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"How can I create 'living' experiences that will support my students to explore the 'layers' of meaning in a story? What type of learning activity supports students to build personal 'connections' with a story?"

We, along with language arts teachers, face these questions as we collaborate to develop literature studies. Our uncertainty seems to imply confusion as to whether we should emphasize story comprehension, reading skills, or a personal connection as the basis.

Relying on more traditional methods to explore a literary text, we used instructional activities such as knowledge-based discussions, story mapping, or writing plot summaries. With instructional emphasis on knowing the story rather than 'living' the story, students seem unable to build human connections with the stories they read. Often they fail to connect to the story when it is offered as a means to demonstrate reading skills.

Our dilemma suggests a limiting understanding of what it means to come to understand literature and about what the teaching of literature has to offer to the intellectual, social, and emotional development of the learner (Langer, 1990).
Our collaboration with teachers in their classrooms became one of discovering avenues for students to interact personally with literature. Our classroom teaching — Lea as a children's literature professor and Daniel as a theatre artist — involved us with classroom teachers to create literature studies built on an aesthetic response to story. What form might instruction take that would enable readers to find connections between their world and the literary world?

**Aesthetic response**

Rosenblatt (1978) defines reading as a comprehension seeking process. This interactive process between the reader and a text becomes a transaction as the reader gives 'life' to the pages of print. This transaction is an ebbing of 'give and take' where the reader interprets meaning as the text affects the reader. It is an aesthetic involvement with a text that creates dimensionality enabling the reader to construct a personal, human, and lived-through response. Without this human response, the text is no more than empty words on the page (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1983, 1993). It is then, the aesthetic — human response that creates the distinction between reading literature and living literature. With this in mind, our goal in this article is to provide examples of arts infused literary studies. Each example uses arts experiences to relate to the literature text. The learning outcome is to involve readers in exploring the meaning of the story as it relates to their own life experiences.

**Literature**

Literature — an art form — powerfully secures the human experience through language. Then, as the human experience of literature is magnified through other art forms, one's connection with humanity is broadened and deepened. These points of contact enlarge the capacity of literature to make sense of life and the world (Probst, 1988). Thus, the arts
provide for multidimensional involvement with a text. This involvement includes both reaction and creation. For example, in reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Frank, 1952), students experienced difficulty in relating to discrimination and what it actually was like to be Jewish during World War II. To experience discrimination and truly connect with the universality of these feelings, students were asked to begin keeping a journal to describe incidents of discrimination and prejudice they observed, read about, or experienced first hand. From this record, students then were able to discuss their reactions.

Involving students in conceptual endeavors where they 'transact' with themes of the text supports them to construct and generate their own view and interpretations (Rosenblatt, 1978). To further enhance and deepen these human connections between students and story, other art forms included the activities of scripting and acting out journal entries, creating anti-discrimination posters using collage techniques, and choreographing a series of movements to depict scenes of discrimination or prejudice incorporating music from both the 1940's and 1990's. These arts-based episodes provided a means for students to meld with the literature and investigate their feelings as developed through the readings.

**The arts**

The arts represent feeling and meaning. Through the arts, students experience their own unique association with the story. This provides a process for students to experience personal connections, to discover new meanings, as well as to expand their understanding of the literary text. When students directly connect with literature through experience of the senses, they are able to go between verbal, nonverbal, logical, and emotional — the better to gain an understanding of the whole (National Standards for the Arts, 1994). Through
these multiple forms of creative communication, readers create spiraling levels of understanding. Then, as the students use the arts as a tool to build personal meaning, they are supported to exercise divergent thinking.

Using the arts as a medium to interact with literature can be accomplished in a number of ways. However, the use of the arts raises questions. What does a teacher need to know about the arts to use them in the classroom? How does a teacher use the arts to provide students with a meaningful, concrete examination of literature? And when are the arts a valuable instructional strategy? These questions alone are enough to keep most of us bound to a more traditional curriculum. Yet, that doesn't have to be the case.

**The arts as instruction**

Bringing literature studies 'alive' begins with a teacher's desire to involve students actively in the learning process coupled with the realization that the arts are a powerful tool for literacy. From this comes a willingness to experiment with music, movement, drama, writing or visual arts as ways to connect students with the human experience portrayed within literature. This is not to suggest that the literature teacher will be teaching the arts, but rather will be using elements of the art forms to provide students with experiences, which enable them to connect with literature. Through the arts interpretative experiences, students 'connected' with the text. Through this personal bridging students were able to consider how the issues of a story may suggest modes of thought or behavior as they meet the challenges of their world.

As collaborating classroom teachers we came to recognize the arts as 'hands on' experiences to build problem solving and critical thinking. We saw students 'making' art,
which subsequently lead to self-awareness, communication, concentration, and individual or group work. As students engaged in different social learning contexts, learning was supported through thinking, talking, manipulating materials, and sharing viewpoints to make decisions (Siks, 1983).

In the following section we outline an arts response lesson sampler for *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson, 1977) and *The Miracle Worker* (Gibson, 1983). Each example illustrates the arts as a tool to encourage aesthetic reading. The desired instructional outcome is to involve the student with opportunities to extract multiple meanings from a story. The arts episodes — expressive writing, creative movement, visual arts, exploratory music, and informal drama — become a type of aesthetic response enabling students to connect with a story and construct personal meaning.

**Arts reader response sample #1**

Using *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson, 1977) as the text to be read, we illustrate arts activities that support students to deepen their involvement and understanding. In Paterson's book, life is examined through the eyes of a young boy who has developed a special friendship that has helped him to uncover his hidden creativity and imagination. When the friendship ends tragically, it is the young boy's self-discovery that ultimately allows him to accept the realities of life. The theme — friendship and imagination — found in Paterson's text parallel the lives of the students. Using these themes as the building blocks for the arts experiences provide natural points to connect students with the human dimension.

**Expressive writing.** Friendship verse is a writing activity sequence designed to focus students on the concept of friendship. Friendship is studied in terms of what it takes to be a friend.
• Students discuss friendship and write a definition. In the definition, a list of the components necessary for a good friendship is included.

• Students write a narrative using one of the following: "I am a good friend ..."; "(fill-in the name of a good friend) is a good friend ..."; or write an original friendship narrative.

• Students share their writings. Following these sharings the class discusses the commonalities along with the differences among what others think it takes to be a friend. This discussion should encompass those elements found in Jesse and Leslie's friendship as well.

Creative movement. Magic kingdom provides an opportunity for physical movement through play while developing imagination. Story characters, Jesse and Leslie, create an imaginary kingdom which is a special place reserved just for them.

• Through discussion, students examine what would make a place special, taking into account the types of animals/creatures, dwellings, people, and landscape that would be a part of their special place.

• Divide students into six groups. Groups are asked to create a magic kingdom using movement. Invite students to respond physically to the environment, objects, and animals that may be in their magic kingdom. For example, "Is the ground wet and muddy or hot and sandy? Do you need to jump from rock to rock to cross a stream? Are there animals and creatures to look at and touch?" Students are encouraged to create the sounds of their magic kingdom as they move through the space. Sound might include chirping birds, babbling brooks, and whistling wind. Encourage students to use all available space in the classroom. Each group would later share their magic kingdom movement activity.
Visual arts. Friendship collage is a visual representation of your relationship with a best friend. This literature response makes use of a variety of materials such as photographs, mementos, writings, drawings, and other concrete objects that would visually denote you and your friend.

• Through discussion, students identify an individual considered to be a 'best friend.' Students are asked and encouraged to collect different materials (as listed above) for several days in preparation for creating a collage representative of their friendship.

• Students design and create their collage using their collected materials which may be mounted on tagboard or other study material.

• The friendship collages may be displayed and given to the 'best friend.'

Exploratory music. Radio readings is a strategy that combines dialogue from the literature text with music and sound effects. In tandem with the teacher, students identify different dialogue passages between Jesse and Leslie that occur at Terabithia.

• Students are paired. Each pair selects a dialogue passage to prepare for radio reading. In preparing for the recording session, pairs are asked to consider appropriate music to heighten the reading of the dialogue text. Students may also use other auditory effects to enhance the reading. These may include instrumental sounds and man-made sounds (for example, crumpling paper can sound like leaves crunching under foot). Pairs practice and rehearse orally reading their selected dialogue text selections.

• The pairs record their readings including all other background sound effects developed.

• The radio readings are 'broadcast' for the students to enjoy.
Informal drama. Ultimate good-bye is a dramatic improvisation that examines the theme of friendship. The following strategies may be used as an instructional sequence or used singularly.

- For each improvisation divide students into pairs. Each pair develops and plays their own improvisation. The pairs will need planning and rehearsal time. The pairs may perform their improvisation for the large group or they may work through their improvisation in pairs and then report and share reactions regarding their improvisation.

- Scenario 1: Two people meet for the first time and all circumstances seem to point toward the development of a strong friendship.

- Scenario 2: Best friends are engaged in a conflict. Include not only the conflict in action but also the resolution or compromise.

- Scenario 3: Best friends are saying good-bye. This good-bye scene can represent separation for the summer, after high school graduation, a long distance move, or the students' own original idea of friendship and good-bye. Encourage the students to avoid making the scene unrealistic and melodramatic (e.g., the use of fake crying).

- Some points to be developed through discussion could include the following: types of good-byes, short-term, long-term (people will be reunited).

- A type of good-bye which is permanent such as death — being able to say good-bye or not having the opportunity.

Arts reader response sampler #2

Our basic knowledge of the world around us is derived from our sensory experiences with it. Sensory awareness is central to all learning. From our various sensory experiences we make observations, comparisons, and discriminations to form our concepts about the nature of things. Strengthening our sensory awareness may lead to a greater understanding of
self and the world where we live. It also strengthens the imagination and the ability to experience all aspects of being with greater clarity.

*The Miracle Worker* (Gibson, 1983) is the story of Helen Keller, a special needs child, who is able to tear down the barriers of her non-seeing, non-hearing, and non-speaking world through the aid of a gifted teacher. Gibson's story is written as a play. The storybook *Anne Sullivan Macy: The Story Behind Helen Keller* (Barddy, 1933) is a narrative account, which also may be used. The following are instructional episodes designed to build and to extend the concept of sense deprivation as developed in the text.

**Expressive writing.** Sensory walk is an exercise designed to use all of the senses except for sight.

- Divide the class into pairs.
- Each student will take a turn leading a partner, whose eyes are closed or have been blindfolded, around the room (or outside the room). Ask the students to explore the environment through their sense of touch, sound, smell, and taste. In order to explore the sense of taste in more depth, you may want to set up a food tasting station. Ask that the leaders take care of their partners. Leaders should work to gain the trust of their partners and to ensure their safety.
- Ask that there be as little talking as possible during this exercise in order to aid concentration.
- Following this sensory walk, students write a narrative focused on the feelings experienced when one cannot rely on sight and must depend on someone else and the remaining senses.

**Creative movement.** Vibratory response is an exercise designed for coordinating sound with physical response and directionality.
• Each student defines his or her personal space in the classroom.
• Students will need to be either blindfolded or asked to close their eyes.
• The teacher will create man-made sounds (hand-clapping, foot-stomping, coughing, etc.), instrumental sounds (drums, tambourine, bells, etc.), and play recorded music (classical, western, rap, etc.). The different sound sources will come from different areas throughout the classroom. Students will position their bodies towards the sound and respond with movement to the sounds.
• Following the sound exercise the teacher and students will discuss the relationship between sound source and directionality as they relate to perception, noting how the absence of sight would create a different interpretation. Of particular note is the experience of physically responding to sound without the aid of sight. Discussion questions might include, "Were you able to tell where sounds were coming from?" "Were you confused or did you ever lose your sense of direction?" "What different types of movement did you create in response to the variety of sounds and music selections?"

Visual arts. Mind's eye sketch is designed to develop students' appreciation of sight. Students will create drawings based on auditory descriptions of unfamiliar scenes and images.
• Each student will sketch a drawing of a personally familiar scene or image (such as their fish aquarium, neighborhood park, favorite animal).
• Divide class into pairs.
• Pairs will sit back-to-back, not revealing their original sketch.
• Each member of the pair will describe his/her sketch as the other creates an interpretation of the sketch based on the verbal description. Repeat the sequence switching roles.
• As a follow up, lead a discussion centered on the different feelings that were experienced. How did the describer feel? How did the sketcher feel? Highlight the dependency that sighted people rely on in interpreting the world.

**Exploratory music.** Musical emotions is for discovering the emotions elicited by different musical compositions and sounds. The goal is to examine how sounds and music affect our moods.

• Students will sit in silence as the teacher plays different musical selections, creates man-made sounds, and provides instrumental sounds.

• Students will record on paper the different feelings and emotions that the particular sounds provoke in them.

• Class will participate in a discussion examining how sound and music creates emotions and moods. This discussion may include issues such as how a deaf person may develop an understanding of emotions and moods.

• Divide class into four groups. Each group is given the task of creating a "Mood Recording" for an assigned emotion. Groups will select music, man-made sounds, and instrumental sounds to create a sound recording representing their self-selected emotion. These recordings will be shared in class and students may free-write as they listen to the different mood recordings.

• Class may choose to read aloud their written pieces with the mood tapes playing in the background.

**Informal drama.** No words improvisation is designed to cause students to communicate through physical movement rather than verbal or written communication. The key concept for students to grasp is how body movement is essential to congruent communication.

• Class is divided into pairs.
• One member of the pair is instructed that she/he must borrow $5.00 from the partner. The lending partner is instructed that she/he must get a ride to the football game from the borrowing partner. This scenario is acted out with no verbal communication, similar to charades.

• Class discussion could explore different problems encountered in communicating. Additionally, communication can be examined from a different person's perspective such as Helen Keller or a visitor in a foreign country. Also, students would analyze body language and what it may communicate to different people.

Figure 1
Arts Reader Response Samplers

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**Conclusion**

School is a place to develop the mind. The arts give us a means to extend learning beyond pencil and paper, question and answer, and quick recall. The language of the arts is universal. It allows students to convey feelings and ideas while extending human understanding. The arts integrate the curriculum — a way to establish connections with other
subject areas. When the transactions with literature are lived through for their own sake, students have the opportunity to examine educational and social conditions for which literature is most valued. The arts — literature, drama, movement, music, visual art, and writing — invite all students to participate through personal connections in learning through reading literature.

Perhaps, the potential of arts as a medium to read literature is captured best by students' comments, "I really liked writing my friendship verse cause it made me see how special my best friend was even though she's dead now. And reading Bridge I didn't feel all alone." "I never [never] understood before how listening [music and sounds] made you feel different when you talk til we [did] Radio Readings of Jesse and Leslie." "I didt [didn't] know how they [visually impaired] lived even after doing the walk." "Helen Keller and her teacher were very smart and strong women. I felt weak and stupid when I was trying to do all those things without my eyes and ears." "Doing all that stuff made me better understand the book. The book is more real."

References

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*Jo Jo's Reading Rocket Chosen for Dr. Toy's '100 Best Children's Products for 1996'*

Mindplay is pleased to announce that *Jo Jo's Reading Rocket* has been chosen as Dr. Toy's "100 Best Children's Products for 1996." *Jo Jo's Reading Rocket* is also a Dr. Toy's "Ten Best Software" award winner. This software is an interactive reading adventure, designed to help young children develop reading skills through modeling, listening and speaking. Every screen comes alive with movement, visually representing the meaning of words and sentences.

Stevanne Auerback, Ph.D., also known as Dr. Toy, uses extensive criteria developed over many years to evaluate the newest, creative and educational toys and other products for the annual award. Among the criteria used are: educational value, learning skills, design, age-appropriateness, creativity, good value for price, lasting play value and of course, fun.

Case Study Analysis in Reading/Language Arts: Getting to the "Nitty-Gritty"

Janet H. Towell

On the first day of class in a graduate reading assessment and evaluation course, my students were asked to formulate a list of questions in cooperative groups that should be considered when doing a case study on a student to assess his or her skills and abilities including strengths and needs in reading/language arts. They were asked to think of any areas of concern that may affect the student's academic performance such as social or emotional factors. The following table of 20 questions was compiled by this group of 16 inservice teachers with varying levels of experience and expertise. The majority of teachers taught at the elementary level. One junior high, one high school teacher and one school librarian also enrolled in the course.

Throughout the semester, the graduate students read and researched on diagnosis and remediation, reflected in their journals on what they had learned, worked together on several mini-case studies supplied by the instructor, developed their own case studies on individual students and made a presentation to the class on one specific area of interest. At the end of the term they were asked to revisit the 20 questions on diagnosis from the beginning of the semester. For their
You are a bright-eyed bushy-tailed newly credentialed elementary teacher, ready to teach the world. You are equipped with an adequate knowledge of reading theory and methodology including whole language, basals, language experience and phonics. You can teach lesson plans such as the KWL, DLTA and LEA; you are aware of the best in children’s literature, and are ready to teach your first thematic unit. It is the second week of school; you have created a beautiful print-rich environment and have been given a class of 28 linguistically and culturally diverse second-graders.

This particular morning your students are having free reading time and you notice Maria, an olive skinned dark-haired child who has recently moved to California from Mexico. She is looking at the pictures in the Little Red Riding Hood book but does not seem to be comprehending any of the words on the page. You ask her to read a sentence to you and red-faced, she stumbles over the words, struggling with most of the sounds. Somewhat familiar with the inquiry method of teaching (Short and Burke, 1991), you start to ask yourself questions about Maria’s possible reading problems. How can I help Maria become a better reader? How can I help her want to join the "literacy club" (Smith, 1984)? You decide to call your friend Susan, a bilingual reading specialist, for help. What do you need to know before you can help Maria? What are the five most important questions to ask and why?

The resulting questions that students included in their final papers were listed in order of frequency. The top seven were selected to be used in this article. Why each question is
important will be explained in sequence. They are not listed in order of priority.

**TABLE**

1. Why does this student go up and down in her academic performance?
2. What are the child's strengths?
3. What can I do that is different for a student who has been in resource for several years and has shown no improvement?
4. How can I help a student who has been identified as having an excessive processing deficiency?
5. How do I know what a child is capable of doing?
6. Is the child making reversals when reading and/or writing? What does this mean?
7. What skills does the child possess in the following areas: phonemic awareness, word recognition and word meaning, comprehension?
8. What is the parental attitude toward reading (e.g., reading to the child or listening to the child read at home, encouragement, access to books, trips to the library)?
9. At what age did the child start school?
10. How many times has the child moved during his academic career?
11. How many times has the child been absent during the past academic year?
12. Has the child had the opportunity to read in his or her primary language?
13. What are the child's interests and attitude toward reading?
14. Is there a reading program and learning style mismatch?
15. Does the child have a concept of print?
16. Are there any environmental stimuli that may be distracting the student?
17. Is there a physical impairment that is affecting the student's reading?
18. Are there any factors outside of school that are affecting the student's progress?
19. Are they receiving instruction in their primary language?
20. What is the child's perception of his reading problem? The parent's perception? The teacher's?
1. What are the student's strengths?

Whole language teachers reject the clinical, medical model of educational assessment. In this model, one looks for what is wrong with the child, and then writes a prescription to fix it. The child-centered nature of whole language instruction demands that we look first at the strengths of children — what they know, how they can use what they know to learn, and what they can teach us. Assessment and evaluation in whole language will move us away from test- and text-driven measures to student-centered observation. We will accept only assessment and evaluation measures that keep language whole and fulfill children's expectations for how language works (Harp, 1992).

Before starting any research it is important to define who your subject is. Questioning what the student knows, thinks, and likes is essential to forming a foundation of the student's strengths. These strengths should be the premise of where you will begin. A child's strengths should be used to build success while learning how to strengthen a "weakness." Identifying a child's strengths when you begin reading diagnosis is important to a child's self-esteem, knowing that there are some things she does well or that in some areas she is just like everyone else. For example, if Maria liked books, enjoyed being read to, and wanted to learn to read, you could use her determination to learn to read to get her to focus on the skills she needed to develop. Positive self-esteem is vital to a child's ability and willingness to learn, to her socialization into the community of her peers, and how the child sees herself as a worthwhile person.

You are familiar with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1993). If the student's best learning modality is
verbal, but logical-mathematical or kinesthetic, it may be that poor reading skills are only a problem in certain classes, such as language arts or social studies. There are many ways to approach the basic material presented in those subject areas that incorporate intelligences beyond the verbal. With that in mind, the student could make use of one or more of those alternative approaches to augment required reading or in lieu of some of it, especially at the upper grade levels. Teaching a student using her best learning modality is critical to her success in school. The seven styles of learning include: linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily/kinesthetic, and interpersonal or intrapersonal.

2. Is there a physical impairment that is affecting the student's reading? This is an important question to ask because often a child may have a vision or hearing problem that has gone undetected and is responsible for inhibiting the child's reading development. If a child is far-sighted, for example, it will be difficult for her to see things up-close like the words on the page of a book, and this will seriously inhibit her ability to learn to read. A hearing problem can prevent a child from developing skills in letter/sound recognition and this will have an influence on the other skill areas as well. Sometimes a child may have an undetected illness that will inhibit her reading development. When a child is not well, she may not have the energy or the will to concentrate on learning to read.

In summary, the obvious areas that should be addressed before learning can take place consist of vision impairment, hearing difficulties, nutrition, processing deficiency and overall health problems. Items as routine as thorough vision screening, hearing tests, and intervention regarding hunger can be enough to turn around a child's learning potential. If one or more of these physical impairments proves to be a
factor negatively affecting a child's reading success, even the best teacher and materials, and the most appropriate strategies for remediation may not be able to impact the child favorably until these impairments are removed or alleviated. Begin by asking the school nurse.

3. What are the student's interests and attitudes toward reading? What does Maria like to do in her free time? What are her interests and hobbies? How Maria feels about other things in her life may reflect upon her motivation — or lack of — in her reading. Does she like to read or be read to? What kinds of books does she like? What are some of her favorite book titles? Does someone read to her at home and how often? If you know what a child's interests are, you can incorporate some of them into your remediation program. It will motivate a child to learn to read much quicker if she will be reading about things that interest her. It may even be possible to change a child's attitude toward reading if she is really interested in a subject and wants to find out more about it, especially if she has to read to do it. Having a variety of genres available on varying levels of difficulty to motivate the child to read such as newspapers, magazines, comic books, trade books (e.g., poetry, realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, nonfiction) and reference books is essential. Multicultural selections are always recommended.

Interest inventories and attitude surveys can assess this information quickly and effectively. One of my favorite attitude surveys for elementary students is the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna and Kear, 1990). Interest inventories generally include questions about hobbies, school, family, favorite things, and possibly plans for the future (career, dreams, etc.).
4. What skills does the student possess in the following areas: comprehension, phonemic awareness, word recognition and word meaning? Before this question can be answered, you must determine the strategies Maria uses when she reads. For example, does she use picture clues when she comes to a word she does not know? Which language cueing systems does she use — graphophonic (how a word looks and sounds), syntax (word order), semantic (meaning, use of context clues), or schematic (background knowledge)? Does she look for meaning first and then use the rest of the language cueing systems automatically as good readers do? If not, this is a good place to start her on the road to becoming a better reader. (A child needs to understand that reading is a meaning-making process; it is not just a matter of decoding or pronouncing words.)

If Maria has been read to consistently, phonemic awareness (an awareness of sounds in spoken words) develops naturally. Songs, poetry, and reading rhyming books with word play such as Dr. Seuss are an effective way to practice phonemic awareness. This skill is necessary before teaching phonics makes sense (an awareness of sounds in written words). Teaching initial consonants in a meaningful context is recommended as a good starting point since consonant sounds are the most consistent.

If Maria is reading on at least the first grade level, an IRI (Informal Reading Inventory) is one example of a well-established heuristic to assess her sight/meaning vocabulary and comprehension. It typically consists of graded passages, questions on the literal, inferential and critical levels, and word lists in narrative and/or expository text on the first through eighth grade levels. Retellings are also recommended for checking comprehension. A miscue analysis on the oral reading provides valuable information on the child's use of the
four language cueing systems. This IRI assessment should relate test patterns to observations derived from Maria's classroom behavior, in peer settings and at home. One of my favorite informal reading inventories is the Steiglitz (1992). It also includes an assessment for emergent readers using interesting pictures. If one can identify the knowledge a child has in the areas of comprehension, vocabulary and phonics, a teacher can build on it and provide instruction toward "filling in the gaps" needed to allow for success in reading.

5. What is the parental attitude toward reading? As in any case, teachers are simply not "miracle workers." Educators agree that the first and most important teacher is the parent. Learning to read, write, and speak need to be fostered outside the classroom as well. This is especially true for a child who is experiencing difficulties in these areas. Parents can do much for their children by supporting outside activities and experiences aimed at reinforcing strategies which can help their child read (e.g., library trips, access to books, encouragement, designated reading time). Having books available in the home is crucial. Jim Trelease (1994) emphasizes the "three B's" consisting of books, a bookrack (in the bathroom), and a bed lamp as necessary for creating a reader.

Different cultures have different attitudes toward literacy. Some literacy events occur as music, storytelling, letter writing, daily visits to church, and so on. Reading may or may not be an important part of the family's culture. If it is not, it is important to look to the type of literacy in which the family is involved to tie in to that view appropriately in the classroom.

For example, you discover that Maria's family has very few books, most of them owned by the children. It appears that her parents do understand the importance of the children
having books of their own to read, even though they do not participate in this type of literacy. In addition, Maria does attend mass daily where literature and music are an important part of the service. You can share pictures of Maria's first communion and little missals that she brings to school with her classmates. They are representations of literacy events to be celebrated.

Literacy values start in the home. If Maria has not and does not have exposure to quality literature outside of the school environment, her literacy knowledge will be limited. If the parents/family do not support literacy/academics, the child will miss the quality, one-on-one learning support of accomplishing homework. Because a teacher cannot spend this individualized time with each student each day, the parent's support is needed.

Vygotsky's research promotes the value of socially-mediating dialogue to construct meaning. His theory of "The Zone of Proximal Development" develops the importance of an adult's help (or more capable peer) in learning. What a child can accomplish with the adult "today" they will be able to accomplish alone "tomorrow." The parent's commitment, support and attitude toward learning may well be the most important factor influencing a child's school success (Vygotsky, 1978).

6. What is the student's perception of her reading problem? The parent's perception? The teacher's perception?

The student: The entire diagnostic process should "involve" Maria through interactive conversations and dialogue. Time for reflection and time for Maria to participate and share her feelings on the selection and development of appropriate strategies is very important! Initially you should
be very careful about establishing a relationship with Maria in order to maintain a strong and trusting work environment as a base for teaching.

The parent: Any home circumstances that affect the child's social, emotional or psychological well-being, and hinder the child's ability to perform her school functions because of anger, fear, or discouragement should be carefully considered. Using a sentence-completion screening can help to reveal social and emotional adjustment. Parent interviews may also be beneficial. Other factors to be aware of that could affect the student's progress are:

- sibling attitudes toward reading/school
- parent's perception of child's ability
- absences in past school year and academic past
- number of moves during academic past

The teacher: Additional factors to consider include the match between your philosophical approach towards teaching, the reading program used, and the learning style of the child. An auditory learner may succeed with a phonics program, whereas a visual or kinesthetic learner may not. The classroom environmental set-up may also have an impact on the child's success and/or motivation to learn. For instance, a child suffering from A.D.D. (attention deficit disorder) may not do well in a whole language classroom because of the possible distractions and noise level.

7. Is the student reading and receiving instruction in her primary language? Last, but not least, this is the most important question for second language learners. Not considering a child's cultural and linguistic background (when they are learning a different culture and language) would be detrimental to the child's ability to learn. Cultural differences affect how children will learn, interact and communicate
because each culture gives different values and status to being able to read and write. This fact greatly influences how literacy manifests itself within a culture. You as the teacher must be aware of these differences since the child's ability and receptivity to learning could be affected if they are not supported. Research has shown that the methods used to help the second language learner function in their new surroundings are also beneficial to the target language learners. All students will benefit in an atmosphere where community, value and equality are promoted.

It is important to consider the following factors:

- Is a bilingual, sheltered instruction or pull-out ESL program available?
- Is primary language reading material available?
- What is the student's level of English acquisition?
- Are social-cultural interaction differences accounted for?

Many studies show that children who speak English as a second language should be encouraged to learn basic communication skills in English while building a cognitive base in their primary language (Spanish in the case of Maria). Then children do not fall behind in academic studies while gaining a second language. If the child is not receiving instruction or reading in her primary language, then that is what the child needs, not remediation. If it is not possible to provide the child with instruction in her primary language, then sheltered instruction techniques (e.g., visuals, repetition, manipulatives, realia, simple speech, gestures) need to be used in the classroom or an aide provided to help the child with her work in the primary language. It will not help a child to give her reading remediation in English when she needs to develop a base of strong skills in her primary language first before she
can begin to transfer those skills to learning in the English language.

Since time is of the essence for elementary teachers, narrowing down the initial list of 20 questions was essential to get to the "nitty-gritty" of what is really important when doing a case study on a child in reading/language arts. These questions begin the process for doing the case study (see Appendix B for the complete case study outline used in this course). The primary goal should be to get students interested in joining the "literacy club" (Smith, 1984), to turn them on to reading. Students learn to read by reading. Giving students opportunities daily for free voluntary reading (FVR) according to Stephen Krashen in *The Power of Reading* makes the difference between a reader and a nonreader. These seven questions (see Appendix A) get down to the basic facts, elements and issues of what really matters. However, it is important to realize that the teacher makes the real difference. This quote was submitted by one of my graduate students as part of her final paper:

"The difference between good readers and struggling readers is often the ability to apply reading strategies at the right time. Learning to read is not difficult. But having the opportunity to read with an understanding teacher, guiding in the right direction, can be the difference between the literate life and the illiterate one" (Donna Gordon, Reading Specialist).

References
Appendix A

Case Study Analysis in Reading/Language Arts:
Getting to the "Nitty-Gritty"

1. What are the student's strengths?
2. Is there a physical impairment that is affecting the student's reading?
3. What are the student's interests and attitude toward reading?
4. What skills does the student possess in the following areas: comprehension, phonemic awareness, word recognition and word meaning?
5. What is the parental attitude toward reading?
6. What is the student's perception of her reading problem? The parent's perception? The teacher's perception?
7. Is the student reading and receiving instruction in her primary language?
Appendix B

*Case Study Outline:*

1. **Background Information?**
   - A. Interests?
   - B. Attitude?
   - C. Ability in reading? (Test scores ...)
   - D. Description of current reading program?
   - E. Problem?

2. **Strategies?**
   - A. Cueing systems? (Semantic? Syntactic? Graphophonic?)
   - B. Predicting? Confirming? Integrating?

3. **Level of reading?**
   - A. Instructional reading level (oral and silent reading)?
   - B. Capacity level (listening)?

4. **Student's concept of reading?**
   - A. Bottom-up?
   - B. Top-down?
   - C. Interactive?

5. **Reading Strengths? Writing strengths?**
   - A.
   - B.
   - C.

6. **Reading needs? Writing needs?**
   - A.
   - B.
   - C.

7. **Recommendations for remediation?**
   - A. Parents (list of suggested books for reading aloud and list of books the child can read based on interests and readability).
   - B. School (a minimum of three strategies/activities and examples).

8. **Summary of experience**
   - A. Conclusions and reflections
   - B. Gaps? (Further questions to be explored).
Illustrations, Text, and the Child Reader: What are Pictures in Children's Storybooks for?

Zhihui Fang

Picture books are profusely illustrated books in which the illustrations are, to varying degrees, essential to the enjoyment and understanding of the story (Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown, 1996). As the most characteristic form of children's literature (Nodelman, 1996), picture books hold a prominent place in children's literature because of the juxtaposition of pictures and words. Thanks to the public's acute awareness of the importance of childhood in human development, to professional critical evaluation of children's literature, as well as to the advances in printing technology and art reproduction, children's literature has witnessed a dramatic increase in well-illustrated picture books.

Despite the popularity of picture books, the relationships of illustration to print and to the child reader remain little understood (Elster and Simons, 1985; Schallert, 1980). As Margaret Meek (1991) notes, "The relation of pictures to stories and the nature of the reader's interaction with both are an important aspect of literacy too little regarded and even less understood" (cited in Johnson, 1993, p. 20).
The purpose of this paper is two-fold: to delineate the main functions of illustrations in relation to the text in picture books and to examine the significance of illustrations to the child reader. While there are many kinds of picture books (e.g., alphabet books, counting books, concept books, wordless picture books, and picture storybooks), this article will focus on picture storybooks because they are most common among young children. Any reference to "print" or "text" throughout this paper denotes the linguistic text.

**Illustrations and the text**

According to Bodmer (1992), illustrations serve to "expand, explain, interpret, or decorate a written text" (p. 72). They perform certain functions that may differ from those of gallery paintings. Art work in picture books is most often concerned with storytelling. Therefore, illustrations in picture books may function in one or more of the following ways.

**Establish setting.** In picture books, as in all literature, setting is used to establish a story's location in time and place, create a mood, clarify historical background if necessary, provide an antagonist, or emphasize symbolic meaning (Norton, 1987). Picture storybooks, however, strongly or sometimes completely rely on illustrations to serve these functions of a setting. For example, time periods in historical stories or distant cultural settings can be brought to life through illustrations in ways words cannot do. Ronald Himler's illustrations for Byrd Baylor's *The Best Town in the World* (1983) show how important illustrations are for illuminating time and place in picture storybooks. While the brief poetic text alone tells little about the turn-of-the-century general store, the pictures help describe the many activities associated with a picnic celebration in the days when a picnic was a major social event.
Likewise, in *Boundless Grace* (1995), Caroline Binch presents to readers vivid pictures of many aspects of people's daily lives at Gambia. The house, the marketplace, the cloth stall, the food and the animals are so full of African spirits that readers can easily identify the setting of the story just by viewing the pictures. The illustrator effectively uses pictures to guide readers through this fascinating arm chair travel to Africa.

Illustrations are also extremely effective in determining the mood of a picture book. In Van Allsburg's award winning book, *The Polar Express* (1985), the author-illustrator, instead of employing a bright and cheery palette typically associated with merry Christmas, uses dull reds and blues and even pallid yellows along with plenty of black and brown to create a mysterious, gloomy, and somewhat scary mood. These dark colors help create and maintain an eerie feeling as a young boy watches a magical train steam its way into his front yard late Christmas eve, into dark forests filled with wolves, and to the North Pole.

**Define and develop characters.** The characters in picture books must have specific traits that make them appealing to the child reader and that meet the demands of the short format. Since a short story does not normally allow for more fully developed characters, illustrations help develop the characters by depicting situations and emotions immediately familiar and credible to the children. In wordless picture books the depiction and development of characters completely rely on illustrations. In picture storybooks, illustrations can supplement characterization in the text by showing the characters' actions and reactions to one another or giving characters an extra fleshing out. For example, in *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) Maurice Sendak uses few words to describe Max, the wild things, or the rumpus that takes place
between them. His illustrations, however, show these effectively. Paul Goble's *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* (1993) is also an excellent example of using pictures to define and develop the traits of the main character in the story. Readers can identify with the Indian girl's true love for horses when they see the many pictures in which the girl stays around the horses under different circumstances. As a result, children will not feel surprised when they get to know at the end of the story that the girl transforms into a horse.

In yet another example, the illustrations in *Ira Sleeps Over* (Waber, 1972) allow readers to learn much about Ira's parents that is not revealed in words. Readers can see his parents' interesting and somewhat unorthodox lifestyle, especially for the time when the book was published.

**Extend or develop plot.** The brevity of text in picture books often severely constrains the development of story plot. Thus, the plot of a story is often advanced by illustrations. In wordless picture books, the whole plot is unfolded through pictures. In picture storybooks the plot can be extended or rounded a little by illustrations. For example, in the first three pages of *Where the Wild Things Are*, readers know that the mother sends Max to confinement without supper because of his mischievous deeds. Even though the words used thus far do not say what has gone wrong with Max, the pictures explain his problem. Readers see him standing on books, hammering nails into the wall, and chasing the dog with a fork. The plot is further developed as Max's imagination goes wilder and wilder. Although words alone tell little about what happens between the time Max leaves the wild things and returns home, the pictures compensate for such lack of details; the illustrations grow larger and larger as the story drama develops and then become smaller again as Max returns to his mundane life.
In *The Relatives Came* (Rylant, 1985), the illustrator, Stephen Gammell, uses pictures to unfold the plot. Although Rylant's words say nothing about Dad's driving skills, the illustrations make it abundantly clear: Dad levels the mailbox on the driveway, loses suitcases, careens around mountain curves and destroys their relatives' fence upon arrival. Here we start seeing the humor inherent in an understated text that is elaborated in detail by pictures. Similarly, in *Boundless Grace*, the author displays Grace's conflict mentality by presenting a picture in which Jatou, Grace's African stepmother, is standing behind Grace and holding a plate of benachin in her hands while Grace is reading a book of fairy tales. Here the plot is greatly extended beyond the meaning of the accompanying text in that the pictures explain effectively why Grace feels cross with her stepmother. Readers can clearly infer from the picture that Grace's stereotyping of her stepmother may have come from fairy tales such as Snow White or Cinderella.

Provide a different viewpoint. Whether intended or not, illustrations sometimes tell a slightly different or even contradictory story than the text. It seems that the greater proportion of illustration to text, the greater the influence illustrations have in the creation of story (Lukens, 1990). In *Rosie's Walk* (Hutchin, 1968), the text says that Rosie, the hen, takes a peaceful stroll around the farm and gets "back in time for dinner." However, the illustrations relate another tale; a menacing fox lurks behind Rosie, ready to make the hen its dinner. It is as if Rosie (the printed text) is unaware of the fox (the pictured text).

Peter Spier's *Oh, Were They Ever Happy* (1978) is also a good example of words and illustrations that are humorously in opposition to one another. Children, who were
inadvertently left alone for the day because the babysitter has her days confused and doesn't show up, decide to do something nice for their parents — paint the house. Although the words say "Neat job!" and "Pretty color!" the pictures depict a terrible mess the children have been making. They paint the bricks and window panes, they finish one color of paint and take up with another. In Arthur Yorinks' *Hey Al* (1986), the illustrator, Richard Egielski, uses pictures to convey a contradictory message about the truth of the heaven. Through the pictures, readers can instantly tell from Al's facial expressions and his deformed figure that the heaven is not what it is supposed to be in Al's imagination.

**Contribute to textual coherence.** Coherence refers to the extent to which the sequencing or ordering of ideas in a text makes sense to its implied readers and the extent to which the language used in discussing those ideas make the nature of ideas and their relationships apparent (Tannen, 1984). Illustrations can contribute to textual coherence when well-integrated with print or through providing referential cues for the text. For example, the illustrations in *Where the Wild Things Are* play a crucial role in providing coherence to the story. When Max is banished to his room for bad behavior, the room gradually becomes the kingdom of the wild things, with trees growing naturally out of the bedposts and the shag rug turning into grass. As the plot progresses, the illustrations cover more and more of the page edging out print and when Max becomes king of the wild things, six pages of illustrations are uninterrupted by text.

In stories where personal and demonstrative pronouns (e.g., I, we, them, it, this, that) as well as location words (e.g., here, there) are used without clear referents in the prior text, the rendition of these expressions depend entirely on illustrations. In Keith Baker's *Who Is the Beast* (1990), for
example, the author begins the story with the line "The beast, the beast! I hurry on." Only by looking at the picture in the story book will the reader be able to figure out who "I" is — a flying bird. Here, by helping create textual cohesion, the pictures also provide a visual/social context for spoken language, thus bridging what Elster and Simons (1985) call "the gap between spoken and written language" (p. 149).

Reinforce text. In certain instances, the primary function of picture book illustrations is to reinforce, rather than to extend or amplify, the text. Nonfiction picture books often fall into this category, with the illustrations and diagrams providing a visual restatement of the words. Russell Freedman's *Children of the Wild West* (1983) is a case in point.

However, illustrations in a picture storybook may also function primarily to reinforce the story. In Robert McCloskey's (1948) *Blueberries for Sal*, for example, readers see what the countryside in Maine looks like as well as the characters who are out picking the blueberries, but no major extensions to the text are evident. In *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (Friedman, 1984), the pictures, depicting in detail the way Japanese eat and the way westerners eat, reinforce the text and help readers gain a better understanding of the differences between the oriental and occidental cultures.

Illustrations and the child reader.

Not only are illustrations integral to the text in picture books, they are also important to the child reader in a number of ways. Despite reasonable concerns among some literacy educators (Chall, 1967/83, Elster, 1995) that illustrious pictures may distract children's attention from print, thus hindering their word identification and acquisition of written language,
the contributions of pictures to the overall development of children's literate behavior seem to be overwhelmingly greater than its potential dangers. First, illustrations in picture books entice children to read and interact with text. They motivate young readers to find/name hidden objects/characters or to predict what is going to happen next. Young children love to play hide-'n-seek and look for hidden objects in pictures. As Perry Nodelman comments, "The excitement of a good picture book is the constant tension between the moments isolated by the pictures and the flow of words that join these moments together.

The jumpy rhythm of picture books is quite different from the gradually intensifying flow of stories told by words themselves" (quoted in Lukens, 1990, p. 217). For example, the illustrations in Keith Baker's *Who is the Beast* encourage young children to search for and identify the hidden beast. The artist has camouflaged the beast so well that children must carefully look for it. Children would miss a great deal of potential enjoyment if an adult reads the 206 words of the text without encouraging the children to find and identify the animal in the pictures. Tana Hoban's *Take Another Look* (1981) encourages children to make predictions. This fascinating book allows the child reader to peek through a hole and see a portion of the photograph found on the following page. Children can relate what they think the picture is, and why, before turning the page to see if their prediction was correct.

Second and somewhat related to the above point, picture books can serve as an effective tool to stimulate and promote children's creativity. By reading picture books without too much linguistic text, children learn to use their active imagination to interpret and (re)create a mental representation of the story. Children often associate pictures with their life experiences or familiar images, construct meaning based on
their existing schemas or schemata. Children often come up with unique and creative interpretation of the plot, settings, and characters when they read picture books. For example, the child reader and the adult reader may like David Wiesner's *Tuesday* (1991) for different reasons. In this book, Wiesner uses a very limited number of words to provide readers a time frame.

Other than that, the reader has to use their own imagination and judgment to predict and interpret what is going on in the story. For example, the book has a picture of pigs floating in the air without any accompanying text. Here the reader is invited to use their own imagination to predict future adventures of the pigs. This encourages the child reader to create their own stories based on their imagination and creativity.

Third, illustrations are important in that they provide mental scaffolds for the child reader, thus facilitate their understanding of the written text. The short attention spans of the young child, coupled with their limited vocabulary, syntax and world knowledge, place special demands on illustrations to help develop plots and characters so that fewer words and less complex syntax can be used. Reading comprehension has been characterized as a constructive process in which the reader uses what is already known to help interpret the new information in the text (Anderson and Pearson, 1984).

As first-order symbols, pictures represent relatively concrete, familiar experience, something young readers can easily identify with. As second-order symbols, words are more abstract and detached from immediate experience. Thus, by juxtaposing the more familiar and concrete with the more abstract semiotic symbols, picture books maximize text comprehensibility. Without pictures, the text is decontextualized.
Further, illustrations in picture books prompt an active elaboration of the printed text, thus facilitating learning by inducing the child reader to form mental images of the information (Schallert, 1980). As Nodelman (1996) speculates, young children need pictures in books "because they find them easier to understand than words and need pictorial information to guide their response to verbal information" (p. 216).

Fourth, illustrations in picture books foster children's aesthetic appreciation of art and beauty. According to Broudy (1977), aesthetic sensitivity to art and beauty is important because "it is a primary source of experience on which all cognition, judgment, and action depend. It furnishes the raw material for concepts and ideas, for creating a world of possibility" (p. 636). In the same token, Johnson (1993) considers aesthetic experiences a basic in children's education and calls for fostering both children's linguistic and visual literacy.

Aesthetic appreciation can be developed in part by consistent exposure to a wide variety of art works that are coupled with pleasing stories in today's picture books. As "a perfect vehicle for opening a child's eyes to the beauty and power of art" (Jacobs and Tunnell, 1996, p. 34), illustrations in picture books allow young readers not only to become aware of the variety of artistic styles and media that artists employ but also develop a sense of judging quality. Many parents and teachers take the opportunity to comment on the art work as they share picture books with children (Dickinson and Keebler, 1989; Elster, 1995; Snow and Ninio, 1986). Their comments range from what they like about an illustration to calling attention to how artistic styles in different picture books vary and which of the varying styles the children prefer and why. Children's taste and appreciation can be cultivated and expanded as they are exposed to more picture books.
Fifth, illustrations in picture books foster children's language and literacy development. The combination of intriguing text, art, and topics found in picture books feed children ideas, stimulates their imagination and curiosity, and provides them with a rich vocabulary to use in book-related questions and discussions (Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown, 1996). In addition, through such reading and responding (e.g., drawing and writing) to picture books, children hone their speaking and writing skills. Johnson (1993) noted that in picture books the child reader enters the dual-meaning environment and extracts from it an enhanced understanding of linguistic language. For example, Robert McCloskey's *Time of Wonder* (1957) describes a family's experiences on an island in Maine. The story's natural setting (established through illustrations) establishes a context that helps children better understand concepts such as porpoise, gull, barnacle, bay, island and driftwood, thus encouraging them to expand their vocabularies. The story's vivid language and figures of speech, coupled with illustrations, acquaint children with new ways of experiencing and describing what they see and hear in the world around them: rustling leaves, heavy stillness, slamming rain, and gentle wind soft as a lullaby. As choppy waves indicate the approaching storm, McCloskey affords the child reader many opportunities to observe the sharp contrasts in nature (Nodelman, 1996).

**Conclusion**

In summary, illustrations in picture books are meant to delight, to capture attention, to amplify or tell a story, to teach a concept, and to develop appreciation and awareness in children. Given the important role illustrations play in children's picture books and in children's language and literacy development, it is imperative that teachers, textbook writers and illustrators become more sensitive to the information
conveyed through the delicate interplay of print, pictures, and the child reader.

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Simple Lessons from Multicultural Children

Joanne Cunard

After designing, initiating, and collecting observational data for two years from a program for a kindergarten class of children representing several different ethnic groups, we present you with some insights to be considered by teachers and faculty.

Teachers as researchers

Pam Ouellette and I met at a Greater Hartford Teachers Applying Whole Language (TAWL) Meeting. I was teaching college classes in reading, language arts and children's literature; and she was teaching kindergarten. As Connecticut's demographics changed to include children from Russia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, and Puerto Rico, I felt that my courses needed revision to help my college students teach this diverse population.

Pam was a kindergarten teacher with ten years experience teaching in an inner city school. Her students had moved to America within the last three years, and few of their parents spoke English. Their inner city neighborhood was rife with crime and drugs. Home visits from the police were common. The cultural minority groups in Pam's school as a whole were the majority of the population. No one knew their cultures from inside as they did.
Pam wanted to develop a holistic literature-based curriculum in her inner city classroom but was fearful of neglecting the requisite hierarchical skill-based reading instruction embraced by her colleagues. As we talked during our first meeting, we discovered the journals and reference books we read in common. We talked about empowerment, teachers as researchers, literature-based instruction, holistic curriculum, at-risk learners, and multicultural education. We wanted to try what we had read about. After further meetings, we agreed upon the following.

**The preliminary program design**

Theoretical underpinnings. Children are competent language users, learners, thinkers with cultural experiences. In school children use these strengths when reading, writing, listening, and speaking. They are encouraged to use these strategies in naturally occurring personal and social contexts; that is, in situations with real and authentic purposes, audiences and content (Teale, 1986; 1987). Advocates of a whole literacy philosophy agree that children will learn to read and write, as they learned to speak, when immersed in literate environments (Bridges, 1989). Recently, Flores (1991) cited eighteen research studies from multiple disciplines demonstrating the language and cultural strengths that language learners bring to school.

Pam and I wanted to use this language and cultural foundation for their knowledge construction. We had read much about the integration and use of multicultural literature and content into regular curricula to foster appreciation and understanding of the cultural diversity of our country (Rudman, 1976). But we wanted books that focused on the cultures and experiences of the children in the classroom.
The children. Of the 28 children (10 = male, 18 = female) in the a.m. kindergarten, 18 were African-American, 3 were Asian, and 7 were Hispanic. We used the p.m. kindergarten as a control group.

Data collection. We collected and analyzed data from: 1) observations; 2) verbatim quotes from the children; 3) field notes; 4) slides and 5) conversations with parents. From the data we could describe the culture, develop theory, and redesign our curriculum. In the a.m. kindergarten we created the schedule with multicultural literature for math, science, journals, shared reading, DEAR, writing, drama and story time. In the p.m. kindergarten we followed the school curriculum using the provided books and materials. We looked for behaviors that evinced emergent literacy characteristics such as an interest in books shown by going to the book corner, holding books, turning the pages, looking at the pictures, and talking while looking at and turning the pages. In general, we wanted to see the children interact with, and respond when appropriate through art, drama, talk, and writing.

Program philosophy

The preliminary program design was organized by three guidelines: 1) to teach emergent literacy concepts through an integrated language arts philosophy (Clay, 1991; Coody, 1983; Cullinan, 1987; Morrow, 1989; Schickedanz, 1986; Strickland and Morrow, 1989); 2) to use picture books with familiar social, cultural models that helped the children see that their own experiences are reflected in literature and that they are included in the culture of literacy; and 3) to share (Des Chenes, 1992; Diakiw, 1990; Harrington, 1993) responsibility for their own learning by freely initiating interactions with print materials.
We began using literature with repetition and refrain (Rhodes, 1981). The children were quick to hear the language patterns and respond to the literature. Soon *Chicken Soup With Rice* (Sendak, 1962) became *Fish Stew With Rice*. We selected books representing the cultures of the children in the class: *Honey, I Love and Other Poems* (Greenfield, 1978); *Baby-O* (Carlstrom, 1991); *Shimmey Shake, Earthquake* (Greenfield, 1992); *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* (Steptoe, 1987); *Arroz con leche* (Delacre, 1989); and *Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs* (De Paola, 1989). Comments such as "that book's about my grandma" became common.

We infused literature in every lesson. For example, before reading aloud *Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs*, we taught book and print awareness concepts by demonstrating how to hold a book and by showing the beginning, the middle, and the end of the book. While reading aloud, we used echoic reading by having the children repeat phrases and assisted reading as we ran our finger under the print while we read, showing the correspondence between oral and written codes. During the reading we also modeled metacognition by sharing our thoughts: "The book didn't say that Nana was alone upstairs. I wonder if she is. Maybe it said so, but I don't remember reading that. I'll go back and read a few pages to look for the answer." We also elicited predictions from the children: "My grandmother never stays home alone because she is so sick. How about your grandmother?" After the reading, opportunities for response (Rosenblatt, 1983; Roser and Martinez, 1995) stressed all language functions (Halliday, 1973) through print and non-print modes; e.g., conferences, journals, scribble/letter writing, music, drama. The program intent was to empower the children as emergent readers.
Observations

During recess duty, we noticed that, like children's literature, the children's jump rope rhymes had cadences with repetition and refrains. We didn't make the connection to our classroom curriculum until we shared a song titled *Arroz con lech*, which is sung in school yards across Puerto Rico. The Hispanic children who knew this song were excited to sing their playground tune in the American school. Unself-consciously, they began leading the other children. We realized our less structured environment was freeing the children not only to participate, but also to initiate. The children brought their playground jump rope rhymes to the classroom. Next, Kurtes, Dwight and Mike brought rap songs by Kriss Kross and Boyz II Men. A metamorphosis had begun. Taking texts from the children, their social and cultural language, we recorded each jump rope rhyme and rap verse on chart paper. We made classroom and individual books. These became the text for the emergent literacy activities: experience charts, assisted reading, rearranging sentences and words in sentences, using the lyricist's pattern to create new texts, and phoneme-grapheme tasks such as consonant substitution and ready-set-show (Cunningham, 1977).

In addition to recording their contributions, together we composed class rap songs using the rhythm cadence from their favorite rap. For example, "I be bee bop" was based on the book *Green Lion of Zion Street* and a current rap song:

```
I be bee bop
I be bee bop
   Hip Hop
I be walkin'
I be walkin'
   walkin' talkin'
I be walkin'
I be talkin'
   I be walkin' talkin'
On = the way to school
```
Immediately, we saw the influence of dialects, literature, culture, and the playground jump rope rhymes. We saw the children as our curriculum informants. We followed the stages in the writing process (Calkins, 1986). The children called this a "freedom activity" because they were "freed up" to create their own composition. As a result, they experienced the feeling of authorship. One six-year-old from Malaysia did not speak in class (English, Spanish or Malaysian) until rap music became part of the curriculum. When we began to learn songs, she began to speak both English and Malaysian. With the songs as her impetus, she started writing in her journal in both English and Malaysian.

Each week more rap and rhymes were introduced by the children from their home cultures — hip hop, gospel, and reggae. Comin' On was created as a jump rope rhyme:

\[
\text{Comin' On} \\
\text{Comin' On} \\
\text{Comin' On} \\
\text{to yo' quick quick quick}
\]

\[
\text{Hoppin' Up} \\
\text{Hoppin' Up} \\
\text{Hoppin' Up} \\
\text{to yo' quick quick quick}
\]

\[
\text{Steppin' High} \\
\text{Steppin' High} \\
\text{Steppin' High} \\
\text{to yo' quick quick quick}
\]

\[
\text{QUICK JUMP THE ROPE} \\
\text{(Repeat from the beginning.)}
\]

Kim was the last to write in class. Again, the rap cadence was her impetus. Her first journal entry was a rap song restating in different rhymes "Writing about nothing."
For the first time, the children's families were asking questions about school and lingering when they brought the children to and from school. They asked us why their children needed paper and pens at home and what was happening in the classroom with all the rap. We invited the parents to come inside, and soon they became part of our curriculum. One parent, a musician, came regularly and helped us tape record with music the children's chants, rap and rhymes. Others came to share memories of their childhood; a Puerto Rican mother taught us multiple versions of "Arroz con leche" as it was sung in school years ago across Puerto Rico. Since the guests did not always speak English well, we recorded the stories in their native language, carefully preserving the original dialects. For all our Jamaican guests in particular, we took note of the large number of dialects. Later the children translated their relatives' stories as we recorded them on an experience chart. We were reading songs and stories in Spanish, Malaysian and English. We introduced personal journals by asking students to write down the stories told during the visits by the parents and relatives. Their recordings of the parents' and musicians' stories and songs were live models to the children that what they write in their journals should come from experiences and thinking.

The morning curriculum became infused with the children's and families' contributions. We counted every day 1-10, then 1-20 in English, then Malaysian and Spanish. We counted spiders from the parent-contributed songs. We made counting charts with the number words in different languages. The children made number correspondence pictures and words for items related to the children's culture. For example, one kente cloth, two goya juice cans. Seeing this, the parents donated supplies from home. Each learning center supported the cultural concepts from stories, rhymes and rap. In the housekeeping area we rotated items to create a Spanish,
an American, and a Malaysian home. The dramatic play area had clothes, props, and fabric supplied by the children and parents from countries other than America. The listening cubes had class-made tapes of the songs and poems from the different cultures represented in the class. We continued to use multicultural children's literature to plan and teach, but we now wove their cultural texts and learning experiences into the curriculum. For example, when researching whales, we included whales near Puerto Rico, whales near Malaysia, whales near the United States. We composed whale songs indicative of each culture. We made and counted using the Malaysian art form of Batik. We made the listening center with poetry and songs from the islands of Jamaica, Haiti and Puerto Rico. The library contained a large collection of the parents' and relatives' stories, charts, books, and audiotapes of memories, playground chants, rap and rhyme songs.

How the children changed

Through observation we documented three changes in children of the a.m. kindergarten program that did not occur in the p.m. kindergarten program. The first change was the increased spontaneity of the children in the classroom. They now moved about the room when they needed to use a journal, talk with another child, or use a center. At first they had to be prompted to self-select an activity, but soon choice became natural. Since the classroom inclusion of the playground rap, rhymes, and the stories of parents, the children became more self-directed (Hoskisson, 1975) and we became less directive.

The second observed and recorded change was an increase in expressive behavior. Our observation records showed an increase in both self-initiated communication and responsive language for all the children. They initiated and participated in the choral reading of rap and rhymes. They
conversed fully with each other about their reading and writing while working at different learning centers. Small and large group discussions were more spontaneous as each child participated with increased frequency and duration. We did not observe these changes in the p.m. kindergarten children.

The third and most dramatic change was the inclusion and acceptance of the children's social and cultural worlds into the classroom curriculum. When we introduced literature books that reflected the backgrounds of the children in our classroom, we had hoped to facilitate emergent literacy concepts. Instead what occurred was an awakening of ideas and coming together of people's social and cultural heritage which became the content and motivated the learning process for all the children and parents involved. Bosma (1991) points out how African-American children respond to the person voice African tales by feeling an immediate bond with the language of the story. The children brought the rhymes, rap and stories from the playground and their homes into the classroom. Thus, our original program design was extensively modified to build upon the stories, rhymes, jingles, and rap from their social and cultural worlds (Johnson, 1991).

New perspectives

Based on this preliminary program design and our observations, our plans for teaching and researching next are: 1) to create units with centers from the children's stories, music and rhyme contributions; 2) to schedule regular visits from parents and musicians, 3) to scaffold emergent literacy concepts into a scope and sequence plan that coordinates with the child-initiated content, 4) to expand the program to use both the a.m. and p.m. kindergarten. For Pam and me, we plan to observe, respond to, and use the cultural, linguistic, and social contributions of the children and their relatives and to make
regular home visits to support the parents' interest in school and in their children's literacy development.

The families of immigrant and minority students are deeply interested in the education of their children (Cummins, 1989; Trueba and Delgado-Gaitan, 1989; Heath, 1983). Recent works (Morrow, 1995; Unwin, 1995) document this interest as indicated by surveys of family literacy in the U.S.

By accepting the children's as well as their families' knowledge about their language and culture, we acknowledged their self-worth. Children tell stories and use rap and colloquial language. Cultural diversity in curriculum planning mandates that the canon of literature must make room for the rhymes and chants that come from multicultural traditions. For us, the children defined what was culturally authentic (Harrington, 1993). The children are now part of the larger culture of literacy.

Our school system, once public, has recently been purchased by a private company, EAI (Education Alternatives, Inc.). We hope our curriculum plans won't be changed.

References


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Sequel to Popular Title on Storytelling Announced

Judy Sierra's Multicultural Folktales for the Feltboard and Readers' Theater, new from Oryx Press, gives educators, librarians, and storytellers a way to nurture young children's awareness and appreciation of different global cultures, customs, and traditions both around the world and within their own communities.

A sequel to the Oryx bestseller Multicultural Folktales: Stories to Tell Young Children by Sierra and Robert Kaminski, this new volume features 20 short folktales from around the world suitable for grades K-6.

Multicultural Folktales for the Feltboard and Readers' Theater, ISBN 1-57356-003-0, has 192 pages, is illustrated, and is priced at $26.50 in North America. To order, contact The Oryx Press at P.O. Box 33889, Phoenix, AZ 85067-3889. Call toll free 800-279-6799, or fax 800-279-4663. Please add 10% for shipping and handling, plus sales tax in AZ, MS, and Canada.
Be Ready for the Censorship Challenge

Linda Mixon Clary

In using a large variety of materials with readers and urging them to read widely, educators must realize that they will likely encounter problems with censorship. People for the American Way reported a new high in the number of cases reported in the United States in 1994 with a total of 760 incidents, a trend that has been in effect over the past twenty years (Simmons, 1994).

These facts, as well as Supreme Court rulings on this subject, suggest caution for the schools of our nation. Decisions that allow local communities to determine what is and what is not appropriate have led to self-appointed guardians of our children's morals and innocence who demand removal of many books from library and classroom bookshelves. This censorship might be done with the best intentions, but it constitutes an attack on the individual's right to read.

The threat is there. It is frighteningly real. It will take determined and prepared educators and public citizens to protect the rights of our young people and to maintain for them a wide variety of literature. However, as the respected Albert Harris (1956) said forty years ago, children do not develop reading tastes by being allowed to read only superior reading
matter. Their ability to discriminate develops through comparison and contrast, rather than from ignorance.

The purpose of this paper is to alert educators to the problems of censorship, to give specific examples of works that have been challenged, and to suggest means for being prepared to meet the censor. This knowledge is necessary for all of those who work with readers as they learn to be discriminating; it is a mandate for having the "freedom to read" in our schools in the years to come.

Intellectual freedom implies that the teacher and the students operate in an open atmosphere. The courts, however, have based their decisions concerning academic freedom on the age and sophistication of the students and the relationship of methods and materials to valid educational use. They have ruled differently on cases brought at the college and high school levels. These differences are justified by the three factors of the age of the students, compulsory attendance laws, and the need for the support of a preponderant body of educators. Most cases can be divided into two categories: teachers who sue when they are not allowed to use certain materials and parents and students who object to specific works.

There are great numbers of organizations and individuals involved in this movement. The American Civil Liberties Union, the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), the American Library Association (ALA), and the International Reading Association (IRA) support the belief of a universal right to read. In fact, NCTE and IRA (1993) have published guidelines for schools to deal with censorship. Conversely, there are numerous groups committed to censorship, including Parents for Decency in Our Schools, the Eagle Forum, Save Our Schools, the Pro-Family Forum, Citizens for
Excellence in Education, the National Legal Forum, and Educational Research Analysts.

While these beliefs may sound like an either-or situation, it is extremely difficult to balance academic freedom for educators. If educators want freedom, students must also be given freedom. Restrictive codes, regimented classrooms, and autocratic administrative decision-making do not create an atmosphere that is conducive to the freedom to learn. Likewise, parents must be allowed to seek alternative assignments for their children and to make reasonable objections based on careful reading of complete materials, not passages taken out of context. They must also understand that what they find inappropriate for their child might not be offensive to all students, and they cannot be censors for all youngsters without impinging on individual rights.

Consideration of materials that have been involved in questions of censorship or controversy constitute an interesting part of the knowledge base required to deal with this subject. They also alert educators to possible problems before they arise. Both books for younger children, such as Witches by Roald Dahl (Hydrick, 1994) and older classics for adolescents, such as Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men, have received criticism. The use of periodicals, including National Geographic, Life, Glamour, Time, Psychology Today, and Sports Illustrated, has been questioned as well. A more in-depth look at some examples clarifies their use.

Go Ask Alice, written by an anonymous author and published twenty five years ago in 1971, is frequently the target of censors. It is a book with coarse language and harsh, disgusting, real descriptions. It is an authentic truthful diary of a young girl who begins writing as a typical teenager in a middle-class family. The diary records her introduction to
drugs, her pursuit of greater and greater "highs," her relentless degradation of self, her struggles at self-rehabilitation, and her eventual death by an overdose. Little of it is pretty, but students will recognize it as real and might be affected by the powerful message it conveys. Its potential for influencing students in a health class is much greater than lectures, brochures, and "Just Say No" campaigns on the danger of drug abuse. If it positively influences just one student to stay away from drugs, isn't it worthwhile for adolescents to read? In addition, it offers a graphic source for studying literacy elements and the social realities of drug culture.

The same is true of books like the regularly-challenged The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger, 1951). As Gloria Swenson (as cited in "Censorship: A Continuing Problem, p. 88, 1990), a secondary English teacher in Wisconsin, points out, students often learn very powerful messages from the vicarious experience of literature. After a year in which her use of Salinger's book was questioned and she felt threats of physical violence, job loss, harm to her children, and community polarization, she asked her students to write what moral they had learned from the book. Two of their answers, printed below, are powerful statements:

This book has taught me it is wrong to commit suicide.
This book made me realize it's OK to say "No" if I don't want to have sex.

Swenson concludes that she has yet to find "a substitute that conveys those messages to teenagers." (p. 88)

Many other titles have been questioned in various communities throughout this country. Ken Donelson (1990),
who has studied censorship for many years, has ranked the most "protested/attacked/censored" books to be listed in the Newsletter of Intellectual Freedom from 1952-1989. Most are intended for adolescents. He notes that J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* has been protested 71 times in the Newsletter, while *Go Ask Alice* rates 31 incidents, and *Of Mice and Men*, 29. The rest range from 18 to 3, with Salinger, Blume, and Steinbeck leading the challenged authors. The appendix shows Donelson's complete list by rank.

However, many others have also been involved in attacks. According to McCarthy (1989), *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Frank, 1957) has been challenged for making all religions equal, while the supernatural references in *Cinderella*, *Macbeth*, and the *Wizard of Oz* have led to their attacks. Even *Romeo and Juliet* has been cited as a romantic view of teenage suicide.

More recently, the American Library Association (1995) reported 760 challenges to public and school libraries and materials in 1994. That list contains books on topics of sexuality, the supernatural, and related subjects. *Daddy's Roommate* (Willhoite, 1991) was first; *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Newman, 1991) and *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* (Schwartz, 1981) tied for second. *Forever* (Blume, 1975), *The Chocolate War* (Cormier, 1974) and *Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) made both lists.

This subject of how to meet the censor is probably the most important to be considered here; preparedness is the key to success in situations where controversy over books arise. If a school system has an accepted code of selection and an adopted method for handling censorship questions, many problems can be avoided. If a case is pursued, a school system with a specific procedure to follow has a better chance to win
its case than the unprepared one. It is also wise to know organizations that are supportive of intellectual freedom and who publish helpful information that can be used in formulating policies. The American Civil Liberties Union, the American Library Association, the International Reading Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English are among those who do. *The Intellectual Freedom Manual* (3rd ed.) (1989) and *Celebrating the Freedom to Read: Banned Books Week '93 Resource Book and Guide* (Doyle, 1993) are very helpful. *Common Ground,* (1993) a pamphlet by the NCTE/IRA Task Force on Intellectual Freedom contains an action plan and specific strategies for practitioners from the local to the international level.

Many helpful articles have also been published to guide teachers and administrators at all levels. The book *Censorship: A Threat to Reading, Learning, and Thinking* (1994) contains separate chapters for administrators, new teachers, secondary English instructors, media specialists and school board members. Stern's ideas for secondary English teachers are applicable with slight modifications for teachers at all levels and even contain sample forms. *Being Proactive, Not Waiting for the Censor* (Brown & Stephens, 1994) suggests guidelines for schools to use in forming committees to develop policies and procedures before a problem arises. Margo Sacco (1993) and NCTE have published rationales for books that are frequently censored, a step that can save endless hours of work.

Once a decision is made to adopt a censorship policy, the first step should be establishing a committee that will develop it. Such a committee should include administrators, teachers, librarians, school board members, parents, community activists, and students. Such a cross-section will give a variety of views and allow for input of information into the adoption
of the policy. A parent's view may be very different from a teacher's or student's or town council member's, but each has a right to that opinion. Initial consideration of these divergent views will make the code more likely to be endorsed and applied once it is adopted.

After the committee is formed, it will be necessary for it to develop several procedures. The most important of these should probably cover the three areas of materials selection, handling complaints, and public relations. First, a materials selection policy must be written. Such a policy should encompass the philosophy of the school system and reflect a consensus of the committee's views after they have sought input from throughout the community. There is no one specific way to compose the policy, although helpful information is available from organizations such as those noted above. However, it should require professional documentation and rationales of the appropriateness of materials for certain ages. Once adopted, it should be applied equally to all materials that are purchased or acquired as gifts. The area of technology should also be covered.

After the policy is set, a definite procedure on handling any censorship complaints should be set up. Again, there is no uniform procedure. Usually, there is a published form that must be submitted to make a formal complaint. These are generally one to two pages, but one Michigan teacher has written that his principal wrote one of fourteen pages (Censorship, A Continuing Problem, 1990). Since complaints usually begin with phone calls, the complainant should be listened to courteously, sent the form, and upon its return, notified of a hearing. The form should be designed so that passages cannot be taken out of context, and the entire text must be read to answer questions. Specific information should be required, including quotations and page numbers of
objectionable passages, the number of people involved in the group who are complaining, suggestions of solutions that the complainant would like considered, and listings of alternative texts that could be used in place of the questioned material. These detailed questions usually mean that those who are protesting may "cool off" in the time required to answer them and then react with less emotion and more reason. They also require reading the entire work. During any conversations between the school personnel and the complainants, great care must be taken to make no commitments, admissions of guilt or threats. Detailed, dated notes should be kept.

If the case is pursued to the point that the form is returned, all parties involved (as defined by the adopted policy) should be notified and should meet promptly, following standardized procedures outlined in the policy. The necessary meetings and hearings should be open to the public. As soon as a decision is reached, all participants should be notified in writing of the decision and the rationale behind it. There should be a route of appeal if the complainant is not satisfied. Eventually, of course, the courts may become involved, but that route can prove to be very time-consuming, costly, and divisive.

Finally, public relations should be an important part of a censorship policy. Civic, religious, educational, and political groups all need to have a clear understanding of how materials are selected for their schools and what they can do when they feel that there is a problem. Therefore, these policies need to be publicized in the media and easily accessible in every school. If the school district is doing its job, they will have their policies in place that have come from community input. There should be no reason to fear challenges if they are handled professionally, honestly, and openly.
Jongsma (1991) also advocates some additional steps. She suggests the importance of knowing the community's standards and keeping abreast of them as they evolve. Careful reading of all materials before they are used in the classroom is mandatory, as well as communicating the rationale for using specific works. She also recommends the rather novel idea of developing a community support group from citizens who believe in intellectual freedom before a problem comes up, so that they can be called on when needed.

It is evident that being prepared for censorship problems is not an easy, simple or new task. However, it is very necessary, and should not be ignored, since preparation helps prevent problems. Even though this incident happened a long time ago, one teacher reported (Hove, 1967) his true story of an experience with controversial books. He sent his reading list home, noted the professional selection aids that he had used to choose them, encouraged parents to read the books with their children, and suggested that parents come in for conferences with him if they had any questions. In three years, he had only a half dozen conferences; all were pleasant. There was no attempt to eliminate any of the books and no negative media publicity. In addition, the teacher got his masters degree, became a department head, and gained tenure at his school. While the political climate today is obviously more controversial, Hove's strategy is still sound.

Swenson (as cited in "Censorship: A Continuing Problem, 1990) practiced many of the same steps in her teaching of Catcher in the Rye in recent years. Marsh (1991) reinforces much of it in her book, 50 Ways to Fight Censorship and Important Facts to Know. Also, the NCTE/IRA pamphlet "Common Ground" suggests similar steps at the local level.
While the necessity for all this work and the possibility of unpleasant situations may make educators reluctant to become involved in programs that stress wide reading, this quote from a letter by the popular author, Pat Conroy, to a Charleston, South Carolina, English teacher who ventured to use his challenged book, *The Prince of Tides*, may balance the risks with the rewards. Conroy wrote:

*I call you Great Teacher ... It is because of teachers that I write books for a living. It was in the classrooms of my childhood that the English language first came to me in a visitation of light and fire. When teachers led me to books, they were handing me the keys to the city of literature, and offering to show me the shape and configuration of the tree of life itself* (cited in Vernelson, 1988).

Can the threat of censorship, the work involved in being prepared for such cases, and the likely personal and professional turmoil of these situations keep today's teachers from so empowering our students? "Schools should teach students how to think, not what to think. To study an idea is not necessarily to endorse an idea." (Connecticut State Department of Education cited in National School Boards Association, 1989). Yet, old ideas must be studied from many books for new ones to be born.

References
Censorship attempts focusing more often on school libraries, groups say. (1989, August). *Education Daily, 5*. 


Linda Mixon Clary is a faculty member in the Department of Education at Augusta State University, in Augusta Georgia.
## Appendix

#### Most Protested/Attacked/Censored Books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Catcher in the Rye</td>
<td>J.D. Salinger</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Go Ask Alice</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Of Mice and Men</td>
<td>John Steinbeck</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Forever</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Soul on Ice</td>
<td>Eldridge Cleaver</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grapes of Wrath</td>
<td>John Steinbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</td>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Flowers for Algernon</td>
<td>Daniel Keyes</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Manchild in the Promised Land</td>
<td>Claude Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Deenie</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Brave New World</td>
<td>Aldous Huxley</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Lord of the Flies</td>
<td>William Golding</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Slaughterhouse Five</td>
<td>Kurt Vonnegut</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Then Again, Maybe I Won't</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>To Kill a Mockingbird</td>
<td>Harper Lee</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Catch-22</td>
<td>Joseph Heller</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>The Chocolate War</td>
<td>Robert Cormier</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Inner City Mother Goose</td>
<td>Eve Merriam</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>The Learning Tree</td>
<td>Gordon Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Black Boy</td>
<td>Richard Wright</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>George Orwell</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Run, Shelley, Run</td>
<td>Gertrude Samuel</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Down These Mean Streets</td>
<td>Piri Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>It’s Okay if You Don’t Love Me</td>
<td>Norma Klein</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>My Darling, My Hamburger</td>
<td>Paul Zindel</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</td>
<td>A. Solzhenitzyn</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Ordinary People</td>
<td>Judith Guest</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>The Color Purple</td>
<td>Alice Walker</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>A Clockwork Orange</td>
<td>Anthony Burgess</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>A Farewell to Arms</td>
<td>Ernest Hemingway</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>A Hero Ain’t Nothin’ but a Sandwich</td>
<td>Alice Childress</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Blubber</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Nigger</td>
<td>Dick Gregory</td>
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Using Vocabulary Studies to Teach Contextual Analysis in Grade Four

Susan M. Watts
Julie Bucknam

Increasingly, researchers are calling for four strands to comprise the elementary school vocabulary program: direct instruction in the meanings of individual words, the improvement of students’ independent word learning strategies, motivation for word learning, and many opportunities for wide reading (Irvin, 1990; Graves, 1995). Strategies for independent word learning are particularly important because wide reading offers students the opportunity to learn as many as 3,000 word per year if they can successfully apply structural analysis and contextual analysis to the new words they encounter (Anderson, 1995). In fact, it has been argued that most vocabulary is learned from context, as opposed to direct instruction in individual word meanings (Sternberg, 1987), and many studies have shown that students benefit from being taught how to use contextual analysis to unlock the meanings of unknown words (Buikema and Graves, 1993; Carnine, Kameenui, and Coyle, 1984; Goerss, Beck, and McKeown, 1994; Jenkins, Matlock, and Slocum, 1989; Schwartz and Raphael, 1985).

However, there have been several criticisms of research on contextual analysis instruction (Kuhn and Stahl, 1996; Nist
and Olejnik, 1995). First, many studies failed to incorporate naturally occurring texts in the instructional process, relying instead on passages written specifically for the purpose of teaching contextual analysis. Such contrived passages often contain more context clues than are found in passages that children typically encounter. Second, most of the research has been short-term. Thus, Graves (1986) has called for long term studies and for studies of how various approaches to word learning fit into the larger picture of vocabulary development in school. Third, research has been criticized for using weak assessments of the effects of instruction (Kilian, Nagy, Pearson, Anderson, and Garcia, 1995). Specifically, assessments that require students to demonstrate that they either know or do not know the meaning of a word are insensitive to the incremental nature of word learning. Word knowledge exists on a continuum ranging from no knowledge to full knowledge with levels of partial knowledge in between (Beck and McKeown, 1991; Chambers, 1904; Dale, 1965). Thus strong assessments are those which capture degrees or levels of word knowledge.

The study reported here was designed to transcend some of the weaknesses of previous research and add to our knowledge about the potential benefits of teaching students to use contextual analysis as a tool for independent word learning. Specifically, the following research questions guided the study: 1) What is the effect of doing weekly vocabulary studies on students' proficiency in using contextual analysis? 2) What is the effect of doing weekly vocabulary studies on students' attitudes toward words and word learning?

**Method**

**Participants.** Students in two fourth grade classrooms participated in this study. Students in Julie's classroom were taught how to do vocabulary studies and did one vocabulary
study each week for five months. Students in the other, comparison classroom did no vocabulary studies over the course of the school year, nor did they learn how. Students in both classrooms were predominantly white and attended the same suburban elementary school in the midwest. Both classroom teachers used a literature-based approach to reading instruction. Performance on the Metropolitan Achievement Test-7 (Balow, Farr, and Hagan, 1993) indicated that most of the students read on or above grade level at the start of the study. Complete sets of data were collected for 29 students in Julie's classroom and 30 students in the comparison classroom.

Data Sources. This study included two sources of data. The first, the context clue test, was used to determine the effects of the vocabulary studies approach on students' abilities to use contextual analysis successfully. This test consists of ten passages, each containing a difficult word whose meaning must be determined by using the surrounding context (see Figure 1). After reading each passage, students are asked to define the unknown word using their own words and to list the clues that helped them to determine the word's meaning.

Figure 1

Sample Item from the Context Clue Test

On Tuesday, Jane was very stubborn. Her parents told her to clean her room before dinner. Jane played a game instead. At dinner time, Jane wasn't allowed to have dessert because she had not cleaned her room. Her parents then told her that she could watch TV only after she cleaned her room. Again, Jane refused to clean her room. Jane's parents couldn't understand why Jane was being recalcitrant. Recalcitrant means:

What clues helped you decide on this meaning?
The test is similar in format to a test designed by Buikema and Graves (1993) and similar in content to a test designed by Carnine, Kameenui, and Coyle (1984). Therefore, the surrounding context included a synonym clue for the unknown word and clues varied across passages in their proximity to the unknown word. Each of the unknown words appears less than four times in a million running words at the fourth grade level (Carroll, Davies, and Richman, 1971). Although passage length prohibited the application of readability formulas, two classroom teachers and two professors of reading education judged the passages to be within the range of reading ability of the average third grader.

The second source of data, student interviews, provided information about students' attitudes toward words, word learning, and the vocabulary studies approach. An attempt was made to ask open-ended questions then probe student responses rather than asking "leading questions" that might direct students' responses (Patton, 1990). The interviews were guided by the following questions: 1) What do you think of when you hear the word vocabulary? 2) What do you think of learning new words? 3) In the past, how have you learned new words in school? 4) What do you do when you're reading by yourself and you come to a word you don't know? The May interview also included the question, "What do you think of the vocabulary studies you've been doing this year?"

Procedures. Students in both classrooms took the Context Clue Test in November and May of the school year during which the study took place. The tests were administered by the classroom teachers who read a standard set of instructions to students and let them work as long as they wished. In addition to explaining the format of the test and the way in which students were expected to respond, students were instructed that, "This is a test of what typical fourth
Six students, randomly selected from all of the students in Julie's class, were interviewed in November and May. Interviews were conducted by a graduate student and took approximately 10 minutes each. Students were informed that the purpose of the interview was to learn what fourth graders think about words. In both November and May, interviews were conducted after the context clue test was given. After the pretesting and interviewing in the fall, students in Julie's classroom were taught how to do a vocabulary study. The initial teaching period lasted for approximately two weeks after which students did one vocabulary study each week through the month of April.

Completing a vocabulary study. The vocabulary study process, a modification of Nist and Diehl's (1994) word study approach, is designed to provide students with an opportunity to practice contextual analysis using self-selected words and passages that they encounter in tradebooks.

The process requires students to first identify an unknown word in their reading material then to apply the following six steps: 1) Write the book title, page number, and unknown word on the top of the page; 2) Copy the sentence in which the unknown word appears; 3) Use the clues in the surrounding sentences to come up with an educated guess at the meaning of the unknown word and write your guess; 4) Write one or two sentences explaining which clues you used to come up with your guess and how you used those clues; 5) Look up the word in the dictionary and write the dictionary definition that best fits the context; and 6) Explain whether
your guess was close to the meaning of the unknown word and, if possible, why you were or were not able to come close given the available context. Two typical vocabulary studies appear in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Vocabulary Studies Completed by Two Students in Julie's Classroom*  
*(spelling has been corrected)*

**Example #1**

1. worsteds, p. 41, *Dolly Madison*
2. Also she gave her a box full of colored worsteds.
3. I think worsteds means some kind of string because in the sentences before it tells that Dolly also gets a piece of cloth to sew on and you can't sew without string.
4. a piece of string or yarn made out of wool. I think mine's the same.

**Example #2**

1. sledge, p. 102, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
2. It was a sledge, and it was reindeer with bells on their harness.
3. I think that a sledge is a sled or a sleigh, or something like that. I think it because further on (the next page) they say Santa in the sledge.
4. sledge, n. A large, heavy sled for carrying loads over ice, snow, etc. I think I was half right, because it was a sled, but I didn't know that it was to carry loads. I've learned a lot today.

The vocabulary studies process was designed to reflect Goerss, Beck and McKeown's (1994) guidelines for instruction in contextual analysis as well as research-based principles of effective vocabulary instruction more generally. Therefore it incorporates active involvement of the learner, in-depth work with the process, and practice with a variety of contexts over time (Irvin, 1990; Mezynski, 1983; Stahl and Fairbanks, 1986). It also includes a metacognitive component in Step 6, which invites students to reflect on their use of the strategy (Graves, 1987). Finally, by allowing students to select the word and passage for study, we hoped to increase motivation for
word learning and heighten students' word consciousness (Anderson and Nagy, 1993; Blachowicz and Fisher, 1996).

**Teaching vocabulary studies.** Students were taught to use vocabulary studies using Winograd and Hare's (1988) explicit instruction model for strategy development. This model consists of the following components: naming the strategy and explaining why it is important, explaining what the strategy consists of, modeling how to perform the strategy, explaining when to use the strategy during independent reading, providing time for guided practice, and providing time for independent practice. During the initial teaching period, Julie modeled the strategy using words in the book she was reading aloud to the class. She copied each word and its surrounding context on to a transparency. She then went through the steps of the vocabulary study process. Gradually, Julie talked less and encouraged her students to talk more. Ultimately, the class did a vocabulary study on its own. Students then selected an unknown word from a book they were currently reading on their own and repeated the procedure independently with Julie providing help as needed. After the initial teaching period, which lasted for approximately two weeks, students did a vocabulary study once each week using a word encountered in a book being read for reading instruction. Julie assigned one vocabulary study per week and allowed students to choose when they would do them, as long as they were done by Friday. Students kept their vocabulary studies in their vocabulary notebooks.

To assist students in doing their vocabulary studies, Julie had them record unknown words, as they were encountered, on Post-It notes kept on the inside cover of their books so that when they were ready to do their vocabulary studies, they had several words to choose from. Students also had personal copies of the steps involved in the process to serve as
reminders. Julie encouraged her students to seek help as they engaged in their vocabulary studies and she provided weekly written feedback to each student. In addition to written feedback, the strategy was reinforced by periodic whole-class reviews. Using transparencies of model student work, Julie reviewed the steps of the process and encouraged students to make observations about their peers' work.

Data Analysis

Context clue test. As discussed previously, the context clue test tapped two aspects of contextual analysis: the ability to glean knowledge about word meanings from context and the ability to identify helpful contextual clues. Student responses to the definition and clue prompts were scored separately and all responses were typed and corrected for spelling. Further, raters did not know whether they were scoring responses from Julie's classroom or the comparison classroom or whether they were scoring pretests or posttests. The author and a trained graduate student scored all student responses. Interrater reliability was 89%.

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Students' responses to the definition prompt were scored using a rubric designed to capture varying levels of
word knowledge. Each response was given a point value ranging from 0 to 4 where 0 indicates no response, 1 indicates a definition that is inadequate and incomplete, 2 indicates a definition that is incorrect but makes some reference to the text, 3 indicates a definition that makes sense within the context of the passage and is partially correct, and 4 indicates a definition that is completely correct. Correct definitions were those found in Webster's New World Dictionary (1988) that made sense in the context of the passage according to the author and two doctoral students in literacy education.

Students' responses to the clue prompt were also scored using a rubric designed to capture varying levels of metacognition regarding available clues. Here, each response was given a point value from 0 to 4 where 0 indicates no response, 1 indicates an inadequate, incomplete response, 2 indicates the identification of clues that are not related to the unknown word but are related to the text, 3 indicates a response that is partially correct, and 4 indicates a response that is completely correct. Correct clues were identified by the author and two doctoral students in literacy education. Students could obtain a total of 40 points on each component of the test and a total of 80 points on the test as a whole. The data were analyzed using an independent t-test.

Student interviews. Student interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. These transcripts were analyzed by the author and a graduate student for the main ideas in student responses. The ideas culled from the November transcripts were compared to those culled from the May transcripts.

Results. In order to determine whether students improved in their ability to use contextual analysis, each student's pretest score on the context clue test was subtracted from his/her posttest score to derive a difference or growth score.
An independent t-test was conducted to compare the growth of Julie's students on the context clue pretest to that of students in the comparison classroom. Results indicate that students in Julie's classroom made a significantly greater improvement in their ability to use contextual analysis than did students in the comparison classroom ($t=3.137$, df=57, $p<.05$). This finding suggests that the vocabulary studies approach contributed to increased ability to use contextual analysis as an independent word learning strategy. The average scores for both groups are shown in Table 1.

<table>
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<th>Pretest (Mean, S.D.)</th>
<th>Posttest (Mean, S.D.)</th>
<th>Difference (Mean, S.D.)</th>
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<td>40.97 (5.97)</td>
<td>39.23 (7.69)</td>
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Results of student interviews indicate a slight change in student attitudes toward words and word learning from November to May. Specifically, in May students had more expansive responses in Questions 2 and 4. In November, when asked what they thought of learning new words in school, students made one-sentence responses such as "It's O.K." In May, they volunteered more information such as, "I think it's important to learn new words because ... learning new words helps you in reading and writing and speaking," and "Learning new words is fun. I like to play word games and I like to use new words in my stories."
In November, students said they either skipped unknown words encountered while reading alone or they looked them up in the dictionary. In May, all six made reference to using context clues as one option. Finally, when asked their opinions of vocabulary studies, four students said they liked them and found them easy to do, one student said she thought they were "O.K." and "better than other ways of learning vocabulary," and one student said he didn't like them and found them difficult.

Discussion

Julie's students showed significantly more growth in their performance on the context clue test than did students in the comparison classroom. In addition, results of student interviews indicate that vocabulary studies may contribute to enhanced attitudes about word learning. Although Julie's students' posttest scores leave room for additional growth, it is important to note that learning from context appears to be an incremental phenomenon, the effect of which is more apparent on a global level than on a local level. In other words, students are more likely to display growth in their natural use of the strategy, on a daily basis, with a variety of reading materials, than on a single test (Kuhn and Stahl, 1996).

As an example of school-base research, this study did not involve many of the controls exerted in pure experimental research. Students were not randomly assigned to classrooms, the behavior of the comparison teacher was not controlled or monitored except to note that there was no instruction in vocabulary studies, and the sample was limited to two fourth grade classrooms in one suburban school. However, an advantage of school-based research is that it allows us to investigate the effectiveness of teaching techniques as they are implemented in a regular classroom. Thus, we are able to study the effects of a new instructional process on learning as well
as the way in which the process, itself, unfolds within the context of a real classroom.

In this case, Julie observed that students had difficulty with vocabulary studies at first but improved over time. One of the difficulties they had was considering only part of the context rather than considering all of the clues available to them. They tended to look only at the sentence in which the unknown word appeared without backward or forward referencing. Another difficulty was mistaking the meaning of the entire sentence for the meaning of the unknown word. Students also had difficulty explaining how their definition compared with the dictionary definition. They were eager to make a judgment of right or wrong but did not want (or, initially, know how) to explain how that judgment came to be. Julie felt that one of the strengths of the vocabulary study approach was that it gave her a "window" on students' thinking, showing precisely where in the process of using contextual analysis, students were having difficulty. She was then able to address these areas in review sessions.

In addition to providing an inside look at the way in which students apply contextual analysis to natural text, the vocabulary studies approach incorporates several research-based suggestions for vocabulary development. It appears that vocabulary studies hold promise as a technique for increasing the ability of elementary school children to learn word meanings independently during wide reading.

References


Susan M. Watts is a faculty member in the Department of Literacy Education at the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis Minnesota.

The author wishes to thank Melynda Drenk, David Carberry, and Dana Ayers for their help with the data analyses. In addition, this work was supported by a single quarter leave granted by the University of Minnesota.
Professional Materials


Patricia A. Crawford
University of Maine at Farmington

In this collection of essays, Herbert Kohl focuses his critical perspective on children's literature. Collectively, these essays beckon readers to view children's literature through a new lens, and to investigate the ideology which undergirds it. Individually, each piece invites readers to examine a different issue related to the power relationships that prevail in both literature and life.

In the first essay, Kohl deconstructs the character of Babar, the beloved elephant king featured in the series of books written by Jean de Brunhoff. Kohl first presents an overview of Babar's life and his evolution from an elephant-centered mindset to a people-centered one; showing how Babar's potential for success in his newfound life is determined by his willingness to turn his back on his old one. In order to flourish in his new world, Babar must not only cease to identify himself with the other elephants, he must literally rule over them. He leaves it for readers to determine a proper response to these books; to consider what type of role they should play in the lives of children.
In another essay, Kohl focuses on Rosa Parks and the way in which her life has typically been depicted in the pages of children's literature. Kohl draws upon a variety of trade books and instructional texts in order to show how Parks has generally been portrayed as a poor, uneducated seamstress who, in an impulsive move, single-handedly took on the entire Montgomery bus system and police force. Kohl juxtaposes this widely held mythology with the lesser known facts surrounding Parks' life, the work of the Montgomery African-American community, and the 1955 bus boycott. By doing so, he illustrates the ways in which many children's authors have not only misrepresented Parks' contributions, but also how, through their omissions, they have effectively erased the role that collective social action played in effecting change in the civil rights movement.

In a third essay, "A Plea for Radical Children's Literature," Kohl asserts that although there has been a proliferation of literature designed to increase young readers' sensitivity to issues, little has been written that actually calls into question the basic values that are part of life in a capitalist society. Kohl lays out a criteria for radical children's literature and issues a plea for more "... books that project the possibility of a decent world for all people" (p. 75).

In these essays, as well as the others included in the text, the author helps readers to look at children's literature in new ways. Kohl illustrates the ways in which stories have the potential to not only inform our thinking, but also to shape our views of the world. Should We Burn Babar? is a fascinating and provocative text, which will affirm some readers and incite others, depending on their ideological perspective. It is an accessible work that includes material relevant to teachers, teacher educators, and parents.
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