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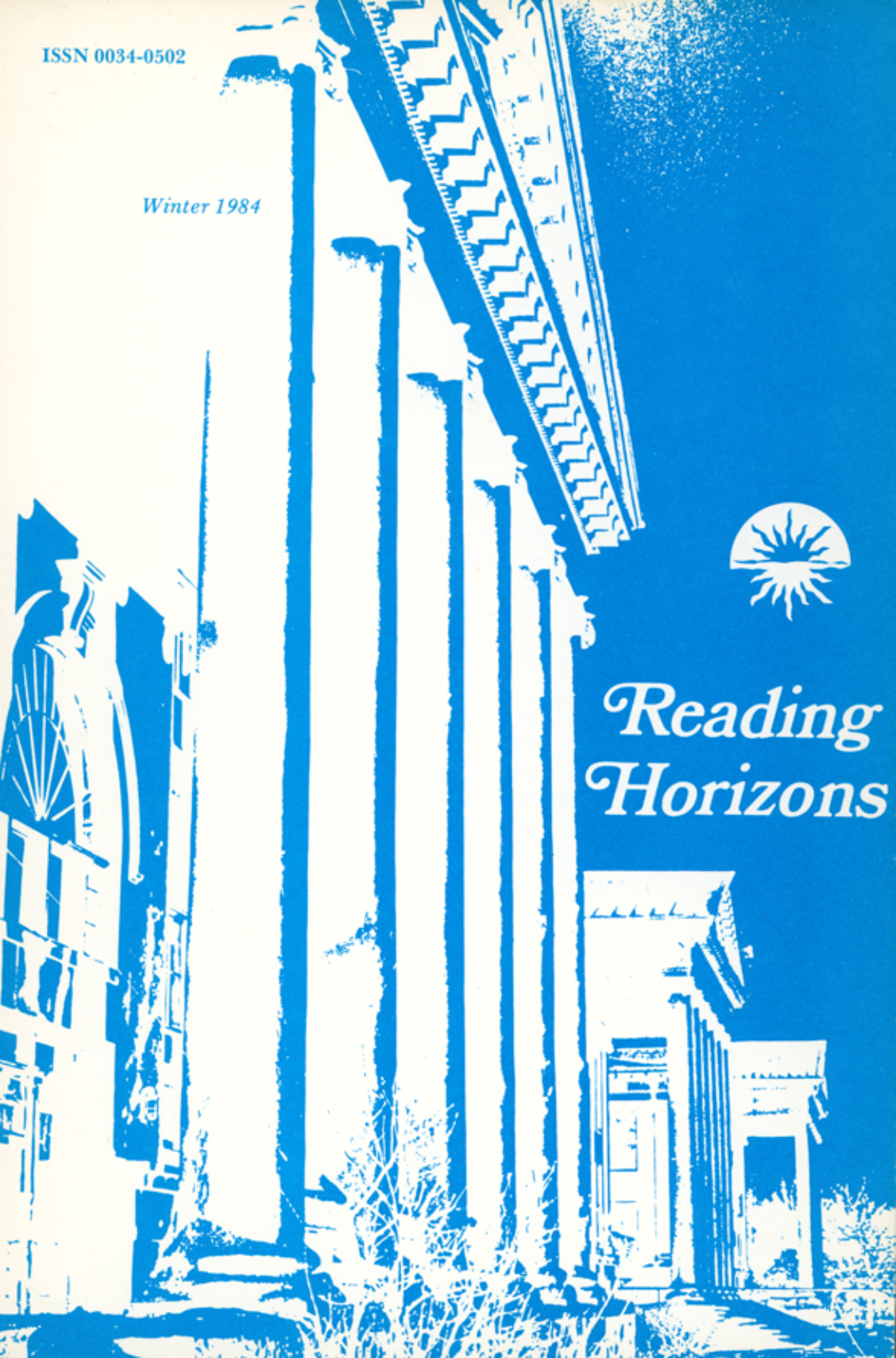


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THE APPLICATION OF CULTURALLY RELEVANT FACTORS TO LITERACY PROGRAMS IN APPALACHIA

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Appalachia is an American region characterized by a strong oral tradition. Ballads, ghostlore, minelore, herbllore, riddles, and proverbs abound. It is not uncommon to have family members and neighbors visit for an entire day, filling the time talking. While the imposition of the mainstream technological society may be weakening the opportunities for the practice of such lore or the desire of the young people to learn the lore, the subculture continues to support a basically oral tradition.

The historical role of literacy in the region is defined in this scene from The Dollmaker (Arnow, 1954, p. 33):

Gertie held the Bible open at Ecclesiastes. She stood with her back to the open front door, and faced the five children. Amos, still a shade pale and thin from his sickness of three weeks back, sat on a sheepskin rug near the heating stove. The four older ones, neat and quiet in their Sunday clothes, sat in a row between the two beds that stood, one in each back corner of the big low-ceilinged, small-windowed room. Her reading seemed a talking, for she looked more often at the children than at the Bible page, saying the words sometimes when her eyes went past the children to the rows of October-colored hills that lay behind the back window.

Here reading is a skill which exists solely as a means of moral instruction for the young. The particular skill required is the ability to read aloud. Listeners base their evaluations and remembrances of personalities on a reader's manner of delivery. Moreover, the content of The Bible, which includes stories from another even older tradition, is in harmony with the requirements of a present-day oral tradition. Any uses for reading other than religious training may still be considered unnecessary or even dangerous (Stewart, 1971).

This restricted role for reading in the lives of the children interferes with the successful acquisition of literacy because it leads to widespread anti-intellectual attitudes. Teachers recount parent conferences in which those parents who come have emphatically told the teachers, "We don't want our children to

be brains" (McClure, 1981; Massey, 1981; Spurlock, 1981). Education is not seen as a path to success in Appalachia. To be successful by an Appalachian yardstick is to be a good person, particularly in the eyes of your family and church. Even in college, students may be missing because a sister had a baby or a brother-in-law is in town. Some parents may verbally support the educational system yet condone skipping school or dropping out. As researchers have noted, children are far more influenced by the home than the school (Jencks, 1972). For example, students may be absent from school for an entire hunting season and teachers are expected to anticipate and adjust to their absences (Winfree, 1981). The impact of the hunting experience is apparent in children's oral language. Several of my teachers have asked their pupils to name the seasons of the year and even after instruction, the students respond with the names of the official hunting seasons (Winfree, 1981; McClure, 1981; Marks, 1981).

Educators must deal with cultural diversity. However, their attitudes are the result of personal experiences. As professionals, they may have espoused the middle class values of the educational system, thereby rejecting any examples of regional characteristics they come across. Such teachers typically regard their charges as deprived and constantly correct their behavior and their language. Failing to recognize the bias of intelligence tests, they use the children's low scores to support their assumption that they have low intellectual ability. Such attitudes are consciously or unconsciously communicated to the children, and their negative self-concept helps them conform to the teachers' expectations. At the other extreme, a different teacher may have passed through the system herself all the while resenting the imposition of a so-called standard, middle-class culture on her feelings for her native region. This teacher is accepting of "things regional", but her bitterness also encourages a negative self-concept in the children and interferes with her helping them prepare for the wider world.

The polarity that most adults demonstrate fosters a kind of cultural schizophrenia in the children. Literally caught between two cultures, the children make choices in order to survive. For example, in 1980, the average dropout rate in West Virginia, computed by comparing the number of students in grades 7-12 who leave school to those who graduate, was 25.71 percent (Ward, 1980). While this figure may be lower than in previous years, certain counties continue to experience a dropout rate as high as 50%. Apparently the children, even when faced with a minimally supportive environment outside the educational system, will choose to identify with family and neighborhood.

In the dilemma facing the youth of this region, the teacher as a representative of the system through which the children must pass, is the pivotal figure. Her attitudes toward the culture, family, and language of her pupils can make or break educational careers. Children come to school speaking the only language they know. They have learned to talk in culturally determined contexts. They use different idioms, vocabulary, or manner of speaking in church, in school, or at play. They have learned to edit or expand

their talk according to the age group with whom they are dealing. With peers, elders, authority figures, and younger children, they play different roles. They have learned when to speak and when not to, how to be tactful, and what is sarcastic. They have learned what language is by observing what language does (Halliday, 1975). They are constantly defining their roles their roles in their society through language and in so doing they are contributing to the maintenance of the patterns of life in that society. Therefore, to reject the way any child talks is to find the child's family and culture also unacceptable. It is irrational to expect any child to participate in such a conspiracy. Ideally, teachers must prepare their pupils to handle the wider world while allowing them to maintain their ability to communicate with their neighbors and families. In so doing, teachers must bring into harmony the community's enculturation of its young and the learning context of the school.

For example, one universal function of language is the telling of stories. It has been said that "Humanity was born telling stories" (Cazden & Hymes, 1978). We gossip, joke, and refer to common experiences. In daily life we ask each other, "How was your day?" "What did you do after that?" or "How did you get your start in newspaper work, weaving, etc.?" and bring on the recounting of life events. A sense of story is crucial to our development because—

We resort to story to make an entity of experience; to give our experience form and balance; to make generalizations about the world. We structure and often modify experience when creating stories of our everyday life, and also, often modify our own internal representations of experience when listening to the stories of others (Brown, 1975, p. 357).

Children observe such functional uses of story, and when these observations are accompanied by the more structured storytelling of a rich oral tradition or the parental reading of stories, we observe a story schema in the oral language of children as young as 2½ years of age (Brown, 1975).

Furthermore, narratives emphasize group affiliation. When personal narratives are excluded in educational settings, which is typically the case, the implication is that the students do not comprise a group. And if the teacher allows herself but no her pupils to tell stories, she may be setting up barriers which may weaken her effectiveness as a teacher (Cazden and Hymes, 1978). Moreover, a classroom that excludes narratives may be attempting to teach new subject matter in an unfamiliar mode of learning, since the family and community frequently teach through storytelling. Giving the students the opportunity to take turns as storytellers in the classroom allows them to use learning strengths which they have as functioning members of the community, and the experience brings the outside context into the classroom (Cazden and Hymes, 1978).

In the lives of young Appalachians, storytelling demonstrates

not only entertaining and instructive functions, but fieldwork indicates that the storytelling model in the community transfers to literacy as well. Two communities in the Carolina Piedmont, Roadville and Trackton, are presently being looked at for the types of oral tradition they support (Heath, 1981). Roadville stories are true tales that reaffirm commitment to community and to church values through personal experiences and testimonials. In contrast, Trackton stories use fact only in the universals of human strength and they include play songs, ritual insults, and cheers. When the children from both communities were allowed to write stories in school, the teachers noted that the Roadville children wrote personal experience stories and the Trackton children wrote tales. The results strongly suggest that educators need to attend to the kind and degree of sociocultural integration any pupil brings to the academic setting, how this integration molds the pupil's linguistic models, and how these linguistic models may be incorporated into educational programs.

The teacher's use of an appropriate learning mode from the larger society in her classroom can guarantee a place for literacy in the lives of her pupils and by extension in the lives of the adults and the society she serves. Appalachian children have a well-developed sense of story and the teacher of Appalachian children should take advantage of this strength by incorporating activities which allow this strength to shine. Because the sense of story serves as an organizer for the meaning found in experiences in life, let us return to the example of the children who recount the hunting seasons for the broader seasons of the year. Rather than voicing her frustration at attempting to push her pupils into a middle class mold, the teacher can take advantage of their knowledge by reading hunting stories to the class and encouraging a group language experience story on the chalkboard about a hunting expedition. The class might then divide into small groups or pairs to compose a collaborative story or play that they tape record or write and then share with the rest of the class. The tapes may be incorporated into listening centers and the stories can become books which the teacher or students transcribe and the children illustrate. Name plates at the front tell the authors, and a paper glued at the back may provide a space for the names of those who read the book and their opinions. Teachers then have a classroom library of books the children have created about the lifestyle that matters to them. A New Yorker and an Appalachian can both successfully decode the sentence, "In the spring we gather greens," but the impact of the sentence is significantly different for both readers. For the Appalachian the statement represents a slice of life that is part of a worldview, while for the New Yorker, the sentence is empty. When learners really understand that print functions because it is meaningful, they will value their ability to handle print. And when learners value communicating through print, they will not only easily begin reading and writing, but they will keep at learning the processes.

Another opportunity which capitalizes on the lifestyle of the community follows the Foxfire concept. Training students in such ethnographic techniques as interviewing and participant observation enables them to record oral traditions and oral histories

of the people in their community. Speaking, listening, reading and writing are well integrated in such a project. While some of the stories collected may be unfamiliar to the students, the names and places are usually known to them. For example, in a ballad about a feud in Lincoln County called "Lincoln County Crew", the creek, store, and hollow mentioned were very familiar to students who had never heard of the song. Students learn to care about reading and writing the materials they collect in such a field project. Moreover, recording the traditions and crafts which may be fading in the community provides students with an obvious sense of origin and place in the world. Such awareness has the potential to ease much of the cultural ambivalence they face as Appalachians.

Literature helps each of us internalize the world while we externalize our feelings. We deal with human questions which are dramatized, and develop deeper insight into human nature and human values. The ballads of Appalachia may also be studied from the point of view of literature because they are well developed stories which demonstrate not only the human condition but also individual strengths. For example:

LIGHTNING EXPRESS

*The lightning express from the depot so grand
had just started on its way,
And most of the passengers who were on board
all seemed to be happy and gay,
Except a young man on a seat by himself
was reading a letter he had*

*It was plain to be seen by the tears in his eyes
that the contents of it made him sad.
The stern ol' conductor then started around
collecting a fare from all there.
And finally reaching the side of the boy
he gruffly demanded his fare.*

*"I have not a ticket," the boy then replied,
"I'll pay you back someday."
"I'll put you off next station," he cried,
but stopped when he heard the boy say
"Please, mister conductor,
don't put me off of your train.
For the best friend I have in this world, sir,
is waiting for me in pain.
Expected to die any moment,
she may not last through the day,
I want to bid Mama good-by, sir,
before God calls her away..."* 1

This ballad tells that a collection was taken among the passengers to see that the boy could reach his mother's bedside. Listening to or reading such a story can prompt discussions about what it is like not to have money when you really need it, the illness or death of a parent, the humanity at least occasionally found in the world, or even Appalachian migrations to cities to find

work. The writing of compositions, poetry, or ballads can follow.

Other ballads quickly spark controversy. For example, this song presents a strong case against women.

I've Got No Use for the Women

*I've got no use for the women,
A true one may seldom be found;
They'll use a man for his money,
When it's gone, they'll all turn 'im down.
They're all alike at the bottom,
Selfish and grasping for all;
They'll stay by your side while you're winning
And laugh in your face at your fall... 1*

Some girls in class might easily make a similar case against men and develop aspects of the discussion into written expression in various genres.

In fact, teachers of Appalachian children might be well advised to focus their attention on facilitating pupils' ability to handle written language. Dialect speakers can acquire control over written language though they may never acquire a so-called standard oral language (Goodman, 1973). Miscue research indicates that readers make miscues which move toward their own oral language and that when the classroom teacher accepts the reader's oral language such miscues do not interfere with comprehension. Among my students I have teachers that I would consider strong regional speakers. Many of these teachers passed through college, but were constantly referred to speech therapy classes. They are presently in graduate school with their dialects intact but they are able to write college exams and term papers in standard English. This dichotomy may also be observed in developing countries whose citizens speak a variety of dialects yet become literate. Therefore a bidialectal program which emphasizes oral (D_1) - oral (D_2) competence may not be as successful as a bidialectal program which accepts oral (D_1) - written (D_2) competence.

In summary, Appalachia is an American region whose communities need to give literacy both a life and a significant role. The educational system has the responsibility of seeing that this realization takes place by demonstrating the functionality of reading and writing in Appalachian life. Teachers can accomplish this task by capitalizing on the strengths with which learners come to school. One strength we all have, but particularly well-practiced and valued in the peoples with strong oral traditions is the telling of stories. With a little imagination, the use of stories from daily life and the more formalized ballads and tales can provide meaningful encounters with written language. In addition, teachers need to emphasize classroom language models which are compatible with community models of language. Story-telling, reading The Bible aloud and singing ballads are social events. Reading as a silent, private act is not compatible with the values the Appalachian community treasures. For strengths in learning to flourish, teachers must provide an integrated, student-centered language arts program which not only uses the

students' oral abilities in activities such as book-making and language experience, but also which uses such sociable techniques as discussions, working in pairs, small group projects, and a constant sharing of experiences and projects.

By avoiding a consideration of regional strengths and gearing the educational system toward a middle class norm, we have cut any harmony that could exist between home learning and school learning. In so doing, we have added to the frustrations of those students who must pass through the system and those teachers who feel they must perpetuate the system. (Pity the poor teacher who feels obligated to force the so-called real seasons of the year on the pupil who wonders why children have to go to school at all.) We have conveyed negative attitudes toward language variety and ended uncouth educational careers. We have produced reading materials with exercises devoid of local color, often meaningless even in terms of the broadest human values. In our concern over test scores, we have taught to the test and lost sight of our real goal of teaching. Our real purpose is, as it has always been, to help our students learn to read and to write. The learning of literacy can only be accomplished in contexts as meaningful and as joyful as those which nurtured our learning to talk. If our students are able to read and write, and to enjoy reading and writing, then we, as educators, and, in particular, reading educators, have truly served our society.

-
1. Both ballads were collected from Mrs. Naomi Sitton, a resident of Boone County, West Virginia, by Dr. Hafiz Baghban.

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A SIMPLIFIED MISCUE ANALYSIS FOR CLASSROOM AND CLINIC

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After years of research in the analysis of oral reading, Kenneth Goodman published The Goodman Taxonomy of Reading Miscues (1969). The taxonomy provided a system by which researchers could investigate the strategies a reader seems to be using while reading. Every time a reader read something other than what was on the page, Goodman labeled that deviation a miscue and asked 28 linguistic questions about how compatible that miscue was with the passage being read. Goodman argued that all readers make miscues and that miscues which are highly compatible with the context of the passage are signs of good reading rather than faulty reading.

Later, Yetta Goodman and Carolyn Burke transformed the taxonomy into a diagnostic kit called the Reading Miscue Inventory (1972). The RMI manual includes directions on how to mark, select, and code miscues for analysis. Nine questions are asked of each miscue as to how compatible it is to the passage, and a retelling or summary score is computed as a measure of comprehension. Answers to the nine questions and the retelling score are entered on a miscue analysis profile sheet and reading instructional strategies are outlined for each general type of profile.

For the reading clinician or special reading teacher, the RMI has several advantages. It is the only major diagnostic tool so far developed which is based on a psycholinguistic model of reading. Moreover, the RMI is educational for the teacher, who becomes a student of the child's reading rather than just attempting to compute a test score. These advantages and others have led Cooper and Petrosky (1976) to describe the RMI as "an individual diagnostic scheme that makes anything else currently available seem medieval."

Unfortunately, the RMI has several disadvantages as well. A major problem with the RMI is the time needed to administer, score, and interpret it. If teacher-selected passages are used, more time is needed due to the long process of computing a retelling score for each passage. Another problem is the confusion brought about by the question: "Does the miscue result in a change of meaning?" For all the other questions, a yes appears to connote a strength, while here a no appears to connote a strength. There are also problems with inter-judge reliability and with interpretability of results, and the semantic and syntactic questions are confounded.

The length of time required to give the RMI has been previously criticized by Tortelli (1976) who reduced a miscue analysis to a two-question adjunct to other diagnostic tests. Unfortunately, Tortelli's miscue analysis gives no information with respect to grapho-phonetic strength and leaves out the most important question in any miscue analysis: "Was the miscue corrected?"

In light of the work of the Goodmans, Burke, and Tortelli, the author has developed a miscue analysis system which attempts to maintain the strengths and completeness of the RMI while eliminating most of its weaknesses.

A Simplified Miscue Analysis (SMA)

Step 1: Have the student read orally from a selection (at the easiest level above instructional level) which is long enough that a minimum of 25 miscues will be made (not counting pauses or repetitions).

The easiest level above instructional level is used as the difficulty level of material because one obtains a different miscue profile from a reader depending on how difficult or easy the test passage is for that reader (Williamson & Young, 1974). The easiest level above instructional level should be used for an SMA so that one can see the relative strengths and weaknesses of the reading cueing systems in material just barely too hard. The profile will then tell you why the passage is barely too hard so that the resulting instruction may raise the student to that next level.

Step 2: Using a coding system, make an exact, written recording of the student's oral reading.

Any complete coding system which the teacher has learned to use in giving an Informal Reading Inventory, standardized test, or the RMI may be used.

Step 3: When the student is finished reading, remove the passage and ask the student to summarize what has been read—rate the comprehension based on the summary, as "almost all," "most," "some," or "almost none."

Step 4: Sequentially number the miscues (not including pauses or repetitions); do not include miscues which were triggered by immediately previous miscues.

Step 5: Make chart on which all four yes-or-no questions are answered for each numbered miscue.

The following criteria are to be used for answering the four SMA questions for each miscue:

1. Did the miscue look like the original wording?

Following Hood (1975-1976), any miscue which is a change in word-order or letter-order within words (reversals other than letter confusions like *b* for *d*, would receive a yes to question 1. Any omission or insertion and any punctuation miscue are given a no because they do not preserve the "look" of the original. All substitutions (whether real-word or non-word substitutions) are given a yes if and only if:

- a. The first half of the letters of the original word are exactly retained at the beginning of the substitution;
or
 - b. The first and last letters of the substitution are identical to the first and last letters of the original word and the word length of the substitution is within one letter of the length of the original word.
2. Did the miscue leave the syntax of the passage essentially the same?

For miscues which are real-word substitutions, a yes is given if the word is the same part of speech (form-class) as the original word; a no is given if it is not. For miscues which are non-word substitutions, the ending of the substitution is used to infer the part of speech intended by the reader and the question is answered yes or n, accordingly. Any insertion, omission, or substitution of ending punctuation receives a no since such miscues always alter syntax. For any insertion, omission, or word reversal, read the original sentence without any miscues and then read the original with only the miscue being scored. Decide if the miscue maintains the syntactic structure of the original sentence; score the miscue yes or no, accordingly. (The miscue should not be scored as to whether it is "grammatically correct" but whether or not it maintains the sentence structure of th

3. Did the miscue leave the meaning of the passage essentially the same?

Readers who say something synonymous to what the page says, receive yes's to question 3. Otherwise, any addition to, deletion from, or change in the meaning on the page receives a no.

4. Did the reader successfully correct the miscue?

The reader only receives a yes to question 4 if the reader's final response to the original wording on the page restored that original wording.

Some sample miscues will illustrate how these questions might be answered in different situations:

The teacher is going to school in her ^{#1}be ^{#2}(new) ^{#3}little ^{#4}car, small, red automobile.

Questions

Miscues	#1	#2	#3	#4
#1	no	yes	yes	no
#2	no	yes	no	no
#3	no	yes	yes	no
#4	no	yes	yes	no

#1 #2 #3 #4
nomads want * colonel's canteen
The thirsty nomads went for the colonel's canteen.

* "for" is not numbered as a miscue because "for" could not follow "want" and thus the omission is triggered by the substitution of "want" for "went" - See step 4, above.

Questions				
Miscues	#1	#2	#3	#4
#1	yes	yes	no	no
#2	yes	yes	no	no
#3	yes	yes	no	no
#4	yes	yes	no	no

Step 6: Analyze this chart by making a frequency count of each pattern of miscues with respect to the three cueing systems.

The SMA yields a percentage of strength for each of the three cueing systems: grapho-phonetic, syntactic, and semantic. These three percentages are coupled with the rating of the student's retelling (Step 3, above) to form the student's miscue profile. (These percentages should not be computed unless there are at least 25 miscues involved.)

The percentage of strength for grapho-phonetic cueing is computed by this formula:

$$\frac{\text{number of yeses to question 1}}{\text{number of yeses to question 1 plus number of noes to question 1}} = \frac{\quad}{\quad} = \frac{\quad}{\quad} \%$$

The percentages of strength for semantic and syntactic cueing are computed by counting patterns of answers to questions 2, 3, and 4. Put the total number of patterns for each type in the slot(s) provided to the side. Column totals are then entered in two formulae.

Patterns	#2	#3	#4	Semantic		Syntactic		Unclassi- fiable
				Strength	Weakness	Strength	Weakness	
a	yes	yes	yes	—		—		
b	no	yes	yes	—		—		
c	yes	no	yes	—		—		
d	no	no	yes					—
e	yes	yes	no	—		—		
f	no	yes	no	—				
g	yes	no	no		—	—		
h	no	no	no		—		—	
totals				—	—	—	—	—

Semantic Cues:

$$\frac{\text{number of semantic strength patterns}}{\text{number of semantic strength patterns plus number of semantic weakness patterns}} = \frac{\quad}{\quad} = \quad \%$$

Syntactic Cues:

$$\frac{\text{number of syntactic strength patterns}}{\text{number of syntactic strength patterns plus number of syntactic weakness patterns}} = \frac{\quad}{\quad} = \quad \%$$

Step 7: Interpret the miscue analysis.

Enter the three percentages of strength and the rating of the summary in the appropriate slots in the student's profile. Put the cueing system with the highest percentage in the top slot, etc.

Student's Profile:

<u>Order</u>	<u>Cueing System</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
Summary = _____		

Interpret this profile by comparing it with the two extreme profiles, ideal and terrible. These extreme profiles have been developed by the author after careful and extensive reading of writings by the Goodmans (including the RMI manual by Goodman and Burke).

Ideal Profile:

<u>Order</u>	<u>Cueing System</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	<u>Semantic</u> ..	<u>≥ 90%</u>
2	<u>Syntactic</u> ..	<u>≥ 85%</u>
3	<u>Grapho-Phonic</u>	<u>< Semantic and Syntactic</u>
Summary = <u>Almost All</u>		

Terrible Profile:

<u>Order</u>	<u>Cueing System</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	<u>Grapho-Phonic</u>	<u>> Semantic and Syntactic</u>
2	<u>Syntactic</u> ..	<u>< 60%</u>
3	<u>Semantic</u> ..	<u>< 50%.</u>
Summary = <u>Almost None</u>		

Those areas of the profile which most resemble their counterparts in the ideal profile are strengths; those areas which most

resemble those in the terrible profile are weaknesses. Each of the four areas of the profile must be classified as either a relative strength or a relative weakness.

Some sample profiles will illustrate how this interpretation might take place:

Mary's profile:

<u>Order</u>	<u>Cueing System</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	<u>Syntactic</u>	<u>75%</u>
2	<u>Grapho-Phonic</u>	<u>72%</u>
3	<u>Semantic</u>	<u>50%</u>
Summary = <u>Some</u>		
Strength(s) = Syntactic & Grapho-phonetic Weakness(es) = Semantic & Summary		

Willy's profile:

<u>Order</u>	<u>Cueing System</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	<u>Grapho-phonetic</u>	<u>92%</u>
2	<u>Syntactic</u>	<u>65%</u>
3	<u>Semantic</u>	<u>55%</u>
Summary = <u>Some</u>		
Strength(s) = Grapho-phonetic Weakness(es) = Summary & Syntactic & Semantic		

Jay's profile

<u>Order</u>	<u>Cueing System</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	<u>Semantic</u>	<u>77%</u>
2	<u>Syntactic</u>	<u>55%</u>
3	<u>Grapho-phonetic</u>	<u>34%</u>
Summary = <u>most</u>		
Strength(s) = Semantic & Summary Weakness(es) = Syntactic & Grapho-phonetic		

Conclusion

The Reading Miscue Inventory was the beginning of psycholinguistic diagnosis in reading. Unfortunately, in addition to its many pioneering advantages, it had several disadvantages. The author has developed a Simplified Miscue Analysis in an attempt to maintain strengths of previous systems of miscue analysis while eliminating most of their weaknesses.

An experienced administrator can give, score, and interpret an SMA in less than 30 minutes. The answer yes connotes a strength for all four questions. The question, "Did the reader successfully correct the miscue?" is the last question answered to prevent confusion. The guidelines of Joyce Hood (1975-76) have been in-

cluded whenever possible in the answering of the questions to increase inter-judge reliability. The semantic and syntactic questions are no longer confounded. The resulting profile is more easily interpreted.

A major limitation remains with the SMA. Even though the SMA takes less time to administer, score, and interpret than does the Durrell, the RMI, the Spache, and some IRI's, 30 minutes per student is still too long for regular classroom teachers to test all students.

Given this limitation, in the years in which the SMA has been given at the UNC Reading Clinic, we have found that an SMA profile has enabled us to help several students for whom other means of diagnosis had been inconclusive or contradictory. We recommend it for use in reading clinics and by special teachers, and we believe regular teachers will find it useful with those particular students who most confuse and frustrate them.

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LEARNING PHONICS NATURALLY: A MODEL FOR INSTRUCTION

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Incorporating phonics instruction into the teaching of reading continues to be a controversial subject. Those who oppose its incorporation note the inconsistency of sound-symbol correspondence in the English language. That is, some symbols or letters represent many sounds (e.g., bet, be, berth, brute) and some sounds have many spellings (e.g., the /u/ as in to, two, blue, through, blew). While phonics opponents favor reading instruction which emphasizes getting meaning from print, those who advocate phonics favor reading methods which emphasize "breaking the code". A further division exists even among phonics advocates. Should phonics generalizations be taught in context or in isolation?

In spite of the phonics controversy, reading methodology textbooks as well as basal reading programs suggest that teachers employ various types of phonics methods in the teaching of reading. The method may be analytical or inductive where children are given a set of words and are led to discover the common underlying phonic principle. Or, a synthetic phonics method may be suggested where children blend individual sounds, gradually constructing the word. Phonics instruction may also be based on a deductive method where a generalization is taught, and children are to apply it to unknown words.

While many teachers incorporate specific phonic methods, they often find the same recurring problem—children have difficulties applying phonics while reading text. Young children's inability to apply phonic principles may be due to their perceptions of how phonics fits into learning to read. Or, it may be due to teachers' perceptions of how children learn phonics and apply the sound-symbol correspondences of the English language. The purpose of this article is to provide teachers an understanding of primary children's abilities, inabilities, and requirements to use phonics as a beginning reading strategy and to suggest a model that facilitates children's application of phonics while reading.

A Possible Source of Confusion

An underlying cause of problems with phonics instruction may be a discrepancy between adults' and children's perceptions of the world in general and language in particular. Children do not necessarily perceive the world as we adults do, nor do they necessarily hear or graphically represent linguistic sounds and words as adults do. What can result between students and teachers,

then, is a lack of common perceptions about sound-symbol correspondences and an inability to communicate those perceptions. Why should we assume that children readily perceive the adult model of sound-symbol correspondences any more than we assume that the teacher effortlessly perceives the children's model? Rather than imposing the complex adult model upon children, perhaps we as teachers should meet children at least halfway. Let's look at how children perceive the world.

Primary Grade Children: Their Abilities, Inabilities, and
Requirements for Learning
Stages of Development

Children look for meaning and attempt to perceive events as organized wholes in order to form their concepts about the world (Piaget, 1976). Like adults, children actively add to, delete from, and modify existing schemes in order to incorporate new information. Concept development is a gradual process, and in the course of gaining conceptual understandings, children perceive the world differently than adults do (Piaget, 1976). Young children are naturally active and curious about their surroundings and automatically investigate the world to derive meaning and build concepts.

Piaget (1955) reports that especially during the early stages of development children learn by doing. Piaget (1955) stresses that children need to do their own experimenting; they need to construct for themselves what is to be learned. When a teacher tells or teaches a generalization, s/he has prevented the students from discovering the generalization for themselves. It is through re-invention and continuous organization and reorganization of experiences that children learn. In relation to learning language, the teacher must provide children with opportunities to experiment with language and provide a non-threatening environment that promotes risk-taking.

Teachers can provide children with opportunities to experiment and make sense of language by permitting them to use invented spellings while writing (Chomsky, 1978; Henderson, 1980; Read, 1971). Children's invented spellings represent their understandings of sound-symbol correspondences. The problem sometimes encountered in classroom phonics instruction may, therefore, result not from lack of knowledge on the part of children but rather from a kind of conceptual clash between students and teachers.

Adult understandings of phonic rules are the result of vast experience with oral and written language. The rules as well as the exceptions to phonics generalizations are incorporated into the adult model. Children's understandings of sound-symbol correspondences, however, are derived mainly or solely from aural input. Children intuitively begin to form generalizations about sound-symbol correspondences and these generalizations are reflected in their invented spellings (Read, 1971). What we as teachers must do, then, is help children gradually substitute their well-founded intuitions about sound-symbol correspondences with a standard system that is not always based on a perfect, regular one-to-one correspondence between print and speech. Rather than

deny children's self-gained awareness, we should understand it and build upon it. For example, Rebecca, a second grade disabled reader, has written the following sentences in a classroom encouraging active involvement and risk-taking.

My teeth are good. I tayk kear of tham.
I brash tham. Aftne meals I brash tham.

From Rebecca's invented spellings, the teacher can provide diagnostic-prescriptive phonics instruction enabling Rebecca to develop proficiency in reading.

Natural Language

For primary grade children, developing proficiency in sound-symbol correspondences is a natural process that progressively evolves through nurturing. The teacher can foster this process by providing children with natural language patterns in connected discourse. Goodman (1976) continually stresses the importance for children to read natural language. He states: "If the written language children encounter right from the beginning is whole, real, natural, and relevant, they will be able to use their existing language competence as they learn to read" (p. 13).

The Language Experience Approach, or LEA, encourages proficiency in reading because it uses the child's own language. By reading their own language patterns, children learn that language is systematic and patterned. Language is systematic in terms of its phonology and orthography (sound-symbol correspondence); a patterned relationship exists between the oral and written systems. Language is also systematic in terms of syntax (grammar) and semantics (meaning). In LEA, the child can develop insights into how language works as an integrative system, i.e., how sound-symbol, syntactic, and semantic components of language work together to provide redundancy so meaning can be constructed. Reading instruction that includes LEA encourages children to explore and experiment with the three components of language.

Oral Language Proficiency

Most primary grade children come to reading instruction with a well-developed understanding of language in the oral mode. At this stage, children have developed their own acoustic distinctive features and distinctive feature lists for processing language (Smith, 1971). That is, children have conceptualized the difference between the articulation of various phonemes by such sound characteristics as voiced /ð/ (as in the word those), voiceless /θ/ (as in the word thumb), nasal /m/ (as in the word mouse), duration, and position of tongue. They are able to discriminate single sounds and eliminate many alternatives in the total number of possible sounds. Children use distinctive features to develop feature lists in order to identify specific sounds or sound combinations that provide information for word recognition.

Most first grade children have mastery of distinctive features and feature lists in the acoustic system of language and have

developed these skills by listening to whole language (Smith, 1971). The process of acquiring acoustic features and feature lists is no less complex than acquiring visual features and visual feature lists (i.e., visual discrimination of letters or words). For the child to acquire the distinctive features and feature lists of the visual system, the child needs to experience whole language that is relevant and meaningful. The child has learned the acoustic system by first learning that oral language is communication. In other words, before the child has learned to say a word, the child has known the meaning associated with that spoken word. The same concept is true for reading. Meaning needs to precede the identification of the written word.

Creative writing, where invented spellings are encouraged, as well as LEA, are meaning-based approaches, permitting young children to acquire understanding of sound-symbol correspondences in a whole language context. From continual encounters with meaningful print, children gradually develop the necessary visual features to become a fluent reader.

We can best develop an effective approach to phonics instruction, then, by understanding primary grade children's abilities, inabilities, and requirements for learning. The model on the following page is based on primary grade children's cognitive and linguistic capabilities.

Phonics Instructional Model

The proposed phonics instructional model (see figure 1) is a four-step model designed to provide children with a natural way to learn phonics so they can become fluent readers. Steps one and two involve indirect teaching of phonics. In these two steps, the teacher places phonics in a holistic framework of creating and reading connected discourse. Steps three and four involve a more direct model of teaching where the teacher first analyzes the children's invented spellings to plan direct phonics instruction. The teacher then implements strategies that promote application of standard sound-symbol correspondences. Each part of the four-step model is explained to facilitate effective implementation.

LEA

The Language Experience Approach is the first step of the model. The fundamental component of LEA is dictation in which children tell a story based on personal experiences. As each child dictates the story to the teacher-scribe, s/he writes the story on the board or easel so the children can easily see the relationship of the spoken word to the written word. As the teacher writes each word, s/he can say the word emphasizing initial, medial, or final sounds developing sound-symbol correspondences. After the dictation is completed, the children can read their story with or without teacher assistance. Through continual encounters with LEA, children can begin to understand the concepts about reading, such as word boundaries, sentences, sound-symbol correspondences, and that reading is a communication process.

Creative Writing

The second step of the model is creative writing which provides

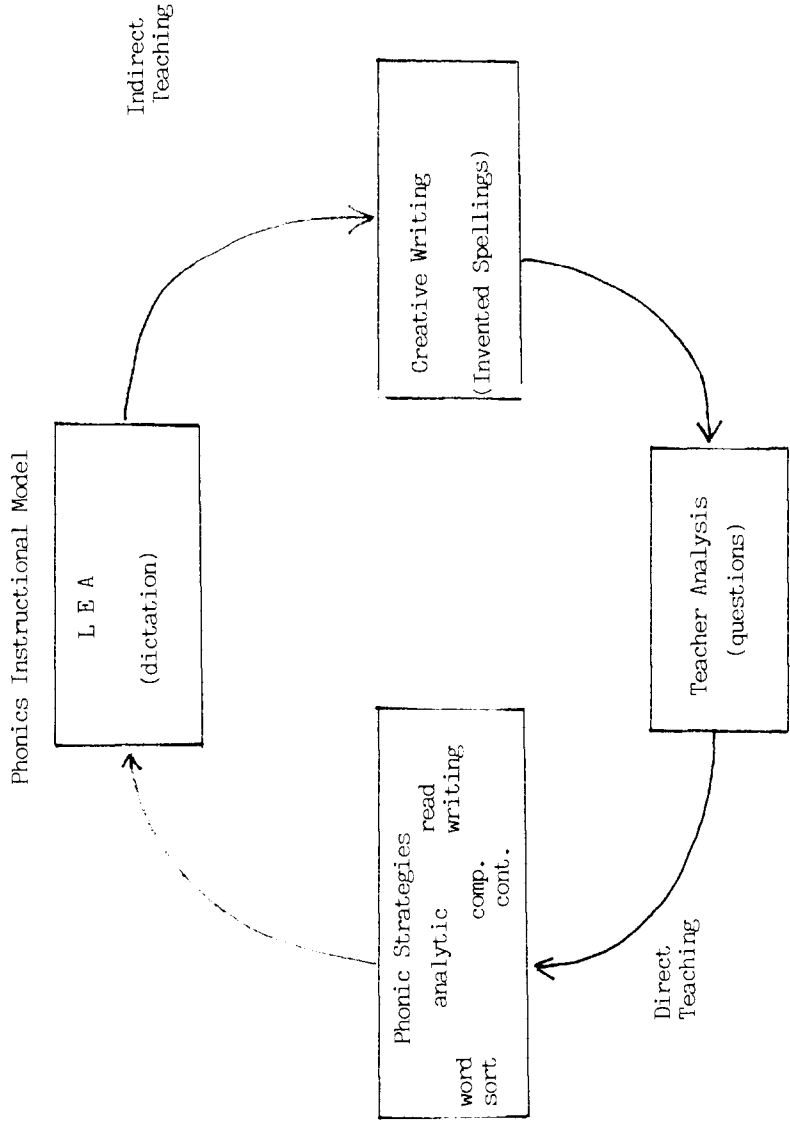


Figure 1

the key for understanding children as phoneticians. During creative writing, the teacher can give children an opportunity to explore sound-symbol correspondences by means of invented spellings. Instead of telling the children how to spell a word, the teacher asks them to listen to the sounds they hear in the word and associate the appropriate letters to these sounds. The teacher needs to assure children that mistakes are acceptable since learning requires taking risks and making errors.

From repeated creative writing sessions, children develop knowledge about how language works. They learn that sounds and symbols do not have perfect one-to-one correspondence. For example, they learn that some sounds, like /ʃ/ (shoe), may be represented by combinations of letters and that some sounds may not always represent the same letters (e.g., /k/ may be s or c). Invented spelling encourages children to discover their own generalizations, to discover the inconsistencies of language, and to recognize that generalizations may not always apply. Children will learn these ideas from continual experiences with language in a meaning based context. It is the combination of LEA and creative writing that can provide impetus for progressive growth in processing sound-symbol correspondences of words.

In the first two steps of the model, the teacher indirectly influences children to develop sound-symbol correspondences by providing children with opportunities to investigate and experiment with language in order to discover phonic generalizations for themselves. The next two steps of the model initiate direct teaching of phonics, but from children's vantage points and not from a programmed sequence found in scope and sequence charts of textbooks or curriculum guides. Phonics is taught via children's knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences of words, based on children's invented spellings within creative writing.

Teacher Analysis

In step three the teacher analyzes the children's invented spellings. The following questions can help the teacher detect each child's strengths and weaknesses in sound-symbol correspondences:

1. Does the child have a concept of word (i.e., word boundaries)?
2. Is there a relationship between the child's spelling and the word to be spelled?
3. Does the word demonstrate a sound-symbol regularity? (e.g., the word the, does not show sound-symbol regularity, whereas the word bag does).
4. Does the child seem to exhibit understanding of the initial, medial, and final letters associated with the sounds heard in the word?
5. What letter(s) does a child consistently associate with sounds heard in a word?
6. Is the child's spelling characteristic of the child's dialect?
7. Does the child consistently omit the same letters within a word?

From these types of questions, the teacher can decide which sound-symbol correspondences each child may be able to learn. Kirk's creative writing sample is used to point out one child's strengths and weaknesses of sound-symbol correspondences. Kirk is a second grader who is experiencing reading difficulties.

One day I want to get a apow. I bet
it. and a tosh came out and it whus
bedden it whus hrten. and I shod mv
Mom I wint to the dentes he said I
have to caudes I got scerd. I strt
to crie becus I Sote He will
Yocc it out

Notice that Kirk seems to understand word boundaries or concept of word. He is able to accurately represent initial sound-symbol correspondences, but is weak in identifying medial and final sound-symbol correspondences. Kirk has the most difficulty with medial positioned vowels as in the words: we t, bit, was, sowed, etc. Even though Kirk has difficulties with the medial vowel sounds, he shows an understanding of English phonology (Chomsky, 1979; Henderson, 1980; Read, 1971). Kirk's representation of some vowel sounds follows a developmental pattern that Read reports in his study of pre-schoolers' invented spellings. Read has found that pre-schoolers seem to use a systematic strategy in order to spell words with a short vowel pattern as in the word bit. These pre-school children have systematically substituted the graphic representation of the short vowel sound with the graphic representation of the long vowel sound articulated in approximately the same position. For example, Kirk has substituted the letter e, for the short i sound in the word, bit. The short i sound is articulated in approximately the same position as the long e sound; therefore, Kirk substitutes the letter e for the letter i. Kirk again uses this systematic strategy as described by Read in the word, went. Kirk has substituted the letter e for the letter a. The short e sound is articulated in approximately the same position as the long a sound. Kirk has shown that he has some understanding of the short vowel sounds.

Kirk also has difficulty with r-controlled vowels (e.g., "hrten" for hurting, "scerd" for scared, and "strt" for start) as well as inflectional endings (e.g., -en for -ing in "hrten" and "bedden" and "shod" for showed). From the analysis of Kirk's invented spellings, the teacher can select appropriate strategies that enable Kirk to learn and apply the appropriate sound-symbol

correspondences of the English language.

Phonic Strategies

In the fourth step of the model, the teacher implements appropriate phonic strategies which fit the child's strengths and weaknesses in sound-symbol correspondences. The following strategies are discussed—word sort, analytic phonics, comparison and contrast phonics, and reading of creative writing. These strategies are explained and discussed in relation to Kirk's strengths and weaknesses of sound-symbol correspondences.

Word Sort

Word sort (Henderson, 1980; Morris, 1980) can develop children's awareness of sound-symbol correspondences by sorting known words into specific categories. For example, Kirk who has difficulties with inflectional endings is given a set of cards and a set of categories. Each card has one word containing an inflectional ending. Each category identifies a different inflectional ending. The child's task is to verbally identify the word on the card and identify the appropriate category to which the word belongs. The teacher may first identify each category and one key word card associated with each category, after which the child is to pronounce his/her word and place it with the correct category. After repeating the task several times, the teacher can add new words for the child to sort. In addition, the teacher can time the student while doing the task so the child learns to recognize immediately the sound-symbol patterns without hesitation or dependence on a sounding-out procedure. Word Sort can easily be used in a small group situation where children are groups according to their needs. In a small group, the teacher distributes several cards to each child, and the child is to say the word given to him/her and identify the appropriate category to which it belongs. Each child in the group takes turns until all the word cards are correctly categorized.

Analytic Phonics

Analytic phonics is used often during instruction in which children inductively develop a generalization from a list of words exhibiting a common pattern. But, incorporating analytic phonics within this model has a unique focus—the generalizations to be developed are based on each child's needs as evidenced in his/her invented spellings. For example, Kirk has shown a lack of understanding in identifying the appropriate letters associated with each of the short vowel sounds. In analytic phonics, the teacher elicits from the child words from his/her speaking vocabulary that have, for instance, the /ε/, as in the word, went. After Kirk names several words with the /ε/, the teacher asks Kirk the following question, "What sound do all the words have in common?" and "What letter is associated with this sound?" After several analytic phonics lessons, Kirk should develop the appropriate sound-symbol correspondences. The key to this strategy is basing the lesson on the child's needs. Again, this lesson can be adapted to small group work as was Word Sort.

Comparison and Contrast Phonics

Comparison and contrast technique is the third strategy in which the child's invented spellings are compared to the traditional orthographics. In this strategy, the teacher writes the invented spellings and the standard spellings in two separate columns and asks the child to compare and contrast the two columns. Using Kirk's invented spellings, the teacher places the words in the appropriate columns and asks Kirk "How are these words alike? How are these words different? What is missing in the invented spelled words? What precedes the letter 'r' in each of these words?" Hopefully, from this discussion and others, the child develops the principle of r-controlled vowels. Again, this phonic strategy is based on the child's needs.

Reading Their Own Writing

The last phonics strategy is placed in the format of natural text. The teacher substitutes the child's invented spellings in the writing sample with standard spellings, and the child's task is to read the text with standard spellings. The child is given practice reading natural text so sound-symbol correspondences can be applied during the act of reading.

A Concluding Word

Young children can learn phonics in a natural manner when teachers permit children to explore language and apply their knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences. By analyzing children's phonics knowledge, the teacher can determine appropriate sound-symbol instruction that can help children become better readers. Following the logical steps of the instructional model, teachers can help children learn phonics naturally.

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INTERNAL MOTIVATION AND FEELINGS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

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Because Southeastern Louisiana University employs an open-door policy of admissions, it traditionally has enrolled students of widely ranging abilities. In recent years, the number of students without the basic skills required to be successful in regular university work has increased dramatically.

Although Louisiana has recently raised standards required in high school, the problems of underprepared students will exist because the first class to meet the new standards will not enroll in college until the fall semester of the current year. At that time there should be an increase in the proportion of students properly prepared for college. However, there will still be many underprepared students, since there will continue to be those who do not follow a college-preparatory curriculum but who do attend college. Approximately one-third of the entering college freshmen follow a college-preparatory curriculum.

About forty percent of the college-bound high school graduates in Louisiana are not fully prepared for college-level work. It is hoped that this figure will be reduced significantly by the fall of the year, and be further reduced as social promotion is eliminated from the elementary and secondary schools. During the interim, the colleges and universities of Louisiana will be faced with the need for comprehensive developmental education programs.

The purpose of the Developmental Education Program at Southeastern Louisiana University is to provide a program to meet the needs of students who enter the University with inadequate school preparation. One major problem facing the entering college student is a lack of basic reading skills which hampers the student's ability to follow classroom presentations, read required materials, organize and summarize content information, and interpret examination instructions and questions. Student deficiencies in the area of reading include low word recognition, poor meaning vocabulary, inadequate reading comprehension and slow rate of reading. The other pressing problem is the students' lack of confidence in a competitive classroom setting caused by low academic skills and low self-concept.

The major objectives of the Developmental Education Program are as follows:

1. Building a positive self-concept and a sense of motivation.

2. Building effective study habits to support academic progress.
3. Improving reading comprehension and reading vocabulary to college survival levels.
4. Increasing reading speeds to efficient rates for college assignments.

ACT composite scores are used for placement. All students with composite scores of fourteen or below are involved in parts or all of the program, which includes developmental English, mathematics, academic skills, and reading. One thousand out of the two thousand first semester freshmen were placed into developmental reading as a result of substandard ACT scores.

The purpose of this research was to determine self-concept levels, attitudes toward reading, and basic learning styles of developmental reading students as compared to regular entering freshmen.

The population of the study had the following makeup:

Sex: 41% female, 59% male
 Race: 72% Caucasian, 26% Black, and 2% other
 Age: 81% 17-18 years, 13% 19-20 years, 6% 21 or older

Total Enrollments of High Schools of origin:

200 or below	12%
200 to 400	21%
400 & above	67%

The Developmental Reading group was compared with a group of regular entering freshmen, using the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS). Students responded to items pertaining to perceptions of their physical self, moral-ethical self, personal self, family self, social self, self identity, self satisfaction, self behavior and self criticism. The only area in which a significant difference appeared was in the area of self criticism (Buros, 1978). This area was significant at the .01 level.

The generalizations generated from the TSCS scores are as follows:

1. Developmental students seem to be more openly critical of themselves as seen in the self criticism scores.
2. Possible reasons for non-significance of other scores:
 - a. Since the test was administered during the first week of school, all students may have been apprehensive, bringing about low self-concept scores of all students.
 - b. Students may not see the developmental program as failure since so many students are enrolled (about half of the class).
 - c. Students are realistic about their ability but feel they can compete if given an opportunity.
 - d. Many students are coming to school because they cannot get a job and success or failure is unimportant.

The Mikulecky Behavioral Reading Attitude Measure was administered to determine difference in attitudes of both groups toward reading (Smith, 1978). This scale is a twenty-item measure which describes various stages an individual passes through in developing attitudes toward reading. The measure reflects the stages of Krathwohl's Taxonomy—Attending, Responding, Valuing, Organization and Characterization. Both groups responded similarly to most items on the attitude measure. For the attending stage, both groups' responses indicated they were aware of reading and tolerant of it. The valuing stage for both groups were primarily similar except for two items of the six. It seems that neither group would have as a priority the locating of a library if they moved to a new city. Giving special books to friends or relatives is a very unlikely behavior for both groups. Even with these differences, both groups' responses indicated that they are beginning to accept the worth of reading as a value to be preferred.

Both groups had similar responses for the organization and characterization stages. Attitudes reflected that reading is a part of life that both the reader and others see as crucial.

Differences between these two groups were overtly indicated by their responses concerning the responding stage. Regular freshmen seem to be willing to read under various circumstances and they are choosing and enjoying reading. The inverse was indicated by the developmental reading group. They are not necessarily willing to read. They do not choose to read nor do they enjoy reading. Generally speaking, it seems that the developmental students intellectually realize that reading should be valued as important, but when it comes to responding to the process, the developmental reading students avoid reading.

The "Learning Style Indicator" (Lapp and Flood, 1978) was administered to both groups to determine modes and habits relating to the intake of information. This is an informal instrument that is comprised of ten paired statements to which one is to respond. The instrument helps to assess students' perceptions of their "preferred" learning style.

The major difference between the two groups on the "Learning Style Indicator" were on three of the ten paired items. First, the regular freshmen read the written part before looking at charts and diagrams whereas the developmental reading groups preferred to look at charts and diagrams before reading the written part. Second, the regular freshmen memorized things by writing them out. However, the developmental reading group memorized things by repeating them aloud. Third, the regular freshmen preferred working quickly, which the developmental reading group preferred working more slowly.

The three item Self Report Inventory (SRI) dealt with students' feelings toward being forced to enroll in developmental education and reasons for their lack of sufficient reading skills. The students' responses can be seen in the following graphs. As seen in the first table, about 30% of the students expected to be placed in developmental reading while a similar number were upset. Additionally, about 12-14% were either surprised, angry or didn't care.

Figure 1
Feelings Toward Scheduling Developmental Reading

—How did you feel when you realized you had to schedule developmental reading?

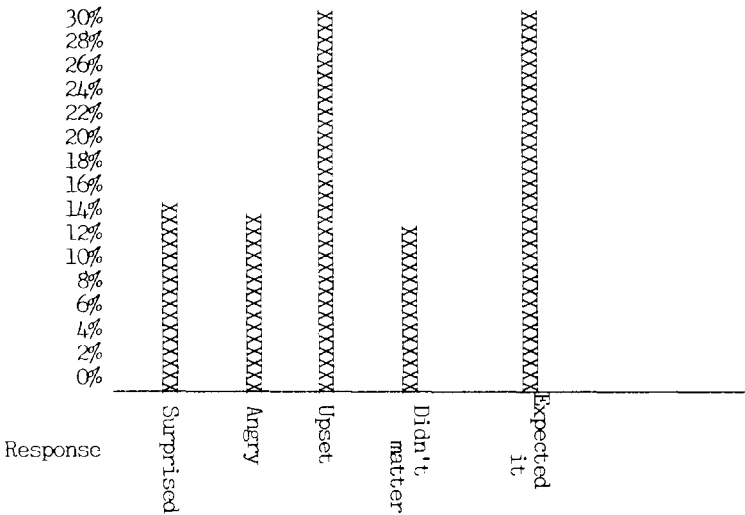


Figure 2
Feelings Toward Scoring Below Average in Reading

—How did you feel when you saw that you scored below the eleventh grade in reading?

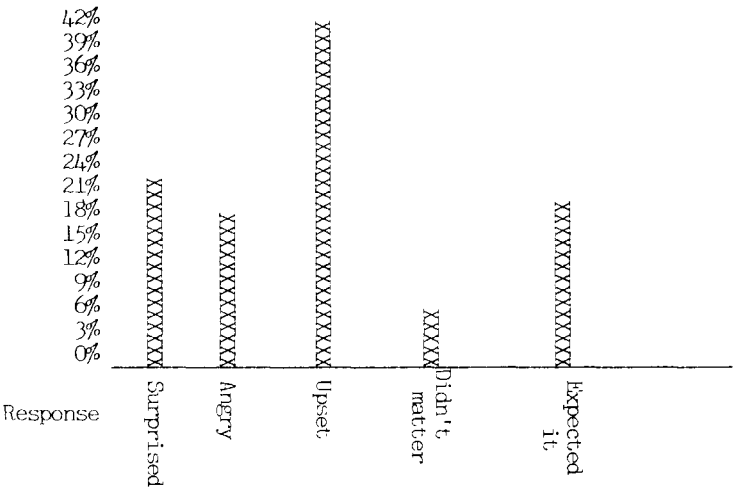
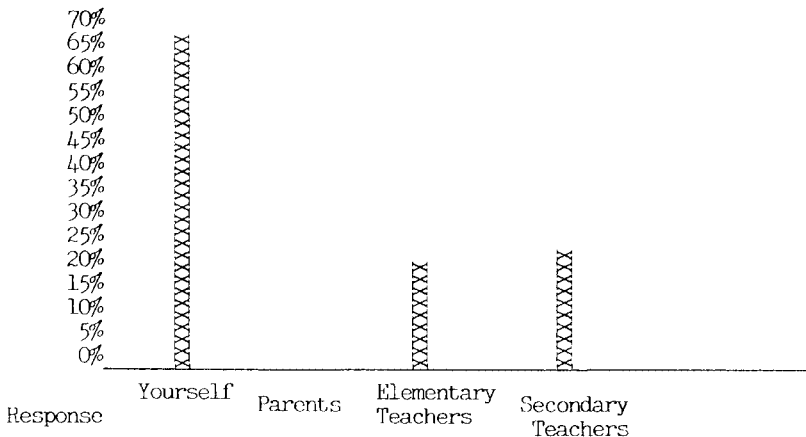


Table 2 shows the majority of the students to be upset by the fact that they had poor reading scores. Other responses ranged from 4% who didn't care to 21% who were surprised.

Figure 3
Reason for Below Average Reading Skills

—Who do you think is most responsible for your not being able to read as well as is expected?



This table indicates one of the more dramatic findings the study offered. Sixty-four percent of the developmental reading students blamed themselves for their poor reading ability while a total of thirty-six percent blamed their teachers, and none blamed their parents.

Summarizing, developmental reading students seem to have a similar self-concept level as that of regular entering freshmen. The developmental students also appear to be more openly critical of themselves.

Comparing the developmental students' attitudes toward reading to those of regular entering freshmen, the developmental students revealed a major difference primarily in one area. The responding stage responses showed that they were not willing to read and they would not select to read, nor did they particularly enjoy reading.

Learning style differences were noticed. The developmental reading students preferred memorizing things by repeating them out loud as opposed to writing them out. They also preferred to look at charts and diagrams prior to reading the written part. Generally, they preferred working slowly.

In reporting their feelings about being placed in developmental reading, a majority of the students either were upset or expected it. Many of the students were either upset or surprised when learning of their low reading scores, which may indicate

that a large number of students do not realize that they cannot read well. All students blamed either themselves or their teachers for their poor reading ability.

The major thrust of this research was to investigate some aspects of the academically unprepared entering university students. Although the research is not comprehensive, perhaps it sheds some light on the problems confronting poorly prepared students in the competitive university setting.

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READINESS FOR READING READINESS

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A child entering school is confronted with the truly immense task of learning how to read. Though more research has been done in this area of education than most others, how a child goes about acquiring the skill of reading is still basically unknown.

In an attempt to uncover the mystery, educational researchers have sought through the decades to specify prerequisite and requisite skills for learning to read. Readiness programs have followed to develop these postulated needed skills.

Readiness Prerequisite Skills

A new focus on readiness is at the forefront in reading education. Cognitive reasoning and problem solving abilities are being examined as necessary prerequisite skills to reading.

Fitts and Posner (1967) view the child's confusion about beginning reading as one caused by instruction geared one level above that necessary for children to become aware of the skills. Bruner (1971) provides a vivid account of what a beginning skill-learner must deal with:

a skilled action requires recognizing the features of a task, its goals, and means appropriate to its attainment; a means of converting this information into appropriate action, and a means of getting feedback that compares the objective sought with the state attained
(p. 112)

In other words, before children can deal with the linkage of instructional terms such as "first sound," "letter," or "word" used so frequently in readiness activities, they must have a firm understanding of these terms and the relationship between them. The beginner must discover what the skill is used for, its function, the salient aspects of the task to attend to, the technical concepts, and the jargon for talking and thinking about the skill. In an unfamiliar situation, the person must find out what to do.

Research Theories and Studies

Two theories concerned with the beginner's ability to reason about the reading process have recently been developed and reported in various research writings. The first theory, developed by psycholinguistics Kenneth Goodman (1967) and Frank Smith (1978), views meaning as a communicative function of language and a primary concern from the very beginning of reading instruction. The other

recent theory developed by John Downing (1979), the Cognitive Clarity Theory, emphasizes the chief aim of reading instruction should be a clear understanding of why people read and write (functional concepts) and how they code language in writing (featural concepts).

Research based on these two theories have discovered there may be no more important question to ask in exploring the child's concept of reading readiness than "What is reading?" (Clymer, 1968). Via interviews with young children, we see their doubts concerning the purpose and process of learning to read. Collective responses to questions defining reading as a process of deriving meaning from print are comparatively few to the many that may be categorized as a "word recognition equal reading mode" (Tovey, 1975; Johns & Ellis, 1976; Ngandu, 1977).

Investigations have also explored the child's understanding of the technical vocabulary used by the teachers during beginning reading instruction. Confusion among the terms letter, word, sentence, first word, sound, first letter, etc. and conventions of print, such as reading begins at the top of the page and is read from left to right, periods signal stop have been observed frequently in young children during reading instruction (Fox & Routh, 1975; Francis, 1973; Johns, 1977).

Related research has emphasized the beginner's lack of awareness of interword space as a cueing convention for the written word. Since beginners tend to combine letters from two adjoining words while reading (Meltzer & Herst, 1969; Weber, 1970), it appears children utilize numbers of letters to identify "words" rather than white spaces between the words (Clay, 1968), and this may be due to the lack of understanding words as printed units.

The extent to which young children are aware of how lexical units of speech are mapped onto the written word has also been a recent concern of researchers. Downing and Oliver (1974) found younger students in their study to associate spoken phrases and sentences to individual written words and to frequently consider long words to be two short printed words. Few children, even older ones, are able to recognize that isolated phonemes and syllables are not words. Children, it appears then, have even less understanding of the spoken "word" than the written "word". Perhaps, states Ehri (1976) this is because speech uses phrases and sentences rather than isolated sounds to communicate ideas.

Implications of Research Findings

Perhaps Pitts and Posner's view could be a viable one in that typically reading instruction is geared above that necessary for beginners to profit from. Prerequisite readiness training should first be an assessment of the child's ability to reason about reading tasks. The second step should be the involvement of the child in activities to foster the development of concepts about the purpose for reading, the salient aspects of the printed word, and the technical language of instruction. The third step is currently where most readiness programs begin, that is requiring children to link various readiness concepts to complete a task.

For instance, when we ask a beginning reader "What is the letter that stands for the first sound in this word, 'bed'?" What concepts must the child know to complete this task? --letter versus number, word, and sentence; first versus last, second, etc.; sound versus letter, word; word versus letter, sentence, etc. But we're asking more than an understanding of individual concepts. We are requiring the child to link all these concepts to give a correct response, i.e., boy or ball.

If misconceptions are not clarified early in the reading program discouraged beginners may develop negative attitudes and avoid future reading and writing activities.

Types of Assessments

To date several devices to measure the child's understanding of the reading purpose and process are either commercially available or have been developed experimentally in research endeavors.

Reading Purpose Measures

The Linguistic Awareness in Reading Readiness Test (Ayers, Downing, & Schaefer, 1977) is a three subtest group-administered test. The first two subtests "Recognizing Literacy Behavior" and "Understanding Literacy Behavior" measure beginning reading readiness and concepts of literacy by directing children to circle pictures (depicting reading/writing activities) in response to oral directions.

The Sand Test (Clay, 1972) is an individually administered measure determining the child's knowledge of page turning, book handling, word and picture arrangement on the page, and word and letter sequencing.

Technical Terms of Instruction

The Units of Print Test (Watson, 1979) is a test requiring children to circle upper and lower case letters, words, and sentences (which end either at the end of a line of print, before the end of a line of print, or in the middle of a second line of print) to show their knowledge of the orally-presented terms "letter", "word", and "sentence".

The Linguistic Awareness in Reading Readiness Test, Subtest C (Ayers, Downing, & Schaefer, 1977) "Technical Language of Literacy" measures the child's ability to differentiate "numbers", "letters", "words", and "sentences" by circling those terms directed by the test administrator.

Written Word Boundary Tests

The Mickish Word Boundary Task (Mickish, 1974) is a three item test; practice items, one which the teacher instructs students to draw a vertical line beside another vertical line, and one which the students are instructed to draw a similar vertical line between four circles. The test item, itself, requires the students to mark between six words printed with no spaces between them (thecatandthedogplayball) as the teacher reads the sentence several times.

Meltzer and Herse's (1969) Written Word Boundary Task is

a test to determine the extent to which students use space to define word boundaries. A written sentence "Seven cowboys in a wagon saw numerous birds downtown" is presented to students who are asked to circle every word.

Oral Word Boundaries Tests

The Mow-Motorcycle Task (Rozin, Bressman, & Taft, 1974) tests the student's awareness of the relationship between oral and printed symbols, i.e., the length of the printed word. Eight cards containing pairs of printed words beginning with the same letter are presented to students. The student is told, "One of these words is mow and the other is motorcycle. Which one is mow?" The child responds by pointing to his/her choice.

The Aural Word Boundary Task (Evans, 1975) involves four sentences read orally and students are asked to repeat each one. After each repetition the student says the sentence again and designates each word by either moving a small wooden block or tapping a series of colored circles. The task assesses the student's ability to segment oral sentences into their component words.

Instructional Strategies

Purpose for Written Language

The conceptual development of the purpose of written language as a communication process is an essential readiness factor. It cannot be assumed, as research has shown, that those children knowing letter names also know what those letters are used for. The following strategies focus on deriving meaning from the printed word:

1. Use children's own language for reading and writing instruction, stressing the relationship between oral and written language. Also daily handwriting lessons can be developed from children's own experiences rather than a teacher's guide.
2. Use a variety of reading materials in the classroom. Trade books, magazines, cereal boxes, comics, newspapers, travel brochures are materials that communicate as well as motivate. Use these materials to teach both beginning reading skills and enjoyment of reading. For instance, children working in pairs can look for words that start like "bed" from a cereal box instead of a mimeographed worksheet.
3. The saying "Nothing teaches reading better than reading itself" is never truer than when it applies to the purpose for reading. Reading to children daily and having children read to each other establishes the understanding of the true purpose for reading—communication of the written word.
4. Writing activities can also reveal the importance of deriving meaning from print. Children may select pen pals from their own classrooms or others. Throughout the school year writing is encouraged through activities related to personal interest, class announcements, etc. Writing periodically to parents is another motivational and purposeful method to foster writing and reading skills.

Salient Aspects of the Printed Word

Activities which make it necessary for children to look at, point to, and write will foster further understanding of written and oral word boundaries. Suggested activities include:

1. From time to time request children to count number of words or sentences on a worksheet or language experience chart story.
2. Teach directionality concepts within the context of reading materials. For instance, ask children to circle the first word in a sentence, the last letter in a word, or the second letter on a page.
3. Have children cut words from a sentence strip noting whether or not space cues are being used to identify words.
4. Ask children to clap or tap out words in a spoken sentence. Do this also with syllables and phonemes. Children can also mark each word, syllable, or phoneme by placing a poker chip or button on the table.

Language of Instruction

It is assumed children come to school equipped with the language for reading instruction. Many do not. The following helpful activities are for teaching the terms necessary to complete beginning reading tasks:

1. At the beginning of the school year stress terms such as word, letter, and sentence in all related activities. Say the terms clearly and be redundant. Ask for some feedback from children.
2. Play games to assess children's understanding of reading terminology. "I'm thinking of a number—" or letter— or word— may be played in the format of the guessing game "Twenty Questions".
3. Have children from time to time write their five favorite letters or words or numbers, etc.
4. Dictation during a language experience activity offers many opportunities to discuss words, letters, and sentences. Special care should also be taken to discuss conventions of print, i.e., spaces between words, words are composed of letters, use of punctuation, and the left to right progression.

Summary

Research supports the notion children are confused about concepts related to beginning reading instruction. Assessments are becoming commercially available or can easily be devised by classroom teachers adapting the formats suggested in the foregoing assessment section.

Children lacking awareness about print need to have either direct or informal instruction to clarify those beginning concepts necessary to profit from further reading instruction.

Parent education programs are another vehicle by which parents can acquire methods to develop language concepts early on in their children so that success in beginning reading instruction is more likely.

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PROMOTING LANGUAGE AND READING DEVELOPMENT FOR TWO VIETNAMESE CHILDREN

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Over the last several years, Asian refugees have appeared in school districts all over the country. Of course, many have settled in urban areas where schools have a history of bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in operation. There, the personnel and resources exist to accommodate this group. However, many Asian refugees, through church and civic organization sponsorships, have found their way into suburban and rural communities. In these settings, school personnel often have no prior experience in providing for the education of non-English speakers. Typically, there are no special resources available to meet the unusual needs of these students. Existing personnel are mobilized, in one fashion or another, to devise an educational program. A concern for promoting competence with spoken and written English often prompts the identification of reading personnel to formulate appropriate instructional programs. Such was the case in one small rural school district in central New York State. The remainder of this paper is a case report of how the reading specialist in this district organized available information on ESL and the normal progress of language development in order to identify instructional goals, assess linguistic and cultural awareness, structure a program based on this information, and to evaluate pupil growth toward attainment of the instructional goals.

Background. Little Falls, New York, is a community of 6,000 people. Farming and small manufacturing are the principal industries. The centralized school district serves 1300 pupils housed in two K-6 buildings and one 7-12 building. A reading coordinator, three reading teachers and four aides are available to deliver supportive reading services to this population. These services are provided through consultation with classroom teachers and through individual or small group instruction. In September, 1980, a Vietnamese refugee family entered the district. One child, "Tina", was a pre-schooler, aged four; "Ben", aged eight, was enrolled in the first grade class. Neither spoke any English. The parents had been educated in Vietnam, and Ben had also attended school before leaving Vietnam. He had some reading facility in Vietnamese. Ben's father spoke some English and was employed as a mechanic trainee in a local factory. Ben's mother and aunt spoke no English

(after two years, fluency in English among adult family members has changed little). Vietnamese was spoken exclusively in the home initially and continues to be the primary language in the home.

First Experiences Ben entered school in September, 1980. He was placed in a first grade class because it was expected that he might benefit from beginning reading instruction as it is typically provided in first grade groups. Ben was physically small and did not "stand out" from the age group. During that semester, Ben's educational program consisted of a typical first grade curriculum; readiness skills, language development, and beginning basal reader instruction. After about a month's time, Ben began having difficulty with the basal reader instruction in the areas of idioms, inferences, and drawing conclusions. The reading coordinator was asked by the classroom teacher to assess and develop a plan of instruction to increase Ben's comprehension of the English language and to promote academic performance commensurate with his intellect.

Staff Development Within a few weeks it became clear that teachers were interested and willing to put forth extra effort to help Ben learn English and to adjust to the school setting, but they simply did not know what to do. They were depending on intuition about what it must be like to be learning English for the first time. Unfortunately, their intuitions were rooted in their observations and understandings of how infants learn English as a first language. Their expectations of what Ben "ought to be capable of" did not always mesh with his performance. For example, since Ben was able to understand a story selection on the literal level, it was assumed that he could easily make inferences about the text because he appeared above average in intelligence. However, making such inferences often demanded more complex understanding of the language than Ben possessed. He and his teachers were often frustrated.

In an attempt to heighten teacher awareness of the special considerations to be made when teaching ESL students, the reading coordinator proposed an inservice program for the staff who were, or would be, working with Ben and his sister the following fall. The proposal was funded by the New York State Education Department under the terms of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980. The targeted objectives focused on developing the following:

1. An awareness of the cultural problems experienced by ESL students.
2. Familiarity with methods and strategies which can be utilized by the classroom teachers in their instruction of ESL students. These methods and strategies emphasized oral communication skills.
3. An understanding of the difficulties involved in learning a second language and how it influences progress in other subject areas.

Two workshop sessions of 2½ hours each were conducted by a leader within the Literacy Volunteers of America organization. Five classroom teachers presently working with the children, or anticipating working with them in the fall, attended. The topics included in the sessions were: difficulties in learning a new culture; Liter-

acy Volunteer strategies and drills for learning English; and, materials and tips for tutoring in ESL. Several activities for teacher participation were included. These activities involved "learning" an African language, and practicing the ESL drills. Teachers commented at the end of the sessions that they had not been aware of the difficulty of learning another language. They felt more confident of their abilities to help Ben and Tina, using the approaches and materials presented.

In preparing for her own work with Ben, the reading coordinator consulted with university personnel, reference texts on second language learning and with teachers of ESL classes in a near-by city. These experiences led to the development of a program that considered the role of language and language differences in effecting "the transition of refugee children into American Society". This is the stated goal of the Refugee Act of 1980.

Designing the Reading Program. The program ultimately developed was based upon the decision to focus on the language base for reading. It specifically addressed the need to understand a basic English vocabulary; to understand basic grammatical features such as tenses, plurals and possession; to understand basic sentence structures; and to use oral English communication experiences to stimulate growth in the comprehension of written English. This program was predicated on the assumption that comprehension of spoken English is a pre-requisite foundation for learning to comprehend what is read.

In September, 1981, similar but different programs were implemented for both Tina and Ben. An assessment of each child included competence in auditory comprehension of English words, word forms and phrases being the first priority. Items from the various tests given were specifically analyzed to identify the degree of agreement between reading errors and difficulties with vocabulary, syntax or morphemic elements demonstrated on the language test.

Reading, or pre-reading, instruction for each child was provided by a team composed of the classroom teacher and reading coordinator. Results of the initial assessment were interpreted, and from this the focus of the daily sessions with the reading coordinator was established. Classroom instruction followed a normal developmental sequence for each child; teachers used materials recommended by the reading coordinator. Regular opportunities for conferences with the reading coordinator were scheduled to discuss specific problems regarding vocabulary, concept development and pacing.

Specifics of Evaluation and Instruction

Tina had attended a community nursery school before entering kindergarten in September of 1981. Tina demonstrated some ability to communicate in English. Her performance on the Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language (TACL), a test that requires the student to point to a picture relating to the words or sentence spoken, indicated below age level comprehension of verb tenses, prepositions, suffixes, noun-verb agreement, and adjectives of quality and quantity.

Tina's responses to the Test of Basic Concepts (TOBC) which involves marking an "X" on the picture corresponding to a descriptive statement by the examiner, showed below age level performance in words denoting concepts considered basic to readiness including spatial relationships (below, next, to); quantity (half, few); and order (third, middle).

Tina's reading room and classroom activities were developed to focus on the language comprehension areas above. Following is a description of the specific materials used to promote each area (complete bibliography will be found in REFERENCES section). To build her speaking vocabulary and sentence formation, the booklets People and What They Do and Places and Things as well as The Transcultural Picture Word List were used. The Media Materials booklets provided pictures with vocabulary words beneath as well as suggestion for the teacher on how to develop the concepts related to the words. The Transcultural Picture Word List provided additional picture word combinations. Recognition of spatial relationships signaled by words was promoted through Positional Boxes. Oral reading of specific library books dealing with readiness concepts such as Berenstain's Inside Outside Upside Down and He Bear, She Bear were used for additional concept development. Listening to the library books being read also served as a model in sentence structure, flow of the language, and grammatical development. Instructional games such as DIM's Building Match-Ups and Scholastic's It Belongs Here were used to promote oral discussion and use of newly acquired vocabulary while teaching a readiness skill. Classroom activities included the Getting Ready to Read book, pre-writing exercises (letter formation, etc.) and eye-hand coordination tasks (painting, paper cutting, etc.). Some language experience stories were also developed and recorded to promote awareness of the link between the spoken and written language.

Since Ben was both older and had developed quite adequate decoding skills the previous year, the testing and instruction planned for him were different in some respects. The tests given included, in addition to TOBC and TACL, English As a Second Language Oral Assessment (ESLOA), Grammatic Closure Subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA), and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test Green Level. The ESLOA, dealing with speaking and understanding critical vocabulary of our culture, indicated weaknesses in calendar terms, monetary notation, and labeling of clothing, service buildings (i.e., post office, hospital) and body parts. Difficulties in the understanding of verb tenses, noun-verb agreement, suffixes, adverbs, adjectives, irregular plurals and superlatives, as well as vocabulary (i.e., whole, equal) were indicated by the TACL, TOBC and the Grammatic Closure subtest. The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test showed that his understanding of orally presented vocabulary was below age level. Difficulty in inferential and interpretive reading were also noted.

Instructionally, weaknesses in these vocabulary and comprehension areas were addressed through various materials in the reading room. In addition to the materials used with Tina for vocabulary development, Ben's instructional materials included

the Picto-Vocabulary Series - Basic Word Sets and Vocabulary Cards that utilize a picture-word format and also have written exercises requiring use of the vocabulary. Educational Password with its high frequency basic elementary vocabulary was used to help distinguish among the labels for relationships being taught. Sentence structure awareness was developed in both the oral and written settings using Developmental Learning Materials' Bike Hike Game, Concepts for Communication (Unit 3), and Backpack Game. The two games develop sentence sense by asking the players to add or delete words from a kernel sentence or to combine sentences while the concepts for the Communication Kit requires oral exchanges with the opponent. The kit focuses on use of descriptive language and following directions. The Peabody Language Development Kit served to structure the objectives for oral language development as did The Magic of English series. These two materials are comprehensive oral language development programs, the latter was specifically designed for ESL students while the former has various visuals (pictures and posters) to stimulate oral expression. Another area of concern, inferential or interpretive comprehension, was addressed using the Croft Reading Comprehension Skillpacks, a traditional skill development program with practice exercises. To reinforce the skills presented in the Croft Program, Increasing Comprehension and Reading for Understanding (Junior) were used.

Classroom reading instruction for Ben involved the Laidlaw Basal Reading Series. This series was chosen over another series used in the district because it had a manageable (for Ben) vocabulary load per story as well as emphasis on comprehension. The classroom teachers informed the reading coordinator of any concepts or vocabulary which required further development for each of the basal stories as Ben proceeded through them. Homonyms and multiple meanings are examples of words that required further instruction to promote comprehension of some stories. In March of his second school year in the district Ben was moved into a third grade classroom. The move was made at the request of the family's sponsor who was concerned about the gap between Ben's age interests and his grade placement. Ben's school progress to date suggested that he could succeed in the third grade math program with moderate supplementary work in essential concepts. His reading program remained essentially unchanged.

At the end of the school year post testing, using several of the instruments administered in the fall, was conducted. In addition, each child took the school administered California Achievement Test with his/her class. Table I shows both the pre and post test scores earned on the assessment instruments as well as May performance on the California Achievement Test. It is clear that both children grew in their comprehension of the English language. Both demonstrated reading achievement that is at least on a par with average and above achievers in their classes. However, comprehension of spoken English still lags behind that of most of their classmates. Support in their continuing growth toward proficiency in English will be necessary.

Table I
Fall and Spring Test Results

		Pretest. (Sept., 1981)	Post. Test (June, 1982)
Tina	<u>Test of Basic Concepts</u> (Boehm, 1969)	<u>Correct/Possible</u> 16 / 50 (Beginning K Norms Mid SES Group)	<u>Correct/Possible</u> 31 / 50 (Midyear K Norms Mid SES Group)
Ben	<u>Test of Basic Concepts</u>	<u>Correct/Possible</u> 40 / 50 3rd. %ile (Beginning Grade 2 Norms Mid SES Group)	<u>Correct/Possible</u> 46 / 50 35th %ile (Midyear Grade 2 Norms Mid SES Gr.)
Ben	<u>English As a Second Language Oral Assess- ment</u> (Literacy Vol.) Level 11	<u>Correct/Possible</u> 14 / 29	<u>Correct/Possible</u> 25 / 29
Ben	<u>Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test</u> (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976)	<u>Gr. Equiv./%ile</u> (3rd Grade Norms)	<u>Gr. Eq./%ile</u> (3rd. Grade Norms)
	Auditory Vocabulary	2.8 14%	3.1 24%
	Literal Comprehension	2.1 29%	3.2 52%
	Inferential Comprehension	1.6 21%	4.5 73%
	Comprehension Total	3.0 26%	4.0 64%
School District Testing (California Achievement Test) 1977, Form C - May, 1982			
Tina	(End of K norms)	<u>Reading</u> 85%ile	<u>Math</u> 10%ile
Ben	(End of 3rd grade norms)	56%ile	96%ile

The foregoing description of the language-reading program implemented for Tina and Ben illustrates a direct approach to both assessment and instruction that focuses on the critical aspects of the bridge between oral language and reading. Published tests used to establish the readiness of native English speakers were found to be useful in providing insights into the readiness of these foreign language speakers as well. Opportunities to learn common vocabulary terms and grammatical structures were consistently provided, directly and incidentally. Apparent difficulties in

reading achievement were routinely considered as a possible reflection of difficulties in comprehending English. Teachers who had not previously worked with foreign students joined together to understand the complexity of learning a second language and then established a cooperative relationship with each other to deliver instruction. Their jointly planned and systematically coordinated teaching was not viewed as burdensome by any member of the staff. This coordinated program of instruction was effective—the students did progress. Finally Tina and Ben, like most other children, were eager to become "one of the group". This language-reading program build upon the view of oral language competence as a bridge to reading competence. In so doing, the program supported Ben and Tina in their efforts to be assimilated into their peer groups. Thus they liked school, felt comfortable there and participated willingly in their instructional experiences.

Throughout the year described in this paper, Tina and Ben were highly motivated to succeed academically. They eagerly came to the Reading Room for their special sessions with the Reading teacher. It seemed that each actually looked for opportunities to apply new learning as soon as possible. However, Ben was more sensitive to "not knowing". It became apparent that when he found his English vocabulary deficient or inadequate to communicate effectively in a given situation, Ben would simply smile and say "I don't understand." This served to conceal his specific lack. Ben would not engage others to help in extending his knowledge base. This suggested to us a pervasive timidity and insecurity in the oral communication setting. But Ben's insecurity was even more all-enveloping than we had realized. Toward the end of the year Ben refused to speak Vietnamese in public. He viewed his different language background as a barrier to acceptance by the peer group and tried to eliminate that difference when he was at school. Tina, to the contrary, found that her ability to speak a "strange" language was a social plus. She was the envy of her peer group and happily shared her linguistic talents with others.

The two children responded well to the language based reading program that had been developed for them but they were different personalities, coping with the pressures of academic achievement and social acceptance at different times in their respective lives. Each was responding somewhat differently to their achievements and to the pressures. A newly trained and sensitized staff of teachers will be available to support Ben and Tina through the maturing process they will experience over the remainder of their elementary school years.

We hope that this shared experience involving two Vietnamese children in an otherwise English speaking school will provide some inspiration and possible guidance to others who find themselves in similar situations.

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SSR, ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION

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Sustained silent reading (SSR) is a school reading activity which consists of a period of time during the school day when children and teachers in a class or in the entire school read self-selected books without interruption for purposes of enjoyment. This activity has been a popular adjunct to many reading instruction programs for more than a decade.

The rationale for SSR is that it will promote reading growth through allowing students to have sustained encounters with self-selected reading material without interruption in the presence of positive peer and teacher role models. Students develop reading skill through application and practice; they develop interests and taste through personal motivation and the free pursuit of individual concerns without the constraints of reporting or testing. Also, the avoidance of feelings of failure and stigmatization often engendered by oral reading difficulties exhibited in reading groups helps to promote attitude improvement as well.

Recently, SSR has amassed a research base which strongly suggests that it is of significant value in promoting reading achievement when combined with a regular program of reading instruction and that it has a positive effect on student reading attitudes and habits (Moore, Jones & Miller, 1980; Sadoski, 1980). SSR may also be a reading activity that has more points of contact with successful educational outcomes in reading than perhaps any other single reading activity.

Accountability and Successful Reading Programs

The demand for educational accountability has been acutely felt in the area of reading instruction. Accountability has been linked with measurable or at least observable results, usually in the form of test results. Despite widespread concerns regarding reading tests, particularly criterion-referenced tests (Schell, 1981), the prevailing attitude of accountability is that effectiveness in reading instruction can be claimed only to the extent to which it produces specific, measured evidence of reading competencies in learners. While this position has emphasized the aspects of reading achievement most amenable to testing, applications that are less direct, but equally important, should be made to promote the less tangible behaviors sought as a result of humanistic education (Strain, 1976).

The objectives of a sound reading program have been expressed by many authorities in many ways, but perhaps most succinctly by Harris (1970) who contends that the goals of an elementary reading program can be grouped into three categories: 1) creating favorable attitudes toward reading, 2) developing fundamental reading skills, and 3) building personal reading taste and interests.

In analyzing successful and widely adopted reading programs, Jackson (1978) has determined that exemplary reading programs have certain characteristics in common. Several of these key characteristics, associated with effectiveness in reading instruction, according to Jackson are: attention to individualized instruction, a literature/reading enjoyment component as part of the program, and ample daily time spent in teaching reading. Jackson also suggests that it may be important to emphasize program elements in the affective domain, although measures in these areas are imprecise and will not translate into cognitive gains.

There is reasonable evidence both from theory and from the analysis of successful application, that sound, successful reading programs provide for both the cognitive and affective development of readers. Accountability should and must address both concerns.

Teacher Effectiveness in Reading

Rosenshine (1979) has concluded from a review of the literature of student-centered basic skills teaching effectiveness that two major variables are related to gains in student reading achievement as measured by standardized tests: 1) content covered, and 2) academically engaged minutes. Content covered deals with "opportunity to learn," or the extent to which instruction is directly related to learnings to be assessed and to outcomes that are desired. Academically engaged minutes deals with the amount and degree of student attention allocated to academic tasks. Rosenshine suggests that this evidence argues for a model of direct instruction, wherein the focus is strongly academic and teacher-controlled. Such programs appear to be related to increased cognitive gains in reading.

Peterson (1979), however, determines from a similar review of literature that while students exposed to direct instruction methods tend to do better on achievement tests, students exposed to open teaching methods tend to exhibit better affective learning outcomes, such as more independence and improved attitude, problem solving and creativity. The open teaching model is characterized by increased student locus of control, wealth of learning materials, integration of curriculum areas, and more individual instruction than large group instruction.

Concluding that because these differing teaching models tend to produce different desirable learning outcomes, Peterson says educators should provide opportunities for students to be exposed to both approaches, and cites evidence to suggest that the public supports a wide variety of social and humanistic goals in education that encompass both cognitive and affective learning outcomes. Brophy (1979) similarly concludes that since the instructional situations associated with cognitive outcomes are different and

apparently somewhat contradictory to those associated with affective outcomes, trade-offs are in order.

The Place of SSR

SSR is not a reading instruction activity, *per se*. It is a supplementary activity that enhances reading instruction. However, this does not mean that SSR should be thought of as a frill. Students need ample time to apply the principles learned from reading instruction to actual reading situations in order to assimilate and transfer what they have learned in their lessons, and to internalize and integrate reading abilities in their own cognitive ways. Developmental learning theory holds that students need to build independence and mastery at a given level before going on to the next one, and educators agree that supplementary reading is an important aspect of learning to be a reader. Typically, however, time constraints and the pressures of testing give short shrift to this aspect. All too frequently both the "real-book" practice and interest components of reading instruction receive reduced or even insignificant attention.

There is an element of uniqueness about SSR in that it is one of the few reading activities that appears to bridge the gap between the learning outcomes associated with cognitive reading achievement and affective reading achievement. Numerous studies indicate that when combined with a regular program of reading instruction, SSR produces cognitive achievement gains in reading equal to or greater than other supplementary approaches or no supplementary approach (Oliver, 1973, and 1976; Evans and Towner, 1975; Reed, 1977; Lawson, 1968; Pfau, 1966; Vacca, 1980; Cline and Kretke, 1980; Minton, 1980). Many studies also indicate that SSR has a positive effect on student attitude toward reading (Pfau, 1966; Lawson, 1968; Wilnot, 1975; Langford, 1978; Sadoski, 1980; Cline and Kretke, 1981). SSR also appears to address many of the theoretical and applied ideals of complete and successful reading programs as summarized by Harris (1970) and Jackson (1978).

This series of contacts seems to define SSR as an activity which addresses the concerns of accountability in reading education as do few other activities: SSR is mutually effective in providing growth in both cognitive and affective areas of reading. It is also an activity in which trade-offs and compromises are unnecessary because it simultaneously addresses different learning outcomes that are usually achieved through contrary approaches. This characteristic lends an element of economy to SSR: gains in several different objectives may be realized from a single investment of time.

This series of contacts seems to define SSR as an activity which addresses the concerns of accountability in reading education as do few other activities: SSR is mutually effective in providing growth in both cognitive and affective areas of reading. It is also an activity in which trade-offs and compromises are unnecessary because it addresses different learning outcomes simultaneously, outcomes usually achieved through contrary approaches. Thus several different objectives may be realized from a single investment of time.

Limitations and Strengths of SSR

No reading activity always works, and some problems have been reported with SSR programs. They may not always be workable on a school-wide basis (Blake, 1979; Minton, 1980). Problems can emerge when there is a lack of attractive reading material or poor role modeling by teachers (McCracken and McCracken, 1978). Wilmot (1975) suggests that there may be an optimum balance between reading instruction and SSR, beyond which more SSR becomes counter-productive. Blake (1979) and Gambrell (1978) have suggested ways to keep SSR going, and good judgment regarding when to use more or less SSR appears to be critical to the success of the programs.

Distinct strengths are also exhibited. SSR has great intuitive appeal, and initial enthusiasm for these programs is usually very high. The reported engagement level during SSR for the great majority of students is uniformly high, suggesting a high number of academically engaged minutes and extensive opportunity to learn, apply strategies and skills, and develop taste and interests. Although definitive longitudinal research on SSR is yet to be done, the available research suggests its usefulness in achieving accountability for student reading growth in its broadest and most appropriate sense.

When its guidelines are met, SSR seems to unite selected positive aspects of both direct and open instruction models into one effective activity. SSR provides for the essential reality testing, practice, and application aspects of reading instruction in materials that are appropriate to individual interests and ability levels. SSR seems to unify much that is requisite for effective reading instruction into a single investment of time and is therefore deserving of prominent consideration from those reading specialists, classroom teachers, and administrators responsible for accountability and effective reading instruction.

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WRITING FOR READING

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For some time concern about the writing ability of students has matched the attention given to their reading development. Teachers of all subjects are urged to require their students to write more, and suggestions for helping students improve their writing abound. At the same time we see additional justification for stressing writing; improvement in writing might well lead to improvement in reading.

Why might this be so? Reading and writing draw upon the same bases--language, experiences, and similar processes. Both deal with meaning--in one case obtaining meaning and in the other producing meaning. The nature of thinking required for both causes learners to behave in ways that perhaps are not very different. They use similar strategies to understand what others write and to write in ways that others understand them. Moreover, it is reinforcement of appropriate responses through different but inter-related pathways that could be the more powerful contributor to improved performance in both reading and writing.

The results of research that sought to assess the relationship between and among the language arts offer some support for this rationale (Loban 1976; Hammill 1980; Stotsky 1983). The results of a more limited number of investigations seem to suggest that writing instruction which attends to idea relationships can have a positive influence on reading development (Stotsky 1983). We should note, however, that much more research is needed to determine the effects of specific writing activities on reading progress.

In the meantime, we believe it isn't realistic to wait until the evidence is in before acting. At the very least, the instruction in writing students receive could have a good effect upon the quality of their writing. At the very best, students would improve their comprehension of materials they read as well as become better writers.

WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR IMPROVING READING

To read with and for meaning requires students to be aware of and sense relationships. It would appear that writing which focuses attention upon ideas and information and their relatedness could have a beneficial influence upon the quality of their reading.

While other kinds of writing might make a difference too, we will limit suggestions to those that call attention to the former.

Reading to Writing to Reading

In our judgment, one of the productive ways of improving reading comprehension through writing is to teach students to base their writing on what they learn to improve their reading comprehension. The latter depends in great measure on students' ability to overcome problems associated with literal and inferential meanings. Thus, as we help students deal with these, we also have them apply what they are learning toward writing skills.

Let us assume we are helping students to become aware of the ways in which writers organize information so that they might understand and remember more of it. Together we analyze appropriate passages they are reading to determine how the information they contain is related. We decide, for example, that for a passage which discusses how fog and clouds are formed, the author uses a pattern of cause and effect to explain the process. After recognizing the same pattern of organization in other passages (with and without words that signal the nature of organization) and identifying cause(s) and the effect(s), students then try their hand at writing about a topic they know, using the same pattern to establish relationships among the statements. They first might write passages containing signal words and later write others without them. Their efforts could be assessed by their peers and suggested changes made if needed. And then this writing would be followed by more reading.

Similar treatments of reading and writing can be followed for other organizational forms and aspects of comprehension. Reading for main ideas both stated and implied, recognizing essential and irrelevant ideas, understanding anaphoric relationships, noting conclusions and generalizations, using context clues for ascertaining word meanings, etc., all may be influenced by the writing we have students do. Some kinds of passages will be more difficult for students to write than others. But with some reading competence and help from teachers and peers, students' writing efforts should improve. If difficulties in writing persist, perhaps more time spent on reading will be reflected in the writing they do.

Sentence Combining

Another writing activity that seems to promote better reading is sentence combining. When students are faced with the task of including in a sentence ideas contained in a group of sentences, they have to determine in what way the ideas might be related. Once the relationship has been determined, they combine them into a single statement.

Following are groups of sentences, each of whose ideas can be included in one sentence. Time order, contrast, and cause and effect, respectively, tie together the ideas they contain.

- 1) Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall.
- 2) Their leaves turn color before dropping.

- 3) Some sections of many European cities are quite modern in appearance.
- 4) Other sections of these cities remind us of medieval times.
- 5) In the Spring the lowlands were plagued by floods.
- 6) Melting snows and ice raised the water level in rivers to overflowing.

Sentences that reflect these and other relationships could be treated. Opportunities to discuss how their ideas are related and alternate ways of combining them while stressing these relationships would be helpful before asking students to write sentences on their own.

Sentence and Paragraph Completion

A writing activity that requires attention to relationships is sentence and passage completion. In the former, students complete sentences from which words have been omitted; in the latter, they provide one or more sentences that have been deleted. A passage such as the following could be used for both exercises. The deleted parts are indicated by parentheses.

Athletes and Extra Minerals *

Some doctors think athletes need more potassium and magnesium than do less active people. Both minerals are used when muscles contract. Both are lost through sweat. Bananas and oranges are rich in potassium, and dark bread, nuts, and green leafy vegetables are (good sources) of magnesium. If an athlete doesn't get enough of these two minerals, he or she will feel weak and tired.

Athletes need more calories. If they get those extra calories by eating more fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains, they will have plenty of minerals. If the athlete isn't smart, he or she may just eat junk food to get extra calories. That athlete won't get the needed minerals that way. (His or her performance during training and at athletic meets may suffer.)

Discussion about the appropriateness of words and statements students supply and their explanations for selecting them will reveal how they establish connections between ideas both stated and inferred.

An alternate procedure could be one in which teachers offer choices for missing words and sentences. After defending their selections, students also might supply others to complete the passage.

Prereading and Postreading Writing

To survey content for general impressions before close reading is one practice that could lead to increased comprehension. A

* Adapted from William and Barbara Franz, Nutritional Survival Manual for the 80s. New York: Julian Messner, 1981, p. 95.

writing exercise that supports such surveys is one in which students develop paragraphs based on the headings and subheadings of a chapter. Not only does such writing require them to speculate about the nature of the information they are to study, but also stimulates them to think about what they already know about the topics.

Students would write as much as they know about the topics, and discuss what they have written. They could verify, add to, and revise what they wrote and compare the way they organized their ideas with how the author expressed them. Their reading could generate additional ideas for which they would write passages to highlight main ideas, conclusions, comparisons and contrasts, cause and effect, time order/sequence, enumeration, etc.

A variety of writing activities which have some support from the results of research include paraphrasing, summarizing, and outlining. Each requires learners to categorize ideas into logical blocks that could help them clarify their thinking. The act of writing forces the "nailing down" of fuzzy ideas, a condition not infrequently absent when we react orally to printed prose.

Other Writing Activities

The rearranging and writing of out-of-order words, phrases and clauses into meaningful idea units is an activity that might facilitate understanding of sentence structure and contribute to comprehension. In addition, there is some evidence that poor comprehenders are not good "chunkers," that is, they do not tend to process words as meaningful units but deal with them individually. In order to rearrange and link misplaced parts of sentences into meaningful wholes, they must use their knowledge of how language works to make sense of them. Practice in writing sentences that give order to misplaced parts helps to make students aware of what they already know. Teachers can call attention to this knowledge when students fail to understand what they read.

Sentence rearrangement might lead to greater chunking. One could select passages from materials students were reading and reorder the sequence of their sentences. Students would rewrite the passages, explain how they decided what the sequence of sentences should be, and match their passages with those the teacher used for study. It is possible alternate reordering of some of the sentences (for example, if the passage contained a stated main idea) wouldn't change the meaning.

IN SUMMARY

There is sufficient reason on both theoretical grounds and the results of research and demonstration to encourage and include writing as one aspect of a program for reading development. Secondary effects on the writing ability of students are real possibilities, the need for which has led to the institution of programs of "writing across the curriculum." Writing for either purpose might benefit both.

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USING A MODIFIED SMOG IN PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE GRADES

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Educators are constantly looking for a simple technique to determine the estimated readability level of a text. The most popular readability technique today is the Fry Graph (1977). McLaughlin (1969), however, developed a technique for establishing a readability score, entitled the SMOG, that is really simpler and quicker than Fry's. Nevertheless, when studies have compared the estimated Fry readability score and the estimated SMOG readability score, it has been discovered that the SMOG score is consistently higher than the Fry score. The assumption made by many educators was that McLaughlin's SMOG score was incorrect. This is not necessarily the case. Fry's readability score is based on 70% comprehension, while the SMOG Grade is based on full comprehension. We should expect the scores to be different. Even if readability formulas were based on the same comprehension percentage, they would not likely yield the same readability score consistently because the factors used in determining the readability scores vary. For instance, Fry uses average number of syllables and average number of sentences in three one-hundred-word samples. Other formulas use word lists, average sentence length, and number of words not on word lists, plus a constant. Readability scores are very likely to vary.

Since educators tend not to use the SMOG Grade because of its variant scores from the Fry Graph, and since the SMOG is so easy and requires no word lists or charts, the author decided to attempt a modification of the SMOG so that it might correlate more closely with the Fry Graph.

McLaughlin (1969) describes the technique for determining the SMOG Grade as follows:

- A. Count 10 consecutive sentences near the beginning of a text, 10 in the middle, and 10 near the end.
- B. Count every word in the 30 sentences having three or more syllables.
- C. Estimate the square root of the number of polysyllabic words counted.
- D. Add 3 to the approximate square root.

It has been the author's procedure in undergraduate reading classes to teach McLaughlin's SMOG but to modify it by changing the constant from 3 to 1. One reason for doing this is that McLaughlin stated that "comparisons show that SMOG Grades are generally two grades higher than the corrected Dale-Chall levels..." (p. 645). After attempting this modification with many books, the author observed that adding 1 to the square root of the number of polysyllabic words produced a readability score similar to that which was determined from the Fry Graph and the Dale-Chall Formula at the upper grade levels. However, many of the modified SMOG Grades were slightly different from the Spache Revised Formula (1974) and the Fry Graph at the primary levels. Observing this pattern, the author decided to carefully examine the SMOG procedure, anticipating modifications that could be made in order to correlate it more closely with other readability formulas at the primary levels.

The Rand McNally Reading Program, (1978), Ginn 720 Reading Program (1976), and Allyn and Bacon's Pathfinder Reading Program (1978) were the texts examined. The readability formulas used for the comparison of primary grade materials were the Spache Revised Readability Formula (1974), and the Fry Graph (1977). For intermediate grades, the Dale-Chall Readability Formula (1948) and the Fry Graph (1977) were used.

It was discovered that two modifications were necessary to make the SMOG Grade useful for primary reading materials. First, McLaughlin recommended that all repetitions of a polysyllabic word be counted. While this procedure is necessary for McLaughlin's original procedure, in the modification, one should count a polysyllabic word only once, no matter how many times it is repeated in the thirty sentences. For example, in the pre-primer, *C. A. Zoo and the Kangaroo*, published by Rand McNally (1978), the word "kangaroo" appeared 52 times in the book and 13 times in the sample. It was the only polysyllabic word in the book. To count the word more than once would have inflated the readability score to an unrealistic level.

The second modification was to eliminate the constant. That is, the estimated readability level of primary grade material is simply the estimated square root of the number of polysyllabic words in the sample. As can be seen in Figure 1, the adapted SMOG Grade compares rather closely with estimated levels from the Spache Revised Formula and the Fry Graph.

Figure 1

Comparison of the Modified SMOG
with the Spache Revised Formula,
the Dale-Chall Readability Formula,
and the Fry Graph

	Agree	1 year difference	2 year difference	3 year difference
Fry	30	8	0	0
Spache Revised	16	6	0	1
Dale-Chall	9	5	1	0

When the obtained square root is 4 or more, a constant of one must be added. That is to say, there is a difference in constants for determining the estimated difficulty level of primary and intermediate grade materials.

In summary, to modify the SMOG to compare more favorably with other readability techniques:

- 1) Count 10 consecutive sentences near the beginning of the text, 10 in the middle, and 10 near the end.
- 2) Count the words of 3 or more syllables in the 30 sentences. (If a polysyllabic word is repeated in the 30 sentences, count it only one time.)
- 3) Round to the nearest perfect square of the number of polysyllabic words counted, i.e., 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36...
- 4) Determine the square root of that nearest perfect square.
- 5) If the obtained square root is 3 or less, the modified SMOG Grade will be simply the square root of the polysyllabic words. When the square root is 4 or more, add a constant of 1 to the square root for the modified SMOG Grade. (When one adds nothing to the square root of 3, and adds a constant of 1 to the square root of 4, it is not possible to determine 4th grade material. The author compared fourth grade material with third and fifth grade material and concluded that fourth grade material more closely resembles third grade material than fifth grade material.)

For those people who have difficulty with squares and square roots, Figure 2 will be helpful. All one has to do is count the 30 sentences and the number of polysyllabic words in those sentences (excluding repetitions). In column A, locate the figures between which your polysyllabic word count falls. Then, directly across in column B, your estimated readability level will be given.

Figure 2

Table for Determining Modified SMOG Reading Grade Level

If the number of polysyllabic words is between (A) , then the readability level will be (B) , grade.

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
0 - 2	1
3 - 6	2
7 - 12	3 or 4
13 - 20	5
21 - 30	6
31 - 42	7
43 - 56	8
57 - 72	9
73 - 90	10
91 - 110	11
111 - 132	12
133 - 156	13

While this modification is not a cure-all for estimating readability levels, it works as well as other readability techniques. When one learns the procedure well, estimating level of difficulty of a text can be done even more rapidly than by using the Fry Graph.

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READ FIRST, TEST LATER: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE 'OVERSKILLED' READER

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Is there really a problem with overskilled readers in our schools? Yes, but not necessarily with the kind of skill that suggests proficiency in reading. Instead, there is a problem when students are routinely subjected to a myriad of isolated, ordered skills all in the name of reading instruction. Workbooks and ditto sheets are common purveyors of "overskill." But the real culprit is an over-reliance on basal assessment tests for progress and placement; particularly those which sacrifice comprehension in favor of decoding, structural analysis and reference skills to name a few. What actually occurs in the classroom to perpetuate "overskill?"

A Typical Classroom Scenario

At the start of the school year and usually in the first grade, students are assessed with the commercially prepared basal inventory to determine their starting level in the series. Often this test is administered individually and consists of a word list, a series of paragraphs and a list of questions. In some instances, first grade students are automatically placed in the first grade basal without benefit of prior assessment. Once placed in a basal, the students encounter unit lessons which typically involve the following steps: (1) reading and discussion, (2) skills instruction, and (3) skills assessment.

Each basal reader is divided into sections (usually three or four) and at the end of each section is a review test designed to assess mastery of all the skills taught therein. It is conceivable that a teacher who relies rigidly on the guidebook will also pre-and post-test each individual skill that falls between these sections or unit tests. Thus, if a student does not pass these tests, the teacher can provide additional practice on the skills missed, and then retest to determine if mastery was achieved. If a student passes the unit test, she/he can move up to the next section.

An understanding of these skills, it must be noted, has no direct bearing on the students' ability to read and comprehend the basal literature selections. Although it would seem logical that students would receive instruction in these skills and would be asked to directly apply them in the context of the stories, this is often not the case. Instead, the skills portion of the basal and the literature portion of the basal function largely as dichotomous entities bound in a single teaching manual.

And so it goes, throughout each successive basal--reading and skills practice followed by intermittent skills assessment. Basal placement and progress, then, is determined by how accurately and rapidly a student can master certain skills, not by how well he can read--in the true sense of the word.

Observe what occurs when individual students are placed within this framework. Take the case of Roger, who is in the fifth grade and has an IQ of 111 and a total reading percentile of 74--neither of which is a particularly eye-catching score. He was assessed in the first grade with the basal reading inventory which, at that time, placed him in the grade level basal. Since then he has proceeded along book by book with the others in his group, reading all the stories, completing every practice page in each accompanying workbook and passing every unit test. When he reached the fifth grade his teacher administered a teacher-made inventory to the class and found that Roger could read and comprehend with 90% accuracy material two levels above his current placement. Yet, a number of questions remained in the teacher's mind: "If I move him up the two levels, what basal reader will his sixth grade teacher use? and more importantly, what about all the skills instruction he will miss?"

A similar situation has occurred when Lisa, a new second grade student, arrived at mid-year from a neighboring state. The reading card in Lisa's cumulative folder indicated that she had been placed in the second book of ABC Basal Reading Series--a different series from the one used in the new school system. Seeing her placement level stated on the reading card, the second grade teacher administered the unit skills test and found that Lisa was deficient in certain skills such as recognizing diphthongs, variants, and syllabication. Consequently, she was placed in the second basal reader to ensure that she "catch up" on her basic skills before moving on. Lisa's parents, concerned over her seemingly slow progress, enlist the aid of a reading specialist who determines that Lisa's reading instructional level is third grade.

Both Roger and Lisa have much in common in this situation. Both are entrapped by their initial basal placement such that any reading gains made through the years go virtually unnoticed.

In Lisa's case, the skills test revealed many so-called deficiencies. However, given that she had started in a different basal with a different scope and sequence, she may not have been taught those particular skills as yet. Indeed, given her reading ability, it is evident that she hardly needs those skills to read and comprehend successfully in the first place.

Yet Roger and Lisa represent a number of "overskilled" readers who should probably fly to their next destination rather than take a train which stops intermittently along the way. Such is the plight of readers who are "tracked" through a series of skills whether they need them or not. In fact, the very issue of the existence of reading subskills remains a controversial topic in the literature.

Do Reading Subskills Really Exist?

The nature and complexity of the scope and sequence charts

which accompany many commercial reading series would seem to suggest that an actual hierarchy of reading skills does indeed exist. Yet no reading programs to date have provided sound empirical evidence to validate either the specific skills advocated or the sequence of their instruction (Stennett, Smythe & Hardy, 1975).

Rosenshine (1980) addressed a similar issue by exploring the data from various sources including factor analytic studies, elementary textbooks, authoritative lists of comprehension skills and commercially prepared reading series. His investigations failed to find support for the existence of either distinct reading skills or a hierarchy of reading skills.

A study by McNeill (1974) suggested that proficient readers may have acquired certain subskills after or during the process of learning to read rather than as a prerequisite to reading. Consequently, the question whether specific subskills are a cause or an effect of a high level reading skill remains unanswered.

Farr (1969) reviewed studies involving the measurement of reading subskills and found more negative than positive evidence to support current measures of reading subskills. Still, standardized tests and commercially developed informal assessment tests typically divide reading into a number of separate subskill areas. Farr commented that "in every instance this division is arbitrary since there is almost no research evidence supporting it" (p.33). He further states that "no one seems to know whether subskills of reading can be measured" (p. 71).

Downing (1982) views reading as a skill, the major feature of which is the integration of those complex behaviors which comprise the total pattern. Integration, he maintains, involves practice, and practice means performing the whole skill rather than simply rehearsing its parts. Or more precisely stated, "one learns to fish by fishing, one learns to play chess by playing chess, and one learns to read by reading" (p. 537).

A recent article by Bussis (1982) outlines several ingredients which combine to make an "incongruous" reading program. Among these ingredients are 1) children who can read books but cannot correctly answer skills test items, and 2) teaching/testing programs that focus solely on skills. While her concern was largely with classroom management systems which break reading into hundreds of discrete skills, her message applies to any programs in which the classroom emphasis on reading skills is paramount to actual reading.

Yet from the practitioner's perspective, many teachers are accountable to administrators and parents for providing objective data from these skills tests to monitor student progress and achievement. And it is true that the basal program does represent a structured "road map" which gives teachers direction and guidance along the way. However, it is the contention of this article that teachers need to feel free to take alternate routes when they deem it necessary, to linger awhile longer at certain locations and to choose not to cover an entire area when they have been there before. For these reasons, this article proposes that a

read (from the basal) first, test (for skills) later philosophy be followed.

What Is Meant by a "Read First, Test Later" Philosophy?

A read first, test later philosophy simply means that the students' reading ability is to be utilized for basal placement rather than their ability to master isolated skills. In this way, talented readers are not "held back" because of a deficiency in specific skill areas, i.e., short vowels, consonant blends, or "ly" endings. Testing for skills development follows rather than precedes comprehension and is not the major determiner of basal placement and progress. And, since literature selections and skills instruction are the two primary components of the basal reader, it seems logical that assessment should be conducted in both of these areas. To achieve this end, a combination of two conventional, teacher-developed diagnostic procedures is advocated. One assessment device consists of a series of graded passages and accompanying questions to be used in the initial placement.

Another device is an informal skills pretest to determine at the outset which skills to stress and which to eliminate, in view of the abilities of a given group of students. While the former diagnostic device has been in existence since 1946 (Betts), the procedures to be described are unique. The modifications make this assessment instrument somewhere between an informal reading inventory administered orally and individually, and graded passages administered silently to an entire class.

Also inherent in a read first, test later philosophy is an emphasis on the teacher as decision-maker. Instead of depending upon a predetermined sequence of instructional events, which may or may not be appropriate for all of the students, the teacher uses data from various sources to determine the direction and goals for the reading class.

Read (from the basal) First - Graded Passages

Since it is a well-established fact that there is much intra-text variation in terms of the readability levels of basal readers (Bradley & Ames, 1977), the first concern in developing a series of graded passages is in choosing passages which actually represent each basal reader to be used. To obtain representative passages, Fuchs, Fuchs and Deno (1982) recommend that a mean readability score be calculated using five (or more) 100-word passages from each basal level. From those five passages, two are chosen which most nearly represent the mean level of the basal under consideration. These two passages then can be excerpted from each level in the basal series beginning, for example, with the preprimer level and ending with grade eight.

Next, the teacher develops five questions determining knowledge of both literal and inferential comprehension. Three to five vocabulary terms from each passage can be underlined to be defined on paper by the students (especially appropriate for intermediate level pupils) as a rough index of their vocabulary and concept knowledge. To expedite the preparation, teachers in a school can cooperatively develop these passages at each grade level. Being

certain that each grade has its own series of passages will ensure that the inventory the students are exposed to every year has not been encountered before.

In a traditional informal inventory, these passages are presented to students individually to determine the quantity of oral reading errors. However, as teachers know, this procedure is a time-consuming one and often poses a threat to classroom management. Instead, the teacher divides the class into groups according to the basal level completed last year. Then, in groups, students begin at the next level reading and answering questions until they reach their perceived frustration level. Encouraging "mumble reading" (Cunningham, 1978), wherein students read aloud "to themselves," ensures that no one student is singled out to read and be heard by the others in the group. This procedure allows the teacher to move through the group listening to students' reading, attending to their errors, asking about their knowledge of particular word meanings, and requiring that they retell portions of what they have read. During this listening and circulation period, any notable observations are recorded in order to make a comparison with the students' performance on the question-answer portion of the inventory (see Figure 1).

Another subjective element involves asking students to record next to their answers to each passage, an X if the passage is too difficult, a Y if it is just right, or a Z if it is too easy. Students' perceptions of their reading abilities can be quite revealing and, in some cases, very accurate.

When students first reach a set of passages on which they fall below 80% comprehension, in general, it is advisable to place them in the level at which they scored 80% or better. However, these objective, numerical figures must be interpreted in conjunction with the observational and self-reporting data mentioned previously. Basals of varied levels should be available for the purpose of either confirming or refuting the initial placement data. Should a question arise about a student's performance, have him/her read orally from other stories in the basal and ask for a retelling of what was just read. In this way, the teacher can re-examine students whose scores seem out of line with other available objective and subjective data.

Test (for skills) Later - The Informal Skills Pretest

Once placement in the basal is determined, the next phase consists of finding out if the students in the group really need all the skills instruction contained in that particular book. To do this, an informal skills pretest is developed which assesses, in one sitting, some of the major skills of each book or unit.

First, the teacher analyzes the unit (or book) to determine the skills emphasized. For example, the skills of a third grade basal might include punctuation, dictionary usage, syllabication, structural analysis, context usage and comprehension skills. Then, the teacher develops approximately 5 to 10 test items for each area deemed necessary. (An alternative is to use or draw from the basal assessment tests which are readily available and which accompany each unit in the series.) This pretest is administered

Figure 1

Student _____ Date _____
 Basal last used _____ Class _____

INDIVIDUAL

STUDENT PLACEMENT PROFILE

Questions

Basal Levels	Questions					Total	Student Rating	Observations
	1	2	3	4	5			

Overall Comments:

to the students and scored using an 80 percent criterion for mastery, 70 percent for needs review, and 60 percent or below for non-mastery. The information is charted on a group profile form (see figure 2) which depicts the group's strengths and weaknesses and provides instructional directions for the teacher. In this instance, the teacher has decided not to pretest for comprehension skills since both standardized test data and professional judgment have pointed to schoolwide and classwide weaknesses in comprehension. Consequently, all lessons involving comprehension will be stressed.

The profile shown indicates the group has an understanding of syllabication and dictionary usage, but needs additional work in the remaining three areas. The practice book or workbook, too, is used only in conjunction with the profiled needs instead of being used from cover to cover. Individual students who show a weakness in a particular area (i.e. Allison, dictionary usage) can be given additional instruction by the teacher or a peer until an understanding is reached. With this information the teacher can selectively choose the skills instruction to be emphasized, eliminate what is unnecessary and accord more time to the literature selections, their comprehension and appreciation.

It is important that these diagnostic procedures, or something similar, be integrated into each teacher's beginning of the year activities. Then each student is given a renewed opportunity to start the year without the stigma of "basal labeling" and the prospect of "basal tracking."

Figure 2

Subject: Reading

Date: August 31

Book Title: _____

Grade Level _____

GROUP PROFILE

Name	Syllabication	Punctuation	Struct. Analysis	Context	Dictionary
Roger	+	+	-	+	+
Ellis	+	R	-	-	+
Lisa	+	+	-	-	+
Helene	+	-	-	R	+
Mark	+	-	R	-	+
David	+	-	-	R	+
Allison	+	R	R	-	R

80% or above + Mastery 70% = R (Needs Review)
60% or below — NonMastery (-)

Summary

While the assessment procedures advocated in this article are not entirely new, research has shown that the problems to which they were initially addressed still persist in our schools

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PROMOTE IDENTIFYING WITH CHARACTERS FOR MOTIVATION IN READING STORIES

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There is the story about a child who, having been told by his teacher that he now knows how to read, exclaimed "Good! Now I'll never have to read another book as long as I live!" The anecdote points out vividly what most reading teachers well know. Teaching children how to read is one thing; getting them to read on their own is another.

The importance of fostering a lifetime interest in recreational reading is well accepted by professionals involved in the teaching of reading. So, few would take issue with Huck (1971) when she writes "If we teach a child to read, yet develop not the taste for reading all our teaching is for naught. We shall have produced a nation of 'illiterate literates'—those who know how to read, but do not read." (p. 37) And, if we accept Ladd's (1977) assertion that children learn to read by reading, motivating children to read becomes even more crucial in the child's reading development. Reading is similar to other skills. If children do not practice reading, they will not fully develop the ability to read. The child who reads frequently will continue to improve in vocabulary, comprehension and other important reading skills. And reading frequently will also help children maintain those reading skills.

There have been many suggestions for encouraging children to read. Among them are the following:

- Allow class time for recreational reading.
- Provide a wide choice of reading materials from which children can choose.
- Suggest books to children that relate to their needs and interests.
- Provide pleasant physical surroundings to create a suitable atmosphere for reading.
- Hold individual conferences with children to discuss their reading.
- Take children to the library weekly.
- Show and interest by reading yourself.
- Share your reading experiences with children.
- Read parts of books and show pictures and illustrations from books to children.
- Read aloud to children daily.

- Let children engage in audience reading.
- Establish a way for children to share what they are reading with others.
- Have children read along with taped stories.
- Decorate the classroom with posters, bulletin boards, book displays and children's projects related to reading.
- Have children write, illustrate, and bind their own books.
- Give praise or tangible rewards to children for reading.
- Help children develop a means of keeping a record of their reading.
- Help children plan specific reading time at home.

Promoting identification with story characters has also been suggested as a way of encouraging children to read. Guthrie (1979) describes a motivation strategy that uses questioning to help children identify with story characters. This motivation technique is based on the following assumptions: 1) The process of identifying with story characters can be learned, 2) Identification with story characters, therefore, can be taught, 3) Questioning based on certain stories can facilitate identification with story characters, and 4) Learning to identify with story characters will increase the desire of children to want to read.

This article provides teachers with generic questions that may be used to help children identify with story characters. The questions can be used with most stories and books, but should not be thought of as a substitute for preparing a variety of questions at various levels of understanding for specific selections.

Prereading Questions

The first group of questions might be used to initiate a discussion about story characters before children are assigned the reading selection. The prereading discussion can help facilitate student identification with story characters in three ways. First, it will provoke thought about story characters. It may also provide children with important background information on the specific characters in the story to be read. And, thirdly, asking questions before children read the selection will build student interest in the characters encountered in the selection. Questions asked during prereading discussion might include the following:

1. Do you ever compare yourself with the characters of a story? Explain.
2. Do you sometimes make-believe and see yourself as one of the characters in stories you read? Explain.
3. Look at the illustrations or pictures for this story. What do they tell you about the characters in the story?
4. Read the title of the story. What does the title suggest about the story characters?
5. Read the introduction to the story. What does it tell you about the characters?
6. What do you already know about the characters in this story?

Purpose-setting Questions

Teachers can also facilitate student identification with

story characters by providing questions to guide children while reading. This may best be accomplished by having children read to find the answers to questions related to story characters. The following are examples of purpose-setting questions:

1. What happens to the characters in the story?
2. What is the problem or conflict the characters have to work out in the story?
3. How do the characters deal with this problem or conflict?
4. How would you have handled the same problem or conflict?
5. Why do the characters do what they do in the story?
6. Are the characters in this story plausible or realistic? Explain.

Follow-up Questions

In a teacher-directed discussion of the story after children have read the selection, opportunities abound to contribute to student identification with story characters. Such questions as the following might be used:

1. Who are the characters in the story?
2. Tell me about the characters in the story.
3. Who is your favorite character in the story? Why?
4. Who do you like the least? Why?
5. How are you like the characters in the story? How are you different?
6. Have you ever been in a similar situation as the characters in the story? Explain.
7. Have you ever felt like the characters in the story? Explain.
8. Would you have done the same thing as the characters in the story? Explain.
9. Were the characters right or wrong in their actions in the story? Explain.
10. What have you learned from the characters in the story?
11. How can you apply the experiences of the characters to your daily life?

Although little scientific evidence is available to support the basic assumptions of this motivation strategy, practical experience would suggest that promoting identification with story characters is a worthwhile goal in motivating children to want to read. In the published highlights from the lectures of Vladimir Nabokov (1980), the following relevant passage occurs: "The more the emotional identification with the book is intensely felt, the more the reader treasures the book." (p. 62) Promoting identification with story characters may contribute to one of the most important and difficult tasks facing teachers of reading—how to help children discover the fun and value of reading so that when they leave our classrooms they will go on reading.

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WORDLESS BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

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Wordless books are plentiful and vary widely in their presentation of concepts and plot complexity. Below are some recent wordless books appropriate for a wide range of age/grade levels.

Anno, Mitsumasa. Anno's Britain. Philomel, 1982. \$10.95

As in Anno's other "journey" books, Anno's Britain offers something unnoticed each time the reader examines the illustrations. In this book, Anno is traveling by boat, then horseback, through England, Scotland and Wales. The highly detailed, watercolor paintings are filled with familiar characters, real and fictional, past and present. In the countryside, Anno sees Jack climbing the beanstalk as Sir Isaac Newton is watching an apple fall from a tree. Likewise, Alice and the Cheshire Cat can be spotted near Stonehenge, and Christopher Robin attaches Eeyore's tail as Mary Poppins sails by. In the city, a crowd gathers to watch the Beatles perform, while others view an artist's renderings of King Henry VIII, Shakespeare, and Winston Churchill. Anno's Britain is indeed a book for all ages; however, older students with a wider experiential background will likely have greater appreciation for the content. The book would fit nicely with a social studies unit on Great Britain.

Goodall, John S. Paddy Goes Traveling. Atheneum, 1982. \$6.95

Fans of earlier "Paddy" books by Goodall will enjoy the lively pig's action-packed and humorous adventure in this volume. Paddy is vacationing on the French Riviera when a young pig's kite flies away. Paddy tries to rescue it, and in the process finds himself on a truck being transported to the Swiss Alps. A frozen and lost Paddy is befriended by a family of bears, and ultimately becomes a contestant in a sled race. Beautiful representational paintings convey the story well. The format of half pages within double page spreads adds to the uniqueness of the book. Older students would probably have a greater appreciation for the sophistication of the tale and the detail used in telling it.

Hoban, Tana. Round & Round & Round. Greenwillow, 1983. \$9.50

Known for her wordless books depicting basic concepts through black and white photographs, Hoban has created yet another superb book. This is her second illustrated with full color photographs. (The first, a color concept book, was Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue?) A variety of objects that are round are presented:

Swiss cheese on a bun, raindrops on a puddle, a raccoon's eyes, to name a few. The photographs are idea stimuli for language experience activities, both oral and individually written. Older students will surely appreciate the quality of the photography and Hoban's unique perspective on the environment. All of Hoban's books contribute a great deal to the development of visual literacy in students of all ages.

Keats, Ezra Jack. Clementina's Cactus. Viking, 1982. \$11.95

Clementina discovers "her" cactus on a walk with her father in the desert, and she is enchanted with it from the beginning. After a sudden desert storm and a calm starry night, Clementina runs to the desert and finds, to her extreme delight, that the cactus has bloomed. Various emotions are expressively portrayed on Clementina's face. Vividly colored paintings depict the desert terrain well. (One particularly "positive" illustration shows the father reading to Clementina.) The book has appeal for many ages. The plot line is simple enough for young children to comprehend. Older readers could respond to the theme that we must go beyond the exterior to find real beauty.

Ormerod, Jan. Sunshine. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1981. \$9.50

Moonlight. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1982. \$9.50


These companion volumes feature a warm, loving family whose everyday activities are realistically portrayed in beautifully detailed illustrations. In Sunshine, soft shades of yellow start the day for the little girl who awakens first, then wakes Daddy, helps him make breakfast for Mommy, and then sees that they get off to work on time. In Moonlight, shades of blue and purple highlight the end of day which includes dinner, bath, and many excuses for not going to sleep (the obligatory drink of water, for one). Many positive models are presented in the two books. The father is nonstereotypically depicted in the nurturing role, helping with the household chores. Books liberally appear in the illustrations. All three people are shown reading, and both parents read to the little girl. Sunshine and Moonlight are truly for all ages. They could be used to prompt children's language experiences about the beginning and ending of their days. Highly recommended!

Spier, Peter. Peter Spier's Rain. Doubleday, 1982. \$10.95

This wordless adventure begins on the book's front endpapers as rainclouds gather above a brother and sister playing in their backyard. As rain begins to fall, the children put on their rain gear and head out to explore the neighborhood in the rain. When the wind begins to blow, the children go home to a warm bath, a good dinner, and an evening indoors playing and reading. It rains all night, and the book's endpapers show the sun shining on the children's puddle-filled backyard. The brightly colored illustrations are loaded with the details characteristic of Spier's work. Small pictures and half-page pictures mixed in with full page and double-page spreads carry the reader along with the children. The book, as a whole, is idea for oral and written language experiences as the sequence of the plot is clearly presented.

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C. TOTAL PAID CIRCULATION (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)					650			600			
D. FREE DISTRIBUTION BY MAIL, CARRIER OR OTHER MEANS SAMPLES, COMPLIMENTARY, AND OTHER FREE COPIES					100			150			
E. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION (Sum of C and D)					750			750			
F. COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED											
1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing					50			50			
2. Return from News Agents					0			0			
G. TOTAL (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A)					800			800			
11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete					SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF EDITOR, PUBLISHER, BUSINESS MANAGER, OR OWNER  Ken VanderMeulen (Editor)						