



# Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

---

Volume 26  
Issue 2 *January 1986*

Article 10

---

1-1986

## Reading Horizons vol. 26, no. 2

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading\\_horizons](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons)

 Part of the Education Commons

---

### Recommended Citation

(1986). Reading Horizons vol. 26, no. 2. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 26 (2). Retrieved from [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading\\_horizons/vol26/iss2/10](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol26/iss2/10)

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Education and Literacy Studies at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu](mailto:wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu).

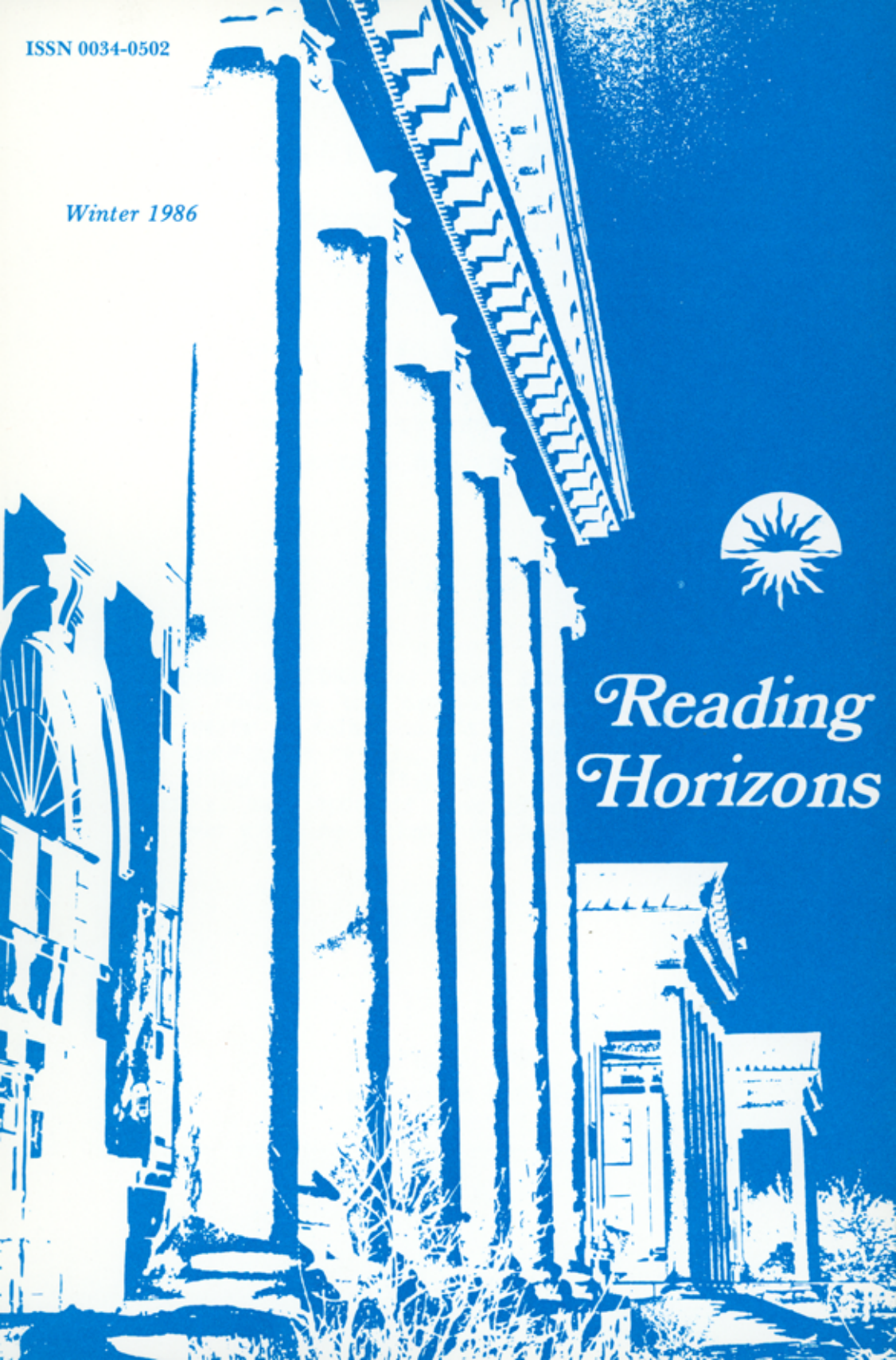


ISSN 0034-0502

*Winter 1986*



# *Reading Horizons*





# READING HORIZONS

Volume 26, Number 2

January , 1986

Editor - Ken VanderMeulen  
College of Education  
Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

READING HORIZONS has been published quarterly since 1960, on the campus of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. As a journal devoted to the teaching of reading at all levels, it provides all interested professionals with the ideas, reports, and important developments constituting the ever widening horizons of reading.

Copyright 1986  
Western Michigan University

---

---

READING  
HORIZONS

READING HORIZONS (ISSN 0034-0502 is published by the College of Education at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Second Class postage is paid at Kalamazoo. Postmaster: Send address changes to WMU, READING HORIZONS, Editor, Kalamazoo, MI

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are available at \$12.00 per year for individuals, \$14.00 for institutions. Checks must be made payable to READING HORIZONS. No. 1 issue of each volume is published in October. No. 4 issue of each volume contains Title and Author index. Rates are determined according to costs and may be changed.

MANUSCRIPTS

Manuscripts submitted for publication should include the original and two copies, and must be accompanied by postage for return of the original if not accepted. Manuscripts are evaluated without author identity by members of the evaluations committee. Address correspondence to Ken VanderMeulen, Editor, READING HORIZONS, WMU, Kalamazoo, MI, 49008.

MICROFILMS

Microfilm copies are available at Universal Microfilm International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48108. Back issues, while available, may be purchased from HORIZONS at \$3.00 per copy, payable in advance.

EDITORIAL  
POLICY

All authors whose articles are accepted for publication in HORIZONS must be subscribers at the time of publication of their articles. The content and points of view expressed in this journal are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the HORIZONS advisory board.

---

READING HORIZONS (ISSN 0034-0502) is indexed or abstracted by Current Index to Journals in Education, Chicorel Abstracts to Reading and Learning Disabilities, Council of Abstracting Services, and Reading Disability Digest.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor - Ken VanderMeulen

Managing Editor  
Sue Standish  
Reading Center & Clinic  
Western Michigan University

Carolyn Hedley  
Dir. Reading Program  
Fordham University  
Lincoln Center, New York

Katherine D. Wiesendanger  
Graduate Reading Program  
Alfred University, New York

Rona F. Flippo  
Reading Education  
University of Wisc.-Parkside  
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Leo M. Schell  
College of Education  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas

L. D. Briggs  
Elementary Education  
East Texas State University  
Commerce, Texas

Nicholas P. Criscuolo  
Supervisor of Reading  
New Haven Public Schools  
New Haven, Connecticut

Donald C. Cushenbery  
Foundation Professor of Education  
University of Nebraska  
Omaha, Nebraska

## STAFF WRITERS

Richard Robinson  
Professor of Education  
University of Missouri  
Columbia, MO 65211

Dr. Mark E. Thompson  
Education  
Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D. C.

Linda Mixon Clary, Ph.D.  
Reading Coordinator  
Augusta College  
Augusta, Georgia

Prof. William S. O'Bruba  
College of Professional Studies  
Bloomsburg University  
Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania

JoAnne Vacca  
Teacher Dev. & Curr. Studies  
Kent State University

Richard T. Vacca  
Reading & Writing Dev. Center  
Kent State University  
Kent, Ohio

Mary Jane Gray  
Associate Professor  
Loyola University  
Chicago, Illinois

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Announcements and News	page 87
Durkin Revisited	89
Katherine D. Wiesendanger	
Alfred University, Alfred, New York	
Twelve "Musts" for Improved Reading Comprehension	99
Linda M. Clary, Augusta College, Georgia	
The Reading Conference: Questions, Information, Activities and Feedback	105
Elene S. Demos, Texas Christian University	
Literary Books Make the Difference in Teaching the <u>ESL</u> Student	112
Mary H. Appleberry & Elvia Ana Rodriguez	
Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas	
Strategies for Independently Attacking Unrecognized Words	117
Leo M. Schell, Kansas State University	
Manhattan, Kansas	
Using Language to Gain Insight Into Literacy Learning	123
Dora L. Bailey and Richard T. Vacca	
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio	
An Integrative Reading-Language Approach	128
Dixie D. Sanger, Sheldon L. Stick, and Una A. Lange, Special Education	
University of Nebraska, Lincoln	
Teacher Expectation: Implications for Achievement	133
Dan T. Ouzts, The Citadel	
Charleston, South Carolina	
Reading Role Models: Fictional Readers in Children's Books	140
Dee C. Storey	
University of Nebraska, Lincoln	



READING HORIZONS is a unique publication which serves as a forum of ideas from many schools of thought. Although it began twenty-five years ago as a local newsletter, RH is now written by and for professionals in forty-eight states and nine Provinces of Canada. It is truly an eclectic venture in sharing ideas on the teaching of reading at all levels.

READING HORIZONS is an educational journal. The staff depends on subscriptions to keep this high quality national journal in operation. Carrying about ten significant articles in each issue, this quarterly is priced at \$12.00 per year for individuals, \$14.00 for institutions. If you are a subscriber, give this page to a colleague. We invite subscriptions. Make your check payable to READING HORIZONS, and mail to: Editor, READING HORIZONS, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

Enclosed is a check for \$12.00 for a one-year subscription to RH.

Mail my journals to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

"There is no more crucial or basic skill in all of education than that of reading."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

FREE. Teachers, now is the time to begin looking at your elementary students regarding the possible need for grade level retention. How can you be sure you are on target with what current research says about retention? At no cost you can get three helpful leaflets that will help you and your colleagues make the important decisions that can affect a child's future educational wellbeing. Just send a postage -paid (U.S. 39¢ postage), self-addressed legal-size envelope to: Retention, 20 Commercial Blvd., Novato, CA 94947-6191, and you will be promptly send: (1) Grade Level Retention - 19 Important Factors; (2) Explaining Grade Level Retention to Parents; (3) How to Make a Retention or Non-Retention Decision.

\* \* \* \* \*

We call your attention to the outstanding series of books published by Crestwood House, The Wildlife Series. The books feature Habits and Habitat profiles of several of the well-known, but little understood creatures that live in our great outdoors. It is the intention of this series to demonstrate that the survival of wildlife, unlike pampered zoo animals, is precarious - that each of us has a part in deciding whether these wild things will thrive or perish from the earth.

The books are almost completely illustrated with full-color photography--the exceptions are old, historic photographs and detailed drawings. Each title contains an extensive glossary and index, as well as maps showing the distribution of the animal. The level of difficulty is about grade 5 (Fry Formula), the interest level is from grade 3 up to and including adult. Each book is 48 pages, and sells for \$9.95, for hardback bindings. Crestwood House, Hwy. 66 So., Box 3427, Mankato, MN 56002-3427.

\* \* \* \* \*

The passage of P.L. 94-142, a law requiring public schools to provide services for seriously emotionally disturbed children, has created a need for a reference source that will aid in the selection of appropriate programs and facilities. To assist educators and parents in this process The Oryx Press has just published the Directory of Public and Private Programs for Emotionally Disturbed Children and Youth. The book, edited by Ronald E. Fritsch [xvi, 336 pages / 8½ x 11/Clothbound / ISBN 0-89774-199-4] is priced at \$74.50. Oryx Press, 2214 N. Central at Encanto, Phoenix, AZ, 85004-1483.

READING HORIZONS received a notice from the Council for Learning Disabilities announcing the Eighth Annual Convention of the Council for Learning Disabilities, October 9-11, 1986, in Kansas City, MO. The theme is "Beyond the Label". Along with the notification was the call for papers. While we could not print the page in its entirety, we quote the following requirements:

1. Attach an abstract that describes the presentation in less than 50 words (if the proposal is accepted, this abstract will appear in the program), and a more detailed description of the proposed presentation (i.e., 250-300 words) that will allow the Program Committee to determine whether or not to accept the proposed presentation.
2. If the proposal is being sponsored by a CLD State or Province Chapter, attach a statement to that effect. The statement should be signed by the Chapter President, since State/Province Proposals are given preference over most other proposals.
3. Deadline for submission is February 15, 1986. Acceptance and rejection notices will be mailed in late April.
5. Upon notification of acceptance, presenters are expected to preregister for the conference.
6. Mail proposals (please include 2 self-addressed, stamped envelopes) to:

Council for Learning Disabilities  
P. O. Box 40303  
Overland Park, KS 66204

## DURKIN REVISITED

Katherine D. Wiesendanger

Director, Graduate Reading Program  
Alfred University, New York

In his classic study (1917) Thorndike successfully demonstrated that reading was a complex process and that its successful completion was determined not in terms of whether or not a student correctly verbalized a string of words, but whether or not he understood the material being read. The Thorndike study had a significant impact on the development of educational strategies that emphasized reading comprehension as opposed to mere verbalization. As a result of Thorndike's work, the subsequent logical questions included: Can comprehension actually be taught? And, if so, what is the most effective means of doing so? Studies (Goudey, 1968; Frase, 1970; and Brady, 1974) focused on questioning strategies, including placement and question type. Finally, in 1976, Dolores Durkin, as a member of the Center for the Study of Reading, conducted what many hoped would be a definitive study, in order to gain more specific knowledge about the instruction of reading comprehension. This research was supported by the National Institute of Education.

While Thorndike's study was considered a significant contribution because he emphasized reading as a reasoning process, Durkin's study (1978) was a milestone in the reading literature partly because of her unique classification of questions. Instead of classifying questions in terms of a taxonomy, Durkin differentiated between questions that focus on the process of comprehension as opposed to the product. She defined process questions as those that assist the students to better understand the material by working out the meaning of units larger than a word. Examples of process questions might include: What do you need to know to draw this conclusion? To what does this refer in this sentence? What words tell us that the author is making a comparison?

Product questions, on the other hand, simply assess a child's comprehension of a selection. They include questions like the following: When did mother go to the store? Why was the little boy sad?

Durkin places the type of question that asks a child to see if he has understood what he has read under comprehension assessment and the type of question that helps him to understand the material under comprehension instruction. Using her unique method of question classification, Durkin conducted a study (1978) which analyzed comprehension instruction from three different perspectives. The three-fold study concentrated on the amount of time spent on teaching comprehension during the reading period. The sub-studies analyzed teaching comprehension from the viewpoints of teachers, the schools, and students. Findings revealed that little time was spent in comprehension instruction.

To determine whether or not any significant changes have been made in the teaching of reading comprehension during the last eight years, the present study duplicated Durkin's original sub-study that analyzed the types of activities and instructional procedures that took place during the reading period from the perspective of the teacher. Of specific interest was whether teachers who were taught the difference between questions related to process, and questions related to product, as well as how to formulate such questions, improve their reading instruction. Consequently, all the teachers in the present study had completed a course in which Teaching Them To Read (Durkin 1983) was used as the major text. The distinction between testing comprehension and teaching comprehension was thoroughly covered. Except for this one variable, care was taken to strictly replicate Durkin's original sub-study.

As in the original Durkin study, all teachers knew beforehand that they would be observed and the recording time began when the period actually began. This researcher observed 20 teachers for a total of 3,120 minutes, whereas Durkin observed 24 teachers for a total of 4,469 minutes in her sub-study that analyzed comprehension instruction from the perspective of the teacher. As in the original Durkin study, fourth grade teachers were observed and visits were carried out on three successive days. Each teacher was observed at least three times for a minimum of 150 minutes. The visits were equally divided among the five days and ranged from 40 to 60 minutes in length.

In the present study, nineteen of the classrooms were taught by women, one by a male. There were no combination grades and no teacher aides. All the teachers observed had master's degrees in reading and had been teaching from

two to sixteen years, with a mean of 8.6 years. The number of students in the classroom ranged from 18 to 27, with a mean of 23.2. In three schools, interclass grouping was used; the rest of the classrooms were self-contained. All observations were done in Western New York by the author from September through May during the 1983-84 school year. The categories used in the present study to assess comprehension instruction are those developed by Durkin. Not only do the categories lend themselves to observational research, but Durkin included directions for using the categories to facilitate replication of her research.

Table 1  
Percentage of teacher time spent on  
comprehension and study skills  
during the reading period

Behavioral Categories	No. of Minutes	% of 3120 Minutes
Comprehension: instruction	462	14.81%
Compre.: review of instruc.	94	3.01
Comprehension: application	129	4.13
Comprehension: assignment	34	1.09
Compre.: help with assign.	123	3.94
Compre.: prep. for rdg.	97	3.11
Comprehension: assessment	310	9.94
Comprehension: prediction	N.O.	
Study skills: instruction	64	2.05
Study skills: review of instruction	N.O.	
Study skills: application	36	1.15
Study skills: assignment	21	.67

N.O. = not observed

Summarized in Table 1 are the amounts of time spent on comprehension activities and instruction observations of the 20 fourth grade teachers. As shown in the table, the largest percentage of time (14.81) during the reading period was spent on comprehension instruction. Comprehension assessment accounted for almost 9.94% of the time spent.

Table 2  
Percentage of teacher time spent during the reading  
period on activities connected with assignments

Behavioral Categories	No. of Minutes	% of 3120 Minutes
Comprehension: assignment	34	1.09%
Compre.: help with assign.	123	3.94
Comprehension: assessment	310	9.94
Study skills: assignment	21	.67
Assignment: gives	118	3.78
Assignment: helps with	115	3.69
Assignment: checks	62	1.99

The amount of time teachers spent during the reading period on activities connected with assignments was 25.11% (shown in Table 2). This included the following: activities connected with comprehension assignments, study skills assignments and assignments excluding those for comprehension and study skills. Assignments connected with comprehension which required comprehension of connected text, helping with the comprehension assignments, and comprehension assessment of assigned readings totaled 14.97% of teacher time. Giving, assisting with or checking assignments other than for comprehension or study skills account for 9.46% of teacher time.

As shown in Table 3 (following page), the amount of time teachers spent on oral reading, phonics, structural analysis and word meaning combined was 15.58% of the total reading period. Analyzing each aspect separately, word meaning accounted for 6.09%, structural analysis 5.87% and phonic analysis 3.62% of the total time spent reading. Oral reading was not observed.

#### Comparison Between Present Study and Durkin Study

1. Descriptive comparisons between the findings of the present study and the findings of the Durkin Study were made. When analyzing the categories that accounted for the largest percentages of time spent during the reading period, Durkin does not mention comprehension instruction because of the miniscule amount of time she observed teachers spending in this category. In sharp contrast, the

Table 3

Percentage of teacher time spent during the reading period on various types of reading instruction, review, and application excluding comprehension and study skills.

Behavioral Categories	No. of Minutes	% of 3120 Minutes
Oral reading: instruction	N. O.	
Oral reading: application	N. O.	
Phonics: instruction	33	1.06%
Phonics: review	17	.54
Phonics: application	63	2.02
Structural analysis:		
instruction	36	1.15
review	27	.87
application	120	3.85
Word meanings: instruction	64	2.05
Word meanings: review	N.O.	
Word meanings: application	126	4.04

Table 4

Categories for the reading program with the largest percentage of time allotted to them

Behavioral Categories	No. of Minutes	% of 3120 Minutes
Comprehension: instruction	462	14.81%
Comprehension: assessment	310	9.94
Non-instruction	146	4.68
Comprehension: application	129	4.13
Word meanings: applications	126	4.04
Comprehension: help w/ assign.	123	3.94
Structural analysis: applic.	120	3.85
Transition	120	3.85
Assignment: gives	118	3.78
Assignment: helps with	115	3.69



present findings indicated that the largest percentage of time during the reading period was allocated to comprehension instruction. Durkin found that less than 1% of the teacher's time during the reading period was spent on comprehension instruction; this compared to 17.65% in the present study. Since Durkin's categories for classifying teacher behavior in relation to reading were used and her instructions for using the categories were adhered to, differences in the definition of comprehension or its assessment could not account for the differences in the findings of the two studies.

2. In Durkin's study, comprehension-assessment accounted for the largest percentage of time spent during the reading period. In contrast, the New York study shows comprehension assessment ranking second to comprehension instruction in the amount of time spent. Observers in both the Durkin and New York State studies, found that assessment questions were taken primarily from the basal manuals. However, the present study found that teachers were more likely to use assessment questions as a guide for developing comprehension questions. In other words, if a child misses an assessment question, an instruction question would be developed to assist in the comprehension process.

3. Categories of non-instruction and transition accounted for over 20% of the time spent in the reading class in Durkin's study. This is in sharp contrast to the present findings in which both categories accounted for slightly over 8% of the total reading class period.

4. Not only did Durkin find little emphasis on comprehension instruction, she also observed little emphasis on the teaching of phonics, structural analysis or word meaning assignments. However, in the later New York study, time spent during the reading period on phonics, structural analysis, and word meanings, was found to be significantly greater, with structural analysis receiving more time than the other two. While more time than was observed could justifiably be spent on teaching structural analysis, it was significantly more than what had been observed by Durkin.

5. Another considerable difference between the findings of the two studies was the time being spent on teachers listening to oral reading. In Durkin's study, this category ranked fourth in the amount of time spent during the total reading period. Oral reading was not observed at the fourth grade level.

6. Present observations found word meaning instruction much more prevalent than had been observed by Durkin. Word meaning application ranked fifth in the categories. Word meaning was not ranked by Durkin among the categories in which the largest percentage of time was spent.

### Summary of Results

The findings of the present study indicated that teachers did spend a significant amount of time teaching for comprehension. While assessment of comprehension was likewise observed, teachers used assessment questions to determine the instructional needs in comprehension. On the contrary, Durkin found that the largest percentage of time was spent on comprehension assessment with little time being spent in direct verbal instruction. While assessment received the greatest emphasis, it was not used as a guide to comprehension instruction but rather to determine who could or could not comprehend the assignment. Further, the emphasis was on literal questions that were primarily taken from basal manuals. Little class time was spent on preparation for reading the assignment.

Durkin also observed a considerable amount of time being used for non-instruction and transition, whereas this researcher observed non-instruction and transition being kept to a minimum. In contrast, the present findings revealed more time being spent on structural analysis and word meanings than in the Durkin study.

Whereas the observers of both studies saw that teachers used basals, Durkin found that the emphasis was on use of ditto sheets and workbooks, with little time allotted to preparation for reading, word identification or word meaning skills. The present observer found that more emphasis was spent on these prerequisite skills for reading and less on workbooks and ditto sheets. It appears that teachers in the present study spent their time more constructively and that they tried to maximize the amount of instruction time.

### Implications

Durkin requested that the best teachers be selected for her observations. Likewise, the teachers in the present study were probably considered far better than average. The major difference between the two groups is that the teachers in the present study had completed a course in which Teaching Them to Read (Durkin, 1983) was used as the major text. The distinction between testing comprehension

and teaching comprehension was thoroughly covered. It would seem that the results at least imply that teachers who were taught the difference between questions related to process and questions related to product, as well as how to formulate such questions, can indeed improve their reading instruction. Additionally, such instruction seems to result in teachers who are more cognizant of the fact that time should be spent on such things as preparation for reading, word identification and word meaning skills.

#### What This All Means

At least 90% of the teachers in the elementary school use the basal reader approach as the primary means of teaching reading. Consequently, the questions asked are the ones taken from the manuals. Questions are not in themselves comprehension instruction (Nicholson, 1982) and are typically examined in isolation from the larger conversational sequence (Chall, 1967). In analyzing the comprehension component of basals, Cooke (1970) and Hatcher (1971) found the majority of questions included in basals to be at the literal level. This is perhaps the reason that some teachers equate reading thinking skills with the most narrow of literal comprehension skills (Henry, 1963).

Because the definition of comprehension instruction found in basal readers differs from Durkin's classification some teachers apparently feel they are teaching for comprehension when they are, in fact, asking assessment questions. Granted, questions can serve a number of purposes, and the teachers' intention in asking the question may not be instructional (Nicholson, 1982). However, Durkin's classifications mandate that teachers understand the distinction between questions that assess and those that instruct. If the basal manuals do not distinguish between process and product, then the institutions that prepare teachers must assume the responsibility.

Long range investigations must be conducted before the reading profession can truly measure the effects that implementing Durkin's questioning classifications will have on the child's ability to comprehend. However, as an observer of over 50 hours of reading instruction, I would like to address several concerns that have been raised concerning her classic study, such as the question (MacGinitie 1983) that Durkin's view might result in less purposeful reading, in lessons that are too structured and in less time being spent actually reading.

It would appear to this writer that MacGinitie's fears are unwarranted. Durkin is well known for advocating that reading instruction be based on the needs of students. Her emphasis on process in no way precludes that student needs be taken into account. On the contrary, Durkin would, for example, advocate helping children develop the process of sequencing only if they needed help in sequencing. Likewise, Durkin's classifications do not imply that lessons be more structured than otherwise. Assisting the child to develop a strategy for understanding the process of sequencing by simply asking such questions as "What signal words did you find in the selection that help us know that one event comes before another?" does not indicate more or less structure. Finally, process questions do not result in less time for reading. On the contrary, by incorporating process questions into the reading lesson, more time could be spent reading. My observations suggest that Durkin is justified in encouraging teachers to follow a child's incorrect response to an assessment question with an instruction question. Certainly this approach makes more sense than simply giving him more assessment questions when he is unable to answer the first one correctly. There is less time spent on ditto sheets and workbook pages which all too often do not instruct because the child must understand the concept before s/he can complete the assignment.

In sum, Durkin's classic study has had profound effects on reading instruction. This is due to the fact that she made us aware of the question patterns that existed in the elementary school. The primary significance of these findings implies that teachers can be taught not only to differentiate between process and product questions but also that they can successfully implement such questioning strategies in the classroom. While additional research needs to be conducted to understand all its implications, my observations convince me that more effort should be made to translate her research into classroom practice.

## REFERENCES

- Brady, L. How Stated Purposes for Reading Affect Comprehension Scores of Fifth Grade Students in a Midwestern School District. Unpubl. Dissertation, Univ of N.D. 1974.
- Chall, J.S. Learning to Read: The Great Debate. New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1967.
- Cooke, D.A. "An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in Basal Series According to the Barrett Taxonomy." Unpubl. Dissertation, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, 1970.
- Durkin, Dolores. "What Classroom Observations Reveal about Reading Comprehension Instruction." Reading Research Quarterly, Vol. 14 (1978), pp. 481-533.
- Teaching Them to Read, 4th ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1983.
- Frase, L.T. Boundary Conditions for Mathemagenic Behaviors. Review of Educational Research, 1970, 40, 337-348.
- Goudey, C.E. A Comparison of Children's Reading Performance under Directed and Non-directed Conditions. Unpubl. Dissertation, Univ. of Minnesota, 1968.
- Hatcher, T.C. "The Development of Comprehension Skills in Selected Basal Readers." Unpubl. Diss., Univ of Northern Colorado, 1971.
- Henry, J. "Reading for What?" Teachers College Record, (1963), p. 65.
- MacGinitie, Walter. "A Critique of What Classroom Observations Reveal About Reading Comprehension Instruction in Five Basal Reader Series: Durkin's Contribution to Our Understanding of Current Practice." In Reading Research Revisited, edited by Lance Gentile. Columbus, OH: Bell & Howell, 1983.
- Nicholson, Tom. An Anatomy of Reading: A Guide to Understanding Reading Problems, 2nd ed. Sydney: Horwitz-Grahame, 1982.
- Thorndike, Edward L. "Reading as Reasoning: A Study of Mistakes in Paragraph Reading." Journal of Educational Psychology, vol. 8 (1917), pp. 323-332.

## TWELVE "MUSTS" FOR IMPROVED READING COMPREHENSION

Linda M. Clary  
Reading Coordinator  
Augusta College  
Augusta, Georgia

Recent years have brought an unprecedented interest in reading comprehension, particularly in the area of research. The Center for the Study of Reading was established in 1976 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, with its basic goal to conduct research into the underlying processes of reading comprehension. One unusual characteristic of this endeavor was the assembly of a multidisciplinary staff of researchers from the areas of psychology and linguistics, as well as reading. Over the past years, the CSR has been prolific in its research and dissemination with hundreds of pieces of ongoing research and summaries of studies having been published. Much of the data have reiterated what good reading teachers and specialists have known for years, while other studies have indicated some changes that need to be made and some areas that need to be strengthened.

A brief summary of this research effort indicates the following conclusions that are important for teachers:

1. Reading can no longer be viewed as solely a skills acquisition in which readers sequentially progress from letter and word recognition to the comprehension of more difficult ideas. Rather, reading is an interaction between these processes and the background and expectations readers bring to their reading.
2. The importance of the reader's background to his understanding of what he reads cannot be overstated. This problem is often referred to as schema theory. Schemata are the networks of concepts or ideas to which the reader relates newly read material, often by filling in gaps that are present in his background and by formulating hypotheses to be accepted or rejected through reading. Consequently, "...comprehension is as dependent on what is in the reader's head as it is on what is on what is printed" (Durkin, 1981), and readers may make widely varied interpretations of the same text if their backgrounds and experiences are divergent. Indeed, their decoding of the text may be exactly the same,

while their comprehension is quite different. This theory reinforces the idea that teachers must give added time to background development and exploration before reading, rather than skimming over that section of their basal lesson plans. It is also important to encourage youngsters to make their own individual predictions before reading and share them with the group, so that the various possibilities of meaning are all explored. Group interaction becomes extremely important when we want students to learn different interpretations of the same materials as is especially common in today's multi-cultural, mobile student bodies. It is equally important that teachers know the possibilities of understanding that exist among their students and give them some strategies for learning to comprehend efficiently by specific methods.

3. Schema theory is also relevant to the areas of standardized and informal testing. If reader's interpretations are so dependent on their individual backgrounds, can there be one best answer to standardized test comprehension questions, particularly at the interpretative level? Can one form of an informal reading inventory be appropriate to all children in the school district? These questions must be answered by individual teachers and districts.
4. Research in the area of story grammar is also relevant, particularly to narrative prose. Story grammar refers to the way stories are put together. Story grammars identify the major components of stories. There are several story grammars in the literature, but the one proposed by Stein and Glenn (1979) is a good example. Stein and Glenn outline these components as the setting; the episode which includes the initiating event, internal response, attempt to reach the goal, consequence and reaction. Current theorists believe that many youngsters read prose successfully because they realize that stories have a schema for the components of stories and read to find them. If the story does not fit this pattern, they often realize that something is missing and has limited their comprehension. In this instance, poor comprehension may be more a result of the author's poor writing than any flaw in the reader's comprehension.
5. Research has also focused on why spoken discourse is often easier to comprehend than written discourse. Apparently, speakers use pauses, intonation, stress, facial expressions, gestures, and eye movements to describe

more familiar materials to the listener (Durkin, 1981). This listener, then, usually has a better idea of what the subject is and there's less likelihood of ambiguity becoming confusing, whereas the writer must use punctuation marks alone to convey many of these same things to the reader.

6. Readability formulas have also been questioned by new research. Generally based on the premise that short words in short sentences make materials easier to read, the formulas ignore the reader's background. In addition, when materials are rewritten, quality is often sacrificed while the author's original message may be altered and many gaps may be left in sentences that have been reduced in length. This reduction may, in fact, make it necessary for the reader to infer more than a longer sentence would. For example, "After I boiled my eggs, I enjoyed eating them for breakfast." is actually clearer than the following two short sentences: "I boiled eggs. I ate breakfast."
7. Anaphoric devices have been recognized as a source of difficulty in comprehension. Anaphora are means of avoiding repetitions by reducing what is said. If the reader recognizes that something has been left out, there's no problem, but if he or she does not recognize the deletion and/or has no instructions in learning to make these recognitions, comprehension may suffer. For example:

"My house was spotless. The baseboards had even been scrubbed."

Comprehension of the above necessitates recognizing that it is the baseboards of the house that have been scrubbed. Children need more and better instruction in recognizing this characteristic of text.

8. Finally, today's research is reaffirming that readers comprehend better when they have specific purposes that are set before reading. The critical point now is to remember that the questions must be good ones that force children to comprehend beyond the literal level. In fact, even primary teachers need to start children on the path of becoming critical readers and thinkers by posing questions that involve critical reading skills. Such instruction might balance the recent basic skills movements that have produced youngsters who can give short, quick answers but are unable to explain and defend the judgments they make and lack the ability for reasoned, disciplined thought.



If the research has yielded all this information, what else does it mean about the daily teaching of reading? We have indicated already the absolute necessities of the following:

1. Consider each child's background before reading selections. Perhaps it will be better to skip some stories in the basals particularly. The option is to spend much longer times on building background.
2. Build background through techniques such as the structured overview. Here the teacher and/or students select important concepts and vocabulary and arrange them in a graphic design for introduction and discussion before reading. This technique can be especially helpful in content areas.
3. In testing, have several forms of IRI's available and try to get item analysis done of standardized tests, so that you will be able to spot possible problems related to background that influence scores. Read through the content of standardized tests to check their match to your students' backgrounds.
4. Remember that skills are not reading; they are only a means to the end of reading. The emphasis should be on reading and learning any skills needed to improve reading, not doing worksheets and taking tests to the point of never allowing time for practice reading.
5. Having children make predictions before they read and/or setting purposes for them to read and confirm or reject is crucial. It makes reading an active process in which each child must talk - or write - and read. Be absolutely positive that students are shown how to comprehend for different purposes through teacher demonstration. Simply telling them to comprehend does not teach.
6. Asking children to retell stories in their own words can be very informative. It eliminates the necessity for questions and can be very enlightening as to the child's interpretation, often revealing varied interpretations that relate to the youngster's different background that may not come out as clearly through questioning. To do this, we simply ask them to tell us, in their own words, what the passage said.
7. In assessing the readability of materials, we need to remember that the formulas provide very rough and limited estimates of readability. Short length sen-

tences and one syllable words do not always equal reading ease, particularly when anaphoric devices and students' schemata are considered. We have nothing as yet as efficient as the formulas, but we will have problems if we rely on them alone.

8. Since students seem to understand spoken language much easier than written, unfamiliar discourse, a good case can be made for the use of the language experience approach, especially in the early stages of teaching students the comprehension process. Language experience stories are generally composed of high interest content and familiar language, and are therefore excellent vehicles for developing comprehension. Students can easily predict, hypothesize and read for verification in the materials.
9. High interest materials, even of the nonlanguage experience type, are always easier for students to comprehend. They generally have the schemata or background for them; therefore, when youngsters have difficulty, these types of materials should be used for lots of easy practice.
10. It is absolutely imperative that children have the opportunity to read, read, read. Doing skill sheets, taking tests, or filling in workbooks is not reading. Children must have the time to practice reading real materials that have some meaning for them--directions for games they want to play, recipes for food they want to eat, manuals that will allow them to get drivers' permits, books they like, materials they have written. Tradebooks and real-life materials should be as important in the classroom as basal readers. Given these opportunities to read and discuss what they have read, particularly early in reading instruction, children will see that getting meaning is essential to successful reading and they will have a more successful foundation on which to base their reading careers.
11. Since knowing the students' backgrounds is necessary for teaching them to comprehend successfully, using interest inventories can be important, especially at the beginning of the year or when a student arrives during the year.
12. Finally, our jobs as teachers will be significantly easier if we can convince parents to read to their children from birth. With this background, youngsters

learn that reading is supposed to make sense. They learn that the squiggles on paper convey meaning. They enjoy reading and they also learn the structure of stories--the story grammars discussed earlier--that make comprehension much easier. This constant reading also greatly expands their background and vocabularies and gives them far greater schemata to be met in print when they read themselves. Learning to read after being read to for several years is sometimes self-taught and almost natural. As reading professionals, we have a real responsibility to get to parents of infants, perhaps through prenatal classes, pediatricians, maternity clinics, obstetricians, the media and any other possible route to convince them of the importance, even necessity, of reading to their young children.

Training our students to comprehend is certainly important in our present society. The unprecedented interest in recent reading comprehension research has verified some old ideas and introduced some new ones. Similarly, some routine practices, such as setting purposes for reading and varying types of questions have been confirmed, while others, like over-reliance on readability formulas and one-shot testing, have been questioned. Though there are still many questions to be answered, we certainly know much that we can do in our classes everyday to enhance comprehension. Faithfully following these research-based practices will make our students more successful in the most important product of reading--comprehension.

#### REFERENCES

- Durkin, Delores. What is the value of the new interest in reading comprehension? Language Arts, 1981, 58, 23-42.
- Stein, N. L. and Glenn, C. G. An analysis of story comprehension in elementary children. In R. Hillsdale (Ed.), New Directions in Discourse Processing (Vol. 2). Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum Associates, 1979.

## THE READING CONFERENCE: QUESTIONS, INFORMATION, ACTIVITIES AND FEEDBACK

Elene S. Demos

Texas Christian University  
Fort Worth, Texas

The recent focus upon our nation's schools through national and state commissions, reports and reforms, has made communication between parents and teachers even more critical than in previous years. The importance of parental involvement and communication has been extensively documented in the literature. Saxe (1975), Grant (1979), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Phi Delta Kappa (1980), and Henderson (1982) present information that parent involvement is essential to schools and promotes increased achievement for students.

Couple this with the importance of the basic skills and a concern for the development of literacy and the schools have a natural vehicle for communicating and involving parents -- the parent reading conference. Many parents have questions about their child's reading progress and reading program and the teacher parent conference allows educators to interact with parents, explain the program and answer questions.

Let's examine this process to enhance and improve our communication with parents. A conference is very similar to teaching in that it requires a great deal of planning. Conferences further parallel the instructional process in that they contain similar behaviors that are evident in teaching to an objective. Our lessons include questions, present information, include activities and present feedback to students. Likewise, conferences include the same behaviors in that our preliminary questions provide a focus to the conference; teachers typically present information to parents; activities occur during the conference; feedback is given to and by teachers and parents during the conference.

Just as a lesson can fail because of poor planning, so can a conference. To avoid this, the teacher must make some preliminary decisions. The teacher must first decide the purpose of the conference. According to Hunter (1976), there are three types of conferences and each type serves a different purpose. These types include giving information,

receiving information and problem solving. We are now ready to enter the first phase of the conference.

### QUESTIONS

Although each phase of the conference involves planning, this phase involves careful consideration since it establishes the focus for the conference. Questions to be answered prior to scheduling the conference are prerequisite for the other phases of the conference. These five major questions must be addressed before other activities occur. They include:

1) What is the purpose of this conference?

There are three basic purposes for holding a conference. The first is to convey information. As the teacher, you may want to explain the school reading program or the child's placement on a specific reading test or something the child has done that is noteworthy. A second purpose for holding a conference is to receive information. The teacher may need or want additional information about a child's previous reading performance, or developmental information that would help one make decisions about how a child thinks, what they read at home, etc. The third purpose is problem solving. If you are having a problem with a child, you may want a conference to work out a solution.

Once the purpose has been determined, the teacher is ready to proceed with the next series of questions. These questions are relatively simple, but answering them prior to the conference will allow for a smoother professional contact with a parent.

2) Who will attend the conference?

In more instances, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will attend the conference. But there will be times when you may want to include the student or reading specialist or the principal. Who you invite will depend upon the purpose of the conference. If you are having a specific problem with a child regarding completing reading homework assignments or acting up during the reading period, you may want to invite the child to attend the conference also.

3) Where will the conference be held?

The classroom is the most likely spot for the conference to be held. Reading materials and student work samples will be close at hand. If you have a

special conference room that includes comfortable chairs and a conducive seat arrangement, you may want to consider hosting the conference elsewhere. In any event, the location must be determined and conveyed to the parent.

4) When will the conference be held?

Most teachers would say, after school. But with today's working parents it may be necessary to schedule a conference in the evening or on a Saturday. In some instances, parents can get away from their job during the day and the conference might be held during a teacher's planning period or just prior to the start of the school day.

5) How long will the conference last?

The answer to this question will obviously depend upon the nature of the conference. If the problem is minor or we need to ask a parent one or two questions we can anticipate that twenty to thirty minutes will be sufficient. More intensive problems will require a longer period, but in any case, you will need to give parents a time estimate--especially if they're coming over a lunch period or if you have another class to teach after the conference.

---

## INFORMATION

Information can be associated with input and generally provides parents with knowledge of their child or the reading program. The information to be conveyed during the conference will vary according to the purpose of the conference. But some basic information will be appropriate to many conferences and will also require some pre-planning and compilation prior to the conference.

### 6) Assessment

Test information is frequently shared during the reading conference. The teacher should present the information as realistically as possible, while remaining positive. For example, the teacher can relay scores as number of correct responses or percent of correct responses, rather than expressing the negative.

### 7) PROGRAM

A brief explanation of the child's reading program, showing parents the child's reading text, workbook with supplementary reading materials will familiarize parents with

the materials and content of the program. A daily schedule indicating the reading periods frequently may help parents understand the pressures and philosophy of the school reading program. Parents are frequently not familiar with the various types of reading programs and a few moments spent on relaying the advantages and characteristics of the approach will enhance their understanding.

#### 8) Materials

Teachers should develop a folder of work samples for each child. This folder should accurately portray the range of reading activities children complete for reading. Samples of language experience stories, creative writing samples, regular assignments, extra credit assignments, and workbook or dittoed materials that may be pertinent to the conference.

### ACTIVITIES

The activities to occur during the conference are established as the agenda is developed for the conference as with the questions and information, pre-planning is likewise required. The agenda should plan activities that focus upon the purpose of the conference. One can equate the activities with the materials used for the instructional process. As such, the activities should serve to support the questions and information that is presented. Activities would typically center upon:

#### 9) Welcoming the parent

Every effort should be made to establish rapport with the parent. Many parents frequently feel ill at ease when talking with their child's teacher. As teachers, we want to make them feel welcome, relaxed, comfortable and important. Our goal is to ultimately open up communication with parents so the signals that we emit upon our first encounter will hopefully convey this intent.

#### 10) Share the Agenda

At the beginning of the conference, the teacher should thank the parent for coming and state the purpose of the conference. Even though this was most likely conveyed over the telephone or in a note to the parent, this will serve as an official reminder of the purpose and what you hope to accomplish by the end of the conference.

#### 11) Materials Examination

If the conference is information sharing regarding

type of program and methods used, it would be appropriate to pull the texts and workbooks that students are using and allow the parent time to leaf through them. This could also occur, however, prior to the conference, if several conferences are scheduled on one day. The teacher might display the materials on a table, outside the conference area, so a parent could examine them while waiting to begin the conference. If you are examining the materials in the conference room with the parents, pull the child's work samples and review these with the parents to enter into the conference. This will serve as an opener and can also become a positive entry point for further discussion.

### FEEDBACK

Just as students need feedback regarding instruction, so do parents regarding the conference. The feedback should include a number of strategies to reinforce, summarize, and follow-up.

#### 12) Interaction

Teacher and parent interactions are obviously very important in a conference. Just as we may have students that we overreact to, we may also have parents who bring out the worst in us. As professionals we must examine our reactions, not become defensive and be as objective and constructive as possible.

#### 13) Encouragement

The teacher should begin the conference by making the parent feel welcome and at ease, and should establish rapport. In addition, information sharing should be considered positive. Parents should be encouraged to comment about their child's program, progress, problems and any questions that are raised. Parents should also be encouraged to ask questions. In fact, prior to the conference, suggest that parents write down any questions that they might have.

#### 14) Listen

Teachers, who are accustomed to doing most of the talking must make a concerted effort to pause periodically, to look for verbal and nonverbal cues and to pick up on parents' questions and concerns. In addition, teachers should listen enthusiastically to parents. The teacher who appears bored during the conference or presents an image that what parents are saying is unimportant will do little to enhance cooperation and collaboration between parents and schools.



### 15) Summarize

At the close of the conference the teacher should first ask the parent to summarize the major points of the conference. This will ensure that both parties have heard the same information. The teacher should reiterate the major points of the conference and parent and teacher should collaboratively develop a plan that addresses any problems that have been discussed. If this was not a problem-solving conference, but an information oriented conference, then a brief summary will be sufficient. Teachers should make a point of having every conference end on a positive note, just as it began. This may seem difficult with particular students, especially if one is into a problem-solving conference, but the positive approach will bring more dividends than the negative.

### 16) Evaluation

Take a few moments at the end of the conference to judge the effectiveness of the conference. Were your questions and the parents' questions adequately answered? Did the parents leave the conference with a positive feeling? How will you follow-up on the conference and institute any plans that were jointly developed during the conference?

### SUMMARY

This article was developed to help teachers plan for more effective reading conferences. Although applied to the area of reading, this format and the steps presented can also be utilized in other areas. The planning and events of the conference overlap with the instructional process; as such, once identified, they can become as automatic as instruction.

Following these steps will allow for smoother conferences and greater communication between teachers and parents and will ultimately provide a positive effect for students. A few moments spent planning will help ensure the focus and communication that was desired by scheduling the conference.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brookover, W. B., Lezotte, L.W. Changes in School Characteristics Coincident with Changes in Student Achievement. East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, Mich. State University, 1979.
- Grant, C. Community Participation in Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1979.
- Henderson, A.T. "Parents Involvement: Does It Improve Student Achievement?" Citizen Action in Education, Vol. 9, No. 1 (June 1982), p. 3.
- Hunter, M. RX: Improved Instruction. El Segundo: Theory Into Practice, 1976.
- Phi Delta Kappa. Why Do Some Schools Succeed? Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa, 1980.
- Saxe, R. W. School-Community Interaction. Berkeley, Calif. McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1975.

## LITERARY BOOKS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN TEACHING THE ESL STUDENT

Mary H. Appleberry

Elvia Ana Rodriguez

Stephen F. Austin State University

Nacogdoches, Texas

Eager, bright eyed children gather close around the teacher's chair, where she holds several enticing books. In this multiethnic class she makes very sure that Juanita, Pablo, and Kim, who know little English, are seated close to her where they can point to pictures and hear her words clearly. The teacher begins with The Very Hungry Caterpillar, the children giggling as he eats his way through "One red apple", "Two yellow pears", etc. While the story is reread the children join in chorus as different pupils point to the pictures. The teacher continues with Teddy Bears One to Ten, Ape in a Cape, Numbers of Things, Green Says Go, or other books that teach colors, numbers, ABCs, and concepts of shape and size. Juanita, Pablo, and Kim beam as they point correctly to pictures and join in repeating the stories with the group, learning through pictures, listening and speaking.

Ninety to ninety-five percent of children are taught to read through basal reading programs (Austin and Morrison, p. 54). Basal readers are carefully prepared series of books designed to teach reading skills sequentially from kindergarten or first grade readiness through sixth or eighth grade levels. They use a carefully controlled limited vocabulary and planned repetition of words, which often results in unnatural language patterns and stories of mediocre quality and interest. Generally, though, the newer basal readers have broadened their portrayal of ethnic minorities and women, "For children not from middle-class American culture, basal readers have failed to present life realistically. They have not motivated children who are culturally different." (Zintz, p. 103) Frequently the different life style portrayed in basal readers seem alien to the perception of culturally or racially different children. (Dallmann et al., pp. 475-481)

As Burns, Roe, and Ross suggest, a balanced reading (and language development) program should include basal, functional or content reading, and recreational literature reading. We suggest emphasizing the latter which can develop language, reading with appreciation, and lifetime reading

interests.

"Children's literature will be broadly defined as any creative literary work that has been especially written and designed for children's use... It is meant to delight, to inform and to affect the values and understandings of its young readers." (Chambers, p. 1)

"We use the term children's literature to refer to those materials, both fiction and nonfiction, which were written primarily for the reader's enjoyment rather than for direct instruction." (Hall et al., p. 230) The writers of this article, however, advocate using such literary books for instruction to develop language.

Books of children's literature are called trade books, defined in the Standard College Dictionary as "an edition of a book designed for ordinary sale to the general public, as distinguished from a textbook," and fortunately these trade books are available in great variety and fine quality in libraries and book stores. Among the many values of literature listed by Norton are pleasure, literary heritage, knowledge, self concept, imagination, and developing positive attitudes toward other cultures and ethnic groups. Norton states, "Due to the fact that literature provides both a model for language and stimulation for oral and written activities, it excels in developing language." (Norton, 1983, pp. 4, 5-7)

Preferably, teachers should select books that are attractive, interesting, and--most important--books that have repeated patterns or those that are predictable enough so that the children will be able to join in as the teacher reads the story. Such participation stories are invaluable aids to learning English.

The use of literature with a variety of interesting content also presents numerous concepts which children need to understand. Pronunciation and meaning are both vital. For the child learning English, meaning is most important because without meaning the student will just have learned to mimic the pronunciation of a teacher, a tape, or another student.

Students who are also in need of self concept development can find literary books to be most helpful. See What I Am, Are You My Mother?, Gilberto and the Wind, I Know a Lot

of Things, I Know What I Like and Mr. Rabbit and Lovely Present are only a few of these books that help with the development of self concept.

Books where students can participate with the teacher-reader are abundant. Students can focus on linguistic commonalities and differences through literary books. Some of these are: I Can't, Said the Ant, Have You Seen My Cat?, Millions of Cats, Horton Hatches the Egg, Ask Mr. Bear, and Who Took the Farmer's Hat?

Students whose first language is one other than English can learn English skills most readily by listening to the new sounds and by producing those new sounds. Therefore, listening skills need to be mastered first. Children need to experience the new language by listening to it as frequently as possible. Teachers can read books to children, noting and stressing patterns. Tapes can also be made so that the student can follow the story independently. Books can, and do, open new worlds to the non-English speaker. By listening to stories, a child not only familiarizes himself with the new sounds but also learns a new vocabulary and starts experiencing a new language by listening to it.

The non-English speaker also needs to master speaking the new language, English. Books are assets for teaching this skill. As the student is read to or listens to taped stories, he is deciphering the new language. Although the process is very intricate, the student will eventually be able to express the language orally. Initially, opportunities like joining in while the teacher reads, repeating certain phrases with or without other children, and eventually retelling the story are activities that help the child practice his English skills. He will make many mistakes at first, but in a group such errors are not noticeable. Ridicule of the pronunciation is taboo for if the child feels a sense of rejection, then his verbal skills will be stifled. Children do need the opportunity to verbalize the experiences of the main character, the setting, the feelings expressed, or anything else about the story which the child wants to share. Pictures in books can bring experiences closer to home. Having speaking opportunities gives the child further practice in the new language. Books open the doors to speaking opportunities.

After the child has had ample opportunities to listen to the new language and has had many experiences in trying out the new language himself, the child is then ready to at-

tempt the third skill - reading. Reading cannot develop until the child has had wide exposure to a rich vocabulary, experiences, concepts, pronunciation and meaning. Many essential listening and speaking episodes must have preceded this reading skill, for if these preliminary skills have been by-passed, the student is doomed to failure. No reading for meaning is possible if the child has not had sufficient meaningful background in English.

Although instruction should move from the known to the unknown according to sound learning principles, learning the new language in a comfortable classroom setting without the stress of having to finish a basal reader within a specific period of time can create success rather than failure.

By having many listening opportunities through books, the non-English speakers can feel and absorb the new language. Then can also reiterate the new language, and speak it independently. Additionally, children can be challenged to explore new avenues when they are offered opportunities to speak the new language by retelling the story, by repeating patterns, and by doing oral activities in a group. And, finally, books can challenge the children to open doors for themselves by reading.

There is no doubt that our students need the very best language and literacy skills in order to meet today's world. However, the instructional program for a person who is learning English initially and/or expanding English language skills needs to place English competence at the top of the list. With the kind of literature based program we have described, culturally relevant material which focuses on some of the linguistic differences between the students' language and English is imperative.

Books are merely tools for teaching, but a creative, innovative, and enthusiastic teacher can make the difference with literary books at the tools for teaching the ESL student. Once a teacher discovers how to utilize the treasure of books in the library with all students, the ESL student will benefit immeasurably.

Bibliography for Teachers

- Austin, Mary, & C. Morrison. The First R: The Harvard Report on Reading in the Elementary Schools. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Bowman, B.L. & P.C. Burns. The Language Arts in Childhood Education. (4th Ed.) Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979.
- Burns, P.C., B.D. Roc, & E.P. Ross. Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools. (3rd Ed.) Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984. P. 338.
- Burt, Marina, Heidi Dulay and S. Krashen. Language Two. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982. pp. 13-14.
- Chambers, D.W. Children's Literature in the Curriculum. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971, p. ix.
- Coody, B. and D. Nelson. Teaching Elementary Language Arts. Calif.: Wadsworth, 1982, pp. 2-3.
- Dallman, Martha. Teaching the Language Arts in the Elementary School. (3rd Ed.) Dubuque: Brown, 1976, p. 22.
- Dallman, M., R. L. Rouch, L.Y.C. Char, J.J. DeBoer. The Teaching of Reading. (5th Ed.) NY: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1978, pp. 475-481.
- Donoghue, Mildred R. The Child and the English Language Arts. Dubuque: Wm.C. Brown, 1979, p. 139.
- Hall, M.A., J.K. Ribovich, C.J. Ramig. Reading and the Elementary School Child. 1979.
- Hennings, D.G. Communication in Action - Dynamic Teaching of the Language Arts. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1978, pp. 37-38.
- Norton, D.E. Through the Eyes of a Child. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1983, pp. 4, 5, 7.
- , The Effective Teaching of Language Arts. Charles E. Merrill, Bell and Howell, 1980.
- Rubin, Dorothy. Teaching Elementary Language Arts. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975, pp. 3-4, 7.
- Zintz, Miles V. The Reading Process: The Teacher and the Learner. Third Edition. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown, 1980. (This contains an excellent bibliography of "Books in Which American Indians are Principal Characters," pp. 524-526.)

# STRATEGIES FOR INDEPENDENTLY ATTACKING UNRECOGNIZED WORDS

Leo M. Schell

Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas

"What's this word, Mrs. Kalb?" asked Matt.

"Mrs. Kalb sighed. "You should be able to sound it out, Matt. It follows the short vowel rule we learned just yesterday."

Sound familiar? Many remedial readers--in skill lessons--seem to have satisfactory command of the phonic or structural analysis subskill on which they are working. They can satisfactorily complete a worksheet, play a game, or engage in an activity requiring the use of the subskill. But, like Matt, they often cannot reliably apply these same skills in functional reading situations when they meet an unrecognized word. They are able to handle individual subskills in isolation but when faced with a situation in which they must respond to and manipulate several of these skills in a non-mechanical manner, that is, where they must make decisions, they seem unable to perform equally well.

Guthrie (1973), in an impressive study comparing normal and disabled readers, concluded that "a lack of interfacilitation among skills is debilitating for the disabled children" (p. 17). He believes that interfacilitation among subskills is necessary for normal reading and that one source of disability for poor readers is their lack of integration of decoding subskills.

Jenkins, et al (1980) asked 17 good and 17 poor third grade readers to pronounce nonsense words such as clide, sarwinky, and weapadoot in isolation. They found that the good readers were significantly more flexible in their attempts than were the poor readers, many of whom either continuously repeated a pronunciation or gave one that was entirely unrelated to the key word. Even though given repeated opportunities to correctly pronounce these words, poor readers as a group didn't change each pronunciation or think of reasonable alternatives.

## Possible Explanations

There are several plausible explanations for this depressing phenomenon. One is that these students have not mastered the subskill to a level where its use is automatic (Samuels, 1976). This explanation would require that these



children receive additional practice in the subskills until automaticity is reached.

Another possible explanation is that of Piaget (1958) who holds that at the concrete operations stage of mental development, ages 7-11, children can't simultaneously manipulate two or more variables but can only focus on one of them at a time. This explanation provides some insight into why some five to eight-year-olds behave as they do when faced with an unrecognized word. But it doesn't specify what we can do instructionally to help these children other than to wait for them to reach a subsequent stage of mental development. Neither does it explain why older remedial readers who have attained stages of mental development beyond that of concrete operations still are also unable to apply learned subskills in functional reading situations to sound out unrecognized words.

A third possibility is that these readers lack a systematic strategy for independently attacking an unrecognized word, i.e., they have not been taught nor have they practiced what to do in such situations.

### Suggested Strategies

Several reading authorities have outlined strategies they believe will help remedy this deficiency. Evelyn Spache (1982) suggests a complicated procedure for attacking monosyllabic words.

1. What is the sound of the first letter or blend? Finish reading the sentence. What makes sense here with this beginning sound or blend? Now do you know the word? If not, go on to step 2.
2. If there is one vowel at the beginning or middle, try the short sound of the vowel.
3. If there is one vowel in the middle and an e at the end, try the long vowel.
4. If there are two vowels together, try the long sound for the first vowel, except for oi, oy, ou, ew, or ui.
5. Say the whole word. If that does not make sense, try the other vowel sound.
6. Now do you know the word? If not, write it down. Go on with your reading and get help later.(p.63)

It must be noted that, before this procedure can be

used effectively, the child must know the short and long sounds of the vowels. Also, it applies only to monosyllabic words and young children may have difficulty recognizing whether a word is monosyllabic, e.g., thought vs. even. Last, it is too complicated for young children to learn and use as it is given.

However, each step--plus step 6--could be taught individually to children after they had learned the requisite phonic principle. A chart could be made showing steps 1 and 6 and the procedure explained and modeled by the teacher. Ideally the teacher would then present a sentence containing a word the children couldn't identify, e.g., He had strong arms, and have them model the steps. The chart might be displayed and referred to whenever an unrecognized word needed decoding. As each step was taught, the chart could be expanded, allowing the children to practice using several steps to arrive at the word's pronunciation.

If a child meets an unrecognized word while reading orally, however, it's probably best to tell the child the word, particularly if the children are in groups. Later, the teacher can refer to the chart and discuss with the child or the whole group what might be done to decode the word successfully.

Wilson (1972) suggests a seven-step procedure for use with multisyllabic words.

1. Look carefully at the word from left to right. (Although this step may appear to be elementary, it is often all that is necessary.)
2. Examine the context for contextual clues. (Read the whole sentence.)
3. Examine the word for structural characteristics: prefixes, suffixes, and compound words.
4. Divide the word into syllables and try to pronounce it. As stated earlier, this technique is often sufficient for older readers.
5. Establish the vowel sounds and attempt to pronounce them.
6. Sound out all the letters and attempt to pronounce them.
7. If at this point the student still is unable to derive the word's pronunciation or meaning, he/she

should: first, be referred to the dictionary; second, be directed to use word attack skills which will unlock the word; or third, be told the word.

He suggests putting these steps on a chart in a readily available place so it can be easily referred to.

It would be possible to incorporate Spache's suggestions on sounding out vowel letters with Wilson's step 5 where he merely admonishes the reader to "attempt to pronounce them" but gives no specific suggestions as to how to do this. This specificity is a strength in Spache's steps.

The remedial readers with whom I'm acquainted are nearly always unable to use such a procedure if all the steps are presented at once; they require smaller "chunks" taught over a period of time and each one integrated with the ones previously learned. As with Spache's steps, explicit instruction, teacher modeling, practice by the children, and repeated application are necessary if this procedure is to become more automatically and habitually used by children.

Readers need to understand that these procedures offer no guarantees that they'll produce a recognizable pronunciation. Many monosyllabic words are spelled irregularly, occasionally multisyllabic words don't follow common syllabication generalizations (e.g., u'ni/form, dec'o/rate), and sometimes context is inadequate to cue pronunciation of the word. And sometimes two of these situations may be combined as in "They wanted to fete the new king." In these instances, independence may be beyond the grasp of the reader.

#### Reader Application and Flexibility

Durkin (1983) lucidly illustrates how readers should flexibly apply procedures such as those outlined above. This is how she believes a reader should think while trying to determine the pronunciation of prove in "That doesn't prove a thing."

The last e probably means one syllable. Two vowels.  
The o has the long sound so that's  $\bar{o}$ ---pr $\bar{o}$ v $\emptyset$ . Pr $\bar{o}$ ve?  
I never heard that word before. I'll try the short  
sound:  $\check{o}$ ---pr $\check{o}$ v $\emptyset$ . Gee, that's not a word either.

Let's see. I'll try some other words: prāv, prēv, prīv, pr--I can't even say it with a long u sound. I better keep going; proov--Oh, proov. Sure. That doesn't prove a thing. (p. 194)

Or, similarly with the multisyllabic word giddy in the sentence, "The children were too giddy to hear what the man said."

I'll divide it between the d's. The first syllable probably sounds like kid so that would be jid. The y has the long e sound so the last syllable is de. Jiddy. Jiddy? I never heard of a word like that. Maybe g doesn't have the soft sound. I'll try the hard one. That would be giddy. That's okay. The children weretoo giddy to hear what the man said.(194)

To help children be flexible and to vary possible sounds and syllabication (as well as putting the pronounced word into context to see whether it makes sense) as Durkin suggests, teachers will have to "walk children through the process," step by step, with words they don't recognize. Then the children must imitate the teacher, verbalizing the process (to the degree possible with their limited ability to express themselves).

### Conclusion

Learning this skill, just like learning the short sound of e or how to divide between medial consonants, must be systematically and regularly taught to children and used by them. A casual explanation now and then won't suffice anymore than it would for learning decoding skills.

Even though we must provide children with the competence to use these skills in a functional reading situation so that they can successfully attack unrecognized words, there are some problems. One is that this technique isn't described in any basal reader teacher's manual, there are no worksheets to teach it, I have never seen it in any scope and sequence chart, and few methods textbooks include it.

Second, a teacher is needed. This process requires

interaction between a child and a human being who can explain this process at the child's level of understanding; a human being who can demonstrate to children what to do and how to do it and help the child know when and how to do it; a human being who can incorporate the process into functional situations when it is appropriate.

Maybe we can help the Maths of this world.

#### REFERENCES

- Durkin, Dolores. Teaching Them to Read, 4th Ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1983.
- Guthrie, John T. Models of Reading and Reading Disability. Journal of Educational Psychology, 65(Feb. 1973), 9-13.
- Jenkins, Barbara L., et al. Children's Use of Hypothesis Testing When Decoding Words. The Reading Teacher, 33 (March 1980), 664-667.
- Piaget, Jean & Inhelder, B. The Growth of Logical Thinking: From Childhood to Adolescence. New York: Basic Books, 1958.
- Samuels, S. Jay. Automatic Decoding and Reading Comprehension. Language Arts, 53 (March 1976), 323-325.
- Spache, Evelyn. Reading Activities for Child Involvement, Third Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982.
- Wilson, Robert. Diagnostic and Remedial Reading in Classroom and Clinic, 2nd Ed. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1972.

## USING LANGUAGE TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO LITERACY LEARNING

Dora L. Bailey and Richard T. Vacca  
Reading and Writing Development Ctr.  
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

A "language story" captures children's interactions with their immediate surroundings--the world about them--in such a way that it reflects how children develop the expectation that oral or written language is meaningful. As teachers of reading and writing we can use children's language stories as a tool to gain insights into processes related to literacy learning. Take, for example, Amy's story.

As a preschooler, Amy enjoyed reading the signs along the road and the eye-catching advertisements displayed by the supermarkets and gasoline stations. She would also read the labels of familiar home products. Once she discovered that the label related directly to the content, she became an avid reader of labels and excitedly explained that now she would not need to squeeze a tube, spill a bottle, or open a box to discover what was inside--she would merely read the label and know!

One hot, sunny afternoon Amy went swimming with her family at the local beach. She was accompanied by her nine-year old cousin, Clint and her grandparents. The grandparents feared that Amy's light skin would be harmed by the sun and had brought along a bottle of sun-screen. Amy reached for the bottle of "stuff" and proceeded to read the label, "Sun...in a bottle?...Clint, what's this word?" Clint answered, "Sun screen".

Upon hearing the answer to her reading dilemma, Amy began to cry in panic. She cried loudly; she signaled extreme distress. However, she could not communicate clearly what had caused her distress. Her grandparents were alarmed but totally unable to penetrate the reason for her distress. Although they tried to comfort and reassure Amy, they could not alleviate her panic.

Amy's cousin, however, sensed that her distress was the outcome of what she had read on the label. He picked up the bottle and said, "Is it the bottle that scares you?" Amy gulped a scream and nodded her head. Her cousin read the label aloud, "Sun screen--are you afraid of this?" Amy nodded "Yes" while struggling to suppress her sobs. Clint

looked hard at the label and suddenly smiled triumphantly. "Amy, it's the screen, isn't it? You think we're going to put a screen around you...you're afraid of being penned up in a metal screen!"

Amy stopped swallowing sobs, the tears ceased to flow. Her eyes crinkled and she smiled back at her cousin. He hastened to pour some of the creamy liquid on his hand and rubbed it on his face and chest, "See, it's just a lotion; it will prevent burning--it screens out the rays of the sun, but it's not a metal screen." Amy giggled and between sighs said, "A screen that's not a screen--a screen that's a lotion. How silly!"

Amy had had a natural reading experience. According to Piaget (1968), Amy was at the pre-operational cognitive level, ages 2-5, in which she related objects one to another through language. Each of Piaget's stages represents the way in which the person actively constructs knowledge of the world around him or her.

A person's expectations, schemata or idea of how things should fit together or what should occur, are based on the past learning experiences of the individual. Neisser (1976) stated that "because we can see only what we know how to look for; it is these schemata (together with the information actually available) that determines what will be perceived" (p. 20). It is an individual's conceptualization of the world that determines meaning in reading.

Amy's present cognitive map led her to expect that the container contained what the label read. The can with the label "soup" had soup in it. The box with the label "rice" had rice in it, and so on.

The first hint that all was not as it should have been with Amy's perception was when she read "sun" and responded "Sun in a bottle?" The response indicated Amy's pre-operational cognition level. It centered on one variable at a time and on one perception of that variable. To understand her fear, it became necessary to understand that after reading the word "screen" Amy also expected a metal screen in the bottle.

What does Amy's language story tell us?

This vignette exemplifies the role of prediction in reading. Amy predicted from what she knew about the world

and 'guessed' what would be in the bottle. She thought that "Sun Screen" was the real thing--a metal screen. But it would also be a barrier, between herself and a lot of things because screens limit freedom of movement. According to Smith (1982) "...this ability to predict is both pervasive and profound, because it is the basis of our comprehension of the world (p. 60).

Amy's predictions, based on past experience, came from a theory of the world that was in her head. Her predictions led her to perceive the world as she expected to perceive it. Thus, her understanding of the world as it unfolded for her was continually affected by what she already knew.

Prediction is necessary in life so that obstacles can be dealt with before they can become hindrances. Amy's screams came before the perceived metal screen was erected. Her screams and tears were her attempt to prevent the perceived loss of freedom.

Prediction also helps to eliminate irrelevant possibilities. For example, Amy would have realized that "Sun Screen" definitely was not a "car" or a "house". Smith defines prediction as "...the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives" (p. 62). In order to predict, the reader must form a mental image of the expected meaning. The occurrence of imagery during reading has been demonstrated in recent brain research (Kraft et al., 1980). Imagery is based on the cognitive map in each individual's mind.

Teachers need to tap into children's imagery to assess what is being perceived during reading. In order to monitor children's cognitive maps, teachers must encourage children to become active, verbal participants in the classroom.

### Listen to children

Language stories from children can be a key that teachers can use to cue into children's background in language and into their cognitive map of language. A 'language story' occurs when a child demonstrates an expectation that oral or written language makes personal sense. Amy's personal sense of based on her perception of how oral and written language functioned in the total world.

Amy's story is an example of Clay's (1967 & '72) assertion that children display meaning-oriented strategies very early. Young children who exhibit behavior similar to Amy's



have a 'literacy set' for reading. "They begin to operate immediately and automatically in appropriate ways whenever they are faced with print" (Holdaway, 1979, p. 61).

By what process do children recognize the majority of words so early? In what context have they learned some of the words previously? The evidence suggests that children learn to read through a natural, developmental mode (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966). Children today have access to meaningful reading, in books, on signs, on food cans and cereal boxes, on T.V., etc. Durkin (1966) and Clark (1976) found that early reading children tend to read 'spontaneously' and show a great deal of interest in print found around them.

Amy's early reading behavior showed that she knew the meaning of reading and was using reading to obtain meaning. Holdaway (1979) would state that reading had a "deep" meaning for Amy. Further, Amy had shown knowledge of the conventions of print: a label on the bottle relates to what is in the bottle. Amy's emotional response to her perception of the meaning of the print showed that when reading, young children do not just parrot the surface verbal recall level.

A number of children enter school knowing how to read without having been formally taught. Teachers can use this naturally developed knowledge of children as a spring board for further literacy development. From the "mouths of babes" teachers can gain invaluable cues to each child's level of language background and reading development.

Thus, as teachers guide the children's reading development, they can create bridges from the children's internal cognitive maps to the external meaning of print.

#### References

- Clark, Margaret M. Young Readers: What Can They Teach Us?  
London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976.
- Clay, M. M. Reading: The Patterning of Complex Behavior.  
Auckland: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972.
- "The Reading Behavior of Five Year Old Children: A Research Report". New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, vol 2(1967), pp. 11-31.
- Durkin, Dolores. Children Who Read Early: Two Longitudinal Studies. New York: Teachers College Press, 1966.

- Holdaway, Don. The Foundations of Literacy. New York: Ashton Scholastic, 1979.
- Kraft, R.H.; Michel, O.R.; Languis, M.L. & Wheatley, G.H. "Hemispheric Asymmetries During Six-to-Eight-Year Olds' Performance of Piagetian Conservation and Reading Tasks." Neuropsychologia, vol 18(1980), pp. 637-643.
- Neisser, Ulric. Cognition and Reality. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman & Company, 1976.
- Piaget, Jean; Elkin, David (ed.). Six Psychological Studies New York: Random House, Inc., 1968.
- Sinatra, R. "Brain Research Sheds Light on Language Learning". Educational Leadership, vol 40(1983), pp. 9-12.
- Smith, Frank. Understanding Reading (3rd ed.), New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1982.

# AN INTEGRATIVE READING-LANGUAGE APPROACH

Dixie D. Sanger

Sheldon L. Stick, Una A. Lange  
Department of Special Education  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Reading instruction is considered one of the most important instructional activities in elementary grade classrooms, because it provides children with knowledge about the world. Positive relationships between ability to read and language development have been reported by a number of authors, who say classroom teachers could help many children become more effective readers by incorporating selected principles of language development into reading instruction (Anastasiow, 1970; Goodman, 1974; Lundsteen, 1977; Monroe & Rogers, 1964; Stark, 1975). Some authors claim that reading is based upon oral language competence and performance (Hall & Ramig, 1978). Others (Smith, 1978) point out that reading and oral language share a common core of vocabulary items, grammatical forms, and speech perception skills such as phoneme discrimination and sound blending (Hillerich, 1978; Venezky, 1970).

Wiig and Semel (1976) indicated that reading problems might be related to difficulty in understanding the ideas being expressed by complex syntactic structures. Rupley (1974) suggested that while the concepts were within a child's level of understanding, the vocabulary used in reading texts might be too complex, and Vogel (1974 & 1977) reported that poor readers might be deficient in the use of morphological skills.

Clearly there are many researchers who underscore the importance of language-based skills as precursors to efficient reading ability (Gleitman & Rozin, 1977; Vellutino, 1977; Liberman & Shankweiler, 1979; Liberman, 1982; Wren, 1983). However, it is still doubtful that adequate attention has been directed to incorporating language-based activities into reading instruction (Goodman & Goodman, 1977). Although some programs have addressed the importance of such activities, the effectiveness of such programs has not been well documented.

This study sought to determine whether third-grade children identified as poor readers (6-12 mos. delay) were able to improve their reading performances after being provided instruction using an integrated reading-language

approach. It was speculated that the basis for some or most reading difficulties were language problems resulting from deficiencies in constructing meaning from a spoken or printed message, difficulty understanding and/or remembering the message proposition(s), and incongruities between a child's knowledge of language and linguistic information presented.

## METHOD

### Subjects

The 47 third-grade children were identified as low readers by their classroom teachers according to criteria (informal observations, criterion referenced tests, and California Achievement Test) established in their school district. Twenty-seven children with a mean chronological age of 106.5 mos. were in the three experimental groups and twenty children with a mean chronological age of 105.2 mos. were in the three control groups. All subjects were without known handicapping conditions and all were considered to be from middle socioeconomic families.

### Procedures

A quasi-experimental design involving three intact experimental groups and three intact control groups, in self-contained third-grade classrooms, was implemented in three public schools during the regularly scheduled reading instruction. One experimental and one control group was located in each of the three schools. The study involved 14 weeks of treatment with another two weeks required for pre- and posttesting. The integrative treatment consisted of four language activities based upon research findings of Sanger, Stick and Lange (1984): 1) following verbal directions; 2) retelling stories; 3) describing objects or pictures; 4) defining words. The dependent measures included the Informal Reading-Language Test (Lange, Sanger & Stick, 1983; Sanger, Stick & Lange, 1982) and the Test of Reading Comprehension (Brown, Hammill & Wiederholt, 1978).

A 2 x 3 analysis of variance was applied to the data. A 90-minute training workshop (Sanger & Stick, 1984) was held prior to implementation of treatment for the three experimental teachers. The experimental teachers were instructed to select and integrate the activities with reading instruction when the children appeared to have difficulty following directions, understanding and expressing ideas or vocabulary, or were unable to retell stories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A t-test on the means of the dependent measures was computed for pretest scores to determine if the composition of the combined three experimental and control groups differed significantly in performance. Respective mean pretest scores for the main groups were not statistically different. An analysis of variance on the posttest subtest scores from the two dependent measures did not indicate statistically significant difference between the mean scores for the two main groups. However, it was determined that there was a statistically significant interaction between group and teacher. Therefore, the results of main effects are not reported.

Significant interactions between group and teacher were noted only for the subtests General Vocabulary ( $F = 7.41$ ,  $df = 2/41$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Syntactical Similarities ( $F = 4.56$ ,  $df = 2/41$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and Reading Directions of Schoolwork ( $F = 13.46$ ,  $df = 2/41$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As a result, the posttest scores were graphed and plotted for further examination. It was noteworthy that two of the experimental groups outperformed their control counterparts; however, the third experimental group did not reach the level of performance of its control group. Although the three experimental teachers were exposed to the identical workshop, they apparently varied in their abilities to successfully integrate the four language activities into the reading instruction. It was concluded that the success of the treatment was due to the efforts from two of the three experimental teachers. These differences might have been related to individual teacher styles of instructing reading, to teachers' backgrounds in reading and in language development, or to the extent to which the treatment was provided during the study. Also, it is possible that a particular school philosophy encouraged listening and retelling of stories as a skill to be taught in reading development.

A notable observation, after the study was completed, was that the three experimental teachers reported they believed the treatment was effective and that it would be continued with future reading instruction. Retelling stories and defining words were considered the most beneficial activities, while the emphasis on vocabulary development, sequencing of ideas, and the focus on language development were viewed as advantages of the integrated reading-language approach. Similar findings had been

reported earlier (Sanger, Stick & Lange, 1984). However, the data did not clearly support the value of incorporating verbal language activities into reading instruction. Perhaps the relationship between language and reading involves more of the temporally static elements found in written language components. Hammill and McNutt (1981) reported that good verbal language skills are not a guarantee of good reading abilities. Instead, there are strong correlates between reading and written language because reading is the receptive form of written language.

This study showed that it was feasible to include selected expressive and receptive language activities (focusing on syntactic-semantic relationships) into reading instruction. Although there are several factors to consider when teaching reading, interventions must be tailored to meet the needs of each student, based on a profile of individual strengths and weaknesses. It would seem that if teachers used an integrated reading-language approach they would be helping children better understand a writer's intentions by providing opportunities for experimenting with different types of meaning and differentiating meanings according to context and form (Olson, 1982). Consideration also should be given to the possibility that all aspects of oral language may not be equally strong correlates of reading.

#### REFERENCES

- Anastasiow, N.J. Oral language and learning to read. Paper presented at the I.R.A. Conf., Anaheim, CA, 1970.
- Brown, V.L., Hammill, D.D., and Wiederholt, J.L. The Test of Reading Comprehension: A Method for Assessing the Understanding of Written Language. Austin, TX: PRO-ED, 1978.
- Gleitman, L.R. and Rozin, P. The structure and acquisition of reading. In A.S.Reber and D.L.Scarsborough (Eds.), Toward a Psychology of Reading. Hillsdale: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1977.
- Goodman, K.S. Effective teachers of reading know language and children. Elementary English, 1974, 51, 823-828.
- Goodman, K.S., and Goodman, Y.M. Learning about psycholinguistic processes by analyzing oral reading. Harvard Educational Review, 1977, 47, 317-333.
- Hall, M.A. and Ramig, C.J. Linguistic foundations for reading. Columbus, OH: Chas. E. Merrill, 1978.

- Hammill, D.D. and McNutt, G. The Correlates of Reading. Austin, TX: PRO-ED, 1981.
- Hillerich, R.L. A Diagnostic approach to early identification of language skills. The Reading Teacher, 1978, 31, 357-364.
- Lange, U.A., Sanger, D.D., and Stick, S.L. An informal reading-language test. Reading Horizons, 1983, 23, 278-282.
- Liberman, I.Y. A language-oriented view of reading and its disabilities. In H. Myklebust (Ed.), Progress in learning disabilities. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1982.
- Liberman, I.Y. and Shakweiler, D. Speech, the alphabet and teaching to read. In L. Resnik (Ed.), Theory and practice of early reading. Hillsdale, L. Erlbaum Assoc., 1977.
- Lundsteen, S.W. On development relations between language-learning and reading. Elementary School Journal, 1977, 3, 193-204.
- Monroe, M. and Rogers, B. Foundations for reading, informal pre-reading procedures. Chicago, IL: Scott Foresman, and Company, 1964.
- Olson, D.R. The language of schooling. Topics in Language Disorders, 1982, 2, 1-12.
- Rupley, W.H. Vocabulary development and instruction. The Reading Teacher, 1974, 27, 428-430.
- Sanger, D.D., Stick, S.L., & Lange, U.A. A workshop to incorporate language development in teaching reading. Reading Horizons, 1984, 24, 264-273.
- Identification of language based problems--an informal measure. Paper presented at the Amer. Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc. Conf., Toronto, 1982.
- Integrating language activities into reading instruction. Reading Horizons, 1984, 25, 7-13.
- Smith, F. Understanding Reading. NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston 1978.
- Stark, J. Reading failures: A language based problem. ASHA, 1975, 17, 832-834.
- Vellutino, F.R. Alternate conceptualization of dyslexia: Evidence in support of verbal-deficit hypothesis. Harvard Ed. Review, 1977, 47, 334-354.
- Venezky, R. Skills required for learning to read. Language and Reading, an Interdisciplinary Approach, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970.

## TEACHER EXPECTATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACHIEVEMENT

Dan T. Ouzts  
Coord., Graduate Reading Program  
The Citadel, Charleston, S. C.

One variable that has often been cited for high achievement in school is that of high expectations for learning. While most teachers would agree that some type of expectation, positive or negative, is placed upon every student in every classroom, how one arrives at these expectations varies as much as the effect it has upon the student. The idea that we as classroom teachers may have different expectations for students in our classrooms could be related to the different types of interactions that are a daily part of the classroom.

What, then, are the characteristics of the classroom teacher who has placed expectations on the students in their classrooms and what are the effects of teacher expectation in improving reading achievement?

Reading teachers must guard against transmitting to children a sense of failure when they are not progressing as the teacher had hoped. There are numerous studies which show that teacher expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies over time (Brophy and Good, 1974; Cooper, 1979; Dunkin and Biddle, 1974).

Elijah (1980) stated that the phenomenon of teacher expectation does exist and is an influential factor in determining how much is learned in the primary school classroom. Quite often we hear that boys do not achieve as well as girls in reading at the primary level or that Chapter I students are not expected to achieve as well as non-Chapter I students. These expectations for learning could be directly related to the reading achievement or underachievement of these students. Sheridan (1978) believes that the sex of the child may determine teacher expectancy while Bank (1980) has stated that teachers were more likely to overrate the abilities of girls than boys because the role behaviors of sitting quietly, listening well, reading and writing well, and not challenging the teacher appear to be role characteristics associated with girls. The student's classroom behavior has been associated with teacher expectancy in terms of



acting out behaviors. The student who acts out as contrasted to the student who is withdrawn will usually influence teacher expectation, and Brophy (1974) stated that when teachers have low expectations for certain students they may skip over them during classroom discussions. Thus, low achieving students may receive less encouragement and attention from the teacher.

Prior to 1968 there was little research to explain how teachers' expectations influenced the students' academic performance, especially in the area of reading. It is now commonly accepted that a teacher's behavior can result in an expectancy effect when student performance confirms a teacher's original predictions about a student. This performance is understood to have been determined by the teacher's behavior.

With the first major study on teacher expectancy (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968), a shift occurred in the understanding of what happens in classrooms. The results indicated that teachers generated expectations that were related to the ability levels of students and acted in ways to fulfill them. The results also implied that teachers may not have been as responsive to student performance as they should have been prior to their students being labeled.

There is still much discussion concerning teacher expectations and the student's academic performance. Is it myth? Aaron (1975) states that it is not a myth but indeed a reality that is far more complex than originally expected.

Teachers need to view students in essentially positive ways and hold favorable expectations. This is particularly important at the elementary level. The almost unavoidable conclusion is that the teacher's attitude and opinions regarding students do have a significant influence on success in school (Purkey, 1970).

Probably the most important element in the education process is the teacher (Artley, 1969; Haffner and Slobodian, 1969; Gentile and McMillan, 1976). A teacher who is knowledgeable, understanding, and adaptable will tend to create a comfortable learning environment. Thus, it is essential that a teacher have these qualities in order to accommodate the largest percentage of student variation

and needs (Lipton, 1969). Conversely, rigid and inflexible teachers were found by Lipton to have less success with readers, especially the remedial ones.

Teachers must also have positive attitudes toward reading. The teacher must be perceived by students as a reader. It is important that this characteristic be revealed to the students so that they can emulate it.

Perhaps one of the best ways to describe a good teacher is to consult the students. Hart (1934) found that the following were reasons why students liked or disliked teachers:

#### Reasons for Liking Teachers (Ranked in importance)

1. Is helpful with school work, explains lessons and assignments clearly and thoroughly, and uses examples in teaching.
2. Cheerful, happy, good-natured, jolly, has a sense of humor and can take a joke.
3. Human, friendly, companionable, "one of us."
4. Interested in and understands pupils.
5. Makes work interesting, creates a desire to work, makes classwork a pleasure.

#### Reasons for Disliking Teachers

1. Too cross, crabby, grouchy, never smiles, nagging, sarcastic, loses temper, "flies off the handle."
2. Not helpful with school work, does not explain lessons and assignments, not clear, work not planned.
3. Partial, has "pets" or favored students, and "picks on certain students."
4. Superior, aloof, haughty, "snooty", overbearing, does not know you out of class.
5. Mean, unreasonable, "hard-boiled", intolerant, ill-mannered, too strict, makes life miserable.

From the Hart study one could note that the characteristic exhibited by the teacher does have an influence on student attitude, behavior, and perhaps academic achievement. Student expectations of their teachers appear to be as related to academic achievement as the teacher expectations. It is important that the reading

teacher not exhibit "give up" attitudes as these feelings can be sensed by students. Harris (1977) has stated that one of the main objectives of the remedial reading teacher should be to develop a relationship with students in which they are not afraid they will be scolded, ridiculed, or punished. Teachers who are sarcastic, tense, bothered by interruptions, too serious, and who always want to be in control will not be successful in remedial reading classes.

Larkin (1980) has done extensive work with the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project and the Milwaukee School Improvement Program Rise. Both projects base work upon the school deficit theory which essentially says that teachers in schools with lower expectations for black students and disadvantaged students convey these expectations to students in a variety of ways. Larkin believes that teacher expectation inservice should be promoted, developed, and offered to all classroom teachers. If teachers are more aware of the vital role that teacher expectations play in the academic achievement of students, then much can be done to insure that expectations are positive and of a high nature.

There is now research to show that what teachers expect of their students is usually what they get (Good, 1982). Some teachers treat students believed to be less capable in ways that differ substantially from the ways that they interact with high achievers. Also, there is a definite link between the teacher's verbal statements and student learning. Weinstein (1982) states that there is increasing evidence to indicate that students are aware of differential teacher behavior and that certain practices have negative effects on students' beliefs and achievement. To promote more thoughtful and successful teaching behavior, teachers need to understand much more thoroughly the consequences of placing students into certain reading groups.

Another implication in the level of reading achievement of students is the matter of labeling. Children who have been labeled slow learners, emotionally handicapped, dyslexic, culturally disadvantaged, or as having minimal brain dysfunction may not achieve due to the fact of the labeling. It appears that we may be more directly responsible for the success or failure of students under our guidance than we care to admit.

The challenge is evident. Those who have the responsibility for teaching anyone should be very much aware of their behavior. Inservice needs to carry this message to all classroom teachers. Certain "mind-sets", regardless of the academic training of the teacher, will only lead to further problems in the classroom and impede learning. One must be aware of generalizing or carrying preconceived notions into the classroom.

Reading teachers are and should be unique. They are delegated the responsibility for teaching students who have often been labeled as having poor self-concepts. Perhaps, these poor self-concepts are the results of being labeled as remedial students. It is to the teacher who has this responsibility to be open to change and to change as needs arise. Regardless of the approach, method, or material, students will make little, if any, progress in reading without the assistance of a teacher who is able to motivate and who is, also, motivated.

Expectation research might best be summarized as a set of propositions (Dworkin and Dworkin, 1979). These propositions are:

1. Negative expectation is alive and well and living in the classroom;
2. When we, as teachers, are aware of the implications our behavior has toward students, we may change accordingly;
3. If we establish positive expectation as a form of intentional intervention, the impact may be seen in the performance and behavior of students;
4. Where negative expectation already exists, neither awareness nor positive labeling is a sufficient safeguard against differential teaching behavior;
5. It is frequently difficult to deal with negative expectation because adults are committed to the notion that regardless of their own feelings, they can and do deal fairly with all children, and
6. We can begin the reversal of negative to positive expectation if we can point to prior positive statements or observations about the student and link the new information to those statements.

As reading educators, we need to think seriously about our roles with students, especially the role with the student who is having difficulty in reading. How do our expectancies affect this achievement?

The major goal of any educational program is the academic achievement of its students. It seems we need to use every means possible to achieve this goal. These means may be quite simple--high and positive expectancies for all students regardless of any irrelevant factor. If the self-fulfilling prophecy is at work within our classrooms, let us be sure that it is working in a positive manner for all students.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aron, R., Greene, J., Starr, P., and P. Zirkel. "Effects of teacher expectancies: myth or reality?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Personnel and Guidance Association. New York, 1975. (ERIC Document Rep. Serv. # ED 115 722).
- Artley, A. Sterl. "The teacher variable in the teaching of reading." The Reading Teacher, Dec., 1969, pp.239.
- Bank, B.J., B. Biddle & T. Good. "Sex roles, classroom instruction, and reading achievement." Journal of Educational Psychology, vol. 72(Ap. 1980)., pp. 119.
- Brophy, J., and T. L. Good. Teacher Student Relationships: Causes and Consequences. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974.
- Cooper, H.M. "Pygmalion grows up: a model for teacher expectations communications and performance influence." Review of Educational Research, 1979, 49:3, pp. 389-410.
- Dunkin, M.J. and B.J.Biddle. The Study of Teaching. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974.
- Dworkin, Nancy and Yehoash Dworkin. "The legacy of pygmalion in the classroom." Phi Delta Kappan, June 1979, pp. 712-715.
- Elijah, D. "Teacher expectation: determinants of pupil's reading achievement." Reading Improvement, vol. 17 (Sum.1980), pp. 117-121.
- Gentile, L.M. and M. McMillan. "When Johnny can't read but Mary can, men can help." The Reading Teacher, vol. 29(May 1976), pp. 771-775.
- Good, Thomas L. "How teachers' expectancies affect results." American Education, vol. 18(Dec.1982), pp. 25-32.

- Haffner, H.M. and J. Slobodian. "An analysis of teacher-pupil interaction patterns." Proceedings--13th Convention of IRA, vol.13, Part 1, (1969),pp.763-767.
- Hart, Frank W. Teachers and Teaching. NY: Prentice-Hall, 1934.
- Harris, A.J. "Practical suggestions for remedial reading teachers." The Reading Teacher, vol. 31(May 1978), pp. 916-922.
- Larkin, M. "Teacher expectations." Paper presented at the Strategies for Urban Sch. Improvement Workshop Series. Wash., D.C. 1980. (ERIC Docu. # ED 212 692).
- Lipton, A. "Relationship of teacher rigidity to progress of retarded workers-reading and realism." IRA Convention, 1969. Proceedings, Vol. 13, Part 1, pp. 757-763.
- Purkey, W. Self-concept and school achievement Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.
- Rosenthal, R. and L. Jacobson. Pygmalion in the Classroom New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968.
- Sheridan, E. Marcia. "Children's perception of sex stereotyping in elementary school." 1978. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. 159 262).
- Weinstein, R. "Expectations in the classroom: the student perspective." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, 1982.

## READING ROLE MODELS: FICTIONAL READERS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Dee C. Storey  
Literature for Children  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, Nebraska

Teachers and librarians know how important reading role models are in fostering a positive attitude toward books. This crucial aspect of a child's education should go beyond decoding and comprehension to encompass a true enjoyment of reading. Educators also hope that youngsters will value literature for what it is and what it has to offer. Such a mind set is frequently incubated at home and further developed early on in the elementary grades.

In the home, a child's outlook toward reading is continually being molded by parental and sibling role models. "Naturally how family members regard books, how much they read and talk about what they read and how many books they buy and borrow, keep near them and value, will be a part of the way of life absorbed by their children almost as if by osmosis." (Chambers, p. 301)

For some youngsters, the educational setting may be a continuation of the home support for reading; for others it may be the primary force for developing a life long interest in reading. At school teachers and librarians create a positive atmosphere for reading enjoyment by encouraging creative and critical literary response, the sharing of reading experiences and a spirit that is not always explicitly stated by an adult but is one that has definite implications regarding reading.

Another group of individuals that have an impact on the promotion of reading are characters in children's books. When youngsters become acquainted with characters who are actively involved in reading, they are being introduced to reading role models their own age with similar problems. Characters who read come from a variety of backgrounds and they react to literature in a number of ways. Characters experience the same joys as their human counterparts when it comes to savoring books by a certain author or stories on a special topic. They also suffer the same frustrations when they have difficulties reading or when they cannot find just the "right" book for a special

assignment.

These fictional folks also come into contact with a number of reading situations that are common to everyday childhood experiences that do not necessarily involve literature. For instance, in The Slaves of Spiegel (Pinkwater 1982), the intergalactic beings are avid readers of recipes in search of the "perfect" culinary delight. Youngsters in The Great Grade Point Mystery (Bartholomew 1983) study their textbooks books but they also spend a lot of time pouring over computer programs and printouts. Treehorn, in The Shrinking of Treehorn (Heide 1971), is a devoted reader of cereal boxes so he can keep up with all the current "give away" prizes. While the materials differ, these characters do read and their particular interests seem to dictate the type of reading that is important in their life.

Authors write about busy characters who make time in their life to read for enjoyment; this attitude influences other characters. In Bridge to Terabithia (Paterson 1977), Leslie asks Jesse, "'Say, did you ever hear the story about Moby Dick?'" (p. 41). When Jess does not know the story, "Leslie began to spin out a wonderful story about a whale and a crazy sea captain who was bent on killing it." In a less direct manner, the reading behavior of one character in Daphne's Book (Hahn 1983) sets another to thinking. During an English class one student sees another totally "lost in a book" she has never heard of. Her friend's absorption in the story leads her to wonder if the book was interesting and if she should get it from the library. These fictional individuals have made it quite clear by their actions that they value reading and that they take their peers as reading role models.

Not all reading role models are so indirectly presented. In the satire, The Problem With Pulcifer (Heide 1982), Pulcifer adheres tenaciously to his literary habit. His parents worry that he does not watch enough television, and that, perhaps, his folks have not set good parental models. Pulcifer is warned by the librarian that checking out books from the library (instead of audio visual equipment) could be the beginning of a very dangerous habit. Pulcifer is sent to a "special corrective remedial class for non-viewers" which he fails due to his "dependence" on reading. Accordingly his visits to an inept psychiatrist are of no avail. Pulcifer sticks to his guns. He has to



read and read he does. Luckily for Pulcifer, his parents accept him (even though they still consider him to be somewhat odd).

Heide cleverly incorporates several of the "reading problem" solution sets familiar to (and frustrating for) many youngsters in the educational setting. Heide's book, is seemingly, a reaction to the research findings that indicate that "middle-graders", who usually can read by this time, will be doing less reading. At the same time, their interest in viewing hasn't waned; according to current TV research, they continue to watch about 28 hours a week. Today more than ever, teachers and parents of middle-grade children must promote the reading habit," (Feeley, p. 15).

#### Promoting the Reading Habit

Developing an interest in reading can prove to be as frustrating as it is rewarding. In Eight Mules to Monterey (Beatty 1982), a librarian in 1916 attempts to interest the mountain inhabitants of the Monterey, California region in reading and in establishing wilderness library outposts. While Lettie Ashmore is very enthusiastic about her mission, she meets up with individuals who cannot read and feel they are not able to enjoy books as a result. Other would-be-readers are barely eking out a living and are more concerned with the realities of survival than the escapism of literature.

The spirit surrounding books and reading comes across quite clearly in this historical fiction novel. One problem of note, peculiar to the time, was Ashmore having to overcome any negative attitudes she might hold about having a library outpost in a saloon. She finally reconciled her feelings by knowing that access to the library was far more important than the actual location; if a place of alcoholic refreshment had a tendency to draw a large audience, perhaps these same people would also be readers.

In the Mariah Delaney Lending Library Disaster (Greenwald 1977), a reluctant reader is surrounded by books at home but even access does not make an immediate impact. Mariah repeatedly hears about the joys of reading from her English teacher mother and book publisher father. Much to her parent's chagrin, she is more concerned with income producing schemes than reading. Mariah interests

herself in literature when she thinks she can open her own library using her parent's books for "bait." In the process of setting up her "business" Mariah goes to the public library to research card files, cataloguing, and the like. When her plan backfires, she volunteers at the public library to discover where she went wrong. While there, she begins sharing books with young children and becomes a reader with a purpose. Even though parts of the story line seem far fetched and the parents seem myopic as to what is going on in their home, the outcome is pleasing in terms of a child developing a reason for reading and then reading for enjoyment.

### Frustrated Readers

As in real life, not all fictional youngsters are surrounded by positive reading role models. An adult's insensitivity to a child's interest may hamper a reader's enthusiasm. In Who Stole the Wizard of Oz (Avi 1981), Becky wants to finish her summer reading book reports as soon as possible because the work and the books are not of her choosing. She and her fifth grade classmates were notified by their sixth grade teacher that they couldn't read mysteries, make-believe or romantic adventures. Becky noted that the list featured only "basic, useful information. Yuck!" (Avi, p. 7) Becky also surmised that the teacher was more concerned with the mechanical technicalities in writing the reports than the students enjoying the books. Luckily for Becky, the public librarian shared a very positive regard for literature with the children.

Conflicting messages about reading enjoyment are presented in A Word to the Wise (Herzig and Mali 1978). Eight fifth graders were required to sit at a special table in the library, choose from pre-selected picture books about monkeys, mice, and the circus, when they wanted to read thick and exciting books about rockets and horses. They were prohibited access to the "big shelves" in the library because they were in the slow reading group. When the children found a thesaurus, their special reading teacher exclaimed that it was an "absolute treasure," a "gold mine," and a "gem of the first water." However, she refused to let the children have it because it was not at their reading level. They felt they had to take drastic measures to read this "forbidden" book, so they stole it; they eagerly shared and enjoyed it in spite of their teacher.

The actions of these teachers are somewhat mirrored by a study concluding that "teachers do consider developing attitudes toward reading to be important . . . However, they reported spending little class time focused on developing positive attitudes toward reading." (Heathington & Alexander) Heathington and Alexander found that educators feel pressured into developing reading skills during class time and they surmised that youngsters who could read would simultaneously be developing a positive attitude toward reading. However, the investigators were quick to point out that "of course, research has not always shown a correlation between attitude and reading achievement. There are readers who can read but don't like to."

Teachers are not the only culprits when it comes to discouraging certain forms of reading enjoyment. Franny Dillman, in It All Began With Jane Eyre (Greenwald 1980) was a devout reader of Jane Eyre and Pride and Prejudice, books her mother believed were unnatural reading material for a ninth grader. "'She's reading again, Howard. It's like an affliction. She doesn't read. She hurtles herself into book and glues herself to the pages.'" (Greenwald,p.6) Rather than develop Franny's interest in the classics or strike a compromise, Franny's mother piles contemporary teen novels on her daughter. Because these stories were supposed to mirror life, Franny began to worry why her family wasn't like those of the characters who were experiencing divorce, mental illness, diabetes, infidelities and the like. As a result, Franny became confused by what she read, though eventually she and her mother learned some valuable lessons about life and book selection.

In these three examples, the adults ignored the value of reading interests and related attitudes thus presenting poor reading role models for the children. Rather than be pleased with a definite liking for topics or genre, the adults in effect attempted to control reading behaviors. In direct opposition to this stance, Guthrie (1981), in a summary of research, reported that children understood more of what they read if they held a high interest in the subject, noting "interest leads to knowledge which leads, in turn, to increased comprehension." Even though the adult figures attempted to interfere with the reading enjoyment of these youngsters, the children's true spirit prevailed; they went on and found a motivation to read and continued to read even under the influence of a less than positive environment.

### Motivations for Reading

In Who Stole the Wizard of Oz (Avi 1981), Becky and her twin brother Toby read The Wind in the Willows, Winnie the Pooh, Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There besides other classics to solve a mystery concerning stolen library books. These two exhibited a fondness for reading and a knack for sorting stories according to their similarities in an attempt to collect clues. While the probability is high that average youngsters would not have the same motivation for reading, Avi, a librarian, builds a case for the adventure filled books these characters explored. In doing so he promoted the reading of the classics by children. Hopefully, this notion will have a positive impact on future reading role models. Watson (1981) noted "instructors of children's literature courses should not take it for granted that enrolled students bring with them a wide reading background in known children's literary classics and award winning books." (p.220)

The writing of a children's book often calls for reference work and that is what led the seventh grade students in a Write-A-Book contest in Daphne's Book (Hahn 1983) to read familiar picture books such as The Snowy Day, The Story About Ping and Make Way for Ducklings. Readers are privy to how two characters see the need to discuss the story outline and how important actions and outcomes as well as the illustrations are in a picture tale. Youngsters will note that writing a children's book not only takes imagination but great concern for the reader. Some of the seventh graders grasped the concept of a primary audience while others did not, as evidenced by the appropriate "The Mysterious Disappearance of Sir Benjamin Mouse" versus the dubious picture book "The Nightmare Slumber Party."

Hahn's basic premise was sound and such contests are popular across the country. However, the main plot line of the story switched focus to revolve around a character and her less than desirable lifestyle with her senile grandmother. Perhaps the intent was to explain why this character was such a sensitive artist, but the two story lines did not fully complement each other.

Christine McDonnel is successful in including a chapter about literature in Toad Food and Measle Soup (1982). Readers will appreciate Leo's predicament when he

realizes he must give an oral report while dressed as a book character in just one week. He enlists the aid of a librarian who knows his interests and who suggests a number of books. Finally, in desperation, Leo concludes that he needs a thin book that is funny and is about an ordinary boy. Without specifically mentioning book titles, McDonnell lends an air of familiarity by mentioning the stories in the reports as though the readers are knowledgeable about the characters and their accoutrements. Enough clues are given so a child could actually find a certain book in the school library. It is rewarding to note that Leo's prize for coming in third (he was Homer Price) was a book.

While book reports are one form of literary response that is practical in a group situation, the sharing of a book between individuals often creates a more intimate magic. The friendship between Jesse Aarons and Leslie Burke in Bridge to Terabithia (Paterson) is memorable because Leslie added a new dimension to Jesse's life by sharing the adventure and in turn Jesse shared his artistic talent. So strong was Leslie's attachment to the wonderment of reading, she created the land of Terabithia based on the imaginary world set down in the books that make up "The Chronicles of Narnia." In a gesture of friendship, Leslie lends all her books about Narnia so he can learn about her and so he can revel in the same delights from the stories as she did.

These youngsters read for pleasure and they read to have a common ground between them. The stories they read provided material for their imaginations. Paterson made it seem as though reading was one of the most captivating and imagery producing adventures available. It seemed only fitting then, that after she died, Leslie's father made sure that Jesse received all her books which were quite a legacy indeed.

### Conclusion

In an age when educators and parents are concerned about the lure of television and after school activities as competition for reading time, it is important to provide reading role models of all sorts. Book characters are a natural source of input for they are seen in the act of reading without being didactic about their activities. Also, they can promote a positive attitude toward reading as peer members. A bonus, of course, is that the children

are reading about a reading role model, so in effect, two aspects are effectively tackled at the same time.

Hopefully, children will create a sentiment regarding the precious nature of books similar to that developed in the science fiction story, The Green Book (Walsh 1982). In this story each pioneer was allowed to take two personal items and one book on the space trip. The computers were reserved for research and exploration, so their memory banks did not include books. Enroute to their destination passengers were told to read each sentence twice and to savor the experience. Ultimately everyone read their one book and they came to important realizations: they had little variety in the reading material due to duplication of titles (three copies of Robinson Crusoe for instance), but most importantly they wanted to read and develop their minds. Everyone's attitude about the value assigned to literature was summarized by the comment: "for one thing, just sitting around all evening like a zombie soon gets to be a bit much, and for another, all the things that were happening to us were just slopping around in our heads, and we needed some stories to cheer us up. Stories are tidy; they don't just slop around like happenings" (p.43). Such a sentiment is definitely worth savoring and sharing with readers so they too can become aware of the importance of positive reading attitudes and reading role models.

#### REFERENCES

- Chambers, Aidan. "The Making of a Literary Reader." Horn Book 51(June 1975), pp. 301-310.
- Feeley, Joan. "Content Interests and Media Preferences of Graders: Differences in a Decade." Reading World 22(October 1982), pp. 11-16.
- Guthrie, John T. "Research Views: Reading Interests." Reading Teacher 34(May 1981), pp. 984-986.
- Heathington, B.S., J.E.Alexander. "Do Classroom Teachers Emphasize Attitudes Toward Reading?" Reading Teacher 37(February 1984), pp. 484-488.
- Personal correspondence between this writer and Avi (February 1984-March 1984). Permission to quote secured.
- Watson, Jerry; P. Sharp & Bill Snider. "Should Literary Classics Be a Part of Children's Literature?" English Education 13(December 1981), pp. 217-223.

Children's Books

- Avi. Who Stole the Wizard of Oz New York: Alfred Knopf 1981.
- Bartholomew, Barbara. The Great Grade Point Mystery. New York: Macmillan, 1983.
- Beatty, Patricia. Eight Mules to Monterey. New York: William Morrow, 1982.
- Greenwald, Sheila. It All Began With Jane Eyre. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- Hahn, Mary Downing. Daphne's Book. New York: Clarion Books, 1983.
- Heide, Florence P. The Problem With Pulcifer. New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1982.
- Herzig, A.C, & J. L. Mali. A Word to the Wise. Boston: Little Brown, 1978.
- McDonnel, Christine. Toad Food and Measle Soup. New York: Dial Press, 1982.
- Paterson, Katherine. A Bridge to Terabithia. New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1977.
- Pinkwater, D. M. Slaves of Speigel: A Magic Moscow Story. New York: Four Winds Press, 1982.
- Walsh, J. P. The Green Book. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1982.

