copied and illustrated their favorite poem from the book, while others drew and labeled pictures.

Skilled reading is strategic

During the writing process, as children revise and edit, they must use metacognitive strategies to discern the sense of their writing. Even during language experience dictations, children can be heard saying, "That doesn't make sense!" By developing outlines based on story grammar, students develop effective strategies which can be transferred to other story-reading tasks (Pressley and Harris, 1990). Also, as children compile a personal portfolio of written texts, they use their own work as a personal dictionary – often referring to past stories to find the correct spelling of a word.

Skilled reading is motivated

According to Alderman (1990), successful teachers of at-risk students must combine a high degree of personal efficacy with high and realistic expectations for student achievement. As defined by Alderman, efficacy refers to "teachers' confidence in their ability to influence student learning and motivation" (p. 28). According to Ashton and Webb (1986), teachers with a high degree of personal efficacy are more likely to view low-achieving students as teachable. An obvious key to this expectation is the structuring of activities which will lead to student success. And tied to this success should be the message that the student made the success happen.

Language experience activities provide a natural pathway to self-esteem and success. Heller (1989) has found that even older at-risk students can benefit from the process of dictating and reading stories. At the Center, the LEA process is taken one step further – to publishing. Publishing can take place in several ways. For beginning students, or those with serious dysfunction, a sentence strip fluently read can be the published work. For others, a comic

strip, a poem, or the beginnings of a book show that students have mastered print. For others, the final product in this process will be an actual book (big or small) with title page, dedications, and illustrations. Regardless of the extent of the published writing, the ultimate goal of the process is the development of a published text which can be fluently read and easily comprehended by the student.

Skilled reading is a lifetime pursuit

Those who work with at-risk students know that intervention takes time. As Alderman states, "there are no miracles" (1990, p. 30). The process of learning to read and write takes time for able children, and children at risk are likely to experience success at a slower pace. Aside from these realities, the written products created by children at the Center are real indicators of growth. They demonstrate to the children, their parents, and the teachers that learning is taking place — that the pursuit is worthwhile.

In each of the defining characteristics enumerated above, writing is used to promote awareness of skilled reading behaviors. What impact does this have on the students' disabilities? Our preliminary data show a positive effect on the children's reading and writing abilities as well as on their attitude about reading. We are continuing to collect samples of children's work in clinic portfolios. In these portfolios, clinicians reflect upon and formally evaluate student progress. Also, we conduct conventional pre-post evaluations as appropriate. In both these formal and informal measures, we observe growth. We see growth in spirit, we see reports from teachers that tell us the children are performing closer to grade and age expectation, and we are receiving reports from parents and teachers who feel that the children are improving in both self-esteem and in literacy skills.

By using writing as a primary intervention vehicle, teachers can provide for skill development, strategic thinking, and self-esteem building. In resource rooms, using writing can provide for the basis of portfolio building and interventions. The activities can be easily adapted to classroom settings as well. As Heller (1990) has written, "The acquisition of reading and writing enables us to develop into the unique individuals we are all capable of becoming."

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Software

Disney Comic Strip Maker (Sunburst Communications, Inc., Pleasantville NY)
The Manhole (Activision, Menlo Park CA)
Once Upon A Time (Compu-Teach, New Haven CT)
The Print Shop (Broderbund, San Rafael CA)

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Using Poetry With Adolescents in a Remedial Reading Program: A Case Study

**Sheila Shapiro
Mary Welch**

Teachers who teach reading to low-achieving adolescents know that good, high-interest, low-vocabulary instructional materials are difficult to find and sometimes unavailable. Even when good materials are available in the form of magazine articles, short stories, and easy novels, they are often overwhelming to an adolescent who is reading four-to-five years or more below grade level.

Fortunately, a great deal of good contemporary poetry is now available for adolescent audiences in the form of attractive, well-illustrated books. Using poetry with adolescents in a remedial setting has several advantages over the use of other types of instructional materials. Poems are quite short compared to prose pieces. Teenagers who have suffered through many years of reading failure and are threatened by a "sea of print" are not scared away by a poem of five or ten to twenty lines that can serve as the basis for a lesson. Another benefit, related to the brevity of poems is their format. Even though poems are relatively short, the format is not necessarily childish, and therefore not insulting to the adolescent learner.

Contemporary poetry for youngsters can be sophisticated or silly, yet the vocabulary tends to be relatively easy. Additionally, the elements of rhyme, rhythm, and repetition help low-achieving readers develop fluency as they read and reread favorites.

Poetry is meant to be read aloud — and performance needs to be backed up by practice. This forms the perfect rationale for practicing the oral reading of poems to be recorded on a tape recorder or read for another audience at a later date. Finally, poems serve as models for writing poetry, an activity that can help remedial readers strengthen encoding skills, without diminishing the primacy of content over form.

Recommended sources

There are many options as to the type of poetry to use. You can find poetry written about almost any topic or theme, including adolescent favorites such as cars, friendship, love, self and *food*! We haven't met a youngster yet who didn't respond to the laughter and nonsense of books of poetry by Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, or Spike Milligan.

Other adolescents prefer more serious themes found in books like *Back to Class* by Mel Glenn or *Rainbows are Made* by Carl Sandburg. Eve Merriam's love poems in *If Only I Could Tell You* provide yet another dimension of poetry appropriate for teenagers. Book-length single poems such as *Tornado!* by Arnold Adoff or books of a series of related poems that build a "story" such as *Waiting to Waltz* by Cynthia Rylant offer a minimal number of words with illustrations that enhance meaning and provide a basis for discussion and follow-up activities. (A list of recommended books is provided at the end of this article.)

A portrait of Eddie

Eddie, a fifteen-year-old boy, classified Severely Learning Disabled (SLD) in school, had been attending our university-based reading clinic for several semesters. This study is based on his attendance at a four-week summer session where he was provided with one-on-one instruction. Eddie's folder was full of details regarding behavior problems in school, lack of interest, short attention span and little motivation to read. A previous teacher had written, "Eddie will do anything to avoid reading." Eddie was going into tenth grade and read at approximately a high fourth to fifth grade level.

Eddie's reading comprehension varied depending on the length of the material to be read. Given brief prose pieces, he could read with good comprehension at the fourth-to-fifth grade level. However, his comprehension of longer pieces fell dramatically because of his short attention span.

Eddie's oral vocabulary was quite good, especially when he talked about his favorite topics — cars, motorcycles, and fifties music. When reading, Eddie was overdependent on phonic analysis to decode unfamiliar words. Often, when he succeeded in saying a word, he continued reading along, even if he was not getting any meaning from the print. He rarely self-corrected.

Eddie's oral reading was very slow and halting. He read in a monotone as he carefully decoded words. His slow silent reading rate indicated that he was using the same procedures when reading silently.

Clinicians in past semesters had experienced negative results using journal writing, written conversations or any

other activities that involved writing. One of the possible reasons cited for this was the fact that Eddie's handwriting was very poor, and sometimes illegible. Indeed, Eddie mentioned during the first meeting that he did not like his handwriting.

Eddie walked in the first day of clinic and announced, "My teacher thinks I'm obnoxious." If he intended this comment to set the tone for his level of participation, he must have been surprised when Mary, his teacher, shot back, "Good, I like to eat obnoxious kids for breakfast!"

Biography poem

Eddie's first encounter with poetry was with writing a biography poem to be displayed with other students' poems on a bulletin board in the hall. The format of the poem is as follows:

Title

First name

Three adjectives

Brother or sister of _____

Who likes _____

Who fears _____

Resident of _____

Last name

Mary introduced the assignment to Eddie and wrote her own "Bio Poem" along with him to model the process she was using. She especially wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to show Eddie that the writing was anything but instantaneous. This assignment became the basis for a great deal of informal, introductory talk. Mary learned about Eddie as they chose adjectives to describe him, and discussed his likes and fears. Eddie relaxed and responded positively as Mary shared information about herself with

him. After much discussion of the line beginning, "Who fears...", Eddie wrote, "Who fears talking to girls." When he learned that the poem was going to be "published" on the bulletin board, he revised the line to read "Who fears nothing!!" The final revision of the poem read:

Mr. Harley

Eddie

Cool, understander, nice

Brother of Michael

Who likes all kinds of music,

Harley Davidsons, girls

Resident of Chicago

Williams

Eddie had a positive response to writing the poem. He enjoyed the conversation and the opportunity to talk and write about himself and his interests. He especially liked the fact that other kids in the clinic read his poem.

During the first few lessons, Mary read a variety of poems from *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein, *Eats* by Arnold Adoff and *The New Kid on the Block* by Jack Prelutsky. Eddie enjoyed the humor of these poems, listened attentively and sometimes read along with Mary on the second reading.

While these activities were successful, other reading and writing activities introduced were being met with indifference and/or avoidance behaviors by Eddie. One of his favorite diversionary tactics was to start talking about cars. After reviewing Eddie's responses to these preliminary activities, Mary decided to use poetry as the basis for Eddie's instructional program.

Acrostics

Since the format of the biography poem provided a nice framework from which to write, Mary thought it would suit Eddie's needs best to continue using some prescribed poetic form. At the same time, she didn't want to limit Eddie's writing to a glorified "fill in the blank" experience. Acrostics, while not as highly structured as the biography poem, would provide the needed framework for writing.

Mary brought in rough drafts of acrostics written by the eighth graders in her classroom. Using drafts rather than final copies again reinforced the idea that the poems did not emerge as finished products. Mary and Eddie read the acrostics together, talked about them, and their responses to them. When Mary suggested that they write their own acrostics, Eddie immediately chose the word "Harley" to work with. Eddie wrote the following acrostic:

Harley

*Have fun with the guys
Awesome to ride on the highways
Really loud
Loan to a friend
Easy Rider
Yes, I want one.*

Meanwhile, Mary continued to read poems from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. During one lesson, she handed the book to Eddie, saying, "Here, you find one and read it to me." Eddie paged through the book to find the shortest poem and read it – first silently, then aloud. He then found one of the longest poems in the book and challenged Mary to read it aloud. The poem, "The Dirtiest Man in the World" is eight stanzas long, the text filling almost two complete pages. The first three stanzas of the poem are:

*Oh I'm Dirty Dan, the world's dirtiest man,
I never have taken a shower.
I can't see my shirt – it's so covered with dirt,
And my ears have enough to grow flowers.*

*But the water is either a little too hot,
Or else it's a little too cold.
I'm musty and dusty and patchy and scratchy
And mangy and covered with mold.
But the water is always a little too hot,
Or else it's a little too cold.*

*I live in a pen with five hogs and a hen
And three squizzly lizards who creep in
My bed, and they itch as I squirm, and I twitch
In the cruddy old sheets that I sleep in.*

When Mary finished reading the third stanza, she stopped and announced with mock horror, "This is absolutely disgusting! I'm not going to read anymore of that..." And with that, she shut the book. This was all the challenge Eddie needed to pursue this poem. He opened the book, hunted through the pages until he found the poem, and tried to cajole Mary into reading it. When Mary refused, Eddie went ahead and read the entire poem, needing only minimal help with the words. He loved Mary's negative reactions to the poem, and did his best to emphasize the truly revolting lines!

When Eddie finished reading, Mary complimented him saying that in spite of her dislike for the poem, he read it well. Eddie responded that the poem wasn't really "that disgusting" and proceeded to reread and enumerate what he thought were the "most disgusting lines."

Time for another challenge. Mary, tempting Eddie, said, "You mean to say you could write a poem even more disgusting than this one?" Eddie met her challenge with, "Well, maybe I could..." And with that, he became completely engrossed in developing a title that would out-do Silverstein's "The Dirtiest Man in the World." Picking up the character's name, "Dirty Dan," and the word "disgusting" that had been bandied about, Eddie decided the title for his poem would be "Disgusting Dirty Dan." Because Eddie had enjoyed writing the acrostic, Mary suggested that perhaps he could write another acrostic, using this new title.

"Okay," said Mary, getting down to business (or prewriting, if you prefer), "Let's go through the poem and pick out all the disgusting words." After making a list of these words, Eddie reread the poem to make sure that he hadn't missed any words for his list. Eddie and Mary then continued to generate other words to add to the list. As they took turns coming up with new words, Eddie reread the list several times, tossing out some words that "weren't disgusting enough." Rereading the words in the list over and over again provided Eddie with the opportunity to increase his familiarity with the words, thereby increasing his fluency. When neither could think of any more words, Mary suggested using the thesaurus as a resource. This research produced wonderful words such as "despicable," "unreasonable" and "dreadful."

After this list was completed, they began to group words according to the letter demands of the acrostic, the sounds of the words, and the content of the poem. Eddie liked to group words that began with the same letter. This led to alliterative lines such as "Gross, grimy, and greasy" and "Gooley, glumpy garbageman."

As the poem began to take shape, Eddie elaborated with adjectives, used some words – and even some lines – that he liked from Silverstein's poem. The final revision of the poem read:

Disgusting Dirty Dan

Dreadfully disgusting Dirty Dan

Indigestible human being

Slob

Gross, grimy, and greasy

Unreasonable to look at

Slimy, swampy scumbucket

The cruddy old man

Itchy

Neighbor to maggots

Gooney, glumpy garbageman

Despicable

Icky, creepy, crawly

Really obnoxious

The cooties that run through his hair

Yellow through and through.

Dirtbag and sleazeball

A rusty, smelly stiff

Nasty man, nasty Dan.

This isn't great poetry – or good poetry – or perhaps it's not poetry at all. Perhaps the poetry happened when Eddie played with language to create the acrostic. The poetry happened when Eddie read it and dramatized it, using his voice to emphasize and elongate certain words for effect. Eddie read his poem to other children in the clinic, tape recorded it with great expression, and thoroughly enjoyed himself. He continued to read it at least once at every lesson that followed. The multisyllabic words strung together

throughout the poem are probably some of the most difficult words that Eddie had ever read with fluency and confidence.

Haiku and cinquain

Seeking to go beyond the acrostic form, Mary introduced Eddie to haiku poems in *Haiku* (Ward and Harper, 1973). After reading several of the poems, they discussed the demands of the form. Both Mary and Eddie wrote haiku, working through the syllable counts as they went. Eddie wrote:

*Harley Davidson
Ride into the setting sun
Stay with their design.*

Eddie loved the idea that he could think about, talk about and write about Harleys. He thoroughly enjoyed his haiku, and responded positively to Mary's suggestion that he try writing a cinquain about a Harley. Eddie wrote the following cinquain:

*Harley
Sleek, awesome
Good for highways
Always rule the streets
Loud!*

Lyrics

Eddie usually came in to the reading clinic singing or humming – popular songs, songs of the fifties, and rap lyrics. Mary used this interest of Eddie's as the basis for further writing. She read examples of raps written by others and she and Eddie had fun reading them together. When they wrote their own raps, both Mary and Eddie had some trouble working with the rhythm. Eddie helped Mary and she helped him, each acting as an audience for the other as

they drafted. Eddie was able to produce the following rap about — you guessed it — a Harley.

A Harley Rap

*Harleys are cool, especially when they're blue
They look so fine, all of the time.
When I go for a ride, everybody wants a ride.
If I say no, you'll say go!
So bye-bye, it's time to fly.*

Mary then used *The Poetry of Rock* to introduce Eddie to written song lyrics. She also found the sheet music for “Surf City,” by the Beach Boys. Eddie had never before seen the lyrics to any of his favorite songs, and was delighted to see, read and sing “Surf City.”

At this point in the clinical sessions, Eddie's behavior had improved to a degree that we never could have anticipated. He was motivated, involved, and had established a trust level with Mary that enabled him to take risks. And take risks he did! Everyone working in the clinic wanted to know what was going on as they heard Mary and Eddie singing lines back and forth, trying them out as they wrote new lyrics to “Surf City.” Starting with the original first line, Eddie wrote:

Woody

*I have a thirty-four wagon and call it a woody.
Car show, here we come!
It's kind of old fashioned, but it's real groovin'.
Car show, here we come!
I put in a back seat and a rear window.
I got to give it a push just to make it go.
And I'm going to the car show on Monday night.
You know we're going to the car show,
and it will be all right.
You know we're going to the car show,*

*and it will be all right.
Two girls for every car!*

Eddie was able to edit, putting in words to fit the rhythm of the song. Interestingly, Mary noted that Eddie's handwriting had improved significantly as they drafted, revised, and edited the poems and songs he wrote.

The end of the summer session was nearing. Eddie had read many poems and written seven of his own. At this point, Mary typed all of the poems and presented Eddie with the idea of binding them into a book. Eddie was impressed with seeing his work typed, enjoyed rereading all of the poems again, and liked the idea of making a book. He and Mary worked together to order the pages for the book. Eddie drew a cover and after looking at several published "author blurbs," described himself in his "About the Author" section as a "girl watcher, Harley watcher, and old car watcher."

Concluding thoughts

At the beginning of this article, we discussed the rationale for using poetry with adolescents. Using poetry as the basis for this remedial reading program proved beneficial in many ways. The format of the poems didn't insult Eddie as a teenager; the brevity of the poems didn't threaten him as a disabled reader. This was evidenced in the positive attitude with which Eddie approached reading and writing poetry. His talk about being "obnoxious" changed to talk about Harleys, cars, girls and music. And this talk, rather than being diversionary, became the basis for his writing. Additionally, Eddie was able to play the role of teacher, telling Mary about cars and motorcycles as they drafted the poems.

Poems became models for writing that strengthened Eddie's encoding skills. The biography poem, haiku, cinquain, acrostics, raps and songs provided Eddie with "plans for writing" that were both accessible and engaging. As Mary and Eddie wrote together, Eddie watched Mary revise her work. As his confidence grew and he began to care about what he wrote, Eddie was willing to work at revising and editing his work rather than just "getting something down" to please the teacher.

Reading and writing poetry helped develop vocabulary skills. Rhyme, rhythm, repetition and poetic form all served to help Eddie focus on words, play with words, and enjoy words. This resulted in growth in meaning vocabulary and in his ability to read multisyllabic words.

Poetry became performance for Eddie. His self-confidence grew as he read and reread his and Mary's poems, and those of published poets. His pride in his work was clearly evident as he read his poems to others. As Eddie performed his poetry, two things occurred. First, his reading fluency increased as a result of rereading. Second, he became more and more aware of audience for his writing. Binding his poems into a handsome book provided him with a tangible product – evidence of his work – proof of its importance.

Working with reading handicapped teenagers can be difficult. Negative attitudes, limited abilities and inappropriate materials can combine to create barriers to further learning. Using poetry in the remedial setting is one means to provide teenagers like Eddie with productive and enjoyable reading instruction.

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Appendix I Recommended Books

- Adoff, A. (1989). *Chocolate dreams*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.
 Causley, C. (1970). *Figgie Hobbin*. New York: Penguin.
 Dahl, R. (1982). *Roald Dahl's revolting rhymes*. New York: Bantam.
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The Composing Process: A Springboard for Literacy Development

**David L. Brown
L. D. Briggs**

The composing process involves the methods used by writers to discover ideas, formulate goals, make plans, express ideas, and assess, revise, and edit their writing. Several years ago, few studies examining the children's composing process could be found in the literature. Yet recently, there has been an increased interest in all facets of composing. This interest has resulted from a concern for improving reading and writing skills, and has been the impetus for increased research activity. As a result of this research activity, models describing the composing process have been developed, and new issues are continuing to gain attention. One such issue relates to the techniques that children use when composing.

This article will review the research related to composing and will also describe the composing process used by young children as they develop into mature writers. Mastering this process is essential if children are to reach their optimum level of literacy development.

Research on composing

Lamme and Childers (1983) studied composing behavior by observing children, aged 2 to 4 years, who were composing in a group setting with a responsive adult. For sixteen forty-five minute sessions during a six-month period, the researcher acted as a support person for and an observer of the children. The study revealed that the children's composing process included a variety of scribbling, drawing, and writing behaviors. During the composing sessions, the children dictated, then wrote, then drew, and then shared their completed products with other students. Planning and revising occurred simultaneously as the children wrote their stories and drew supporting pictures.

A very extensive investigation (Graves, 1982) of the composing process was conducted at the New Hampshire Writing Process Laboratory. Employing an ethnographic approach, the researchers, during a two-year period, studied the composing process used by sixteen children. Eight of the children were from the first and second grades, and the other eight children were from the third and fourth grades. The sixteen pupils were selected to represent children of low, middle, and high writing abilities. The children's spontaneous comments were recorded, and their composing behaviors were videotaped and then examined. Afterwards, the children were questioned about their methods of composing.

As a result of the investigation, Graves identified three developmental stages in the children's composing process: 1) overt and early manifestation of speech, 2) page-explicit transitions, and 3) speech features implicit in text (Graves, 1982). Each of the developmental stages of composing was analyzed, and the pertinent characteristics of each stages were identified. During stage one, speech directs and

enhances the children's writing. Stage two is characterized by children drawing during the composing process. The third stage of children's writing growth resembles talk written down (Graves, 1982).

The participant-observer technique has been used in the kindergarten classroom for exploring the relationship between oral and written language. After using this technique, Dyson (1982) found that the children used talk to request information, to express their feelings, and to regulate social relationships. Furthermore, she noted that the children created messages, encoded messages, read messages, and drew letters during writing activities. Dyson's study also revealed that kindergarten children's writing moves from a "graphic" to an "orthographic" representation of speech. Only two of the kindergarten children actually tried to write messages. Initially, the children drew letters with no concern for meaning. Based on her observations, Dyson (1982) formed several conclusions:

Children's first representational writing serves to label (organize) their world. Talk surrounds this early writing, investing the labels with meaning. Eventually talk permeates the process providing both meaning (representational function) and means (directive function) for getting that meaning on paper (Dyson, 1982, p. 26).

Hall, Moretz, and Statom (1976) found that early-writing children came from home environments where writing was used in functional ways. Also, the parents read to their children and furnished reading and writing materials for their children's use. Genishi and Dyson also recognized the important role of parents in furthering literacy development: "parents are major contributors to the growth of communication in their children, particularly because of their role in

focusing and maintaining interaction" (Genishi and Dyson, 1984). In addition, "by observing their parents and others interacting with print, children learn that reading and writing have functional environmental uses" (Brown and Briggs, 1987). Consequently, the home environment may accelerate or delay children's composing development.

The composing process

Children often compose as a social activity, and this activity has an impact on the quality and quantity of their writing. Piazza and Tomlinson (1985) discovered that children who engage in social interaction during composing learn fundamental principles of how to write. Children understand that writing serves as a tool for communication and, also, that writing is a cognitive activity which involves thinking. Thus classroom teachers should encourage the natural conversations that occur when children are composing. This peer intervention, before the writing occurs, allows children to draw ideas from the feedback of their peers and to build a context or background for discovering meaning.

There are several classroom procedures that promote thinking and writing and, therefore, would enhance the composing process. Fitzgerald (1989) advocates group thinking conferences during which children read and criticize their own writing. Furthermore, Fitzgerald recommends some specific strategies for teachers to use: 1) The teacher asks students to write. The topic or type of writing may be assigned by the teacher, or the teacher may ask the students to choose their own topics. 2) Later (usually the next day), a small group of four to eight children assembles with the teacher, and students take turns reading their own pieces aloud. 3) After each student reads, the teacher asks three broad questions to motivate discussion: a) what was

the piece about? b) what did you like about the piece? and c) do you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for the author? 4) Later (usually the next day), students are given the opportunity to revise their own pieces (Fitzgerald, 1989).

The group thinking conference shows how social interaction can be used to promote critical thinking which, in turn, facilitates the revision process in children's writing. This is an excellent example of how literacy acquisition can be facilitated by social activities (Fitzgerald, 1989).

For younger children, the involvement of the teacher as a scribe could promote a united collaborative effort. Hayes (1990) recommends the use of language experience charts that are dictated by the children with appropriate collaboration among class members. The final composition could serve as the children's first published material if the product were put into book form.

Other researchers have studied the composing process. For example, Flower and Hayes (1980) collected think-aloud protocols from novice, as well as expert, writers to determine the cognitive processes involved in the problem solving of writing. From their findings, Flower and Hayes (1981) developed a cognitive-process theory of writing. Their model includes three major elements: "the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes" (Flower and Hayes, 1981). Planning, translating, and reviewing characterize the writing-process element of the model. Constant monitoring occurs as the writer continues to evaluate and revise the product. The Flower and Hayes (1981) cognitive-process model emphasized four major points: 1) "writing is... a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize

during the act of composing," 2) "these processes have a hierarchical, highly embedded organization in which any given process can be embedded within any other," 3) "the act of composing itself is a goal-directed thinking process, guided by the writer's... goals," 4) "writers create their own goals... by generating both high-level goals and supporting sub-goals which embody the writer's developing sense of purpose, and... by changing major goals or even establishing entirely new ones based on what has been learned in the act of writing" (Flower and Hayes, 1981).

Other research has identified additional aspects of the act of composing. For example, some researchers have described the composing process as consisting of three stages: conception, incubation, and production (Britton, et al., 1975). Thus, researchers have different opinions about what stages should be included in the act of composing.

Some researchers have made composing models which have described writing as a recursive activity. One such researcher is Perl (1980) who believes that composing is a recursive process which varies cyclically from one writer to another. Perl arrived at this conclusion after numerous observations of the composing processes used by many types of writers, including undergraduate and graduate college students and teachers. The recurring or recursive behaviors were noted in the writers' rereading after a sentence had been written. After continued reflection upon the topic, non-verbalized perceptions, and pauses, the writers reach to their inner feelings for content and structure. Perl (1980) stated that when children are composing, the observer "can see the shuttling back-and-forth movements of the composing process, the move from sense to words and from words to sense, from inner experience to outer judgment and from judgment back to experience" (Perl, 1980).

Therefore, as text is modified by restructuring, meanings are changed and refined. Innovative methods for observing and recording the steps used in the restructuring process have brought about a change in the way composing is viewed.

Recent research on the composing process and the writing development of young children has provided teachers with guidelines for needed changes in classroom practice. Harste and Burke (1985) have suggested a strategy called the authoring cycle. This strategy promotes activities which integrate reading and writing. Children are encouraged to use writing in functional ways. For example, children write in journals or learning logs; they write letters to pen pals; and thus writing becomes an integral, natural part of thematic teaching in content areas.

The decade of the eighties has been recognized as a period during which extensive research has been concerned with the composing process and the cognitive development of young children. Of course, the research is continuing into the nineties. This inherently beneficial research has caused a literacy revolution in the early childhood instructional programs. These subtle yet profound changes have resulted in educationally-prudent instruction that is more developmentally appropriate for young children.

Summary and conclusions

In conclusion, the composing process integrates the cognitive and psychomotor domains of learning. The child conceives ideas and utilizes the skill of writing to put the ideas on paper. This coupling of thinking and writing produces written communication that can be shared. It seems intuitively logical that these educational activities – reading

and writing – should be integrated in educational practice. This integration should be inherently beneficial to the child, as well as the teacher whose goal is to plan lessons that enhance learning.

The composing process seems to be very individualized because it depends on one's goals. Therefore, teachers should plan writing activities which emphasize broad themes and which contain valued and interesting content. In other words, the learning experiences should stimulate each student's desire to write.

The research examining the children's composing strategies indicates that the process is a highly socialized task for young children. Obviously, the children like to share their compositions with classmates, and this sharing motivates the children to become better readers, as well as writers. But in many classroom settings, children are required to perform composing tasks in solitude which would deprive them of the interaction that could contribute to their success.

Furthermore, during children's composing processes there seems to be a relationship between writing and types of drawing. Graves (1975) noted that children's narratives were more dynamic when the children's drawings took profile form. On the other hand, static facefront pictures resulted in stories which lacked action and a plot. There is no question that art adds an additional creative dimension to the composing process. Art can greatly influence composing activity, and teachers should use art for this purpose.

Unfortunately, many teachers teach art, reading, and writing separately. Yet, as children write, reading takes place. Furthermore, sometimes when writing, children

enjoy using art to add a pictorial dimension to their stories. These three activities of the curriculum — reading, writing and drawing — should be integrated in practice so that children can be provided with a more meaningful learning experience. The result will be a composing process that can serve as a springboard for literacy development.

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Reviews

Professional Materials

Literature-Based Social Studies: Children's Books and Activities to Enrich the K-5 Curriculum. Written by Mildred Knight Laughlin and Patricia Payne Kardaleff. Oryx Press, 4041 North Central at Indian School Road, Phoenix AZ 85012-3397. ISBN: 0-89774-605-8. 148 pp. US\$27.50 1991.

Reviewed by Lynn Nations Johnson
Western Michigan University

Laughlin and Kardaleff have designed sets of integrated social studies/literature lessons with accompanying related children's literature and follow-up activities. With each lesson they have provided some bibliographic information for additional research and study by the children. The lessons cover a broad range of topics within the traditional "expanding social studies curriculum" format: self, family, community, etc. However, in the midst of the traditional approach, attention to multicultural issues is woven. The set of lessons on families illustrates this multicultural weaving. The study of family is one of the traditional K-5 social studies topics. Rather than presenting a single type of family configuration, Laughlin and Kardaleff have the children explore and discuss multiple family configurations relevant to today's society. Examples include two-parent families with children, single-parent families with children, and families with extended family residing in the same household. A lesson follows wherein the definition of home and its function are explored, followed by one on the economics of family living and a child's potential contribution. The closing lesson for this set examines family configurations, lifestyles, and

traditions in diverse cultural settings such as Nicaragua, South Africa, Kenya, Japan. In addition to the multicultural elements found in the study of families, later lessons either focus on or present related literature and activities which explore Appalachian, Native American, and Black American cultures, to name a few, as well as diverse world cultures.

Laughlin and Kardaleff's book would serve a teacher in productive ways as a resource book. It is *not* designed as a textbook, but rather is designed to supplement social studies programs and to inspire the creation of programs where none exist. It offers a beginning step to integrated social studies/literature units, but is not a book to be used as a sole source. A number of high quality pieces of contemporary children's literature are introduced; this is a rich resource.

While recognizing the positive attributes of this book, it is important to recognize it as a resource with limitations as well. Although the multicultural component is consistent throughout, sparse attention is given to the reality of the human condition, e.g., the plight of the poor and the working class; ethnic/racial, class, and gender discrimination. Educating children to have a *full* understanding of humanity, *all* we experience, and *why*, is an integral part of multicultural education.

In short, the book reflects a white, middle-class orientation to life and to diversity, the very orientation multicultural education seeks to overcome. Laughlin and Kardaleff do take social studies and children's literature one step closer to the integration of their content and purposes, and they take these two disciplines several steps closer to their integration with multicultural content. The reality is we still have a long, long way to go and many more steps remain to be taken.



Books for Children

Aldo Peanut Butter. Written by Johanna Hurwitz. Illustrated by Diane de Groat. Morrow Junior Books, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN 0-688-09751-0. 128 pp. US\$12.95.

Reviewed by Sherry R. Myers
Western Michigan University

When Aldo asks for a puppy for his birthday, he gets more than anyone bargained for: he gets five of them! His parents allow him to keep two, which he names Peanut and Butter. Summer vacation has just begun when Aldo's parents are called away on separate emergencies. Suddenly, Aldo and his two older sisters, Elaine and Karen, are in charge of the house. *Aldo Peanut Butter* is the chronicle of their week's adventures on their own, which include green hair, a lobster race across the kitchen floor, and a puppy covered in syrup. When the children learn that their parents are coming home – and bringing their grandparents to live with them (which may mean getting rid of one of the puppies) – the action becomes fast and furious as Aldo works to save the day... and his puppies.

The adventures are of realistic siblings who love each other and work together, but don't always agree. Aldo's decisions as he tries to train his puppies and bring order back to the house are ones that children can easily picture for themselves. That is the joy of *Aldo Peanut Butter*. Aldo cares about his family and all living things; he is bright, inquisitive, and brave, but he is never portrayed as a miniature adult. Because of this, the reader will love Aldo and will gladly join with him in his adventures.

Hurwitz's text is manageable for readers who are ready for chapter books. Diane de Groat's detailed black and white illustrations add dimension to the characters and scenes. For children not quite ready to attempt the reading, *Aldo Peanut Butter* is a treat to listen to, and the chapters are short enough to make good bedtime reading or listening.



Alison's Zinnia. Anita Lobel, author and illustrator. Greenwillow Books, a division of William Morrow and Company, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN 0-688-08866-X. Hardcover, 32 pp. US\$14.95. 1991.

Reviewed by Linda K. Judy
Western Michigan University

Alison's Zinnia is an extraordinarily clever alphabet book for all ages. In keeping with alphabet book tradition, each letter represents an object; in this case, the theme is flowers. However, Lobel's unique approach is many layered. The author/illustrator succeeds in finding a way to connect flowers to girls' names: "Once I found the verbs, it all seemed wickedly simple. Girl-verb-flower, linking fluidly and gracefully from page to page and connecting the last action in the book back to the beginning."

Alison acquired an Amaryllis for Beryl.
Beryl bought a Begonia for Crystal.
Crystal cut a Chrysanthemum for Dawn.

...

Xantippe x-ed a Xanthium for Yolanda.
Yolanda yanked a Yucca for Zena.
Zena zeroed in on a Zinnia for Alison.

The fact that the primary illustrations of each flower are botanically correct provides the possibility of integration with a science curriculum. Lobel's choice of verbs provides a stimulating vocabulary challenge to her readers on many levels. Her secondary illustrations visually describe the action of the verb to make each sentence have meaning to even the very youngest of readers. Lobel's vivid use of color, painterly style and strong page layout, along with her creative use of alliteration and "girl-verb-flower" connections combine to produce a uniquely stimulating and universally appealing alphabet book which flows easily from one page to the next.

Building a House. Written by Byron Barton. Greenwillow Books, a division of William Morrow and Company, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. 31 pp. ISBN 0-688-09356-6. US\$4.95. 1990.

Reviewed by Cindy Overly
Western Michigan University

Building A House offers an opportunity for curious onlookers to observe the sequence of tradesmen involved in constructing a new home from the groundbreaking all the way to moving day. Because the text is simple, and the illustrations are bright and charming in their childlike style, *Building a House* is ideal for beginning readers.

This story will spark interest when shared at home or in the classroom, since children and adults all seem to be fascinated by buildings under construction. This behind-the-scenes glimpse of the workers also provides an opportunity for youngsters to learn some basic information about careers related to the construction business.

Elfwyn's Saga. Story and pictures by David Wisniewski. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-688-09589-5. US\$13.95. 1990.

Just as skillful writing may inspire children to write in a new style, so dramatic illustrations may inspire children to attempt a new art form. David Wisniewski is both author and illustrator of this handsome book, and the cut paper panoramas are amazingly vivid and varied.

There are deep and important truths in myths, and children have no difficulty in making their way through make-believe worlds; adults do children no favors by stressing the "truth" of fantasies. The ending of this story turns the tale into a lovely *pourquoi* story — a "why" story explaining the origins of a natural phenomenon — with the sparkling dust fragments of the shattered crystal glimmering in the northern sky as the Northern

Lights. But to introduce this beautiful ending with the assertion, "When you meet the Hidden Folk in a dream, they will tell you this tale is true" seems unnecessary and unwise. (JMJ)

Manatee on Location. Written by Kathy Darling. Photographs by Tara Darling. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-688-09030-3. 48 pp. \$14.95. 1991.

Fact-packed and illustrated with handsome photographs (and, in the chapter on "Manatee Anatomy," with clear, simple diagrams), the text is as exciting as it is informative – one of many instances of an upsurge in content area trade books as tempting to read as good fiction. Two chapters are in the form of dated diary entries about manatee observations: Chapter 1, "Water Baby," describes the birth of a manatee calf; Chapter 7, "Drownproof," vividly recounts the injuries to a manatee inflicted by a motor boat. The authors encourage a commitment to wildlife preservation. (JMJ)

Summer Time Tales

Yellow Ball. Written by Molly Bang. Morrow Junior Books, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-688-06314-4. 24 pp. US\$12.95. 1991.

By The Sea. Written by Michelle Koch. Greenwillow Books, William Morrow and Company, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-688-09549-6. 24 pp. US\$13.95. 1991.

The Twelve Days of Summer. Written by Elizabeth L. O'Donnell. Illustrated by Karen Lee Schmidt. Morrow Junior Books, 105 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-688-08202-5. 32 pp. US\$13.95. 1991.

In good time for preparation for vacation reading, here are three gorgeous, multifaceted storybooks with on-the-beach settings. The protagonist of *Yellow Ball* is a beachball. "Catch Throw Uh-oh" — and the big yellow ball is off on a dramatic

trip through the wind and waves, finally to reach the only proper new home for a lost toy — the arms of a welcoming child. Bang's lovely illustrations show the wide human family enjoying the beach together. Every part of the the book is charming, including her thanks to a third grade class "for helping me to learn to draw BIG."

By the Sea also presents a simple text and ingenious illustrations which show a diversity of people. Michelle Koch has chosen to contrast paired words through text and illustrations: *search* (the seagulls are dashing about the beach, heads down) and *find* (three birds in a row have each caught a fish). This picture book will inspire conversation and storytelling, and will be enjoyed by preschoolers and primary age children alike.

Summer at the seaside is celebrated in *The Twelve Days of Summer*. The text can be read, or sung — "three jellyfish, two pelicans, and a little purple sea anemone" — and the illustrations are enchanting. A wonderful family book to enjoy on the way to a joyous outing. (JMJ)



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To submit an item for potential review, send to Kathryn A. Welsch, Reviews Editor, *Reading Horizons*, Reading Center and Clinic, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo MI 49008.

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