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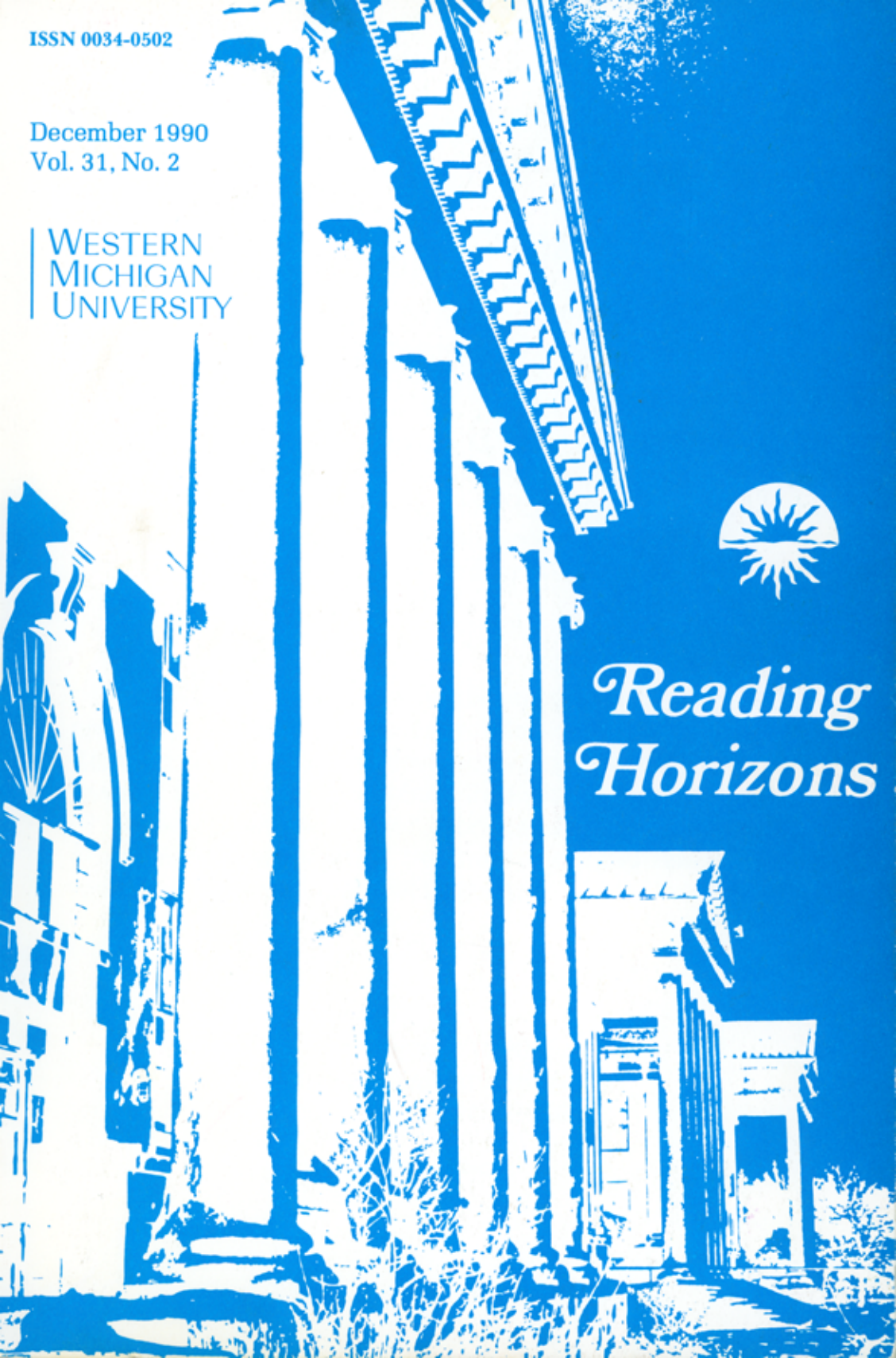
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What Kids Taught Us About Reading Instruction: Two Professors Return to the Classroom

**Robert C. Cooter, Jr.
D. Ray Reutzel**

Two years ago we left the insulated environment of the university setting to return to the chaos and excitement of full time teaching in two first-grade classrooms. Our colleagues wondered why we felt this need, and the teachers in the schools where we were going were pleased, but skeptical, about our abilities to cope with the tumult of classroom teaching again. We often asked ourselves why were we embarking upon this bold, new adventure. After some contemplation of the question, we decided there were at least four good reasons for returning. First, we believed that we, like many professors, would benefit from occasionally re-immersing ourselves in the reality of classroom teaching. Second, we realized that our credibility with our preservice and inservice teachers would increase dramatically as a result of our return. (Our students often challenged us to prove our ideas in classrooms!) Third, we were anxious to learn about how children go about solving the reading and writing puzzle. And fourth, we were particularly interested in implementing holistic reading and writing strategies and routines in our classrooms. We felt that

holistic teaching would best facilitate our observations of children struggling to solve the reading-writing puzzle.

We expected to learn a great deal from our experience, but we never dreamed that we could learn so much about reading and writing from these youngsters. After all, we were the ones with doctorates and years of teaching experience in the public school classroom and the university! Some months after completing our year in the classroom and gathering hours of videotapes and field notes, we sat down and tried to make some sense of all that we had learned and experienced. With a good deal of thought and struggle, we developed a list of insights we gained and which we feel summarized our experiences while working shoulder to shoulder and knee to knee with these wonderful child-teachers.

Insights into literacy learning

- **Insight 1: Reading and writing are reciprocal processes.**

We began writing the first day of school. Looking over the shoulder of students one day, we saw that Nan was busily working away at a new creation. Underneath several pencil arches were the letters "RNBO." As Nan colored each arch a different color it quickly became clear that her story had something to do with a rainbow. Thereafter we referred to the point at which children began to see the relationship between letters, sounds and words as the *rainbow connection*.

Initially some children would say things like "I don't know how to write!" or "I don't know how to make words yet!" These children had already been conditioned to believe they were unable to create and "write" their own stories. With a little reassurance that they *could* compose on

whatever level they felt comfortable (e.g. picture writing, invented spellings) our children were soon producing stories about such topics as "My New Baby Sister," and "The Toledo Zoo."

Children, as writers, became fascinated by new layers of meaning which can be created through written language. They noticed the words and phrases used by favorite authors and the way mental pictures can be created through language. The transfer value from writing to reading in our classrooms was impressive. Children learned to apply what they already knew about story structure as authors. Excitement at discovering just the right word for a story helped improve sight word knowledge. Invented spellings helped the children learn about beginning, medial, and ending sounds in words. Context clues were learned in the natural habitat of language. It became clear that when children develop as writers they likewise develop as readers.

• **Insight 2: Children learn from example.**

It is no secret that some of what we teach in literacy education is very abstract and can be difficult for children to grasp. For instance, classroom discussions related to story grammar elements (e.g. theme, setting, conflict) can be a real "mind burner" for primary students if approached traditionally. Teachers should be living demonstrations of the love of literacy. As an integral part of teaching, children should be able to observe their teachers enjoying the reading and writing process daily.

We adopted a learning from example attitude and spirit in our first-grade classrooms by sharing all sorts of popular children's literature in what we called "Sharing Time." Such titles as *Each Peach Pear Plum* (Ahlberg and Ahlberg, 1985), *More Spaghetti I Say* (Gelman, 1987), *Boss for a*

Week (Handy, 1984), and *Clifford's Family* (Bridwell, 1984) helped us to demonstrate our own enjoyment for books and gave us excellent opportunities to model literacy. We also engaged in a great deal of storytelling, poetry readings, chants and song. Likewise, we felt it important to share examples of our own writing. As children participated in Sustained Silent Writing (SSW), we as teachers also spent at least ten minutes producing our own compositions. Not only did these Sharing Time activities provide us with many opportunities for teacher modeling, they frequently served as natural vehicles for whole group minilessons on the reading/writing processes.

• **Insight 3: Language and instruction must make sense.**

One day in the reading circle, Heather was struggling to understand what the teacher meant by using the context of a passage to deduce the meaning of a word in print. Try as we may, these professors-turned-first-grade teachers could not seem to get the message across. Stephanie, one of Heather's classmates, finally became a bit annoyed with the lack of language precision on the teacher's part and decided to intervene. She tactfully leaned over and whispered, "just think of a word in its place that *makes sense*." Holdaway (1984) writes:

Any procedure which makes a child think that reading does not need to make sense, or even that there is something more important than making sense, will make reading and writing harder for children. Even in learning phonics or other parts of the word-solving process children should never lose sight of the comprehending purpose (pp. 16-17).

For us that meant doing away with workbook assignments and skill sheets as a means for teaching reading

strategies. Instead of creating instructional dilemmas for us as teachers it was actually very liberating. For example, rather than attempting to teach context clues using a relatively boring skill sheet, we simply took passages from a book like *Leave It To Minnie* (Gelman, 1987) and constructed a modified cloze activity using "post-it" note pad slips to cover selected words. In this and many other ways we were able to teach children to integrate all the reading cues in a whole group format using authentic reading tasks.

• **Insight 4: Using predictable language is effective.**

In our classrooms, children were introduced to reading through the use of predictable books. The writings of Holdaway (1984) and others suggest that highly predictable books (those dealing with familiar concepts and repeated language patterns) are easiest for children to read, but we were eager to discover to what degree this might be so for our first graders. We found that our children embraced predictable literature and learned to read various forms of predictable text quickly. The more stimulating and creative the text, the more quickly it was learned.

Environmental print was extremely useful because of its predictable nature. Logo language from such sources as cereal boxes, candy wrappers, and advertisements for restaurants provided a wealth of reading opportunities. In one activity an alphabet book was constructed by children using logo language examples.

Children also delighted in books like *The Napping House* (Wood, 1984) that featured repeating phrases and ideas. As children began to embrace the reading act through predictable literature we heard many inspiring remarks from parents, such as one from a mother at the September open house who stated how pleased she was

that her daughter, Jennifer, had books she could read and enjoy. "She reads them over and over to anyone who will listen!"

• **Insight 5: Approximating, risk-taking and safety-netting should be stressed.**

In our classrooms only constructive peer criticism was allowed. For example, one day we were reading *Clifford's Family* (Bridwell, 1984) in a small group (mixed ability) setting. One child came to the sentence "Nero was a *rescue* dog at a fire station" but she read "Nero was a *running* dog at a fire station." Instead of criticizing her for not calling the word correctly she was congratulated by her teacher for attempting a new and difficult word. She was also praised for guessing a word that began with the right sound and one that made sense in the sentence. Not only did this type of teacher behavior build confidence and self-esteem in this child, it had a profound effect on the other children who witnessed the episode when they encountered new words themselves. Fear of failure was replaced with eagerness to try new learning experiences.

Early learning in any developmental task is by nature clumsy and unskilled. Not only should this behavior be tolerated in reading instruction, it should be appreciated (Holdaway, 1984). What is expected of novice readers and writers is that they should try their best and see how close they can come to the desired task. In other words, novices should *approximate* the task. Over time and with practice improvement is almost certain.

We know that children take significant risks with their self-esteem whenever attempting new tasks. The spirit of *risk-taking* should be encouraged so that children can begin to approximate adult standards of literacy. Teachers should

do all they can to protect students from peer criticism and competition in the classroom. This protection is a form of *safety-netting*. Children should be praised in reading class for trying, and for approximating the real purposes and strategies of skilled readers. The cost of learning must never become so high as to overshadow the benefits and joy of learning.

• **Insight 6: Self monitoring and correction should be encouraged.**

An ultimate goal of education is to help students become independent learners. One important step toward independence as a reader is learning how to monitor one's own progress and make corrections as necessary. Classrooms should be organized in such a way as to help children assess their own work and feel comfortable in making revisions as necessary so as to produce the best product possible.

This belief was operationalized by adopting the attitude that learning is a process. Not all learning projects were graded, but feedback was always available. Our learning center activities were usually equipped with answer keys or other resources enabling children to check their own work. We helped our students begin to understand how they might rate their own performances as readers (e.g., comprehension of text, decoding abilities) and writers (e.g., topic selection, organization, imagery). In addition to these reflective evaluations, students were encouraged to ask neighbors for opinions when working on a learning project. Frequent conferencing with the teacher regarding writing and reading helped students better understand what needed further development. While the noise level in our classrooms was no doubt higher than the norm, enjoyable and productive encounters with literacy prevailed and

children came to monitor their own reading and writing processes.

- **Insight 7: Collaboration and cooperation should be fostered.**

One morning during the writing workshop period, Shannon was designing a greeting card in the shape of a Valentine. Her face had a bewildered expression that seemed to say "I want to write what's in my head, but it just won't come out." Before her professor/teacher had time to walk over to her desk to make a "house call," Shannon's six-year-old classmate, Allison, had also seen her expression and come to her aid. After a few moments of collaboration Shannon was able to complete her draft and both girls (not to mention the teacher) felt great satisfaction.

A sense of community or "belonging" in the classroom supports children as they attempt new complex learning tasks. Teacher-led activities such as shared book experiences (Routman, 1988), lively unison readings, and storytelling help to draw children into the classroom community and make them active participants. Equally valuable are collaborative experiences, such as the encounter between Shannon and Allison, in which children help each other to succeed. Such activities as paired or assisted reading, teacherless writing groups, and other "buddy systems" helped us reduce unnecessary competition and promote the learning process as children grew toward adult standards of literacy.

- **Insight 8: Favorite literature leads to "read it again."**

One of the greatest compliments we received as teachers was the light-under-the-sheets phenomenon. Several times as parents were picking up their children at

the end of the school day they would make such remarks as "Yes, David is reading *all* the time... In fact, we keep having to take away his flashlight to keep him from reading after bedtime when the lights are out!" Another parent reported that her son, Curt, "...needed new cereal boxes for breakfast. He didn't have enough to read at breakfast!"

After sharing an especially exciting story in our classes, like "Jack and the Bean Tree" (Chase, 1948), children would ask to hear the same selection over and over again. All children seem to develop a need for books which they loved to hear repeatedly. This "read-it-again" phenomenon produced for every child a body of cherished literature.

The most popular books in our classrooms offered a great deal of predictability and security for the children. Whenever possible, copies of trade books, student-made books, and teacher-made books were checked out of the classroom library for children to take home for multiple readings. We discovered that the massive practice that arises from the read-it-again process carries with it a sense of security, familiarity, and affection for different texts.

• **Insight 9: Free agency and self-selection are important.**

Our children were introduced to literacy through immersion in trade books and writing experiences. In using teacher-made and commercial books, a great deal of freedom or *free agency* was allowed students through *Self-Selected Reading* or SSR. We chose to rename this popular technique, changing from the usual *Sustained Silent Reading* because the children reminded us that when readers are engaged and engrossed in a good book they may sometimes want to stop and tell a peer about an

exciting part. Thus SSR is sometimes neither silent nor sustained in a healthy reading environment.

We structured learning situations so that children were free to self-select activities and materials within given limits. Practices such as individualized reading, themed literature units, Self-Selected Reading (SSR), and Sustained Silent Writing (SSW) allowed students to choose topics they find interesting and pleasurable.

The basal also found a useful niche in our classrooms. Instead of dominating our curriculum, basal stories were used as a jumping-off point for other literacy experiences. For instance, stories in one of the preprimers were constructed about the circus. Books were selected from the school library for Self-Selected Reading (SSR), and other reading/writing activities relating to the circus themes were generated. Children would spend only about twenty minutes a day reading in the basal, but another two and one half hours would be spent in related literacy events. In this way the district-mandated basal skills were developed without slowing the initial momentum created earlier in the year. The overall result of combining whole language and limited basal experiences might be termed "spontaneous reading combustion!" At the heart of this program success was the students' ability to exercise free agency in the classroom.

• **Insight 10: Direct or explicit instruction is needed.**

Several times each week we conducted whole class *minilessons* in reading and writing. These were teacher-directed sessions targeting needed literacy strategies (e.g., getting the sequence from a story, editing compositions). Direct instruction is often very useful in helping students understand thinking processes (Baumann, 1986). Teacher

modeling of strategic reading behaviors such as predicting, responding, self-correcting, and selecting cues helped children in our classes discover different ways of approaching literacy challenges. It is much like a carpenter who demonstrates skills for an apprentice. By watching the master woodworker the apprentice learns how carpentry skills are applied to create something beautiful out of raw lumber. Similarly, children in our elementary classrooms needed to have opportunities to observe their teacher and others as they applied literacy strategies to make sense out of books.

- **Insight 11: Assessment supports learning.**

We used *naturalistic assessment* (e.g., student work samples, observation checklists, writing journals) as well as *traditional assessment* (e.g., standardized reading achievement tests) to document our students' growth. This perspective allowed us to satisfy the political realities of state mandated assessment, and also provided insights for parents and ourselves as teachers into the growth and development of literacy abilities in each child.

Classroom assessment should examine both the child's literacy products and processes. Our goal was to support and encourage the learner, not simply to document scores for the educational bureaucracy.

- **Insight 12: Parents and community resources should be involved in the reading program.**

We found a great deal of success in holding parent meetings prior to the beginning of school and once during the year to educate parents on their all-important role in helping their children with literacy learning. When home tasks are kept simple and parents know what to do, successful home-school partnerships can emerge.

Schools cannot encourage literacy alone, nor should they be expected to do so. Parents must become active participants and supporters in creating and maintaining homes which stimulate interest in reading and writing. Learning is a three-way partnership between parents, children, and teachers. Without full participation from each, literacy learning is seriously compromised.

• **Insight 13: A curriculum should be rich in culturally relevant content.**

We found a wealth of books in our school libraries which present useful and non-stereotypic insights about many of America's great natural resources, her peoples' cultural and ethnic communities. Hirsch (1987), in arguing for cultural literacy, states:

In the best of worlds, all Americans would be multiliterate...surely the first step in that direction must be for all of us to become literate in our own national language and culture (p. 93).

Children should enjoy opportunities for reading and responding to the great literature, thoughts, and issues of our time. Within the bounds of good taste, we decided that we should not avoid content in an attempt to avoid controversy. Reading is language. Reading is the transmission of ideas.

• **Insight 14: Teaching should draw upon students' prior knowledge and language experience.**

Children in our classes were able to make the best use of print when we called to the mind of each reader past language and experiences related to the text or story. This was a critical role for us as teachers and was accomplished through the rereading of favorite books, storytelling, audio-visual presentations, guest speakers, group discussion, and

other means of stimulating the retrieval of *schemata* or memory structures. To the extent we were successful in helping children retrieve past experiences, reading was meaningful, personal, and successful. When we fell short, the going was tough for the children. It was just that simple — and that difficult.

• **Insight 15: Literacy is to be shared.**

Our desire was to immerse children daily in stimulating literacy events. These immersion tactics in our classrooms included such experiences as reading aloud exciting poems (e.g., Prelutsky's *The New Kid on the Block*; Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, and the Ahlbergs' *The Jolly Postman*), entertaining songs (e.g., Bonne's *I Know an Old Lady*), and stories which created vivid pictures in the child's mind (e.g., McKissack's *Flossie and the Fox*, and Chase's *Grandfather Tales*).

We felt it important as teachers to share examples of books we were reading and our own compositions. Teacher Sharing Time gave us the opportunity to model the writing process and our joy of reading. Sharing Time also served as a natural catalyst for encouraging children to participate in Student Sharing Time.

One of the natural drives that emerged in our young readers and writers was a desire to share. When children enthusiastically labored over a writing project about their beagle puppy or a ride they took in grandma's new corvette, they were anxious to share their stories. Similarly, a child who had just discovered the *Curious George* books was eager to tell friends. Two vehicles used for student sharing of reading and writing were *Author's Chair* and *Reader's Stage*. As compositions were completed each child could sign up for the Author's Chair. They would read aloud their

compositions and answer questions from the class. Reader's Stage was similar in that after students participated in an individual conference with the teacher they could share an excerpt with the class. Both Author's Chair and Reader's Stage concluded with positive comments from the teacher for a job well-done and applause from their peers.

Problem solving was also a very important part of sharing literacy. A kind of dramatic tension was created when a truly challenging problem for youngsters was posed for which there was no easy answer. These problems gave students a legitimate and burning desire to find answers through books, peer interactions, and stimulating discussion with the teacher.

- **A final insight: Teachers, like students, make classroom transitions.**

One of the great insights we gained from our experiences was the realization that attempting to teach from a more holistic perspective takes a great deal of time. To paraphrase Judith Newman (1985, p. 185), the transition toward more holistic forms of teaching comes not in graceful gazelle-like leaps, but in small increments. One of the frustrations we encountered as we attempted to implement new holistic strategies in our classrooms was the feeling that it must all happen at once (Mosenthal, 1989). We discovered that just as children go through various stages of learning or "approximations," teachers go through similar stages or *transitions* when implementing new classroom strategies. Regie Routman (1988), in her book *Transitions*, describes her struggle to modify both her beliefs and practices to reflect a whole language perspective in this way:

At this point in time I am comfortable integrating the four language modes – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While much of what I [do] encompasses whole language concepts and while many would say I am a whole language teacher, I am personally uncomfortable with the pureness that the term “whole language” implies for me. I don’t always use thematic units, I occasionally teach from part to whole; I am still struggling hard to integrate more areas of curriculum with language arts – an ideal that is very difficult to attain. I anticipate that this struggle will go on for years. I am also concerned about the possible misuse of the term “whole language” as a new catch phrase that opportunists will exploit to their advantage (p. 26).

The notion of *transitions* finds further support in the writings of Goodman and his colleagues (1987):

Teachers and schools wanting to adopt a whole-language approach to reading may find it most feasible to use the basal as a point of departure and adapt its use so that it ceases to be the focal point of the program and becomes one resource among many in the classroom (p. 264).

Finally, teachers should not be criticized by colleagues for using intermediate steps or *transition* programs since they represent a logical and prudent stage of curricular modification. We, like our students, take significant risks and need to feel the calming assurance of a professional “safety net” while doing so. We learned, as so many spirited and innovative classroom teachers have in recent years, that important insights into reading instruction can be gained at the feet of children.

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Reading Horizons welcomes suggestions for innovative teaching ideas for inclusion as "Expanding Horizons" features. (See page 167 of this issue for an example.) Submit two typed copies of your idea to Editor, Reading Horizons, Reading Center & Clinic, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, 49008, with two stamped self-addressed envelopes.



The Role of Modeling in Teacher Education Programs

**Davida R. Schuman
Juliette Relihan**

Teacher education has come under scrutiny in the recent past because teacher educators are recognizing a gap between what they have traditionally taught in their classrooms, and what new teachers are doing in theirs. Somehow the messages about the effective ways to teach have not been getting through. The solution to the problems seems fairly simple. If beginning teachers are to be effective, they must have a model of the various instructional techniques which can be implemented. Teacher educators, then, must model these techniques in their education courses. In this way, the message clearly comes through, that what is modeled in the college classroom is what should be evident in the classrooms in which they teach.

Children learn to speak and read by adult modeling of both language and literacy. Much of the literature refers to the teacher modeling various reading behaviors and skills for children in preschool and elementary classrooms (Combs, 1987; Duffy, Roehler, and Herrmann, 1988; McCracken and McCracken, 1978; Perez, 1986; Roser, 1987). Parents have also been trained to help develop reading skills in young children by observing teachers model effective teaching techniques (Spewock, 1988).

Because individuals will imitate the behavior of a person they respect and with whom they have a rapport, the use of modeling as a teaching tool has been shown to be effective (Bandura, 1977).

The premise of modeling to learn novel behavior can also be applied to teaching preservice education students in methods courses. Modeling has been compared to direct instruction (Putnam and Johns, 1987). It has also been studied in combination with videotaped feedback as opposed to videotaped feedback alone, modeling alone, and lecture/discussion (King, 1979, 1980; Martin and Fanslow, 1980). Investigations that involve models revealing their thoughts and reasoning (cognitive modeling) while performing a task, in contrast to direct instruction, have shown that cognitive modeling is more effective (Gorrell and Capson, 1988, 1989). Additional research on modeling has indicated that the decision on how to model is as important as what to model (Sharp, 1981). Thus it is crucial that the focus in whole language methods courses be concerned with how preservice students learn to use the knowledge they are gaining in order to be most effective in their role as teachers.

Journal writing

The focus of reading and language arts methods has changed drastically in the last few years. No longer are teachers to emphasize the disparate skills of grammar, spelling, composition, etc., but rather to develop language as a whole. A critical medium for drawing writing skills together is the use of journal writing in the elementary schools. Through this medium teachers enable even young children to bridge the gap between reading and writing.

Because journal writing plays such an important role in the elementary classroom, preservice students need to

have experience with the mechanics of this activity as well as the theoretical structure of it. The methods instructor needs to demonstrate how journal entries are written by modeling the procedure for preservice students. The content of the entry will vary as much as the students themselves. It is not what they write but writing itself that is crucial.

In initial sessions, the college instructor and students reverse roles. The instructor models the role of the student writing in the journal. The preservice students in their role as teacher can then comment on the entries. Once the instructor determines that the method of journal writing has been sufficiently demonstrated, it is time to resume original roles. For the rest of the semester the preservice students become the writers and the instructor the commentator.

From a pool of topics related to whole language development, preservice students are encouraged to choose one concept or activity which was discussed or modeled during the class session. This includes any activity or concept related to writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Using any one or a combination of the four areas as an impetus for their journal writing, they can then describe their reasons for choosing as they did. In addition, they should also describe the benefits of their choice to them as future teachers. While reading the preservice students' entries, the instructor writes comments and reactions in the journal without attaching grade values. Preservice students come to understand that expressing their ideas in written form is an important activity if they are to become advocates of emergent literacy. In this way they have learned not only the technique of journal writing but the theoretical framework which benefits both the writer and the commentator.

Use of big books

Book sharing is another aspect of whole language which is now emphasized in teacher training. Once again the instructor assumes the role of an elementary school teacher and the preservice students the children in the class. Use of actual materials contributes to the real life modeling which is about to take place. The preservice student needs to see how the big book is used in the overall schema of emerging literacy. It becomes a source for lessons that go beyond the pure enjoyment of listening to the instructor read the story. By drawing their attention to the name of the book, the author's name, and showing the pictures, preservice students are directed to predict what the book is about. The instructor reads the story tracking the print by moving a hand across the page. This hand motion demonstrates the importance of left-to-right and top-to-bottom eye movements in conjunction with the concept that print "talks."

In assisting preservice students to understand the mechanics of enabling young readers to construct meaning from the text, the instructor uses a variety of questioning techniques designed to develop specific skills. The instructor explicates understanding of the story by thinking aloud about the process. Predicting, making inferences, and drawing conclusions demonstrate to preservice students how readers should think as they read. As the preservice students become familiar with the procedure, the instructor draws them into making predictions, recognizing inferences and drawing conclusions. After the story has been read, the instructor guides the discussion with emphasis on developing skills in language, recalling events and important concepts — methods that help students to derive meaning from words. As a concluding activity, the preservice students are asked to write about a character they liked or dis-

liked in the story. For the next several class meetings, the preservice students participate in small groups, practicing the strategies they saw used with the big book and taking turns being teacher or child.

DL-TA and DR-TA

An additional reading activity which has its roots in the whole language classroom involves making predictions and verifying them. The terminology used for this activity with prereading children is the Directed Listening-Thinking Activity (DL-TA) described by Stauffer (1980). For those children who can already read, activities such as this are involved in the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA) (Stauffer, 1980). This strategy should also be modeled by the college instructor. Preservice students need to be given opportunities to practice this strategy from the perspective of both teacher and student.

An ideal starting point for this activity is to use the college textbook for the DR-TA exercise. In the initial meetings with preservice students, the college instructor guides their use of the text by asking pertinent questions which involve these students in making predictions about what they are reading. Along with prediction making, they are also accruing experience in verifying these predictions. Once the students have acquired some proficiency in playing the role of a student in the DR-TA, it is time to acquire practice as the teacher. Using the techniques modeled by the instructor, they take turns leading their class in DR-TA exercises. A beneficial by-product of this exercise is the increased effectiveness of the college text. Development of this technique is especially useful in the curriculum areas which use content area texts that can be difficult to use for many elementary school-age children.

LEA

The language experience approach is used in many primary classrooms and is another reading strategy which preservice students need to learn in order to become effective whole language teachers. This strategy has long been used in teaching reading and continues to have impact in the whole language program. At the heart of LEA is an experience which has been shared by the teacher and children. Having shared an experience assures a common pool of ideas which will facilitate the writing of the story. To stress the importance of this shared experience, the instructor must demonstrate it through modeling. The modeling helps students see differences between a lesson based on a shared experience and one in which the experience is personal.

As with the journal writing, the instructor models this procedure while preservice students assume the role of children. The instructor presents an experience they can share and discuss. To keep the discussion active, the instructor uses questioning techniques which are designed to cover the topic under discussion. Once the instructor determines that enough has been said, it is time to write the story. Preservice students dictate their story for the instructor to write on chart paper. The instructor then reads the story to the students tracking the words in a left-to-right progression. After the initial reading by the instructor, a second reading is done, this time by the group. In addition to the story chart, the instructor makes individual phrase and sentence cards, matched to the story, which allow for further exchange between writer and print. As a final step, the instructor makes individual copies of the story for each preservice student to have.

Over a period of the next few weeks, preservice students practice the technique of the language experience approach modeled by the instructor. They take turns playing the role of classroom teacher and student. This enables them to reinforce the modeling strategy to which they have been exposed. In this way they are building a repertoire of questioning techniques which will enhance their ability to maintain the needed discussion for success in the language experience approach.

Summary

The strategies presented in this article are components of whole language programs in many classrooms today. The integration of reading, writing, listening and speaking should be brought about in meaningful contexts which enable children to learn in an atmosphere that encourages literacy in all of its aspects. Correspondingly, preservice students should learn how to implement these strategies if whole language is to provide the avenue to literacy for an educated society. Since our goal as methods instructors is to have preservice students become successful teachers, they should understand the concepts and how to use them, from the perspective of the child as well as that of the teacher. This can be accomplished by the instructor demonstrating these strategies while preservice students role play first as children, then as teachers. All of this is a prelude to the preservice students testing their wings as classroom teachers in actual situations which give closure to what they have learned.

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Transitions in Reading Instruction: Handling Contradictions in Beliefs and Practice

**Maureen Siera
Martha Combs**

Reconciling whole language philosophy with traditional classroom reading instruction requires redefining beliefs about reading processes that, for most of us, are deeply embedded in years of basal reading instruction. Such redefining has the potential of creating conflicts between curricular beliefs and instructional practices. Whole language and basal skills instruction, according to Goodman (1989), are contradictory and incompatible practices. In contrast, Hemysfeld (1989) suggests that it is appropriate to combine the best aspects of skills instruction and whole language into one approach. While contradictions may exist initially, perhaps such contradictions will resolve themselves as educators redefine professional beliefs.

In support of others who are in transition, we would like to share experiences of two first grade teachers, Nancy and Sandra, who were beginning to make a transition from basal reading to a more holistic approach. Nancy and Sandra each discovered that transition is a slow process and that contradictions in beliefs and practice are a very real part of the transition.

A little background on Nancy and Sandra

Both Nancy and Sandra came from traditional preservice programs, had student teaching experiences which emphasized a basal reading skills program approach and have taught for six and five years respectively. They are employed in different school systems; however, the adopted basal reading programs are the reading curriculum in both districts. During the year prior to the changes described, both teachers enrolled in graduate courses in reading/language arts at different universities and were introduced to whole language philosophy.

At school Nancy was allowed to make some changes in her instruction, but her principal assumed that she would continue to use basal materials in some manner. He expressed concern for children learning "the skills" and for the money that he expended for materials. Sandra's principal expressed similar concerns. Her school system, however, mandated at least three days of basal instruction per week.

Nancy's transition

Following two and one-half months of basal readiness letter books combined with language experience, Nancy decided not to move into the preprimers as she had always done in the past. While she was deciding what to do about reading groups, she instituted a form of individualized reading. Using picture books and easy to read books that were leveled from very easy to hard, the children, with Nancy's guidance, chose books to read. They practiced reading the book by themselves, with a partner from their class, with a sixth grade partner, with the teacher, and with their parents until they felt confident to read the book aloud to the class. As Nancy made other changes in her program, time for individual reading remained. At the time, Nancy did

not consider this approach as a viable alternative to her basal groups.

In lieu of basal instruction, Nancy decided to alternate weekly between the use of 1) big books, and 2) content language experience (a combination of reading easy informational books and language experience stories). Even though a basal series had been adopted by her district, Nancy chose not to use those materials. She was, however, required to give the end of level tests that would be placed in cumulative folders.

During big book lessons, children were called to reading by table groups, so that the lesson was repeated three times. Nancy felt that the small groups enhanced interaction and attention. Lessons usually began with predictions using the title and pictures; as Nancy read each page aloud, she encouraged children to discuss story events and make new predictions. Nancy would also call attention to such things as word or letter patterns and new vocabulary words. The group then reread the story with Nancy. The reading was followed by a worksheet based upon the story and reinforcing a skill emphasized during the discussion.

Over the course of the week, the children participated in repeated readings, identified skill elements found in the stories, completed follow-up activities, and tape recorded themselves reading. Nancy commented that the first reading seemed tedious, but she did not change this routine.

Content language experience lessons were organized around four or five topics each week for which Nancy could find a variety of books, such as space, famous people, sports, wild animals, or transportation. On Monday, after selecting a topic, the children would choose a book to start

reading. Then they would informally share their books with each other. During the week of study, the groups would alternate meeting days with Nancy. Children discussed what they had learned, shared ideas they had written down, and dictated ideas they thought were important to remember. These dictated stories could be reread during future group times or independently. During the week the children also read a number of different books about their topic. Books were checked out to be read and shared at home. While Nancy met with one group of children, other groups were completing seatwork, listening to "skill" tapes and completing worksheets, or doing Workshop Way activities. Children were free to interact during this time, assisting each other.

The morning routine in Nancy's room began with process writing time. During writing children selected their own topics, wrote and often collaborated on stories. Nancy would conference with children. The writing time ended with a few children sharing their pieces at an "author's chair." After reading and responding to questions and comments about their stories, the authors would award a "listening ear" to the best listener. Authors also joined the "author's club" or added another star on the chart by their names for sharing.

Following writing, children were directed to a daily mystery word, sight words that Nancy believed needed to be learned. On 3x5 cards, children copied the word and a sentence, either the one on the board or their own, drew a picture on the reverse side of the card, and filed the card in a box with other mystery words. These cards were often referred to during spelling or writing.

Next came the assigning of seat work to be completed while Nancy met with reading groups. The seatwork often was a combination of work with spelling words, phonics

workbook pages, teacher-made practice pages for a skill discussed in reading group or in a minilesson, a follow-up activity to a language experience story, a math workbook page, or Workshop Way activities. Later in the year, the children received writing tablets for copying work from the board.

Skill teaching, such as phonics or structural analysis, was also completed as a whole group in minilessons. Along with skill knowledge, children were encouraged to think strategically about the skill knowledge that Nancy was presenting. There were usually follow-up activities on other days to reinforce the lesson. The content for these lessons came from what Nancy's observations during reading and writing times.

The afternoon included a spelling program in which children selected their own words and practiced with a partner, independent reading, math, or story times, and special classes, such as music, art or physical education. At the end of the day the children would mark their own behavior sheet by either circling a happy or sad face for that day.

Sandra's Transition

Because of her school district's mandate of basal instruction three days per week, Sandra decided to use multiple copies of children's literature on the other two days. Initially she chose Tuesdays and Thursdays for literature. On the other three days she conducted her reading groups as she had always done, at least in the beginning of her transition.

On basal days, Sandra moved from the process writing period into an explanation of seatwork activities, which included a variety of reading and math worksheets, basal

workbook pages, and handwriting. A literature activity related to each group's book was also explained along with reminders about other classroom choices. In these sessions children were grouped by learning modalities. In these groups Sandra used a combination of story and vocabulary introductions, silent and oral reading, discussion of stories, skill instruction and explanations of workbook pages.

In preparation for the literature groups, Sandra selected four books that she thought her children would enjoy and for which she could get enough copies. For a period of four weeks children would rotate through these books, but in the order they chose. The week before the literature groups met, Sandra read all of the books aloud. On Friday, the children would tell her their choice for the first rotation. Sandra also developed five different extension activities for each book, one for each day of the week. These usually tended to be open ended activities, encouraging creativity and expression.

On Tuesdays, Sandra would introduce the children to the author of the book with interesting tidbits that she had found. Before reading, she would present a chart of vocabulary words, in story context, that she felt were necessary to discuss ahead of time. Then Sandra would read the story aloud again, with the children following along in their own books. The story would be discussed, emphasizing the parts the children enjoyed most and any questions they had about the story, including vocabulary. After the first reading, the book would be repeated with children reading along with Sandra whenever they could. If the group was enthusiastic and time permitted, the reading might be repeated several times. Finally, the children would act out favorite parts or become one of the characters in a new version.

On Thursdays, the second meeting of the literature group, the children would participate in repeated readings and some individual reading of favorite parts. During this group time, Sandra often called attention to certain aspects of the book that she wanted students to notice, such as special words, interesting patterns or how illustrations related to text. As the year progressed, these discussions were built more upon what students noticed in the book.

Over time, the children expressed reluctance to return to the basal stories so Sandra began to make some modifications in both literature and basal groups. In the literature groups, Sandra began to realize that no matter how carefully she selected the vocabulary words, they never seemed to be appropriate for all children. So she encouraged children to select five words from the story that they found interesting or wanted to learn. These words were placed in the child's word book.

Sandra also discovered that after several rotations through the set of four books, the children were very familiar with the stories and were suggesting new activities to extend the books. She learned that children often thought of better extensions than she did; certainly they were more personal.

During the basal lessons, Sandra began to find that students already were familiar with skills she was directed to introduce. Sandra believed that the combination of writing and wide reading was definitely helping. Realizing that students didn't need all of what the basals suggested, she began to alter lessons drastically, focusing on comprehension of the better stories and using the workbook pages less and less. Along with this change, she began to alter morning seatwork into more open ended activities that would allow

children more time for exploration. But she was never allowed to completely give up the basal program — and perhaps she wasn't ready to.

During the afternoon, Sandra's students were read to, completed math lessons, did independent reading (often partner reading in one of the four literature group books), and were involved in units or other special activities. Children read a wide variety of texts in the unit activities. Sandra commented on how much easier it seemed to be to bring books into the afternoons than the mornings.

Contradictions come with transitions

Fullan (1982) suggests that changes in classroom instruction involve a) use of new and revised materials, b) use of new teaching approaches, and c) alteration of beliefs. We will use this as a framework for reflecting on how Nancy and Sandra began to make changes in their classrooms and to consider the question of contradictory practices and beliefs during times of transition.

Use of new and revised materials. Both Nancy and Sandra incorporated new materials (children's literature and some follow-up or extension activities) into their reading instruction but in different ways. As they did this, they still retained some of the old materials. While initiating use of big books, information books, and language experience, Nancy still retained many worksheet-type activities that had previously been a part of her reading program. For the most part, Sandra seemed to separate the literature groups from other parts of the day. She did not bring old materials into these groups, but did retain them in most other parts of the morning.

These teachers come out of a basal tradition where change of curriculum is often equated with a change of materials, but not necessarily a change in beliefs or behaviors. In some school districts, it is done every five years or so as new state adoptions take place. Even when the new materials come, we often hold on to the old because it is familiar and comfortable. As the new materials become more familiar, we are better able to make judgments about the relevance or effectiveness of such materials.

Were the materials used by Sandra and Nancy incompatible or contradictory? Yes, they were. It seems, however, that part of the transition from basal to literature may involve a period of time when the materials we use are incompatible and contradictory as we are learning. However, as Nancy and Sandra illustrate, over time we can re-examine our ideas about contrived skill materials as we learn the power and potential of authentic materials.

Some impacts of the contradictions were easier to see than others. Nancy sensed that the big book lessons were not as effective as the content language experience lessons and she was initially defensive about them. Over time, she began verbalizing concerns about the big book lessons, acknowledging that a change was needed but she still wasn't sure what was wrong. Sandra could not elect to end basal instruction altogether, but she could begin to modify it to make it more consistent with the literature groups. Even though she was modifying her materials, Sandra still retained some old materials, such as workbooks and morning seatwork, for which she did not seem to see a new alternative. The process of change followed by the two teachers is summarized in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

Nancy's Transition

Basal Readiness Books with LEA

- OCT/NOV
- decision not to use basal preprimers
 - independent & partner reading
(while deciding alternative approach)
 - New approaches (alternating weeks)

- NOV/DEC
- big book units (3 groups)

Day 1

predict
teacher read aloud
discuss
attention to skills
choral read
worksheets

Day 2/3

reread
attention to skills
worksheets
taped story

- content language experience (4-5 groups)

Day 1

select from 4-5 topics
select book
read independently or
with partner
take book home

Day 2/3

share/discuss
dictate LEA
exchange books
take books home
write responses

Day 3/4

share/discuss
add to LEA
reread LEA
write ideas

- FEB/MAR
- Add whole group minilessons for phonics and structural analysis. Emphasize strategies.

Note: The chart reflects only major changes in reading instruction.

Figure 2

Sandra's Transition

SEPT	• basal groups (3 days) (district mandate)		
	<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Day 2</u>	<u>Day 3</u>
	introduce story	oral reading	skill work
	introduce vocabulary	skill work	work book
	silent reading	workbook	
	discussion		
	workbook		
	• literature groups (2 days)		
	(4 books - 4 groups, rotate weekly for 1 month)		
	<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Day 2</u>	
	introduce vocabulary	choral reading	
	read aloud	reread favorite parts	
	discuss favorite parts	focus on particular aspects	
	choral reading	of book	
	acting out parts	discuss author	
	responsive activity		
OCT	• after several rotations students begin suggesting activities		
NOV	• replace vocabulary introduction with personalized vocabulary activities		
JAN/FEB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notice early skill acquisition • reduce isolated skill instruction • emphasize personal response • replace some workbook pages with open-ended activities 		
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become more selective about stories • some multiple copies of literature are by student authors 		

Note: The chart reflects only major changes in reading instruction.

Use of new teaching approaches. For at least a portion of the school day, both Nancy and Sandra incorporated new teaching approaches, while maintaining the former approaches. Nancy's content language experience groups led her in new directions for the use of information books, open discussions, using writing as a way of responding to books, and a new teacher behavior for less directed reading groups. Nancy did not use these same behaviors in her big book groups where she was much more directed and used worksheets to isolate and check skill knowledge. She sensed that there was a difference between the two groups, but could not specifically identify what it was.

Except for her initial attempts to preteach vocabulary in stories, the approach that Sandra took in the literature groups was dramatically different than her typical basal teaching behavior. She behaved as if basal and literature groups served different functions. However, Sandra's basal group behavior was modified over the course of the year as she watched the children demonstrate knowledge of reading processes before the basal introduced the skill.

For both Nancy and Sandra some new behaviors were carried over to other parts of the day. Nancy moved into a more child-directed spelling approach. Sandra's afternoon incorporated a great deal of literature into units of study and she was being trained for Math Their Way, a process approach. Both teachers devoted time each morning to process writing.

Did Nancy and Sandra display incompatible and contradictory teaching behaviors? Yes, they did, but over the course of the year they both began to alter those behaviors. While at the end of the year all of the contradictions were not resolved, both Nancy and Sandra had learned to take some

of their cues from their children and from their intuition about what felt right.

Sensing that our behaviors may not be appropriate can be a long and drawn out process for some of us. We are not used to trusting ourselves. Both Nancy and Sandra needed time to grow into their new approaches, see how they felt, and then begin to reflect. Like materials, some behaviors were more obvious, others were very subtle and remained unchanged at the end of the year.

Alteration of beliefs. Redefining some of their beliefs initially led both Nancy and Sandra to begin making changes in classroom instruction which continued throughout the year. Both began with a global direction, but had difficulties with the details involved in the redefining that Goodman (1989) suggested must take place. They both seemed to focus on the most obvious at first—a need for new materials. Even though both Nancy and Sandra embraced holistic principles they continued some incompatible practices, such as isolated skill instruction. They seemed to be unable to recognize the contradictions between their espoused beliefs and some of their classroom practices. Even at the end of a year, there were still contradictions between beliefs, materials, and approaches that each teacher could not reconcile on her own.

The sheer number of changes may have actually slowed down Nancy's transition. There were times when Nancy felt overwhelmed with all that was happening in her classroom. Nancy had replaced most all of the traditional landmarks of the morning in a primary classroom with unfamiliar activities. While Sandra experimented with literature, she was still able to tell herself that she was teaching the "skills." This issue — "skills" — may very well be the most

difficult aspect of our histories to alter. Nancy had given up the security of basal groups, but did not give up teaching "skills" during that school year. Both teachers needed time to reconcile this issue for themselves.

Conclusion

We believe that the experiences of teachers like Nancy and Sandra suggest that while teachers are in transition from basals to more holistic approaches, we should expect that some incompatible and contradictory elements will exist. Unlike Hemysfeld (1989), we do not suggest that the strengths of basals skills and whole language be combined into one approach. What we do suggest is acceptance of the co-existence of contradictory beliefs and practices as natural for a period of time while teachers re-educate themselves about new approaches, materials, and beliefs. Co-existence may mean periods of confusion and uncertainty, but reassurance comes from teachers like Nancy and Sandra, who demonstrate that when we begin to tune into ourselves and our children, new directions slowly become clearer.

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Aspects of a Caring Reading Curriculum

Timothy V. Rasinski

Education in America has traditionally maintained two basic mandates: one academic, the other social (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Schools, 1918; Levine and Haselkorn, 1984; Wynne and Walberg, 1985). The first mandate is the education of the young in academic skills that will enable them to lead productive lives. Reading, obviously, is one academic area that schools teach in order to fulfill this responsibility.

The second mandate for American schools is the development of prosocial attitudes and behavioral dispositions. This goal reflects the ideal of a caring citizenry, concerned not only for the well-being of self, but also for the welfare of others (Jeffreys, 1971; Wynne, 1985). Reading and reading education, being social phenomena (Bloome, 1985; Templeton, 1986), present fertile soil for the fulfillment of both mandates in the schools.

The American educational system has, in general, addressed the academic purpose of education to the benign neglect of the socialization purpose (Rasinski, 1984). Education curricula have been developed that attempt to lead students to "mastery" of academic content and skills. In the quest for this goal, students are often placed in social environments that have little resemblance to the one for

which they will enter outside of school. Moreover, they are kept from social tasks and activities that may help them develop prosocial dispositions.

This situation is true for reading. In many schools the need to have students achieve well on tests of reading achievement has resulted in the development of school reading programs that, at best, are neutral in the fostering of prosocial attitudes and behaviors (Rasinski and Nathenson-Mejia, 1987). Motivation through public ridicule or intensive competition, attention focusing through physical isolation, reading skill development through the use of materials having little socially redeeming content, and maximizing academic engaged time by having students spend most of their time working alone are ways in which some school reading programs have addressed the need for academic excellence in the reading curriculum.

Winograd and Smith (1987) have pointed to the trend in American schools to treat reading as a competitive activity. Ostensibly, the purpose of the competition is to improve reading performance. However, as Winograd and Smith point out, the irony of the situation is that the very students for which the competition is supposed to be beneficial are the ones who are the most hurt. It becomes apparent that programs incorporating such approaches are not addressing the full range of student needs and school goals. In programs that employ these sorts of methods a hidden curriculum (Eisner, 1985) can develop that promotes selfishness and a "hyper-individualistic" attitude among students (Oldenquist, 1983). Indeed, students coming from such narrowly defined reading programs may be fully capable of reading but may have difficulty adjusting to life in the larger society and contributing to the well-being of their communities.

A caring reading curriculum

Recent commentaries in *The Reading Teacher* have called for some fundamental changes in the way reading instruction is perceived (McMillan and Gentile, 1988; Rasinski, 1988; Rasinski and Nathenson-Mejia, 1987). These articles have argued that reading is often consciously taught in a social and moral vacuum. What is needed is a caring reading curriculum: an approach to reading education that helps children learn to consider and care for others while simultaneously promoting academic success in reading. An optimal reading program, according to this view, is one that seeks to satisfy the dual purposes of education. A caring reading curriculum helps to insure that programmatic changes to enhance the academic achievement of students are not made at the expense of the equally essential socialization aspects of the curriculum.

While calls for a caring reading curriculum do not resound through the profession, the idea is not new and is not limited to this author. The era of progressive education saw educators voicing a concern for the social development of students in all areas of the academic curriculum (Bode, 1938; Cremin, 1961). Much of interest in progressive education and the prosocial development advocated by the progressives succumbed to the crisis in education spawned by Sputnik (Cremin, 1961). More recently, advocates of a whole language approach to literacy education promote methods and techniques that acknowledge the social utility function of literacy as well as foster growth in literacy (Goodman, 1986). Yet, despite the positive social and altruistic outcomes that result from the whole language approach, the focus of the approach is on learning literacy, not on prosocial development. A caring reading curriculum needs to be the product of conscious decision making by informed teachers.

But how does a teacher establish a caring reading curriculum? In attempting to develop a caring reading curriculum or in evaluating the caring quality of an existing reading program, certain aspects of the program must be considered. This article attempts to identify and discuss certain specific aspects of reading instruction that are critical in developing a caring curriculum. The purpose is not to dictate a philosophy or methodology, but to help sensitize teachers to the social and caring consequences of certain parts of the reading curriculum that may have been thought of previously as devoid of or neutral in social and altruistic value. Four aspects central to a caring reading curriculum are the classroom environment, reading material, tasks and activities, and models of caring persons. Each of these aspects will be discussed briefly in terms of their potential contribution to a caring reading curriculum.

Classroom environments

The classroom is the place where students spend a majority of the day for nine months of the year. The important question to be considered is does the classroom environment offer students opportunities to interact with one another visually, verbally, and physically? In order to learn to care, students must be given opportunities and space to be together so that they can see, talk and work with each other. In a caring reading program desks might be arranged in groups of four to six in which students face one another. This is in contrast to the traditional rows of seats in which students only see the back of the head of the child in front of them. Moreover, a teacher sensitive to the need to maximize social interaction will change seating arrangements often so that students have opportunities to sit near and interact with a full range of personalities.

In a caring reading curriculum, physical isolation, which prevents potential for social interaction and growth, is avoided. Thus, little attempt is made to isolate students using walls, dividers, or any other physical item. The goal is to maximize interpersonal contact. Students are grouped heterogeneously as often as possible so that students of various ability levels can work together, each contributing her or his own unique talents. In a caring reading curriculum, one will often find a comfortable and inviting reading commons area where students can gather to read alone or in groups. An old couch or a soft rug with pillows invites students to come together to read or work together.

Bulletin boards, classroom walls, and hallways are viewed as places where all children's reading and writing activities can be displayed and celebrated. Rather than use neat and trendy commercial materials for display areas, teachers sensitive to the notion of caring will see the celebration of children's work through display as an opportunity to demonstrate their valuing of and caring for children and their work.

Reading materials

In a caring reading curriculum the materials for reading need to be considered in terms of the social messages, if any, they present to students. In his study of award winning books for children, Shannon (1986) found that most books portrayed the main character in a self-serving role as opposed to a role in which the character's actions were for the benefit of others or the community at large. A preponderance of such materials can send a subtle yet unmistakable message of self promotion to the reader. Certainly in a caring reading curriculum students need to be exposed to materials, both in trade books as well as basal materials, in which the main characters are also motivated by prosocial

and altruistic interests. And when students do read about characters who appear driven by self-interest, classroom discussion will focus on the source of character motivation.

Academic tasks and activities

Perhaps the most important aspect of any reading curriculum involves the tasks the students are asked to perform. This is also true in a caring reading curriculum. The caring reading curriculum is marked by students working cooperatively in groups on shared projects and activities. Groups of students will be assigned tasks for which the group itself will bear responsibility. In many cases the groups will be made up of students from a wide variety of ability levels. Research by Robert Slavin and his associates (Slavin, 1979; Stevens, Madden, Slavin and Farnish, 1987) and David and Roger Johnson and their colleagues (1984) provide generic models of cooperative group learning that promote both the academic and socialization goals of education. While the major focus of their research has been on the academic improvement (as measured by tests) afforded through cooperative task structures, Slavin and the Johnsons have noted the positive social and altruistic outcomes of putting students together on group academic tasks. Perhaps the easiest method of involving students in cooperative group activities is by having them read together and discuss real books for children. Hepler and Hickman (1982) described the groups of readers that evolved in their classroom observations as "communities of readers" as students, reading together, learned to share insights and personal reflections as well as the actual reading task with one another.

In a caring reading curriculum students might also be paired into partnerships. These pairs of students work together, listening, monitoring, evaluating, and providing

feedback on each other's reading. Here, too, models of cooperative dyads in reading instruction exist and have been found to be highly successful (Boraks and Allen, 1977; Koskinen and Blum, 1986; Larson and Dansereau, 1986). Dialogue journals are another way for students to integrate literacy learning with the development of personal and caring relationships with one another or with their teacher.

In all forms of grouping, the teacher, in the caring reading curriculum, must pay close attention to the dynamics of the group. The teacher will not allow the makeup of the groups to remain static. Groups and pairs will be reformed several times throughout the year so that students get to know and work closely with a wide variety of individuals, especially those with whom they might not otherwise associate.

In a caring reading curriculum students will also be given opportunities to use their literacy skills to help others outside their own classrooms. Cross-age tutoring (Nevi, 1983), for example, allows older readers to work with and help younger, less able readers. Research suggests that both members of the partnership benefit academically. Students can also be paired with older members of the general community. In a study reported by Rasinski (in press) middle grade students were paired with residents in a retirement village. Together, the pairs worked through several literacy related projects, such as conducting an interview and writing up an oral history of the older partner, that both partners found interesting and satisfying. Students received academic credit in English for their participation in the project.

By being involved in situations which require students to cooperate with others in order to successfully fulfill an

academic task, students develop empathy and friendship with others and learn to give and accept help. At the same time they are practicing reading skills that will enable them to gain proficiency and independence in reading.

Models of caring people

The importance of modeling in reading education cannot be underestimated (Gillet and Temple, 1986). A caring reading curriculum would be rather sterile if the students did not have any real life examples of what it meant to live out one's life in a caring way. The teacher needs to be the prime model of how caring is enacted in a person's life.

In a caring reading curriculum the students will recognize their teachers as a source of encouragement and help. Students will not be afraid to ask for assistance from teachers, knowing that they will give it without condition and in abundance. Although teachers may find the duties of teaching to be stressful at times, they will attempt to deal with each student with patience regardless of how exasperating and repetitive some students' questions and requests for help may be.

The teacher will talk to and discuss frequently with the class about what it means to be a caring person. This may be a discussion that follows the reading of a story on sharing or, conversely, one on selfishness. Or, it may be leading a talk, role play, or readers' theater play about the social skills that lend themselves to caring and cooperating situations.

The teacher in a caring reading curriculum may also ask parents and other volunteers to come to the class in order to work with less able readers or to share a special book or experience with the class. The teacher will help the class see that these visitors are coming as helpers who are,

in their own particular way, caring for others. Times such as these may also offer opportunities to talk about the importance of being helped and cared for and the ways in which people being helped can respond.

Conclusion

My purpose is not to diminish the academic goal of reading instruction. Rather, I am attempting to make the point that reading instruction that focuses only on the academic aspects of reading instruction may not be optimal in terms of the overall benefits to students.

A second goal of schooling is the development of citizenship and social responsibility in students. Reading educators need to realize that to learn to read in a context devoid of thoughtfully planned social learning and interaction is a less than notable achievement. Achieving full humanness involves learning to relate to other persons in a subjective and caring manner (Buber, 1958).

Reading instruction offers educators excellent opportunities to develop curricula that help children learn to care for one another while simultaneously becoming readers. Four aspects of creating or evaluating a caring reading curricula have been suggested here. A reading curriculum for caring provides an environment that invites group activity. In a caring reading curriculum, students read and discuss stories that involve examples of prosocial as well as self-centered behavior. Teachers find ways, in a caring reading curriculum, to involve students in reading tasks that enable them to work with others within and outside of the classroom. And, in a caring reading curriculum, students see caring personified in the daily actions of their teacher and other significant visitors to the classroom.

Surely other aspects of a caring reading curriculum can be suggested. However, this discussion offers a starting point for the serious consideration of making the development of socially responsible and caring citizens an important component of any reading curriculum.

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THEMED ISSUE ON READING RECOVERY: CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

In the spring of 1991, *Reading Horizons* will offer a special issue on the theme of Reading Recovery. Contributions in the form of case studies, commentaries, and articles about all aspects of the Reading Recovery program are welcomed. Manuscripts will be evaluated following *Reading Horizons* standard review procedures. (See the Call for Manuscripts on the final page in this issue.)

The co-editor for the themed issue will be Dr. Jim Burns of Western Michigan University. Manuscripts submitted for this issue should be postmarked no later than January 15, 1990.



Celebrate Poetry Through Creative Drama

**Kathy Everts Danielson
Susan Crites Dauer**

Creative drama and poetry are often neglected, yet they are important aspects of a holistic approach to the language arts. Drama encourages children to use language for meaningful purposes by actively involving them and motivating them to read, write, listen, and speak. Poetry exposes children to expressive and descriptive language used in many creative forms. Poetry also involves children and motivates them to read and write poetry of their own.

Creative drama has other benefits as well. Henderson and Shanker (1978) found that students who dramatized stories answered comprehension questions better than did students who only read the story. Miccinati and Phelps (1980) suggested that drama allows teachers to determine children's comprehension. Graves (1983) also suggested creative drama as a way to enhance comprehension. The use of poetry also has many benefits:

Poetry can work with any grade, any age level. It can meet the interests and abilities of anyone, anywhere, from the gifted to the most reluctant reader; it opens up a world of feelings for children they never thought possible; it is a source of love and hope that children carry with them the rest of their lives (Hopkins, 1987, p. 4).

There are many fine poetry books written for children that invite participation. Because poetry must be read aloud to be fully enjoyed, creative drama is a natural way to get students further involved with poetry books. This article describes how poetry can be used with the different types of creative drama, including finger plays, pantomime and movement, Readers Theater, sensory awareness, storytelling, choral reading, action poems, role playing, and characterization.

Finger plays. Finger plays are short rhymes that when recited encourage the use of hand or body movements to act them out. Classic examples are "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" and "I'm a Little Teapot." Children not only chant the song or poem, but also add planned gestures and movement to enhance the rhymed story. Several poetry books provide examples of finger plays. *Hand Rhymes* (Brown, 1985), *Play Rhymes* (Brown, 1987), and *Finger Rhymes* (Brown, 1980), provide not only playful poems for finger plays, but also small drawings that suggest appropriate hand gestures or body movements. Through the use of finger plays, young children are encouraged to play with language, enjoy the humor of a poem, gain knowledge of rhythm and rhyme through active participation, and enhance eye-hand coordination. Finger puppets can accompany finger play poems. Children can make puppets out of felt or construction paper to put on their fingers as they act out the poems.

Pantomime and movement. Pantomiming situations or objects helps children to think about the nonverbal behaviors and attitudes that convey meaning without words. Children can pantomime action-filled poems while the teacher or another child reads them. For instance, the poem "Boing Boing Squeak," in *The New Kid On The Block*

(Prelutsky, 1984), tells of an energetic mouse loose in the house:

*It bounces on the sofa, on the table and the bed, up
the stairs and on the chairs, and even on my head.*

Several children could silently, yet dramatically, act out the poem by pretending to be the bouncing mouse (on the sofa, table, bed, chairs, and up the stairs) while another child reads the poem.

Creative movement to music or poetry adds to the mood or meaning of the poem. In introducing children to the creative drama process, DeHaven (1983) suggested movement exercises that encourage students to make their hands as large as possible, as strong as possible, as small as possible, and so on. Another suggestion is to have children pretend to be leaves loosening from the branch in the fall and being blown by a strong breeze or a whirlwind.

Exercises of this kind could carry over into poetry reading. For instance, while another child or the teacher read the book *Sledding* (Winthrop, 1989), children could act out the poem by paying special attention to the creative movement possibilities of the rhymed story. After the sledders are finally bundled up to go out in the snow, they move vigorously:

*Bang and bump and slither and flop. Unzip, unclip,
unsnap, pop! Hold tight, steer right, splash! (pp. 18-24)*

By adding actions and body movements to the poems, students better understand the content, theme, and possible mood of the poem. They have a hands-on experience with the text, rather than just reading it.

Readers Theater. Readers Theater is a dramatic reading of a script. Using Readers Theater with poetry allows students to transform a poem into dialogue form and to read it with great attention to oral expression. Since poetry is meant to be shared orally, many poems are appropriate for Readers Theater. *Joyful noise: Poems for two voices* (Fleischman, 1988) is such a poetry book. Written in two parts (one reader reads the left side of the page, while another reader reads the right side of the page), two readers can use much expression to convey the message of the poem. Students could be encouraged to write their own poems for two voices for Readers Theater, such as the one shown in Figure 1, written by a sixth grader.

Figure 1

"Colors: A Poem For Two Voices" by Blanca

Reader 1

*Some colors
make me feel
happy*

full of joy.

*Other colors
make me feel
sad*

gloomy.

*But still other
colors make me feel
sleepy*

*like staying
home all day.*

Reader 2

*Some colors
make me feel*

moody

*Other colors
make me feel*

depressed

*But still other
colors make me feel*

cozy.

Sensory awareness. To encourage students to participate in creative drama activities, sensory awareness must be stressed. Through sensory awareness activities, students begin to recognize the importance of their senses as they become attuned to sounds, sights, smells, tastes, and textures. *Chocolate Dreams* (Adoff, 1989) encourages readers to experience chocolate through their senses. By reading the poems about different types of chocolate, students become aware of their heightened sensations evoked by chocolate. After reading some of these poems, students could be encouraged to write their own sensory poems about chocolate. They could examine a piece of chocolate and fill in a sensory chart. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Senses Chart for Chocolate				
SEE	SMELL	TASTE	HEAR	FEEL
<i>dark brick</i>	<i>sweet sugary</i>	<i>creamy soft</i>	<i>crunchy melting</i>	<i>smooth sticky</i>

Using some of the words together in two word phrases, two word poems about chocolate, such as the one shown in Figure 3, could easily be written.

Figure 3: Two Word Poem About Chocolate	
<i>Soft</i>	<i>brick</i>
<i>Sugary</i>	<i>dark</i>
<i>Sticky</i>	<i>soft</i>
<i>Crunchy</i>	<i>creamy</i>
<i>Melting</i>	<i>sweet</i>

Storytelling. Storytelling is an ancient form of our oral language tradition. It increases both language abilities and internalization of the characteristics of stories (Morrow, 1985). In addition to traditional tales, many poems can add to the interest of storytelling.

For initial experiences with poems and storytelling, familiar nursery rhymes can be used. "Little Miss Muffett," "Jack and Jill," and "Little Bo-Peep" all tell a story in poetry form. As students begin to feel comfortable with this genre, other more complex stories told in poetry form could be used. For example, *My Father* (Collins, 1989) tells of a father's dreams for himself and his young family. Although these dreams never come to fruition, the reader is carried through the verse by the musical quality of the text. Another recent publication, *This is the Bread I Baked for Ned* (Dragonwagon, 1989), tells, through verse, about getting ready for company. Students will understand that even an ordinary happening can come alive through the rhythm of poetry. Flannel board characters would be a welcome addition with this book, enabling students to understand how the verse builds as the party time nears.

Choral reading. Choral reading involves students taking turns reading a poem together. By using this strategy, students quickly learn to appreciate poetry through its rhythm, feeling, and magical quality by being actively involved with the text. Choral reading provides opportunities for students to collaborate because they must decide how to present the poem for maximum understanding and enjoyment. Making decisions of when to read in unison, in small groups, or individually, provides practice in cooperation.

One book that is well suited for choral reading is *Ho for a Hat* (Smith, 1989). By describing the myriad types of hats that can be worn, the author provides many situations for individual voices as well as a recurring refrain to which all can respond. Many types of hats could be used for props with this book. Another fine example of a text suited for choral reading is *The Missing Tarts* (Hennessy, 1989). Starting with the familiar nursery rhyme about the Queen of Hearts who discovered that her tarts were stolen, the book continues with various nursery rhyme characters helping with the search:

'Let's look up the hill,' said Jack and Jill.

Young children would enjoy meeting favorite characters through this choral reading opportunity.

Action poems. In the last few years, many fine books have been written in verse form, providing rhythm, through word choice and meter, to constitute action poetry. Because of the strong beat, no one can sit still when action poetry is read. Fingers snap, bodies sway, and toes tap to the rhythm of the beat. *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin and Archambault, 1989) is a rhyme/chant of the alphabet letters as they try to climb up a coconut tree. This rollicking rhyme invites participation through its infectious rhythm. Another book that weaves a lilting rhyme is *17 Kings and 42 Elephants* (Mahy, 1987). The wonderful combinations of words and rhyme roll off the tongue of the reader, on this magical, musical trip through the tropical jungle.

Both of these selections could be enhanced with a rhythm band or simple dance, created by the students themselves. An exceptional collection of action poetry, best

suited for intermediate grade levels, is *Chortles* (Merriam, 1989). This small volume is packed with lively verse, including a poem called "The Ultimate Product" about a potato chip:

Chomp, chew, munch crunch no-drip no slip easy-grip...

Role playing. Role playing is defined as the literal interpretation of another person's actions, or taking the role of another person. Active participation in this format increases the child's understanding of others. For example, by reading *Old Henry* (Blos, 1987), students can examine how people feel in situations in which they are dealing with others who do not share the same values. This story in rhyme enables students to become not only Old Henry but also his neighbors. Another example of a story in rhyme in which students could role play is *Because of Lozo Brown* (King, 1989). Lozo Brown is the bully to end all bullies, and the book helps students realize how it feels to be the bully as well as the children that are picked on. Both books can be used as springboards for further discussions about positive, constructive relationships.

Characterization. When students begin to consider characterization, they focus their imagination and concentration on the characters themselves – what they look like, how they think and feel, and how they act (Hoskisson and Tompkins, 1987). There are poems that readily enhance these informal drama concepts. *The Pup Grew Up* (Marshak, 1989) is an excellent example of a poem that focuses on characterization. Not only does the text provide true glimpses of the characters in the poem, but also the illustrations are vivid portrayals of feelings and actions. Students could easily identify with the strong

characterization. In a softer vein, *The Fairies* (Allingham, 1989) identifies the whimsical characteristics of these "little people." This book provides many opportunities for students to think, act and feel like wee forest folk, a subject that often arouses curiosity in children.

Summary

Integrating the language arts within a holistic framework should include the many possibilities offered by combining informal and interpretive drama situations with poetry and stories in rhyme. The examples given here will not only provide unlimited occasions for active participation in reading and reciting poems, but also enhance reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

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APPENDIX I

Suggested children's poetry books for creative drama

Finger plays

Brown, M. (1980). *Finger rhymes*. NY: Dutton.

Brown, M. (1985). *Hand rhymes*. NY: Dutton.

Brown, M. (1987). *Play rhymes*. NY: Dutton.

Pantomime and movement

Cole, B. (1985). *The slimy book*. NY: Random House.

Duncan, L. (1989). *Songs from dreamland*. NY: Knopf.

Hersom, K., & Hersom, D. (1989). *The copycat*. NY: Atheneum.

Martin, B. & Archambault, J. (1988). *Up and down on the merry-go-round*. NY: Holt.

Prelutsky, J. (1984). *The new kid on the block*. NY: Greenwillow.

Westcott, N.B. (1988). *The lady with the alligator purse*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Winthrop, E. (1986). *Shoes*. NY: Harper & Row.

Winthrop, E. (1989). *Sledding*. NY: Harper & Row.

Readers Theater

Fleischman, P. (1985). *I am phoenix*. NY: Harper & Row.

Fleischman, P. (1988). *Joyful noise: Poems for two voices*. NY: Harper & Row.

Lewis, C. (1987). *Long ago in Oregon*. NY: Harper & Row.

Martin, B., & Archambault, J. (1988). *Listen to the rain*. NY: Holt.

Martin, B., & Archambault, J. (1989). *The magic pumpkin*. NY: Holt.

Sensory awareness

Adoff, A. (1989). *Chocolate dreams*. NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Bennett, J. (1989). *Spooky poems*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Cole, W. (1981). *Poem stew*. NY: Harper & Row.

cummings, e e (1988). *In just-spring*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Fleischman, P. (1988). *Rondo in C*. NY: Harper & Row.

Frost, R. (1988). *Birches*. NY: Henry Holt.

Hopkins, L.B. (1989). *Still as a star*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Storytelling

Collins, J. (1989). *My father*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Dragonwagon, C. (1989). *This is the bread I baked for Ned*. NY: MacMillan.

Field, R. (1988). *General store*. Boston: Little, Brown.
Gerard, R. (1989). *Rosie and the rustlers*. NY: Farrar Straus & Giroux.
Nerlove, M. (1989). *Just one tooth*. NY: McElderry Books.

Choral reading

Archambault, J. (1989). *Counting sheep*. NY: Henry Holt.
Hennessy, B.G. (1989). *The missing tarts*. NY: Viking Kestrel.
Kennedy, X.J. (1989). *Ghastlies, goops and pincushions*. NY: McElderry Books.
Siebert, D. (1989). *Heartland*. NY: Crowell.
Smith, W.J. (1989). *Ho for a hat!* Boston: Little, Brown.

Action poetry

Baer, G. (1989). *Thump, thump, rat-a-rat-tat*. NY: Harper & Row.
Hayes, S. (1988). *Stamp your feet: Action rhymes*. NY: Greenwillow.
Mahy, M. (1987). *17 kings and 42 elephants*. NY: Dial.
Martin, B., & Archambault, J. (1986). *Barn Dance!* NY: Holt.
Martin, B., & Archambault, J. (189). *Chicka chicka boom boom*. NY: Simon & Schuster.
Merriam, E. (1985). *Blackberry ink*. NY: Morrow.
Merriam, E. (1988). *You be good and I'll be night*. NY: Morrow.
Merriam, E. (1989). *Chortles*. NY: Morrow.

Role play

Blos, J.W. (1987). *Old Henry*. NY: Morrow.
King, L.L. (1989). *Because of Lozo Brown*. NY: Viking.
Livingston, M.C. (1989). *Up in the air*. NY: Holiday House.

Characterization

Ahlberg, J., & Ahlberg, A. (1986). *The jolly postman*. Boston: Little, Brown.
Allingham, W. (1989). *The fairies*. NY: Henry Holt.
Goffstein, B. (1989). *A house, a home*. NY: Harper & Row.
Marshak, S. (1989). *The pup grew up*. Translated by R. Pevear. NY: Henry Holt.
Prelutsky, J. (1988). *Tyrannosaurus was a beast*. NY: Greenwillow.
Steig, J. (1988). *Consider the lemming*. NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.





Modeling an Expository Text Structure Strategy in Think Alouds

Christine J. Gordon

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

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

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

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

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

Types of expository text structures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The wider context

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

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

Modeling text structure use in think-alouds

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

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

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

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

Suggestions for developing think-alouds using expository text structure knowledge

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

Sample of well-organized text with subheadings

Ways to earn money

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sample of well-organized text without subheadings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sample of poorly organized text

Public Sports

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

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

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

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

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

Sample think-aloud on less well-organized texts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shared responsibility for modeling

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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. . . . Expanding Horizons

Using Venn Diagrams as Children Analyze Children's Literature

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

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

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





READING: THE CONFERENCES

Jeanne M. Jacobson

Educating the Imagination

**National Council of Teachers of English,
80th Annual Convention, November, 1990**

Many of the presentations at the annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, held in Atlanta in November, stressed the theme of teachers educating themselves, and one another, through reflective practice, shared theory — and ongoing exercise of perceptive imagination. Our own minds need cultivation; our own practices need change; our own professional lives need to grow.

Regie Routman, author of *Transitions*, and the forthcoming book *Invitations*, described her own process of professional development in her introduction to a session titled, "Firing the imagination: Using literature to support teacher change." Preceding other participants who spoke of children's literature as a vehicle for teacher change, Routman discussed the ways professional literature has

affected her own growth as a teacher and writer. Reviewing a list of recommended books, she pointed out the changes that have occurred in the views of scholars in the field of education as they have created new ways of teaching, and then observed and modified their own practices.

It has been most of all the professional literature that has created change in our teaching. ...It is the professional literature that has enabled me to look at the ways I teach and say, "Aha! That's why it's working."

*Regie Routman, speaking at the NCTE conference
November 17, 1990*

Susan Hepler, addressing the same session, showed that children's literature itself, through the power of ideas and the beauty of language, constitutes a powerful change agent in teachers' lives. (The bibliography she provided is shared on pages 170 and 171 of this issue.) She also offered suggestions for engaging parents in learning about the best current theory and practice. Parents want to learn about what their children are doing, and why, yet teachers often lament that opportunities for communication with parents are difficult to arrange. Hepler advises using displays of students' work as occasions for informing parents about current educational theory and practice. When students' work is displayed, she advised, teachers should include a statement describing the activity and the rationale for it. "I see so many *inert* displays," she commented. "Displays that are explained give parents an understanding of the theory behind the instruction given. When we really educate parents about what we are doing, they really understand."

The next annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English will be held in Seattle Washington on November 22-27, 1991. For further information about the convention, write to National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana Illinois, 61801 .

FIRING THE IMAGINATION: LITERATURE WHICH SUPPORTS CHANGING TEACHER PRACTICE

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able to pick and choose the portions of the lesson plans they feel are best suited to their own students. In addition, Zarnowski suggests methods for integrating the material into the life of the student, a process requiring higher level thought.

Learning About Biographies is well written with clear, fast moving, understandable language that can be read easily in an hour or two. While reading you may frequently find yourself saying, "Oh! Of course. That makes perfect sense."

Books for Children

Henry's Happy Birthday by Holly Keller. Greenwillow Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. 32 pp. ISBN 0-688-09450-3. US\$12.95.

Reviewed by Sherry R. Myers
Western Michigan University

It is Henry's birthday, and nothing is going right. The cake is the wrong flavor, he doesn't appear to be getting the gift he had been promised, and he doesn't win the party games. When the time comes to blow out his candles, the only wish Henry can think to make is to wish it were somebody else's birthday instead of his. Then good things start happening, and Henry learns that appearances can be deceiving, in more ways than one.

Henry learns that some days things just don't seem to go the way he'd wish, but Henry learns that wishing those bad days away could be a big mistake. Things that aren't what one imagines can be just as good – in a different way. A gentle lesson in adjusting expectations to meet reality, *Henry's Happy Birthday* lets the young listener chuckle through Henry's misfortunes and be delighted with him when everything turns out better than just okay. Keller manages, with a simple story line and colorful, heart-warming illustrations, to touch on a generation-spanning truth: real life is seldom what we expected it to be. The story's upbeat ending subtly counsels young and old readers alike to be patient with reality.

The New Illustrated Dinosaur Dictionary. Written by Helen Roney Sattler; illustrated by Joyce Powzyk. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-688-08462-1. 352 pp. US\$24.95.

Billed as "the indispensable handbook for dinosaur lovers," this carefully prepared, 362-page compendium amply fulfills its promise. More than 350 dinosaurs are described in detail, while other entries discuss aspects of the study of dinosaurs, e.g., "naming dinosaurs," and present information about related terminology, e.g., "carnivore" and "Cretaceous Period," and the parts of a dinosaur. Variations in print style and form give helpful signals about cross-references; large print and careful writing make complex information easy to understand:

SALTOPUS (Sahlit--o-pus) "Leaping Foot" (Latin *saltus* = leaping + Greek *pous* = foot, because the finder thought it was a leaper, but it was really a runner.)

A small COELUROSAUR of Triassic Europe. This BIPEDAL dinosaur was similar to PODOKESAURUS but was smaller. It was an agile little meat eater about the size of a house cat. It stood only 8 inches (20 cm) high at the hips and weighed about 2 pounds (1 kg). Its HANDS had five fingers and were capable of grasping prey. *Saltopus* was a swift runner with sharp TEETH, and it probably ate small lizards and other small animals. It had a long, swanlike neck and large eyes. It is known from partial skeletons found in Scotland.

Classification: Coelurosauria, Theropoda, Saurischia.

A marvelous book — truly filled with information to marvel at — which would be a welcome addition to any classroom or home. (JMJ)

Mr. Hacker. Written by James Stevenson; illustrated by Frank Modell. Greenwillow Books, William Morrow & Company, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-688-09216-0. Hardcover. 32 pp. US\$12.95.

For reading, and being read to, children will relish the story of a lonely man who finds occupation and pleasure in feeding animals, and an ongoing challenge in making sure no

one eats food designated for some other species. The illustrations are appealing, good-humored and informative — from the first page on which Mr. Hacker walks sadly toward us, down a bleak, littered city street, to the last page where, carrying "cat food, dog food, dog bones, bird seed, and — for the squirrels — a bag of nuts," with a large dog trotting companionably by his side, he strides purposefully away from us, down a snowy country lane. (JMJ)

It Happens to Everyone. Written and illustrated by Bernice Myers. 1990. Children's Books Marketing, William Morrow and Company, 105 Madison Ave., New York NY 10016. ISBN 0-688-09081-8, 0-688-09082-6. Hardcover. 32 pp. US\$12.95.

Reviewed by Nancy Hood
Western Michigan University

It Happens to Everyone is about the very first day of school. Michael, the little boy in the story, and Mrs. Daniel, the teacher, are both nervous. In a new way, this book tells the story about a grown-up getting the first day jitters, too.

The illustrations are colorful and humorous and very realistic. They will capture the eye of every eager kindergarten student. *It Happens to Everyone* is a valuable addition to the "beginning school" collection. Both children and adults can relate to this story of the teacher and student and the anxieties they feel about the opening day of school.

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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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