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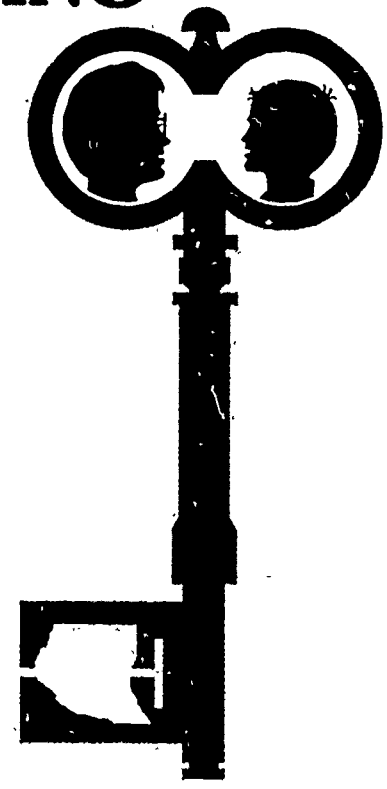
ABSTRACT

Intended for use as an inservice tool for elementary school teachers and as an independent study tool, this guide provides a framework for designing language experiences in the classroom. Following an introduction, the first section of the guide deals with language as communication, as thought, and as a series of interrelated skills. Three questions language arts teachers must ask themselves are posed: whether they give receptive and expressive skills equal time, whether inner thought can occur without language, and whether teachers interrelate the language arts. The second section explores creating an environment for language, and is organized around the essential areas of language teaching. The section includes three language arts teaching frameworks, ways of providing for interaction between the different language arts, and two suggested models for enriching the context for language learning. The third section deals with designing language experiences in the areas of listening, oral expression, dramatization, written expression, literature as a base for critical reading, and a framework for teaching reading using children's literature. In addition to the resource lists in each skill area, a selected list of writings in language arts is included in a bibliography. (HTH)

ELEMENTARY

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



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FOREWORD

Helping students to communicate effectively has always been a top educational objective. Since the early years of public education when the "3 R's" were the **only** curriculum, two of those three were skills of communication. Reading and writing continue to be regarded as high priority items for successful orientation into adult life.

The tools of language include more than just reading and writing. They enable students to become more attentive listeners, to speak with greater clarity, to write creatively and effectively and to read critically. The close interrelationships of these major skill areas of the language arts are the focus of this inservice publication.

Elementary Language Arts: Strategies for Teaching and Learning provides a framework for designing language experiences in the classroom. Concepts, goals, interrelationships with other language skills, essential experiences, examples of classroom activities, evaluation techniques and useful resources are offered in each skill area. In addition, there is a review of the present trends in language arts research and a section on creating an environment for language.

The emphasis on student and teacher interaction, and upon enriching the contexts for language learning should provide additional strategies for teaching and an improved understanding of the learning process.

Franklin B. Walter
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ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS: STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Using This Publication

Elementary Language Arts. Strategies for Teaching and Learning was designed for use as an inservice tool with classroom teachers and as an independent study tool It is intended as a guideline for such inservice and not as a comprehensive course of study. The topics presented are those that should be considered when planning elementary language arts programs

Section I: Understanding Our Language poses three questions that should be considered by all teachers of the language arts.

Section II: Creating an Environment for Language is organized around the essential areas of language teaching. Current writers in the field are drawn upon to provide a support base for teachers and administrators when preparing a rationale for their language arts program Examples are presented from three writers in the field of language arts The frameworks they suggest are presented in the subsections of part II At the close of this section two models of the integration of language skills into the general curriculum are presented with pages that can be made into transparency overlays.

Section III: Designing Language Experiences is divided into the major elements that constitute a language arts program The five areas of listening, oral expression, dramatization, written expression and the reading of literature for children are developed in a similar format. One part of that format is a framework for teaching that consists of a concept, goals, interrelationships with other language arts skills, essential experiences, examples of student activities, evaluation suggestions and a selected list of resources

Again, these are not intended to be a comprehensive collection of interrelationships, experiences and activities but a listing of those that are considered essential to include when developing any language arts program

Bibliography: In addition to the resource lists in each skill area, a selected list of writings in language arts are included here

This key will be found throughout this book as a cue that a particular segment might serve as a useful inservice topic. When all the "key" areas are put together they become the framework for the inservice use of this publication. Some may be adapted as overhead transparencies while others might serve as topics for discussions or as handouts All pages of this publication may be duplicated for inservice use

ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS: STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

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ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS: STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Introduction

All educators are concerned that children learn to communicate their thoughts and feelings effectively. From kindergarten to the upper elementary school levels the oral and written language skills are stressed and rightly so. Facility with one's language is essential to achievement in all content areas. Children have already acquired considerable ability to use their language before they begin first grade although they are not yet aware of the rules of the language. The teacher's role at the primary level then becomes one of helping children utilize their natural language abilities in relating to the language of the school. The teacher needs to be sensitive to the child's attempts to learn the English language system and to recognize when progress is being made.

Most children have acquired much of their ability to communicate prior to their school years and have done so without benefit of direct teaching. They have learned naturally through listening, imitating and practicing the words required to communicate their desires and needs. **Research studies have found that this natural approach to learning and improving language skills is most effective. In view of these findings, teachers might begin to examine their own attitudes toward language arts teaching, their relationships with students, and the interaction and involvement in the classroom that require and produce language skill.**

This publication will be concerned with such interaction and involvement, as well as the strong interrelationship among the components of language teaching.

Language Is Communication: Do We Give Receptive and Expressive Skills Equal Time?

The primary purpose of language is communication. The teacher's concern is that students learn to express themselves effectively and to comprehend the information they receive. Speaking and writing are the major forms of expression. Dramatics, nonverbal communication, handwriting, spelling, grammar and usage are necessary components. The receptive skills include listening and reading, with literature contributing as a source of both information and enjoyment. Observation might also be included, since visual discrimination skills play a vital part in reading. An understanding of gestures, posture and facial expression clearly plays an important function in receiving information and interpreting feelings.

The teacher who has a command of our language system and its interrelationships can convey to students the idea that the expressive and receptive skills are mutually reinforcing. Improvement in listening aids speaking. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are all positively related. The studies of Walter Loban, one of the significant researchers of children's language, verifies these interrelationships among the language arts.[1]

Language Arts Skills (As discussed in this publication)	
Receptive	**Expressive**
Listening	Speaking
Observing	Dramatizing
Reading	Writing
Children's Literature	Handwriting
	Spelling
	Grammar
	Usage
	Punctuation
	Capitalization

Communication takes place in many contexts, and teachers who provide common experiences for their students may find these a profitable way to begin the process. When students experience an event together, such as a field trip, working on a project, or hearing a story, they will see objects and hear terms presented in a meaningful context that can serve as a base for future language experiences. At a later time the students can use their experiences and the language acquired to discuss or record the past event in a meaningful way **Classroom projects in which the receptive and expressive skills are related within the context of a natural give and take of ideas will help children extend their understanding of the language skills.**

Three levels of communication have been identified by James Smith. To the "experiential" and "verbal" levels he has added a "conceptual" level at which students generalize past experiences and integrate them with new events.[2]

Paul Anderson also believes that communication involves more than just words and that teaching is not just telling. He would have the skills of language used throughout the day and suggests that planned instruction of certain skill areas is essential to their development.[3]

Perhaps the five points for the dynamic teaching of language arts made by Hennings best summarize the comprehensiveness of the communication skills:

1. Drawing together speaking, writing, reading, thinking and listening into integrated, communication-centered experiences
2. Providing for children's direct involvement in language activities
3. Using varied instructional techniques that combine interaction with independent learning
4. Placing literature experiences at the nucleus of language arts activity
5. Using linguistic understanding as a theoretical base for the language arts.[4]

The term "representational" is used by M.A.K. Halliday to identify the communication function of language. He says the teachers' conceptions of language must address the many models or functions of the child's language if the child's needs are to be met adequately. Prior to school all language has had meaning for the child because it was used for familiar and specific functions. **However, many children encounter difficulties when they enter school, where the language is used in a context unrelated to their former experiences with language.** "In order to be taught successfully," says Halliday, "it is necessary to know how to use language to learn: and also, how to use language to participate as an individual in the learning situation."[5]

The language experience approach recommended by Roach Van Allen teaches communication and develops the curriculum around three strands: experiencing communication, studying communication, and relating communication of others to self.[6]

[1] Loban, Walter, *The Language of Elementary School Children*, Champaign, Illinois, National Council of Teachers of English, 1963. p. 89.

[2] Smith, James *Creative Teaching of the Language Arts in the Elementary School*, Boston Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1973

[3] Anderson, Paul *Language Skills in Elementary Education*, 2nd edition, New York Macmillan Company, 1972

[4] Hennings Dorothy, *Communication in Action*, Chicago Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1978

[5] Halliday, M A K, *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, London Edward Arnold, 1973 p 18

[6] Allen, R Van *Language Experiences in Communication*, Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976 p 3

Language Is Thought: Can We Think Without Language?

If total communication deals both with language as communication and as a medium of thought, more attention must be paid to self-expression and to the individualization of the curriculum.[7] Experienced teachers know how greatly children differ in language ability and that these individual differences or needs must be met in some systematic way. Classroom experiences, therefore, must include opportunities for children to use their language in practical and expressive ways and also provide for direct teaching of the skills which need additional development or reinforcement.

The views of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky must be considered in any review of language and thought, for both have provided significant information upon which differing theories of language learning have been based. Piaget sees language in young children as separate from the child's cognitive development, though both grow closer and function almost simultaneously as the child matures.[8] Vygotsky's philosophy differs from Piaget's in that he views language learning and cognitive learning as a single process. That is, thought cannot take place without words. He believes that silent or inner speech occurs with thought.[9]

Those who follow Piaget, therefore, view language learning as only one of several kinds of learning offered to children. Educators following Vygotsky's position consider language learning as necessary for all other learning to take place.

Language Is Interrelated: Do We Provide for Interrelationships?

If language is the ability to express oneself in several different modes (speaking, writing, acting, gesturing) and the ability to receive from others in different modes (by listening, reading and observing), the interactions of these modes seem quite natural. In order to listen, someone must speak; to speak, there must be thought or desire to express and inform. In order to read, someone must write; to write, there must be knowledge of words and their functions as well as skill in reproducing them (spelling, handwriting). Finally, to observe there must be something to see. These skills are naturally reinforcing and occur in almost a developmental sequence, although they occur simultaneously as well.

Listening helps the young child learn that words have specific meaning. Gradually the child attempts to reproduce those words that gain attention, food, or information and that identify objects and people. Later the child becomes aware that print on paper is composed of words that can be read and also written down for others to read. The child is continually refining each of these areas as new and varied experiences and conditions are encountered.

Not only are the language skills closely related in function, they are mutually beneficial or reinforcing. Reading, for example, offers a model of correct spelling and sentence formation, as well as word meaning, in a context that will in turn help children become more skillful in writing and speaking. Children who listen to good speech models will be more apt to improve their own speech. Children who are made aware of changes in stress or pitch, for example, will have a greater understanding of the effect of such changes on the meanings of words. Children will tend to use vocabulary correctly in speaking or in writing when that vocabulary has been encountered in the reading of books, in listening to stories read aloud, or in conversation. Attempts have been made to teach each of these skills separately, but it is difficult to separate the language skills, since they rarely function independently. At the elementary school level, where many classrooms are self-contained, the integration of the language arts skills can occur rather easily. Within a departmentalized organizational structure, integration does not typically occur as frequently. The emphasis on content and the shorter period of time with a group of students are both factors. Closer communication among teachers of the content areas and the language arts teachers would be a helpful first step to integration. Discussion of ways to integrate language skills into the total curriculum might follow. For example, vocabulary encountered when reading technical materials, discussion techniques, study skills needed for library research, oral and written reporting techniques, recording observations of experiments, and practice in listening for specific purposes are all topics that can be integrated into the daily schedules of departmentalized classrooms. Teachers who are aware of these relationships will find ways to relate all the receptive and expressive skills.

The skills of observing, speaking, listening, reading and writing can be applied to almost every aspect of the daily elementary curriculum. In this way, they become the tools for learning content as well as the means of learning about language. The teaching/learning situation that accommodates this dual role will undoubtedly be more satisfying and successful for teachers. Working with children in real-life situations creates interest and satisfies immediate needs. Children, at the same time, see language functioning in ways that are relevant and useful.

Examples of this close interrelationship will be offered throughout this publication. For clarity, however, each major element will also be considered separately. Just as the teacher directly instructs in specific skill areas to improve basic understandings, there is a need to present each facet of the language arts separately in order to show its unique contribution to the total program.

[8]Piaget, Jean, *The Language and Thought of the Child*, Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1969.

[9]Vygotsky, Lev S., *Thought and Language*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1962.

Children have acquired a significant amount of skill in producing and using language prior to their school years. Their skills are reflected in their ability to speak in reasonably well-constructed sentences and with an adequate vocabulary and to listen with moderate comprehension to most utterances they hear. Many children have learned something about the formation of letters and can even write their own names Children's television programs in recent years have certainly furthered children's understanding of letters and numerals and captions on pictures. The emphasis on reading stories on children's television programs, in the home, and in public libraries has created a renewed interest in books and a desire to read. This aids in developing a readiness for reading in the early years of formal schooling and into a habit of reading as the child matures. An atmosphere of eagerness and curiosity is created in many children for all aspects of language. Children who participate in good listening, speaking, reading and writing experiences learn to use their language skillfully.

Developing the Framework

In creating a supportive language environment in a school setting then, it would seem appropriate for the classroom teacher to establish a program in which language can be used throughout the day in a wide variety of experiences and activities. **The more closely these activities resemble real-life experiences the more readily they will be accepted by children as relevant and useful and therefore worthy of their time and effort.** Such a teaching/learning environment is appropriate for all ages and not just for children entering the elementary school program. **We must capitalize on the tremendous amount of language facility children bring to the school environment and establish in our classroom an atmosphere that will encourage continued progress in language learning.**

A Summary of Frameworks for Teaching Language Arts

ROACH VAN ALLEN - A LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

- interaction is the key
- sensitivity to environment
- self-confidence in language usage
- child's own language is basis for instruction

CHARLES CALLITRI - A STRUCTURE FOR TEACHING LANGUAGE ARTS

- autistic stage - language used for self only
- communicative stage - need to share
- analytic stage - attention to errors
- esthetic stage - accomplishments motivate further experience

JAMES MOFFETT - A THEORY OF DISCOURSE

physical distance between speaker and audience
- "I-I" - inner speech
- "I-You" - conversation
- "I-You" - dialogue at a distance
- "I-It" - publication for unknown audience

levels of abstraction of subject matter
- what is happening - perception of event
- what happened - memory of past event
- what happens - classification, generalization
- what may happen - hypothesizing, conceptualizing

The chart on the preceding page summarizes the three frameworks that follow. This additional information is given for those who wish to explore the concepts in greater detail.

A language experience approach. The following conceptual framework suggested by Roach Van Allen seems an appropriate way to begin developing the broad base for effective language instruction:

> The basis of children's oral and written expression is their sensitivity to their environment both within the classroom and in the world at large
>
> Freedom in self expression — oral and written — leads to self confidence in all language usage including grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
>
> A natural flow of language develops in children engaged in programs of instruction based on personal patterns and meaningful vocabulary
>
> Interaction, the only process through which language matures, is promoted through the use of numerous activities experiences, and devices
>
> Utilization of the child's own language as one of the bases for reading instruction results in a high degree of independence in writing and reading

A structure for teaching. In developing a structure for teaching the language arts, Charles Callitri offers a pattern that illustrates the need for teachers who are sensitive to the students' motives when involved in language learning. His structure consists of four aspects: autistic, communicative, analytic, and esthetic. A brief description of these will set the stage for the suggested program that follows and to gain an understanding of the child's behavior when using language.[2]

The autistic stage is similar to what Piaget called ego-centricity and is not related to the term used to describe a withdrawn, uncommunicative child. Students use language only for themselves -- to enjoy a listening experience, to read for their own pleasure, to look at something of interest, or to write their private feelings and ideas. These experiences are not to be shared or "graded" by anyone else. This stage provides an opportunity for the teacher to involve students in becoming more aware of self, in broadening their perceptive abilities and in enjoying what they are doing with language.

In the communication stage, the students need to share with someone else those feelings and thoughts enjoyed previously by themselves. It is at this point that the teacher aids the communication process, but only when spelling or punctuation, for example, interfere with a written message that the students want to share. This preserves the focus on meaning, which is the reason for communicating.

It is at the analytic stage that messages, oral or written, are subject to correction and evaluation. Students who have derived pleasure from the autistic experience and presented ideas at the communicative stage can more readily be led to see the necessity for analysis of their language. As students communicate with wider audiences they can be helped to see the necessity for using the conventions of language (spelling, punctuation, grammar) that are understood by most people. At this stage the teacher introduces the study of form and style and teaches them deductively. Errors that can restrict communication or inhibit appreciation such as incorrect spelling or illegible handwriting are analyzed and corrected. Students, then, feel better about themselves as their work improves.

The esthetic stage is a synthesis of the first three and it leaves the student with a feeling of accomplishment, which in turn provides the motivation for additional work with language experiences. The stages are cumulative and overlap of necessity, as the variety of language experiences cannot be separated so precisely.

The understanding developed between students and teacher is extremely important in this approach. The teacher who asks children to give an opinion cannot then mark an opinion wrong. Illogical and unjustified opinions may be questioned, of course. The teacher who asks students to use correct style and form, however, can reject the product if it fails to meet the assignment standard. Then the teacher can analyze the errors and help students in their efforts to improve their writing.

A theory of discourse. Another structure that has been widely accepted is that of James Moffett's student-centered language arts curriculum. Moffett has developed a theory of discourse that follows the basic theories of child development. It closely parallels Piaget's theory of cognitive development and Callitri's four motives for language. Moffett believes that the teaching and learning process must be brought together to produce real education, meshing the structure of the subject with the structure of the student.

Moffett's theory of discourse is determined by (1) the physical distance between the speaker and his audience that he calls rhetorical distance and (2) the level of abstraction of the subject matter.[3] He identifies the physical communication between speaker and audience as the determiner of the type of discourse. The first is "I I" or the inner speech we all use daily as we "talk to ourselves" about our thoughts or rehearse silently what we plan to do or say at a later

[1]Allen, R. Van, *Language Experiences in Communication*, Boston Houghton-Mifflin, 1976. pp 55-57.

[2]Callitri, Charles, "A Structure for Teaching the Language Arts," *ard Educational Review*, Vol. 35, 1965.

[3]Moffett, James, *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*, Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968. (Chapter 2 Kinds and Orders of Discourse)

time. The second is "I-You" which is an outer vocalization or conversation. It is usually informal and friendly and consists of the speaker telling someone else what happened. A third type of distance is also "I-You" but the speaker and listener or listeners are removed in time and space, so letter writing is necessary. Correspondence is dialogue-at-a-distance. The audience is known to the writer or speaker and some response is expected. The fourth stage of rhetorical distance is "I-It" in which the speaker and audience are unknown to each other. **Formal writing requires that vocabulary, style and logic must be used so that anybody in the audience can understand.** We might think of this as publication.

When describing the levels of abstraction of the subject matter Moffett uses four verb tenses which indicate when events occur. **What is happening** is how we perceive things as they happen and might occur in conversation, writing a letter or dramatization. **What happened** is when the speaker must rely on memory and is sharing an incident that occurred previously, as in reporting or in story telling. Classification and generalization occur when the speaker is relating **what happens** and might occur as a student is explaining an historical event. When the speaker or writer is relating **what may happen,** hypothesizing, theorizing and conceptualizing take place such as in argument or persuasion or when describing a science experiment.

The levels of abstraction are found at every stage of rhetorical distance, and students should be encouraged to work with all levels to understand the differences that will occur in word choice, punctuation, sentence structure, grammar, paragraphing and organization. Children know intuitively that they speak differently to different people or audiences. Moffett's theory merely organizes this natural understanding into a developmental sequence for teaching and learning.

Providing for Interaction

In his conceptual framework Roach Van Allen has stated that interaction is the only process through which language matures, and that it is promoted through the use of numerous activities, experiences, and devices. If students bring to the school environment language skills that they have acquired before attending school, then daily experiences in refining and extending those skills through interaction with their teachers and their peers is justified. Douglas Barnes has said, "A school by its very nature is a place where communication goes on: that is what it is for."[4] He also states that language must enter into the curriculum in two ways: (1) as the communication system of the classroom in which the learner is more or less passive and (2) as a means of learning in which the learner is an active participant in the making of meaning.[5]

[4]Barnes, Douglas, *From Communication to Curriculum*, New York: Penguin Books, 1976. p.14.

[5]Ibid. p.31.

Both teachers and children are constantly interpreting each others' actions, talk, and nonverbal signals. How the teacher establishes relationships in the classroom and provides opportunities for interaction will often be a greater incentive to the student's participation in school work than will intelligence or self-confidence.

There is another type of interaction needed in the language-learning process and that is interaction with the content of the curriculum itself. Many experiences are needed before students are able to link their everyday knowledge gained outside the school with the knowledge presented in the classroom.

In order to function in the classroom children must feel secure. To feel secure, children need some sense of control of their learning strategies and their ability to predict. If teachers permit children to interact with new content, materials, and terminology individually and in small groups, they will begin to take more responsibility for solving their own problems. **The freedom to discuss, to pose possible solutions and to try out their hypotheses, offers many opportunities for language to be recognized as a useful tool for learning.** Children need to be encouraged to relate new experiences to old ones; for it takes time to process information. Through conversations, discussions and writing, children can bring their perceptions to the learning task and merge them with those of the teacher. If all the talking and telling is done by the teacher and all information is gained only from textbooks, then we are ignoring the tenets of Piaget, Vygotsky and others that the function of speech and writing is as an instrument for reshaping the learning task into a meaningful experience.[6]

Interpersonal interactions are extremely important. "The social interactions," says Louise Cherry, "in which the child participates directly in the alternating roles of speaker and listener are among the most important experiences for the child developing communication competence."[7] Cherry says that such experiences create a need for the child to use language appropriately and effectively to communicate, to provide opportunities to test language rules and to receive information about the adequacy of those rules.[8]

Verbal & Nonverbal Signals

One of the tasks of students is to learn to interpret their teachers' remarks.

Teachers reveal much of their attitude toward their teaching and their students by their verbal and nonverbal signals. Much research has been carried out on

[6]Barnes, Douglas, p.84.

[7]Cherry, Louise J. "A Sociocognitive Approach to Language Development and Its Implications for Education," *Language, Children and Society*, eds., Garnica and King (New York, Pergamon Press, 1979), p.115.

[8]Ibid.

the amount of teacher talk that occurs in the classroom and on the characteristics of that talk. Researchers are becoming increasingly concerned with the manner of talk as well.

Signal 1: Teacher talk. Teachers exercise control over children with their talk – the words, the tone, the amount and the direction used. Examining habits of talk, the choice of recipients for questioning and the tone with which certain topics are presented, may be a revealing experience. Teachers need to remind themselves frequently that their speech habits serve as models for their students. The teachers' use of speech is a model of its functions. They use language to persuade, encourage, disagree, report, explain, entertain, and above all to organize their thoughts. Children attentive to these many functions can pattern their own use of language in similar ways.

Signal 2: Experiences with language. The teacher who engages children in conversation, provides opportunities for discussion, and initiates word play activities shows children that language is important and that language activities can be fun. The teacher who reads aloud to students will add an even greater dimension to the value of language to entertain and to inform, as well as to add new words and word meanings to their growing vocabulary. Words used in these contexts will extend the children's knowledge of their language system. This is especially valuable to children with inadequate language experiences. If children have experienced little conversation in the home, or have never had a question answered to their satisfaction or have never been asked to explain a game or to retell an experience, they need many opportunities to try all of these modes before they are ready to use language at its fullest. As Alice Yardley states, "Long before the child can benefit from systematic teaching in word usage, he must develop his natural skill in communication."[9]

Signal 3: An invitation to learn. According to William Purkey, all students should be "invited" to learn by teachers using both verbal and nonverbal approaches. The inviting teacher continuously lets students know that they are responsible, able and valuable.[10] The teacher who smiles, nods, and spends time with students is using positive nonverbal techniques that encourage the students to become involved and to achieve. The teacher who frowns and ignores certain students is not inviting them to learn, and thus projects a negative image to those students. Teachers may be intentionally or unintentionally inviting or not inviting students to learn. Negative nonverbal behavior often counteracts positive verbal behavior. Actions speak louder than words.

Signal 4: Nonverbal communication. Perhaps the most significant problem in the broad area of nonverbal communication is the general lack of awareness on the part of some teachers. The scope of nonverbal communication is surprising. It can involve items over which the teacher has no control such as the size, color or design of the classroom or the building itself, the classroom furnishings and the number of students in the classroom. The teacher who is aware of these effects of the environment can arrange the classroom so that the space and facilities are used to better advantage. Individual space and space to socialize or work together need to be considered in establishing an inviting classroom. Movements around the classroom, the gestures employed, posture, and above all, facial expression and eye contact have an effect upon the degree of acceptance, rejection, action, and interaction in the classroom. Teachers who are aware will be more apt to adjust these factors to achieve the ultimate learning situation.

The effects of nonverbal communication upon the learning incentives of students are made even more complex when the students in the classroom are from different cultural backgrounds. Caucasian, Black and Native American children interpret eye contact in different ways, for example, and gestures and facial expression are more critical with certain cultural groups than others. Howard Smith has compiled a comprehensive reference which examines numerous categories of nonverbal communication that have implications for teaching.[11] His seven categories include environment, proxemics (use of space), kinesics (body motion, movement, posture, facial and eye behavior), touching behavior, physical characteristics, paralanguage (voice volume, pitch, tempo and intensity, and silent pauses), and artifacts (clothes and beauty aids).

[9]Yardley, Alice, *Exploration and Language* London. Evans Brothers, Ltd., 1970 p.29.

[10]Purkey, William, *Inviting School Success*, Belmont, California Wadsworth Publishing, 1978.

[11]Smith, Howard A "Nonverbal Communication in Teaching," *Review of Educational Research* Vol. 49 (Fall, 1979), pp 631 672

Components of Nonverbal Communication

Environment:

- placement of furniture - desks and chairs

Personal space:

- distance between teacher and students
- distance between students

Body movement and orientation:

- gestures - pointing, shrugging
- posture

Facial expression:

- moods and emotions
- eye behavior

Nonlanguage vocal behavior:

- paralanguage (how a statement is made)
  laughing, crying, intensity, pitch, articulation

Adapted from Wiemann and Wiemann Nonverbal Communication in the Elementary Classroom.[12]

Importance of Questioning

One means of inviting students into a learning experience is through the use of appropriate questions. **A careful sequence of questions can lead to discussion, and open-ended questions tend to be the best talk starters.**

Research shows that teachers ask countless questions and far too many that are either unnecessary or irrelevant. One researcher, J.T. Dillon, suggests that teachers should state what they are thinking rather than pose it as a question to students. Allowing students to respond to a statement rather than to a question serves to involve the student and clarify what was said. Students can be invited to question each other and this, too, encourages active involvement and is likely to stimulate greater participation in discussion.[13] Because students are quick to recognize the unnecessary question, Dillon recommends that teachers ask questions only when clarification or additional information is truly needed. **One alternative to unnecessary questions might be silence until the student has time to rephrase, rethink or formulate a statement.**[14]

Wlodkowski recommends limiting the use of knowledge questions and selectively increasing the use of

[12]Wiemann, Mary O and Wiemann, John M. *Nonverbal Communication in the Elementary Classroom*, Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1975

[13]Dillon, J T , "Alternatives to Questioning. *The Education Digest*, Vol. 45 pp 42 44

[14]Ibid.

comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation questions. **He suggests teachers ask themselves, "In the learner's perceptions, how stimulating and provocative are the questions being discussed?"**[15]

If the teachers' goals include bringing students into an active participating role so that language interactions can take place, then the model they present should be one of provoking thought. Effective questioning practices are one means of providing students with opportunities to acquire and classify information and to use logical thought. Questions can subvert, as well as enhance, these teaching goals. Sondra Napell has posed some questions, paraphrased here, that all teachers can ask themselves about their use of questions.

Do your questions enhance learning or put students on the spot?

Do you give all students equal time to formulate their responses?

Do you ask questions that encourage responses?

Do you plan experiences which require that students design their own questions? For example, interviewing, brainstorming, one-to-one conversing.

Do you plan time for summing up?[16]

Since questioning is recognized as an important key to stimulating discussion, to provoking logical thought and to opening the door to self-expression, teachers need to help students perfect their own questioning techniques. Students can be encouraged to formulate their own questions with more precision, clarity and relevance as a means of increasing their effectiveness in both oral and written communication. This means time must be set aside for practicing questioning techniques and listening to and assessing the responses received. **Open-ended questions by the teacher do much to allay students' fears of having their responses ridiculed and allow for greater flexibility, individuality and creativity.**

The segment on questioning in Motivation: Unleashing Learning Power offers specific suggestions for improving classroom questions.[17] A few are reprinted here.

[15]Wlodkowski, Raymond J., *Motivation and Teaching: A Practical Guide*, Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1978, p.28.

[16]Napell, Sondra M., "Using Questions to Enhance Classroom Learning," *Education*, Vol. 99, pp. 194-197.

[17]Ohio Department of Education, *Motivation: Unleashing Learning Power*, pp. 24-26.

Improving Questioning Skills

1. The teacher's questioning skill is revealed in the subtle phrasing and direction of the question itself. Phrase questions to open up student response rather than to imply that there is a known answer. (For some questions, there is only one correct answer)

2. Ask questions which have more than one correct answer. Encourage children to view a problem from several perspectives and arrive at a number of different but equally plausible answers. Such questions also can lessen a child's fear of being wrong and can help him concentrate on the activity itself.

3. Ask questions which require multiple-word answers. The answers a child gives are, in part, a function of how a child thinks about the question and, in part, a function of the questions we ask.

4. Encourage children to ask questions. Urge children to ask about things they do not understand by reacting positively when they **do** ask questions. Part of the positive reaction includes careful listening to a child when questions are asked.

5. Help learners make judgments on the basis of evidence rather than by guessing. Ask children to back up their answer with evidence. Show children you think evidence is important. Give children practice in using evidence or criteria to develop their answers.

6. Let students know when their answer or work is wrong, but do so in a positive or neutral way. Direct corrections to the child's answer or work, not to the child as a person.

7 Help children view learning as problem solving.

Enriching the Context for Language Learning

Context 1: Content of the curriculum. The language arts have been presented as a means of communication and with components that are closely interrelated. Most educators agree that the language arts are considered tools of learning more than as subjects in themselves. It would seem that the skills of language, therefore, should be taught and used within the more meaningful context of the subject matter or content areas.

This does not mean that all language skills are acquired in an incidental way within the context of studying other subjects. **Once the language component has been introduced in a relevant situation, there will need to be direct instruction in the specific skills required for communication.** For example, new technical vocabulary may require dictionary skills and the word recognition skills of reading. When writing a report, the student must be able to locate material, and organize it systematically, and must possess sufficient mechanical skills to produce the final product. The various content areas of the elementary curriculum then would serve as the contexts within which language can be taught.

There are many other environments in which language can be used meaningfully. These occur both in school and outside, with familiar materials and with unfamiliar, and are used both by individuals and by small groups.

Context 2: Familiar to unfamiliar. One principle of learning suggests that experiences should move from familiar to unfamiliar and from concrete to abstract. Teachers who provide for learning experiences in a developmental way will help all students bridge the gap between their present knowledge of the world and the "school" knowledge they are expected to acquire.

Many opportunities for using language occur when children are exploring their immediate environment. Some of these explorations will arise spontaneously as students discover that things they already know can contribute to their school experiences. Trips around their school and community will permit students to draw upon their knowledge of that area, and discussions, reports, interviews, and observations will provide the confidence needed to pursue an environment farther afield. Trips to historical areas or museums contain a wealth of experiences that acquaint children with less familiar territory and provide for more challenging language experiences in the form of new vocabulary, descriptions, comparisons with the familiar, new questions to ask and new materials to discuss. As the Mallett report indicates "...they gain confidence in their capacity to make sense of what they encounter."[18]

At times the context is so familiar that it is often overlooked. Students can be led to discover features of familiar objects that they had never before noted or considered. A closer look at the school building and the homes in the vicinity, for example, could reveal architectural differences that help to identify the age of the buildings. Styles of architecture, construction materials used, cornerstones, and historical records are a few of the topics that might be initiated by a closer look. Information about streets and roadways, nearby streams, cemeteries, and local businesses can all be sources for school studies. The changing neighborhood might provide a springboard for research, interviews, discussions and a discovery of local folklore.

Students of any age need many experiences near at hand before embarking on long trips to unfamiliar territory. Before studying the culture of other countries and times, they should look at the daily lives of their own neighbors, their work, their hobbies and their families. At a later time it will be easier for them to study via textbook or museums the world of the pioneers and their daily lives, crafts and customs. Children who bring meaningful experiences to their unfamiliar textbook and reference materials will be able to integrate much more effectively their "action" knowledge and their "school" knowledge.

Context 3: Natural surroundings. Another context for learning might include the natural surroundings of the area such as the flowers, trees, waterways and wildlife native to the region. These might be natural outgrowths of science lessons and serve as a bountiful source for language arts experiences, with many possible avenues of exploration.

Context 4: Vicarious experiences. Thus far the contexts have come from the immediate environment, but there are others that arise from books and other media. Filmstrips, movies, audio and video tapes and books are rich resources for classroom projects and language experiences in particular. These can be the means of introducing students to new areas of the curriculum - listening experiences, expressive writing, or extensions and enrichment of language activities.

Context 5: Spontaneous events. Now and then an event occurs that affects the lives and dominates the interests of students. Such an event demands immediate attention, and the skillful teacher can use this "teachable moment" to bridge the gap from the incident to the curriculum. This more or less spontaneous context offers a valuable opportunity for expression of feelings and thoughts. Questions that arise can be channeled in many different directions.

[18] Mallett, Margaret and Newsome, Bernard. *Talking, Writing and Learning 8-13*, London: Evans/Methuen Educational, 1977, p.22.

These represent only a few of the numerous contexts in which language activities thrive. The teachers who use the classroom as a primary environment can encourage children to include the world of the school, neighborhood and community as additional sources of knowledge and experiences. These teachers will benefit from the broadened perceptions their students bring to school assignments.

Two Suggested Models

To enable classroom teachers to visualize the use of language in a variety of contexts, two models are included at this point. **The content of the models is merely a sampling of what might be found in a typical elementary school situation. Teachers would substitute their own students' contributions.** How comprehensive the list of topics and activities becomes depends entirely upon the abilities of the students involved and the willingness of the teacher to expand their horizons.

The models represent two very different sources. One is a spontaneous occurrence that causes great concern among the members of the class. Students initiate discussion and suggest questions that might be investigated. The second is an assignment that the teacher develops for a specific subject area and arranges the environment to stimulate students.

The sequence in each model is somewhat the same, for the teacher may use each experience not only to further student knowledge of a specific content of materials, but also to tap all of the language functions feasible within that context. The examples show how classroom activities can serve as the content within which language can be used in functional ways.

A Sequence for Integrating Language Experiences

1. An event or planned introduction occurs
2. Opportunities for questions and comments are provided
3. Possible activities or topics are brainstormed
4. Decisions are made jointly by teacher and students as to which areas can reasonably be used
5. Groups are assigned as needed to explore a specific area
6. Discussions of group procedures are held and agreed upon
   - Time for group meetings
   - Sources of information
   - Record keeping
   - Progress reports
7. Ideas are exchanged during project
8. Experiences are assessed

The two models that follow are offered as examples of how the teacher might record the responses of children on a chart or chalkboard as a result of a brainstorming session. All responses are recorded, and as they are offered the teacher asks under what category a specific suggestion should be written or whether a new category should be added. This "webbing" procedure continues until the children no longer have ideas. The teacher at this point might suggest a missing category or ask questions that could stimulate more critical thought.

Once the webbing has been completed, the teacher and children make decisions as to which categories should be explored further. Committees are organized, and procedures for group meetings are discussed and arranged. The teacher might want to alert the librarian about the project so that children will have help in locating their resource materials.

When children are working in groups and each group is researching a different area, there is a more natural interest in reporting and listening to the reports of others. Exchanges of information may occur during the search as each group seeks its own materials but finds resources appropriate to another. Discussing needs, listening for pertinent facts, writing notes, and locating and using materials provide language experiences that are educationally sound and meaningful to children. At the conclusion of the projects an assessment is made with the children of the success of the group process, the quality of the information gathered and the effectiveness of the groups' reports or presentations.

Two Models for Integrating Language Experiences Use of Transparencies

The pages that follow are designed for inservice use. Transparencies of each set of three pages can be made and projected as follows:

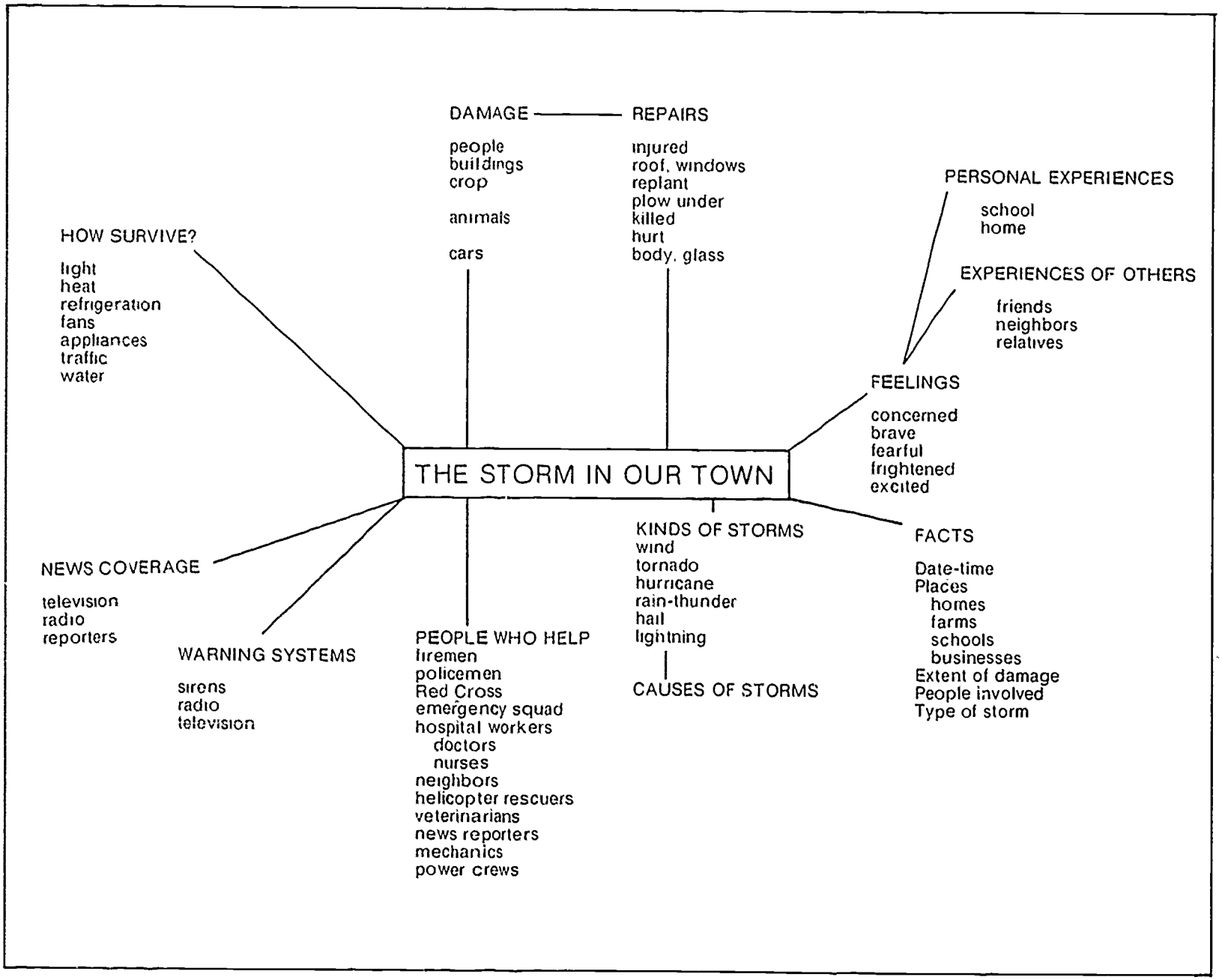
A SPONTANEOUS OCCURRENCE

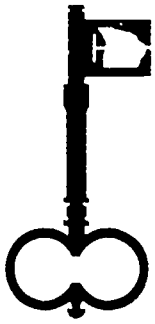
1. Collecting Student Ideas
   show on overhead projector and discuss the brainstorming procedure
2. Planning Language Experiences
   place on top of (1) to illustrate the language experiences that can be applied. Teachers would, of course, focus on those experiences that are most needed in their own classrooms.
3. Evaluating the Responses
   place (2) over this page to illustrate the questions teachers might ask themselves as they evaluate the responses of children to the assignment.

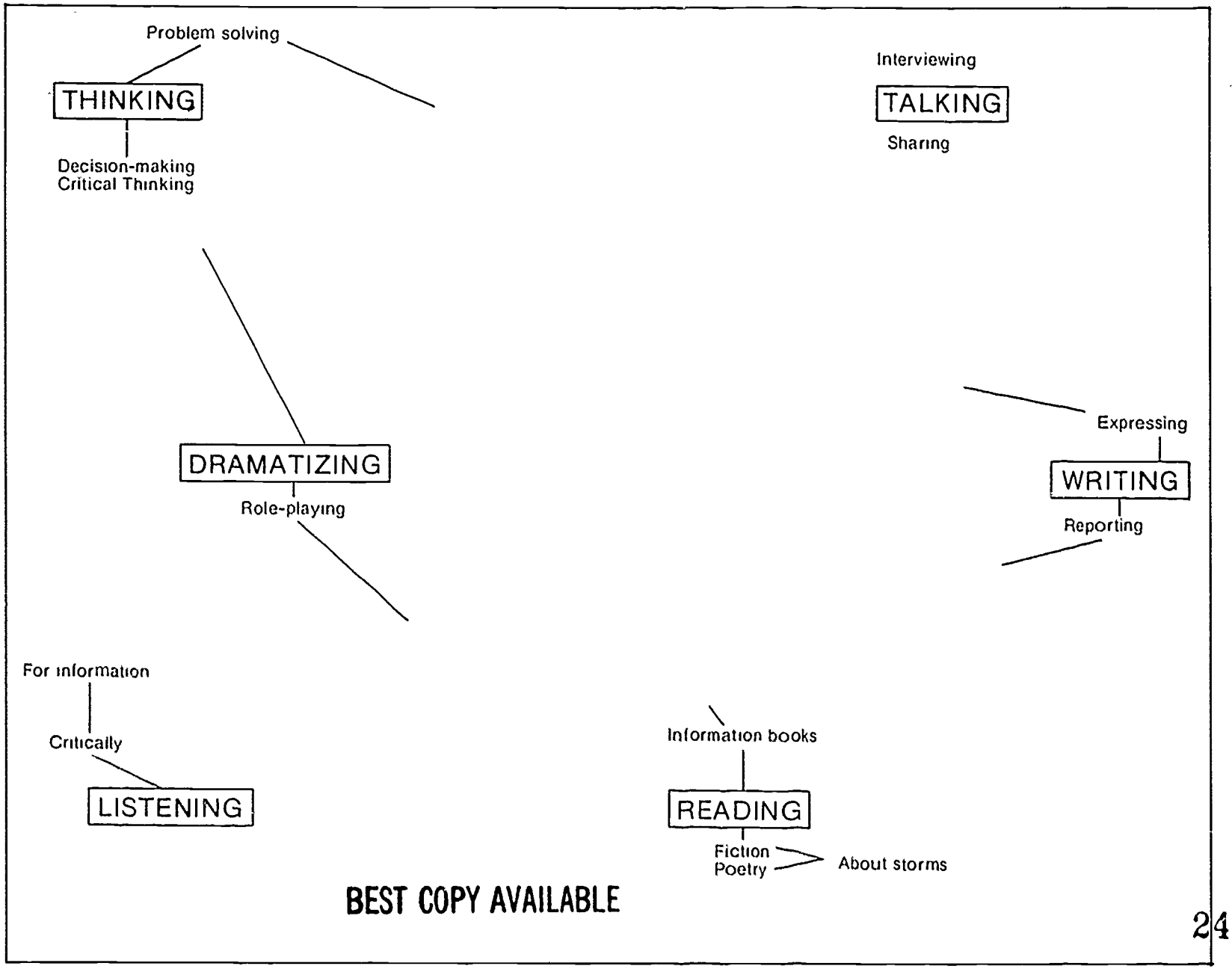
A PLANNED SCIENCE PROJECT

1. Collecting Student Ideas
2. Planning Language Experiences
3. Evaluating The Responses

present in the same sequence as the example above


THE STORM IN OUR TOWN
DAMAGE
people
buildings
crop
animals
cars
REPAIRS
injured
roof, windows
replant
plow under
killed
hurt
body, glass
HOW SURVIVE?
light
heat
refrigeration
fans
appliances
traffic
water
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES
school
home
EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS
friends
neighbors
relatives
FEELINGS
concerned
brave
fearful
frightened
excited
NEWS COVERAGE
television
radio
reporters
WARNING SYSTEMS
sirens
radio
television
PEOPLE WHO HELP
firemen
policemen
Red Cross
emergency squad
hospital workers
doctors
nurses
neighbors
helicopter rescuers
veterinarians
news reporters
mechanics
power crews
KINDS OF STORMS
wind
tornado
hurricane
rain-thunder
hail
lightning
CAUSES OF STORMS
FACTS
Date-time
Places
homes
farms
schools
businesses
Extent of damage
People involved
Type of storm





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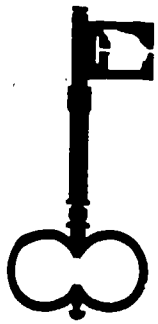
SPONTANEOUS OCCURRENCE - 2

Planning Language Experiences



A SPONTANEOUS OCCURRENCE - 3

Evaluating the Responses

Was interviewer courteous?
Were questions relevant?

Were problems identified?
Were steps logical?
Were criteria appropriate?
Were options considered?

Did children take turns?
Were they good listeners?

Were characterizations realistic?
Were situations clearly presented?
Were feelings portrayed well?

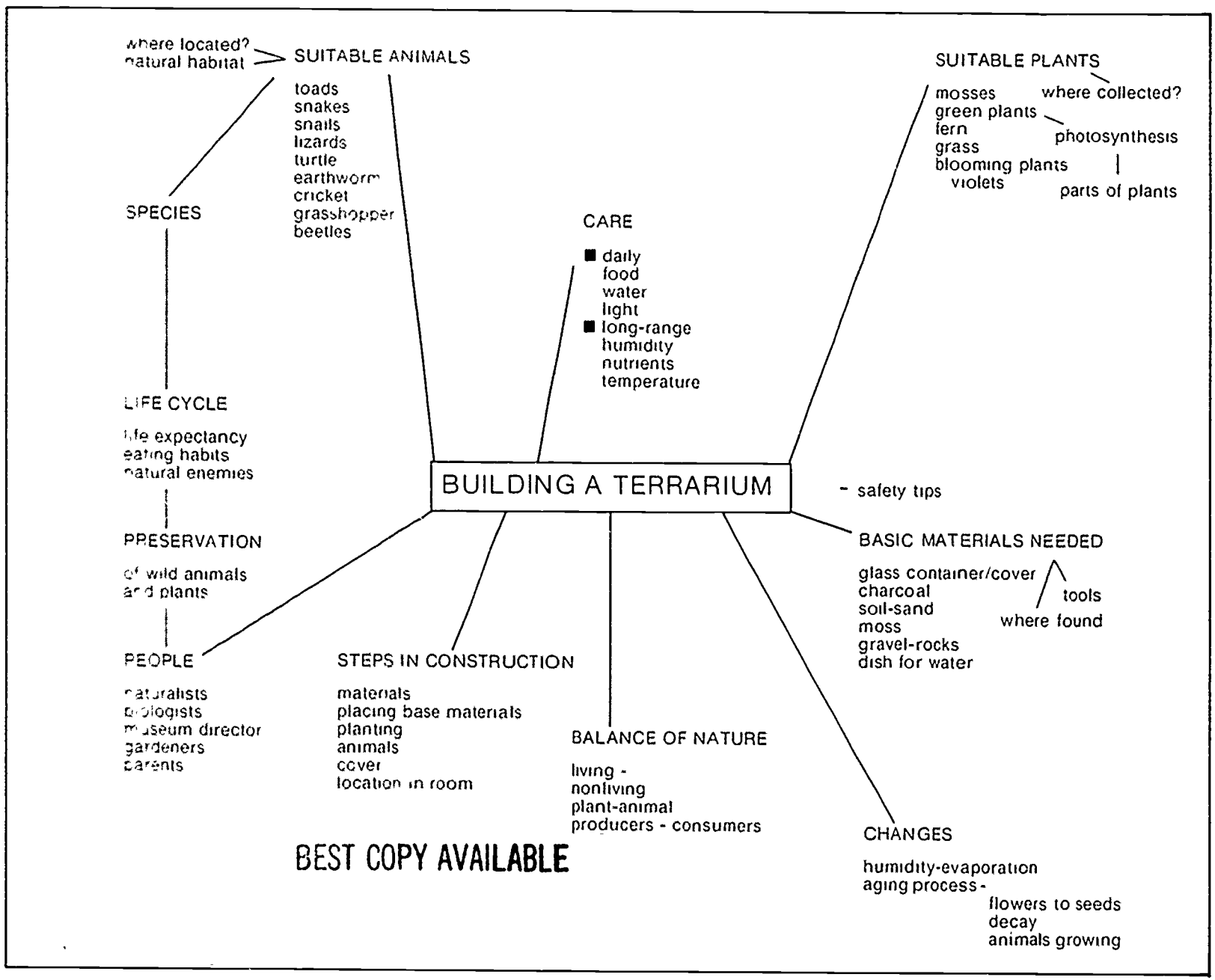
Was writing sensitive?
Were words well chosen?
Was theme apparent?

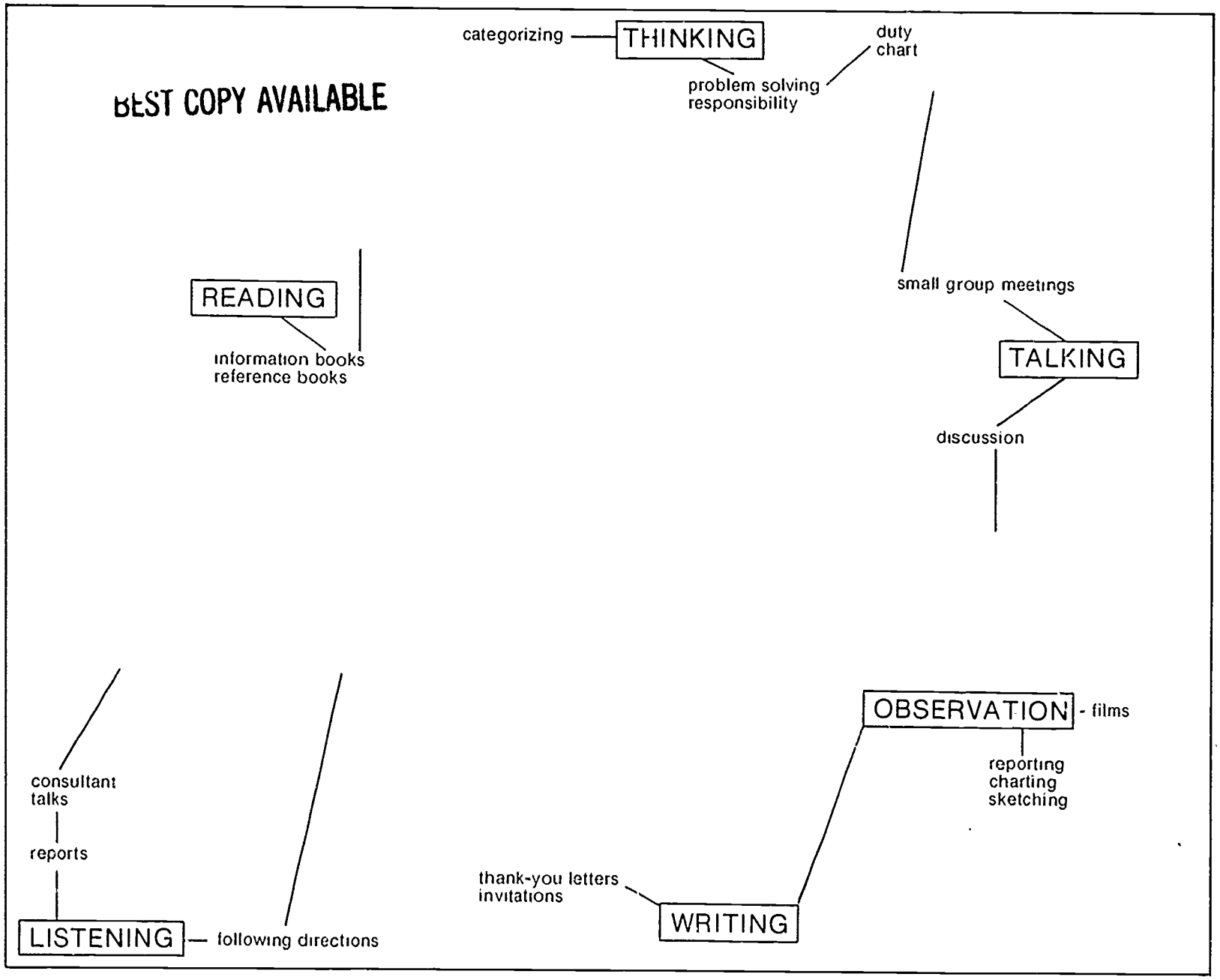
Was product well organized?
Were facts included?
What audience was addressed?

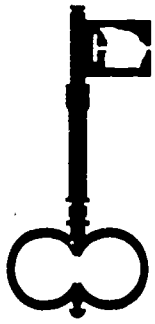
Could child retell one experience heard on TV?
Could child identify sources of news?
Could child describe signals given?

Does student understand cause/effect?
Were facts clearly reported?
Was coverage comprehensive?

Were stories realistic?
Were characters well developed?







were categories appropriate?

were problems identified?
were options considered?

did all children participate?

were sources accurate?
was coverage adequate?

did all children take turns?
did they stay on topic?

was finished product functional?

were reports well organized?
were all facts correct?

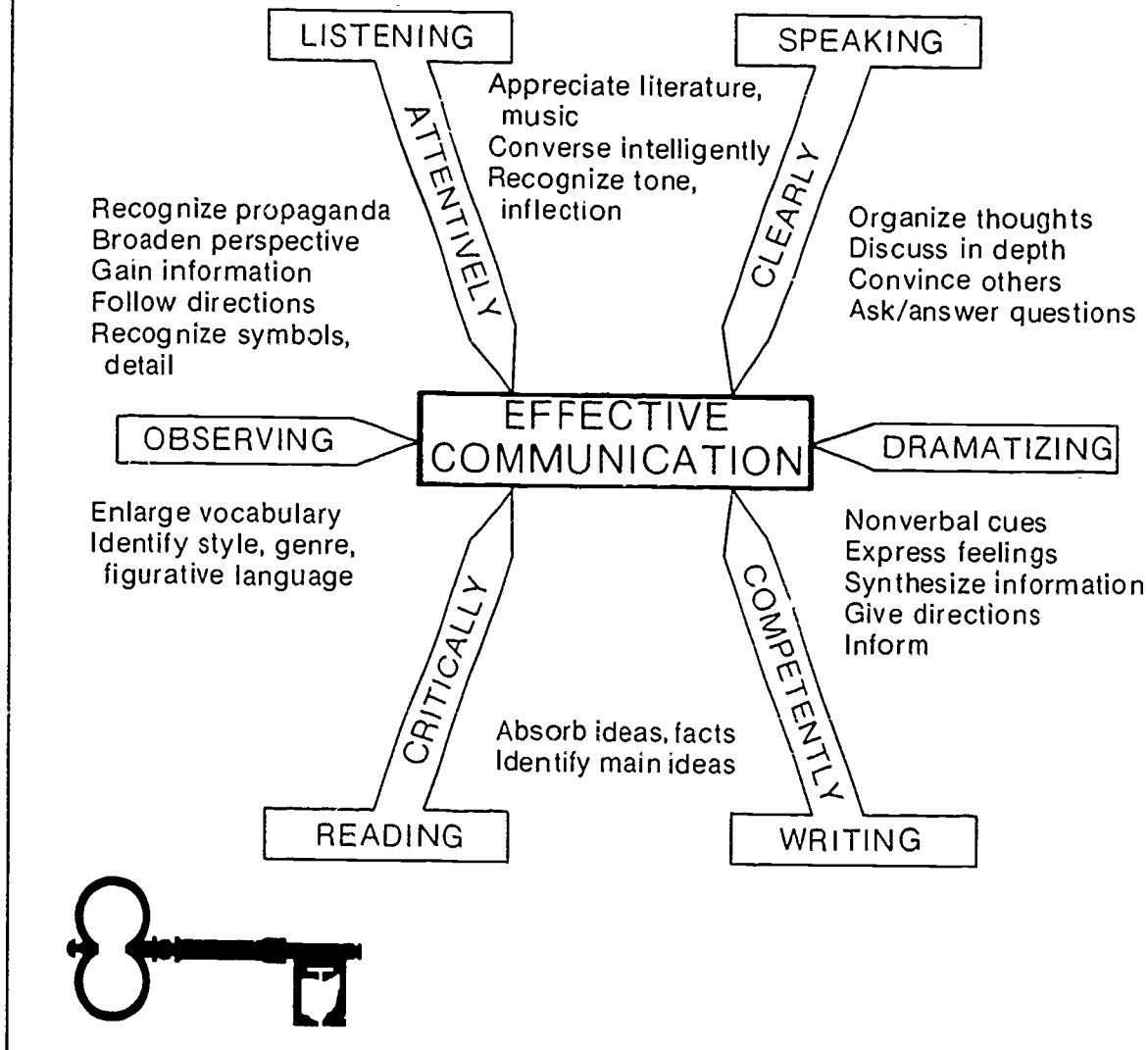
were children courteous?
were questions relevant?

was correct form used?

were charts clear?
were sketches to scale?

The language skills have been described thus far as being closely interrelated, mutually reinforcing and essential to effective communication. In the sections that follow, the receptive and expressive skills will be presented as integral parts of the communication process. The unique aspects of each will be described and strategies for their use explored. A few examples of the interrelationship each has with other language arts elements will be offered in the hope that teachers will view language and its teaching as a natural part of the total curriculum. Many of the examples offered will relate to other language skills and curriculum content. There is a time for direct teaching of specific skills in any content area but language skills generally are best understood by children when they are seen as a relevant part of the total learning process.

The Interrelationships of the Language Arts



Listening

One of children's earliest means of receiving information is listening. From infancy to the time they enter school, the sound of the human voice has guided their actions. For example, from the call to breakfast, the viewing of television, the chatter of family and playmates, and a scolding when naughty to the firm "time to go to bed," children learn about the subtle meaning differences revealed by the tone in which a word is spoken. Even though they come to school with this background of language experience, children are not prepared for the kinds of listening the school program demands. Many cannot focus or maintain their attention. Strange new words are used and familiar words are suddenly used in a different context.

Listening, therefore, **must be consciously taught within the many contexts of the school setting.** A variety of listening experiences can be offered that include teacher, peers, other school personnel, outside speakers, and many different media such as film, filmstrips, cassette and tape recordings, and records.

Listening with comprehension requires thought and the ability to maintain attention. It is the type of listening required in school settings. There are other types of listening that are essential for children and adults in order to become effective communicators. Classroom teachers should offer experiences in a variety of listening situations so that children can function comfortably. The more realistic and relevant to children these situations are, the more effective their listening skills will become.

Listening seems to improve in relation to certain developmental levels. Yet throughout their lives children and adults must be able to perform at any of these levels at any given time.

Marginal listening is essential to tune out distracting noises and at the same time be conscious of subtle changes in the sounds of people and things in the environment. Selective listening might be useful when only the highlights of a speech or a broadcast are desired, but it could also jeopardize good listening habits, because some listeners might "tune out" all but what they want to hear. The critical listener might mentally respond to one speaker and come to a real meeting of the minds, but not be swayed by another's presentation. **In this age of media bombardment, we need to concern ourselves with the development of critical listening in children so that they may make judgments based on a complete understanding of a presentation and its implications.**

Early Experiences in Listening

Listening plays such a vital role in the total language arts program that a few activities are suggested here for beginning experiences in listening. Auditory discrimination skills are essential to developing the sound-symbol relationships necessary for successful reading and spelling. Listening can be fun and educational at the same time. Keep early experiences as simple and brief as possible, develop one skill area at a time and create a readiness for each activity.

- Daily story telling, story reading, story sharing times to develop attention to story sequence, dialogue, vocabulary in context and theme
- Music, poetry, singing games to develop appreciation of the sounds of language
- Auditory experiences to develop increased discrimination of sounds

  identify unseen sources of sounds, from behind a screen or on tape (egg beater, vacuum cleaner, water running)

  develop awareness of pitch by playing notes on piano or other instrument, speaking in high and low voice

  play tapes of sounds of nature and man-made sounds to be identified

  tap or march to a variety of rhythms

  develop a "code" of long and short sounds
- Experiences with poetry, prose or real sounds to increase ability to develop mental images (listen and draw a picture of something in story)
- Stories, word puzzles, and number games are useful for practicing listening for detail (clues) to solve a problem or mystery
- Daily conversation time, show and tell, and sharing experiences or books with small groups develop ability to think with speaker and respond with relevant questions or comments
- Directions for building an object or folding paper help to increase skill in listening for specific information

Provide Realistic Experiences for Children to Improve

Kinds of Listening

ATTENTIVE
(listening to gain information)

- select pertinent facts
- follow directions
- grasp main idea
- develop a sense of story

ANALYTICAL
(listening with comprehension)

- identify sounds
- detect shades of meaning
- detect propaganda
- comprehend meaning
- identify sources of information

APPRECIATIVE
(listening for enjoyment and to heighten sensitivity)

- build sensitivity to language
- enjoy sounds of language
- enjoy sounds of nature
- enjoy music, plays, poetry
- participate in word play

COURTEOUS
(listening with consideration for others)

- avoid interrupting
- be attentive-eye contact
- suspend judgment until speaker is finished

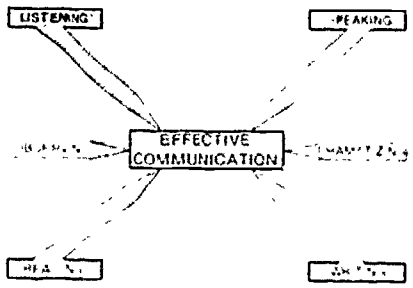
MARGINAL
(listening passively until called to attention)

- provide background music
- tune out distractions
- identify routine alarm devices
- recognize changes in tone of voice

CRITICAL
(listening in order to make a judgment)

- develop criteria
- categorize information
- separate fact from opinion
- make comparisons
- solve problem
- make judgment

A Framework for Teaching: Listening



Concept: Listening skills can be taught and improved through planned instruction.

Goals: To improve student's ability to listen critically, courteously, attentively and appreciatively.
To improve children's ability to analyze and apply ideas as they listen.

Interrelationships:

Mutual reinforcement with:

speaking
- converse intelligently
- ask and answer questions
- follow oral directions, assignments
- comprehend oral reports and select pertinent ideas
- grasp main idea in discussion

writing
- develop sense of story from hearing many stories
- use listening experiences as springboards for writing

reading
- increase vocabulary and comprehension
- refine sound-symbol relationships
- gain an appreciation of literature

Essential Experiences:

Teachers:

- Offer frequent listening experiences
- Establish clear purpose for all listening activities
- Recognize children listen at different levels
- Offer different kinds of listening experiences
- Relate listening to other language skills
- Discuss with students what makes a good listener
- Establish standards for listening experiences
- Avoid needless repetition
- Develop listening experiences appropriate for age and listening levels of students
- Plan peer listening activities
- Make listening important
- Create a readiness for listening
- Read aloud daily and maintain a relaxed atmosphere
- Encourage questions to clarify misunderstandings
- Encourage response to listening experiences
- Reduce possible distractions
- Arrange seating for students with hearing difficulty

For Example:

Students:

- Play listening games such as Simon Says and Gossip
- Build group stories
- Supply missing words in familiar rhyme
- Categorize sounds heard indoors and outdoors
- Visit a listening corner with records, tapes, earphones, sound filmstrips
- Have time for small group sharing, conversation
- Listen to reports by peers and list details and ask relevant questions
- Listen to a story and express feeling it creates, predict ending or give main idea
- Listen to a paragraph and suggest reasonable title or identify a sentence that doesn't belong
- Listen to music and select favorite passages
- Follow directions for a new game
- Listen to stories and poetry for enjoyment of the language and ideas presented

Evaluation:

Does student:

- Follow oral directions capably?
- Need repetition before responding to spelling words or answering questions?
- Respond emotionally to stories with laughter, tears or comments?
- Respond appropriately to questions?
- Use broadened vocabulary gained from listening?
- Identify specific sounds by matching sound with object, recognizing letters, and providing rhyming words?
- Attend for reasonable length of time?
- Summarize a report, activity or story in an organized manner?

Resources:

Kaplan, Sandra; Kaplan, JoAnn; Madsen, Sheila; and Taylor, Bette. *Change for Children*. Pacific Palisades, California: Goodyear, 1973.

Lundsteen, Sara W. *Listening: Its Impact At All Levels on Reading and Other Language Arts*. Revised Edition. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1979.

_____ "Procedures for Teaching Critical Reading and Listening," in *Language and the Language Arts*, ed. Johanna S. DeStefano and Sharon E. Fox. Boston: Little, Brown, 1974.

Russell, David and Elizabeth Russell. *Listening Aids Through the Grades*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959.

Taylor, Sanford E. *Listening*, What Research Says to the Teacher, Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1964.

Tutolo, D.J.A. "A Cognitive Approach to Teaching Listening," *Language Arts*, Vol. 54 (March, 1977) pp. 262-265.

Teachers are perhaps the second most influential adults in the formation of children's speech and language habits. The parents have had the most influence, for they were the child's speech model during the most formative years. Another growing influence that cannot be overlooked is television. Children's programming has expanded enormously in recent years with children watching advertisements and adult programming as well. In *The Plug-In-Drug*, Marie Winn describes the possible influence of television on children.[1] Children with siblings have yet another model of considerable influence prior to entering school.

Before they start their schooling, children have acquired a reasonable ability to predict the results of their requests for things, demands for attention, and their questions. Upon reaching school age, children may discover their speech patterns and habits (baby talk, dialect, colloquialisms) are not universally understood. They need an understanding adult to help them to acquire the skills they need to become effective communicators. The child's teacher is a tremendous influence and can do much to ease the child gradually into the oral demands of the school setting.

In the first year of school or in a later year if a child transfers from one school to another, colloquial speech patterns or dialect may cause misunderstandings. **It is extremely important that the teacher respect the language patterns with which the child has successfully communicated up to this time.** A child's speech is a reflection of the child's family, friends, and community. If the child's language is not respected, it is seen as a sign of disregard for the child's background, and therefore self-esteem suffers.

It is also important that the child learn just how effective that speech pattern is in the larger school community and with those who live even farther away from the local district. We are not being fair to children if we do not help them to understand the need to communicate in an ever growing circle of life situations. Only when children recognize this need will they be motivated to make changes in their speech habits. "Studying" standard English or usage conventions will not guarantee such change in behavior.

Opportunities to express themselves in a variety of situations requiring oral response are essential. **At certain times children need to feel free to speak without fear of correction or interruption. They need, too, to recognize the needs of others to have an equal opportunity to be heard.**

Children with speech problems resulting from physical or mental disabilities usually require professional help but the teacher's attitude can do much to help these children in the classroom. **A teacher's understanding and acceptance of the way a child talks will support the child's self esteem during a period of therapy outside the classroom.** This acceptance will encourage the child's classmates to respond more sympathetically to the problem as well.

The teacher is often a "significant other" to children just as are parents and other adults who are trusted by children. Perhaps the statements offered in a recent motivation publication should be repeated here:

Significant others can:

- give students individual attention
- show kindness to students
- really listen to what students have to say
- value all students' contributions to class discussion
- give students continuing and constructive feedback
- treat students as unique individuals with courtesy and respect
- let students know that you have confidence in their ability

[1]Winn, Marie, *The Plug In-Drug*, New York: The Viking Press, 1977.

Strategies for Classroom Discussion

Of the many oral expression experiences that take place in the elementary classroom, whole class or small group discussion may occur most frequently. Children need direction by the classroom teacher to function effectively during a discussion. There are multiple skills involved, although the most apparent are speaking and listening. Some of these skills are:

1. PREPARATION SKILLS for topic to be discussed
   - Understanding purpose for discussion
   - Selecting relevant materials
   - Summarizing information
   - Organizing information for quick retrieval
2. LISTENING SKILLS
   - Suspending judgment until speaker is finished
   - Understanding those using propaganda techniques
   - Keeping eye contact with speakers
   - Listening for main ideas
3. SPEAKING SKILLS
   - Enunciating clearly so that all can understand
   - Selecting words within range of group's ability
   - Speaking loudly enough to be heard
   - Improving and increasing vocabulary
   - Speaking to total discussion group/class - not just the teacher
4. THINKING SKILLS
   - Responding with relevant remarks
   - Questioning those views not understood
   - Clarifying remarks or ideas presented
   - Weighing all contributions before making decision
5. SOCIAL SKILLS play an important part in the success of any group activity
   - Taking turns - avoiding interruptions
   - Balancing contributions and listening - avoid "taking over"
   - Respecting contributions of others - avoid sarcastic remarks
   - Willing to listen to another point of view - reach a consensus

continued on page 30

continued from page 29

Obviously, the role of the teacher is an extremely sensitive one in classroom discussions. Perhaps the following tips will smooth the way to a successful group meeting.

1. Set clear purpose for discussion
2. Select topics of concern and interest to students
3. Provide ample time for preparation and pondering of the topic
4. Assemble reference materials - books, films, tapes - to aid preparation or for use in discussion
5. Attempt to reduce distractions when selecting time and location of meeting
6. Set standards for discussion WITH children BEFORE beginning meeting
7. Assume leadership role as needed but maintain participant status to keep discussion flowing around group
8. Help children grow in use of their skills of questioning, solving problems, offering relevant responses and sharing conversation
9. Provide time for summation of topic and evaluation of solutions offered
10. Assist children who do not contribute by planning topics they can speak about or providing materials for them to use while talking

Discussion takes time, but considering the many skills that may be improved, it seems well worth the time spent. The skills of discussion are essential for effective communication throughout life.

Kinds of Oral Expression Experiences

SPEAKING

- organize thoughts
- express effectively
- sensitive to audiences
- adequate usage

PERSUADING

- debate formally
- use propaganda techniques

INTERVIEWING

- prepare well: know topic and person
- formulate questions ahead
- use time wisely

TELEPHONING

- be courteous
- be brief
- answer promptly
- know emergency procedures
- take messages

CONDUCTING MEETINGS

- follow procedures
- be neutral
- share "floor"

CONVERSING

- listen carefully
- share ideas

BRAINSTORMING

- ideas for projects
- planning aid

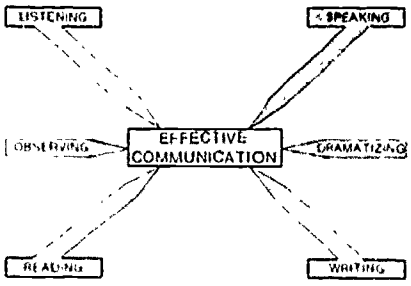
DISCUSSING

- listen attentively
- keep on topic
- take turns

QUESTIONING

- come to point quickly
- answer concisely
- state precisely

A Framework for Teaching: Oral Expression



Concept: A good oral language foundation is basic to a child's ability to read and write

Goals: To improve children's power of expression
To increase and enrich children's vocabulary
To increase children's ability to speak clearly, appropriately and intelligently

Interrelationships:
Mutual reinforcement with:

listening
- answer questions appropriately
- broaden speaking vocabulary
- gain information to use in responses

writing
- discuss experiences to better organize ideas
- clarify word meanings for precise writing
- enrich writing vocabulary with oral word play
- record notes from oral reports

reading
- read words from oral vocabulary more easily
- reduce reading problems while improving speech

Essential Experiences:
Teachers:
- Create a nonthreatening atmosphere that encourages oral expression
- Encourage children to formulate own questions
- Provide varied opportunities for oral interaction
- Limit teacher "talk" — encourage student involvement in discussion
- Select discussion topics of interest and concern to students
- Aid children in organizing oral presentations
- Discuss standards for speakers and audience
- Develop an awareness of audience as students prepare presentations
- Serve as a speech model for class
- Provide rich and varied experiences that stimulate talk
- Help children develop a growing sensitivity to the beauty and power of language
- Investigate the many nonverbal cues to meaning
- Aid students in developing good speech habits
- Set acceptable and realistic standards for oral communication

For example:
Students:
- Give directions of all kinds — games, directions to various locations
- Dictate stories or reports of experiences
- Convince classmates to vote, purchase, read or follow suggestions
- Practice voice control, manner, posture when speaking
- Use telephones in classroom
- Brainstorm many ideas
- Contribute to a panel discussion
- Organize facts, know audience, think on feet during debates
- Conduct meetings using parliamentary procedures
- Interview principal, coach, teachers about topics of concern
- Conduct surveys
- Share experiences or materials
- Play with words — meaning, rhyming, humor

Evaluation:
Does student:
- Relate events in sequential order?
- Stay on topic, take turns in discussions?
- Use words appropriately and easily?
- Use complete sentences when appropriate?
- Read orally with ease and pronounce correctly?
- Contribute to discussions, conversation?
- Organize thoughts and express self well?
- Elicit positive audience reaction to oral presentations?
- Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard?
- Speak in an interesting manner?

Resources:

Carlson, Ruth Kearney, *Speaking Aids Through the Grades*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1975.

Laffey, James L. and Roger Shuy, eds. *Language Differences: Do They Interfere?* Newark, Delaware: IRA, 1973.

Mallett, Margaret and Bernard Newsome, *Talking, Writing and Learning 8-13*. London: Evans/Methuen Educational, 1977. (Schools Council Working Paper 59)

Possien, Wilma, *They All Need To Talk*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969.

Dramatization

Drama means many things to many people. In the elementary classroom drama frequently takes the form of dramatic play or creative dramatics, although choral speaking, puppetry and pantomime are also included. Dramatic play is usually defined as unrehearsed play with materials found in the K-3 classroom. Children are often seen playing house, school or doctor and manipulating blocks into a variety of structures for playing train, building a skyscraper or trucks. The teacher provides these materials and rules for their use but otherwise allows children much freedom. Observation of children shows much talk occurring which aids language development and adult behavior being copied in an exaggerated manner.

Creative dramatics is more structured than dramatic play, and the teacher's role is more apparent. Incidents of importance to children are role-played with children changing roles to learn to view problems or situations from another's point of view. Children's stories may serve as the basis for a look at how certain characters might be portrayed. Some creative drama might be related to social studies or science in which children dramatize a moment in history or a scientific discovery. A clear way to assess a child's understanding of the lessons involved would be the teacher's observation of such drama.

Movement to music, following a rhythmic pattern, or moving as though one were an animal or a tree in the wind all help children release energy while enjoying a creative experience. In drama, children can try out many roles without fear. This helps them deal with aspects of life that they may someday encounter. For some children "acting out" will help them to clarify a situation from a story, a textbook or a classroom discussion.

Children who have grown up with television have had access to a medium in which the main element is drama. They have been exposed to all types of dramatic presentations in which the roles played, the themes depicted and the information dispensed represent a wide range of quality. The teacher may help children view these programs by examining the techniques of characterization and staging that make the difference in the quality of a production.

All activities should be educationally defensible and the teacher must have a clear understanding of the values involved in the experiences for children. Dramatics can be a healthy channel for emotions, an excellent group discussion topic, a stimulation of the senses and a springboard to other forms of creative expression. **Children who are seeing, feeling, and thinking in creative drama are more likely to find it easy to communicate in speaking and writing throughout the school day and beyond.**

Kinds of Dramatic Presentations

DRAMATIC PLAY

Playing "house" using dolls
Using blocks as props
Playing at sand table
Playing in "school store," "bank," "post office"

ROLE-PLAYING

Trying on adult roles
Portraying story book characters
Making a scientific discovery
Becoming a pioneer, explorer or famous chef

MOVEMENT

Changing a familiar game around
Walking as if old, young, a toddler
Moving to mood music
Marching to varying rhythms

CHORAL SPEAKING

Selecting a familiar poem or verse
Deciding on the range of voices needed
Reading the lines in a variety of ways
Evaluating effectiveness of each attempt

CREATIVE DRAMATICS

Using simple props (hats, scarves)
Improvising a situation with speech and movement
Sustaining a dialogue on a theme
Acting out a new ending to a story

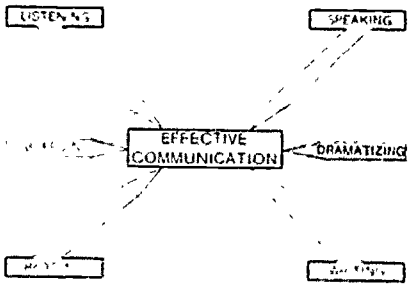
PANTOMIME

Acting out parts while narrator reads script
Playing charades
Responding to story poem
Pantomiming a familiar activity

PUPPETRY

Using paper bag puppets
Using finger puppets
Creating stick puppets
Switching roles and puppets
Manipulating stick puppets on overhead projector while telling story
Recording story for use with puppets

A Framework for Teaching: Dramatization



Concept: Children's natural enthusiasm for "acting out" can be directed toward educationally sound objectives

Goals: To satisfy children's need for trying out adult roles

To provide children experience with situations that depict varying points of view through role-playing

To provide an outlet for children's creative talents

Interrelationships:

Mutual reinforcement with:

listening — improve ability to attend to dramatic presentations
— increase sensitivity to rhythm and sound of language
— move in rhythm with sounds or music

speaking — present varying roles by changing voice and posture
— increase ability to speak on impromptu basis
— present choral readings of poetry

reading — use stories to understand and portray characters
— develop and portray scenes from stories
— read aloud from play scripts

Essential Experiences:

Teachers:

- Understand and appreciate values of dramatic play
- Provide time and an idea from which to create a drama
- Provide some equipment with which to characterize roles
- Observe drama and at times participate with children
- Utilize drama when an appropriate complement to subject areas
- Emphasize peer evaluation of performances
- Guide imaginative experiences
- Stimulate sensory impressions
- Use literature as a stimulus for dramatic experiences
- Explore various media as appropriate stimuli for drama
- Recognize characterization is basic to creative dramatics
- Recognize that a basic part of drama is self-evaluation
- Ask questions that tap the ideas and imagination of children themselves
- Enable children to transform their feelings and moods into movement

For Example:

Students:

- Identify personal concerns that can be addressed through drama
- Use color, music and comments to guide movement activities
- Portray different kinds of people by adding hats and scarves
- Role-play pioneers struggling across the western plains
- Participate in experiences with seeing, feeling, smelling and hearing as the basis of a response
- Offer positive comments and suggestions after a creative performance
- Read story or play while others pantomime the parts
- Describe a setting and move through it taking different roles
- Listen to an adventure story or folk tale and act out in an impromptu way
- Select favorite story and create puppets or flannelboard characters for retelling
- Listen to tape or cassette of story and respond with movement or pantomime
- Respond with movement to musical themes that evoke different moods
- Select familiar verse and plan the choral reading assignments
- Discuss a common conflict and role play various solutions
- Select partners and have one apply makeup or shave in front of "mirror partner"

Evaluation:

Do students:

- Improve in their ability to assess a performance positively?
- Work better as a team in producing drama?
- Show improvement in ability to speak or think "on their feet"?
- Exhibit more sensitivity to moods and feelings as a result of role playing?
- Accurately depict historical events in their drama?
- Show improvement in their ability to express themselves verbally and through actions?

Resources:

Gerbrandt, Gary L. *An Idea Book for Acting Out and Writing Language K-8.* Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teacher of English, 1974.

Gillies, Emily. *Creative Dramatics for All Children.* Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1973.

Glass, Gerald G. and Muriel W. Klien. *From Plays Into Reading.* (Plays to read in the classroom) Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969.

Kelly, Elizabeth. *Dramatics in the Classroom: Making Lessons Come Alive* Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1976. (Fastback #70)

King, Nancy *Giving Form to Feeling,* New York: Drama Book Specialists Publishers, 1975.

McCaslin, Nellie. *Creative Dramatics in the Classroom.* New York. David McKay Company, 1968.

Moffett, James. *Drama What is Happening.* Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teacher of English, 1967.

The emphasis in teaching writing has been changing from *what* children write to *how* they write. Recent studies have focused on the process rather than the product, and their results appear to offer classroom teachers more effective strategies for the teaching of writing.

James Britton, Marie Clay and Donald Graves, among others, have been providing the leadership in this study of the writing process. They each advocate the concept that children learn to write by writing, and that the interactions of the children and teacher are essential to the refining of the product. Product and mechanics involved in good writing are not forgotten, but are introduced at a different stage of production. Most technical aid is offered at the "editing" stage of a first or second draft. Children are urged to make revisions that clarify their ideas or message before their work is analyzed for specific mechanical problems. Children's anxiety about corrections reduces their ability to express ideas. If burdened by **how** they are writing, they will lose their enthusiasm and desire to write.

Writing takes time, and the classroom teacher can provide that time by integrating writing with all curriculum areas. Not only will children have more experiences with varying functions of writing, but they will come to view writing as an integral part of their daily lives and one of many excellent means of recording and expressing their ideas and thoughts.

Stages in the Process of Writing

PREWRITING: Something to Write About

Time to explore topics, ideas and perceptions
Listen/read good literature, prose and poetry
Try role playing or dramatizing an event
Brainstorm with peers, teachers
Research an idea in the library, locate facts, details
Hold sustained discussions with peers, teachers
Go on field trips and walks
Ponder what has been seen, heard, experienced

FIRST DRAFT: A Purpose for Writing

Decide on the reason for writing — to express self, record an event, entertain, persuade
Think of the reader (audience) to whom writing is directed
Write ideas, thoughts down quickly
Organize ideas and write in logical sequence
Explore new ideas generated by writing
Pattern style after familiar story
Create new ending or setting for a story

REVISION: Clarify the Message

Reread aloud to "hear" your message
Listen for dull, repetitive statements
Share with peer or teacher to check interpretation by others
Focus on effective use of words
Look at organization and clarity of message

EDITING: Improving the Mechanics

Check grammar
Use dictionary to correct spelling
Look over punctuation and capitalization
Check flow of words and vitality of message

PUBLISHING: Making Use of the Final Product

Design and make own books
Copy story or poem into student-made books
Shelve in classroom or school library for use by others
Compile reports, articles into class notebooks
Keep folder of all writing to check progress or for later polishing
Write stories, make books for younger children to read
Share stories orally in class and with younger listeners
Keep a journal when have something to record — might include a teacher student dialogue
Contribute to a young author's corner or bulletin board
Submit books "published" to a young author's conference

Handwriting

The mechanics are as important to the craft of writing as they have always been, it is the placement of their use that has undergone great change at the elementary level. Many children have been discouraged from writing because of the emphasis on mechanics ocurring long before they have seen a need for acquiring the skills of spelling, handwriting and usage

The present trend of thought for instruction in handwriting is to teach the formation of letters, either manuscript or cursive, in the primary grades so that children have a tool with which to transcribe their ideas. The refinement of their handwriting, of course, continues, but writing is copied in its best form when that writing is going to be used in some specific written product such as a letter, a report, a class book, or a story to be published in a school or classroom paper Children can then more easily understand the need for legibility and neatness. The following criteria for a handwriting program might include.

- Well-planned direct teaching to develop proficiency
- An individualized approach following initial instruction so that individual needs are met
- Pupil-teacher discussion of reasons for good handwriting
- Legibility as the primary aim in teaching handwriting
- The teaching (rather than copying) of individual letters
- Proper posture and positioning of paper and writing tools
- Children's evaluation of their own work
- Instruction integrated into situations where there is a need and desire to write
- Writing is complex and immediate accuracy quite rare
- Writing experiences not associated with punishment

Beginning experiences:

- Children need practice with large and small muscle coordination activities such as cutting, drawing, painting, and working with clay
- Unlined paper on an easel and the chalkboard should be used before lined paper at a desk
- Left to right drawing of objects or shapes should be practiced
- If using manuscript writing, the child needs to be able to make circles and straight lines
- Verbalizing handwriting procedures may improve a beginning writer's attempts.

Later experiences:

- Quality of handwriting can be judged by children with teacher guidance on improving form, size, spacing, alignment, slant and neatness
- Speed is not a major element during the elementary years though children should acquire greater speed naturally as they master the techniques
- A folder of children's writing efforts should be maintained for diagnosis of difficulties and evaluation of improvement by teacher, child and parent
- If a transition to cursive writing is made, children should be given an option to write in their most comfortable form when completing tests or writing reports
- Group evaluation of legible writing can be done with the use of an opaque projector. (What makes this paper easy to read? What causes you difficulty when reading this next paper?)
- Continue use of both manuscript and cursive to maintain skills
- Handwriting difficulties can be checked during the editing process in most writing projects whether practical or creative

Resources:

Andersen, Dan W. *Teaching Handwriting*, What Research Says to the Teacher. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1968.

Burns, Paul C. *Improving Handwriting Instruction in Elementary Schools*. Second Edition. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1968.

Myers, Emma *The Whys and Hows of Teaching Handwriting* Columbus, Ohio: Zaner Bloser Company, 1963

Spelling

Children come to school with a fair knowledge of speech sounds and a rich and complex understanding of their language. In the past we have taught spelling by assuming that children knew very little about language. **We now recognize that we must build on what children know and change some of their assumptions about the complexities of their language system.** For example, young children (and older) are confused about which vowel sounds are spelled with the same letters. We are learning to permit children to use their phonetic judgement, which in many cases is quite reasonable and serves as a cue to the children's stage of development in spelling. Children who are consistent in their misspellings are applying the "rules" as they perceive them and are at a higher stage of development than children who have not yet reached a point of consistency.

Children are guided in the process of learning to spell by their knowledge of the subtle properties of speech sounds and of parts of sentences. Children use many cues from the oral language of adults to give meaning to words or statements. Their reliance on pronunciation, timing and intonation may be responsible for reading difficulties, for these cues are not found in written language. If written language is difficult to decode, the encoding process may be equally frustrating. Teachers need to recognize this difference in acquisition of language meaning and to identify the level at which children are working.

Changes in spelling strategies occur sequentially and systematically and children move through these over an extended period of time regardless of the instructional procedures employed.[4] This knowledge might indicate that until children reach a certain point in maturation and their cognitive development they cannot deal successfully with spelling and word recognition skills. Learning to spell involves learning about words, their components and relationships among these components (sound-symbol, syntactic, morphemic elements). **Therefore, the teaching of spelling should be linked with word recognition skills and word exploration in the classroom.** Children should be urged to explore words to unlock meaning. Actually seeing words in print may help students to remember how a word looks so that they can spell it correctly, for over the long run reading becomes a major source of information about spelling. However, teachers should recognize that children may read the standard orthography of a textbook with ease while unable to read their own writing which includes their own "invented spellings."

We have much to learn about the process of learning to spell but there seems to be common agreement that we approach the teaching of spelling in a systematic way and with a greater awareness of the problems faced by children as they attempt to use their knowledge of language to express themselves in writing.

Analyzing spelling errors

One of the most effective ways to aid children with their spelling and to assess the stage of their development is to examine their spelling errors. An analysis of errors will frequently reveal that a child is incorrectly spelling many words but only one or two types of errors are involved. Errors can be classified into types and children can be given direct instruction in the skills involved in one type at a time. Their task for improvement will not then seem so overwhelming.

[4]Beers, James Wheelock and Carol Strickland Beers "Vowel Spelling Strategies Among First and Second Graders A Growing Awareness of Written Words," *Language Arts* Vol. 57 (February, 1980), pp 166-172.

Common types of errors

ERROR	POSSIBLE CAUSE	EXAMPLES
Spelling wrong word	confusing words similar in sound	loose for lose
Substituting letters	confusing vowel sounds	din for den
	confusing consonant sounds	sents for cents
Adding letters	doubling consonant incorrectly	comming for coming
	incorrect suffix	partys for parties
Transposing letters	misunderstanding generalization	recieve for receive
	carelessness	saftey for safety
Omitting letters	forgetting silent vowel	wer for were
	using phonetic spelling	Wensday for Wednesday
Other errors	inaccurate pronunciation	liberry for library
	poor handwriting	ruin for rain

Beginning experiences:

- Children need help with writing and naming letters of the alphabet
- Children need to practice copying words correctly
- Children should be able to write their own names and a few other words from memory
- A desire and interest in learning to spell should be encouraged
- Formal spelling lessons should begin after children indicate a readiness for the task
- Word recognition skills phonetic and structural are aids to spelling
- Invented spelling as children begin to write should be accepted as a step towards later mastery
- Emphasis on word meaning is important to spelling readiness
- Emphasis on oral cues when reading aloud to children can lead to greater understanding

Later experiences:

- Errors in spelling should be analyzed and used for reteaching
- Children need help in developing a systematic approach to new words
- Spelling "demons" should be identified and presented to students (words with schwa sound, r-controlled vowels, certain letter sounds)
- Practice in dictionary use aids student independence in spelling/proofreading
- Supplementary spelling words should be selected for their utility
- Individual differences must be recognized and met
- Test-study-test methods are favored in upper grades
- Self-corrected tests aid student understanding of errors

Resources:

Hanna, Paul R., Richard Hodges and Jean S. Hanna. *Spelling: Structures and Strategies.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1971.

Boyd, Gertrude A. and E. Gene Talbert. *Spelling in the Elementary School* Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing, 1971.

Read, Charles. *Children's Categorization of Speech Sounds in English.* Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1975.

Grammar, Usage, Punctuation and Capitalization

Grammar

Grammar is the study of the structure of language and deals with the form and structure of words, with their arrangement in phrases and sentences and their functions. In recent years the traditional grammar based on the rules of Latin has been supplemented or replaced by other grammars. The linguists' study of the way we speak produced structural grammar which reports language as it exists, identifies basic sentence patterns and describes the function of words. This was followed by transformational grammar which was developed to overcome the weaknesses of the structural approach. The kernel sentence is the core of the system (The dog ran.). Anything added to enlarge the kernel sentence (The little black dog ran down the street.) changes it into a "transformed" sentence.

Grammar deals with word classifications whether traditional or structural, and the terminology should be used when it is natural to do so. The terms may differ somewhat, such as an adjective called a determiner and an adverb an intensifier, but if used in relation to actual written or oral expression, children should have no trouble with them.

It is also natural for children to learn the names of sentences and their parts as they work to improve their written expression. Teachers should deal with this structure and function of language informally but not incidentally. The activities dealing with the forms, structure and functions of language are carefully planned situations from which the need for using specific language skills arises.

Results of a study published by Pooley in 1974 showed formal instruction did not produce change in usage and composition.[3] Elementary students benefit most from practicing their writing and speaking, learning by listening to language in use, and reading the publications of others as well as their own. Definitions and "rules" are not effective tools unless they are preceded by experiences that exemplify those rules.

Usage

Language is constantly changing, and there are many levels of its use from illiterate to literate and informal to formal. Words are invented as a result of advances in technology and familiar words take on new meanings. Levels of language change to accommodate audiences and situations. The national standard of language at the elementary school has moved from a formal to an informal standard and some linguists recommend that we teach a variety of levels of usage (standard, dialect, slang, colloquial).

Usage is concerned with the choices we make when using words and is often thought of in terms of "correctness" or "incorrectness." The National Council of Teachers of English has urged teachers to observe that acceptable usage is determined by the current language in use; recognizes dialect and geographical variations, judges appropriateness by the purpose intended, recognizes situational levels of speech; and takes the historical development of language into account.

Teachers must be sensitive to the responses of children who use other than the dominant language of a school or community. If these children are being ridiculed by their peers, then dialect differences become an area of concern. The teacher needs to understand the dialect or colloquialism so that the child's learning can be reinforced. Students need to be reminded of their own knowledge of language and encouraged to generate sentences that express what they want to say. Children cannot learn to improve their language unless they first feel free to use language. Typically usage difficulties are centered around a few common errors and teachers should use their best judgment in determining which need to be improved if children are to become effective communicators.

Some usage difficulties are only problems in written form. For example, in "I am going _____ the store," children must identify which of the words, (to, too, two) is the correct one to use. When children say "I am going to the store," there is no problem. The same would be true of their and there and the many other homonyms in our language.

Punctuation

The unique aspect of punctuation is that it appears only on paper and not in speech. We "punctuate" in speech to some extent by stress, pause, inflection, and tone of voice, but punctuation is in reality a visual aid to making sense of writing. Writing has been practiced for almost 3,500 years, but punctuation marks have only been used for a little over 200 years. We are still attempting to find a more adequate system.

Children should be introduced to punctuation marks as naturally as possible and always in the context of written expression. While there are many punctuation marks in use, only a small number of them are necessary for children in elementary school. In general we use punctuation for four major reasons:

(1) separating - period, question mark, exclamation point, comma
(2) linking - hyphen, dash, semicolon, colon
(3) enclosing - pairs of commas, dashes, parentheses, brackets, quotation marks
(4) omissions - apostrophe, period in abbreviations, series of periods or dots, dashes

As children are taught to proofread their own writing, they must be given specific items to look for. Students can review the types of punctuation they are to check such as endings on sentences or the use of the apostrophe. A chart can be made as a ready reference for individual proofreading. Reading a written selection orally gives clues for punctuating. This practice later becomes internalized.

[3] Pooley, Robert E. *The Teaching of English Usage* Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1974.

Lack of punctuation frequently leads to lack of effective communication and teachers can help students in their early efforts so that positive attitudes toward the tools of writing will be fostered. **An overemphasis on punctuation to the detriment of the ideas expressed, however, may hinder the desire to write.**

Capitalization

Just as with punctuation, capitalization is a visual clue to understanding and needed only when writing. An examination of children's writing in the classroom will reveal any difficulties they are having. Long before children begin to write independently, however, they can be introduced to capitalization. As they learn to form letters in handwriting lessons, they find two forms for every letter. As dictated sentences are written on charts, teachers should be pointing out words which begin with a capital letter.

As children begin to write independently, they usually exhibit a great anxiety for correctness, and teachers must help them discover ways to cope with these anxieties. If individual handwriting charts with directions for formation of letters are available at their desks, they will feel more comfortable about using them. Sample sentences showing capitalization of the first word will serve as reminders, and proper names labeled where appropriate might help to reduce frustration. Above all, teachers should recognize that children can help each other and that errors are bound to be made in early attempts. An attitude of helpfulness while encouraging formation of good habits will reduce the anxieties of children as they strive to perfect their skills.

Beginning experiences:

- Keep mechanics of writing and of forms on an individual basis
- Encourage good habits in using mechanics but emphasize ideas
- Introduce grammar, usage, punctuation and capitalization in the context of real writing experiences
- Have young children draw pictures to represent parts of speech (prepositions such as over, under, across can be illustrated)
- Read Mary O'Neill's *Words, Words, Words*, to introduce children to parts of speech and punctuation marks
- Use colored chalk on chalkboard to identify punctuation marks and capital letters
- Have children sign notes home to practice capital letters
- Dramatize punctuating sentences with Mr. Period, Mr. Question Mark, Miss Comma

Later experiences:

- Serve as an "editor" for children's writing after ideas are on paper
- Keep folder of children's writing and use in private conference to review needed improvements
- Develop a play on punctuation marks or a game with homonyms
- Use daily newspaper to identify various kinds of sentences, punctuation, capitalization
- Start a class newspaper for varied writing experiences — especially editing and proofreading practice
- Emphasize use of language by writing letters, reports and stories
- Use an overhead or opaque projector to identify writing errors with class (no names on papers)
- Continue journal "dialogue" with children who desire to do so
- Use bulletin board, posters and charts to focus interest on mechanics
- Use first drafts to polish ideas; use second draft to "edit" mechanics
- Work on only a few common errors at one time
- Look up history of our language, letter formation, and punctuation marks

Resources:

Burrows, Alvina, et al. *They All Want To Write*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964.

Carlson, Ruth K. *Writing Aids Through the Grades*. New York. Teachers College Press, 1970.

Epstein, Samuel and Epstein, Beryl. *First Book of Words*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1954.

O'Neill, Mary. *Words, Words, Words*. New York: Doubleday, 1966.

Forms of Written Communication

PRACTICAL WRITING

- business letters
- labels/captions
- thank you notes
- friendly letters
- invitations

EXPOSITORY

- reporting facts, data
- informative
- descriptive

EXPRESSIVE (factual-imaginative)

- prose-stories
- poetry-verse patterns, free verse
- recalling experiences
- thought ramblings
- journal writing

RECORDING

- notes from speakers, readings
- experimental data
- events in sequence
- lists of materials, names
- experience charts

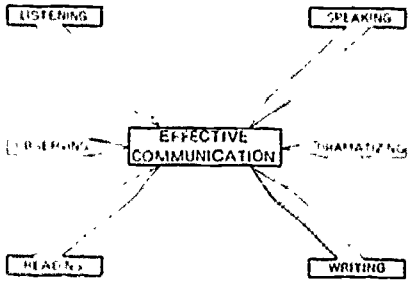
PERSUASIVE

- editorials
- directions
- advertisements

REPORTING

- news
- results of experiments
- social/sports events (who-what-when-where-why)
- movies and television

A Framework for Teaching: Written Expression



Concept: Children learn to write by writing

Goals: To aid children's effectiveness in communicating their thoughts and ideas in writing
To develop students' awareness of audience as they write
To increase children's proficiency in the mechanics of writing
To develop students' understanding of the need for editing

Interrelationships:

Mutual reinforcement with

listening
- develop concept of "story"
- broaden perspective from ideas of others
- polish note taking skills

speaking
- discuss experiences to clarify thoughts
- ask questions to obtain information for writing
- try out new words for later use in writing
- share and enjoy stories

reading
- absorb form style of stories read independently
- acquire new vocabulary
- become aware of need for legible, clear writing

Essential Experiences:

- Provide a supportive environment for students
- Respond as editors to children's writing
- Provide many prewriting experiences that will give students something to write about
- Focus on writer's ideas (content) before mechanics in early writing
- Discuss experiences to clarify and organize thoughts
- Read aloud to develop a concept of story
- Develop a sense of audience with students
- Provide numerous contexts for writing in addition to classroom
- Link writing experiences with curriculum topics that have relevance to students
- Help students establish real purpose for writing to inform, entertain, persuade
- Encourage revisions of first drafts to polish ideas and language
- Provide what technical help is needed during revisions
- Encourage peer groups to edit other's work — provide criteria for making judgments
- Make use of student writing that is polished and proofread
- Provide time for writing: time to experience, ponder, produce, polish, proofread

For Example:

Students:

- Try Sustained Silent Writing on a regular basis
- Can dictate their individual stories or poems to an adult
- Contribute a sentence to a short story by peer group
- Organize and clarify their information and enlarge technical vocabulary when writing reports
- Write up sequence of events following demonstrations in science
- Use variety of aids so that ideas are not lost for lack of spelling skill. (Draw lines, write only first letter, invent spelling, use dictionaries, ask student monitors)
- Work on improving mechanics of writing during the editing process
- Create a mood by using sounds, music, poetry, stories, films, and other sensory experiences (write a response)
- Use writers' corner where materials and space encourage expression
- Look at pictures before writing; take field trips around neighborhood
- Respond to drama and literature by expressing feelings, thoughts
- Combine many forms of writing, plus editing, proofreading, planning layout by working on class newspaper
- Combine interviewing with recording, graphing or charting and summarizing results while making a class survey
- Record minutes during class meetings
- Write telegrams on how to relay important message in a few words
- Read student-authored books shelved in school or classroom library
- Correspond regularly with pen pals in United States and other countries

Evaluation:

Do students:

- Disregard all form when writing creatively?
- Rank high on scale when scoring their total writing product holistically?
- List criteria before making judgment on qualities of a good story?
- Communicate in clear and appropriate language?
- Keep individual student folders and check for improvement in their writing periodically?
- Check for organization, clarity of message, precision in word selection when editing their work?
- Discuss writing techniques and ideas with teacher in individual conferences?
- Recognize that different forms of writing should be evaluated in different ways?

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Reading: Literature for Children

The values of including fine literature as an essential part of the entire school curriculum are well known Good books can do much to supplement instruction and complement the topics under discussion. Books for children supply information about a subject in addition to indirectly teaching children about the process of both reading and writing.

There is a growing belief that children learn to read by reading and that they are stimulated to read by adults who can open the world of books to them in new and exciting ways. Children will develop lifelong reading habits if they are read to and have access to a library of many books, are encouraged to read and to share their favorite stories with others, are provided with many opportunities to respond to stories and poetry in a variety of ways and are encouraged to extend literature with experiences in art, music, drama, and writing.

Children are enriched by the literature they hear and read and almost unconsciously store away positive feelings about books and reading. The development of imaginative thinking may be aided by acquaintance with animal fantasy, folklore or the high fantasy stories of mature readers. The concept of story so necessary for children to write their own tales of fact or fiction may be enhanced. A knowledge of character development and of the form and style of various authors is carried over into their own writing.

Hearing stories and poetry read aloud provides children with an increased listening vocabulary and strengthens their comprehension skills in addition to improving their ability to attend to the spoken word.

The vicarious experiences that children may encounter in literature supply them with insights and understandings about people and their world that could not possibly be experienced first hand. Books can be found that will enhance all topics and the broad range of human emotions. Interests may be kindled through books that lead to avocations and vocations.

Learning **from** literature can lead to learning **about** literature. In addition to developing a sense of story and character delineation and development, children may begin to acquire a style of their own in the use of figurative language and other literary devices such as point of view, foreshadowing, flashback, and use of imagery. These should not be forced but should be introduced in the questioning of teachers to help children discover their meaning and their contribution in the context of a story or poem. As children become acquainted with a greater variety of stories and poetry the discussion of form might be introduced to enrich meaning.[5]

Above all, the pleasures that children find in books — the laughter, the wonder, the facts and the fantasies — all join to encourage those children to learn to read and to love to read. When learning to read becomes a goal desired by children, they will apply themselves vigorously to mastering those skills that will help them achieve that end.

Literature as a Base for Critical Reading

Children's stories and poetry provide an excellent base for teaching of critical reading. Children's interests and enthusiasm are tapped by the teacher who reads aloud and discusses literature with them. These discussions can be designed so that children become increasingly aware of the forms, elements and devices of literature. They can use their knowledge to make judgments about the materials they read and to become discriminating readers.

Forms of literature

Experiences with many types of literature lead children to an awareness of the variety available to them. Reading from both fiction and nonfiction, prose and poetry will broaden children's understanding of the author's purpose for writing; to make them laugh, cry, or think.

Teachers can introduce children to the many forms of literature through reading aloud. After hearing several stories of historical fiction, for example, children can discuss what makes a historical novel good. As they develop its criteria, such as authenticity and accuracy and a feeling for the times, these will be considered as new historical stories are read. Criteria for each of the types of literature can be developed in this way. The next step can be making judgments based on their criteria and comparisons made with other examples of the same type. Thus, realistic fiction, both contemporary and historical, fantasy, traditional literature such as fables and folk tales, and biography will gradually become a familiar part of the children's background of knowledge about books. A listing of the more common forms follows.

[5] Huck, Charlotte S. *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*. New York. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp 709 710.

Forms of Literature

Prose

Fiction
- realistic
  - contemporary
  - historical
- modern fantasy
- traditional
  - fables
  - folk tales
  - legends
  - myths
- picture books (can be all types including wordless)

Nonfiction
- biography
- information books
- picture books (ABC, counting, concept, informational)

Poetry

- Narrative
- Lyrical
- Free verse
- Ballads
- Concrete poetry
- Patterned poetry
  - haiku
  - tanka
  - cinquain
  - diamante
  - limerick

Elements of fiction
As children become aware of the many forms of literature, they will begin to learn about the different elements associated with each. In fiction the major elements are theme, plot, setting, characterization, and style. The list below will identify them briefly.

ELEMENT	DEFINITION	CRITERIA
theme	the main idea/author's message	appropriate
plot	the action of the story	well-constructed
setting	the time and place of the story	authentic/credible
characterization	way author reveals the characters	believable
style	author's choice and arrangement of words, other literary devices	reflects tone

An additional element may be considered when reading picture books, though not found extensively in novels The illustrated book has pictures depicting certain events in the story or placed at the beginning of chapters The picture book contains illustrations that are unified with the text, enhance it, and "tell" the story even if children cannot read the words. Its illustrations are created by the artist who uses line, color, and spacing in a variety of media and styles to complement the content of the story Observation skills are enhanced by children who look for detail in the illustration that is described in the text.

Children may compare the works of one author or illustrator using the various criteria to determine the quality of a new book. They may compare and contrast stories of similar content or theme to evalu ate those elements. Children and teachers might discuss the characters in a book in terms of their development by the author. How does the writer reveal the kind of person that character is in the story? What is it that enables the reader to predict how the character will respond in a given situation?

These questions will come naturally from many children as they discuss the action of a story and relate it to their own experiences and background of know ledge Allow this absorption of information about books to occur informally and in an atmosphere of curiosity, inquiry and sharing.

This attitude of inquiry will help children to read between the lines to interpret the intentions of the writer and to read beyond the lines to critically examine the worth of what they have read. Once the habit of observing and reading critically has been established with literature it may transfer to other materials as well. Just as with fiction, criteria for non-fiction can be determined. The best of biography and information books can then be selected for use in reports and research topics as well as for pleasure. Children should be introduced to many forms and patterns, so that they will recognize the variety available and be able to select their favorites.

Literary devices

After children have responded in a personal way to the stories and poetry they have heard or read, they may have questions that relate to the devices used by authors to make their stories memorable. Among the devices that might be used in children's literature are point of view, symbolism, figurative language and, at times, flashback. Children do not need to define these terms, but a knowledge of "who is telling the story" may help them discover meaning. Symbols representative of the theme occur in many stories and often provide the means to talk about theme or "big idea." Figurative language often causes children to think about common objects and events in unique ways. The language of the simile or metaphor should relate to children's experiences or they will fail to understand the meaning intended by the writer.

As teachers explore the literature and help children become more discriminating readers with the ability to make judgments about their reading, perhaps they can also see the relationship to the total language program. Discussions, observations, writing and listening are essential parts of the process of critically examining material. **Children's literature can be the catalyst that effectively integrates the communication skills.**

Experiencing Literature

DEVELOPING APPRECIATION

hearing or reading a variety of literature
reading books by same author
recognizing styles of illustrators
discovering enjoyment in books

RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

dramatizing stories or poetry
drawing, painting, sculpturing scenes and characters from stories
portraying a character
creating a game from story

WRITING FROM READING

writing new endings
creating a new story or poem
following a story pattern or form
creating a unique book report

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

experiencing many forms of literature
reading stories on similar theme
identifying similar story plots
comparing different versons of folk tales

READING ALOUD

reading to peers, younger children or family
reading daily by teacher
choral reading of poetry
choosing books that stretch the imagination

STORY-TELLING

retelling favorite story
story-telling by librarian, teachers or child
encouraging children to join in refrains
taping well-told stories
using flannelboard to enhance story

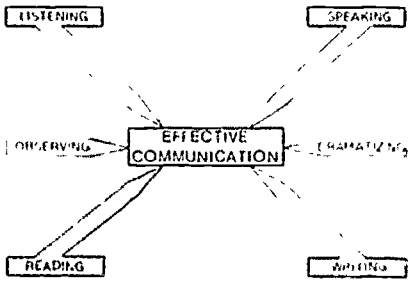
DISCUSSING/SHARING BOOKS

discussing believability of character
discussing theme or concept
relating story to own experiences
questioning reality of story
making oral book reports

IDENTIFYING LITERARY FORMS

introducing new forms throughout year
developing criteria for each literary form
discussing the author's purpose
listening to different patterns of poetry

A Framework for Teaching: Reading Children's Literature



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Concept: Good books serve as a motivating factor in the reading process

Goals: To develop in children a lifelong habit of reading
To develop children's imagination
To help children identify a variety of literary forms, styles and devices
To create in children an awareness of the information and enjoyment found in books

Interrelationships:

Mutual reinforcement with.

listening
- develop concept of story plot and characterization
- acquire an awareness of rhyme and rhythm
- identify theme or main idea

speaking
- retell familiar stories
- choral speaking (verse choir) with poetry
- share a story with small group

writing
- create new endings to well-known story
- follow story poetry patterns
- use new vocabulary appropriately

Essential Experiences:

Teachers:

- Read aloud from good books every day
- Guide discussions about books and their author/illustrator
- Use a variety of literature — prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction
- Develop criteria for identifying good information books
- Develop critical reading skills using literature
- Link children's personal and school experiences to books
- Share poetry daily
- Provide for extensions of literature with art, music, and drama
- Encourage reading during free time
- Provide time for sharing of stories and poetry by children
- Maintain a classroom library
- Involve children in book selection for classroom library
- Work closely with school librarian or media specialist
- Use books to complement content area studies
- Develop criteria for judging good books
- Participate in National Book Week and Right to Read Week activities

For Example:

Students:

- Retell stories with flannel board and puppets
- Study books by one author or illustrator
- Compare stories of similar theme, plot, setting
- Share a favorite story with a small group
- Read to younger children on regular basis
- Create time-lines using facts from historical fiction
- Compare several biographies of a famous person
- Create games from adventure stories or fantasy
- Paint mural depicting many stories from one genre
- Read many variations of one folktale and discuss
- Use picture books to note detail, unity with text, color and artistic techniques
- Create dialogue or sound track to accompany wordless books
- Predict endings after reading part of story
- Use information book location skills in class project
- Dramatize stories — role play characters
- Hold book fairs in school or class — conduct a book character parade
- Write original story based on familiar plot or theme

Evaluation:

Do students:

- Attend to reading aloud and story telling?
- Respond to books in a variety of ways?
- Improve in ability to predict story action?
- Increase the number of books read independently?
- Continue to broaden their scope of reading?
- Apply literature learnings to other school work?

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