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ABSTRACT

Sharing concerns and interests of New York State educators in the improvement of literacy, this annual journal raises educational issues such as appropriate, effective instruction and assessment for all of New York's children. A central thread found in many of the articles is the importance of authenticity and inclusion. A second strand reflects classroom and college educators' experiences with effective instruction. Articles in the journal are "An Introduction to Clarence Page" (Dorothy R. Troike); "Black Voice Adds Richness to a Maligned Class" (Clarence Page); "Making Connections, Opening Minds: An Author's Perspective" (Betsy Maestro); "Making Connections, Opening Minds: An Illustrator's Perspective" (Giulio Maestro); "P.S. 272: A Work in Progress" (David N. Berg); "Access to Books: Variations in Schools and Classrooms" (Richard Allington and others); "Making and Sharing Meaning: The Power of Response Journals" (Elizabeth Forbes Stever); "A Look Back: Page's 1845 Normal Chart as the Foundation for Teaching Reading" (Rose-Marie Weber); "Portraits of Success: Two Students in Reading Recovery" (Susan Stoya); "Authenticity and Literature in the Multicultural Classroom: What Are the Issues?" (Brenda M. Greene); "A Celebration of Multiple Realities" (M. Priscilla Myers); "Diversity Expressed and Experienced through Poetry" (Rose Reissman); "Women's Literature and Voice: Implications for Girl's Reading and Writing in the Classroom" (Brett Elizabeth Blake); "'Teacher Talk'--Ethnographic Perspectives on Classroom Language" (Michael L. Walker); "Reader Response: It's Okay to Talk in the Classroom!" (Kenneth Weiss and others); "The Usefulness of Portfolios in Teacher Education" (Rebecca Rich and Sylvia Blake); and "Envisioning Literacy in a Diverse World: Literacy Development and the Power of Social Independence" (Dolores Gaunty-Porter). Most papers contain references. (RS)

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The Language And Literacy Spectrum

Volume 5 ■ Spring 1995

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THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SPECTRUM

VOLUME 5 SPRING 1995

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE READING ASSOCIATION AND SUPPORTED BY THE SAGE COLLEGES

INFORMATION

The **New York State Reading Association** is a statewide organization made up of 43 local reading councils across the state. The goal of NYSRA and the local councils is to promote literacy and general improvement of reading at all levels, and to encourage reading as a lifetime activity. All members of **NYSRA** receive a subscription as part of their membership fees.

The Language and Literacy Spectrum
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The Language and Literacy Spectrum is a publication of the New York State Reading Association. It is published annually and intended for a wide professional audience including classroom teachers, reading and special educators, consultants and specialists, college and university faculty, parents and administrators of schools as well as others interested in literacy, reading and the language arts.

The Language and Literacy Spectrum seeks manuscripts dealing with topics, ideas and events of interest and value to teachers, specialists, and administrators involved in reading/language arts instruction at all levels of education.

The ***Spectrum*** welcomes photographs depicting students in varied literacy activities. Black and white photos are preferred. Parent/guardian permission is required and photos will not be returned.

The deadline for submitting manuscripts is **December 1, 1995.** Manuscripts and editorial correspondence should be addressed to:

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2. ***The Language and Literacy Spectrum*** is a refereed journal and, therefore, the review of manuscripts is blind. Contributors must submit three copies of each manuscript with an abstract of 75-100 words. Manuscripts must be between 10-20 pages long and typed according to APA format. Author(s) must be identified on title page only. If a manuscript is accepted for the journal, contributors must submit a 3.5" floppy disk of the manuscript in WordPerfect format, for either IBM or Macintosh computer.

3. Authors are solely responsible for the accuracy of material in their article and the opinions and conclusions expressed therein. It is assumed that articles under consideration for publication in the ***Spectrum*** are original and not being considered for publication elsewhere.

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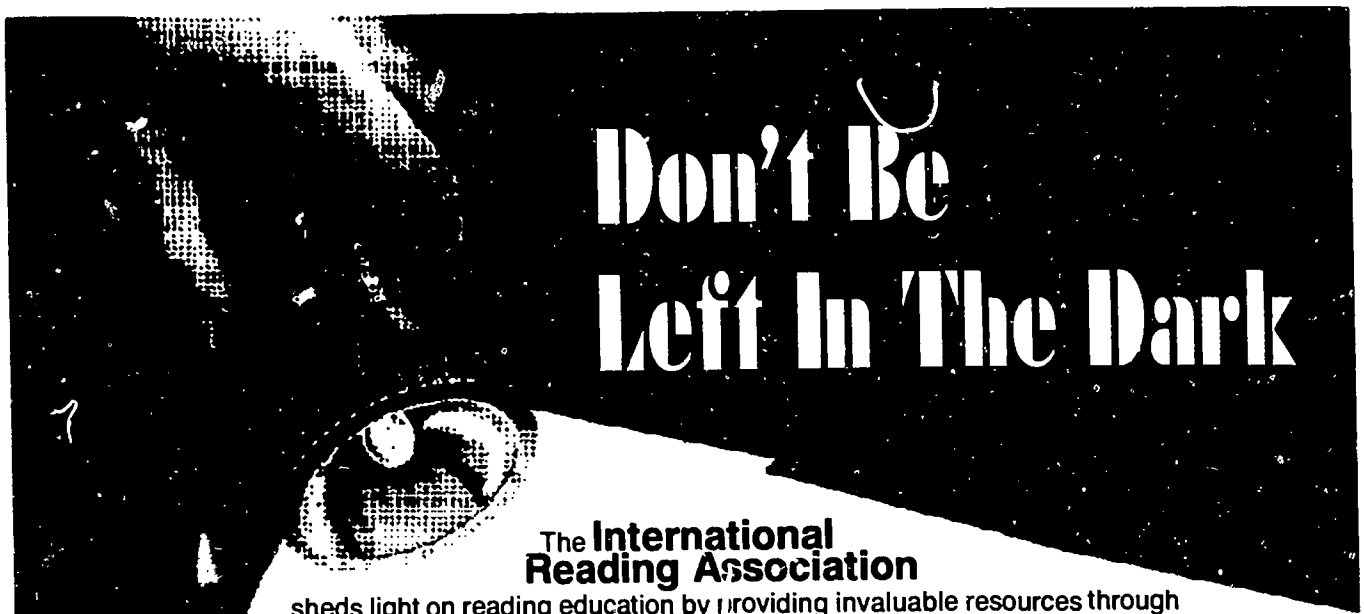

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FROM THE EDITORS...

The importance of authenticity and inclusion is a major theme in *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*, Spring 1995. For too long the experiences and stories of some Americans have been excluded from schooling. Nationally acclaimed journalist Clarence Page eloquently argues that the black voice in Huck Finn must be celebrated and cautions against excluding it. Betsy and Giulio Maestro, a well known author-illustrator team, share their commitment to writing non-biased, nonfiction children's books. David Berg provides a snap-shot view of an inner city school's exemplary literacy efforts; teachers, parents and children alike find that diversity is a powerful influence in P.S. 272's success. While P.S. 272 has been highly successful despite its high poverty level, Allington et al. show the inequities too frequently experienced in other schools with high proportions of economically disadvantaged youngsters in terms of availability of and access to high quality children's books; they argue the social injustice of these discrepancies must be addressed through funding.

A second major strand reflects classroom and college educators' experiences with effective instruction. Elizabeth Stever depicts the potency of quality books in helping children connect their lives to the books they read. As Rose-Marie Weber illustrates in her historical research, the controversy surrounding the teaching of "phonics" is not new. Susan Stoya portrays the success of two struggling emergent readers in her Reading Recovery™ program. Brenda Greene presents a convincing argument for the use of authentic literature to help students empathize with other persons' life experiences; only through open, honest dialogue will we see the uniqueness and humanness of others. Poetry has been effective in allowing Rose Reissman to demonstrate to her preadolescent learners the commonalities among people and the hurt of prejudice. Through Brett Blake's poignant capturing of Chantal, an adolescent African American student, we see first hand the frustration experienced when available books have little authenticity and the tremendous impact meaningful literature can have on one learner. Based on a review of classroom ethnography, Michael Walker found that teachers often speak in teacher-ese (language highly specific to classrooms) and he argues that children with little familiarity with such conversational interactions are disadvantaged. In an investigation of children with varying reading abilities and ages, Weiss et al. concluded that all children can participate in personalized conversations about trade books they are reading; these authors strongly recommend daily and varied opportunities for children to share their responses to literature. Rebecca Rich and Sylvia Blake describe their use of portfolios with graduate and undergraduates in teacher education programs; not only did they find them helpful for program and course evaluation, but they contend that such development gives deeper insight into the process for teachers who will ultimately use these assessment tools in their classrooms.

We are pleased to include the essay from the Donovan Award winner in 1994. Dolores Gaunty-Porter shares her personal perspectives on literacy and argues for more collaborative opportunities for literacy learning.

Once again Frank Hodge has graciously allowed us to share his book recommendations with the readership of *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*. Among his many wonderful suggestions, a number of books celebrate the great diversity among people. We hope that you will read, enjoy and share these books with others.

KAG & PMcD
February 8, 1995
The Sage Colleges
Troy, NY

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

Each member of the NYSRA will receive a copy of *The Language and Literacy Spectrum* as part of their membership. We want to recognize the vision and efforts of both the New York State Reading Association Board of Directors and the Assembly of Delegates. The journal can now better achieve its goal of serving as a forum for the exchange of ideas among New York State literacy educators.

Paula Costello, President of NYSRA, has been a strong supporter of *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*. Jane Barber Smith, Past President of NYSRA, continues to ardently support the journal in many, many ways; her thoughtful, reasoned approach to all issues alleviated much of the stress of its publication. Our recent contact with Marilyn Funes, President of NYSRA in 1995-1996, makes us look forward to working with her. These leaders reflect the best in our profession, and they have contributed to the journal in significant ways and deserve our thanks!

The Editorial Review Board has evaluated many, many manuscripts, often with severe time constraints. We could not produce the journal without their efforts. Thank you to each and every person who reviewed manuscripts.

The Sage Colleges continues its general support of the publication of the journal in many daily ways including postage and use of the phone. Moreover, Dr. David Goldenberg, Executive Dean, underwrote a portion of the editors' costs to attend the NYSRA Conference which enabled us to meet presenters and keynote speakers, many of whom responded to our requests for journal submissions which were subsequently published in this volume.

In early 1994, Dr. Howard Berrent, a long time, active member of NYSRA, approached the Association and offered to publish *The Language and Literacy Spectrum* through his company, Berrent Publications Inc. Because his company recently merged with Steck-Vaughn, we are pleased to publicly acknowledge the support of the journal by Steck-Vaughn/Berrent.

Diane Simmons and Carol Brazinski, secretaries in the Education Department at The Sage Colleges, continue to provide assistance with editing, typing and other production expertise. What amazes us is their good humor through all our frenetic efforts. We can not thank them enough!

Last year it was our hope that *The Language and Literacy Spectrum* would grow in stature and visibility. We are thrilled that the circulation has gone from 1000 to nearly 8000 in a year! We believe the journal provides a vehicle for discussion on literacy issues affecting New York State.

We welcome any and all comments from our readership and thank the New York State Reading Association for the opportunity to continue to serve as editors.

KAG & PMcD

FROM THE ANNUAL NYSRA CONFERENCE

An Introduction to Clarence Page

– Dorothy R. Troike

I was intent on getting Clarence Page as a keynote Speaker for the 1994 New York State Reading Association Conference. I had often seen him on The McLaughlin Group and heard him on national radio. I was convinced that as Pulitzer Prize journalist, he would bring varied perspectives to the role of "literacy in the global community."

Clarence Page spoke on Thursday evening, November 3, 1994, in the Imperial Room of the Concord Hotel. As predicted, he spoke with ease and eloquence to the topic of Literacy and the Media. One of his major points was the changing demographics of newsprint readership; while most of us grew up reading the daily paper, few young persons do. He also discussed the role of media and immediate access to world events. He predicted that on-line technologies had the opportunity to recapture readership and encouraged us, as literacy educators, to engage children in the world and its problems. In particular, he expressed his worries regarding censorship and political correctness. Concomitantly, the issues of racism and exclusion were addressed in his remarks. Reference was made to his 1992 commentary, *Black Voice Adds Richness to a Maligned Class*, which is reprinted below.

Conference participants who had the opportunity to chat with him before and after his keynote address were delighted to learn that he was both personable and unassuming. Not only was he an eloquent spokesperson for literacy and humanism, he was warm and compassionate. NYSRA is proud to have had Clarence Page among us! He is indeed a friend to literacy!

Dr. Dorothy Troike is Professor of Reading at the State University of New York College at Cortland and the New York State Reading Association's 1994 Conference Coordinator.

Black Voice Adds Richness to a Maligned Class

– Clarence Page

(Reprinted by permission: Tribune Media Services)

Say what you will about Ross Perot, G-7 talks or Batman. To me, the biggest story of recent days is the literary scholar who concludes that Huckleberry Finn may have been black.

Well, no, not Huck himself, but his voice. The voice that narrates the great American classic "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" may have been that of a black lad Twain wrote about in a loving essay titled "Sociable Jimmy" that The New York Times published 118 years ago.

Although some scholars remain cautiously skeptical, others have greeted warmly the conclusions of Shelley Fisher Fishkin, an associate professor of American studies at the University of Texas, that Twain deliberately modeled Huck's language after that of Jimmy, who had enthralled Twain with his unpretentious chatter.

Fishkin thinks Jimmy's dialect, which Twain cheerfully quoted at length, may have triggered enough of Twain's recollections to enable him to paint vivid pictures of life in Missouri and along the Mississippi for the novel Ernest Hemingway says is the basis for all modern American literature.

Fishkin uncovered words and phrases in Huck's language that she says may seem at first to be typical backwoods white dialect but on closer examination are closer to Jimmy than to other white characters like Huck's

friend Tom Sawyer. For example, both Huck and Jimmy say "drownded" for "drowned," while in "Tom Sawyer," Tom says "drowned" while Huck still says "drownded."

"Clearly, Jimmy's speech was ringing in Twain's head as he was writing 'Huckleberry Finn,' " Fishkin told The New York Times. Her study, "Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African-American Voices," is scheduled to be published next year by Oxford University Press.

The news that ol' Huck might be a soul brother is particularly ironic in light of how many blacks have tried to keep "Huckleberry Finn" out of the hands of schoolchildren every year, in spite of its strong anti-slavery, pro-brotherhood message, because it happens to mention the word "nigger" about 200 times.

Probably no one lashed it more viciously than a black administrative aide at, ironically, Mark Twain Intermediate School in Fairfax County, Va., who said in 1982: "We don't want any kid to be forced to read this racist trash....The book is poison....It is anti-American....It works against the idea that all men are created equal...Anybody who teaches this book is racist."

As an African-American who has found himself defending the book against such passionate critics, I now feel vindicated by the possibility that "Huck" may have black roots. And, why shouldn't it be? It would be characteristic of Twain to notice as he was writing this great American novel that our great American language and, accordingly, our culture are inextricably multiracial.

Like others among America's hyphenated ethnic groups, we African-Americans are very American, and America, thanks to our influence, has become more African. All of America's many cultures contribute to the flavor of its great national mulligan stew. Those who stubbornly resist that reality deserve the savage mocking Twain gives them in "Huckleberry Finn."

I, too, flinched when I heard my white teacher reading the word "nigger" aloud when she introduced our 9th-grade class to the book. But I soon found myself reading it on my own, at first out of curiosity, then out of sheer pleasure.

Easing into its flow and language, I was quickly caught up like Huck's raft in the mighty river. By the end of the journey, I was laughing out loud at the way Twain's stiletto wit had exposed the lunacy and hypocrisy of American racism by showing it through the eyes of a boy who finds himself, against his initial wishes, helping a slave to escape.

It was inspiring for me as a future wordsmith to see how effectively the power of words could be used to grab and persuade a reader to see a powerful point.

It was inspiring enough for me to read other great American authors who were inspired by Twain. They include such great African-American authors as James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison, among many others.

The power of the word "nigger" to dehumanize people like "Miss Watson's big nigger named Jim" made it an essential device to help Twain portray Huck's state of mind before his adventure; helping Jim escape teaches him the book's big point, how a black slave is as human as any white citizen.

As a word that was no more proper to emit in proper society than a curse word or a foul odor would be, it helped Twain show how Huck's attitudes had been shaped by the moral hypocrisy of his time and how much Huck's view of his fellow humans changes by the end of the book.

So, whenever I hear somebody talk about "protecting" black youngsters from Twain's words, I think about how our protection might also protect them from ever being inspired as I was to know the power of words.

That's appropriate, I suppose, since so many of our public schools are doing such a fine job already of protecting our children from inspiration.

I'm not sure what Twain or his sociable friend Jimmy would have thought of such favors. I can only imagine that they might have shared a laugh.

Not a big belly laugh, you understand. Just the "little kind of a low chuckle" Huck and Jim would share when they were "kind of solemn, drifting down the big still river, laying on our backs, looking up at the stars."

Clarence Page, the 1989 Pulitzer Prize winner for Commentary, has been a columnist and a member of the Chicago Tribune's editorial board since July 1984. He is an occasional guest panelist on The McLaughlin Group, a monthly contributor of essays to the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour and a biweekly commentator on Sunday Morning Edition on National Public Radio. He is a frequent guest on national news programs, including ABC's Nightline and Good Morning America, NBC's Today, and CNN. Mr. Page received a 1980 Illinois UPI award for community service for an investigative series titled The Black Tax and the Edward Scott Beck Award for overseas reporting of a 1976 series on the changing politics of Southern Africa.

Call for Manuscripts

The Language and Literacy Spectrum, a journal of the New York State Reading Association

THEME:
SPANNING OUR WORLD ON THE WINGS OF LITERACY

The sixth volume of the *Language and Literacy Spectrum* is being prepared for Spring 1996 publication. Manuscripts relating to literacy, literacy in our multicultural society, classroom language, children's literature, reading for second language learners, emergent and beginning reading, content areas reading instruction, remediation, assessment and inclusion of special and remedial students are some of the topics that would be especially welcomed.

The *Language and Literacy Spectrum* accepts contributions from teachers, teacher educators, researchers and other interested individuals. Contributors must submit three copies of each manuscript with an abstract of 75-100 words. Only original manuscripts, which have not previously been published, will be considered for the journal. Manuscripts must be between 10-20 pages long and typed according to APA format. Author(s) should be indentified on the title page only. If a manuscript is accepted for the journal, contributors must submit a 3.5" floppy disk of the manuscript in WordPerfect, for either a PC or Macintosh computer.

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Making Connections, Opening Minds: An Author's Perspective[1]

– *Betsy Maestro*

Like all of you, I too am an educator. From the time I was a little girl, I wanted to be a teacher. My mother was a teacher and I proudly followed in her footsteps. Although I have been out of the classroom for many years, I am still an educator. Every moment of my work is about teaching children. We're all united in our hopes for the future of children; we're working toward common goals.

The theme of this year's conference, **Literacy in the Global Community**, is closely related to our work, and in fact, any number of titles listed in the schedule of events could have been substituted for our own. The phrases "Using Literature to Promote Tolerance," "Celebrating Cultural Diversity," "More Alike Than Different," and "Peace Begins With You," are all close to my heart. Books are something we all love, or we wouldn't be here, and although we live in an age of electronic magic, I'm as sure as you are that books are here to stay. We all are working to bring children into the world of books and to provide children with books that are both satisfying and relevant to today's world.

The word "global" is particularly appropriate as it relates to education. All educators must think globally in both senses; as relating to the whole world, and in being complete and comprehensive in approach. Nonfiction has a very important role in global education; education is what nonfiction is all about. Working on nonfiction is quite different from working on fiction. There is less of the imagination, less of the personal; one must rely heavily on research. I am not an expert on any of the subjects I write about; and at first, I found this a little scary. How could I explain something to kids when I knew so little about it? How could I pretend to be an expert on a subject when I was really so ignorant (or at least I felt that way at the beginning)? Happily, I discovered that I didn't need to pretend to be an expert, and even better, that being somewhat ignorant was actually a great advantage.

Too many writers of nonfiction seem to have their own agenda. They allow their preconceptions or opinions to get in the way of an objective presentation. I was amazed to find, in doing research, that many so-called scholarly and well-respected sources were, in fact, biased and one-sided in their account of events. I take my job very seriously; I have a mission.

I feel a sacred responsibility to remain objective when I write for children. I have a moral obligation to leave any personal baggage at the door when I start work on a new project. Any writer of nonfiction should do this, but those who write for children must have a strong commitment to this rule. Children do not always have the knowledge or the sophistication to recognize and separate opinion from fact. My only agenda is to help children view the world with a more open mind. Teachers have an obligation to open young minds and those of us who write for children share in that obligation. It is our responsibility to present information in an unbiased manner.

As important as it is to be objective, it is equally so to be accurate. Good and thorough research is essential to my work; more time is spent on research than on any other part of my work, so it's a good thing that I like to read! I'm always learning about something new; I read, collect and process information for each new project. It's much like taking a class in a particular subject; I read, study, take notes, and then the final exam is producing a manuscript. It's a little like writing a term paper. I have to take the time to review many sources and to uncover the latest research and current thinking in order to produce accurate information for my text. Sometimes there may be disagreement among scholars and researchers; this problem came up in trying to pin down the timeframe for the earliest human arrivals in North America while working on *The Discovery of The Americas*. It is useful and necessary to be able to tell children: "no one really knows for sure" and to use words like *probably, possibly, maybe and likely.* Children need to know that even scientists don't always know the exact answer.

It is our responsibility to present information in an unbiased manner.

One of the hardest parts of my work is trying to find a way to condense a huge amount of interesting information into about 40 short paragraphs. Out of hundreds of pages of notes, I need to select the critical material - the essence, so to speak - and find a way to relate it in a way that children can understand. This is the challenge I face with every new book. Whatever the subject, the goal is the same: to take a complex subject and bring it to young readers in a lively, unbiased and accurate format. Luckily, I feel that I bring two important assets to this task: a very organized

mind and an ability to talk easily to children. My years in the classroom have proved invaluable.

Writing for children is so different from writing for adults. One can assume that adults have some background knowledge, and that they bring some perspective to the subject. I can't make these assumptions about children, for conclusions that seem obvious to us are not at all obvious to them. Complex and sophisticated ideas need to be broken down so that children can understand them. My first task is to learn enough about a subject to explain it to myself. Then I pretend that I'm actually speaking to a group of children when I explain that same information in the text.

It's a particularly great challenge to explain abstract ideas like *democracy and freedom*, so writing about our Constitution few years ago was a real challenge. Equally difficult was a text about American government I just finished work on for Lothrop, Lee and Shepard. These are not easy subjects to bring to young readers.

We work on so many different books about so many different subjects, but in all of them our desire is always to open childrens' minds and to help them make the connections needed to truly understand the world around them. History is not the only area that can benefit from this approach. All people, not just children, have misconceptions about many things (i.e., fears and biases often based on ignorance). Understanding and knowledge can encourage tolerance and dispel fear. A while ago, I was asked to do a book on snakes for Scholastic. I agreed but was not exactly thrilled by the prospect. Not only did I *not* find snakes appealing, I was actually repelled by them. How could I possibly be objective? How could I encourage children to have open minds when mine was so closed? But luckily my belief in the power of knowledge to dispel fear and intolerance was well founded. The more I learned, the more I became interested. Soon, I was feeling very sorry for these poor maligned creatures. In no time, I found myself actually attracted to the snake exhibits at zoos and museums, and I amazed myself by actually being able to touch and hold a snake without fear or disgust.

Hopefully, this process will work for children as well. I am certainly hoping for just such an awakening to occur when children get to read an upcoming book we are doing on religion for Clarion. During the Gulf War, a few years ago, with all the talk of Islam and Muslims, I began to wonder how many American children even knew what Muslims were. Religion is obviously a very sensitive subject all over the world. But how can we all get along, when we know so little about one of the most influential aspects of most cultures? I decided to write a book about religion for children, a book that would simply say, if such things can ever be said simply, that we live in a world full of religious diversity and isn't it interesting? Look at our differences, look at what we share and we can all live in our own way while still respecting and appreciating someone else's way. I believe I accomplished just what I set out to do - managing great objectivity while taking on a very controversial topic for young readers. Giuilo (Maestro) is at work on illustrations and it will remain to be seen whether my hopes and wishes for the good that this kind of book can bring will be realized. Sadly, for children, we realize that many adults may not let this happen.

Part of opening minds and making connections is to always give children the wider view, a sense of the whole. History is one area that can greatly benefit from this approach. Everything in our world is connected; no event exists in a vacuum. And yet, that is the way we have taught children about history. Children need to be able to put information into some framework, to develop some perspective, in order to see the whole. Years ago, when I was asked to do a book for the Columbus anniversary, I was immediately negative about doing another book that was just about Columbus. I wanted to put Columbus in some kind of historical perspective for children. History is a continuum, one event leading to another, each having impact on future events. When events are taught in isolation, children develop misconceptions. The voyages of Columbus are often discussed as if they took place in a vacuum. Children need to understand what came before and what other events were set in motion as a result. Columbus is just one part of the story of the discovery of the Americas.

Too often, children are only told one part of the story or, as is sometimes happening in our politically correct world, a totally revisionist version of world history.

In history, there are usually two sides to the story. The conquerors and the conquered both have a story to tell. Too often, children are only told one part of the story or, as is sometimes happening in our politically correct world, a totally revisionist version of world history. We don't necessarily need to throw out all that we learned before; we just need to balance the account so the European explorers, including Columbus, can be acknowledged for their accomplishments at the same time we deplore the tragic consequences for native Americans. Neither side of the story is accurate history when presented alone. Both sides of the story have truth and merit and contribute to the whole picture.

Encouraging children to see how people and events are related (i.e., helping them to connect pieces of information to create a meaningful whole) is a crucial part of global education. In upcoming books about the colonial period in our *American Story Series* for Lothrop, Columbus, the Pilgrims and George Washington are all participants in events that are historically related. The texts make clear the relationship of these events, which came first and how one made the others possible. In early school years, children learn about Columbus Day, Thanksgiving and Washington's Birthday. But how are these people and events related? The connections between them are critical for an understanding of American history.

We're now in the process of finishing our work on the book about American government. Earlier, when visiting the library, I found that there were lots of books about government; books on the Constitution, books on the presidency, books on the Supreme Court, books on the Congress, and books about Election Day and voting. But where was the book to put all this together for children? What does the Constitution have to do with what Mom and Dad do in the voting booth? Who are those people in Washington anyway, and what do they have to do with the Constitution? The direct relationship between all of these aspects of government is crucial to the real understanding of the subject. My political views do not enter into this work, nor does the cynicism that we all seem to have succumbed to. Hopefully, children can put together the pieces of the American system and come to sense some of the idealism that founded it, so that they can all become better at active citizenship than most of us are.

Multiculturalism has become a very over-used, catch-all phrase that is now politically correct. But the concept that it represents is long overdue and is not just a passing fad.

Connections are important to a sense of belonging to, and sharing with, the global community. How interesting it is to discover that the Golden Rule is stated in many different ways but is part of most of the world's religions and that Judaism, Christianity and Islam have common roots and share many of the same beliefs and stories. Connections enable children to see that they are part of the world and that the world is part of them. Connecting our own stories to the stories of others gives us all a sense of belonging.

Multiculturalism has become a very over-used, catch-all phrase that is now politically correct. But the concept that it represents is long overdue and is not just a passing fad. We need to develop a world view in all things and books for children can contribute greatly in this effort. The use of nonfiction trade books in classrooms is increasing every year. Naturally, this is welcome news to those of us who make a living creating these books. But we like to think that it is also a good thing for children. While not all textbooks in science and social studies are dull, many are. Many more are either out of date or are biased in some way. Most importantly, many textbooks simply do not turn children on, particularly in subjects that they think of as boring, history being a prime example. Picturebook nonfiction for young readers can make a difference, because by the time children get to middle and high school they may be turned off to learning about subjects like science, history and government. I like to think that if they are exposed to interesting material in these areas early on, they will have more of a desire to pursue the subjects in later years.

Pictures can help bring a text alive for young readers. The illustrations add to the understanding of the material, including details not mentioned in the text. A good illustration can teach just as much as a paragraph of text and in my opinion, in nonfiction, it should. And when the two are put together, you have a powerful learning tool. The illustrations serve to pull children into the text where they hopefully find that the subject is a lot more interesting than they thought it would be.

It is not our intent to provide a detailed presentation of the subjects we tackle. Taking on big subjects in the format we use makes it impossible to delve into every aspect of the subject. What we hope to do is to provide a framework or overview of a subject to give young readers a view of the whole. Then after they have a sense of the larger picture, hopefully they will pursue the details in other books as well as through other media.

It is a great feeling to do work that makes you feel good. It is very rewarding to me to feel that I have a way of contributing in small measure to the shaping of young minds - of helping children to open their eyes, their hearts, and their minds to all the wonders of our world, both past and present, and helping them to feel the connections that we all truly share.

[1]This speech was presented at the 1994 Annual NYSRA conference in Kiamesha Lake.

Making Connections, Opening Minds: An Illustrator's Perspective[1]

– Giulio Maestro

As you've heard, the writing and the editing of a text must be completed before the visual interpretation of it is considered. As an illustrator of fiction, and especially nonfiction, for children, I try to always be aware of the images my pictures convey. For instance, I try not to fall into depicting stereotypical roles. Of course I've also become very conscious of two controversial terms: "multicultural" and "politically correct." I say controversial because they seem to mean different things to different people, and some see them as positive and some as negative when applied to books or the learning process in general.

In our society I feel that "multicultural," as the term applies to books, should mean that the publishing industry make an effort to publish books: (1) that generally reflect the multi-ethnic make-up of our society; (2) that deal with the ways of life of particular ethnic groups in the United States who are not necessarily in the majority; (3) with a world view that give children a wider picture than that of our society, as diverse as it may be. The old idea of the United States as a "melting pot" of cultures should probably give way to the idea of retaining the interesting mix of cultures without really "melting" them together completely. In the last century great efforts were made by the government to forcibly change the ways of native Americans and to forced them to adopt European dress and customs and abandon their own beliefs and languages. The utter demoralization of these peoples was the result. While I do personally feel that learning English at this point should be required of all, as our common language, in terms of people's feeling of self-worth, there is great value in preserving the languages and traditions of native Americans and of all the ethnic groups that immigrated to this country.

By respecting other people's opinions and ways of life, and fostering this attitude by publishing books that dignify different points of view, I think children's book publishers can express the best of the American spirit. Ironically there are those who see the effort to be multiculturally sensitive as a threat, who seem to look at ideas different from their own as threatening by definition and so as a threat to their children when expressed in books. Some claim that by exposing children to all kinds of ideas, everyone will become the same and lose their individuality. To me, it is the variety in the world that makes life interesting, whether it is in ideas, or customs, or in simply going to restaurants which serve exotic foods different from what we're used to. So really, I don't think the term "multicultural" should be so controversial.

As to "politically correct," I feel there is a bit of a problem. The term is rather suspect right off the bat for the inclusion of the word "political" which implies a "strategy for not offending," rather than honesty in dealing with differences of opinion. One can do things or say things with the purpose of not offending anyone; one can similarly water down a text; but if all people, writers, artists and indeed teachers were to be "politically correct" at all times, we would be living in a dull world. Books that had been thought to be classics would be discarded because they expressed only one point of view. There would be no new books published with new and different ideas or philosophies, no new and untried technologies, and indeed no new anything that might offend those comfortable with the status quo.

On the other hand, it is true that some books and stories over time have unfairly characterized both people and other members of the animal kingdom; for example, the wolf has been maligned traditionally in European literature, becoming a scapegoat, a symbol for evil. In the Grimm fairy tale *The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids*, the mother goat leaves on an errand, telling her little ones to "beware of the wolf," for he wants to "have them all for dinner." They have been told not to open the door, but the wolf tries to fool them into thinking he is their mother. First he claims that he forgot something. When that doesn't work because of his deep voice, he drinks some honey to make his voice sweet. Again he's foiled when they spot some gray fur through a crack in the door. Then the wolf makes himself white as Mama by covering himself with flour, and at last the combination of honey-sweet voice and white fur gains him entrance to the house. He finds and gobbles up all the kids but one, and goes off to take a nap. The mother returns, hears from the surviving little one what has happened, and they find the wolf fast asleep. Mama quickly cuts his stomach open, her kids pop out none the worse for wear, and she proceeds to stuff the wolf's stomach with rocks, and sews him up. When he wakes up, he's so thirsty he drags himself to the river to get a drink, but the weight of his heavy stomach pulls him in and he drowns. A grim story indeed.

Recently I realized that the version of this story that

Betsy (Maestro) and I collaborated on some 16 years ago, called *Lambs for Dinner*, kind of anticipated that current trend toward giving back some dignity to characters like the wolf. In our retelling of the story, we changed the goats to lambs, but otherwise the story closely followed the Grimm brothers' plot with one important difference. When Mama sheep arrives to save her babies, the wolf is found at home, in a chef's hat, busily serving dinner to the captured lambs. This puts the whole series of devices used by the wolf to try to lure the lambs to dinner in a new light, as the reader finds that the poor wolf was misunderstood by everyone from the beginning.

...there is great value in preserving the languages and traditions of Native Americans and of all the ethnic groups that immigrated to this country.

Now of course there are those who would change classic books and *only* have the so-called "corrected" versions from now on, but I think it's a great idea to have children compare and discuss the differences between old and new versions of stories, and talk about what is true to life, or accurate, and what is not. When dealing with a new text and new illustrations, a publisher these days will look them over with an eye to fairness in how the characters are portrayed. But I have a good example of how an illustrator sometimes has to deal with publisher's policy in matters of multiculturalism and political correctness, and how one attempt to grapple with the idea of being sensitive actually ended up being narrow minded and even racist.

Some years ago I was commissioned to do some illustrations for a unit in a math workbook by a well-known publisher's school division. The illustrations were to include children involved in various summertime activities. Along with layout requirements I received a standard policy form that had guidelines requiring me to maintain an ethnic balance when portraying the children. It was very specific. It gave me percentages to go by, something like these: 45% white, 25% African American, 15% Hispanic, 10% Asian American and 5% with special needs.

Well, I had no problem with the goal here, but I was puzzled by the percentages as they related to my artwork because most pictures would have only two or three children involved in a particular activity. The editor assured me that I could consider the six page unit as a whole when calculating the percentages so that made it a little easier. However, that's not the end of the story; when I sent in my sketches for the various pictures, I included one with a number of children enjoying a swim in a pond. The sketches came back approved except for the one with the swimming scene. No explanation was give, but I was requested to call the editor on that one, and the problem would be explained to me. The problem turned out to be this: I had shown a black child and a white child in the water at the same time. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. After having me calculate percentages of ethnic types for the purposes of not offending classroom users of the workbooks (i.e., the children) the publisher was requiring me to bow to a racist attitude and presumably held in some school districts, potential purchasers I was not to risk offending.

At another time I was asked to illustrate a different school workbook unit with no children involved in the illustrations. Instead, all the pictures would feature woodland scenes with animals native to the United States. In my sketches I included squirrels, birds, chipmunks, raccoons, deer, bear and so on. When the sketches came back, there was a directive to drop the raccoon from the pictures and substitute other animals. I didn't understand the reasoning, and it was explained that it was the publisher's policy because of the similar derogatory term sometimes used for African Americans. I protested that no children were involved here, only animals; however, the policy stayed firm. In fairness, these instances have been exceptions to the rule. I have yet to be told that because people sometimes call each other "chicken" that I mustn't draw chickens; or that because some people at one time were known to refer to police officers as pigs, that a barnyard scene can picture all the typical animals, minus the pigs.

Usually when I start my work on sketches for a book, I deal with more basic concerns. I want the pictures to appeal to people of all ages, not just children, and I want the illustrations to be attractive, starting with an eye-catching cover, to draw the readers perhaps to a subject they might not otherwise pick to read aloud. In the case of nonfiction books, as well as fiction, quality illustrations can not only add a special color scheme and tone to the text but also add details that help explain what is in the writing. With a nonfiction subject, the question of the artwork's style becomes important in a special way: I feel that the objects, people or places should be depicted in fairly realistic manner. While I enjoy drawing in a cartoon style, I reserve this way of working for fiction, or wordplay books, where the visual emphasis can be on zany and clever. I think that the illustrations in a nonfiction book must show how things look in reality, not filtered through an artist's highly stylized view, no matter how attractive. An interesting style of artwork may not be helpful to the young reader; for instance in

our book *The Story of Money*, wood cuts might have been graphically interesting but would have taken the images a big step away from realism. Instead I pictured the coins and paper money as carefully as I could using pencil and watercolor.

Children's questions about real subjects or real events show that they are interested in details, and in my illustrations I always try to supplement the facts given in the text with visual information. This requires me to do a great deal of background reading before doing any sketching, something that comes as a surprise to most people. It's not unusual for me to spend many weeks reading though dozens of books, taking notes and absorbing background material related to the subject. This is essential for me to get a "feel" for the subject, whether I'm to deal with a period of history or the habits of animals like sharks, snakes or bats. So it's amusing to be asked sometime whether as an illustrator I just kind of "tag along" behind Betsy's (Maestro) writing. While it may be understood that the illustrating of a book must necessarily follow the completion of the text, people often think that I just have to read over the text and paint the pictures to go along with it, and that the illustration (and indeed all visual art) somehow flows in some enchanted, effortless way from the artist's fingers. Nothing could be further from the truth; not only is illustration work, but there are deadlines I have to meet. I can't sit around waiting to be "inspired."

After consulting many of the same sources Betsy (Maestro) has used as reference, I also need more visual material to look at, books with photos or diagrams, and I often visit up to six public libraries looking for pictorial items. I often purchase relevant illustrated books so as to have the most up-to-date information, and I maintain a picture and fact file in my studio; I've collected photos and pictures for over 20 years on subjects as diverse as air cargo, bacteria, coral reef life, plate tectonics, dinosaurs, sailing ships and weather phenomena, which get updated as I find new material. If I'm going to illustrate a book about real places, sometimes it's useful to visit them. Hoping to get funding, that's what we told the publisher when we were studying Magellan's trip around the world. That didn't go over very well. Closer places are more possible to visit, and when we were working on our book about the writing of the Constitution, *A More Perfect Union*, we visited Philadelphia; I was able to see the cobble stone streets, the scale of the building, architectural details and Constitution Hall itself, inside and out. I then had a much better feeling for rendering the illustrations.

Of course, the question might be asked: is all this really necessary? The answer is that a surprising amount of additional information can be communicated in the illustration, visual information which adds detail to the text without distracting from its message. My research helps me to be accurate about some things that might not be necessary to include in the text; weather is a good example. A library bookwhichlisted important dates in American history and described the weather conditions for each, aided me greatly. I found out the day the Constitution was signed in Philadelphia by all the delegates was very gloomy and overcast, and the day of George Washington's inauguration as President in New York was sunny and pleasant; these scenes were, therefore, painted to reflect true facts not mentioned in the text of our book.

With all our books, I'm concerned that the illustrations help the flow of the text make sense in the best possible way. I want the children who read our history books to connect with the chain of events and the many references to people and locations around the globe. Therefore I often find it useful to insert some maps of different parts of the world, to show particular countries or explorers' routes, so that the child doesn't have to interrupt the reading periodically to consult a separate atlas. Pictures that dramatically illustrate a text can encourage children to look for more information, to dig into a subject more deeply. I look at not only our history books in this way but also our nature series. I try to vividly depict creatures like sharks, snakes and bats in a way to stimulate interest in further study. I try not to sensationalize the subject but draw the reader to a more friendly attitude toward these much-maligned creatures.

We hope that children all over the world will increasingly look at their environment, at the people and events around them , in a spirit of tolerance and cooperation.

Betsy Maestro and I both strive to bring our subjects to life with an even-handed approach to both writing and illustrating, with the goal of inspiring children to look to historical events as they relate to the present day, to be interested in all the world's creatures (great and small), and to realize the connections between the peoples of the world. We hope that children all over the world will increasingly look at their environment, a the people and events around them, in a spirit of tolerance and cooperation. We hope that our books in some small way contribute to that end.

Betsy and Giulio Maestro have been creating books together since 1974 and have published more than 70 together. They are well-known for their nonfiction, characterized by attention to detail and the clarity of both words and pictures. Betsy Maestro, a former kindergarten and first grade teacher, has an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education and a masters degree in Counseling. Giulio Maestro, a Fine Arts graduate, has been illustrating books (over 100, to date) for young readers since 1969. Many of the Maestro's books have been chosen as Notable Books by the American Library Association and as Pick of the Lists by the American Bookseller's Associations.

The Maestros were featured speakers at the 1994 New York State Reading Association Conference (Editors)

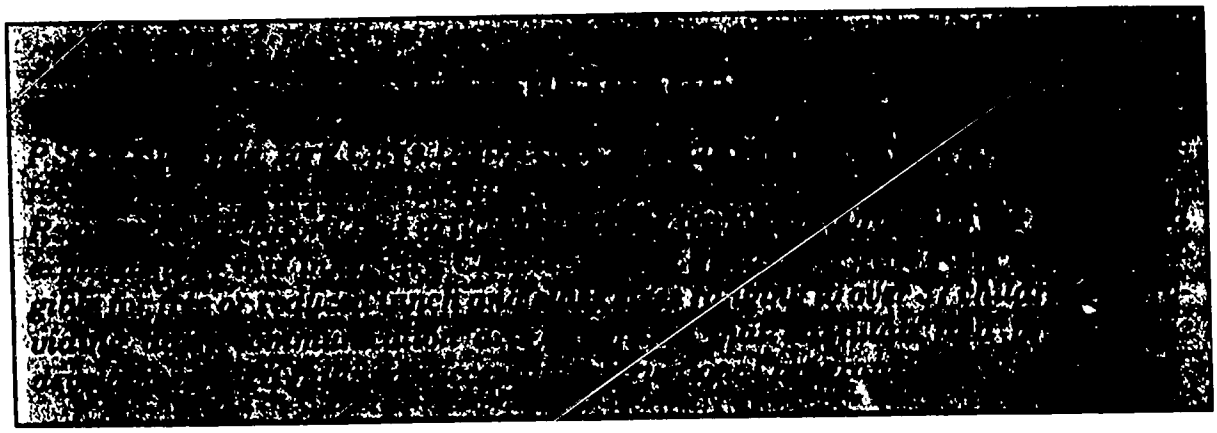
[1]This speech was presented at the 1994 Annual NYSRA conference in Kiamesha Lake.

LIST OF RECENT BOOKS BY BETSY AND GIULIO MAESTRO

- *All Aboard Overnight*. (1992). Clarion Books.
- *A More Perfect Union: The Story of our Constitution*. (1987). Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.
- *A Sea Full of Sharks*. (1990). Scholastic.
- *Bats: Night Fliers*. (1994). Scholastic.
- *Bike Trip*. (1992). Harper Collins.
- *Delivery Van: Words for Town and Country* (1990). Clarion Books.
- *Dollars and Cents for Harriet*. (1988). Crown Publishers.
- *Exploration and Conquest—The Americas after Columbus*. (1994). Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.
- *Ferryboat*. (1986). Harper Collins.
- *How Apples Grow*. (1992). Harper Collins.
- *Macho Nacho*. (1994). E.P. Dutton.
- *More Halloween Howls*. (1992). E.P. Dutton
- *Riddle City USA*. (1994). Harper Collins.
- *Snowy Day*. (1989). Scholastic.
- *Take a Look at Snakes*. (1992). Scholastic.
- *Taxi: A Book of City Words*. (1989). Clarion Books.
- *The Discovery of the Americas*. (1991). Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.
- *The Story of Money*. (1993). Clarion Books.
- *The Story of the Statue of Liberty*. (1986). Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.
- *Why Do Leaves Change Color?* (1994). Harper Collins.

P.S. 272: A Work In Progress

– David N. Berg



P.S. 272, Brooklyn, heard a loud cheer resound throughout its halls when I announced over the public address system last May that we had been selected as the *Exemplary Reading Program Award*[1] School for New York State for 1994. This cheer came from our students, staff members and parent volunteers who work so diligently throughout the year in order to provide the best possible education for our students. We knew that we had been in the running for the award, but when the Committee members made a site visit to our school, the reality of the competition became keenly honed. Even having come as far as having visitors on-site to view our programs was a reward in itself, since it was an affirmation that what we believed to be a valuable instructional program was viewed as such by those outside of our walls.

So that you may view our school program in perspective, I will give you a brief overview of some aspects of P.S. 272:

We are located in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn in Community School District 18. When I arrived at the school four years ago, there were 854 students. Today there are 1,095. We are at approximately 150% of capacity. We have 15 special education classes including four that are organized around an inclusionary educational philosophy, which means that there are regular and special education children in the same room working and learning together. In addition, we have 11 other special education classes of children ranging from those with mild disabilities to those with severe handicapping conditions.

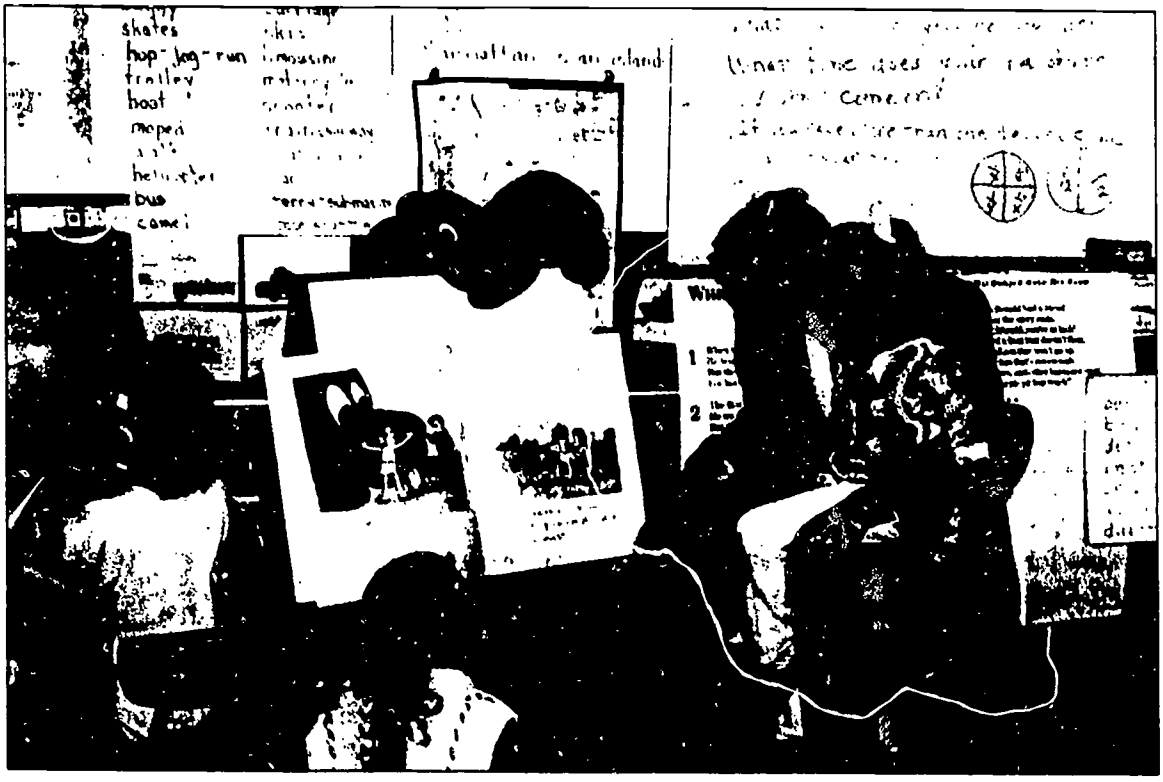
We have six classes of gifted children. This year, we have a bridged K/1 gifted class but otherwise have a gifted class on each grade level from prekindergarten through grade five, our terminal grade. We have many funded programs that include remedial reading/writing and mathematics instruction, and ESL instruction.

P.S. 272 has a program, Project PACT (Parents and Children Together), in which children starting at age 3 come to school with their parents. The children and parents work in the PACT classroom together with a teacher, paraprofessional, family worker, and child psychologist. After one hour, the parents and psychologist go into a second room and the parents are taught parenting skills. What is special about our "Mommy and Me" program (for that is the name such a program usually is given) is that *The Children's Television Workshop* serves outside consultants. This allows parents to get additional information about the beneficial use of TV with their children. However, the most innovative aspect of the program is that it is modeled around Howard Gardner's *Theories of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) so that the teachers look to identify giftedness in seven different areas and to teach through that strength.

We also have anywhere from three to five classes of regular education children on each grade level. We are so overcrowded that we have classes in the very high thirties, even now that we formed two new classes by closing the Teachers' Rooms and library. Over 75% percent of our children eat free or reduced lunch qualifying our school as a Chapter I school. This means we are considered a school with most parents in the lower economic level. However, what we lack in money, we more than make up for in dedication, concern, involvement and caring about our children. This is what makes our school so special and is one reason why I believe we were received the *Exemplary Reading Program Award*.

This article and the presentations that I have made as a result of our winning this award describe our school as a work in progress. We are constantly striv-

ing to modify, improve and incorporate new research, materials and instructional strategies into our program. It is never static for to be so would take away its vitality and the enthusiasm for learning. We have been forced to make modifications this year due to overcrowding. The loss of our library space to keep class registers down, results in books exchanged from carts thanks to parent volunteers who run our rolling library. Our conditions are not ideal; however, with an enthusiastic and dedicated staff, we have been able to keep up our momentum while continuing to strive to improve our instructional program.



Mr. Marc Carlson Dunaway shares a big book with his students, Liat Rudberg, Tina Alexander, Neil Zilikowitz and Ayanna Mack, at The Curtis Estabrook School, P.S. 272, Brooklyn. Photo is courtesy of David Berg.

When you enter our building you will find that it is alive with the verve of our students and staff. Our front lobby is festooned with banners that hang from the ceiling. Each one is designed by a class and reflects that class' view of itself. You will find a giant newspaper bulletin board. On it are articles written by our student reporters describing aspects of the school program. This "school newspaper" allows for the display of the final efforts from our journalism program in which a cluster teacher goes from class to class teaching about newspapers and having our children serve as student reporters. These efforts are followed up by the classroom teachers in their own instruction. As a result of this program our students have published in local newspapers as contributing authors.

You will also find a large area devoted to the best writing that goes on in our classrooms. Teachers who wish to highlight the work or outstanding efforts of children in their class are free to post those writings on this board which is prominently displayed outside the main office. This does not mean that students' writing is not also seen throughout the halls and in the classrooms. In fact, the bulletin board space is not enough; student writings and class projects spill on to the tiled walls adjacent to the classrooms.

As you walk through our halls, you will find that the classroom doors have been decorated to look as if they are bookjackets. Each one reflects a favorite book that the class has read. The creativity is astounding and the doors add a colorful enhancement to the print-rich environment we want to have before our students' eyes.

You will also find parent volunteers in our halls, reading with or to small groups of children, assisting teachers in the classroom and providing library services that I previously described. Our parents are wonderful and their dedication helps us to overcome many of the adversities of overcrowding.

The writing process is in progress throughout the

building. We have had wonderful success with this program and through the dedicated efforts of Mrs. Maureen Powell, our "turn-key trainer," many more teachers are participating in this program each year and receiving the support they need. Periodically teachers go to conferences at Teachers' College to hone their skills and to learn new approaches; the results are evident in the work that one sees in the classes. We are particularly interested in the progress this year of a very difficult special education class where the children seem to be able to use their writing as a catharsis; through their study of authors and their appreciation for their own creative efforts, we are seeing a big change in their behavior and work.

In addition to Mrs. Powell, this year we are fortunate to have the services of a staff developer, Mrs. Sandra Rosner, and to have had Mrs. Lynn Eckers fill this role last year. They are able, as Chapter I staff developers in communication arts, to go into classrooms of teachers who are in need of support and training and to demonstrate, model, and assist these teachers as they develop needed skills. In addition, we have two Chapter I reading teachers who work with children in classrooms and who provide peer coaching for their colleagues who have target children in their rooms. As a result of these support personnel, you will find that all our classrooms are not only print-rich but also abound with charts illustrating story structures, experience stories, favorite poems, class surveys, recipes and the like. These efforts are supported on a district level with staff development workshops and videotaped lessons produced by our district for teachers to view.

On an early childhood level we have the services of a teacher-specialist, Ms. Marilyn Goldberg. She provides teacher training on an early childhood level and advocates the age appropriate activities that parallel those provided for the upper grades by the staff developers previously mentioned.

Our Assistant Principal, Mrs. Brenda Edelstein, assists new teachers before school twice monthly at informal workshops. At these sessions, which our teachers attend voluntarily, Mrs. Edelstein presents strategies and activities to infuse the teaching of these participants with new ideas, and approaches, and she discusses common concerns that they have. Teachers welcome the informality and content of these sessions and, at their request, the second monthly session was added.

We had a basal reading series at P.S. 272 prior to my assuming the principalship. The staff joined me in searching for a better way to teach reading. We selected a literature based series which would provide materials of instruction that were whole text and quality literature. When we took this route, I knew that the series would be only a transition for those who were, as yet, afraid to embrace a whole language philosophy. As teachers become more secure with using literature as the tool of instruction, more and more are asking for sets of books to use for instruction. This, of course, is the aim of any school with a whole language philosophy.

Teachers are also encouraged to experiment and make their whole language classrooms their own. One example is Mrs. Iris Ofsie who developed a program of backpacks for her kindergarten class. Mrs. Ofsie, after developing concepts and exposing the children to various enriching activities at learning centers, then took the centers and collapsed them into backpacks. These backpacks were, in effect, opportunities for children to further their experiences in each area with parental involvement and support. Each backpack, and Mrs. Ofsie had over forty of them, involved books and activity sheets, as well as other materials including videos, if available and appropriate. Parents were expected to work with their children nightly for a week until the backpack was returned and the child shared the culminating project that he or she had made with the class.

This year, after attending Lucy Calkins' workshops on Reading Clubs at Teachers' College, Mrs. Ofsie has modified her classroom so that the children have a great variety of books to read, and she organized them into themes at on all reading levels. These themes may be based upon subject matter or author studies. Much of the classroom instruction is taught using big books and then the children apply that learning through their independent choices of books. Ms. Wanda Wakal also attended this summer institute and is applying the same type of instruction on a fifth grade level.

So that our teachers appreciate reading and also the types of discussions that they ask their children to participate in, we have a teachers' literature discussion group. The group selects books to read and meets monthly to discuss them. This year, we are alternating a children's book and an adult book so that we gain greater understanding of what our children experience.

We also have a committee to promote reading and the enjoyment of it. This committee generated many exciting literacy events: classroom doors were decorated as book jackets; children participated in activities where they read a certain number of books in order to win prizes at a local restaurant; the faculty held a read-in where parents, grandparents, and loved ones came to school to spend an afternoon reading with our children. Blankets were strewn everywhere, with people reading all types of literature.

No school can function effectively without a committed and dedicated staff. Our school is most fortunate in that in addition to these two attributes, our staff is hard-working and highly professional. Their receptive-

ness to change is incredible. Any change is threatening, no matter how secure the individual. The teachers, parents, and support staff at Curtis Estabrook are always willing to go that extra mile and to do whatever is necessary to improve our instructional program. The sense of collaboration and involvement is evident when one visits. Even with the absence of a teachers' room, staff members find time to discuss and consult with one another over common concerns so as to provide quality education for our students.

This is but a brief description of P.S. 272's varied program of literacy instruction. We hope that it gives you an idea of why we were selected as the *Exemplary Reading Program Award* School. We invite you to come to visit us and see our school in action.

Reference

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind*. New York, NY Basic Books.

[1]***P.S. 272, Brooklyn, The Curtis Estabrook School, was named the International Reading Association's Exemplary Reading Program Award School for New York State for 1994. This prestigious award was presented to only fifteen schools nationally. Each state reading association which participates in the program has a committee that reviews written descriptions of nominated schools and then evaluates and ranks them. Written proposals must have a minimum rating in order to receive consideration. Once evaluated, the committee makes site visits to view the programs in action and to evaluate them, once again, on set criteria.That school which receives the highest rating is selected to be honored as the*** Exemplary Reading Program Award ***School for its respective state.***

Hayden Wilkin and Joshua Bucci enjoy a good read at West Sand Lake Elementary School. Photograph is courtesy of Dr. Larry Schrader.

Access to Books: Variations in Schools and Classrooms

– Richard Allington, Sherry Guice, Kim Baker, Nancy Michaelson and Shouming Li.

ABSTRACT

This study found that schools with high numbers of poor children have less access to books and magazines in their classroom libraries than other schools. Furthermore, there were likely to be restrictions on access to library and books in high poverty schools. These discrepancies highlight the critical need for more monies to purchase books for schools with many poor children.

If we want to develop readers, children must read and read widely. If we want children to read widely, we must provide children with access to books. These may seem simple enough axioms, but some schools seem to provide children with both greater access to books and an opportunity to read those books during the school day than others do. A half-century ago Waples (1937) demonstrated that physical proximity to supplies of books and magazines predicted the extent to which people engaged in reading activity. In other words, those who had easy access to books and magazines were more likely to read than those who did not have easy access. A similar result has been reported in schools through the use of "book floods" (Elley & Manguhabi, 1983; Fielding, Wilson & Anderson, 1986; Ingham, 1981). Given the importance of access to books, we studied patterns of access in elementary schools implementing literature-based instruction because these schools seemed good candidates for asking about the availability.

High poverty schools provided children with substantially fewer opportunities to visit the library and placed greater restrictions on access to books once at the library.

One element of children's access to books is the school library. Huck, Hepler and Hickman (1987) suggest using the American Library Association (ALA) minimum standards of roughly 10,000 books for elementary schools for 500 or fewer children (or about 20 volumes per child). We studied six elementary schools in five school districts that served substantial numbers of low-income children and only one exceeded the ALA standard. On the other hand, in the six comparison schools that enrolled few poor children (i.e., less than 10 percent), four met the standard. Schools with few poor children had 21.5 volumes per child available, whereas schools with many poor children had shelves with only 15.4 volumes per child. Children who attended schools that enroll few poor children had access to about 50 percent more books than those enrolled in schools with many children from low-income families. A similar difference was found in access to magazines with the low-poverty schools averaging 38 subscriptions and the high-poverty schools averaging 22

We also examined the size of classroom tradebook collections as another aspect of access. Huck et al. also suggested that classroom book collections of about 500 volumes are needed, but none of the high-poverty schools achieved this standard. In most of the high-poverty schools classroom libraries of 50-100 books were available, although the school with the greatest concentration of poor children (95%) had the smallest classroom libraries (25-50 books).

District policies on providing books for classroom libraries varied considerably in these six schools. Nonetheless, classrooms with the largest collections of

trade books were those where teachers reported they purchased most of the books. Teacher purchase of books for classroom collections differed by school. In some schools very few teachers reported such purchases, while in others the majority of teachers bought books from their personal funds. At one high-poverty school neither the district nor the teachers purchased many books for classroom collections and as a result that school ranked last in size of classroom collections. At another school, the district purchased many books but few teachers did. Still the school ranked first in the average size of classroom collections. But it was the few teachers who purchased many books over a period of time and who worked in districts that also purchased many books that had the largest and most diverse classroom library collections.

...children from poor families have limited access to books in school.

Finally, we must note that in the schools serving many poor children access to the library was usually restricted to a single weekly visit. Several schools also restricted the number of titles that children could borrow (usually to one or two per visit). Two schools barred children from taking library books out of the building! No low-poverty school had such a restriction, and it was more common in these buildings for children to have relatively open access to the library throughout the day and, in some cases, before and after the regular classroom schedule.

Discussion

Eight of the twelve elementary schools studied had school library collections that failed to meet the minimum standards for number of volumes needed. Only one high-poverty school met the standard. Schools with many poor children, on average, had 50 percent fewer titles in the library per child than schools with few poor children. Additionally, many, if not most, of the books were very out-dated in the libraries of schools serving many poor children. In one school over half of the titles available had been purchased prior to 1970 (usually with ESEA funds). In some cases children were selecting books that were older than their parents! In too many cases the book collections were not only terribly out-dated but also largely failed to reflect the diversity of American culture. High poverty schools provided children with substantially fewer opportunities to visit the library and placed greater restrictions on access to books once at the library.

But school libraries are no longer the only source for books in most schools. Classroom tradebook collections have become increasingly popular in the past five years. Such collections can provide an immediate access to books. Unfortunately, none of the high-poverty schools met the standard set for adequacy of classroom libraries.

No matter how we consider our findings, it seems that children from low-income families are treated unfairly. These children have the fewest books at home. They attend schools that have the smallest classroom and library book collections with the most restrictive book lending policies. None of this seems to the authors to be a prescription for creating readers.

We present our findings in the hope that more support for school and classroom library collections will soon be forthcoming. In our view the ALA minimum standards, which were developed in 1975, are themselves dated and inadequate to meet the literacy needs of children today. But developing school and classroom libraries even to those standards will represent true progress in schools with many poor children. There is good evidence that the sheer quantity of reading that children do is the best predictor of reading achievement (Cunningham & Allington, 1994). There is also evidence that access to a rich range of appropriate books fosters more reading in and out of school. Finally, there is evidence that children from poor families have limited access to books at home. Our findings provide good evidence that children from poor families have limited access to books in school. If we want children to become readers, the question that needs to be answered is, "What are they supposed to read, anyway?" (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1993).

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Dr. Sherry Guice is an assistant professor in the Department of Reading, State University of New York at Albany. She is a recent graduate of the University of Georgia, where she earned her doctoral degree in children's literature.

Dr. Shouming Li is on the faculty of the University of Maryland, where he supervises a national five-year longitudinal research project focuses on early intervention with disabled children.

Kim Baker and Nancy Michaelson are research associates at the National Research Center for Teaching Literature, State University of New York at Albany and doctoral students finishing

Kaytrina Reed and Crystal Bielawa, students at The ARK in Troy, have read most of Mildred Taylor's books. Here they enjoy Song of the Trees. The ARK provides arts and literacy programs for urban learners. Photography is courtesy of Mary Theresa Streck.

Making and Sharing Meaning: The Power of Response Journals

– *Elizabeth Forbes Stever*

ABSTRACT

Literature response journals facilitate both comprehension and a love of reading. Building upon a constructivist framework, this article reveals how teachers can use their students' personal responses to literature to promote comprehension monitoring and ownership of learning. Examples of third grade student responses and subsequent discussions clarify the teacher's role in this interactive process.

"Aren't we going to write today?" asks James eagerly.

Frequent opportunities to respond to literature have made James a confident constructor of the meaning within texts. He is eager to express his ideas in writing, sure of his ability to predict, question, evaluate and make meaningful connections. He feels safe within our reading-writing community, certain that our conversations will value his thinking. The purpose of this article is to show the power of response journals to enhance thoughtful discussion, leading to strategic control of the comprehension process.

Recent theories of comprehension suggest that reading is an active, constructive process in which the reader relies heavily on background knowledge to create meaning, with the teacher playing the role of facilitator in helping the student negotiate that meaning (Eeds, 1991; Pearson, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1978). Only about 10% of the information used by a competent reader actually comes from the printed text. Most information comes from the reader's prior knowledge of the world and previous exposure to texts (Smith, 1988). Since a given text generates a wide range of responses depending on background knowledge, the responsive teacher facilitates discussion around the unique contributions of each student. Confirmation of the variety of acceptable responses to literature provides both support for continued exploration as well as models for future responding.

Most educators agree that the social context of the classroom greatly affects the quality of language learning for all students. When immersed in a print-rich environment with abundant modeling and encouragement to approximate literate reading and writing behaviors, young children emerge as competent language users (Cambourne, 1987). Both Bruner (1986) and Vygotsky (1978) suggest that instructional interactions are the "raw material" of learning. The teacher's role is more of collaborator than evaluator, weaving the contributions of students into an instructional conversation that is supportive and nonthreatening (Goldenberg, 1993). Literature discussions provide a context for activating the prior knowledge of students so that they can make sense of a new literacy experience. Since there is no one right answer, many new insights and applications arise (Leal, 1993).

Herrmann (1992) uses the term strategic reasoning to define the complex thinking processes used before, during and after reading to construct meaningful interpretations of text. Teachers model strategic thinking during think aloud demonstrations to make explicit the invisible mental reasoning involved in reading for meaning. In addition, teachers monitor students' evolving use of strategies by encouraging them to verbalize and refine their use of strategies during group discussion. Think aloud instruction has been shown to be highly effective in promoting the reflection and verbalization that leads to metacognitive control (Baumann, 1993).

Response journals are an excellent way to introduce young children to the open, thoughtful use of writing to construct meaning from the texts they read. Since journal writing is first draft writing, mechanics and grammar are not emphasized, creating an instruction-

al context that values higher level thinking. The informal language of journals encourages students to explore and rehearse their thoughts before they speak, often committing students more strongly to their ideas (Fulwiler, 1987).

Figure 1 represents the range of interactions readers experience naturally, before, during and after reading. There is no hierarchy or sequence in these transactions. Frequently, two or more transactions occur simultaneously in a student's response while other transactions predominate in reading a particular genre (Pappas, Kiefer & Levstik,1995).

Figure 1: Types of Transactions with Text

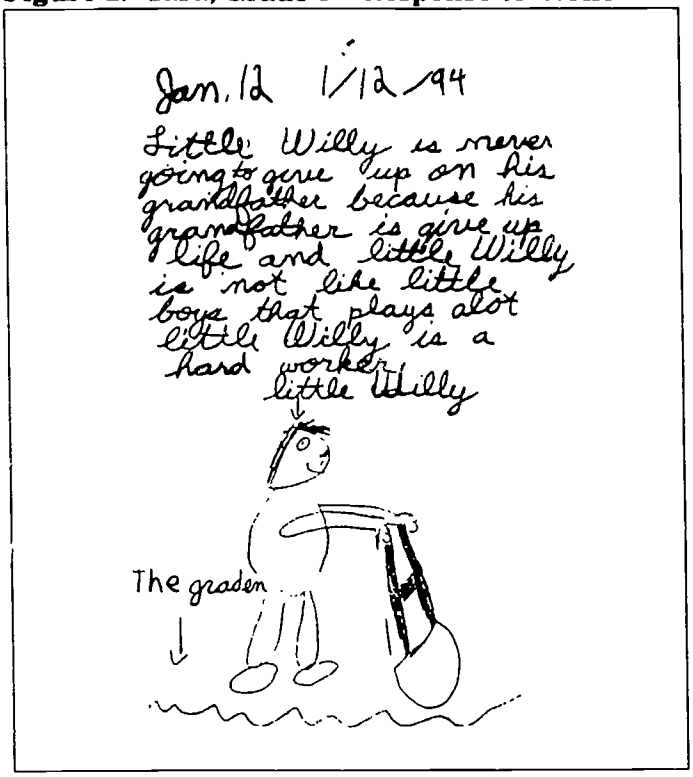
Emotional:	Expressing involvement with text or empathy with characters
Connective:	Linking text with prior experiences
Descriptive:	Noticing features of text such as choice of words, metaphors, etc. (the author's craft)
Interpretive:	Predicting, questioning, confirming/disconfirming a hypothesis
Evaluative:	Noting relevance, effectiveness or importance of text
Reflective:	Noticing one's own process of reading or how a text fits with own beliefs and/or knowledge

Teachers do not need to structure the responding task for students by asking specific questions. A simple prompt, such as "What do you think?", allows students to respond in their own voice to what they consider to be important. Subsequent discussion reveals the variety of transactions spontaneously evoked by a quality piece of literature. To choose good stopping points the teacher simply asks, "At what point in the story am I able to anticipate an important upcoming event or plot turn?" (Morris, 1992, p.193)

In Figure 2 Tara links Little Willie's work ethic in *Stone Fox* (Gardiner, 1980) to her prior experiences with 10 year olds and uses that knowledge to predict how the main character would react to adversity. Connective and interpretive transactions occur frequently in responses as students draw on prior knowledge to make logical predictions. Tara's journal entry reveals her growing ability to think inferentially and critically.

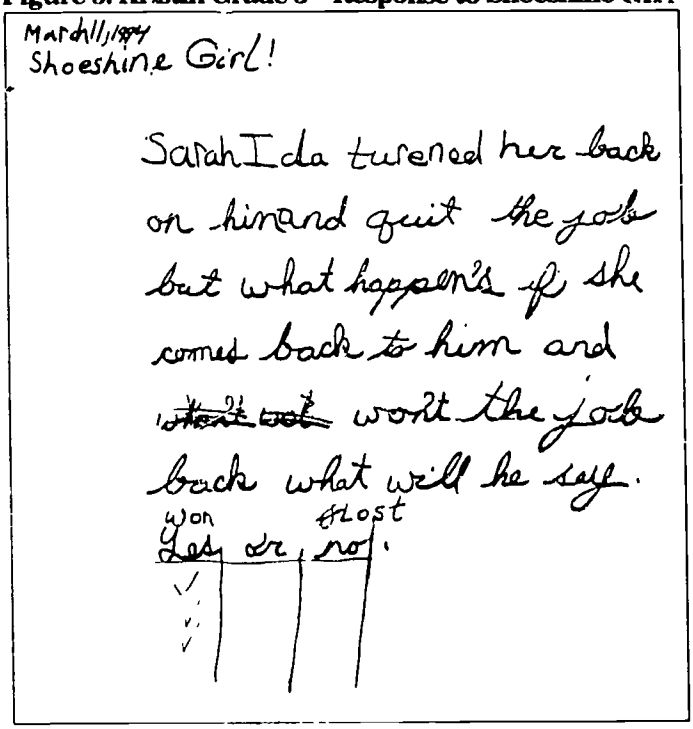
Kristin responds interpretively by questioning the outcome of Sarah Ida's actions in *Shoeshine Girl*. Stopping to reflect at this point of high interest models the active thinking of proficient readers who continu-

Figure 2: Tara, Grade 3 – Response to Stone Fox



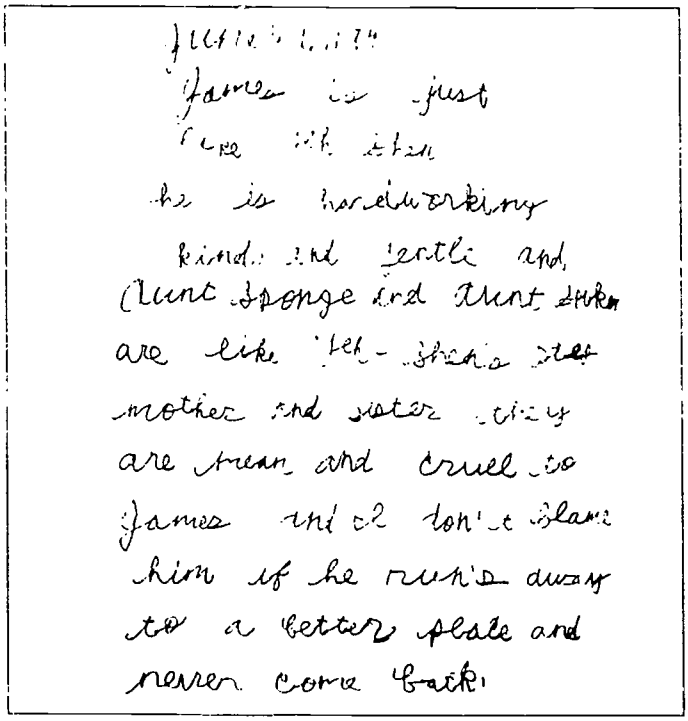
ally predict and then read on to confirm/disconfirm their hypotheses (See Figure 3). During group discussion Kristin tallied the predictions of group members, providing a clear purpose for reading on.

Figure 3: Kristin Grade 3 – Response to Shoeshine Girl



In Figure 4 Jamarvis links the vivid description of Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker in *James and the Giant Peach* (Dahl, 1961) to the characterization of the stepmother in Yeh-Shen (Louie, 1991), a Chinese retelling of the Cinderella fairy tale. Drawing on background knowledge gained from previous exposure to literature, Jamarvis reveals his understanding of the problem faced by the main character.

Figure 4: Jamarvis, Grade 3 -- Response to James and The Giant Peach



Although higher level transactions are sometimes difficult for young children to capture, these journal entries reveal evidence of meaningful interactions with text which discussion can elaborate and extend. It is not the written product that is important; rather it is the thought process involved in responding that promotes critical thinking and a deeper appreciation of literature. The teacher's role is to listen carefully for the logic and relevance in students' responses and build on their ideas to clarify and elaborate the transaction (Wollman-Bonilla, 1993).

The support offered through literature discussions not only helps students comprehend the text at hand but also promotes internalization of thinking strategies. Comprehension monitoring strategies can be woven into discussions using the authentic literature context to make the learning powerful. Tara's group had a lively discussion of the word "plow", a tool not in their experiential background. One student reread "The plow digs up the plants . . ." and surmised that a plow must be like a shovel. Another noted that Searchlight took her dogsled harness and stood in front of the plow, so it must be pulled like a sled. Using these context clues as well as clues from an illustration, the group concluded that a person guides a plow as it is pulled to dig up crops. Tara's drawing reveals her understanding of this new vocabulary word. (See Figure 2)

I asked Kristin's group to justify their unanimous prediction that Al would let Sarah Ida come back to work for him. Students had to think critically about the author's development of Al's character. Upon reflection the children inferred that since Al was so patient when Sarah Ida accidently put black shoe polish on a customer's brown shoe, he would probably allow her to continue working at the stand.

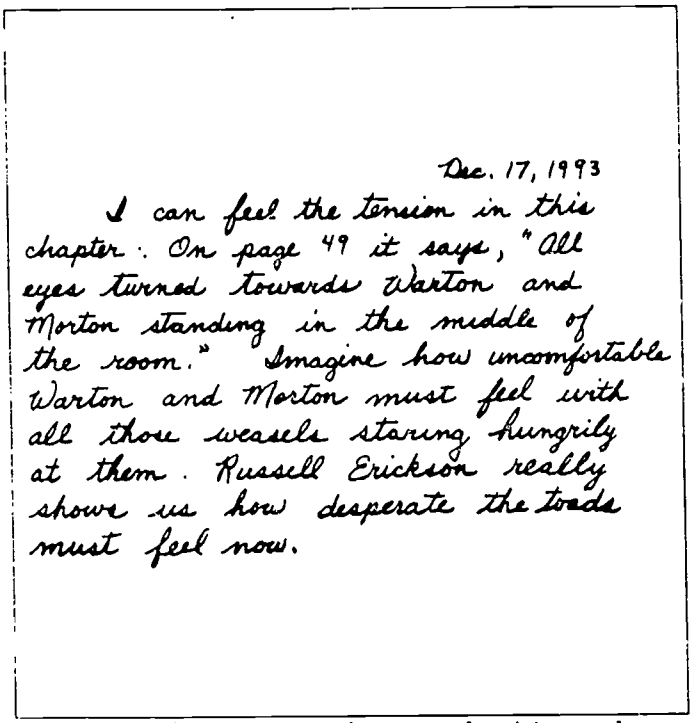
Jamarvis' response led naturally into a discussion of how authors reveal their characters through dialogue. Students reread a number of conversations between James and his aunts, discussing how each contributed to the reader's impression of Aunt Spiker and Aunt Sponge. Several students immediately began to include dialogue in their journal entries to strengthen their description of characters.

Instructional conversations empower students to take control of their own learning. By providing a context in which students interact with teacher support, children learn to use a variety of comprehension strategies to monitor their own thinking.

When reading-writing workshop teachers ask students to pick the one thing that helped them the most as learners, the overwhelming response is "You write with us and you read with us" (Reif, 1994, p. 15). Figure 5 shows my emotional response to the feelings of Warton and Morton, two delightful characters from *Warton and the King of the Skies* (Erickson, 1989). I reflect on a variety of transactions in my journal, intentionally noting the author's craft as well as my own process of constructing meaning. Students pick up on these transactions and I soon see evidence of their efforts to interact descriptively and reflectively. In addition to providing another model to extend personal response options, teachers build a trusting environment when they become a member of the community of learners.

Expressive response to literature is a natural way for schools to nurture the connections between reading, writing, listening and speaking. Classroom discussion of journal responses resembles the social context of parents and children in the home during oral language acquisition. The focus of the interaction is on supporting meaningful communication with the knowledge that continued exposure and encouragement will result in literacy. Young students need repeated modeling of the responding process and support for their efforts to interact in a very personal way with literature.

Figure 5: Teacher Response to Warton and the King of the Skies



Dec. 17, 1993

I can feel the tension in this chapter. On page 49 it says, "All eyes turned towards Warton and Morton standing in the middle of the room." Imagine how uncomfortable Warton and Morton must feel with all those weasels staring hungrily at them. Russell Erickson really shows us how desperate the toads must feel now.

Many students come to the journal writing task tentatively. Often early entries are plot summaries that reflect the safety of literal level statements. I am always grateful to the divergent thinkers who reveal sensitive insights into characters and events early on. By providing time in class to share and discuss journal responses, the more reluctant writers begin to trust themselves and gain confidence in their ability to construct meaning. As students accept full responsibility for the direction of their responses, they begin to view literature as an opportunity to learn more about themselves and their world (Parsons, 1990).

This spring when my students asked me to bring our books to the end-of-year picnic, I knew that they saw themselves as successful readers and writers. Providing opportunities to write and share literature responses promotes the ownership of learning that creates lifelong readers and writers. These students choose to engage in literacy learning, confident that they can use language to discover meaning in their world.

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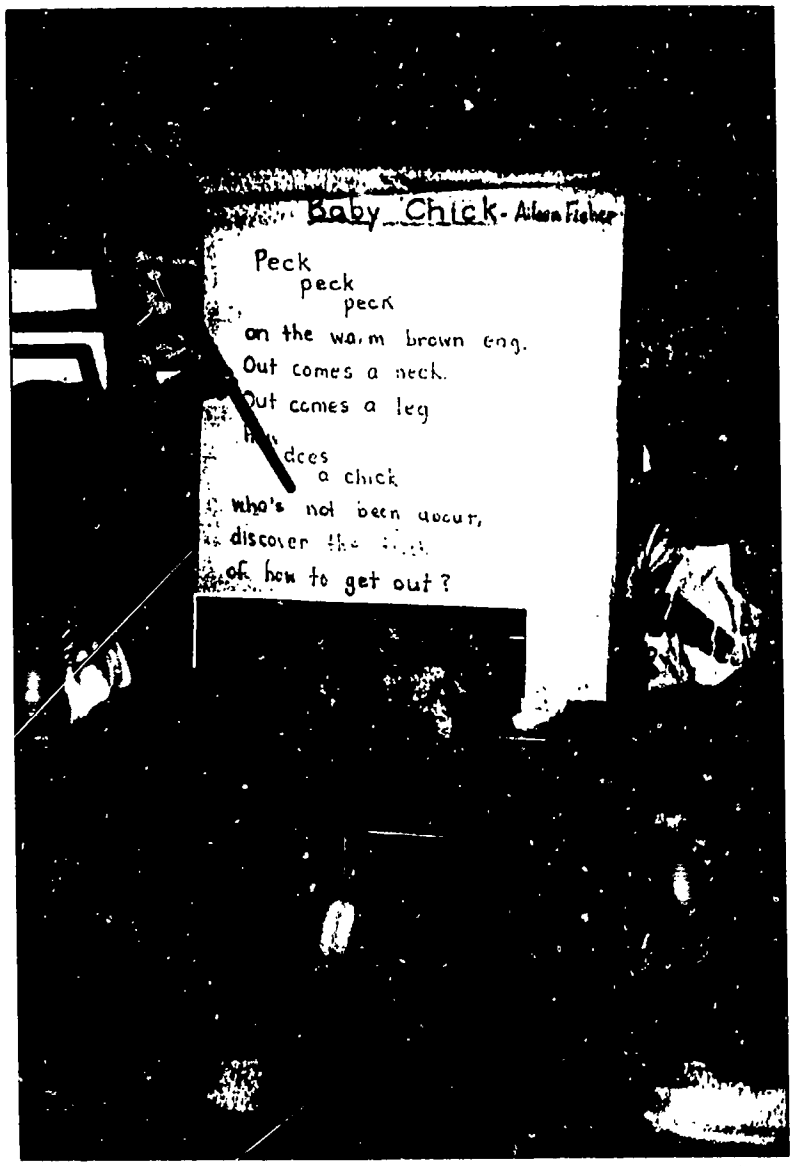
• Author's Note

The author of this paper is grateful to Mary Melara, Indian River School District ESOL teacher, for her insightful comments and continuing encouragement.



Anna Hionas, Lauren Cassandro and other children enjoy a good warm-up about baby chicks at Forest Park Elementary School. Photograph is courtesy of Rochelle DeMuccio.

A Look Back: Page's 1845 Normal Chart as the Foundation for Teaching Reading

– *Rose-Marie Weber*

ABSTRACT

Concern for the most effective way to develop children's graphophonic knowledge is not new. This article presents one of the earliest programs for teaching grapheme-phoneme correspondence, ***Page's 1845 Normal Chart.***

Precisely how to introduce learners to reading has always been a question in education for literacy. When New York State established the Albany Normal School for training teachers 150 years ago, this question was no less in the air. In the 1840's, graded readers were becoming popular and the technology for producing inexpensive printed materials was changing publishing (Venezky, 1987). Yet in rural New Yerk teachers had few materials and few ideas beyond the alphabetic approach (i.e., having students call out the letters of each word and then pronounce it). The educational reformers of the times challenged this approach to teaching reading, some encouraging teaching to read for the meaning of words and passages more directly, others urging that teachers become more knowledgeable about the relationship between the sounds of speech and print on the page as a first step in teaching to read for understanding.

...how to introduce learners to reading has always been a question in education for literacy.

David Perkins Page, a reformer who was selected in 1844 to head the Albany Normal School, was among those who believed that teachers should become more knowledgeable about print-speech connections as a foundation for teaching reading. Clearly, he was immensely concerned to educate teachers who would engage their students in active explorations as well as focused practice. He developed a rigorous curriculum that demanded a high level of knowledge from the prospective teachers at the Normal School. In the book *Theory and Practice of Teaching* (1847), based on his lectures there, he laid out the dimensions of knowledge that he considered essential for teachers, including moral philosophy, human physiology, vocal music, and, of course, orthography and reading. He referred explicitly to the "Normal Chart of Elementary Sounds," which he had prepared for use in the schools, as representing his point of view.

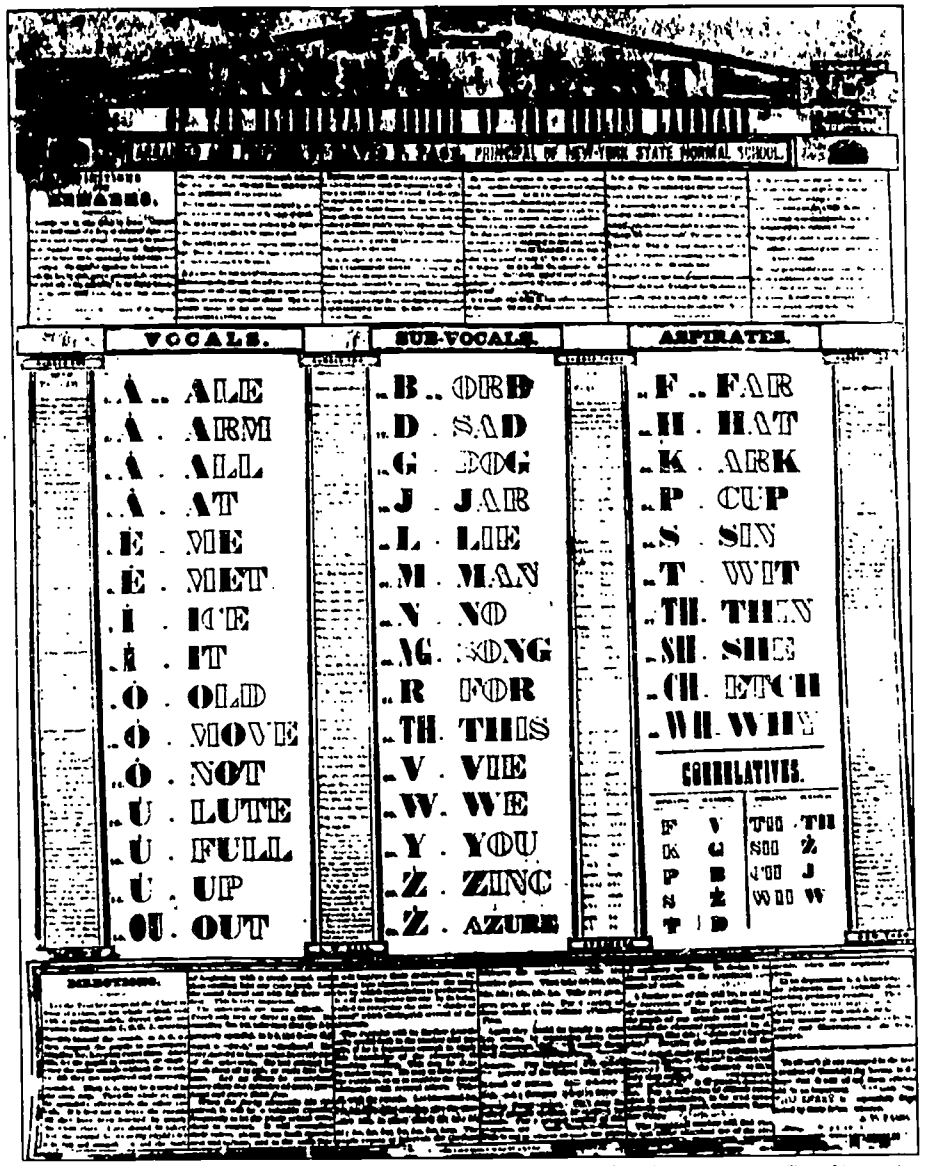
Page's Normal Chart of the Elementary Sounds of the English Language is dated January 1, 1845. Designed to be hung in a classroom and used for group practice in the pronunciation of sounds, syllables and words, it included not only material for practice but also specific instructions to the teacher as to how and why to carry out the practice.

The chart is of interest in the history of reading instruction in several respects. It exemplifies an early teaching aid designed for teachers in the era when common schools brought together children of different ages and abilities for basic instruction in literacy into the same room. Further, it offers a view on the relationship between phonology and orthography, reflecting the tradition of the times, yet according with our current notions about the awareness of sounds in the development of reading ability. Beyond this, it shows Page's thinking about teaching and learning as he articulated it for prospective teachers in the Normal School through his lectures and book.

The Chart

The Normal Chart of the Elementary Sounds of the English Language was published in 1845, by L. W. Hall of Syracuse. Measuring 56 inches long by 45 inches wide, it was "got up in superior style," as the advertisements maintained.[1] It had a cloth back and was mounted on rollers. While most textbooks of the time cost under fifty cents, it cost two dollars.

Notably, the chart is arranged in the form of a stylized temple of learning in the Greek Revival architectural style that had come to represent American republicanism. The pediment announces the title and



author. The facade lists the symbols for the elementary sounds, the "vocals, sub-vocals, and aspirates," with corresponding key words in large type chosen to be "distinctly legible" from fifty feet. The frieze divides into six sections of remarks and definitions, the columns give examples of items for practice and reflection, and the base provides directions for how to conduct lessons; the latter is in smaller type that cannot be read from a distance.

In this small print Page offers an essay for teachers on the purpose and organization of the chart, elaborating on the production of speech, the categories of the forty elementary sounds (i.e., the elements) and their distinctiveness from the letters used in written language. He presents details about less common sound-spelling connections, examples of syllables "to improve articulation," words to be analyzed into their elements and examples of sound clusters, words, and brief sentences that are difficult to articulate. In the small print of the base specific directions are given to the teacher for conducting the exercises and the purposes for doing so.

Page explains that the activities are intended to strengthen pupils' voices, to improve their articulation and to refine their ear so that they would recognize the characteristics that distinguish one sound from another. The activities would also aid in correcting "prevailing faults of articulation," a concern of the period. But he declares that the knowledge of the elementary sounds is most useful for the teaching of reading. In particular, he suggests analyzing words into sounds so as to distinguish sounds from spelling as a fundamental understanding.

The Phonology

The first half of the nineteenth century is notable as a period when scholars and entrepreneurs applied

knowledge of American varieties of speech to the teaching of reading (Bronstein, 1949; Venezky, 1987). Nevertheless, much of this work, which was based on the orthoepic and elocutionary traditions that flourished in England in the late nineteenth century, was adapted and revised for the American condition. In fact, Page derived the Normal Chart from the *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language of John Walker*, which first appeared in London in 1791. Specifically, Page adopted the set of elementary vowel sounds and their representation by the letter most commonly used to spell it. He continued Walker's convention of distinguishing a particular vowel sound by a number above the letter, using the same numbers. He listed the vowel sounds (the "vocals") in the same alphabetical and numerical order as Walker. In this respect Page was conservative, sidestepping novel American efforts such as the use of diacritics for distinguishing vowel sounds that Noah Webster had developed by this time (Monaghan, 1983).

Page seems to have had a good ear and understanding of speech sound production. On the chart he clearly distinguished sounds from letters and offered a passable description of sound production. He also seems to have had an appreciation of the coherence of the phonological system, drawing connections, such as the "correlatives," as he called the voiceless-voiced pairs of consonants (e.g., f/v, ch/j) . He chose well from the well-established knowledge of the period (Bronstein, 1949).

...exemplifies an early teaching aid...when schools brought together children of different ages and abilities for basic instruction in literacy...

The Chart as Instructional Aid

In the classroom, the teacher was to hang the chart in front of the class or whole school and, using a pointing stick, pronounce a small set of the sounds forcefully and rhythmically, to have students accompany the teacher and to have them repeat the model individually or in groups. Then more sounds were to be added. In accord with the principles in his book, where he called for highly focused but brief experiences, Page says on the chart, *"Let no Class be exercised more than ten minutes at once, perhaps not more than five."* The theory of speech production sketched in the frieze was not to be learned by the student seeing the chart, but to be understood by the practicing teacher.

With reference to the teaching of reading, Page explicitly offered opportunities for two specific activities on the chart: first, combining sounds into syllables, again following the teacher's model; second, analyzing words into their elements, the words being "spelled" out by their sounds (e.g., *pause*—p-a^3-z, which as in this case can "distinguish silent letters from the real elements"). Students were to manipulate the sounds, synthesizing them into words and analyzing words into their composite sounds.

These activities, of course, were to be carried out in the light of what Page built into the chart implicitly, the alphabetic principle. Page insisted on the independence of sounds from spelling. Nevertheless, as the students practiced the sounds and the words that they appeared in, they also saw the representations of them in letters. The symbols for the elemental sounds were the letters of the alphabet that most frequently represented the sounds in question in the written language. Minor spellings for the elemental sounds (e.g., "J has *g*, *d*, as in *g*in, sol*d*ier" were also recognized in the table of equivalents on the chart.

The exercises on the elemental sounds based on the chart might well have contributed to learning to read. In Page's chart we see direct instruction and practice on sounds to improve the ear. In current terms, the instruction would foster phonological awareness, the side of sound letter correspondence that has made a difference to children's learning (e.g., Sawyer & Fox, 1991). Contemporary research has offered converging evidence that sensitivity to the sounds of speech among young children is a solid predictor of their early reading acquisition for good reason, showing up as a significant contributor to learning in methodologically different correlational, longitudinal and training studies. On the other hand, children and adults who have difficulty with reading are often weak in hearing and analyzing the stream of speech and drawing the sound letter connections. Building learners' phonological awareness through intense exercises such as those proposed in Page's chart may have served reading by bringing speech sounds to their attention.

Conclusion

Page chose to stay in the elocutionary tradition and to have teachers direct students to analyze their own speech stream in ways organized by the Normal Chart. Like others of his time, he considered this attention to the speech stream valuable for teaching reading "philosophically," that is, based on knowledge rather than just "mechanically." Teachers were to lead students to practice sounds rhythmically and intensely, singly and in groups, but in brief spurts that might well serve automaticity. These exercises were to

launch pupils into an appreciation of the sounds of English and their connections to letters as they appeared in words and sentences.

Page suffered from delicate health all his life. After only three successful years as principal at the Normal School, he died of pneumonia before turning forty. Nevertheless, the Normal Chart is listed as part of the curriculum devoted to reading and writing instruction in the two year program of the Albany Normal School for more than twenty years after his death.

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Robert Daniel and Stephanie Peters, of Forest Park Elementary School, share letters and photographs from British penpals. Photograph is courtesy of Rochelle DeMuccio.

Portraits of Success: Two Students in Reading Recovery™

– Susan Stoya

ABSTRACT

The lowest achieving children often have significant differences in the way in which they process print. The case studies of these two children in Reading Recovery™ illustrate the different paths of progress taken in becoming successful readers.

Reading Recovery™ is an early intervention program for first grade children experiencing difficulty learning to read. It is a one-on-one daily program in which specially trained teachers help struggling youngsters learn strategies for problem solving on written text. Daily thirty-minute lessons involve the child in the reading and writing of continuous text with the teacher developing a program on the strengths of each particular child. Acceleration is achieved which enables these students to read at the average level of their first-grade peers and to participate successfully within their classrooms.

Reading Recovery™ students are quite diverse. The program is directed at the lowest achieving students in first grade classes, regardless of intelligence, ethnicity, language achievement or school history. These struggling first grade students differ greatly in their strengths and weaknesses, making it difficulty to address their individual needs in a group situation. There is no "typical" Reading Recovery™ student.

I spent the 1989-90 school year in training as a Reading Recovery™ Teacher Leader at New York University. Thereafter I returned to my district in Glens Falls, a small city one-hour north of Albany, to embark on my first year of training teachers and the first year of working with students in my own district. Throughout these past five years, I have seen many students become successful by learning how to read in first grade. These students came from a variety of backgrounds and entered with many different strengths and difficulties. Their paths of progress, therefore, were quite different (Clay, 1993a); yet all became readers when it did not seem likely that they would or could.

In this paper I share the progress of two of my students as they learned to read through Reading Recovery™. Working with these two children helped me become a better teacher. While all teachers are interested in how children learn to read, reading teachers, special educators and primary grade teachers may be particularly interested in the literacy portraits of these children for whom learning to read was so difficult.

Jennifer

Jennifer was one of my first Reading Recovery™ students. She experienced great difficulty in kindergarten due to emotional difficulties. Jennifer was very shy and withdrawn and spent most of kindergarten not talking. Her kindergarten teacher reported that when Jennifer did talk, she buried her face in her arm! When I administered Clay's *Observation Survey* (1993a) in September, Jennifer scored the lowest of all first grade children on most of its measures. She identified 10 letters; because four of these letters were identical in their upper and lower case form, she really only identified six letters by name. Although she did not make many attempts, she displayed confusion with some letters, particularly those similar in appearance or sound to others (e.g., calling "s" a "c" and "Q" an "O"). When shown a list of 20 high frequency words, she was unable to successfully identify any of them, but she did provide a word response for some words,

substituting color words for many of the items. On the *Concepts About Print Test* (Clay, 1993a), Jennifer successfully answered six tasks: she identified the front of the book; she indicated that print carried a message; she demonstrated the concepts of "first" and "last"; she read the left page before the right; she knew where to start reading a page and the meaning of a period. Jennifer did not indicate knowledge of the return sweep to the left, word by word matching, nor was she able to isolate two letters, or one or two words. She did not show the first and last letter of a word. Jennifer wrote her name, but she seemed reluctant to write, stating "I don't know any more words." She did, however, make two attempts that were visually similar to the correct spellings (i.e., "cte" for "cat," and her last name). When attempting to write words, Jennifer used groups of letters close together, such as Ipep/mom. On the Clay's Dictation task (Clay, 1993) Jennifer wrote five sounds with their correct letters, although it appeared that some of those letters may have been placed randomly, rather than through sound analysis. She mainly used the letters e,p,t,i,s and h, in a variety of configurations to form most words (e.g., TPT/it, CPTie/stop). When asked to read text, Jennifer could not read a repetitive, patterned text requiring her to recite a three-word pattern and then two simple sentences. She did, however, demonstrate the ability to point and match words during her reading.

Reading Recovery™...is directed at the lowest achieving students in first grade...regardless of intelligence, ethnicity, language achievement or school history.

When I began working with Jennifer, I looked beyond the scores at her strengths. The tasks of the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 1993) allowed me to observe, systematically, the ways in which Jennifer searched for information in printed texts and how she worked with that information. While she scored low on letter identification, several of her attempts on letters were nearly correct (B/D, T/I) and she knew that they were called letters. On the Word test, she seemed to know that they were words as indicated by her responding to some with color words. She did not match word by word on *Concepts About Print*, whereas she did so when reading the text herself. She could write her first name (a long name at that!) and she nearly succeeded on her last name and "cat." Again, she did represent words with groups of letters on both the Writing Vocabulary and Dictation tasks. Jennifer correctly wrote from left to right and used spacing between her words. She chimed in with me when I read a patterned text to her; this revealed that she could learn a simple text pattern and was willing to attempt reading. All her oral attempts contained meaning, i.e.:

Jennifer:	*A*	*bird*	*can*	*fly.*	*He*	*can't*	*fly.*
Text:	The	bird	can	fly.	So	can	I.

I wanted to help Jennifer utilize her strengths in our earliest sessions together. Equally, if not more important for me, was the need to create a learning environment wherein Jennifer could feel comfortable taking risks necessary to become a reader. Smith (1983) warns teachers about requiring children to use cautions when they read, instead of taking chances. Jennifer definitely used too much caution. She needed to feel safe making attempts at reading and to be confident with what she already knew. In Reading Recovery™, each student spends the first 10 sessions in the program "roaming around the known" (Clay, 1993b, p12). During this time the teacher helps the child become comfortable "moving around his or her personal corpus of responses" (Clay, 1993, p. 13); concurrently, the teacher observes the child more closely in a variety of easy reading and writing activities.

During "roaming around the known," Jennifer received many opportunities to write her name with a variety of media. She chimed in with me as I read patterned books, such as *Dear Zoo* (Campbell, 1982). She accurately pointed to and matched words on very simple texts containing three and four words per line. She wrote the word "I" and when I wrote "zoo" for her, she exclaimed, "That starts like Zach!" She had begun to make connections. Jennifer increasingly began to associate letters of the alphabet with the names of people she knew. She became flexible with her one-to-one match, using her left and right hands interchangeably (Clay, 1991). Jennifer started, without instruction, to use several effective literacy strategies: she searched a picture for information if she needed help in predicting an unknown word and reread if her one-to-one match was off. She also began to learn and remember some new words through having written them in stories. She developed a keener sense of phonemic awareness as evidenced by comments such as, "dog starts with Dad." By the end of the 10 "roaming" sessions, Jennifer could read simple patterned texts containing two lines of print and accurately match and complete a return sweep to the second text line without losing her match.

Jennifer remained extremely shy, only speaking in brief phrases in response to others' initiatives. Her hands shook visibly when she was nervous or working hard. She needed great reassurance and praise

throughout these early sessions. I accepted her approximations at strategy usage and put aside a desire for accuracy. Jennifer needed to become a risk-taker, and I knew that expecting accuracy when she made good, strategic attempts could easily negate for her the positive things she was doing. Clay (1991) states that "there is evidence to suggest that if we actively support partial correctness rather than negate it as wrong, learning will proceed at a faster rate" (p. 217).

After these initial "roaming" lessons, I actively began to teach. My daily lessons consisted of six components: the rereading of familiar books, the independent reading of a book read the previous day (while I took a running record), letter identification or learning how words work, writing a story, the cut-up story, and the orientation to and first reading of a new book. Through these components I helped Jennifer develop reading strategies. Clay (1991) maintains that "a few items and a powerful strategy might make it very easy to learn a great deal more" (p. 331). For Jennifer it became important that she learn these few items. However, Clay (1991) further explains that "the child needs a reason to attend to novel features of print before he can develop a strategy for getting information and using it" (p. 331). Jennifer had not attended to print much in the past, but in "roaming," she began to have a real reason to attend to it. Children with good language skills are sometimes unsuccessful in learning to read because they do not pay enough attention to the visual cues in texts (Clay, 1991). I needed to be sure that Jennifer attended to the distinctive features of text. She not only needed to learn more letters, but she required a reason to learn them. Writing proved to be very powerful in providing this connections for Jennifer.

Jennifer relied on known words to detect oral reading mismatches or if her one-to-one matching was incorrect. Gradually she attended to the first letter of words to notice mismatches in print, such as *d*uck/*b*ird. I praised her when she did this independently on her running records. Although she learned to monitor and self correct (sc) her errors on the first letters of words, she was not consistent.

Since Jennifer could not yet read many words, it was essential that I selected books containing easy patterned text. Gradually, as she became better able to attend to the visual details of print, I provided her books that contained fewer pictures and less pattern support. When I introduced new books to her, I carefully described what each story was about, let her hear and rehearse some of the language patterns, and asked her to locate some words in the text. Orienting Jennifer to the story proved especially important because she had little knowledge of words or letters and needed to rely extensively on story structure and meaning. Clay (1991) explains that "as the child approaches a new text, he is entitled to an introduction so that when he reads, the gist of the whole or partly revealed story can provide some guide for a fluent reading" (p.335). I carefully planned these text orientations to help Jennifer successfully read each story.

Jennifer experienced difficulty self-correcting her meaningful predictions from the first letters of words. I continued to work on building her knowledge of letters; in retrospect, I did not do enough of this because as a new Reading Recovery[IM] teacher, I was so worried about item teaching. Thus cross-checking her predictions remained difficult for Jennifer for quite a long time.

As I predicted, writing was an area where Jennifer flourished. "Many of the operations needed in early reading are practiced in another form in early writing" (Clay, 1993, p. 28). Through writing, Jennifer learned to attend to the visual details of print. She experimented with long and varied sentences and learned to hear many of the sounds in words through the use of Elkonin boxes (Clay, 1991, p. 84). Although she could hear most sounds, Jennifer frequently required a model for the visual form of the letter, and at times she could not retrieve the letter name.

By lesson 13, Jennifer began to cross-check by using the first letter of words (e.g., saying skip for hop, she exclaimed,"Hey, that's not skip. It's hop!"). She gradually began to articulate a first letter softly when attempting an unknown word, but this lacked consistency. I praised her when she self-corrected independently and anticipated that if she become conscious of using an effective strategy, she would apply it more often. As Jennifer moved up in text difficulty, I expected her to read texts with high frequency words and problem solve unknown words with a variety of strategies. While Jennifer handled these increasingly more difficult language patterns, her monitoring and self-correcting strategies remained inconsistent. Nevertheless, Jennifer's attempts remained semantically and grammatically correct.

My role in the Reading Recovery[IM] lesson was ever-changing. At this point in the program, I expected Jennifer to use what she knew, but I still shared many of the literacy tasks with her. Clay (1991) advises:

> "A teacher must do more than provide the child with a stimulating experience and opportunity for growth. If she works alongside a child letting him do all that he can but supporting the activity when he reaches some limit by sharing the task, she is more likely to uncover the cutting edge of his learning" (p. 65).

Bruner (1975) has referred to this support as "scaf-

folding," in that the adult assists only when necessary to enable the child to actively participate in the learning event. The scaffold needs to be a "disappearing one" that fades gradually as the child becomes more and more confident in assuming the task (Cazden, 1988). I needed the delicate balance of allowing Jennifer to do all that she could, while at the same time supporting her in the areas where she still needed assistance. Structuring activities that would enable her to use some of what she knew, while requiring her to orchestrate increasingly more complex reading behaviors, seemed a daunting task since Jennifer appeared to have so little "item knowledge." Her strong language and her knowledge of directionality proved to be her areas of strength.

Using magnetic letters, Jennifer learned how words could be taken apart and put together...

After the running record component of my lesson, I began showing Jennifer some simple analogies using words she knew (e.g., he, me and we). Using magnetic letters, Jennifer learned how words could be taken apart and put together, knowledge which would assist her in future problem solving of unknown words through analogy. In retrospect, I believe I introduced this task too soon for her. The time would have been better spent helping her to learn letters of the alphabet and some useful words.

By about lesson 35, Jennifer cross-checked more consistently and began to search for visual information beyond the first letter. She learned to independently figure out some simple words and showed a strong self-correction rate. In writing, she learned some chunks, such as -ing and -er, and she accurately filled in inaudible letters in words. As texts became difficult, Jennifer struggled with figuring out unknown words. With less picture support, she needed to predict the meaning in other ways, particularly by using print information. This proved difficult, but after this came together for her, she move very quickly through texts of increasing difficulty (Reading Recovery™ levels 9, 10, 11 and 12).

Jennifer came from a kindergarten class that could read very well. The classroom instruction involved the use of a basal reader with a great deal of literature enrichment. While Jennifer showed progress, so did her classmates. For Jennifer to be perceived as "average" in her class, she needed to read at least at the end of a 1-1 reader with fluency and quick problem-solving strategies.

Jennifer's parents played an active role in her progress. Her step-mother and father conscientiously listened to Jennifer read several of her little books to them, and they helped her put together the cut-up story from her writing each day. They visited school to observe a Reading Recovery™ lesson and asked for ways they could help at home. They even inquired about what kinds of books to buy her for Christmas. Jennifer's father felt very strongly about helping her now, as he lamented the fact that his fourth grade son had difficulty in all subject areas due to his inability to read well. His son experienced behavioral problems as well, which the father attributed to the boy's frustration with reading. The father strongly wanted to prevent this from happening with Jennifer.

While Jennifer had these strategies underway, she was unable to use them fluently, flexibly or automatically; stated another way, she was unable to use the strategies "on the run" (Clay, 1993b, p. 49). We worked hard on these strategies and emphasized independence. After about 65 lessons, the classroom teacher and I agreed that Jennifer was ready to discontinue from Reading Recovery™. When I tested Jennifer for release from the program, she knew all the letters of the alphabet, she read 17/20 high-frequency words and responded correctly to 21/24 items on *Concepts About Print*. She successfully wrote 51 words and read to text level 18 (which corresponds to a 1-2 basal level). The classroom teacher placed her in the middle group and reported success there. Moreover, Jennifer continued to make gains in her reading and went on to second grade, encountering no difficulties.

Perhaps more dramatic than Jennifer's reading progress was the change in her personality. She was still shy but established some friendships and began to speak up. She became very confident in her reading ability and in subsequent years has been a reading "buddy" to other Reading Recovery™ students. When Jennifer received her last lesson with me, she wrote, "I'm graduating from Mrs. Stoya's room. I feel good." Since discontinuing, or graduating from Reading Recovery™, Jennifer has done well. She is now in fifth grade and has never needed or received additional reading support. She has scored between the 48th and 56th NCE on the California Achievement Test which is administered to all students in our district each May, indicating that her word attack and comprehension scores have consistently remained within the average range for her grade level. Jennifer's report cards have consisted rated her reading as "Good" from the choices of "Excellent," "Good," "Satisfactory" and "Poor."

Looking back at Jennifer's program, there is much that I would do differently. Each year as a Reading Recovery™ teacher, I learn from my experiences as well as the continuing education provided through the Reading Recovery™ network. Despite the mistakes I made, Jennifer succeeded! When I now see her in the

school halls, she is a very independent child busily chatting with her friends. I feel great pride in her success. Independence is what we strive for in Reading Recovery™, and Jennifer, indeed, is independent!

Marie

Marie entered Reading Recovery™ in Fall 1992. On a district designed-test administered at the end of kindergarten, Marie scored among the lowest in her class. While she seemed to be a bright, articulate child with a great deal of family support, Marie experienced difficulty learning to read. On Clay's *Observation Survey*, she identified 38/54 letters of the alphabet by letter name, and displayed one confusion (i.e., she called the type-set g an "a"). On the Word test, she only identified one word out of 20 (i.e., "yes"), and she made no other attempts. On the *Concepts About Print*, Marie correctly responded to 16 out of 24 tasks. She successfully matched word by word and displayed correct directionality with text. She recognized both inverted print and when line order was altered. She pointed out the first and last letters of a word but demonstrated confusion about the terms, "letter" and "word." Marie could write six words (i.e., her name, no, on, Mrs. Mom, a and her attempt of her last name was visually similar). On the Dictation task, Marie was able to represent eight sounds with their corresponding letters. She wrote in list form, representing most words with one letter. When reading text, Marie could match word by word and could maintain the given text pattern. However, when presented with more than one line of print and a text in which the pattern changed, Marie skipped lines, invented text and lost her matching. Her attempts remained meaningful, however, and revealed appropriate sentence structure.

Marie seemed to have many areas of strength, and it was puzzling why it wasn't coming together for her; She, too, had an older brother who experienced reading difficulties, and her parents anxiously waited for any help she could receive. Upon analyzing Marie's performance on the *Observation Survey*, I recognized that while Marie had a great deal of item knowledge, she did not know how to apply it to read strategically. Although reading is "a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced" (Clay, 1991, p. 6), it was apparent that Marie did not know how to problem-solve using the great deal of information she had. Lyons, Pinnell and Deford (1993) note that "these beginning readers must learn how to use effectively their previously developed knowledge as they problem solve while reading" (p. 55).

Unlike Jennifer, who entered Reading Recovery™ with little item knowledge, Marie began "roaming around the known" with quite a bit of item knowledge. I needed to provide her with experiences that would enable her to use her repertoire of knowledge. During our earliest sessions, Marie learned several new words on her own. This really surprised me, but it confirmed my tentative theory that for Marie, learning items was what reading was about. I needed to show her otherwise. At times she pointed to match word by word, and at other times, she did not, especially when the text was easy text for her. She did not attend to the print closely, making meaningful substitutions based on the story (i.e., mother/father; father/mother). On her fourth "roaming" session, she independently monitored and self-corrected with her one-to-one matching. We both became very excited! Her matching became stronger, and she even matched multisyllable words. In writing, she tended to use predominantly upper case letters, and her sentences were somewhat short. By session six, she began using known words to monitor reading. She recognized that her match was off if she was not reading "the" in the right place. This was somewhat inconsistent because she tended to rely on the pattern when reading text rather than the words she knew (i.e., so do I/I do too).

After the early "roaming" lessons began, I actively focused on questioning Marie about her matching (Did that match?) and using her known words to monitor (Were you right? Why did you stop? Is that a word you know?) Establishing this speech-to-print correspondence was vital because "as long as the child cannot locate the word he is saying in the line of print, he will remain a non-reader" (Clay, 1991, p. 166). Marie was able to work on these strategies while reading simple little books with two or three lines of patterned texts, even with some variation in the pattern. Once she knew what to do, monitoring came easily to Marie. She then began monitoring with the first letters of words, and I began prompting her to check one cue source against another (cross-checking). She started doing this early in her lessons (e.g., self-correcting "bird" for "duck").

In writing, Marie could hear and record most of the dominant sounds in words. She could articulate words slowly and use the Elkonin boxes well. She slowly began to use more lower case letters, and over time she required models for letters less frequently.

Later in her program, Marie began to monitor so much with the first letter or look of the word that she became reluctant to make an attempt. To solve this, I prompted her to search more actively for information from the picture or the meaning of the story and to then check for visual information that might help her. She needed to take risks in reading. She was starting to search for visual information but didn't always integrate that with a meaningful attempt.

Unlike Jennifer, Marie moved through early reading tasks very quickly. She required new learning quite easily, so I had to be sure my teaching focus kept up with what she was doing. By December, she was nearly ready to discontinue the program, but she needed to search more actively for visual information: her classroom basal reader presented little picture support and, at times, the reader provided little text predictability as well. Marie attempted to use visual information, but often it was letter by letter rather than chunks, or larger visual units of information. Good readers use the largest units possible to solve unknown words, going to the letter level only when necessary (Clay, 1991). Marie needed to become more efficient at solving unknown words.

When choosing books for Marie, I looked for selections that would provide opportunities for her to problem solve words "on the run," while still providing many opportunities to practice the strategies she already knew. Books like *The Greedy Gray Octopus* (Rigby, 1988) and *Goodnight Moon* (Brown, 1947) provided a framework within which Marie could read at a high level of accuracy but still have some "reading work" (Clay, 1993b, p. 40).

By early January, the classroom teacher moved Marie to the middle reading group, and the teacher expressed satisfaction with this transition. Marie seemed to have no difficulty reading more challenging material and completing the workbook and writing tasks required of that group. I administered the *Observation Survey* and determined that after 42 lessons, Marie could discontinue from Reading Recovery™ She identified all 54 letters by name, identified 12/20 words on the Word test, responded correctly to 21 tasks on *Concepts About Print*, and wrote 40 words in ten minutes. She successfully represented 35/37 sounds with their corresponding letters on the Dictation task and read at a text level of 16, which is the equivalent of a 1-1 reader.

...carefully observing and responding to the way children negotiated text...provide(d) the scaffolds necessary to ensure success.

Marie continued to do well at the end of her first grade, and she received ratings of excellent on her report card for reading. On her May California Achievement Tests she scored at the 84th NCE, and her scores have remained between 68th and 84th NCE. She scored in the top 15 of her third grade class on the PEP tests last spring and is generally doing very well. Her teachers report that she is still somewhat quiet but a good, solid student. The school reading teacher has never heard of Marie, which, to me, is a true sign of success. Teaching for strategies should be the means to the end of becoming readers (Johnston, 1992) and clearly, this has happened to Marie. Her mother reports that she now loves reading and is constantly reading chapter books on her own. Marie has become a reader!

Summary

Jennifer and Marie found their own way to the goal of literacy learning, and through my work with them, I learned to be a better respondent. Clay (1986) describes the role of observation in the teaching process:

> Sensitive and systematic observation of young children's reading and writing behaviors provides teachers with feedback which can shape their next teaching moves. Teaching can them be likened to a conversation in which you listen carefully before you reply (p. 6).

Only by carefully observing and responding to the way children negotiated text was I able to provide the scaffolds necessary to ensure success No predetermined, sequence set of skills or curriculum would have allowed for the flexibility needed to follow these two children. Looking back at my notes from the perspective of a more experienced teacher and active learner, I realize that at times I did not follow each child as closely as I might have. The one-to-one setting provided by Reading Recovery™ allowed for the orchestration of responsive teaching, which is sensitive to the particular needs of each student. While Jennifer and Marie could have been placed in the same "low" reading group, it would have been a formidable task to meet each of their needs, given the great differences between them. While all children are different, the lowest achieving students seem to have the most differences in their confusions, strengths and weaknesses. Systematic observation, ongoing professional education and self-reflection are vital to meeting the challenge of true individualization.

My teaching has improved but will never be perfect; there will always be children who challenge me to question my assumptions, reevaluate my responses and test out new hypotheses. These are the children from whom we, as teachers, can learn the most. The question we must ask ourselves is "What can I learn from this child?" Every challenging child offers the potential for us to become better educators.

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Where the Words Begin

- Katharyn Howd Machan

A letter comes from France
speaking of children, how they
place a candle on the windowsill
and wish for birds in morning.
Aladdin in his green silk shirt
rubs the lamp again, wishes
the genii will carry him miles
away to where love waits.
Diamonds glisten; a row of books
beckons the eye and heart.
Even the air seems rainbowed with light
that tastes of southern sun.
Call tigers. Call the pirates shouting
For rum and pieces of eight
The letter from France is a song
of story, why small mouths
smile and laugh. Fresh bread
in a basket, new wine on the tongue:
a scimitar curves on the fine
woven carpet, and magic
is sudden as gold.

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Authenticity and Literature in the Multicultural Classroom: What are the Issues?

– *Brenda M. Greene*

ABSTRACT

Authentic literature has tremendous potential to develop increased understandings of many cultures and to provide opportunities to value diversity. This article presents a framework for use of multicultural literature and practical strategies to assist teachers.

Hi, my name is Sister. My other name is Shirley Ann, but everybody calls me Sister. This is my little brother, Mike. Everybody calls him Brother just like they call me Sister. Mama says that's the way they do, down south where she was born. But you know what? I call Brother MeToo. That's because everything I do, he has to do too.

Like when Mama says I can go out to play till it gets dark? MeToo has to say, "Can I go, too?" He's such a baby. But we have good times.

Now we're goin inside to hear one of Mama and Great-Grammaw's stories. Every evening we have storytelling time. And uuu-uuuu-uuuh! Mama and Great-Grammaw, they tell some se-ri-ous, dy-no-mite stories.

Like yesterday when we went in, Great-Grammaw was fixin Mama's hair in cornrows. That's what Great-Grammaw calls those braids. She said the braids got that name because our old folks down south planted rows of corn in the fields. And the rows in the cornfields looked like the rows of braids that they fixed in their hair. Mama's hair was looking pretty.

The above excerpt from Camille Yarbrough's story *Cornrows* (1991) highlights the value of authenticity in literature for young children. Through Sister's voice we get an authentic view of her family and culture. Sister presents us with Great-Grammaw's stories and through these stories, we learn about the origin of the cornrow style of braiding (a style worn by many African American girls), and we come to understand the significance of braids among the Yoruba people. We observe that special bond that forms between a daughter, a mother and a grandmother, and we get a sense of what it is like for young African American girls to sit for hours as their mothers braid their hair. We hear stories that recount the history and identify the heroes of a group of people. We get a glimpse of an entire culture through a brief picture book because Camille Yarbrough creates an authentic text which mirrors the lives of young African American girls; her book can motivate students from other cultures to raise questions and discuss traditions and rituals that can help them to expand their knowledge base about other peoples and cultures.

The issue of authenticity in literature has become particularly significant. Changing demographics and our concepts of American literature have moved beyond the boundaries of the United States. Because our classrooms are more diverse we must, therefore, expand our concepts of literature to include literature that is more representative of other cultures, and we must pay careful attention to the literature of those groups that have been marginalized in our society. Our students must hear their voices and must see themselves represented. The theme of the 28th Annual New York State Reading Conference, "Literacy in the Global Community," illustrates that our communities have expanded, that our country represents a global community. Providing students with authentic texts written by diverse voices validates the experiences of those who have not been represented and provides a medium for portraying the marginalized as subjects rather than objects in literature.

When we help students to shift their perspective to see the "other" as subject rather than as object presented in texts, we are providing them with ways to "re-see" texts. We are inviting them to explore the historical, sociological and political implications of literature that cross the cultural boundaries within and outside of the United States. Examining literature from a global and more critical perspective presents our students with constructs that both challenge and offer different belief systems, values and world views.

...we must...include ...the literature of those groups that have been marginalized in our society.

As the concept of what it means to be an American is reconceptualized to encompass peoples who were formerly the "other" and who are Americans in a global sense (i.e., people who are Caribbeans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, South Americans, Central Americans and Native people), our students will be in a position to view this more pluralistic concept of literature from both the inside and outside. Crossing these cultural boundaries in terms of literature challenges us, as teachers, to establish paradigms that acknowledge and negotiate the differences that arise. The reading of authentic literary texts places us in a special position to address these challenges.

Among the many issues facing us in the teaching of authentic texts are the establishment of criteria to determine what literature we expose our students to and how we teach this literature. We must also be aware of the degree to which our cultural perspectives impinge on us as readers and teachers of these texts, and the strategies we use to get students and teachers to negotiate differences. Finally, we must instill the concept that the negotiating of differences as inclusive, rather than exclusive, helps our students to learn tolerance, respect and empathy. Some ways in which the use of authentic texts have helped me to address these issues with high school and college students are presented.

One poem,which illustrates how the concept of what it means to be an American has changed, is "Child of the Americas," by Aurora Levins Morales (1993). In this poem, Morales, a child with a Puerto Rican mother and Jewish father explores her identity. She begins with "I am a child of the Americas, a light-skinned mestiza of the Caribbean, a child of many diaspora, born into this continent at a crossroads." She closes the poem with the words, "I am new. History made me. My first language was splangish. I was born at the crossroads and I am whole." Morales provides a platform for discussing what it means to be of a mixed race, what it means to be of two cultures and how history has created a more inclusive concept of American. When Morales speaks of America, she goes beyond the continental United States presenting America as symbolic of the crossroads of merging cultures. Through the use of an authentic voice, Morales recreates a different world view of America.

Another writer who explores the issue of identity in literature is Lewis P. Johnson, a Potawatomi/Ottawa Native. In his essay, "For My Indian Daughter", Johnson (1993) recounts what it is like to grow up as an American of Native origin. Although he only feels slightly connected to his Indian heritage he recounts through a series of incidents in his adult life, how he is viewed by the "other" as Native American. He has no Native name, he speaks no Native language and knows no Native customs. He is amazed when his daughter indicates that he is not really an Indian and he realizes that his search, along with his daughter's search for identity, has been and will continue to be lonesome and necessary. Johnson and Morales illustrates what it is like to a member of multiple cultures and to view America from within and outside of her traditional boundaries. Both writers have moved themselves from the position of the object to the subject (i.e., from the margin to the center) and through their authentic voices, we are able to observe and empathize and feel what it is like to be of two worlds.

The use of authentic literature also develops compassion and empathy for people from other cultures. I have used the story "From Vietnam" by Vo Thi Tam (1993), for example, to help students understand the immigrant struggle. The text recounts her harrowing escape from Vietnam and her journey to the United States. Through the use of the first person, the reader relives Vo Thi Tam's survival on the boat, her starvation, her shipwreck and her internment in a refugee camp. After reading and discussing these vivid first hand accounts of Tam's experiences of fear and courage, students connect with her and come to a better understanding of why someone would leave their homeland. When students in my classes read this story they indicated that they began to look at Haitian refugees differently. They also discussed the contexts of Cuban and Mexican immigration. Students explored in more depth why these groups want to leave their homelands, and they discerned that usually only one view of why people desire to immigrate is presented. I asked my students to conduct an interview with someone who had immigrated from another country and to either rewrite the story from their interviewee's point of view or write the story as if they were a journalist interviewing someone for a human interest story. Many students indicated that this experience provided them with an opportunity to find out more

about their families and the reasons why they had immigrated to this country. Thus, the reading of Tam's story was a starting point for enabling students to imagine and thereby empathize with the reasons why someone would undertake a difficult and dangerous journey to obtain political asylum or better their economic conditions.

Further evidence of the value of authenticity in literature is found in *Arrival at Manzanar* where Houston & Houston (1993) use narrative voice to validate their experiences. Through this powerful story, we witness the despair of the Japanese who were interned during WWII.

A different perspective of those who were interned during WWII is presented in *Legends from Camp* (Inada, 1992). Inada combines prose and poetry to reflect on the contradictions inherent in moving people who viewed themselves as Americans to internment camps. In the Prologue to *Legends From Camp*, Inada states:

> The situation, obviously, was rather confusing.
>
> It obviously confused simple people
>
> who had simply assumed they were friends, neighbors, colleagues, partners, patients, customers, students, teachers, of, not so much "aliens" or "non-aliens," but likewise simple, unassuming people who paid taxes as fellow citizens and populated pews and desks and fields and places of ordinary American society and commerce. (Inada, 1992, p. 8)

Reading texts such as Houstons' and Inada's forces us to study history and to re-examine WWII from the perspective of the "other". Their stories are too frequently omitted from our history texts and many of us only learned of the internment of Americans when we became adults. When I used Houstons' story in one of my classes, one student who had never heard of the internment, came back to the next class session convinced that the internment had been done to protect the Japanese. She had been deeply moved by the story and had difficulty accepting that our government had violated human rights, so she consulted with her father-in-law and found it easier to accept his explanation that the internment of Japanese Americans was for their own good. Even though the use of an authentic voice may not always convince the reader that the writer is presenting the truth, it does provide a forum for raising difficult issues and confronting the fears, biases, contradiction and prejudices of many people in our society.

Authentic texts provide students with portrayals of the social, political and economic factors that shape cultural communities.

Authentic texts provide students with portrayals of the social, political and economic factors that shape cultural communities. Jamaica Kincaid for example, a natural born storyteller from Antigua, creates authentic literature which depicts the political and social realities of the human experience. On one level, Kincaid's novel *Annie John* (1985) can be read as a story about a young Caribbean girl's passage from childhood into adolescence. Students can then compare Kincaid's *A Small Place* (Kincaid, 1989) with *Annie John* to discover the personal and social conflicts of growing up in a post-colonial culture from the perspectives of the people who are within that culture. In *A Small Place*, Kincaid effectively uses the second person point of view to illustrate how colonialism has dominated her culture. The placing of these two texts side by side reveals that while the universal themes of growing up and conflicts between the old and new may be present in both texts, an analysis of their historical and geographical settings broadens student's responces to and interpretations of these texts. Reading both texts allows students to understand Jamaica Kincaid's critical statement about the social and political situation in the post-colonial society.

Buchi Emecheta's (1983) novel *Second Class Citizen* and Chinua Achebe's (1992) novel *Things Fall Apart* also provide students with an authentic view of the political and social situations of specific communities. In these novels we get a glimpse of Nigerian culture during its transition from colonialism to its post-colonial period. Emecheta's novel focuses on the story of a young Nigerian girl who decides to defy traditional custom by attending school and becoming a librarian in London. Along her journey she overcomes many obstacles through her determination to make her own choices in life. Students, particularly those who are recent immigrants as well as students who come from homes where women are only expected to fulfill stereotypical female roles, readily connect with this text and learn how different cultures share similar conflicts with respect to gender expectations.

Achebe's novel focuses on gender differences and cultural conflicts from a different perspective. In this novel, Achebe portrays the conflicts that emerge when east meets west and when old ideas are challenged by new ones. The characters face internal struggles with maintaining traditional customs in the face of the movement of young people from their rural communities to the cities and the clash of Christianity with traditional African religion. Achebe uses this novel to

make a strong statement aboutthe effects of colonialism on his community and his peoples. Both Emecheta and Achebe represent the authentic voices of peoples who have been subjected to colonialism and who can effectively use literature to portray the social and political effects of colonialism on a community.

Authentic texts open lines of communication between people of different cultures. They enable students from diverse backgrounds to fill in the gaps creat ' by a lack of understanding and knowledge of otner people. Because we are not and can never be aware of all of the beliefs, traditions, and rituals of all people, we must use the literary authentic text as a way to respect, embrace and celebrate difference in a pluralistic society. Through the reading of authentic texts, our students come to realize that different groups speak to one another in different ways. As literary scholar Karla Holloway (1992) notes, we cannot hide behind the masks of universality. We must acknowledge diversity.

...use the literary authentic text...to respect, embrace and celebrate difference in a pluralistic society.

How do we address the issues raised by authenticity in literature? Stories are a natural way to authenticate the human experience and we must ensure that our students read the stories represented by a global community. It is critical that our students read fiction which is written by persons who represent the ethnic group being portrayed and that the stories depict realistic characters and images of peoples from diverse backgrounds. Moreover our texts must accurately represent history. Our students need opportunities to talk and write about ways in which these texts relate to their personal lives. Finally, we must not study texts in isolation. The traditional approaches of examining texts for their aesthetic and/or formal qualities alone no longer work because they omit too much information and perpetuate narrow perceptions of people and their cultures. We can widen and enrich students' literary reading experiences by reading traditional texts side by side with non-traditional texts and by drawing upon history, sociology and geography to establish a broader framework for studying diverse works. Using these strategies to address the issues of authenticity in multicultural literature provides alternative perspectives for reading and interpreting literature and creates powerful opportunities to generate authentic responses to authentic stories.

The tasks which face us as we attempt to "re-see" ways of teaching texts are formidable. Many teachers feel unprepared for today's multicultural classes. They are concerned about the amount of time it takes to develop curricula which address alternative ways of seeing texts as well as including texts that were formerly marginalized. One way to accomplish this is to bring together a group of teachers to share the responsibility for compiling material which could be used by a community of teachers in one school or school district. In my graduate course on pluralistic approaches to cultural literacy, my students develop annotative bibliographies which focus on ten to twelve texts they could include in their curricula. These bibliographies focus on a particular ethnic group or theme and target a particular group of students. At the end of the semester, students discuss and distribute their final lists with the entire class.

My graduate students identified a variety of issues as they compiled their bibliographies. Among the broad range of research topics were South African literature, Caribbean literature, African American literature, Latina literature, Holocaust literature, Chinese literature, Native American literature, and gay and lesbian literature. The targeted age range was also broad and covered all grade levels. Two students, for example, decided to do their research on gay and lesbian literature; one focused on this literature for elementary school children and the other person focused on this literature for high school and college students. Two students who researched Native American literature indicated that a computer search yielded little literature which was titled Native American. Most literature in this area was under the category of "Indian", and much of this literature was anthropological rather than literary. Other students who researched Chinese literature, emphasized the importance of exposing students to Chinese culture and philosophy when teaching this literature. At the end of the course, students stated that this was the most valuable experience they had had in the course. They left this course with a wealth of materials which could last them for years. The development of annotative bibliographies could be undertaken in a faculty development workshop or independently by a group of interested teachers. In this way, the responsibility for identifying authentic texts is shared and the lists are extremely expansive. More importantly, teachers can discuss what they are reading and brainstorm possibilities.

Another activity which could be used in the development of authentic multicultural curricula is to establish learning environments in which students are responsible for doing the research needed to read an authentic text. This activity, also done in my course on pluralistic approaches to cultural literacy, requires students to make a presentation on a particular book. Requiring students to conduct research on the literary reviews of a text and the historical and sociological fac-

tors related to the setting and emerging themes in the text, enriches their text understanding. Having students develop creative ways to get other students to connect with the text and to construct meaning is powerful. The texts chosen in the graduate course where these presentations were done came from a range of cultures and included *When Rocks Dance* (Nunez-Harrell, 1986), a novel which focuses on the Caribbean, *Dreaming in Cuban* (Garcia, 1992), a novel which focuses on Cuba and Cuban Americans, *Legends From Camp* (Inada, 1992) a collection of poetry and prose which focuses on the Japanese internment, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston, 1978), a novel which focuses on an African American woman's search for self, and *The Joy Luck Club* (Tan, 1989), a novel which focuses on the relationships between Chinese mothers and their Chinese American daughters.

Students' presentations from these books were lively and stimulating. They suggested comparative texts which could be used in the teaching of these texts as well as comparative cultural and political issues which could be raised to help other students engage with the texts. They also encouraged free writing and class discussion which provided ways for their class members to test their assumptions and biases about the themes with which they were confronted. Although this type of activity is most appropriate at the high school or college level, I have also observed middle school and elementary school students who are capable of coming together in order to collaborate on group presentations. Structuring classrooms around the presentation of authentic texts allows students to share in the creation of knowledge about other people and cultures, to teach each other about the issues and themes generated from authentic texts, and to negotiate the differences that arise from the discussion of these texts.

The issues related to the teaching of authentic texts in multicultural curricula are not always apparent, especially to those who have not been exposed to diverse texts and strategies for approaching these texts. When applying for teaching jobs one of my graduate students was asked to send a resume which included her views of and experiences in teaching multicultural literature. Initially she believed that she understood the issues; after taking the course on pluralistic approaches to cultural literacy, she realized that she was not fully aware of the issues. I suggest that teachers familiarize themselves with the literature surrounding the debates on these issues. A good place to begin is the professional journals on English studies. I recommend *Canons and Contexts* (Lauter,1991) and *Loose Canons: Notes on the Cultural Wars* (Gates, 1992), both of which provide a context for understanding the issues related to the inclusion of authentic literature and additionally present the criteria for teaching and developing a more pluralistic curriculum.

Finally, in establishing a paradigm for rethinking authenticity in multicultural literature we must re-see the classroom as a "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991). Pratt defines the contact zone as:

> "...social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today (Pratt, 1991, p. 34)."

The concept of the contact zone illustrates a way teachers can create the space needed to enable students to generate authentic responses to literature. Using the classroom as a contact zone enables students to bring varying voices and perspectives to their reading of texts. Difference and conflict generate growth and serve as stimulating and critical sources of discussion in our reading classes. Those who fear the concept of the contact zone are perpetuating the status quo. Those who embrace this concept are establishing a paradigm that will enable students and teachers in pluralistic classrooms to negotiate differences and conflicts and to generate growth.

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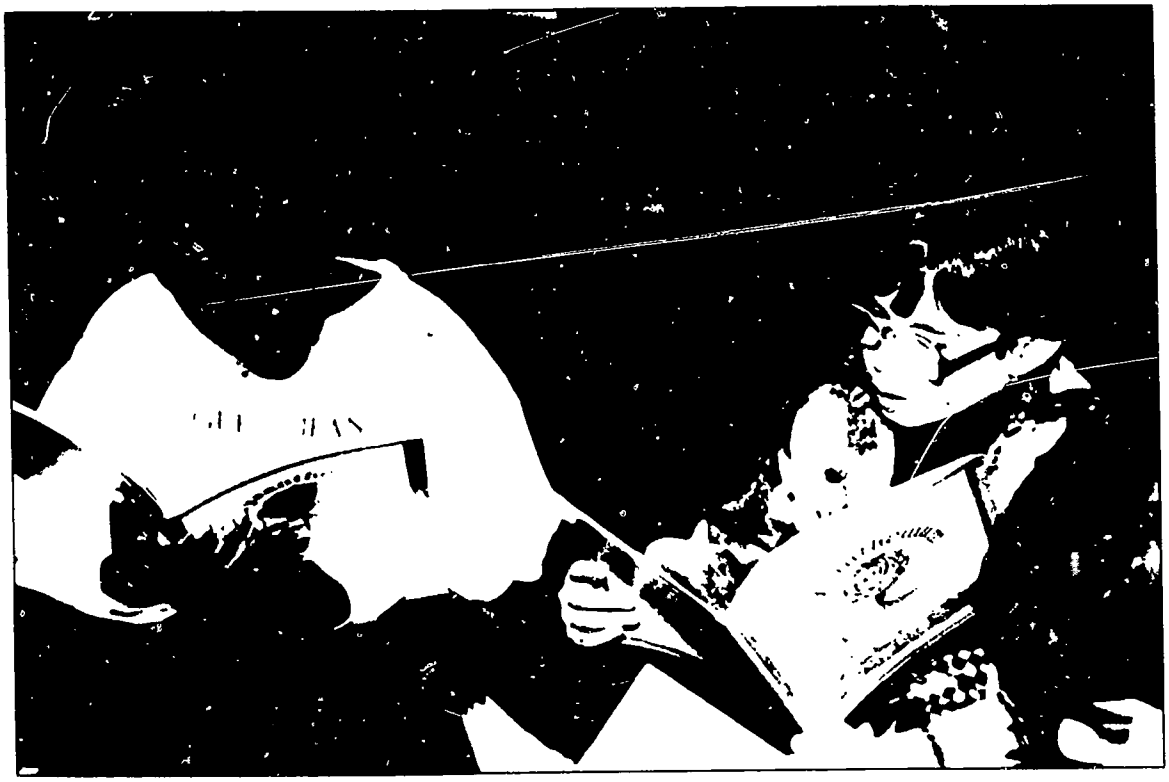

Jade Campbell and Caryn Friedberg silently read at The Curtis Estabrook School, P.S. 272, Brooklyn. Photo is courtesy of David Berg.

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A Celebration of Multiple Realities

– *M. Priscilla Myers*

ABSTRACT

By the year 2080, more than half of the U.S. population will be Latino, African American or Asian American. Educators must adapt to the changing cultural diversity of their classrooms, believe in the authenticity and value of difference, and reconstruct educational processes to promote equality across race and culture. This article identifies teaching strategies that are effective for all learners, particularly those from multilingual and cultural backgrounds.

"Ay-guy-yaah! Papa would yell as we pulled into the magnolia scented driveway leading to my grandparents' Louisiana home. We knew it meant "Hurray!" or "Welcome!" Though I later studied French, I was never able to track down the precise derivation of that pithy Cajun phrase. I loved making the trip from Colorado to Louisiana; it was a unique world within the bounds of my own country; a hickory coffee, fig preserve, sweet flower and hangin' moss kind of place where southern drawl slipped into slow moving French nasals and crawled back again. I was drawn into a celebration of cultural diversity at a young age and have been fascinated by the multiple realities of our world's cultures ever since.

Maybe Louisiana Cajuns led me to a year's study in France and travel all over Europe - skiing in Austria, basking in Capri's sun, whispering in the great halls of The Louvre, musing among Pompeii's ruins. I know that teaching English to French adults in night school pointed me toward a career in education. Later, as teachers, my husband and I lived and taught in Norway, England, and Japan, all the while traveling, questioning, observing, participating, learning. I was asked once by a social studies teacher at a going away party, "How can you leave your country?" I left my country and immersed myself in America's cultural heritage, learning to love and appreciate my own country and her people by stepping back and looking hard, by becoming an outsider, a foreigner, an alien, a white among all blacks, a Christian among all Muslims, a westerner among all Asians, a commoner gazing on the resplendence of kings, and a person of wealth among the world's most impoverished. I learned what it's like to be unable to read a sign or ask for help, to be mobbed by children begging for a dime or a stick of gum, to feel shame during a plea for peace offered by a Hiroshima survivor, to watch elephants running free in the wild like puppies, to endure the exquisite darkness of a tomb inside a 3,000-year-old pyramid, to stare into the wax-white face of Lenin, to sing in an Irish pub by the light of a peat fire. . .

How could I leave my country? I left and I returned knowing it better, respecting it more, and realizing the enormity of my challenge as an educator in the United States. In 1989, the U. S. Census Bureau projected that from 1990-2030, the white population of the U.S. will increase by 25%; the African American population will grow by about 68%; Asian American, Pacific Island American and Native American populations will grow by 79%; and the Latino or Hispanic population will increase by 187%. Cortes (1989) states that the U.S. has reached "merely the diversity take-off stage" and that by the year 2080, more than half of the U.S. population will be Latino, African American and Asian American. What are the implications for educators? "Ours is a multicultural, polycentric, pluralistic nation of the world village where we must enter into the bond of learning and understanding together, in community" (Hamilton, 1992, p. 7). Educators must not only acknowledge diverse races and cultures within their classrooms but must believe in the authenticity and the value of differences. Only by valuing differences in human characteristics across ethnicities, by modeling sensitivity and respect for diversity of thought and action, can we begin to develop a unified vision - to see clearly mutual concerns, similarities across experiences, attitudes, and values, in order to promote equality, to "give voice to alternative world views" (Delpit, 1988), and to develop what Byrnes

(1988) called a "concern for the well-being and dignity of all."

> . . . we must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness (Delpit, 1988, p. 297).

While teachers do not become immersed in different cultures for extended periods of time, we can empower students by accepting, valuing, and celebrating the multiple realities represented by diverse races and cultures. Teachers are always concerned with what can be done tomorrow? And how? Specific teaching and learning strategies which are sensitive to the needs of every child in your classroom are presented; teachers who use such strategies become enablers who help others to do good works and extend their already considerable powers (Macrorie, 1984). The ideas I have incorporated are not just "add-ons" to existing curricula. I advocate real changes in overall teaching approaches necessary for meeting specific needs of multicultural, multilingual students. I have organized the ideas around three basic themes: (1) Establishing a Positive Classroom Atmosphere; (2) Building a Knowledge Base; (3) Creating Curricular Changes.

Establishing a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

Create an atmosphere in your classroom in which all children's self-concepts will be enhanced and in which all children will want to learn. Researchers have found clear relationships between the degree of prejudice among school children and self-esteem; the better the self-esteem, the less likelihood for prejudicial feelings (Pettigrew, 1981). Thus, teachers must be concerned about building individuals' self-concepts; school environments must foster security, acceptance, independence and responsibility (Samuels, 1977). Byrnes found that within supportive teachers' classrooms "warmth, praise, (and) appropriate limits are consistently present" (1988, p. 269).

Teaching Ideas

1. Promote positive, goal-oriented interactions among your students. Create opportunities for real interactions—not "show-and-tell" reports—with individuals "in equal status roles toward mutual goals" (Byrnes, 1988, p. 269). For example, Kinsella & Sherak (1994) propose ideas for creating small groups or academic learning teams within the classroom:

- Incorporate brief group activities regularly into lessons; vary tasks and type of groups. Select groups for specific learning activities, personality types (pooling shy, withdrawn individuals to promote active participation), social patterns (eliminating "in- or out-groups"), interest, or randomly. Groups may also reflect academic preparation, but over-reliance on academic skills as prerequisite for membership in a given group may create children who "behave in conformity to perceived adult expectations" (California Department of Education, 1992, p. 9). In addition, grouping based on academic performance tends to increase divisions along class, race and ethnic lines.
- To promote teamwork, make sure tasks invite multiple contributions. For example, after reading a selection, have groups of three to four children write and answer their own questions to check for understanding, or have them create a story map on the overhead and explain it to the whole class.
- Teacher-formed groups should contain diverse student compositions (e.g., gender, ethnicity and academic preparation), and large enough for heterogeneity and small enough to promote equal participation.
- Establish groups and maintain them for extended periods so that children can develop familiarity and confidence with the members of their group.
- Explain the purpose and outcome of the group project and relate it to material previously covered. Establish guidelines and roles of group members explicitly. Keep routines and procedures consistent; give students working in groups specific time frames and clear instructions before they begin working. Write the procedures on a large sheet of butcher paper or on the board. Model the procedures. Give plenty of time to answer questions before moving into groups.
- Be an active facilitator; monitor each group's progress, provide feedback, and help children stay on task.
- Value the work produced by groups as you would individual work in order to ensure that students consider a group effort justifiable. Provide feedback on social skills as well as on academic achievement. Allow students to evaluate their own contributions to the group's work.

2. Be enthusiastic about learning. Enthusiasm breeds interest. Find curious details or interesting sidelights; add personal anecdotes; use many examples and analogies. Don't be afraid to exaggerate your gestures; be a bit of an actor; vary the tone of your voice; sing a little; become the characters in a story read aloud.

3. Invite active participation. Maintain eye contact when a child is speaking; be a sincere listener. Model good listening for your students. Paraphrase or summarize what children say to ensure understanding.

Give children adequate response time after questions. Ask interesting, meaningful questions; if the answer is not important, don't ask the question. Make sure you include all children in a discussion. If you have a particularly shy student, ask a question and tell him/her you will come back later for a response after he/she has time to think about an answer. Value every response. If a student responds illogically (or even absurdly), ask "What made you say _? I'm not sure I understand where that idea came from." Be specific in your praise; rather than, "Good answer!"; say, "I like the way you described the character's facial expression when I asked how he felt when he heard the news."

4. Kinsella (1993) advocates much social interaction for children, especially second language learners who need extensive exposure to new vocabulary and opportunities to take risks in producing language. She advises teachers to express themselves in several different ways, using different levels of vocabulary, relating content to children's everyday lives and giving students opportunities to share information about interests and activities. Be tolerant of error, especially when the it does not affect comprehension. If a child speaks nonstandard English, or uses a colloquialism inappropriate for the classroom, paraphrase the child's words using standard English rather than calling attention to the specific words or lecturing about "the 'correct' way to speak." For example, if a child says something like, "We be comin' from Chicago," the teacher could answer, "Oh, you come from Chicago? We come from so many different places, don't we?" Similarly, if a child reads a passage imperfectly (e.g., making the character's words sound more like the child's own dialect), examine whether the misreading resulted in a loss of comprehension. If not, let the child continue reading uninterrupted. Allow students time to rehearse or share responses with peers before contributing to the whole class.

5. Fill your classroom with good work created by the children. Minimize or eliminate student-against-student competition; trace and celebrate individual student progress. Maintain high standards for all students but consider growth of the individual in your appraisals.

6. Let students accept responsibility for their own learning. Allow them to choose among several unit ideas, or to choose books, articles, or projects to complete. Accept a variety of responses to units of study: writing, drama, artwork, additional reading, interviews, newspaper reporting, self-made quizzes or tests, peer reviews, parent reviews, school administrator reviews. Have students write their own contracts for learning and include them in the assessment process. Incorporate students' ideas about how to run the classroom efficiently. Keep "rules" to a minimum; include "Respect each student's right to learn," a rule which can subsume many others, such as "Raise your hand before speaking. . . Don't interrupt. . .Don't talk while the teacher is explaining something,."

7. Use students' second languages in the classroom. Create labels and signs in different languages; ask specific students to translate, to pronounce, to discuss differences between English and the second language. Ask students to teach the class "survival vocabulary" in another language (e.g., "Where is the bathroom? Thank you. Excuse me. May I have a Coca-Cola?").

8. Encourage students to relax and participate by moving informally around the room. Arrange the room flexibly so that students sometimes face each other.

Building a Knowledge Base

The next step is to build a knowledge base about and establish open communication with the communities and families from which students come. Strickland (1994) suggests that teachers should inform themselves "both from reading the relevant literature and from first-hand experiences with others who belong to that population" (p. 334).

Teaching Ideas

1. Find articles around the theme of multicultural perspectives. Read them yourself and then share with your students. Discuss multicultural issues: what happened? What was the author trying to tell us? How do I feel about it? How do others feel? Why do I feel this way? What can we learn from what happened?

2. Read both fiction and nonfiction materials about cultures and different parts of the world represented by your students. Incorporate the literature within your curriculum.

3. Use attitude and interest surveys with students. Examples of questions you could ask: What makes you smile? Whom do you admire most? Least? What is your favorite/least favorite _____? If you don't understand something, what do you do? What do you like to do in your spare time?

4. Ask students to discuss and teach you about the multicultural dimensions of their families. Where did

their families originate? What is their ethnic affiliation? What language(s) do they speak? Are they from rural or urban backgrounds? Why did their families come to the U.S.. or relocate within the U.S.? What are their families' attitudes toward America and the "Old Country"? Describe persons from different cultures who had significant influences on their lives. Describe their families' mealtime or holiday traditions. What is the most unusual experience they have had?

5. Have students create a montage, collage, or mobile entitled "My Family" or "All About Me."

6. Celebrate a "Student of the Week." Invite family members to the class or ask them to send information or special pictures of the student or family.

7. Have a "Multicultural Banquet." Invite the students' family members to contribute special foods or entertainment in the form of traditional costumes, dances, stories, books—invite students, family members, special members of the school and community to attend.

8. Invite parents and caregivers to a "Welcome Potluck Dinner Night" at the beginning of the year to get acquainted. If possible, provide free sibling childcare and entertainment by your students.

9. Recognize children's birthdays by reading a book depicting the birthday child's cultural background; if the child's parents ask about providing a birthday party with treats, ask them to consider purchasing that book for the classroom instead, complete with a dedication to the class from their child.

10. Maintain communication with families throughout the year: for requesting help with children with academic needs, for good news reports, for "checking in" purposes (e.g., What kinds of things does she relate to you at home? How could I make this unit more meaningful for your daughter?).

11. Take a field trip to historical sites. Immerse yourselves in another time, place, or culture. Note special landmarks and signs, the contents of houses and stores; visit a restaurant and try the local food specialties; visit churches and cemeteries; talk to people and notice the way they dress and speak; read brochures and record special events and significant people to study more formally later in the classroom. Incorporate this experience throughout the curriculum; read more nonfiction about the area or about the people from the area, find picture books that depict the lives of the people in a similar geographic area or time in history, write news article, reports, or original stories about a fictional character who lived there, role play a particular historical event, create dioramas and other artwork, draw diagrams and graphs, gather the population statistics of the community, plot your trip on a map, investigate the history of the site, do an oral history based on a real interview.

Creating Curricular Changes

Closely related to establishing a positive classroom climate is the development of a curriculum that enhances positive attitudes toward different racial and ethnic groups. Banks (1994) divides multicultural education into five dimensions: content, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, pedagogical equity, and empowerment. I have structured teaching ideas in the area of curricular changes within Banks' dimensions, though I have combined equity pedagogy and empowerment.

Teaching Ideas

1. Content Integration: In order to encourage an attitude of universal acceptance and respect, add materials to your curriculum written by or about people representing a variety of cultures and races. Frankson (1990) writes, "To develop a positive image of their roles as valuable members of society, minority youth need to see themselves represented in good literature, both in their classrooms and on the library shelves" (p. 30). Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1993) report that minority children derive self-esteem, respect, and pride in their own heritage as a result of seeing themselves positively represented in quality literature. They also cite research indicating that the emotional involvement and vicarious experiences majority children share with minorities in literature increases awareness of parallel cultures and reduces prejudices. Among many excellent resource books listing culturally conscious literature are the following: Bushman and Bushman (1993); Huck, Hepler, and Hickman (1993); Jensen and Roser (1993); Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1993); Manna and Brodie (1992); Tiedt and Tiedt (1986); Tompkins and Hoskisson (1995).

Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1993) recommend criteria for evaluating and selecting multicultural literature: 1) Multicultural literature, as well as all literature selected for children, should be of high literary and artistic quality. Select a wide variety of multicultural books with themes that are developmentally appropriate, relevant, and worthy of study. 2)

Minority characters within a given text should reflect individualization within cultural groups and project positive, believable images. Attend to the diversity and range of representation within cultures; include a wide spectrum of lifestyles, educational backgrounds, and careers within specific cultures. Avoid books with stereotypical, flat characterizations, and be espcially cautious about books which seem to paint multi-colored faces on white, Anglo Saxon, middle class characters. 3) Make sure the cultural details depicted in the work are authentic including idioms, dialect, and descriptions of food, clothing, customs, housing.

3. Knowledge Construction: Banks (1992) suggests that teachers must determine how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases influence the ways children learn. He advises educators to allow children to view history, literature, and other content areas from the perspective of the parallel culture (e.g., examining, discussing, and studying Columbus' arrival in the Americas from the Arawak Natives' viewpoint.

4. Prejudice Reduction: Byrnes (1988) states, "Children are aware of differences among people and learn the prevailing social attitudes towards these differences at a young age (p. 267);" we must not deny the differential weight assigned to human characteristics across cultures. Byrnes identifies activities designed to increase cognitive sophistication in the area of identifying and reducing prejudicial behavior. For example:

- Set up a mock election of candidates who are known to students through pictures alone. Collect pictures of "candidates" from magazines, catalogs, newspapers—include differences based on age, gender, race, and degrees of physical "attractiveness." Vote. Answer questions such as, "On what did you base your vote? Was this a fair election? What more do we need to know? Does physical appearance play a role in society?"
- Discuss: "Prejudice is being down on something you're not up on."
- Have children respond to illogical conclusions, such as:

"John is a liar. John lives on the east side of town. All people from the east side are liars and cheats."

Ask: How are people hurt by statements like these? How are the people making such statements hurting themselves?

5. Equity Pedagogy and Empowerment: A variety of teaching and learning approaches can equally empower all students to make connections, understand, and become self-directed, independent, lifelong learners. Following are some strategies I have adapted from Kinsella (1994) for students who are in the process of acquiring full language proficiency. I have added strategies I have collected after years of teaching literacy to multicultural students both in the Unitied States and in American schools abroad.

- Begin each lesson by reviewing main ideas from previous lessons. Ask students to summarize major points in their own words, write questions they may have, brainstorm what they remember on the board and then follow-up by categorizing and checking the accuracy of details.
- Always check for understanding. Teach children to check themselves for understanding. Extend "wait time" after questions. Have students take the role of teacher.
- Make topics interesting and meaningful. Provide simple overviews, semantic webs, or other graphic organizers to enhance your teaching. Use many concrete examples, analogies and anecdotes to relating information to students' lives.
- Highlight major ideas with gestures, facial expressions, intonation. Consistently use target words like, "In other words, for example, to summarize, this is important, there are three important points to listen for," etc.
- Use manipulatives as much as possible—blocks when discussing geometrical patterns, pictures when talking about types of illustrations, finished products when planning individual projects . . .
- Let students know the purpose of lessons; provide a variety of experiences for differing purposes (group oral and choral reading, sharing time, reports, readers' theater, students' rehearsed oral reading).
- Read aloud to students of all ages from narrative and expository text and from poetry selections.
- Provide discussion opportunities for students to collaborate, cooperate, compromise.
- Evaluate students through multiple assessment approaches. Include formal tests/quizzes, but also, projects, written reports and responses, works of art, dramatic presentations, interviews and questionnaires, observational notes, participation. Assess students individually, based on individual growth and achievement, rather than on comparisons across grade levels or classes. Have students engage in peer evaluation and self-assessment. Ask students' parents or caregivers to choose a paper from among several written assignments which they feel best represents their child's greatest efforts.

Sleeter (1992) states, "The Multicultural Approach to education reconstructs the entire education process to promote equality and cultural pluralism" (p. 7). Celebrate the multiple realities students represent: Establish a positive, welcoming atmosphere; build a

knowledge base about students, their backgrounds, and the community in which they live; create real curricular changes which equalize instruction for children across cultures, race, age, gender, physical disability, lifestyle preferences, physical appearance and socioeconomic status. Enabling all children to progress is the responsibility—and the pleasure—of their teachers. Wu (1992) expressed this idea eloquently, "Do not ever underestimate your power as an educator: your power to inspire, your power to make all your students feel special, your power to make all of your students feel included, and perhaps, most importantly, your power to plant hope" (p. 15).

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Diversity Expressed and Experienced Through Poetry

– *Rose Reissman*

ABSTRACT

A teaching method of using poetry without references to the specific ethnicities of the writer is presented as a way to tap into students' cultural stereotyping. Stragegies are given to broaden our students' understanding of diversity.

As an educator, lover of literature and a citizen concerned with fostering education of proactive, cooperative living in a richly diverse society, it is my mission to infuse multicultural understandings throughout my curricula. I want my 12 and 13 year old inner city students, the majority of whom are Latino and African American, to examine and take pride in their own rich cultural backgrounds as well as appreciate the common goals and emotions shared with persons from different backgrounds. Since some adults have tremendous difficulty with appreciating and coexisting, my idealistic goals, however well-intentioned, are an extremely tall order for young people just entering their teens. Yet there is one literature genre which leads young people to initial diversity understandings: poetry. I discovered, quite by accident, that poetry could deeply touch and involve my students in diversity studies.

A colleague had given me *Braided Lives* (Appleman & Reed, 1991) an anthology of multicultural literature. As I read through it, I was taken with a poem, "Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question," by Diane Burns, a poet whose work I had never read before. Written as an imagined dialogue between the poet and her new acquaintance, her poem dealt with people's reaction to her disclosure of her cultural background which was Native Aishinabe and Chemehuevi. By way of introduction the poet states her ethnicity up front:

> "How do you do?
> "No, I am not Chinese...
> "No, not Spanish.
> "No, I am American Indian, Native American."
>
> (Burns, 1991)

In response to this frank introduction, the new acquaintance counters by raising various stereotypes associated with Native American Indians (i.e., high cheekbones, Indian princess, Navajo archery, stoic look, and alcoholism). The new acquaintance assures the poet that she/he has had an Native friend and servant and proceeds to apologize for what has been done to the Native Americans over the years. Finally in an effort to ingratiate herself/himself with the speaker, the new acquaintance compliments aspects of the speaker's personal appearance and personality which s/he "positively" associates with the Native Americans (i.e., lovely hair, concern for Mother Earth, spirituality, talent in archery, and a knowledge of where to get Navajo rugs "real cheap"). Although the poem was obviously deeply rooted in the poet's Native background, I saw it as emotional linkage to a broad spectrum of cultural identification encounters, where a new acquaintance tries to respond in a politically correct, but stereotypical, way to a statement about cultural background.

I used the poem to encourage young students to explore their own stereotypes about different cultural backgrounds. I read it twice orally omitting specific references or allusions to Native American culture. I asked the students to listen to the reading, fill in the blanks with whatever cultural/ethnic signifying words seemed appropriate, as well as identify the cultural background of both the speaker and the new acquaintance. They were also invited to draw the new acquaintance. After the two readings, the students shared their "guesses" as to the cultural identity of the speaker. Among their choices were: Jewish; Chinese; African American; Native American; Puerto Rican; Jamaican; and Pakistani. Not surprisingly the choices offered mirrored some of the students' own ethnic backgrounds.

"What was the right answer?" several asked. Rather than respond immediately, I pressed them as to what words or what tone in the poem clued them into

the cultural identities of the poem personae. They gave many answers which again reflected their responses as readers rather than the uncompleted text of the poem I had shared. The figure below presents the "cues" in the text and students' inferences as to the ethnicities of the two persons:

The varied cultural responses to what was read were posted on the board. I asked the students how they reacted to the spectrum of suppositions about the match up with a plethora of cultures. The students had themselves demonstrated how different cultures shared many of the same experiences (i.e., concerns about negative stereotyping; discrimination; incorrect identification based on facial or physical characteristics, and false assumptions about culturally based character traits).

After this discussion, the actual text of Diane Burns' poem was read aloud to the class and copies of it were distributed. At first the students who had correctly

Student Inferences to Text Cues

Text	Student Inferences
high cheekbones Princess	"Greek, Spanish" "Jewish American" "Oriental Goddess" "Black American"
No not...	Black American Puerto Rican Russian Jewish Italian
Yeah, it was awful what you guys did to us. It's real decent of you to apologize	"The speaker is a Jew who is meeting a German. They're talking about the Holocaust" "The poet must be a Black American who is being told by a White how sorry the White was over the slavery and experience by Blacks"
I bought it at Bloomingdales	"Another signal that the speaker is a Jewish American Princess. They shop at Bloomingdales" "Who ever is making the introduction is a rich person who can shop at Bloomingdales"
a lot of us drink too much	"Must be an Italian, people are always saying that Italians are winos"
stoic look	"All Chinese have stoic faces" "Greeks are stoic looking, they can take anything"

identity of the personae. Some of the students lobbied for their own individual choices, but as each referred to the actual wording of the poem, the class came to an informal consensus that the wording could and did guessed that the poet was of Native ancestry were pleased with themselves. One student noted, "I didn't even know there were tribes called 'Aishinabe' and 'Chemehuevi," and thought her a member of the

Cherokee or Sioux tribes, two associations Ms. Burns doesn't like. Another student noted that same type of intracultural group stereotyping was a problem for her because she was always referred to as Hispanic or Latina, whereas she wanted to be identified as a Dominican; but as she noted, few of her non Latino friends even understood the distinction. Still another student said that it didn't really matter what the cultural identities of the poem personae "really" were, since he personally had been talked down to by a friend's father in the same way. A Korean student added that a neighbor's kid told her that she and her mom would really enjoy "The Joy Luck Club" film because it was about a Chinese family. My student laughingly said the only problem with that was she was Korean, not Chinese. Obviously the neighbor had categorized all Asian Americans as one group, ignoring (or perhaps ignorant of) their differing histories.

...poetry...can be used to develop proactive cultural understanding...

Students recorded instances from their own lives where they had been "talked down" to or "bombarded" with inappropriate stereotypes, whether positive or negative, as a result of sharing their cultural background. The prose and poetry produced by them was extremely evocative and surprisingly mature for 12 and 13 year old students. Two examples are presented below:

Example 1

"You know you look just like an American girl. I'd never know you were born in Cuba. You talk just like an American. It's true you're petite, but maybe you'll get taller. Anyway there are plenty of short Americans. That's why they have petite sizes. I wouldn't talk too much about Cuba. That's a negative here . . ."

I didn't know whether to be happy or sad about being able to 'pass' for an American. What did that say about looking like a Cuban, was that ugly? I had never thought about being short as part of being Cuban. Anyway, was being Cuban a negative?

Example 2

Sure You Can Ask Me a Question
Is it true?
Yes, I am part Black and part Hispanic
No, not dark skinned Black
No, not from Africa
No, not Cuban
Yes, it's possible to be a mix and not look Black
Yes, part Black and part Spanish
What awful things will you do me?
Many Blacks say I'm not black enough
Some Hispanics say I'm a mix
No, I didn't purposely create myself
Thanks, but I'm not pleased my hair
isn't kinky and that my skin isn't white
This ain't no make-up cover up
This is my face

When I reviewed the range and depth of responses and insights to charged cultural concerns that I was able to evoke from youngsters through this single poem, I realized the power of the poetry to provoke students with opportunity for experiencing and exploring issues of diversity.

Poems can be chosen and presented without the words which "mark" the specific cultures of their creators. Presented without these markers they naturally lead students into discussion of complex issues such as the conflicts between specific cultural backgrounds and "American" pop culture, intergenerational cultural attitudes, cultural self-knowledge and self-celebration, cultural commonalities and uniquenesses, and crosscultural friendships.

I continue to employ poetry as entree to diversity study. I am increasingly convinced that it can be used to develop proactive cultural understandings by all educators concerned with creating a nurturing climate for diversity dialogue. Only through opportunities to connect and explore other peoples' cultures and experiences will students come to value the richness of diversity.

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Women's Literature and Voice: Implications for Girls' Reading and Writing in the Classroom

– Brett Elizabeth Blake

ABSTRACT

This article explores the inextricable connection between girls' reading, writing and voice. Through a two and a half year ethnographic study conducted in an urban fifth-grade classroom, it became clear that the girls needed to understand that there was literature that reflected their experiences more closely and honestly. Here, Chantal learns that not all literature is "white and about boys...", a development that holds very powerful implications for the development of girls' voices in the classroom.

Chantal slowly got up from her seat. I watched her as she walked to the back of the room to choose a book for silent reading: head down, feet barely moving; it almost looked painful for her to walk. I kept my eyes on her, curious. The two-tiered red rolling cart of books forced her body to stop; it seemed as if she would have kept right on walking through it if she could have. But the cart stopped her, and with her head now hung, standing hunched, she began to flip the books on the shelf first to the left, then to the right, reading only the titles, or, perhaps, only glimpsing at the outside covers. I heard her sigh, mumble something, and glance towards me. "What's the matter, Chantal? Can't you find a book to read?"

"Naw," she whined. "I don't like any of that girly-girly Barbie stuff, and I've read everything else." At that, I pulled a copy of Toni Cade Bambara's (1980) "Raymond's Run" out of my briefcase, and said, "Why don't you try this? It may be a little hard for you to read, but you let me know. If it is, I'll read it out loud to you." Chantal managed a smile, took the photocopy of the story and returned to her seat for the obligatory sustained silent reading period at the end of the day.

I had been a participant-observer in Chantal's fifth grade urban classroom for two and a half years and although I hadn't always carried around copies of "Raymond's Run" in my briefcase, lately I had watched some of the girls in this classroom practice this same painful ritual as they walked to the book corner to find something to read. When I asked them why they chose a particular book, I was met with responses such as, "I dunno," "It was the only one back here," "It's an easy book," "No other good books," or even "They're free." Mr. Rassel, the teacher, had even complained that it wasn't easy "getting good literature" for his students, adding, "Did you know that 'RIF' (Reading is Fundamental) dumps their non-sellers on these kids? You don't see any good literature here, like Judy Blume, do you?" So, I began to carry copies of short stories by Toni Cade Bambara in my briefcase.

There were quite a few books displayed in this classroom: three large stationary bookcases; one with reference books, including dictionaries and encyclopedias, and the bright red rolling cart which held an additional two shelves of books. Each bookcase was tightly packed; books were often placed on top of the shelves because there simply was no more room inside the bookcases themselves. With so many books, I thought, these girls must just be complaining to hear themselves complain. There were just too many choices, I thought.

I was wrong. After spending one morning combing through each of the bookcases to see exactly what kinds of choices these young women were faced with when asked to "find something to read," I became alarmed by two observations.

First, there were few, if any, books written about women. I found the standard fare: *The Double Life of Pocahantas* (Fritz, 1983), *Rosa Parks* (Greenfield, 1973), and a "new" piece, *The Class President*

(Hurwitz,1990), in which the main character, a fifth-grade girl, loses her bid for classroom president to a boy. (The boys in this classroom told me she lost, in the end, because she was, a "bitch.") Second, there were few, if any, books on the shelves written by women. The ones I did locate might very well fall into Chantal's category of "girly-girly:" *The Hand-Me-Down-Kid* (Pascal, 1980) and *Seven Days to A Brand-New Me* (Conford, 1993) (with a dedication to Robert Redford because "he knows why"). A trip to the school library confirmed my findings as the librarian acknowledged that there weren't very many books on or by women in the school's collection. How, then, I thought, could I speak to these young women about developing their voices in their writing when there were few, if any, solid female role models in the literature found in this urban school? My ethnographic research among fifth grade African American, Latina, and Angla girls over the last two and a half years has primarily focused on writing, specifically on the development of "voice" through their writing in a process approach classroom setting. However, the more I observed and interacted with these young women, the more I began to wonder how their reading habits, their choices of reading materials, and their responses to what they were reading, could tell me about their writing and the development of their voices. And, what, then, might be some implications for young women in similar classrooms who were faced with similar choices?

My intent here is to tell a story about one of these fifth-grade girls, Chantal, who struggles both with her writing and her reading in the classroom. Through describing some of my interactions and dialogue with her, along with examining the notion of voice through some of the literature of both historical and contemporary women authors, I offer what I believe are honest and concrete ideas so that Chantal and other young urban women may have continued possibilities for reading and writing in the classroom.

...young urban ... girls need women's literature on which to model their own writing...

Women's Literature and Voice

There has been a long tradition of women writers who explore the development of voice through writing. Virginia Woolf struggled with this fundamental issue of voice through writing, and, of course, lost the struggle (or perhaps won it?) when she killed herself in the 1960's. In her treatise on women and fiction, Woolf (1929) poses the question, "What effect has poverty on fiction?" (p. 25). Here, Woolf means not only the poverty of material goods, but the poverty of one's creativity and expression; the poverty, certainly, of voice. Without voice, Woolf tells us, a woman is "... so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must [have lost] lose her health and sanity to a certainty" (p. 51).

The ability, however, to be able to create and to be heard through one's writing allows for an amelioration of these effects of "poverty" as women, too, find "the submerged truth" through this release of expression through the written word. If a woman is to write, Woolf concludes, she "must have money and a room of one's own" (p. 4). Women must have the space and time to write, the space and time to reflect on their lives' experiences, and the "intellectual freedom" granted others in this society to do so.

In contemporary literature, Morrison (Micucci, 1992), too, tells of her struggle with "poverty" and a "room of one's own" as she, like many women, created and wrote "privately at night [like women] with families who use their off hours for creative projects" (p. 3). She, too, searched for a voice through these stolen moments which would allow her to explore not only issues of gender and race but also to explore her identity as a woman and the possibilities of self and being human in the world. According to Morrison, writing allows one to "stretch and grow deeper" because the "search for love and identity runs through everything [I write]" (p. 3). Writing is also a place where "one can be courageous" and "think the unthinkable" (p. 3). Indeed, according to Heilbrun (Matthews, 1992), a contemporary feminist writer and scholar, "*life and literature are linked...we are* (emphasis added) *the stories we tell*" (p. 83).

The implications these women writers' words hold for the issue of writing and voice, especially among young urban girls' in the classroom are profound. Girls need women's literature on which to model their own writing and begin to develop their own voices. Urban African American, Latina, and Angla girls need a voice which speaks to or is representative of their own culture, their own experiences and backgrounds.

Continued Possibilities

Two weeks later, Chantal walked to the back of the classroom to the reading corner where I sit and observe. "Can we read that story today?" she asked. "What story?" I replied, having forgotten that I had given her a copy of "Raymond's Run" to read. "The one you gave me," she added, slightly exasperated with me. "I tried to read it, but would you read it outloud to me

anyway?" "Sure," I replied, a little concerned that the 20 minutes allotted for sustained silent reading wouldn't be enough time, "We can try to finish it today."

Chantal sat down in the chair next to me as I began to tell her a little bit about the piece and the author. "Toni Cade Bambara is African American just like you," I told her, "and she writes short stories about Black kids just like you." "Sure doesn't look like a short story to me," Chantal remarked as she flipped through the photocopied pages and smiled. "Well, it is," I assured her. "Let's read it." As I began to read, I noticed that Chantal was inching herself closer to me. When I reached the part where Mary Louise, Rosie, and Squeaky trade stories, Chantal exclaimed, "They talk just like me," and moved herself so close to me that her elbow rested on my knee, her face cupped inside her right hand. I continued to read and Chantal didn't utter another sound. When we finished, I turned to her and asked, "Did you know Squeaky would win?" "All the time," she answered excitedly, "I'm faster than both my sisters and they're older." We talked a little more about the story, the setting, the characters, when the final school bell rang. "I'm gonna make me my own story like this," she announced, taking the copy of the story and heading back to her desk.

Young women...need to know that there are stories... in a voice which sounds much like their own...

It has been a month since Chantal and I read "Raymond's Run" together. She has not yet written the story. But she has not stopped talking about her own prowess as a runner: "I'm a tomboy and that's okay. I mean I can climb trees and stuff and I can run fast. I love baseball and I play basketball and football, except that I get dirty." Nor has she forgotten the story. She continues to ask me for "good stuff" to read, realizing now that there is literature which reflects her life and experiences, more closely and more honestly, within a world in which she reminds me, "Everything is white and about boys except a few shows on TV."

Young women like Chantal need to know that there are stories being written that "speak" to them in a voice which sounds much like their own, and where characters are portrayed who experience life much as they do. Chantal needs to know that there is, indeed, a connection between literature and life, and that from this connection she may learn to begin to speak in her own voice much as the characters in stories do. In turn, then, she needs to know that this connection with one's own life through literature can help her further explore her own self through writing.

Yet, how can we, as educators, help young urban women like Chantal begin to understand that not "everything is white and about boys"? How can we help her to explore these broader connections between life, literature, and writing, and hence, perhaps, voice? How can we extend these ideas into real possibilities in the urban classroom?

There are no easy answers to these questions, and I do not search for scapegoats on whom to place "blame." It is a fact that urban school libraries don't often have the resources to fund the purchase of new books; urban teachers often search for and buy quality literature for their students on their own time and out of their own pockets. It is a fact that teachers tell me they just "can't find good women's literature" as they search through many book companies' offerings; too many companies continue to produce and market "girly-girly" literature with little or no regard to the messages they are sending to young women in the classroom.

As educators, teacher educators and researchers, we need to understand, and make problematic, the clear messages that are being sent to our classrooms when literature by and about women is not included. Simply put, a lack of quality women's literature sends a strong message: women are not capable of writing quality books, nor do women have quality experiences about which to write. We need to understand how this message, then, transcends itself directly into girls' expectations of their own writing, as they see no concrete models on which to extend their voices.

In the classroom, then, educators must begin to deal with notions of sex equity and balance through the curriculum. Specifically, they should familiarize themselves with literature which is gender-balanced and with sources which help them locate these gender-balanced materials (See "Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum" prepared by the NCTE Committee on Women in the Profession). Examples and samples of work considered to represent women well must be prominent and suggestions must be offered on how to use this literature in the classroom.

Professional committees, such as the NCTE Committee on Women in the Profession, must keep writing about these issues: getting the word out, as we struggle to get women's literature in. In fact, Toni Cade Bambara, herself, expresses the notion that "struggle" is always a component of her writing, and hence, her way of "getting the word out:"

> "Writing is one of the ways I participate in struggle—one of the ways I help to keep vibrant and resilient that vision has kept the Family going on. Through writing I attempt to celebrate the tradition of resistance, attempt to tap Black potential, and try to join the chorus of

voices that argues that exploitation and misery are neither inevitable nor necessary. Writing is one of the ways I participate in the transformation... Writing is one of the ways I do my work in the world (Bambera, 1980, p. 154)."

There may be something essential and powerful in asking about girls' lives in general and especially among those, like Chantal, whose stories have gone unheard. We must continue to acknowledge the powerful influences these girls' lives and experiences have on their learning and, more specifically, on their choices in reading and their development of voice in their writing. There are important, vibrant works by both contemporary and historical female authors who can offer our young women alternative, important, vigorous voices on which they, then, can reflect on and, perhaps, model their lives, developing both a renewed interest in reading and writing as well as renewed possibility of the power of their own voices.

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After fund-raising, Jessica Gold, Aziz Sajovitz and Jackie Gold from the Rabbi Harry Halpern Day School celebrate their purchase of a bean bag chair for the school library. Photograph is courtesy of Esther Berkowitz.

"Teacher Talk" – Ethnographic Perspectives on Classroom Language

– Michael L. Walker

ABSTRACT

This review of selected ethnographic studies on "teacher talk," the specialized classroom language used by teachers, revealed that some students, particularly those of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, do not respond to teachers' questions, directives and requests for action; the language socialization of these students has given them little exposure to speech commonly used by teachers. Examples of major issues in teacher talk are examined and its impact on classroom instruction and teacher education is discussed.

The importance of "teacher talk," the language that teachers use in the classroom to instruct children and to communicate generally, was recognized more than 60 years ago (See Rosenshine & Furst, 1973 for a discussion). The manner in which teachers talked and the effects of clear communication were the primary topics of study in the initial research. Most of this earlier research consisted of interaction analysis, which has its roots in social psychology, and is characterized by the use of coding instruments for recording teacher and student verbal and nonverbal interaction for later analysis (For reviews of this work see Amidon & Hough, 1967; Chanan & Delamont, 1975; Rosenshine, 1971; Rosenshine & Furst, 1973; Simon & Boyer, 1967, 1970). Other researchers (e.g., Bush, Kennedy & Cruickshank, 1973; Kennedy, Cruickshank, Bush & Myers, 1978; Land, 1981) focused primarily on the issues surrounding the effect of the clarity of teachers' speech (e.g., explaining through written or verbal examples, personalizing, using multiple strategies) and non-verbal communication on various aspects of students' achievement and performance

Classroom instruction and teacher education have benefitted greatly from the research on classroom interaction analysis (e.g., the importance of the teacher's enthusiasm; the teacher's use of multiple levels of questions). There have been benefits as well from the work in teacher clarity (e.g., the use of examples and illustrations in presenting material, explaining concepts and directions in an understandable manner and at an appropriate pace).

More recently, studies have focused on the difficulties that socioeconomic and cultural differences present for classroom discourse. This relatively new area of classroom ethnography rejects experimental or survey research in favor of a methodology that is descriptive, non-causal and non-predictive (See Green & Wallat, 1981). Classroom ethnographers maintain that the traditional methods employed in interaction analysis and teacher clarity studies can not uncover the miscommunication caused by cultural and socioeconomic differences between children and the teacher.

The impact of ethnography on teacher education and classroom instruction is somewhat unclear. Because comprehensive reviews of ethnographic research on teacher talk do not exist, the extent of the impact is difficult to ascertain. The inaccessibility to educators of ethnographic findings may result from several factors: (a) the varied interests and disciplines of the ethnographic researchers; (b) the lack of a central theme or emphasis in the studies; (c) the unique character of each study and the relatively small number of studies; (d) the thorny methodological issue of the non-statistical and non-experimental nature of ethnography (i.e., writers and editors are reluctant to give full credence to findings whose general applicability may be questioned).

A review of teacher talk from the ethnographic research suggests six issues: (1) directives and requests for action that are embedded in questions; (2) the use of control-type questioning; (3) the use of questions whose answers are known to the teacher; (4) questioning about skills and information acquired from a familiarity with books, and questioning that asks for labels and attributes; (5) mismatches between students' and the teacher's language; (6) politeness in

classroom language. While this list does not exhaustive, an ancillary goal of this analysis is to stimulate further ethnographic research on teacher talk and to further explicate these issues and enable us to generalize the findings.

Directives and Requests for Action

In her ethnographic study of a kindergarten class, White (1989) quotes the teacher's remarks to a student: "Joey, could you turn around so I can see your face?" (p. 298). In attempting to bring the class to order so that a social studies lesson can begin, the teacher is issuing a directive to the student to stop talking, face the front of the room and be attentive. Teachers' directives which are embedded in questions assume that students have learned the grammatical features of these utterances, and they understand the rules and procedures for interpreting, responding to or taking appropriate action in response to them.

Heath (1982) studied the children of working-class African Americans and whites in an area of the southeastern United States to determine the reasons for these children's academic difficulties. She concluded that the African American children's learning of language had not prepared them "....to respond to utterances which were interrogative in form, but directive in pragmatic function" (p. 123). When asked, "Why don't you hang your coat up?" these students generally ignored such embedded directives and did not respond until explicitly told, "Hang your coat up" (p. 123).

...traditional methods can not uncover the miscommunication caused by cultural and socioeconomic differences...

Other potentially non-communicative embedded directives for children are questions such as, "Is that where the crayons belong?" and "What are we supposed to be doing?"(Heath, 1978, p.1). If students merely answer "no" to the former question, they may be considered disrespectful. The student must also place the crayons in another location. Likewise, in fulfilling the requirements of the latter embedded request for action, students must understand that they are engaged in an inappropriate action, and in addition to stopping, they must also begin to become engaged in another mutually understood and acceptable activity.

Use of Control-Type Questioning

Goody (1978) found that children may perceive questioning by those in high-status roles, such as teachers, as a means of controlling unwanted behavior or establishing blame for actions; thus youth may resist answering questions in a meaningful way. Because young males perceived questions as controlling in Goody's study of the Gonja of Africa, they were not used as an educative strategy in the training of these young males in the dyeing and weaving trade. Parallels to this phenomenon has been discussed in western societies. Heath (1982) quoted teachers in their remarks about students with whom they had communication difficulties as follows:

> They don't seem to be able to answer even the simplest questions....I would almost think some of them have a hearing problem; it is as though they don't hear me ask a question. I get blank stares to my questions. Yet when I am making statements or telling stories which interest them, they always seem to hear me.... (pp. 107-108).

Although these teachers were reporting problems in communicating with African American children, the difficulties encountered with questioning (i.e., evasive shrugs of the shoulder, meaningless responses, or silence) have striking similarities to the difficulties high-status individuals experience when attempting to question individuals of lower status in Gonja society. Children reared in nonwestern cultures or in subcultures of the United States often have learned to attend very early to the control functions of questions; they may relegate little significance to the information seeking function of interrogatives.

Questions Whose Answers are Known to the Teacher

Ethnographic research is beginning to show that some children do not respond to questions whose answers are known to the teacher (e.g., Heath, 1982). Children in middle-class western cultures are continually asked questions such as, "What color is the man's hat?" and "How many pigeons do you see?" This type of question is used by parents and teachers from the earliest periods of socialization training and education of children. The answers to such questions are often in plain view of the questioner and the respondent, and middle-class children learn to answer this type of query. A total unfamiliarity with this type of information-known questions was evident in children from working-class African American families where answers and ways of answering are actually accepted with no one having the "right answer" (Heath, 1982).

Mehan (1986) studied children's responses to questions, whose answers were known to the teacher. The results indicated that the teacher and student created a student's answer out of a number of preceding propo-

sitions and, in essence, the teachers often unwittingly answered their questions themselves.

Heath (1978) discovered, moreover, that older students with strong peer group ties refused to supply answers to information-known questions because they viewed these answers to be "teacher-owned" information; they withheld answers, therefore, to deny the teacher aid in carrying out classroom aims.

Questions about Skills and Information Acquired from a Familiarity with Books and Questions that Ask for Labels or Attributes

Heath (1982) also employed the ethnographic approach to look at middle-class teachers' use of questioning with their own children. She found that these parents used questioning to teach their children what to attend to when looking at a book. Children were questioned about the location of objects and characters, and the names, categories and sequences of events and ideas; they were asked about pictures and parts of pictures, and they were asked to discuss all such relationships out of context. Compare the way children with very little experience with this type of language learning respond to such questioning (Heath, 1982, p. 105):

Teacher:	What is the story about?
Children:	(silence)
Teacher:	Uh...let's see...Who is it the story talks about?
Children:	(silence)
Teacher:	Who is the main character? Um...what kind of story is it?
Child:	Ain't nobody can talk about things being about theirselves!

This expression of frustration was voiced by the child because the language socialization of these children gave them little or no experience in discussing discrete features of objects and events in isolation from the context; simply stated, responding to questioning that called for labels and attributes of characters, and situations and emotions was foreign to these students. Furthermore, students of this community had little to no experience with questions that required them to show a familiarity with books, nor with the abstract ways of talking about books and the relationships, plot, and inferences of a book's content.

Mismatch Between Students' and Teachers' Language

Shuy (1988) points out that young children have learned to function in conversational adult talk prior to school entry. Teacher talk may present children with a *register* (i.e., a conventionalized way of speaking used in particular environments) with whose rules and structure they may be unfamiliar. Shuy proposes a restructuring of teachers' classroom language that would entail teachers' use of students' styles initially and a gradual introduction of only the most necessary elements of teacher talk.

Heath (1978) stresses that good, clear communication occurs only when there is shared knowledge between teacher and student; both must understand the structure of each other's utterances as well as the norms and behaviors to which they refer. Heath (1978) presents a contrasting use of the same prepositions in teacher talk that points to the origin of a potential mismatch in classroom language:

> Hold the red box up.
> Put the blue circle in the red box.
> Hold the sheet of brown paper over the red box.
>
> Let's put the scissors up now.
> Are we all in line?
> We've got to get over this habit of everyone stopping at the water fountain on the way to lunch.
> Hold your work at your desk until reading is over. (p.17)

Politeness in Classroom Language

"Oh, I like the way Tammy and Barbara are sitting down. They're so ready for first grade....Steven T., would you come up here by me? Bobby, find yourself a place there" (White, 1989, p. 299). These examples of polite language are typical of language the register that teachers use to avoid reprimands, appear non-threatening and develop positive self-concepts in children. Although such language is common in most primary classrooms, White (1989) argues that politeness is an impediment to cognitive growth because it carries over into the teaching of lessons and contains cultural codes that shape and mold curricular practices. White says:

> The polite questions begin as an invitation to participate but result in all knowledge coming to have a 'nice' orientation. The norm of politeness constrains students from exploring their own real reactions to what they are shown and does not encourage them to ask questions or see knowledge as problematic (p.306).

Communication between teachers and non-middle-class children may be affected when the teacher uses "polite" rather than direct ways of speaking to children (Heath, 1982).

Conclusion

Teaching methods and strategies are predicated on the assumption that a mutual understanding of language and its referents exists between teacher and student. The findings of ethnographic research reveal these basic assumptions are not met for some children and youths.

The potential for improvement of communication is great. Educators must begin now to assess the impact of such findings on the use of language in their classrooms.

I do not advocate the use of children's dialect by teachers as a solution to the concerns raised in the ethnographic research on classroom language, nor, do I believe is it sensible for teachers to attempt to adopt speech patterns dictated by the children's language socialization. I suggest, however, that in order to prevent the confounding of communication by elements of teacher talk, Shuy's (1988) general admonition to initially use only those features of teacher talk that are necessary might serve as a guiding principle for teachers to improve classroom communication. For example, teachers could easily eliminate the use of the six confusing constructions pointed out in this article; they should fully explain expressions such as "get over this problem," which could be misinterpreted by some students. Ultimately, of course, teaching and learning will be improved when communication in the classroom is unambiguous and uninhibited.

It is imperative that we examine our classroom language as the number of culturally and socio-economically diverse children increase. Only when we understand what we are communicating to students can we create effective educational strategies and improve their learning.

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Reader Response: It's Okay to Talk in the Classroom!

– *Kenneth Weiss, Dorothy Strickland, Sean Walmsley and Genevieve Bronk*

ABSTRACT

We investigated children's classroom conversations about books, and we found that when given the opportunity, children can and do speak freely and intelligently about the books they read. However, in most classrooms where talk is far more limited and controlled by teachers, we suspect that the same quality of literary discussion is not likely to occur. Our investigation sheds light on some important implications for the classroom.

It is a familiar scene in many elementary school classrooms. The teacher stands at the front of the room, book in hand, ready to pose a question about a passage or story which children have just read. Excitement can be seen on the face of some children, eager to raise their hand and be called upon to deliver the "right" answer. Other children sit in fear that they will be called upon, or worse, that their answer will not be the one expected by the teacher. Cazden (1988) describes this technique as Initiate, Respond, Evaluate (IRE). The teacher controls the topic of talk, controls who participates and evaluates the response. Eeds and Wells (1989) describe this as an inquisition.

In most classrooms, talk is limited and controlled by the teacher. In these classrooms, once the "correct" answer has been stated by a student, teachers tend to move on to the next question or activity, limiting the chance for others to share their opinions or viewpoints.

Purpose

We wanted to know what children would say about the books that they were reading. We were curious about how the children talked about the books in terms of the literary content as well as their interactions with the text.

The Participants:

To explore what children would say about books during the course of informal conversations with an adult, we selected twelve students from grades one, three and five to be part of our study. These children came from classrooms where basal reading series made up a proportionate amount of the curriculum and from classrooms where authentic children's literature was predominantly in use. Children were nominated by their classroom teachers as better or less able readers. We also selected children from three distinct community environments: urban, rural and suburban schools in New Jersey and in upstate New York.

Four trained adult reading professionals were used as the adult partners in the conversations. Each of the adults came from slightly different training in the field, but all were committed to the encouragment of use of children's literature in the classroom. All of the adults were trained in the format to be used during the course of the conversations.

How the Data were Collected:

Children met with an adult six times to talk about the books they were reading. Conversations were held away from the classroom, usually in a quiet area of the school library or in another empty school room. All of

the conversations were audio taped. Children were allowed, and encouraged, to bring their books with them to the conversations. Each conversation lasted approximately 45 minutes. Unlike the structure of the formal classroom setting, children were allowed to talk freely without concern of competition for the getting the correct answer in their conversations. Each conversation started out with the adult offering a simple prompt, such as "Tell me about the book you've been reading."

"There were times when we laughed with the children and times when we shared their sorrow."

What We Found:

In many of the conversations, children exhibited a rich literary background. They talked openly about the books they were reading. They provided insightful statements as to why they liked or disliked a character or plot. They talked about how the author could have changed an event in the story, or how the story was funny, or how the child would never attempt the character's antics in her own house. Many of the children were able to hold their own weight in the conversations with an adult. Other children were struggling with this new found sense of freedom. One could almost imagine some of the children sitting in a class where a basal reader was used, waiting for the next round of questioning, before attempting a response on their own. There were times when we laughed with the children and times when we shared their sorrow.

Overall, we found that the children with whom we conversed had much to say about books. It was especially rewarding to share conversations with children who had been labeled as less able readers, based on their standardized reading test scores. What a revelation to find out that while some of these children might not have mastered all of the skills displayed in a scope and sequence chart, they had knowledge bases about style and illustration, about linking reading to their life experiences, far beyond what a classroom teacher might have expected from them. Given the opportunity to converse about their own reading opened not only our eyes, but their eyes as well. Suddenly they were respected for what they had to say and, in turn, were able to share new ideas with us.

In our investigation of children's conversations about books, we found that children, when given the opportunity, speak freely and intelligently about the books that they are reading. Children from varying language arts curricula, children who were designated as better and less able readers, children from rural, urban, and suburban communities were all capable of carrying on rich literary conversations with adults. Given the opportunity, children were able to make informative and interpretive statements about the content of the books they were reading. Statements were made about plot, character, setting/mood, author/illustrator, style, illustration, and genre. Along with these content statements, children also shared varied levels of meaning and interpretation. Some children were only able to discuss the content in terms of identification or description; other children were able to evaluate, elaborate, interpret, and/or abstract information from the books. Still other children were able to link a book to other reading they had done and to their life experiences.

What the Children Said:

To give the reader a flavor for what happened in the conversations, several excerpts are provided:

R.W., a third grader from a basal classroom in an urban setting, was identified as a less able reader. He identified a book as a nonfiction science book that he was using in conjunction with a science project. He discussed *Heart Disease* and realized that it was not written the same way as a novel might be written. He said, "...there are more facts and illustrations. It is harder to read than a book."

J.W., a fifth grader from a basal classroom in a suburban school, was a better reader. In discussing the style used by Jerry Spinelli, he said, "The author has style. He's very descriptive. What he writes, well some of the things in the book are a little unrealistic, but the story overall could happen if you put aside a few incidents." In discussing another book, *The Gammage Cup* (Kendall, 1959), J.W. talked about author's craft, "I liked the style a lot. Well her style was very descriptive. I got a good picture in my mind."

When A.P., a fifth grader from a suburban basal class who was a less able reader, talked about author and illustrator craft in the design of a comic book, she discussed layout (style): "They should split those up and put, I think they could have put them on that one, and that one up there. Like the big ones, they could put it littler, and the ones that don't have pictures on them, they could put them on those, or put little ones like that on that one."

K.M., a first grader from a literature-based suburban classroom, displayed her knowledge of other books by talking about an author who was studied in her class, "Well, we had an author of the month. I know he's very good and I read that book before."

K.S., a first grader who was a more able reader in a rural basal classroom, shared how she related part of a story she read with a real life experience. She identi-

fied this as her favorite book because she found it to be "funny," an evaluative description. K.S. proceeded to retell the plot of the story and then engaged in the following conversation:

A1:	Have you ever had anything like that happen to you?" [referring to the silly-things which K.S. just recounted from thestory].
K.S.:	No
A1:	No? Would you ever put a pot on your head?
K.S.:	No
A1:	You wouldn't?
K.S.:	I don't want to.
A1:	You don't want to?
K.S.:	My mom would yell at me
A1:	Did her mommy yell at her?
K.S.:	I don't know, I don't think she...
A1:	She didn't? I wonder why?

K.S. was capable of relating what she had read to her life experience. While she thought the idea of putting a pot on the head and getting everything mixed up was amusing, she was able to distinguish between a funny fanciful incident in a story and the reality of doing something like that in her own home.

In talking with J.C., a less able first grade reader from a basal classroom in a rural environment, beginning skills of being able to talk about plot and character in terms of description, evaluation and interpretation were found. In this excerpt, J.C. talked about the kinds of books (genre) that he preferred:

A1:	Okay. Do you like books? What kind of books do you like?
J.C.:	Like (unintelligible) kind of book
A1:	Every kind?
J.C.:	Except these books
A1:	Why don't you like these books here in the library?
J.C.:	I like the book over there, but I don't like these books.
A1:	Okay those books.
J.C.:	All they got is words in it
A1:	Oh and
J.C.:	That shelf all the way down over to here
A1:	Yeah what about those books?
J.C.:	They're picture books
A1:	And you like those kinds....

In a conversation with R.W. a less able basal-oriented reader from a third grade urban classroom, there was talk about a book, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughter* (Steptoe, 1987), which he read. There was an indication that R.W. was able to describe, elaborate and make comparisons between books read. In this excerpt, R.W. showed a good deal of literacy awareness:

A3:	Okay. Let's talk about *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughter* now. Do you remember when Mr. H. read that one to you?
R.W.:	Yeah.
A3:	He read that to you, and did he read it in one day, or over several days?
R.W.:	One day.
A3:	You said you liked *C.L.O.U.D.S.* better than *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughter*, but you did like the book *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughter*, or not really?
R.W.:	I liked it.
A3:	What did you like about it?
R.W.:	Uh, the sister got to be the, there was this mean sister and a kind sister. One of the sisters wanted to be queen I think, and then the bad the mean one tried to like where they was going she tried to go through the night. Then, the father and the her daughter, then they went out looking for her and they found her in the morning and she was there but it was like this snake...he was like prince.
A3:	I was surprised at that.
R.W.:	Yeah, it was this one, and ...first he was a snake and then turned into that.

K.M., a first grader from a suburban community classroom who was a more able reader, had conversations which suggested that she was accustomed to being surrounded by literacy activity. In talking about several books that K.M. read recently, she discussed the books, the authors and, moreover, made connections:

A3:	Okay. What can you tell me about them?
K.M.:	At Camp Custer that's just short for the title.
A3:	Uh huh.
K.M.:	The Cutups are sort of these two guys by James Marshall.
A3:	Yeah.
K.M.:	You ever heard of them?
A3:	Uh hum. Oh sure. I know James Marshall.
K.M.:	An I've never read this kind of book before but now that the author is James Marshall, I've read them. And in Brownies we have these two girls when you put that (unintelligible) and

	um K.R.
A3:	Oh really?
K.M.:	You put them together they're cut ups they're really cut ups.
A3:	I see. Maybe you should start by telling me why you chose [these] books. Okay? What made you pick *Crazy Times at Camp Custer?*
K.M.:	Well I like James Marshall.

J.C., a first grader who was a less able reader from a basal classroom in a rural environment, talked about books he read using a basal litany. He waited for a question, responded and waited for the adult to ask more questions. J.C. talked about a book and digressed to relate the story to a life experience:

A1:	Which one did you like best?
J.C.:	This one.
A1:	The *Snowball War*, okay, let's talk about it. What did, tell me about the book. what you liked about it and all.
J.C.:	They had a snowball fight.
A1:	Pardon?
J.C.:	They had a snowball fight.
A1:	They had a snowball fight, yes, and what did you like about it?
J.C.:	Them two pages.
A1:	Those two pages? Oh, when Rat hit Bunny on the back?
J.C.:	Yes.
A1:	Ah ha. Have you ever done that?
J.C.:	What?
A1:	Do you throw snowballs?
J.C.:	Yes.
A1:	Do you like to throw snowballs?
J.C.:	I throw them at my sister...and once my neighbor, I said do you want to have a snowball fight, he said yes, so I throwed it and I hit him right here.

During the course of other conversations, one of the adults, A3, was able to relate her own reading and life experiences with her own young children to help the conversation move along. In a conversation held with E.T., a less able fifth grader from a literature-based class, A3 talked about a book which E.T. was reading:

A3:	You picked *Six Months to Live*, first because it looked really interesting,what's it about?
E.T.:	It's about this 16 year old girl. She has some kind of leukemia. And she's gonna die. She's gonna die in six months. She found out a couple of days before, she found out the day that she went to the doctors. And she has to go to this children's hospital.
A3:	Is it a true book?
E.T.:	It could be true, but I don't know if it's a true book.
A3:	Have you ever known anybody that had cancer, somebody young that had cancer?
E.T.	No.
A3:	How about anybody, is that interesting to you for any special reason? Do you know people that are sick?
E.T.:	My grandfather died from cancer.
A3:	Sorry to hear that. My mother died from cancer.
E.T.:	She did?
A3:	She died when I was 8. Yeah. Did your grandfather die recently?
E.T.:	He died about three years ago.
A3:	Well maybe it's just not the right time for you to read it yet, you know?
E.T.:	Probably.

What became evident in these conversations was that the children were able to respond to the adult's style. While different agenda may have been set intentionally or unintentionally by the adults, the children responded to the style presented to them. Many of the conversations were rich and informative, although not in identical ways in terms of content or levels of understanding.

Conclusions

The results of our research suggest that children at all three grade levels, as well as from each of the reader ability groups, were able to converse freely about the books they read when in an adult-child dyad. It did not seem to matter whether children were participants in a specific language arts curriculum, whether they were more or less able readers, nor at which grade level they resided. While conversational patterns and trends became apparent, the overall picture was one of children responding to literature in a variety of ways with varying degrees of interpretation. As was the case with research conducted by Hill (1985), Lehr (1988) and Peterson and Eeds (1990), the children in our study felt at ease in discussing the books they read when they were not put into a position of competing for the correct answer.

Implications for Practice:

We have reached the conclusion that children who are exposed to good quality children's literature on a consistent basis come to talk about the books they hear

read to them as well as the books which they read in a rich, literary way. Teachers need to be sensitive to the necessity of not only exposing children to literature but to exposing children to a varied menu of genre. Conversations need to take place with the entire class, with small groups, pairs of children and with individuals in which there is no competition for a right answer. Children need to converse in order to express their opinions, to share their ideas and to learn from the thoughts of their classmates as well as their teachers. Discourse needs to be encouraged and needs to replace rote written exercises in workbooks and on ditto sheets. Teachers, regardless of the mandated curriculum, must learn how to talk not only to, but with, children about books. Time must be put aside to do this on a daily basis.

"...children who are exposed to good quality children's literature... talk about books...in a rich, literary way."

While this sounds ideal, this sort of discourse is taking place in some classrooms today (Hiebert, 1989; Hill, 1985; Hynds, 1990; McGee, 1991; Zarillo, 1989). Proper training in and implementation of these strategies will open classrooms to more student centered discourse and to a sharing of many voices, multiple levels of knowledge and levels of interpretation. Changes like this cannot and do not take place easily nor quickly. However, if teachers begin to implement programs using literature gradually and begin to feel less threatened in giving up total control of the conversations which take place in the classroom, they will find themselves immersed in what Peterson and Eeds (1990) call grand conversations. These conversations will be rewarding to both the teacher and the children. Opportunities may be provided for the sharing of ideas and concepts among students as well as between teacher and students.

Teachers at all grade levels need to provide for a wide range of literacy opportunities for their students. As teachers move toward a literature-based orientation, they must be trained in newer methods of instructional delivery. Print intense classrooms that encourage wide reading and discussion should emerge. A wide array of books, newspapers, magazines and other media are needed. A movement must be made to move away from scope and sequence charts and the concept of reading as a series of isolated subskills. As this change occurs, children will begin to feel more comfortable about self-selecting texts and sharing what they have read with others.

When classroom learning activities become more student-centered, children will feel more empowered to share their ideas in written and oral discourse (Cazden, 1988). The threat of competition for attainment of the one and only correct answer needs to be put aside in favor of valuing everyone's contribution to book discussions.

The language arts curriculum currently plays an important role in determining the content of the reading program. Regardless of what curriculum is mandated, teachers should be empowered to expose their students to as much literature as possible. It is not so much what may be wrong with a basal series but rather what is wrong with the way teachers deliver the instruction. Teachers need to feel able to choose activities which will benefit their students and enrich their students' literacy skills. This, as Hiebert (1989) and Zarillo (1989) advocate, will take time and effort to achieve.

Learning to accept the value of all students' contributions, regardless of ability, is also critical for better classroom discourse about books. Less able readers are able, as revealed in this study, to converse about books and add special dimensions to the discussions. Some of these so called less able readers have unique skills and understanding when it comes to areas dealing with illustration, style and author's craft. We must learn to accept and encourage their contributions to discourse about books.

The findings of our research also suggest that a teacher's style of discourse leadership is important. The teacher influences what takes place in the classroom, whether this is an IRE technique or an open forum for discourse. Teachers need to learn to model ways of responding to literature: modeling of discussion groups; demonstration of student dyads to share a favorite book; modeling ways of individually expressing ideas in terms of written or oral response. Children who had been exposed to the basal approach have sometimes had difficulty adjusting to the new freedoms and responsibilities found in more student-centered discussions. The process of change must be gradual, non-threatening and one of acceptance. The changes will not be easy, but the rewards, as demonstrated by the conversations in this study, will be many. We are further convinced that due to the personalized nature of the conversations, the children in the study were willing to speak freely and without inhibition, not only about the books, but about their lives as well. If this could be translated into the classroom, we believe that the atmosphere for learning and growing would be greatly enhanced.

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The Usefelness of Portfolios in Teacher Education

-- *Rebecca Rich and Sylvia Blake*

ABSTRACT

Portfolios are increasingly used in classroom assessment. In this article two teacher educators describe how they use portfolios for helping prospective teachers develop insights about their personal literacy experiences and approaches to teaching.

In elementary and secondary school classrooms, educators are changing the way they view assessment. Traditionally learning was considered to be best assessed as a summative product. (Jitendra & Kameenui, 1993). Such a perspective does not reward experimentation or creativity, does not align instruction with assessment and, overall, tends not to disregard the kinds of tasks students perform on a daily basis (Tierney, Carter & Desai,1991). Static traditional assessment tends to measure product rather than the process of learning or responsiveness to instruction.

By contrast, the newer view of assessment is a dynamic, authentic perspective which regards assessment as an integral part of instruction, a continuous and on-going collaborative effort between students and teacher. Assessment becomes a channel through which students can be supported in evaluating themselves which, in turn, encourages them to take ownership of their own learning. Authentic assessment is a way of examining processes and attitudes as well as product. The portfolio is an example of this type of assessment.

The portfolio is a collection of expressions of achievement over time. It can portray evidence of learning by examining individual strengths, evaluating progress and setting goals (Wagner, Brock & Agnew, 1994). The process by which students and teachers cooperatively reflect on the collective products is empowering and self-regulating.

> "A portfolio approach to ...assessment has great intuitive appeal: It resonates with our desire to capture and capitalize on the best each student has to offer; it encourages us to use many different ways to evaluate learning; and it has an integrity and validity that no other type of assessment offers" (Valencia, 1990, p. 338).

Increasingly classrooms are moving in the direction of authentic assessment with more and more teachers required to include portfolios in their planning. Yet, many teachers, both pre-service and in-service, have not received adequate information and training in implementation of the portfolio. To better acquaint teachers with the rationale and construction of portfolios, we initiated this type of assessment in several of our teacher preparation programs. In this article we describe our experiences in using portfolio assessment in an undergraduate course, a graduate course and as the final accountability measure in a master's degree program.

Portfolios for Undergraduates in Teacher Education

We began the use of portfolio assessment in one undergraduate section of the methods course, "Elementary Reading and Language Arts" which is required of all pre-service elementary teachers. This course concentrates on theory, assessment and strategies for teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening. The portfolio is a natural outgrowth of a twofold desire: first, to have students experience portfolio as a means of gaining insight into their own learning; second, to ensure our students become familiar with the

implementation of portfolio assessment.

The portfolio fulfills one of the prime objectives of the course which is: "Students will demonstrate their understanding of their own learning through their inclusions in and reflections upon their literacy portfolios." If we had more than one semester for this course, we would provide for personal choice of items to be included in the portfolio. However, given the limitations of time and the fact that for most, if not all, of these students this is their first portfolio experience, we prescribe the items to be included so as to insure that the items demonstrate mastery of course objectives.

...assessment is an integral part of instruction, a continuous and on-going collaborative effort...

The portfolio items include a reaction paper written in response to a journal article; four written observations of language arts instruction in elementary classrooms; an essay written in class in response to a question probing learnings based upon readings and class discussions; a lesson plan presented and evaluated in class as well as submitted in writing; a pre and post test on phonic knowledge.

Each portfolio item is submitted and graded by the instructor over the course of the semester. At the midterm the portfolio to date is submitted to the instructor for review along with a "Reflection Sheet" completed by the student. At semester's end, students submit the completed portfolio along with the "Portfolio Cover Sheet" which contains a self-assessment for each artifact and a peer assessment for the portfolio as a whole. Students are asked to identify their strengths and weaknesses as learners as well as reflect on the value of their portfolio. The same sheet contains an area for instructor comments which are then returned to and discussed with the student.

Portfolios for Graduate Students in Teacher Education

The graduate course in which we use the portfolio is called "Advanced Practicum in the Reading Problems of the Learning Disabled." This course focuses on the reading problems of special education students especially those students with learning disabilities. In addition to weekly seminar discussions, participants tutor youngsters with reading difficulties on a regular basis. A fundamental premise is to effectively teach the language arts to students with special learning needs, a teacher must be familiar with and able to select from a variety of assessment measures, instructional strategies and materials. The intent of this course is twofold: (1) to provide information about and experience with effective methods of diagnosing, monitoring, planning and teaching literacy to students with special learning needs; (2) to facilitate the development of competencies judged to be essential in teachers of special education.

In this course, students submit their portfolios twice for review, once at mid-semester and then again at the end of the term. Each submission is accompanied by a self-assessment. Prior to submission to the instructor, students confer with peers in smallgroups sharing ideas and suggestions.

Since this course is a practicum in the teaching of the language arts, students are asked to reflect on their own literacy abilities and interests. They collate such items as reactions to books they are reading, papers they have written for other courses and any creative writing expressions. They reflect, in writing, upon their collections and share their materials with classmates in small group conferences. One required entry is a "think aloud" assignment performed about two-thirds into the semester. In this assignment students read texts of varying difficulties and analyze strategies they use to construct meaning. The instructor develops her own portfolio along with the students thus modeling expected behaviors.

Ongoing assessments of the child being tutored are included in the portfolio. Initially, course participants are required to construct and administer an informal reading inventory. Then they design informal surveys to further explore strengths and skill and strategy needs. Beyond the initial assessment, the course participants select those on-going observations they deem appropriate to their learners' needs. Based on the results of the initial assessments, observations, and background information, course participants write an individual educational plan for each child to be tutored.

For this course, students are expected to conduct a minimum of twelve tutoring sessions and submit weekly lesson plans to the instructor. For the portfolio, students include a sampling of their plans. Also, they are asked to tape record at least one of their sessions and, based on listening to the tape, submit a tutoring session self-assessment. At the conclusion of the semester, students write an evaluation of their teaching performance. Two-thirds of the course grade is based on the portfolio. All required items for the portfolio are listed in the figure below:

Figure: Tutoring Portfolio

In its final form, each student's portfolio includes all of the following materials:

1. Personal literacy experiences including think-aloud assignment.
2. Informal reading inventory and follow-up surveys.
3. Samples of on-going assessments.
4. Individual Educational Plan.
5. Samples of lesson plans.
6. Taped session and evaluation of session.
7. Teaching performance self-assessment.
8. Portfolio reflection and assessment.

Portfolios As A Final Accountability Measure

The portfolio requirement for the Master's of Professional Studies in Reading and Writing and the Master's in Reading and Special Education offers students an opportunity to self-assess, self-monitor and reflect upon their development as readers, writers, thinkers and teachers. The portfolio requirement allows students to self-select specific items for inclusion. The portfolio is an exciting alternative to the traditional comprehensive exam because it permits accomplishment of the following: modeling the assessment innovations that students are studying in their reading, writing and special education classes; directing students' energies toward learning new strategies and reflecting upon how they may utilize them (as opposed to a concern with finding the "right" answers to test questions); concentrating our students' thinking on discovering which methods best fit their needs and those of their students (as opposed to a focus on replicating "the one best way" to teach); increasing students' confidence in their own abilities to make appropriate professional judgements regarding their own classroom practices; giving students a sense of ownership over their methods; teaching students to assess their own strengths and weaknesses in the classroom (practicing "metapedagogy" if you will).

"...the portfolio...gives teachers a forum...to examine their personal ideas... [and] to become more...reflective about...assessment..."

In designing this portfolio assessment, we were mindful of several issues. First, an effective portfolio structure depends upon careful selection of the portfolio tasks. Second, it is important to establish at the outset the number and variety of tasks required. Third, students must be afforded numerous, defined opportunities to accumulate required materials and an effective holistic marking system to assess their performance.

Portfolios are first evaluated mid-way through the master's program and again at the end of the program as a graduation requirement. These evaluations are conducted by full-time Department of Teacher Education faculty who are familiar with the program and its objectives and have been trained in the holistic marking system to be used in grading the portfolio.

Concluding Remarks

When asked to evaluate the usefulness of the portfolio experience, among the student responses were the following:

- "Portfolio really encourages reflection and metacognition."
- "It allowed me to reflect on the many changes I experienced as a student, a writer, a reader and a prospective teacher."
- "Hopefully, having dredged up these memories has also put me in tune with my students' struggles."
- "The portfolio is a wonderful way to genuinely self-reflect and to develop one's own understandings."

We share our students' belief that the portfolio is a useful tool in teacher education programs. It gives prospective teachers a forum within which to examine their personal ideas about the skills, beliefs and knowledge that a teacher should possess. It also encourages them to become more sensitive to and reflective about the issues surrounding assessment per se. Finally, it is a productive means of assessing both products and processes that have emerged as a result of instruction.

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Jennifer Solomon and John Lovett partner read at The Curtis Estabrook School, P.S. 272, Brooklyn. Photo is courtesy of David Berg.

The late Senator James H. Donovan enthusiastically promoted literacy and parent education in New York State. He served as Chairman of the New York State Senate Committee on Education for many years, and he co-founded Parents as Reading Partners (PARP). The Senator James Donovan Memrial Scholarship is awarded annually to a member of the New York State Reading Association who is currently enrolled in graduate studies in literacy education. Those who might be interested in submitting essays should contact: NYSRA Headquarters in Albany, New York.

Winner of the 1994 Senator James Donovan Memorial Scholarship Award

Envisioning Literacy in a Diverse World: Literacy Development and the Power of Social Independence

– *Dolores Gaunty-Porter*

Literacy is both an individual intellectual achievement and a form of cultural knowledge that enables people to participate in a range of group activities that in some ways involve talking, writing and reading (Forman & Cazden, 1985; Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Wood, 1990). Some students enter school equipped with literacy experiences that work in concert with the school's instructional practices, whereas other students have cultural attitudes, beliefs and practices which frustrate the system. Literacy development is not all-or-nothing. Daily, teachers make multifarious decisions about organization and implementation of curriculum that supports literacy acquisition. The idea of multiple literacies suggests that there are many ways of being and of becoming literate (Froman & Cazden, 1985). Therefore, the never static and ever changing cultural background of the student is just as important as the social structure of the school. Building bridges between diverse home and community experiences and the demands of schooling is not easy.

Literacy is a cognitive and social process. Differences in attitudes and interests amass in a social context (Cooper, Johnson, Johnson & Wilderson, 1980; Friesen & Wieler, 1988; Johnson & Johnson, 1981; Owens & Barnes, 1982; Sharan, 1980; Wilcox, Sbardellati & Nevin, 1987). Traditionally the teacher has been seen as the provider of new information and the student considered passive in the learning process. Through the application of cooperative learning methods, however, the teacher adopts the role of facilitator (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Putnam, 1993). Cooperative learning structures promote a greater motivation to learn, plus higher self-esteem. This is particularly important in a classroom where teachers are working with an increasingly diverse student population. To celebrate that diversity, rather than view it as a hindrance to high educational attainment for all students, the teacher must take full advantage of what students already know and help them acquire additional skills (Friesen & Wieler, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Indeed, the dynamic, interactive and complex nature of the classroom suggests that responsibility for the educational success of all students requires teachers to translate the multidimensional, non-rule based nature of literacy into classroom practices that bridge their teaching and the student's literacy development (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Putnam, 1993;).

The teacher's assignments to students are normally characterized by either individualistic efforts or social interdependence. Too often the role of social interaction in literacy development focuses on teachers' (con-

sidered the experts, who know more about the subject at hand) and students' (generally peers with equivalent expertise) interaction with each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Owens & Barnes, 1982). *Interdependence* is differentiated from dependence and independence. Social *dependence* occurs when the outcomes of Person A are affected by Person B's actions, but the reverse is not true. Social *independence* occurs when individual's outcomes are unaffected by each other's actions. However, two types of social interdependence, competitive and cooperative, exist when each individual's outcomes are affected by the action of others. *Individualistic* efforts describe the absence of social interdependence and dependence. Most experienced classroom teachers will confirm that students desire and seek opportunities to operate jointly and to engage in collaborative classroom activities (Johnson & Johnson,1987; Wood, 1990). Today most classroom instructional designs are organized around activities centered in individualistic efforts and/or competition with few opportunities for collaborative interaction.

The idea of multiple literacies suggests...many ways of being and becoming literate.

Cooperative learning refers to a set of instructional methods by which students work in small, mixed-ability learning groups to accomplish a shared goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Putnam, 1993; Strother, 1990). Teachers aspire to create the inclusive classroom where all students can succeed, regardless of their individual ability levels, backgrounds and learning styles. Cooperative methods are proven effective, research based instructional strategies that encourage every student to achieve at a high level of competence (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Putnam, 1993; Wood, 1990;). Students are held accountable for their own behavior and academic success. At its optimum the properly structured cooperative learning classroom is neither teacher dominated nor student controlled.

Too often cooperative learning is viewed as simply having students work in groups; group work alone does not necessarily promote cooperation or interdependence (Friesen & Wieler, 1988; King, 1993; Sharan, 1980). Traditionally, there have been two types of social organization in the classroom: (1) group instruction (either large or small, with the teacher in control) (2) individualized instruction (i.e., students working alone on assigned tasks with the teacher monitoring and checking their individual progress either at a student's desk or his/her own) (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). The complex nature of the curriculum and the diverse student population suggest that it's time to rethink the traditional educational practices and discard or reshape the old way of "doing business."

Literacy development can flourish through the five basic elements of cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Putnam, 1993; Strother, 1990).

- Positive Interdependence - Students feel that they need each other to complete the task.
- Face-To-Face Interaction - Beneficial educational outcomes result through interaction and verbal exchanges that take place among students
- Individual Accountability - The cooperative learning group is not successful until every member has learned the material or helped with the assignment.
- Interpersonal and Small Group Skills - Students learn that appropriate communication, leadership, trust, decision making and conflict management skills are necessary in order for groups to function effectively.
- Group Processing - Processing means giving students the time and procedures to analyze how well their groups are functioning.

Thus literacy develops through carefully organized, ongoing, relevant social interaction constructed around listening, speaking, reading and writing activities.

To achieve effective cooperative learning processes it usually takes a year or more (Strother, 1990). But the potential value of cooperative methods far outweighs the efforts teachers must make to effectively implement this strategy. Since literacy development is a social process, diverse groups of learners (i.e., students with varying cognitive abilities, developmental and learning disabilities, sensory impairments, and different cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds) can experience higher levels of academic achievement and retention of knowledge and skills through positive interdependence: cooperation (Cooper, Johnson, Johnson & Wilderson, 1980; Johnson & Johnson, 1981; Sharan, 1980; Wilcox, Sbardellati & Nevin, 1987).

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From the Shelves of Hodge-Podge

– Frank Hodge

Editors' note: *Frank Hodge, our good friend and colleague, generously allowed us to cut and paste from several editions of his newsletter,* ***Chapters,*** *for the book recommendations that are presented here.*

MUST READS FOR EVERYONE

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA, compiled by Amy Cohn, illustrated by eleven Caldecott Medal Winners and four Caldecott Honor Books Artists (Scholastic, 1993; $29.95) is a truly astonishing book! This impressive anthology should be in every home and in every classroom in America. It shows us, through stories, songs, poems, legends, and pictures, the history of America through the oral tradition. By reading the volume, the compiler, Amy Cohn hopes we can "begin to understand who we are as a people and what we have accomplished as a nation." This 400-page volume is a read-aloud treasury and will make a wonderful curriculum resource for all grades.

Bruce Coville has done more in the last few years to stimulate readers than anyone has ever done. He turned young readers upside down and inside out when he wrote, **MY TEACHER IS AN ALIEN**. This success was followed by several books which young readers literally snatched from the shop shelves making Bruce Coville a household name! This season's outpouring from this talented writer brings four new books to young readers. **SPACE BRAT 3: THE WRATH OF SQUAT** illustrated by Katherine Coville (Minstrel, 1994, $3.50) is one in the series Bruce writes for early readers. **I LEFT MY SNEAKERS IN DIMENSION X** illustrated by Katherine Coville (Minstrel, 1994, $3.99) is the first of a proposed series for a character named Rod Allbright. Bratty cousin Elspeth arrives at Rod's home the day summer vacation began! What a bummer! Until, of course, they are kidnapped to Dimension X by a monster, Smorkus Flinders (Appropriate Gr. 4+). The third release also represents the first in a proposed series, The *Unicorn Chronicles* with **Book One: INTO THE LAND OF THE UNICORNS** (Scholastic, 1994, $12.95). Here Cara jumps off the church roof and into the adventure of her lifetime. She is now in Luster, the world of the unicorns. Her foe is Dimblethum, the Squium, and her ally Lightfoot. They try to prevent the destruction of all the unicorns. Cara is a great female protagonist here, and readers will adore the fun adventure. And finally in picture book format William Shakespeare's **THE TEMPEST: Retold by Bruce Coville** helps young readers get a handle on this popular play. Bruce Coville is a multi-talented author who is a true friend to young readers. He knows them so well; he writes for them so perfectly. (All levels)

NO DOGS ALLOWED by Howie Schneider (1995, Putnam, $15.95) is a once in a lifetime reading experience. All animal lovers should rally to this one. The Arbuckle family is taking a trip, and after doing the sightseeing, they need a place to stay for the night. But the signs all read, NO DOGS ALLOWED. What will the family do with Mercer, the family pet dog? It takes clever ingenuity and Monsieur D'Puppie is born. What a fun romp! I can hear little ones giggling as they point out why Monsieur is in reality only Mercer. The cast of characters is hilarious and the action is imaginative. The cartoonlike illustrations are very appropriate for the text. This is a book for all animal lovers, expecially those who travel with their pets. (Gr. 2+)

Nancy McArthur has completed the fifth adventure in her wonderfully popular series. **MORE ADVENTURES OF THE PLANT THAT ATE DIRTY SOCKS** (Avon, 1994, $3.50) brings Michael and Norman to the attention of the Natural History Museum where it has been discovered that Fluffy and Stanley are relatives of plants that lived when dinosaurs roamed the earth. The usual fun action which has attracted readers by the droves to the earlier four books in the series. (Gr. 4++)

Cynthia DeFelice has given us all another winner in her hilarious new picturebook, **MULE EGGS**, pictures by Mike Shenon (Orchard, 1994, $15.95). This one literally cries to be red aloud! Patrick was a city slicker who wanted to be a farmer. Neighbor farmers felt he should return to the city. Well, Patrick outslicked the conniving farmer. This would be a great book to use with youngsters around Halloween because of the pumpkins involved in the story. It has nothing to do with Halloween, only pumpkins. The artwork is colorful and in keeping with the tone and mood of DeFelice's story. This book will be appropriate in any number of situations and the lesson here will long be remembered. (All ages).

Bill Wallace is a master of adventure stories for middle grade readers. His latest book, **BLACKWATER SWAMP** (Holiday House, 1994; $14.95), starts with little hints, a touch of mystery here, a bit of intrigue there. The plot unfolds perfectly, sequence building upon sequence until the structure is complete.

In the end he ties all the threads together and the reader is left feeling satisfied, and, perhaps, a little weary from the adventure.

THE BOY AND CLOTH OF DREAMS by Jenny Koralek, illustrated by James Mayhew (Candlewick, 1994, $14.95), is a magnificent piece of art for story and illustration. A little boy sleeps peacefully under his cloth of dreams, a brilliant, beautiful quilt made for him by his grandmother. Grandmother says the quilt will protect him until he is able to "forge his own courage." The quilt is torn and escaping nightmares keep the boy awake at night. Can he find the needed materials to mend the holes? The art in this book is as spectacular as the story. Colorful quilt pieces are stitched with gold frame in the story illustrations. Golden hues from the sun and silver tones from the moon splash brilliantly across the pages. This book is a treat for all senses. (All ages)

Not too long ago Ursula K. LeGuin charmed readers, young and old alike, with her captivating fantasies, **CATWINGS** and **CATWINGS RETURN.** Recently her third volume, **WONDERFUL ALEXANDER AND THE CATWING** illustrated by S.D. Schindler (Orchard Books, 1994, $12.95) arrived. Kitten Alexander Furby, the biggest, strongest and loudest in his family sets off on his own and ends up treed by two barking hounds. "Mew," he said in a thin shaky voice, as the sun rose. "It's me. Help me, please!" Alexander meets the youngest of the Catwing family, the one discovered when the children went to rescue mother from the city. She ultimately identifies herself as Jane and assists Alexander from the tree. Up to this point Jane had not spoken except to say, "Me" or when frightened, "Hate." As Alex and Jane become close friends, she tells him the story of her life before being rescued. This fantastic storyline is guaranteed to keep young readers thoroughly engrossed, provided they have read the first two in the set. I often worry when authors decide to go further with characters from successful books; many of the stories do not live up to what I want that character to do. In this case, however, Ms. LeGuin tells a wonderful and original story, making her Catwing family even more special. (Gr. 2 and up)

Historical Fiction: Making the Past Alive

SEMINOLE DIARY: REMEMBRANCES OF A SLAVE by Dolores Johnson (Macmillan, 1994, $14.95). This story of fleeing slaves who were befriended by the Seminole natives is a remarkable story of two groups of people who develop a very special relationship. Journal entries make the reading very exciting and fast paced. The ending is gripping and effectively handled. The art work is alive with color and the facial expressions on the characters make one think they are about to speak directly to the reader. This is a simple yet effective story to use with units on slavery especially, or Native American units (Grades 3+).

Avi has two paper releases which I feel compelled to mention. **NIGHT JOURNEYS** (1994) and **ENCOUNTER AT EASTON** (1994) are the best pre-Revolution books I have ever read. This past summer a visitor to Ellis Island told me their guide had told them that large numbers of our early immigrants were indentured slaves or servants. These two books introduce two immigrants who were brought to Americafrom England's shores. What stories! What a way to make the history of the early colonial American period come alive for kids. Both are fantastic read alouds. I love these books (Gr. 4+).

CHRISTMAS IN THE BIG HOUSE, CHRISTMAS IN THE QUARTERS by Patricia C. McKissack and Frederick L. McKissack, illustrated by John Thompson (Scholastic, 1994, $15.95) takes readers of today back into the world of the plantation. This book is a valuable resource to help show children what life was like for everyone on the plantation. The artwork is brilliant, realistic and alive. The pictures seem about to spring off the page and into the world of pre-Civil War America. This is a lovely addition to history class. (For all ages)

MR. TUCKET by Gary Paulsen (1994, Delacorte, $14.95) is a fabulous tie in for Western expansion units. This is a wonderful adventure story. His latest entry in the Culpepper series is **PRINCE AMOS** (Dell Yearling, 1994, $3.50), another adventure tale designed for the reluctant male reader. This one makes a nice addition to a successful series.

THE RAID by Clifton Wisler (Puffin, 1994, $3.99) is a story of 14 year old Lige Anders who, with the aid of Zeke Jackson, a former slave, sets out to rescue his younger brother, Charlie, captured in a raid on their Texas frontier settlement. Mr. Wisler has written more than 40 books, many of them for young readers. Give him a try! You'll be glad you did!

JACOB'S RESCUE: A HOLOCAUST STORY by Malka Drucker and Michael Halperin (Dell, 1994; $3.99) joins the legion of WW II stories available for young readers today. Here, Jacob Gutgeld is slipped out of the Warsaw Ghetto and taken home by Alex Roslan, a kind Christian man who agreed to be his new "uncle." The horrors of hiding, the fears of discovery, and the general story of his life make this a page-turner for young readers. Jacob's worry about his family and his worry for his own life and future are extremely well handled by this author team. (Intermediate grades and up)

Great Multicultural Books

BILLY, by Albert French, is an outstanding read for all (1995, Viking, $9.95) and one of the most original pieces of fiction I have encountered in many years. This is the story of ten year old Billy Lee Turner who is convicted of and executed for the murder of a white girl in Banes County, Mississippi in 1937. This story presents American racism at its very worst. The author, Albert French, is a photographer by training and profession. He brings to his prose his perceptive eye for what constitutes an excellent, noteworthy picture. He seems to write in pictures, giving the reader one picture after another. He never delves deeply into any of the characters, main or secondary, but through his word pictures he provides the reader all kinds of insights. This book is truly amazing and I recommend it for all readers who work with children or to readers who are interested in America's journey through Civil Rights.

The meaning of the new world in America can best be explained to children by sharing a book that strives to answer the question, "What is a real American?" **WHO BELONGS HERE?** by Margy Burns Knight, illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien (Tilbury, 1993; $16.95), is a probing book that explores many issues related to intolerance. The story centers on Nary, a young Cambodian boy, who fled the brutality of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge to come to America where his grandmother said "life would be better than heaven." America, however, does not quite turn out to be the heaven that Grandmother promised. It is beset with problems of intolerance which must be faced and addressed. The book serves as a resource about the factions discussed in the text, and the thoughtful organized information can be extremely useful at many grade levels.

DEEP DREAM OF THE RAIN FOREST by Malcome Bosse (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Sunburst Book, 1994, $4.50). Middle grades' study of the rain forest now becomes real as readers meet an Iban tribesman and tribeswoman. This is a great adventure with fabulous lore of forest life. (Gr. 5+).

TONIGHT, BY SEA by Frances Temple (1995, Orchard Books, $15.95) should be required reading for all junior high and senior high students. Once again Frances Temple takes her readers into the guts of Haiti. As she did in her magnificent, **TASTE OF SALT** (Winner of the Jane Addams Children's Award, 1994, Harper Trophy, $3.95), Temple gives young readers a first hand personal glimpse of life in that strife torn land. In her latest book we meet the people of a small village who are building a boat. Their courage and journey will astound the reader.

Companion book to **MOLLY'S PILGRIM** by Barbara Cohen, **MAKE A WISH, MOLLY** is now available. Good addition to multicultural units for (Grade 2 +)

An introduction to life in the barrio can be found in the stories from **AN ISLAND LIKE YOU** by Judith Ortiz (1995, Orchard Books, $15.95). These coming of age stories apply and appeal to all young teens. The barrio environment makes them expecially rich and lifelike. (Grade 7 and up).

Frank Hodge is a widely sought after teacher/consultant and a presenter regarding children's and adolescents' literature. Frank publishes Chapters, his newsletter about recent books, and he hosts several author and book conferences each year in Albany, New York. He may be reached at Hodge-Podge Books, Lark Street, Albany.

WE

played
baseball
every spring.

He taught me
every single thing
I had
to know—

how to bat
to bunt
to throw.

But
since
he went away
that day
the game
will never
be the same.

The bleachers,
the bases,
the catcher's mitt
seem
empty

barren
now

like me

deserted
lonely
a
"Strike-three-
OUT!"

And
I realize
what
losing
is
all
about.

by Lee Bennett Hopkins

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