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ABSTRACT

This handbook presents two core units for a distance education course that provides an introduction to the genre of texts targeted for adolescent/young adult readers. The first core unit in the handbook discusses the teaching of literary aspects of using adolescent/young adult literature. The second core unit addresses alternative approaches to teaching adolescent/young adult literature. The core units in the handbook provide a unit overview, readings related to unit topic, reading examples of adolescent/young adult literature related to unit topic, and an application/research project (which may include library research, Internet research and activity, developing teaching units, interviewing students, and evaluating teaching effectiveness). (RS)

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Education L535:
Teaching Adolescent/Young Adult Literature
Course Handbook II

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Sections:
I. Core Unit 5:
The Teaching of Literary Aspects Using Adolescent/Young Adult Literature

II. Core Unit 6:
Alternative Approaches to Teaching Adolescent/Young Adult Literature

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Core Unit 5
The Teaching of Literary Aspects Using Adolescent/Young Adult Literature

Part of the job description of most language arts teachers includes teaching traditional literary elements such as plot, conflict, and characterization. Young adult literature can be used as a vehicle for helping students become familiar with these elements of fiction while at the same time helping to develop a love of reading.

According to Nilsen and Donnelson, a main goal of teaching literature is to elicit a response from students so they can explore their own lives and improve their logical thinking skills (Nilsen and Donnelson, 1993, p. 49). This should be accomplished while developing a well-grounded appreciation for literature. Nilson and Donnelson discuss seven stages of literary appreciation an individual who loves to read goes through during his or her life. Stages one through three encompass the kindergarten through elementary years and involve developing (stage one) an early recognition of the pleasure and profit from printed words. As the student moves through the primary grades, he or she (stage two) learns to decode words becoming independent with print, and (stage three) is able to lose oneself in books by the late elementary grades. Stages four (finding oneself in books) and stage five (venturing beyond self) include the Jr. and Sr.

high student, and stages six (reading widely) and seven (aesthetic appreciation) are most often associated with college students and adults.

An elaboration of Nilsen and Donnelson's 4th and 5th stages of literary appreciation follows below:

Level	Optimal Age	Stage	Sample reading materials	Sample Actions
4	Jr. High	Finding oneself in books	Realistic fiction Contemporary problem novels Wish-fulfilling stories	Hides novels in textbooks to read during classes Stays up at night reading Uses reading as an escape from social pressures
5	High School	Venturing beyond self	Science fiction Social issues fiction Forbidden materials "Different" stories	Begins buying own books Gets reading suggestions from friends Reads beyond school assignments

For teachers working with most adolescents, a key to developing an appreciation of reading is first selecting young adult novels in which students can identify people like themselves and then begin to venture beyond themselves. This means a focus upon plots, conflicts, and characters which resonate with adolescent experiences. Teaching the literary elements of plot, conflict, and characterization using carefully chose young adult literature, then, provides a useful overlap for developing adolescent appreciation of reading while also developing skilled readers of literature.

Plot and Conflict

ERIC Full Text Provided by ERIC

In *Language Arts- Content and Teaching Strategies*, Tompkins and Hoskisson (1991, pp. 316-318) provide a succinct definition of plot and conflict:

> Plot is the sequence of events involving characters in conflict situations. A story's plot is based on the goals of one or more characters and the processes they go through to attain these goals.

The main characters want to achieve a goal, and other characters or events are introduced to oppose or prevent the main characters from being successful. The story events are put in motion by characters as they attempt to overcome conflict, reach their goals, and solve their problems.

Conflict is the tension or opposition between forces in the plot, and it is introduced to interest readers enough to continue reading the story. Conflict usually takes one of four forms:

1. Conflict between a character and nature
2. Conflict between a character and society
3. Conflict between characters
4. Conflict within a character...

Authors develop plot through the introduction, development, and resolution of conflict. Plot development can be broken into four steps:

1. A problem that introduces conflict is presented at the beginning of the story.
2. Characters face obstacles in attempting to solve the problem.

3. The high point in the action occurs when the problem is about to be solved; this high point separates the middle and end of the story.
4. The problem is solved and obstacles are overcome at the end of the story.

The problem is introduced at the beginning of the story, and the main character is faced with trying to solve it. The problem determines the conflict. After the major problem of a story has been introduced, authors use conflicts to complicate the path to an easy solution. As characters overcome obstacles, logical interactions between characters and outcomes from previous actions often lead to additional conflicts which further thwart the characters. Postponing solutions by introducing new and unresolved conflicts is the core of plot development. Teaching students to recognize these writing techniques in young adult literature can provide them tools for a life-long appreciation of all literature.

A good example of a young adult novel that portrays an interesting plot and conflict sequence is *Stotan* by Chris Crutcher. Basically, the story revolves around four high school swimmers who are the only members of a small town team. Their goal is to win the state finals. Before they achieve this goal, the members overcome many obstacles, together and alone. For example, all of them have to go through Stotan Week, a week of intense training used as preparation for the finals. They are in conflict with nature (physical stamina during workouts) and internal dilemmas (mental toughness to complete the training).

Also, each of them has a personal conflict to struggle through. Nortie is a victim of child abuse and has to face the fact that his father is a cruel man, and to survive, he has to let go of his role as son and move on to a new home. Lionel witnessed his parents and younger sibling die in a boating accident when he was young. He lives alone on top of a bar and is very introverted, for he is mentally hurt from his past. He has to understand these deaths and accept reality. Jeff has a blood disease and is dying. He needs to find peace of mind with his eminent death. Walker has to witness this, make sense of it all, and try to understand the mysteries of fate and the universe. The story is told through Walker's narration as he sees these struggles of his closest friends. He gets advice from his coach, Max, and friends and learns a great deal about the meaning of life.

The high point or climax comes at the final swim meet and the resolution of these multiple conflicts of the various characters comes at the end of the story where all members have resolved conflicts through either overcoming obstacles or accepting obstacles which cannot be overcome. All four steps of plot development discussed earlier have been introduced, developed, and resolved for the various characters. Helping students to recognize the craft of the writer can add a level of understanding to the appreciation they develop for a well-told story

Student activities to enhance understanding of plot and conflict

There are several activities available to teachers to help students develop abilities to recognize how writers create a well-written story. Several of these activities follow below.

A. Have students break into small groups to analyze plot and conflict by participating in a reader's theater for one of the novels. Here, the students can develop a play by selecting and writing dialogue from a novel which highlights conflict within a plot. This will involve identifying and sometimes writing lines of dialogue, putting the lines in a cohesive order, as well as adding narration and stage directions. Students can act out their play of the story in front of the class where a narrator and actors for the characters are included. When finished, the group can discuss how they felt acting out the conflicts each character had to go through and how they would have reacted in similar situations. Class discussion can center around the types of conflict seen in each character. Also, students will be able to see the climax and resolution of the novel.

B. Tape some butcher paper around the perimeter of your classroom. Split your class up into four groups. Have the first group write and draw ideas and pictures on the paper about the first step in plot development taken from the definition above (problem is introduced). The second group should cover the second point and so on. After this is done, the class can discuss the reasons for their choices and agree or disagree with each other. Alternative discussion strategies involve asking students to talk about their own experiences in similar situations and how they felt and what they did to get resolve conflict.

C. Have groups create their own newspaper based upon a novel. The newspaper can include general interest articles over events in the book that incorporate the 5 W's and 1 H (who, what where why, when, and how). The stories can be put in a logical order that follows the events of the plot. Another section of the newspaper can include the "conflict page" where reporters write about the four types of character conflicts. They can use this as a gossip page or Ann Landers forum where they give advice to the characters who "write in" about their conflicts and problems. You can devise different sections for your newspaper and have the group appoint reporters, editors, layout people, etc.

D. The above activity could also be a lead-in into writing an organized essay with supporting points and examples backing up the main thesis of the four steps of plot development and different types of conflict. Students might be assigned to write two separate essays, one on plot and the other on conflict.

E. Have the students create a Jeopardy-type game in which they create categories dealing with events and conflicts in the book. Of course, the student(s) creating the game get to put on their own production for the class.

Characterization

An author of fiction develops a character by showing:

1. how the character acts and speaks,
2. a physical description of the character,
3. the personality of the character in the sense of ideas or thoughts (psychological),
4. how other characters react to and think about the character, and
5. how the writer feels about the character by directly commenting on the character.

The first four methods are done *indirectly* requiring the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about the nature of the characters in a particular piece of literature. The fifth method is done *directly* through the author directly stating his or her own ideas about the character. Sometimes interesting tensions can be created by having a story narrator directly state opinions about a character which come into conflict with information about the character provided through other means.

Characters can also be *static* or *dynamic*. Static characters remain the same throughout the story and do not change. Dynamic characters change and realize things about life and how they relate to it and the world.

Crutcher's's *Stotan* again provides multiple examples for character development. For example, in a monologue by Walker at the end of the book, we see points 1,3, and 4 as well as understanding that Walker is a dynamic character because he has changed and learned something about life. Point 2 (physical description) has been given throughout the book through repeated descriptions of Walker as a swimmer in good shape.

Walker: *I think if I ever make it to adulthood, and if I decide to turn back and help someone grow up, either as a parent or a teacher or a coach, I'm going to spend most of my time dispelling myths, clearing up unreal expectations. For instance, we're brought up to think that the good guys are rewarded and the bad guys are punished; but upon close scrutiny, that assumption vanishes into thin air. Nortie certainly never did anything to warrant the horror of his life and Jeff sure isn't one of the bad guys. Look what he gets to give up.*

And who are the bad guys anyway? Are they guys like my brother who are so damaged and weak they prey on people when they're down, or are they guys like O'Brian who are damaged and strong and prey on anyone who gets in their way? And what about guys like Norties dad? Is it his fault that ten generations of men before him beat the hell out of their families, and he's too mean and dumb to stop it?...

...All questions; no answers...

...I think my job in this life is to be an observer. I'm never going to be one of those guys out their on the tip of the arrow of time, presenting new ideas or inventing ways to get more information on a smaller chip. But I think I'll learn to see pretty well. I think I'll know how things work-understand simple cause and effect-and, with any luck, be able to pass that on. And that's not such a bad thing. I'll be a Stotan observer: look for the ways to get from one to the other of those glorious moments when all the emotional stops are pulled, when you're just so goddamn glad to be breathing air...(Stotan, pp. 181-183).

Student activities to enhance understanding of characterization

A. Students can break into groups of 4-5 and write a five-page story about one of the characters in an assigned novel. Since they have already analyzed the character, the story should incorporate a plot line that is indicative of the character and his or her reactions to various situations. To back up the story, the group can create a visual presentation of what they have written. They can create collages, picture books, comic books, etc. A successful visual is usually a movie about the story. The group can borrow a video camera from home or the school and direct their own portrayal of the character.

B. Students can write journals or response papers about their reactions to certain characters in the story. They can agree or disagree with the actions of the character and write about what they would have done in similar situations. Other movies, songs, books, television programs, etc. that have characters who can be paralleled or contrasted with the characters being discussed can be added to their papers. They can break into pairs and discuss their papers with one another or with the class as a whole. Some of the questions you can ask them to inspire thought about characters are:

1. Describe one character's problem or a choice to be made. What advice do you have for the character?

2. Explain why you think a character is acting as he or she is.

3. Examine the values of a character you like/dislike

4. What real-life persons or events are you reminded of by characters or events in the story?

C. Students can develop a diary for one of the characters in the book. They can take on the personality of the character and write about present and future reactions to main events in the book. Also, they should use the voice and style of writing of the character.

D. Students can create word games about a character chosen from the book. These can include scrambled words, crossword puzzles, find-a-word, etc.

After they are finished, the can distribute them to the class to work on as a review for the test.

E. Students can choose a character to interview. Here, they make up a list of questions for a character and write the response they think the character would use in answering. They can write this out on paper in interview format and read or act it out in class on their own program or talk show.

Selected Readings for Further Guidance

The following list of books provide the teacher with excellent ideas on how to teach some of the traditional elements of literature.

Beach, Richard and James Marshall (1991). *Teaching literature in the secondary school*, Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Bommer, Randy (1995). *Time for meaning: Crafting literate lives in middle & high school*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bushman, John and Kay Parks Bushman (1994). *Teaching English Creatively.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Clark, Thomas, Ed. (1994). *The writers digest guide to good writing*. Cincinnati, OH: F &W Publications.

Van Vliet, Lucille (1992). *Approaches to literature through genre*. Phoenix: Oryx Press.

II. Suggested Young Adult readings with good examples of plot and conflict

Avi. Nothing But the Truth. New York: Avon Books, 1991. 212 pp.
This satire shows what could happen in a high school when communication breaks down, politics take over, and the truth of the matter is lost. The story focuses on freshman Phillip Malloy and his "participation"as pawn in the game of

censorship and freedom of speech in the arena of school board members, administrators, parents, and teachers.

Blume, Judy. Forever. New York: Pocket Books, 1975. 220 pp.
Senior High student, Katherine is having her first experience of love with sex. Her boyfriend, Michael, is also having to go through trials of his own to make the relationship successful. Blume tells the story in realistic dialogue as the two main characters try to make sense of the new world created by their love. The main questions is " How do you make love last?"

Conrad, Pam. Prairie Songs. New York: Harper and Row, 1985. 167 pp.
This book tells of the hardships of life on the Nebraska prairie for American settlers in the mid 1800's. The story is told through the narration of Louisa, a thirteen year old girl, who tells a vibrant story of love, loss, coming of age, and adventure where life is not always as it seems. Conrad captures the spirit of the age with accurate detail of the landscape and the people living there.

Crutcher, Chris. Running Loose. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1983. 190 pp.
High-school senior, Louie Banks, has a hard time in life during his last semester. He quit the football team because of his experience with unfair sportsmanship and now has to deal with a world that has turned upside down. Learning to cope in the small town of Trout, Idaho is not easy, but with the help of friends, Louie sees the truths and unfairness in life in a world where many hurdles and potholes await his running stride.

Crutcher, Chris. Chinese Handcuffs. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1989. 202 pp.
High school senior, Dillon Hemingway is forced to deal with his older brother's suicide, his best friend, Jenny's, problems, and the devastation of his family unit How will he cope and what will he do to get to the truth? Crutcher tells a riveting tale of teen angst and loss of innocence.

Davis, Jenny. Sex Education. New York: Orchard Books, 1988. 150 pp.
Mrs. Fulton's ninth-grade biology class has a new assignment dealing with sex. High school sweethearts, David and Livvie team up to complete the project by studying and learning about the Parkers, a couple who is new to the area. While doing the project, David and Livvie discover the realistic world of sex and the consequences for being irresponsible.

O'Brien Robert C. Z for Zachariah. New York: Atheneum, 1974. 249 pp.
Ann Burden, a 16 year old girl, is the last person on earth after a nuclear holocaust has destroyed the world. After fending for herself, she discovers that there is someone else still alive and coming to her town. Will this mysterious man be a friend or foe? This adventurous plot shows the progression and destruction of relationships, man's quest for dominance in science, and the what could eventually happen to the world's environment.

Service, Pamela F. Under Alien Stars. New York: Atheneum, 1990. 214 pp.
It's the future and Earth has been ruled by the Tsorians for ten years. Jason, the son of an Earth Resister, hates being under their command and helps in the plot to kidnap the Tsorian commander, Rogav Jy. Because of this, Earth is attacked by an outside force that takes advantage of the confusion on Earth with the Tsorians. Now, Jason is forced to work with Aryl, a Tsorian girl and daughter of the commander, to help save the world. Will he be able to put aside his prejudices for his hated enemy to help save Earth?

Sleator, William. Interstellar Pig. New York: Bantam, 1984. 196 pp.
Barney, a sixteen-year-old, has discovered a weird board game called Interstellar Pig in a haunted cottage he is staying at with his parents during summer vacation. He gets addicted to the game that possesses magical powers where rival aliens are battling to control the galaxy. At first Barney thinks this is a make-believe game but soon realizes that the destiny of the Earth is in peril. What will he do?

Taylor, Mildred D. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Bantam, 1976. 210 pp.
It's the early 30's in small-town Mississippi and life is hard for the Logan family who are black. Young Cassie Logan and her family learn about and experience prejudice and life's hardships at the hands of ignorance. The book chronicles their struggle for freedom and survival in a moving story that one will never forget.

B. Books that have good examples of characters

Cormier, Robert. The Chocolate War. New York: Dell Publishing, 1974. 191 pp.
High school freshman, Jerry Renault, learns about social hierarchies and corruption at Trinity High School. Whether it is the Vigil's leader, Archie's, "assignments" or Brother Leon's crusade to make money selling boxes of chocolate at any expense, Jerry has to deal with it. Does he "dare disturb the universe" or keep silent when combating the evils that surround him? Cormier's writing style is full of action and suspense and will keep the reader going until he or she is finished.

Hinton, S.E.. Rumble Fish. New York: Dell Publishing, 1975. 122 pp.
Rusty-James is trying to make sense of his life as a child of the streets who wants to be tough like as older brother, The Motorcycle Boy. Gang fighting, skipping school, drinking, and playing pool are all part of Rusty-Jame's existence. How long can he survive in a world where his less-than-average intelligence and safety of his fleeting brother are all he has to protect him?

Hobbs, Will. Beardance. New York: Atheneum, 1993. 197pp.
Cloyd wants to help ease his mind after feeling responsible for the death of a male grizzly bear the year before. He heads off to the Colorado mountains after hearing of grizzlies being spotted there. His adventure includes battles with the elements and other people threatening him and the bears.

Jenkins, Lyll Becerra de. Celebrating the Hero. New York: Dutton/lodestar Books, 1993. 179 pp.
Camilla Draper has to come to terms with her mother's death. To do this, she has to return to Columbia, the place where her mother was born. Being an American of Hispanic descent, she does not know much about her culture. Her journey to her mother's homeland, opens her mind to the reality of her culture's traditions and political atmosphere.

Simon, Neil. Lost in Yonkers. New York: Penguin, 1991. 120 pp.
Two young brothers, Arty and Jay, are forced to live with their cold-hearted German grandma due to the death of their mother and father's need to find work in another part of the country. They learn about survival and love for family in the toughest of times as they meet and get to know their two aunts and one uncle. Simon's play is very personal and moving.

Ure, Jean. Plague. New York: Puffin Books, 1991. 218 pp.
High school senior, Fran, returns home after a camping trip to see her city in the throws of a plague. Most of the city, as well as her parents, are dead. Medical personnel are everywhere as no one knows how or why this devastation started. Fran's best friend, Harriet, is still alive but close to being insane. With no safety in sight, Fran must conjure up their strength for survival deep within herself and fight for the chance to exist. Will she be able to do it?

Assignment Options: Core Unit 5

1. Develop 5-7 pages of student materials to support the activities (pp. 5-6 and pp. 8-9) for developing understandings of plot, conflict, and character. These materials should include starter examples to demonstrate to students how a play, newspaper, new story, diary, or game can be developed from an adolescent novel. The examples you develop should come from two different novels.

2. Create five new techniques for teaching each literary device. If you use some of these techniques with students and describe the results and modifications you will make, you may limit your reading to a single novel for this core unit. If you don't try out some of the teaching techniques, you must read two novels.

3. Interview 3-5 literature teachers to find out how they teach each literary device. Describe the ideas you have gathered and then develop student materials to apply at least one of these ideas to two novels from reading lists for this unit.

4. Search the Internet for teaching ideas related to teaching the elements of fiction. Provide descriptions of ideas you've gathered (with http:\\ addresses). Develop student materials to support the application of some of these ideas to adolescent novels read for this unit.

Core Unit 6
Alternative Approaches to Teaching Adolescent/Young Adult Literature

The previous core unit addressed using young adult literature as a vehicle to teach traditional elements of literary analysis such as plot, conflict, methods of characterization, etc. Though these methods are used in many English classrooms, they are not the only methods for teaching literature. In recent years, several new approaches have been recommended by scholars and successfully implemented by classroom teachers. These include:

1) grouping novels into thematic units which allow comparison of themes across novels,
2) creating interdisciplinary units which link literature to the study of history, science or the arts,
3) using more learner-centered teaching approaches which begin with the reader's response to literature instead of beginning with an analysis of the text, and
4) drawing upon art, music, drama, and physical activity in the teaching of young adult literature as a means for addressing students' multiple intelligences and ways of learning.

Thematic and Interdisciplinary Units: There are dozens of publications available in journals and the ERIC system to help teachers organize thematic and interdisciplinary units. For example, Stevens (1993) has developed a framework for planning thematic units across such universal themes as making decisions, facing challenges and working together. In another article (attached to this core unit), Burk (1996) describes thematic units on such themes as "rivers," "crossings," and "journeys." Many of these thematic units lend themselves to becoming interdisciplinary units which examine history, geology, geography, and economics concurrently with the reading of young adult literature. Burk concludes his article half seriously and half whimiscally suggesting a thematic unit on shopping malls using such titles as Richard Peck's *Secrets of the Shopping Mall* and *Love and Death at the Mall.*

An annotated listing of journal articles and ERIC documents with ideas for developing thematic and interdisciplinary units follows below. One of the assignment options for this core unit will be to draw upon the Burk reading and some of the readings below to develop lesson outlines and student materials for a thematic unit or an interdisciplinary unit. Teaching ideas in the articles below range from multiple readings on such traditional adolescent themes as family relationships, coming of age, and making decisions to organized bibliographies and lesson plans on topics such as travel, war, the holocaust, science and technology, and viewing history from the persepective of an adolescent time-traveler.

AN: ED383618
AU: Barton,-Keith-C.; Smith,-Lynne-A.
TI: Historical Fiction in the Middle Grades.
PY: 1994
NT: 23 p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies (Phoenix, AZ, November 1994).
AB: This research presents finding from a preliminary study of the use of historical fiction in the middle grades. Focusing on historical fiction related to World War II and the Holocaust, the researchers sought to examine the factors that influenced teachers' decisions to implement historical fiction in their classrooms and students' responses to its use. Through observation in classrooms, in-depth interviews of the two teacher participants, and interviews of 14 student participants, the data gathered suggests that greater use of historical fiction in the middle grades is warranted, but that such use depends on more extensive and more flexible access to materials and continued teacher training in the use of groups. Problems of scheduling, lack of available materials, reading levels of materials, and discomfort in allowing students to work in literature response groups are cited. Suggestions for classroom materials are included. (EH)

AN: EJ507473
AU: Bolding,-Robert-A.; And-Others
TI: Enhancing Geographic Knowledge through Literature.
PY: 1994
JN: Southern-Social-Studies-Journal; v20 n1 p13-41 Fall 1994
AB: Asserts that, although international understanding is essential for survival, most high school students do not acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for competing in the global community. Finds that geographic knowledge can be integrated into literature courses and includes exemplary lesson plans.

(CFR)

AN: ED343124
AU: Brewbaker,-James-M.
TI: Challenging the Future through Young Adult Literature, Fiction Writing and Local History.
PY: 1991
NT: 56 p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (81st, Seattle, WA, November 22-27, 1991).
AB: Columbus (Georgia) College's Challenge Squared program consists of three 2-week enrichment day camps for gifted students in grades 5 through 10. In past years, students have worked with an artist to create local history murals and have written and produced video plays in cooperation with a media specialist. Most recently, students were involved in the reading and writing of time-warp fiction based on events from local history. In the second week of the program, students wrote the episodic novel, "Crisis at the Clock Tower," which took its name from a tower built on campus in 1991 and which contains a time capsule scheduled to be opened in the year 2058 in conjunction with the institution's centennial. The time-travel theme was reinforced with day trips to areas of regional historical interest. After students read one of four time-warp novels, local history experts from the college faculty visited the class. Next, the students devoted themselves to research into Columbus history. A computer-based writing lab simplified the writing process. Challenge Squared's use of time travel opened the eyes of talented eighth and ninth grade students to the past and to a future which they may help to shape and enabled them to think of time in novel ways. In his book, "A Brief History of Time" (1988) Stephen Hawking asked: Where does the difference between past and future come from? Why do we remember the past but not the future? Through time-warp fiction, today's students may be challenged with such questions. In time, they may find the answers. (The student-composed novel, "Crisis at the Clock Tower," is attached.) (SG)

AN: EJ472962
AU: Chelton,-Mary-K.
TI: Books for the Beast.
PY: 1993
JN: Voice-of-Youth-Advocates; v16 n3 p141-44,147 Aug 1993
AB: Describes the organization, planning, and evaluation design of a workshop involving peer-led thematic discussion groups on books for young adults, a notable author as a speaker, and a panel on promoting young adult books. A list of the theme groups and titles used is provided. (EAM)

AN: ED384916
AU: Christenbury,-Leila, Ed.; And-Others
TI: Books for You: An Annotated Booklist for Senior High Students. 1995 Edition. NCTE Bibliography Series.
CS: National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill.
PY: 1995
AV: National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096 (Stock No. 03677-3050: $15.95 members, $21.95 nonmembers).
NT: 448 p.; For the 11th edition, see ED 350 614. Foreword by Jerry Spinelli.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC18 Plus Postage.
AB: Designed to help teachers, students, and parents identify engaging and insightful books for young adults, this book presents annotations of over 1,000 books published between 1990 and 1994. The book begins with a foreword by award-winning author Jerry Spinelli that tells students why they should read. Annotations in the book are grouped by subject into 36 thematic chapters, including: "Adventure and Survival"; "Dating and Sexual Awareness"; "Family Relationships"; "Inspiration and Religion"; "Science and Technology"; "Humor and Satire"; "Poetry"; "Short Stories"; and "War and War Stories." More than 150 titles with a multicultural focus are highlighted in one of the chapters entitled "Multicultural Themes." Annotations in the book provide full bibliographic information, a concise summary, and a notation about any

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awards the book has won. Appendixes present lists of award-winning works of poetry, fiction drama, and nonfiction for the years 1989 through 1995; and a list of organizations that produce their own lists of notable books for young readers. Author, subject, and title indexes are attached. (RS)

AN: ED350601
AU: Imdieke,-Sandra; Anderson-Madaus,-Lynn
TI: Characters in Time Travel Fiction as Historical Guides.
PY: [1992]
NT: 9 p.
AB: Based on the idea that the literary genre of historical time travel fiction can provide the reader/student with a frame of reference for studying history, this paper presents a model for thematic integration of the curriculum which uses a work of literature as its central focus. According to the paper, this thematic approach to the content areas can serve as a springboard for inquiry, as a basis for writing assignments, and as a representation of the integration of the fiction with history texts, other non-fiction works, and other forms of visual media. The model described in the paper outlines classroom and research activities to augment concepts related to events in the novel "The Root Cellar" by Janet Lunn--activities in language, social studies, science, math, and art and music. The paper also contains a 22-item annotated bibliography of historical fiction time travel literature. (NKA)

AN: ED364494
AU: Kennemer,-Phyllis-K.
TI: Using Literature To Teach Middle Grades about War.
PY: 1993
AV: ORYX Press, 4041 North Central at Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397.
NT: 209 p.; For a related document, see SO 023 676.
PR: Document Not Available from EDRS.
AB: This document suggests ways of using children's literature to enrich the study of military history. The book is divided into six literature units that list and describe appropriate books, learning activities, and resources for teaching about specific wars. Studying historical periods through literature offers an invigorating, interesting way to become immersed in a past era and gain a substantial understanding of the people involved, their conditions, and their decisions. The thematic literature units provide a basis for meaningful learning experiences, encourage students to share the responsibility for their own learning, enhance the quality of individual student participation, and increase opportunities for using high level thinking processes. The book includes literature units on the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War. The document is intended to provide teachers and school librarians with a basic framework for designing thematic units. The resources and units are recommended for use with students in grades six through eight, although the units could be adapted for higher or lower grade levels. Basic components of all the units are (1) a selected chronology, (2) recommended books including picture books, factual books, biographies, and fiction books, (3) sample lesson plans, (4) suggested questions, (5) suggested activities, and (6) glossaries. Guidelines for group discussions are included and discussed. (DK)

AN: ED378590
AU: Levesque,-Bonnie; And-Others
TI: The Huck Finn Experience.
CS: Maine Center for Educational Services.
PY: [1993]
NT: 6 p.; A product of Project SEED.
AB: This paper describes "The Huck Finn Experience," a high motivation interdisciplinary unit that takes students on a 6-week journey back to the life and times of Mark Twain through the fictional character of Huckleberry Finn. The unit described in the paper was design The paper notes involved in the unit came away ed for eighth-grade students but could be easily adapted to be successful with grades 7 through 12,

and takes into consideration the many different ability levels of students. The paper presents an outline of the 6-week unit and a list of resources needed for the unit. Activities in the unit described in the paper include writing newspapers, linking up with pen pals in Missouri, exploring a cemetery, climbing a mountain, cooking a Southern meal, learning blue printing and raft construction, and studying buoyancy and density. feeling positive about their accomplishments and their contributions to the project. (RS)

AN: EJ448905
AU: Mazur,-F.-E.
TI: Writing Motivationally Supportive Text for Hypermedia Programs: Strengthening a Weak Link.
PY: 1992
JN: Journal-of-Educational-Multimedia-and-Hypermedia; v1 n3 p301-08 1992
AB: Discussion of supportive text in hypermedia programs focuses on the motivational aspects of supportive text for young users. An example using the historical novel "Johnny Tremain," by Esther Forbes, is used to show how motivationally supportive text can encourage associative learning and show cross-disciplinary linkages of ideas and events. (five references) (LRW)

AN: EJ507486
AU: Smith,-J.-Lea; Johnson,-Holly-A.
TI: Dreaming of America: Weaving Literature into Middle-School Social Studies.
PY: 1995
JN: Social-Studies; v86 n2 p60-68 Mar-Apr 1995
AB: Asserts that the use of multiethnic adolescent literature can help teachers create meaningful learning opportunities to explore diverse perspectives. Recommends the use of thematic literature studies and provides a framework model. Includes four multidisciplinary cognitive maps and a bibliography. (CFR)

AN: ED365951
AU: Stevens,-Alba-D.
TI: Learning for Life through Universal Themes. Literacy Improvement Series for Elementary Educators.
CS: Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, OR. Literacy, Language, and Communication Program.
PY: 1993
AV: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Marketing Dept., 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204 ($3.65).
NT: 28 p.; For the previous three booklets in the series, see ED 354 484-486.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
AB: As the integration of language and literature across the curriculum builds, educators have come to believe worthwhile literature is embedded in universal themes (such as making decisions, facing challenges, and working together) that are common to the human condition. These themes transcend subject areas by providing natural frameworks for unifying the curriculum. Universal themes are powerful catalysts for lifelong learning because they address what is at the core of humanity. A class of fourth graders demonstrated that the active involvement, collaboration, and personal investment in their own learning arising out of a discussion of the universal theme of perseverance is possible for students of all ages and abilities. Six traits are characteristic of universal themes and are helpful in considering possible themes for study: concept, catalyst, connection, content, context, and curriculum. An important criterion for developing meaningful thematic instruction is to select themes that go beyond narrow topics. Selecting appropriate universal themes to develop involves: considering concepts children need to learn; finding natural connections to chose a theme; and searching for universal themes embedded in literature already being used. Planning a universal theme unit is a developmental process similar to the reading and writing process and comprises three stages: discovering and "themestorming"; making decisions about major learning processes to incorporate; and experiencing the process of teaching and learning. (RS)

Reader Response Approaches: Literary scholarship during the past two decades has recognized that the literary experience is what Louise Rosenblatt (1985) describes as a transaction between the print and the experience of the reader. Each person, therefore creates a slightly different version of a reading in his or her head. Indeed, reading a novel twice at different ages can be two similar yet different experiences. This concept of transaction as well as research on the importance of prior knowledge in reading comprehension has led to a good deal of attention toward examining the reader half of the reading transaction. What do readers bring to the page? How do readers initially react to what they have read? How can readers focus attention on making the transaction between the printed page and their own experiences? Student response journals, recollections of experiences similar to those in novels, and discussions focusing upon personal emotional reactions to readings have all been used as means to elicit reader responses to literature.

In "Reader-Response Theory and the English Curriculum," Probst (1994) offers a practical discussion about the importance of developing students as readers and writers who continue to enjoy literature into adulthood. He proposes that students must "respond to it and think about it in ways that enrich their emotional and intellectual lives" (37). Probst discusses reader response goals and principles for a literature/writing program and presents example questions that can help involve students with their texts. Bleeker and Bleeker (1996) provide more concrete suggestions of how to use the writing of poetry as a means for eliciting student responses to young adult fiction. The articles (which are included with this packet) can serve as frameworks and models for developing a reader-response approach to teaching nearly any selection of young adult novels. One of the assignment options for this core unit will be to make a selection of 2-3 young adult novels and plan a teaching unit which employs a reader-response approach.

Multiple Ways of Knowing: Recent research suggests that linguisticl intelligence (such as that possessed in abundance by most English teachers) is only one sort of intelligence which we all possess to one degree or another. Most teachers may find that many of their students draw upon other sorts of intelligence (i.e. mathematical/logical, musical, spacial, bodily/kinesthetic, etc) as their strong suit in making sense of the world. Many scholars argue that to the extent that a teacher can integrate with the study of literature activities which provide use of more than one sort of intelligence or way of understanding, we increase the chances for all of our students to learn.

Two articles attached to this packet deal with how to implement such ideas when teaching literature. In "Multiple Intelligences in the English Class: An Overview" Smagorinsky (1995) reviews Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and suggests ways in which this theory can enhance the English curriculum and involve a greater variety of student talents. He also offers some reflective questions about the challenges that assessment may create when one teaches using these approaches. Leland and Harste (1995) provide case study examples of younger learners using multiple ways of knowing to help make sense of information they read. One of the assignment options for this core unit will involve drawing upon ideas from these two readings to develop activites and approaches which allow for multiple ways of knowing.

Articles attached to Unit

Bleeker, Gerrit and Bleeker, Barbara. (1996). Responding to young adult fiction through writing poetry. *ALAN Review*, Spring, 1996

Burk, David. (1996). Literature in an interdisciplinary unit. *ALAN Review*,Winter, 1996.

Leland, Christine H. and Jerome C. Harste. (1994) Multiple ways of knowing: Curriculum in a new key. *Language Arts*, 71, pp. 337-345

Probst, Robert E. (1994) Reader-Response theory and the English Curriculum. *English Journal,* 83, pp. 37-44

Smagorinsky, Peter. (1995) Multiple intelligences in the English Class: An overview. *English Journal,* 84, pp.19-26

Assignment Options

1. Draw upon the Burk reading (attached to this unit) and some of the ERIC readings listed earlier to develop lesson outlines and student materials for a thematic unit or an interdisciplinary unit. This should involve the use of 2-3 novels and perhaps some additional readings from newspapers, encyclopedias, magazines, and other textbooks.

2. Use the Probst article and the Bleeker & Bleeker article (which are included with this packet) as frameworks and models for developing a reader-response approach to teaching selections from 2-3 young adult novels which you have not used in previous assignments.

3. Plan a 3-week novel unit (incorporating 2-3 novels) that incorporates ideas from this module (i.e. thematic, reader response, multiple ways of knowing). Include suggestions and possibly materials drawn from the Internet to enrich your teaching plan.

4. Play the role of a student. Find a partner and choose one of the novels from this unit. (A partner could be an e-mail partner taking this class) Write a small response journal using the questions from the "Questions for Reading and Writing" section of the Probst article. Responses should be several sentences minimum. As a final entry, discuss your impressions of this type of assignment for middle school or high school students. Submit completed response journal to the instructor.

5. Access the internet to find 4 websites that provide additional information about other methods for teaching literature and/or lesson plans that other teachers may have used. Exchange websites with 1 partner. Check partner's websites and offer him/her feedback about the ease of access, usefulness of material, and whether or not you would recommend its use to someone else. Make copies of your findings and communications to turn in for the assignment.

Literature in an Interdisciplinary Unit

David S. Burk

The day of our River Fair we were flooded. As seventh and eighth graders scurried around filling miniature locks with water, setting up displays of Great Miami River flora, and carrying model riverboats and bridges, water began rising up through the multipurpose room drain -- and kept rising. What could we do? We moved the whole fair, some sixty or more exhibits, to another part of the building. While we were moving, the "river talk" that had begun months before continued. Some speculated on the causes of our very own mini-flood. Others wondered about the composition of the water. "I wouldn't step in that stuff if I were you!" Still others reflected on the symbolic meaning of the flood: Was this our across-the-road neighbor, the Great Miami River, taking its revenge for all the students tramping along its banks and across its bridges in the preceding weeks? (Nothing so dramatic -- just a clogged drain out back of the building.) There is no end to the ways one can talk and think about a flood. Or a river.

Our River Unit was the first attempt at a large-scale interdisciplinary unit by a team of six teachers working with 150 middle school students. We feel the unit was successful. We also feel like rookies who have a lot to learn about designing, executing, and evaluating the success of interdisciplinary units. As the eighth-grade English and Reading teacher on the team, I have learned a bit about the role literature can play in interdisciplinary units. Also, I have read more than twenty adolescent river books and taught three. For those who, like my team and me, are just starting to explore interdisciplinary units, this article will provide an overview of the river unit that my team and I taught during the 1994-95 school year, a discussion of the role of literature in that unit, and a survey of some adolescent river novels.

The A-Team River Unit

The team I have worked with for the past three years consists of a science, a math, a home economics, and a social studies teacher, along with another English and Reading teacher besides myself. Our goal for the 1994-95 school year was to plan and execute a large-scale interdisciplinary unit. We teachers wanted to work more closely together, to model collaboration for our students. We wanted to help students see the interconnectedness of the various academic disciplines. We wanted to involve students in real-world problems and issues. And we wanted the teaching of research skills to be a team-wide undertaking.

The central activity of the unit was a two-part research project. First each student designed, researched, and wrote a paper on the aspect of the Great Miami River, the nearby Ohio River, or of rivers in general that interested them. Each student was assigned a teacher from the team as mentor to help narrow the topic, to find resources and outside-of-school contacts, and to help with writing the paper. Topics ranged widely: the 1927 Ohio and Miami Floods, pesticides in the river, drownings (with three girls making a much-admired trip to visit the county coroner at the morgue), river poems, the Delta Queen riverboat.

During the second part of the research project, students moved beyond written products -- creating displays, demonstrations, and performances (often combining their efforts in groups of two or three) to be shared at the aforementioned River Fair.

Long before the two-part research projects were begun, teachers in the various disciplines were introducing river terms and concepts. In social studies, students had explored the way ancient civilizations developed along rivers. In science, students learned about water quality and chemistry, river geology, and buoyancy. In home economics, they looked at the effects various laundry practices have on the environment and at ways of preparing fish. In English and Reading, in addition to the literature component discussed later, we got a head start on research skills.

The other component of the unit was a River Career Day. With help from our county career-education specialist, we invited professionals from the area whose work put them in contact with the Great Miami or Ohio River: an engineer from an architectural firm that designs bridges and dams, a meteorologist working for the State of Ohio on flood forecast and control, an environmental chemist monitoring water quality at industrial sites along the Ohio, entertainers from the Showboat Majestic, and several others. All the presenters had been forwarded the students' research questions; so most brought materials and designed their presentations to address them. Never have I witnessed a career day with such a strong feeling of collaboration among presenters and students. Much information picked up that day made its way into the research papers, student presentations, and subsequent class discussions.

The success of the River Unit motivated us to start planning similar units for the future. Next time, we want students to be more involved in the ground floor planning and to gain more independence and sophistication in designing their projects. We also want to apply a lighter touch -- we had some students who got genuinely tired of thinking about rivers.

Literature in the River Unit

Before I began learning to take part in interdisciplinary units, I was concerned they would rob language arts of its identity -- make it a lab course in which students carried out and wrote up research that had its intellectual roots in science or social studies class. Well, it's true that more pamphlets, encyclopedias, and almanacs were used in my class this year than ever before, and that most of the writing done in conjunction with the river unit was scientific or historical in nature. Only a handful of students chose topics involving river poetry or fiction.

However, literature took center stage late in the year when, after the projects were completed and the other classes had mostly finished talking about rivers, we read and discussed our third river novel, Linda Crew's Children of the River. Set in the late 1970s, it tells the story of Sundara Sovann, forced at the age of ten to flee her Cambodian homeland with her Aunt Soka's family, leaving behind her parents and siblings. Now a high school student in Oregon, Sundara faces pressure from her aunt and other refugees to conform to traditional Cambodian ways. At the same time, she faces pressures -- some subtle, some less so -- to conform to American teen culture. Two matters complicate her life even further. First, she feels responsible for the death of Soka's infant son, who died during the boat escape from Cambodia while Soka was incapacitated by seasickness. Secondly, Jonathon McKinnon, the most popular boy and best football player in Sundara's high school, becomes interested in her, and the two gradually fall in love.

I knew Children of the River, with its modern setting and themes of family versus peers and forbidden love, would spark good discussion. But I was especially gratified by our discussion of the novel's river symbolism. The title refers to the fact that Sundara and Jonathon are children of two vastly different rivers -- for Jonathon, the Columbia, which is controlled by humans for hydroelectric power, irrigation, flood control, and recreation; for Sundara, the "mighty Mekong, never bridged or dammed" (p. 99). The river as metaphor for life crops up several times throughout the book, becoming explicit when Sundara muses to Jonathon, "I wonder why American always think of life like a road. `Down the road of life,' they like to say." She continues, "We think of life more like a riverÉ. On a river it is not so simple as just choose which way to go. On a river we try to steer a good course, but all the time we getting swept along by a force greater than ourselves" (p. 146). Our discussion of this passage was long and flowing. We talked about the two competing views of life in the book; then we talked about our own lives; then we talked about Life. It was the kind of discussion of literature and life I was envisioning when I decided to be a teacher in the first place.

Reflecting later on what made that discussion go so well, I, of course, gave credit to an excellent novel and fine students (and took some credit for myself). But those factors have come together before without and fine students (and took some credit for myself). But those factors have come together before without such satisfying results. I believe the prior knowledge built up through research projects, the career day, and the two river novels we read previously are what made the difference.

What have I learned about literature in an interdisciplinary unit? I learned that literature is a natural way to reinforce some of the lessons taught in science and social studies -- about how river geographies and natural histories differ, about how individuals and cultures affect and are affected by rivers. But literature does more than help review for the social studies test. Our experiences with Children of the River and the other two river novels opened up the poetic possibilities of rivers, as well as the mythic and spiritual -- important aspects that other content areas have difficulty accessing. And as I've said, our broad, rich, firsthand study of our local rivers provided important background that helped us explore these abstract possibilities more fully.

The River as a Topic

We had difficulty deciding on a topic for our first interdisciplinary unit. Our options seemed endless, and we had neither the firsthand experience nor the critical tools to sort through them. We might still be stuck if it hadn't been for Stephen Lafer and Stephen Tchudi's January 1994 article in English Journal, "The Familiar Made Curious: A Case of Hometown Interdisciplinary Studies." In this article, the authors narrate the progress of a two-week summer institute, the Truckee River Community Project, in which Reno, Nevada, area teachers, kindergarten through college, studied their local river from an interdisciplinary perspective. Lafer and Tchudi's reasons for choosing their river made sense to us:

> We focused on the river specifically because it is a familiar part of the local landscape.... The Truckee River serves as a powerful metaphor for cultural and political issues important to the region.... Almost every issue and problem faced by our area... can, in one way or another, be traced to the river and its primal influence. (p. 15)

The topic's rightness of fit was confirmed by the excitement and creative thought present in our earliest discussions. It is firmly rooted in the local and the concrete, yet it is rich and flexible, with broad and varied applications. A much greater problem has been generating other topics that approach its richness.

River Novels

Language arts teachers might evaluate a potential interdisciplinary topic by discovering how many good books have been written about it. Using this approach, rivers make a great topic. The computerized catalogue at my local public library offers 771 entries under the keyword river. Three recent scholarly books on rivers in literature name over twenty abstract meanings for rivers in their tables of contents, including river as threshold (Seelye, p. 419), as agent of judgment, as unifier, as companion (Herendeen, p. 376), and as god (Colwell, p. 218).

Here is just a sample of river books -- all but one fictional -- for adolescents. I'll refrain (but it's a struggle) from offering tasty morsels from adult literature such as naturalist Barry Holstun Lopez's mystical prose poem River Notes: The Dance of Herons. The river books that we chose are divided into the two most often-used river metaphors: river crossings and river journeys. But of course even within a single book a river has many meanings.

Crossings

Rivers are often used to represent boundaries or goal lines; to "cross the river" is to undergo a transformation. So it is in Gary Paulsen's short (114-page) novel The Crossing. Manny Bustos, a fourteen-year-old orphan living on the streets of Juarez, Mexico, seeks to escape his squalid life on the brink of starvation, and to escape the street thugs who would sell him into prostitution, by crossing illegally into the United States. Meanwhile Marine Sergeant Robert Locke often crosses the Rio Grande illegally into the United States. Meanwhile Marine Sergeant Robert Locke often crosses the Rio Grande in the other direction and for another form of escape: he seeks, in the noisy clubs and cheap Scotch of Juarez, to keep from his consciousness the voices of men he commanded in Viet Nam, men he watched die horribly while calling to him for help he could not give. His path crosses Manny's; eventually he learns of Manny's plan; and once again he hears a call for help he feels he cannot provide. "Crossings" provide the basic structure of the book: everything leads up to Manny's attempt to cross the Rio Grande; the last scene depicts Robert Locke's crossing from life to death; and in the course of the novel both characters cross from a world of danger, loss, and isolation into a world that includes the possibility of hope and human connection. The Crossing also has much to teach, for so short a book, about rivers as social and political boundaries. It includes a brief description of the effects on Juarez of the damming of the Rio Grande upstream in the United States. This was the first river novel my students and I read together, and it made a fine introduction. Our understanding of Manny's plight was greatly enlightened through excerpts from Patrick Oster's The Mexicans: A Personal Portrait of a People, especially the true stories of Miguel Tostado -- the only survivor when a boxcar full of illegal immigrants suffocated while trying to cross into Texas (pp. 57-69), and Jose Rivas -- whose best way to earn even a meager living was to perform as a tragafuego, or firebreather, for stopped traffic in Mexico City, blowing mouthfuls of kerosene toward a burning torch.

In Lynne Reid Banks' One More River, high-school-aged Lesley Shelby is uprooted from her upper-middle-class life in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, when her parents decide to emigrate to Israel and live on a kibbutz, or collective farm. While coping with severe culture shock, spare living conditions, and hard physical labor, Lesley must also confront competing definitions of what it means to be Jewish. Especially, she must come to terms with her attitude and the attitudes of those around her regarding Arabs, particularly the inhabitants of a small Arab village directly across the Jordan River from Lesley's kibbutz. At one point Lesley actually crosses the Jordan and becomes acquainted with an Arab boy. Banks makes the Jordan River an important symbol, just as Linda Crew does the Mekong in Children of the River. And like Children of the River as well as The Crossing, One More River is full of social and political issues along with personal issues close to the lives of most teens.

I'd like to make a brief mention of two other "crossing" books: Ann Gabhart's Bridge to Courage and Paige Dixon's May I Cross Your Golden River? The first is the story of Luke Dillon, a high-school student whose fear of heights, need for acceptance by both his father and his peers, and uncertain relationship with his pretty neighbor Shea Ashburn all get tested at once when he must venture out onto a high railroad trestle to save another boy. The second tells the story of eighteen-year-old Jordan Phillips from the discovery that he has Lou Gerhig's Disease through his struggles to come to terms with his weakening condition and approaching death. Neither book spends many words on actual rivers -- neither gives content-area teachers much to work with in terms of river facts. But they help suggest the metaphorical range of adolescent river fiction.

Journeys

The other river novel my students and I read together besides The Crossing and Children of the River was Scott O'Dell's Streams to the River, River to the Sea, a version of the story of Sacajawea. A teenage Shoshone mother, Sacajawea, her husband, and her newborn son accompanied Lewis and Clark on their 1804-1806 journey of exploration up the Missouri from St. Louis, across the Rocky Mountains, down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean, and back again. River journeys, as Sundara observes in Children of the River, tend to represent the journey of life. They tend also to be journeys of self discovery. These symbolic possibilities are perhaps exploited better in other adolescent novels, but I chose Streams to the River, River to the Sea because it is such a classic American story, and so well written, and because it connects so directly with my school's eighth-grade social studies curriculum. As with other great American stories, variations of Sacajawea's story abound. We had fun comparing passages from Streams to the River, River to the Sea with passages from John Bakeless' The Journals of Lewis and Clark, thus to the River, River to the Sea with passages from John Bakeless' The Journals of Lewis and Clark, thus gaining insight into O'Dell's fictionalizing techniques. The children's video The Song of Sacajawea, in which Sacajawea's ne'er-do-well husband Toussaint Charbonneau is depicted as cute, devoted and romantic, contrasts strongly with O'Dell's version and the one that emerges from the journals, and, therefore, sparked discussion.

Perhaps the river journey best known among adolescent readers is Brian Robeson's in Gary Paulsen's The River, sequel to the popular Hatchet. This time around, Brian must not only survive in the Canadian wilderness; he must return from it without help, bringing with him the comatose Derek Holtzer, a psychologist who has convinced Brian to return to the wilderness so that his successful survival habits can be studied and taught. Derek is incapacitated by a lightening bolt. Brian must transport him to civilization and medical help, and the only avenue available is -- you guessed it -- a river. The River deserves consideration because of Paulsen's popularity and the unique and well-developed character of Brian Robeson. For such a short book (132 pages), it also has much to teach about river geography. However, one really needs to have read Hatchet to understand it fully, and my students and I agree that The River is a bit of a letdown afterwards.

One can also learn much river geography, this time of the Grand Canyon segment of the Colorado River, from Will Hobbs' Downriver. Eight teenagers hijack a van and trailer loaded with whitewater-rafting equipment from an outdoor education school called Discovery Unlimited but more commonly known as "Hoods in the Woods." The eight teenagers use the equipment to run the Grand Canyon, without permission, without much experience, and without maps. All eight characters have problems or needs (which is why they are enrolled in Hoods in the Woods to begin with), but as they proceed on their adventure, each learns that he or she has strengths as well; all contribute to the success of the journey. Downriver's characters -- strong but reckless and troubled -- grab the attention of adolescent readers. The emphasis is on action, not necessarily on believability.

A nonfiction river journey, exciting, well-told, and full of interdisciplinary possibilities, is Joe Kane's Running the Amazon. The author and nine other adventurers start high in the Andes Mountains, facing deadly chutes and rapids in rafts. In the end, two members of the group paddle kayaks down the sea-like lower Amazon to its mouth. Filled with travel anecdotes, historical sketches, and geological and natural-history explanations, couched in flowing, vivid prose, Running the Amazon would make a strong contribution to a river unit. Be aware, however, that it is longer and more complex than the books mentioned so far. Adolescents may wish to skip the many passages detailing the personalities of the adventurers and narrating the complex group dynamics that evolve throughout the trip.

River Runners, by James Houston, tells of fifteen-year-old Andrew Stewart's first experiences as clerk in a fur-trading post in the Canadian Arctic, his friendship with a Naskapi boy, and the season they spend together establishing an outpost in a barren and dangerous region. In the same frosty survival tradition as Call of the Wild, White Fang, and Paulsen's Dogsong, River Runners gives a glimpse of a little-known Native Canadian culture and at a little-known type of river, a frozen sledding and hiking path most of the year. River symbolism surfaces in this quotation from Andrew's Naskapi friend Pashak: "Mium-scum said last night that white people like to race down long, straight, dangerous rivers and maybe break up everything. We true men prefer this slow and curving river. Is it not beautiful?" (p. 139).

In a novel from L. M. Boston's Green Knowe series, The River at Green Knowe, the river serves as a scene of enchantment as well as adventure. Three children -- the oldest is eleven -- spend the summer at the Green Knowe manor and explore the islands, locks, and shore buildings along the river that flows past it. In their travels they encounter a hermit, a herd of flying horses, and a tree-like giant named Terak. Actually more of an intermediate-level book -- a quick and easy read for most adolescents --The River at Green Knowe might serve as a useful counterpoint for works of nonfiction or realistic fiction.

Green Knowe might serve as a useful counterpoint for works of nonfiction or realistic fiction.

Conclusion

As I said earlier, it is difficult for my colleagues and me to imagine another topic as ripe as rivers for exploitation in an interdisciplinary unit. Perhaps other topics will seem as rich in hindsight, after we've worked with them for a year. For our next unit, however, we decided not to substitute another geographical feature (we are surrounded by hills, fields, creeks, woods -- all of which might someday be "explored"). Instead, we opted for something equally tangible, equally hometown: our main topic for this year is malls. They haven't been around long enough to have the history, lore, or literature associated with them that rivers have. However, they mirror different aspects of our lives than do rivers. Incidentally, Richard Peck has written two mall novels, one of which, Secrets of the Shopping Mall, I'll be reading with my students this coming year. He has also commented at length on mall culture in his recent book, Love and Death at the Mall. Other than that, the genre offers little more than a couple "thrillers." Oh well, at least on Mall Day we won't get flooded.

(I would like to thank the A Team Teachers -- Jim Bierer, Science; Delores Denson, Math; Dennis Schlabach, English and Reading; Teresa Wyman, Social Studies; and Holly Vining, Home Economics -- along with the A Team students of 1994-95. All have been my teachers.)

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Reader-Response Theory and the English Curriculum

Robert E. Probst

Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Respecting the Text and Respecting the Reader

There's something rotten in the state of Denmark, to mix plays, if not metaphors. Perhaps not rotten, but tumultuous, at least, with reader-response advocates, deconstructionists, cultural critics, feminist critics, new historicists, narratologists, and a few die-hard New Critics, all clustered around the cauldron, tossing their newts' eyes, rats' tails, and bats' wings into the tumbling, bubbling theoretical stew. If we aren't careful, when the hurlyburly's done, we may have forgotten that the purpose of literature programs in the elementary and secondary schools is to develop readers, not literary scholars and critics.

A few of our students will write us appreciative letters several years from now telling us of the joys and agonies of their doctoral research in seventeenth-century poetic forms or their pursuit of Melville's white whale, three of them will publish in *PMLA* or *New Literary History,* two will come home to debate feminist readings of Hemingway at the local college, and one lonely but diligent scholar will travel to England, become buried in the library at Oxford, and produce a brilliant and unreadable Freudian analysis of the significance of the three witches. Most of our students, however, are going to be elsewhere. They'll be in some line of work far removed from the literary world. They should, nonetheless, be readers. They should be people who enjoy literature, who read it willingly, even enthusiastically, and who respond to it and think about it in ways that enrich their emotional and intellectual lives.

To teach them, and to design English curricula for them, we need to keep in mind who they are and where they are headed. If they aren't scholars, if they don't have the instinctive love of books that probably led us into teaching English in the first place, how then do we approach them? How do we justify the time and energy we ask them to expend upon imaginative inventions, the hours we expect them to spend reading and writing, hours they might prefer to spend watching television or roaming the streets? Or—since the explanations and justifications we offer them are unlikely to be persuasive anyway—perhaps the more important question is, How do we teach so that the experience with literature is its own justification, so that the time spent talking and writing is compelling enough that it doesn't require formal defense?

We must try, first of all, to *respect the natural influence of literary texts upon readers.* Louise Rosenblatt argues that the teacher's influence should be "an elaboration of the vital influence inherent in literature itself." Our first task, if we accept that position, is to make sure that the literature has the chance to work its effects upon the readers, to make sure that we don't get in the way, substituting other matters for that vital influence. The literary experience, then, although it may involve learning about history, biography, genre, technique, and the other elements into which literature is too easily subdivided, is first of all the immediate encounter between a reader and a book. Texts and lessons should begin here, assisting the students to articulate and investigate that influence rather than replacing it with peripheral matters. The literary text must not be reduced to exercise or drill, but must be allowed to live as a work of art, influencing the reader to see and think and feel. Into the context of that natural response, whatever it may be, other tasks, other questions, may be introduced, but the influence inherent in the work itself must be respected and must be of primary concern in the classroom. We must respect the text.

Implicit within this vision of literary experience is a *respect for the uniqueness of the individual reader and the integrity of the individual reading.* We have tended in the past—influenced strongly by the professional tendency to insist upon the rightness of certain readings, upon conformity to established interpretations—to seek consensus in the classroom. Teachers who guided us to a select group of pre-eminent critics reinforced the notion that there was a perfect reading hiding out there somewhere. We didn't have it—obviously—but the best, the most widely-published critics, might lead us to it. One thing we learned quickly was that our own, private, personal experiences would do little to help us find it. They were idiosyncratic, unique, almost deviant, and the poet clearly could not have had them in mind as he wrote, so they were better disregarded and ignored if we hoped to find the right reading, the correct interpretation.

If literature is to matter, however, if it is to become significant in the reader's life, then those personal connections become hard to deny. Meaning lies in that shared ground where the reader and text meet—it isn't resident within the text, to be extracted like a nut from its shell. Rather, the meaning is created by readers as they bring the text to bear upon their own experience, and their own histories to bear upon the text. Robert Scholes goes so far as to argue that reading text and reflecting upon our lives are essentially the same intellectual process:

> Learning to read books—or pictures, or films—is not just a matter of acquiring information from texts, it is a matter of learning to read and write the texts of our lives. Reading, seen this way, is not merely an academic experience but a way of accepting the fact that our lives are of limited duration and that whatever satisfaction we may achieve in life must come through the strength of our engagement with what is around us. We do well to read our lives with the same intensity we develop from learning to read our texts. (19)

So we must respect readers and their readings, too.

This is not, of course, to say that texts mean anything we want them to mean—it's obviously possible to misread, to misunderstand a word, or miss a point. When we argue that a writer holds a certain belief, that a character has certain values or goals, we obligate ourselves to offering evidence and logic that sustain our position. Our reasoning, when we do so, may be weak or it may be strong. In a debate about such matters of inference one argument may well prove to be more persuasive than another. The point remains, however, that a work may mean to a reader what it did not mean to its author. It may trigger responses, evoke memories, awaken emotions and thoughts that could not have been predicted by the writer. And those associations may be of much more interest and importance to the reader than anything the writer could have predicted.

We do well to read our lives with the same intensity we develop from learning to read our texts.
Robert Scholes

Consider, for the sake of a concrete example, responses to this poem by David Bottoms:

Sign for My Father, Who Stressed the Bunt

On the rough diamond,
the hand-cut field below the dog lot and barn,
we rehearsed the strict technique
of bunting. I watched from the infield,
the mound, the backstop
as your left hand climbed the bat, your legs
and shoulders squared toward the pitcher.
You could drop it like a seed
down either base line. I admired your style,
but not enough to take my eyes off the bank
that served as our center-field fence.

Years passed, three leagues of organized ball,
no few lives. I could homer
into the garden beyond the bank,
into the left-field lot of Carmichael Motors,
and still you stressed the same technique,
the crouch and spring, the lead arm absorbing
just enough impact. That whole tiresome pitch
about basics never changing,
and I never learned what you were laying down.

Like a hand brushed across the bill of a cap,
let this be the sign
I'm getting a grip on the sacrifice.

It's difficult for many students to read such a text as this without finding their minds wandering beyond the words on the page to extraneous mat-

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ters. Of course, we'll argue that they aren't extraneous to the reading but simply external to the text. Students have spoken of their own experiences playing baseball (or if not baseball, some other sport that required the same concentration and practice), of fathers or mothers or other teachers who tried to get them to accept something difficult for youth to accept, and of their own slow realization that sacrifice was occasionally necessary. Other students will speak of still other matters we can't foresee. One young reader said that it simply evoked a "sense of loss," a sad awareness that the times he and his father had played football together were now past and seldom thought of. Adult readers, some with children of their own, have their own perspectives on the poem, perspectives shaped by their unique histories. For some teachers, the text has called to mind resistant students, students to whom they have struggled to teach concepts unpalatable at the time. If such other matters—thoughts of our parents and our children, our own memories and dreams—are awakened by the poem, are they not part of the literary experience, part of our own encounter with the text, and shouldn't they be welcomed into the discourse?

The poem may invite some readers to reflect on their own mothers or fathers, to speculate that much of a parent's rejected teaching was well-meant and ultimately significant. If so, if the reading enables a reader to see some aspect of his or her own life more clearly, to articulate a chapter of a personal story so that it makes sense, then it would be hard to assert that this reading was insignificant. Nor does attention to those personal elements preclude addressing other issues we might want to attend to in the English class. The concept of metaphor, for instance, is clearly worth discussing in the context of this poem. Paying attention to the readers' responses, however, doesn't necessarily obviate consideration of metaphor. In fact, the discussion of responses is likely to lead directly to an opportunity to define and discuss metaphor. Once students have pointed out that the "sacrifice" in the last line of the poem is more than just a ball tapped down the third-base line, that it suggests other sacrifices, larger sacrifices, once the class begins to see that the moment on the ball field represents the relationship between the man and the boy, that it is a metaphor for the teaching and learning, then we may observe that they have discovered the concept of metaphor, and help them define it with their own perceptions about the poem. The concept is more likely to register upon students if they come to the definition through concrete experience than if they are first given the definition and then asked to go out into texts and search for examples.

Those fundamental assumptions—that our students are not professional literary scholars, that the literary experience is at first personal and unique, that there is validity to unique and divergent readings, that we must respect and trust both the text and the reader—lead us to six goals for literature instruction, goals that might direct the design of programs or textbooks.

Goals for the Literature/Writing Program

1. Students will learn about themselves. That is the English program's greatest and most sadly neglected potential. The essential content of our writing is, after all, our own experience. Literature is, above all else, a reservoir of conceptions of human possibilities; it is about life. Rosenblatt says that "of all the arts, literature is most immediately implicated with life itself," and Kenneth Burke refers to literature as "equipment for living." It isn't purely academic, simply a scholarly exercise, but

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rather it speaks of the human condition and invites us to reflect on our own. If a reading of the Bottoms poem offers us a chance to see ourselves more clearly, to tell something of our own story, to grasp our own experience more firmly, then that opportunity should be pursued. It is likely to result in more readers who see value and significance in literature and who will therefore be more likely to read on their own after schooling ends for them.

2. *Students will learn about others.* The English program ought to humanize us, ought to make us more sympathetic and understanding of one another. When the human questions that literary works raise are emphasized in the classroom, and when the differing responses of the students are respected, it has the power to do so. If the Bottoms poem is simply an opportunity to teach the distinction between metaphor and simile—one of the more useless distinctions in the literary lexicon—there is little to do but learn definitions and memorize examples. But if the influence inherent in the work itself, which may be to evoke thoughts of parents and children, of teaching, of lessons learned and taught, forgotten and remembered, of lost opportunities, of sacrifices made and not made, then the encounter with the poem is a chance to learn about both oneself and one's classmates. And it may not be possible for students to understand themselves well without the background of their peers. They may need in part to define themselves in terms of similarities and differences with others around them. The literature and their own writing give them that chance.

3. *Students will learn about cultures and societies, their varying concepts of the good life, of love and hate, justice and revenge, and the other significant issues of human experience.* If we are to come to understand ourselves, we will have to do so, at least in part, by coming to understand the larger groups to which we belong. Those cultures and societies are the background against which we define ourselves as we accept or reject what they value, struggle against the limitations they impose, or celebrate the visions they offer.

4. *Students should learn how texts operate, how they shape our thought and manipulate our emotion.* Respect for the students' unique readings doesn't imply that readers should look only into their own memories and associations, that literary texts are simply catalysts to introspective meditations. Texts are more manipulative than that, and they *do* work upon us, encouraging us to see things in certain ways, to notice and value one aspect of a situation rather than another; if the reading is to contribute to our intellectual growth, we need to be able to see those effects and understand them. The power of the text imposes responsibilities on the reader.

It's appropriate to ask, for instance, how "Sign for My Father" suggests that more is at issue here than baseball strategy. Students might be encouraged to notice that the word "sacrifice" carries several meanings; that the narrator's stance is that of one for whom many years have passed ("three leagues of organized ball, no few lives") so that the bunt is likely to be of less significance to him now; that Bottoms plays upon the contrast of the glorious home run and the lowly but important sacrifice; that games are often offered as metaphors for life. Such observations should, as often as possible, emerge from the natural discussion of responses. Some student, almost inevitably, will offer the suggestion that this poem is about more than baseball, leading directly into the analysis of text suggested here with questions that their own comments imply: "Why is it about more than baseball?" "What makes you suspect that?" "What do you see emphasized in the poem that suggests a broader significance in the mind of the author?" "What do you hear in the responses of classmates that indicates some larger issue has come up?" Such questions, growing out of the responses of the students, will lead into the appropriate analysis of text without substituting it for the human reactions that come first.

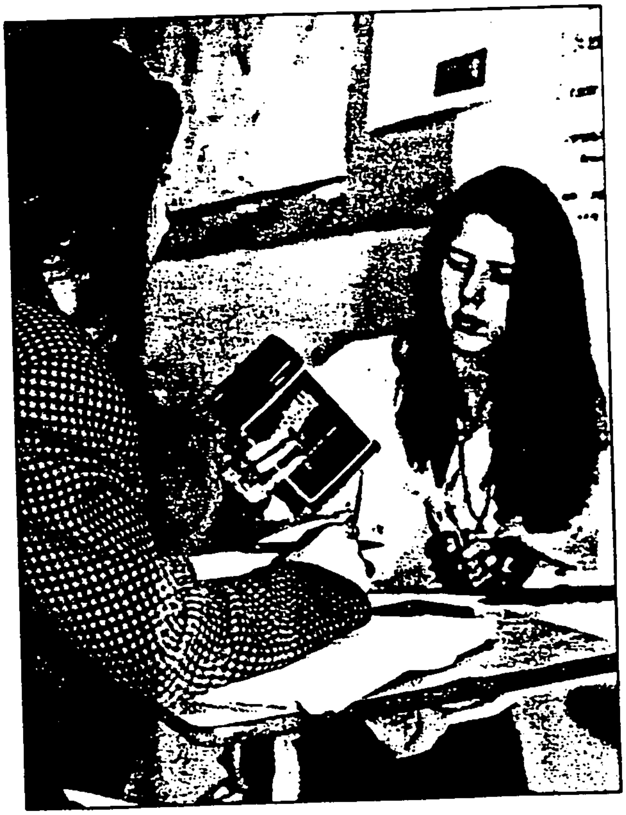
5. *Students should learn how context shapes meaning.* Meaning resides neither in the text, nor in the reader. In fact, it resides nowhere. Rather, it happens, it occurs, it is created and recreated in the act of reading and the subsequent acts of talking and writing about the experience. As the game exists only in the playing, the dance only in the dancing, so meaning exists only in the active encounter of reader and text. That encounter, however, occurs within a context. The reader may meet the text alone, or surrounded by thirty other restless readers; may come to it happy or sad, troubled or at peace, hungry or satiated; may love baseball or hate it; may have made the team or been cut. Events in life outside the classroom, outside the

text, frame readings and either light them or cast them into shadow in various ways.

A student who brings to "Sign for My Father" a history of bitter conflict with a father, for instance, may see the poem very differently from one who carries pleasant memories of playing catch in the back yard. A student who has recently lost a parent may have a hard time reading the poem at all. A young woman with no interest in sports may see it as a male poem by a male poet about male experience and reject it utterly, though, when that did happen on one occasion, another woman asserted that *she* knew more about baseball than any man in the room, and that furthermore the poem was as much about parent-and-child or teacher-and-student as about father-and-son, a perspective that welcomed the female reader as well as the male. Each of us comes to a literary experience from other experience, against the backdrop of which we read. Those circumstances inevitably shape our reading.

6. *Students should learn about the processes by which they make meaning out of literary texts.* We have tended to deceive students about those processes by hiding from them our own struggles with texts. Typically, teachers come to class with meaning already made. That is to say, they understand the poem or play. They've read it, read about it, decided what's significant in it, figured out what's worth discussing, what problems there are to solve, what questions there are to answer, what, in sum, the text means. And students consequently don't get to see readers in the act of making meaning out of texts. Instead they are deluded into thinking that meaning is outside of themselves, that it lurks somewhere out there in the world, perhaps hidden in the text, perhaps buried somewhere in the recesses of the teacher's mind, but definitely outside themselves. Meaning comes to be something they have to find, or worse, that someone will provide for them, rather than something they must make and take responsibility for. They learn that the process of thinking about a literary work consists of answering questions posed by an authority, hoping that the interrogation will lead to some clearer vision of the text.

Answering someone else's questions is only one way to work for meaning. The explicatory paper is only one of the suitable genres in which to write about our literary experience.



Students need instead to learn that literary meaning is largely an individual engagement, that it results from the creative effort of a reader working with a text, and that the reader may work in various ways. Answering someone else's questions is only one way to work for meaning. Inferential reasoning is only one of many valuable strategies to apply to texts. The explicatory paper is only one of the suitable genres in which to write about literary experience. There are other productive ways of dealing with texts and readings, and students need to know and appreciate them. One of the most valuable is in some ways a departure from the text. It is to tell your own story as it was evoked by the literary work. The Bottoms poem, for example, often awakens memories and associations that are compelling and interesting, though they leave the text far behind. When those stories rise to the surface, students seem almost driven to tell them, or if the stories are more dangerous and frightening, to write about them. Too often those stories are lost, listened to politely, perhaps, and then swept aside to let the class get down to the serious business of interpreting and analyzing. When th

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happens, students are taught that their lives are less significant than the imaginary lives of the characters in the text, that their thoughts are less important than those of the writer, that making sense of their own lives is less important than analyzing how writers make sense of theirs.

But if literature is a valid way of dealing with experience, if narrative and poetry and drama are forms that help us comprehend and cope with human events, then it seems reasonable to invite students to use those forms in their own lives, to reflect upon their own experiences as Bottoms must have reflected on his to write that short, elegant poem. Students might be encouraged to choose the form appropriate for their response—a letter perhaps, or a personal narrative, or a poem, the writing of which might be aided by drawing upon "Sign . . ." as a model. Or, if it serves the student's purpose, a problem-solving essay, a traditional, expository paper.

These six goals might guide the development of a literature and writing curriculum devoted to cultivating in students a love of reading and an ability to draw upon literary experience to enrich their own lives. Such a curriculum proposes to develop readers and writers rather than literary scholars. Encompassing all of these goals, implicit in them, is the over-arching goal that *experiences with literature will yield pleasure—aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, and social—for students*. That is not to say that the work will always be fun or that class will seem a game, but that there will be rewards, intellectual and emotional, for students. They will have the satisfaction of seeing more clearly who they are, who their classmates are, what they value and reject. They will have the intellectual pleasure of solving problems and analyzing challenging texts and the emotional pleasure of participating in literature's celebrations of life.

Principles of Instruction

In pursuit of these goals several principles for instruction might guide the design of instruction.

1. *Invite response to texts.* Everything we do in the classroom should make clear to students that their responses, emotional and intellectual, are valid starting points for discussion and writing. Students must not feel, as they so often do, that they are irrelevant in the process, that they are interchangeable, that they could be replaced by anyone else who would sit there taking the same notes while the class proceeded along exactly the same path. Instead, they have to realize that they are an integral part of the process, that literary meaning requires their presence and participation.
2. *Give students time to shape and take confidence in their responses.* They need an opportunity to reflect and to articulate their reactions and their questions before they hear those of others. Unfortunately, students are too often encouraged to do the opposite. Professors who announce at the beginning of a course that "the critics important for you to study are these . . ." tell us that it's more efficient to read those critics early, find out what it is we are to think, and then read the literary works and think those thoughts. The questions that often follow selections, those questions that call for information or that pose a particular textual problem, tell crafty students that nothing else needs to be attended to in the reading. Instead, we need to encourage students to verbalize their own responses, to articulate their own questions, preferably before hearing those of others, to ensure that their concerns will be addressed and will inform the work of the class.
3. *Find the links among students' responses.* Those points of contact, the similar stories, the shared reactions, and the dramatically contradictory readings will enable us to encourage communication among students and will demonstrate the possibilities for different points of view and for profiting from the exploration of those differences. The similarities observed will underline their shared humanity, and the differences will remind them of their uniqueness.
4. *Invite discussion and writing about self, text, others, and the culture of society.* Literary experience and writing should be opportunities to learn about all these elements. The temptation to focus exclusively on the text is strong—it gives us surer footing, a solid ground on which to build. The divergent readings and responses can be so varied, so digressive, that they become confusing and chaotic. If, however,we begin to think of the literature classroom as a workshop in which students may be doing many different things, then we may grow easier with the notion that in response to one text some students are writing letters, others poems, others are arguing about the author's intentions, others about the values they themselves hold, and others still are improvising alternate possibilities for a scene drawn from the text.
5. *Let the talk build and grow as naturally as possible, encouraging an organic flow for the discussion.* In the interest of devising and conducting well-crafted lessons, we've often tried to foresee exactly where the talk would go. We've built carefully designed edifices of questions that enable us to conclude, just before the bell rings, "Thus we have seen that Bottoms, in 'Sign for My Father,' means. . . ." Al-

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though some lessons may need to be taught that way, because we think that some point very much needs to be made, too often those lessons steal from the students the opportunity to explore their own readings. Students should feel free to change their minds, to explore, to follow the talk wherever it leads.

6. *Look back to other texts, other discussions, other experiences, and forward to what students might read next, what they might write tomorrow.* As the classes proceed, we need to search for opportunities to connect today's discussion with yesterday's essay, today's novel with tomorrow's play. Meaning grows not only out of the encounter of reader and text, but out of the rich interplay of other readers and other texts as well, and out of the tight bonds between the act of reading and the act of writing in the students' lives.

Questions for Reading and Writing

These principles suggest a sequence of issues or questions to consider in teaching both reading and writing in the secondary English program. Our problem is to figure out ways to help students do something that they must do largely on their own. They need freedom if they are to discover the significance of the text for themselves and learn to find their own way through literary works. On the other hand, they need assistance and guidance so that they may learn a repertoire of questions, strategies, attitudes, and skills, that will enable them to enjoy literature.

The questions we raise to help students read and write are critically important because they should support without restricting. Here, for instance, is a hypothetical set of questions, offered as an example of the kind of inquiry that might guide without too tightly confining, that might support the students' readings without dictating precisely what they will do with texts. All these questions are generic—none are tied directly to a specific text. All of them would have to be reworded for lower grade levels, and perhaps supplemented with questions directed specifically at the text of the moment, but they might suggest the approach and the emphasis for the classroom. Implicit in this sequence of questions is the opportunity, or perhaps requirement, that students write and talk about their perceptions. These questions can't be treated like the short-answer questions often provided at the end of a selection simply to see if students did their homework.

The first question asks students to focus on what took place in their minds as they read:

1. Read the text and record what happens as you read—what do you remember, feel, question, see . . .? Afterwards, think back over the experience. What is your own sense of the text—does it have any significance for you; does it recall memories; does it affirm or contradict any of your own attitudes or perceptions?

Such a question invites readers to observe themselves reading, to respect their thoughts and feelings and examine them for their significance. It asserts that they and their primary reactions are important and will constitute much of the substance of the class.

The second question then asks them to concentrate on what was going on in the text. Even such a simple task as paraphrasing has the potential of revealing differences in readings, differences in judgments of characters, differences in the attitudes and beliefs of the students:

2. What did you see happening in the text? You might paraphrase it—retell the event briefly.

   or

   What image was called to mind by the text? Describe it briefly.

   or

   Upon what did you focus most intently as you read—what word, phrase, image, idea? What is the most important word in the text?

The third asks them to compare their readings with those of other students. Its purpose, at least in part, is to begin to build the society necessary for the discussion of literary works. It attests to the importance placed upon *readings*, as opposed to texts, and affirms the importance of dialogue about unique readings as a way of coming to understand texts and ourselves as readers:

3. Please discuss your readings with your partner (or in a small group). Did the text call to mind different memories, thoughts, feelings? Did you make sense of it in different ways? What similarities and differences do you notice in your experiences with the text? What might account for those differences?

The fourth question asks them to reflect on the context of the reading: that is to say, the classroom setting and any related works that come to mind. It serves as a reminder that meaning is complex, that it demands attention to matters outside the text, even outside one's self:

4. Does this text call to mind any other literary work (poem, play, film, story—any genre)? If it does, what is the connection you see between the two? How did the circumstances—this room, this

group, other events in your life—influence or shape the reading?

And the fifth asks them to consider how meaning has evolved, changing and taking shape, during the course of reading and talking and writing about the text. It reaffirms the extremely important notion that meanings are fluid, that they develop, evolve, grow; that meaning is not a static entity, a unitary and unchanging thing to be found, dusted off, admired for the moment and shelved:

5. How did your understanding of the text or your feelings about it change as you talked? How did you respond to it—emotionally or intellectually? How did you think about the text—did you analyze it, examine your own associations and memories, react to the observations of your partner, or something else?

If we designed instruction around such questions as these, we would be asking students to learn something about themselves, about texts, about other readers and thus about their society, about contexts (the classroom setting, other literary works, and so on), and about the processes by which meaning is made from literary texts and human experience. For them to read intelligently and to write well they have to be aware of all of those elements—they all contribute to meaning. The writing that students would undertake in such a curriculum would, of course, be diverse in both mode and content. Traditional essays about literary works, those answering questions about the author's intentions or values, about the characters' beliefs and motivations, or about similar issues, are reasonable and valuable assignments, so the curriculum should attend to the interpretive, analytical essay. Students will write it more effectively, however, if the essay is part of a real dialogue in pursuit of meaning and significance. Interpretive essays will be most appropriate when there is real disagreement about a text, and then the talk might lead into the writing of more extended and carefully planned argument than oral discourse allows. Those papers themselves could become the substance for further work—students could even be asked to write analyses of the arguments of their classmates. But *all* of the work should be devoted to making sense of literary and human experience in a way that respects the uniqueness and the integrity of the individual reader. In a curriculum that respects the student's role as a maker of meaning, the expository, analytical essay would be only one of the genres in which students would be asked to perform.

Students of music aren't asked just to listen and appreciate; they are invited to hum a tune or pound on a drum.

Much of the writing we ask students to do might be personal narrative, perhaps the telling of one's own stories as they are called to mind by reading. If poetry and fiction are legitimate ways of making meaning, then we should have students try their hands at them. Students of music aren't asked just to listen and appreciate; they are invited to hum a tune or pound on a drum. Literature students should similarly be asked to hum a poem once or twice during their schooling if they are to come to understand the genre as fully as they might. There are, after all, various possible ways of making meaning out of experience, literary or otherwise, and students should learn to exercise some responsibility in choosing among them. They need to know that telling their own stories is a perfectly legitimate, respectable act, as significant as explicating a text.

Our primary goal in the English curriculum is not to make literary scholars of all of our students. It is to make them readers and writers, independent and self-reliant thinkers who employ language and literature to enrich their lives. If we keep clearly in mind what we are about, it should be possible for all our toil and trouble to yield an English curriculum that accomplishes that for many of our students.

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Responding to Young Adult Fiction through Writing Poetry: Trying to Understand a Mole

Gerrit Bleeker and Barbara Bleeker

"Look! I've thought of the last line of my poem," Luke triumphantly announces as he shares a smudged piece of spiral notebook paper with us. Luke has written: "Friendship is trying to understand a mole." It is a moment to celebrate. Sixth-grader Luke is making meaning by responding to a text through the writing of poetry.

Responding to young adult fiction through writing is becoming common practice in English language arts classrooms. Jane E. Brown and Elaine Stephens point out in *Teaching Young Adult Literature: Sharing the Connection* that "current trends shift the emphasis in formal writing away from a critical analysis of literature to writing that allows students to explore their responses to the literature" (p. 217). In addition, Richard Beach and James Marshall in *Teaching Literature in the Secondary School* argue that teachers need to provide a meaningful structure to elicit students' responses to literature, "...a structure that allows them freedom at the same time that it points them in potentially rewarding directions" (p. 101).

One way students can respond to fiction is through writing poetry. Poetic forms, recommended by the teacher, provide a framework for students' responses and allow them freedom to respond independently and creatively to a given text. Five poetic forms - **riddle poem, found poem, character poem, poem for two voices,** and **repeat poster poem** - are particularly useful in helping students engage with young adult fiction. A choice of these poetic forms offers students appropriate and varied constructs for responding to the characters, themes, emotions, and artistry found in young adult literature.

Riddle Poem

Riddles intrigue children and young adults; consequently, students enjoy responding to literature by composing riddle poems. A riddle poem is a five-line poem describing an object, setting, event, symbol, theme or character in a piece of literature. The first four lines give the reader clues, and the fifth line offers the answer to the riddle. The first line of the riddle poem names something that will give the reader a clue about the subject of the poem. The second line gives a hint, using an adjective and noun. The third line names two actions connected with the riddle. The fourth line offers the last clue in the form of a phrase or statement, and the fifth line gives the answer to the riddle. Students may like to share the first four lines of the poem and then ask classmates to guess the answer. Or the student poet may offer only the first four lines of the riddle poem and then encourage others to read the novel to discover the answer.

Sixth-grader Julie responds to Theodore Taylor's *The Cay* by composing this riddle poem:

Gray
scary shapes
shadowing, lurking
looking smooth except for sharp teeth
ocean sharks

Eighth-grader Michael reacts to Gary Paulsen's *Haymeadow* with this riddle poem:

Dumb
fly-followed
stubborn and stinky
spread out like a gray carpet
herd of sheep

And sophomore Robin responds to Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" by writing this riddle poem:

Flats of green grass
dull-hued spaces of mesquite and cactus
sweeping and spacious
home to huddled groups of frame houses
Texas

These students use the riddle poem format to highlight what they consider to be an important object (symbol) in the fiction they are reading; they obviously feel comfortable and confident enough to modify the riddle poem to fit their interpretation of the subject matter.

Found Poem

Another poetic form that lends itself to capturing a student's response to literature is the found poem. To write a found poem, the reader begins by choosing an exciting incident or an interesting character in the book. The reader returns to the book and "finds" a few words and phrases that capture the spirit of the incident or a dominant trait of a character. The reader then arranges these selected words and phrases from the text into a found poem.

Seventh-grader Amanda finds her poem while reading E. L. Koningsburg's novel *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*:

Graceful and beautiful
the small angel statue
stands
between the velvet ropes
still and alone
while the crowd asks,
"Is it the work of
Michaelangelo?"

Michael captures his response to Gary Paulsen's *Nightjohn* in this found poem:

Naked in the sun,
so black
it seemed you could see
inside,
down into him.
Sweated,
fly-bitten,
beautiful—
Nightjohn, he came
to bring the way to know.

Responding to literature through writing found poetry helps young readers appreciate an author's style and encourages them to focus on an aspect of a book which fascinates or appeals to them.

Character Poem

A third poetic form that helps trigger a student's response to literature is the character poem, a variation of the biopoem, popularized by, among others, Anne Gere in *Roots in the Sawdust: Writing To Learn Across The Disciplines* (p. 222). Although less prescriptive than the biopoem, the character poem, like the biopoem, helps students focus and reflect on the complexities of a given character by completing statements about a character as elicited by the poem's format and a reader's understanding of a character. One possible format for a character poem follows; students may choose to complete only those lines that seem applicable to the literary character they are trying to describe.

(first name of character)________________________
Lives in ____________________ where ____________
Hears ______________________________________,
Sees _______________________________________,
Touches ____________________________________,
Needs ______________________________________,
Fears ______________________________________,
Gives ______________________________________,
Wonders ____________________________________,
Dreams _____________________________________,
Believes ___________________________________,
Loves ___________________________________, and
Is ____.
(last name of character) ________________________

Joshua, an eighth-grader, uses the character poem to record his interpretation of Robin Hood after reading Ann McGovern's *Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest:*

Robin
Lives in Sherwood Forest where he
Hears about the archery contest,
Sees the evil sheriff as an enemy,
Fears nothing,
Gives money to the poor,
Dreams about maid Marian,
Loves the feel of a bow in his hands and
Is happy to live in Sherwood Forest
Hood.

Sixth-grader Luke also uses poetry to capture his understanding of a character as he describes Omri from Lynn Banks' *The Indian in the Cupboard*:

Omri
Lives in London where he
Hears the sounds of the city,
Needs comfort,
Fears the skinheads,
Dreams of his Indian coming to life, and then
Is in fear for the safety of his little friend
Omri

Responding to a short story by Sandra Cisneros, Robin focuses on what she finds to be most important about Esperanza, a character in "The House on Mango Street," in this character poem:

Esperanza
Lives in Mexico where she
Hears Mexican records sounding like "songs of sobbing,"
Sees her grandmother sadly sitting by the window

**Touches her cold and greasy rice sandwich,
Needs to feel like she belongs,
Fears ending up like her grandmother,
Dreams of leaving the red house on Mango Street,
Believes she has a story to tell,
Plans to pack books and paper and say good bye to Mango
Cordero**

By writing a character poem, readers not only explore and re-think their initial reaction to a character but also return to the text to find specific details to support a more informed interpretation.

Poem for Two Voices

A fourth type of poetic response, both fun and creative, is a poem for two voices, a poetic form popularized by Paul Fleischman in his poetry books, *I Am Phoenix* and *Joyful Noise*. In composing a poem for two voices as a way to respond to fiction, the reader chooses two characters from a book or story and shows how each of them looks at the same thing in a different way. Sometimes one character speaks in the poem, sometimes the other character speaks, and sometimes they speak together. Two people or two groups of people are needed to read the poem; each person or group reads one column.

Amanda chooses to respond to Madeleine L'Engles' *A Wrinkle in Time* by exploring the perspectives of characters Meg and Charles Wallace. She writes:

A Poem for Two Voices

My name is	**My name is**
Meg.	**Charles Wallace.**
We are so different.	**We are so different.**
The storm makes	**The storm makes**
me feel	**me feel**
scared.	**hungry.**
I think the noises	**I think the noises**
outside are	**outside are**
a tramp.	**Mrs. Whatsit.**
I believe I am very	**I believe I am very**
stupid.	**smart.**
But we are alike.	**But we are alike.**
WE MISS FATHER!	**WE MISS FATHER!**
I love you.	**I love you, too.**

Luke also uses a poem for two voices to demonstrate his understanding of two points of view found in Lynne R. Banks' *The Indian in the Cupboard:*

A Poem for Two Voices

Blood brothers	**Blood brothers**
we are.	**we are.**
One cowboy	**One Indian**
both small	**both small**
in a giant's	**in a giant's**
world.	**world.**
And we tried to kill	**Once we were**
each other.	**enemies**
Now we are friends!	**Now we are friends!**

Finally, Michael responds to J. Street's *Weep No More, My Lady* by showing in a poem for two voices how Skeeter and Jonathan approach the same situation from very different perspectives.

A Poem for Two Voices

Uncle Jess calls me	**Mr. Cash calls me**
Skeeter.	**Jonathan.**
I love my dog,	**I love my dog,**
M'Lady,	**M'Lady,**
and "nobody gonna	**as I command her**
take her	**to get in the cage**
away from me."	**to leave me.**
Only a boy,	**Nearly a man,**
I make my home	**I make my home**
in lonely	**in lonely**
bayou country.	**bayou country.**
"Certain things are	**"Certain things are**
wrong."	**right."**
"Nothing ain't gonna	**"Nothing ain't gonna**
ever change that.	**ever change that.**
When you learn that	**When you learn that**
You're fit'n to be	**You're fit'n to be**
a man."	**a man."**

Just as in found poetry, students may quote words and phrases from the text as they create a poem for two voices.

Repeat Poster Poem

A fifth kind of poetry, repeat poster poetry, lends itself well to collaborative student writing but may also be written individually. After selecting a main idea or theme from a book, the reader writes several statements about this theme, all beginning with the same word or phrase. Next the reader designs a shape representing the major theme, writes one statement on each of the cut-out shapes, and glues the shapes in rows on a poster. To read the poster poem, one can move in any direction (up and down, diagonally, forward, backward, or skip about at random), choosing about five of the statements. The poem may change for each reading, depending on the choices the reader makes.

Sixth-grader Mike's repeat poster poem, inspired by Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon's *The Black Gryphon*, may read:

War is the only enemy
War changes people
War is not the way life should be
The only true enemy is war itself.

Luke's repeat poster poem, based on Brian Jacque's *Salamandastron*, also offers a series of metaphors:

Friendship is being there
Friendship is of the heart
Friendship is sharing a mug of Octoberal
with a hare
Friendship is a feast
Friendship is trying to understand a mole

Repeat poster poems not only help guide the reader's response to a given piece of young adult fiction but, when displayed in the classroom or media center, also may inspire others to read the book.

Responding to young adult fiction through writing poetry encourages young readers to discover and to construct meaning in a text thoughtfully and creatively. Poetic forms suggested by the teacher help trigger and shape student responses. Writing a poetic response also offers young readers a rich and rewarding way to understand, embrace, and celebrate what others -- even a mole -- have to say to them.

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Multiple Intelligences in the English Class: An Overview

Peter Smagorinsky

The author reviews the theory of multiple intelligences and offers suggestions for classroom instruction.

bout ten years ago, the high school in which I taught instituted a speech program. Every sophomore in the school would devote one semester to an untracked course that involved the students in public speaking, oral interpretation, improvisation, role playing, and other activities involving oral communication. At that time I taught juniors and wanted to be able to follow up the speech program with students in their subsequent learning. With release time provided by my supervision of a student teacher, I was able to observe a number of speech classes, discuss their purpose with the teachers, find out what the students were learning, and build on the speech program activities with my juniors.

My incorporation of the speech activities into the junior curriculum profoundly affected my approach to teaching. My classes had always been activity-oriented, but my exposure to the dynamic activities in the speech classes opened up new possibilities to me. When bringing their knowledge of oral communication into my junior English classes, the students were both tremendously imaginative and thoroughly acclimated to an environment that valued the generation of non-written "texts" as a means of meaning-construction. Students performing oral interpretations of poems or dramatizing literature would bring a wide range of resources to the projects, often providing musical accompaniment, elaborate sets, costumes, and even special effects: one group of students performing a nocturnal scene from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" not only fogged the room with a cauldron of dry ice but added pyrotechnics by darkening the room and striking a lighter beneath the jet from an aerosol can, providing a memorable (if perilous) rendition of the literary moment.

In the following years, in addition to the core of writing I required, I increasingly encouraged students to represent their understanding of literature through unconventional types of compositions, even when I changed jobs and taught in a school that did not have the preparatory speech program. My rationale for emphasizing multiple forms of compositions was that the students were, almost without exception, highly engaged in the projects they would undertake, often far more so than they were when being evaluated through conventional writing. In particular, students who were low achievers were often among the most enthusiastic and productive workers on these projects. Students who were loath to turn in simple homework assignments would spend all weekend producing elaborate video productions dramatizing their interpretations of literary relationships. Above all, the students, besides being engaged, were clearly demonstrating an understanding of literature in ways not accessible through their writing. Not only were they active, they were learning in the process.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

In 1989 I came across an article by Howard Gardner that provided my introduction to his theory of multiple intelligences. After reading this article I wrote Project Zero at Harvard, where Gardner is co-director, and ordered a number of related publications, which I read with great interest. Finally I read *Frames of Mind* (1983) Gardner's most complete articulation of his theory. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences provided a powerful psychological foundation to support the pedagogical approach I had developed, giving it greater authority than I had simply from my observations of enthusiastic student involvement.

While I had always been confident that what I had been doing all along was worthwhile, Gardner's work enabled me to justify non-linguistic activities with a powerful, comprehensive theory of psychology, one that allowed me to overcome the skepticism of some of my colleagues who claimed that

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my students were "only playing games" rather than using and developing their intelligence when they would act, dance, draw, soundtrack, and otherwise express their conception of the English curriculum.

Howard Gardner developed his theory of multiple intelligences through his work as a neurologist and through his extensive reading of cultural history. According to Gardner, people of Western culture are very limited in how they view the idea of "intelligence." In particular, Westerners have been seduced by the notion that intelligence can be measured quantitatively through standardized tests; Gardner has facetiously referred to this approach as being "Westist, Testist, and Bestist." The sovereignty of testing has been encouraged by the testing industry, which has insinuated itself into school assessment to the extent that standardized tests are widely believed to have the capacity to identify the "true" achievement levels of students and, presumably, teachers. These tests are questionable on many grounds, as countless critics have maintained; this article is far too limited in scope to review all of the problems attendant to standardized testing, many of which are already familiar to *EJ* readers.

The introduction of multiple intelligence activities must be accompanied by large changes in the values of the classroom.

From Gardner's perspective standardized tests are thoroughly misguided in the *breadth* of thinking they test. Gardner has argued extensively that standardized tests—and schools in general—tend to focus on two types of thinking, one's *linguistic* intelligence and one's *mathematical/logical* intelligence. This emphasis is quite evident in the accepted division of standardized tests into "verbal" and "mathematical" categories (even though it is questionable whether the "verbal" sections of tests provide a true measure of one's verbal ability, given that they present students with reactive rather than generative problems).

Schools not only allow standardized tests to assess them according to these limited dimensions, they also follow suit with curriculum development. The standard curriculum includes in its academic core subjects that are amenable to a logical/analytic approach, including English classes which, as Arthur Applebee (1993) has amply documented, focus on analytic approaches to thinking about literature.

A LOOK AT THE SEVEN INTELLIGENCES

Gardner maintains that in taking this narrow approach schools ignore reality, both historical and contemporary. Historically, the linguistic and mathematical/logical intelligences so exclusively valued by modern American schools have figured peripherally in the essential work of other cultures.

Among Gardner's favorite examples is the ancient sailor who spent much of life at sea, navigating ships according to an understanding of the positioning of the sun (and at night, of the stars), recognizing weather patterns, sizing up waves, repairing and maintaining the ship facility, getting sustenance from knowing how to fish and preserve foods attained through trade, and having the savvy to barter effectively once on land. The operation of the ship required sailors to employ *spatial* intelligence, which Gardner identifies as the ability to configure space in order to pose and solve problems. Spatial intelligence was fundamental to the survival of sailors and was their most important means of problem-solving.

Spatial intelligence is not simply an artifact of an ancient culture, however, but vital to life for many in the modern world. Many people, for instance, still fish for a living, requiring the same skills as the ancient navigators described by Gardner. Tailors, landscape architects, football coaches, engineers, artists, and others whose work requires the order of space all rely primarily on spatial intelligence in order to make their way successfully in the world. With the explosion of the telecommunications and computer industry and the resultant emphasis on producing and comprehending images, spatial intelligence will undoubtedly become increasingly important in economic development in our society, linking the future to its ancient roots in navigation, architecture, agriculture (in terms of the design of tools and facilities), and other fundamental human endeavors.

Spatial intelligence is one of seven types of intelligence identified by Gardner as being fundamental to human performance over the centuries and across cultures. As noted, *linguistic* and *logical/mathematical* intelligence are two of the others and the ones that receive the most attention in

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American schools. Additionally, Gardner identifies other intelligences.

Musical intelligence is the ability to produce or appreciate music. Musicians, music critics, dancers, figure skaters, and others who must understand the use of rhythm, tone, melody, and other aspects of musical expression are blessed with musical intelligence.

Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence is the ability to use the body effectively in order to solve problems. Gardner distinguishes between having athletic skills and having bodily/kinesthetic intelligence; a strong and fast athlete does not necessarily use that physical giftedness in intelligent ways. Rather, a player who can "see" a playing field well and make the appropriate moves; a thespian who can suggest pathos with the arch of an eyebrow; a massage therapist who has an understanding of the body's needs and an ability to apply appropriate pressure; these and others who use their bodies to solve problems possess bodily/kinesthetic intelligence.

The ability to read and respond to the needs of others is *interpersonal* intelligence. Good teachers, therapists, salespeople, politicians, and others who deal effectively with the public often demonstrate interpersonal intelligence in their communion with people.

Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to look within oneself for self-knowledge and understanding. People who are highly reflective have intrapersonal intelligence, including those who seek and benefit from therapy, those who learn from their mistakes, those who practice yoga, and others who have the ability to come to a greater understanding of themselves.

COMBINING THE INTELLIGENCES

Most activities in life require some combination of these intelligences. A quarterback throwing a football needs to have bodily/kinesthetic intelligence to develop proper passing technique and also the spatial intelligence to know how to "lead" a receiver so that ball and player arrive in the same place at the same time. A building remodeler must have spatial intelligence to know how to reconfigure the space of a household and also the interpersonal intelligence to deal effectively with customers, the mathematical intelligence to operate a budget, and the bodily/kinesthetic intelligence to manipulate tools properly.

Although everyone probably has each of these intelligences to some degree, most people have strengths in a few areas but not all. We see this imbalance all of the time, probably most of all in ourselves. A friend of mine is widely known as a good writer, for instance, but has recently confessed that she cannot wrap a birthday present to save her life. I too am capable of writing, but am a menace on the dance floor, have no idea of how to decorate a room (my preferred scheme is to line the furniture up along the walls), can't understand physics (I'm always amazed that airplanes can actually *fly*), and when I draw pictures with my children, it's hard to tell my horses from my dogs (or my trees for that matter).

And so, to return to our previous examples, the football quarterback who has little endowment in interpersonal intelligence may be able to deliver footballs in a timely fashion but may alienate players on his team to the extent that they neglect to block effectively for him, thus reducing his overall effectiveness. The building remodeler who cannot manage a budget or relate to customers may go out of business. And if I ever have to sing for my supper, I'll surely starve.

WRITING AND THINKING

Having used Gardner's theory to face my personal shortcomings, I turned my attention to my teaching. My understanding of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences led me not only to incorporate more unconventional means of response and expression in my high school English classes, it enabled me to do so with greater confidence that my students were experiencing all of the good thinking that I (and most others) had once considered the sole province of *writing*. Janet Emig's characterization (1977) of "writing as a unique mode of learning" has influenced English teachers since the 1970s, justifying the idea that "writing across the curriculum" is the solution to the problem that students are not thinking sufficiently in their academic coursework, even in courses (say, architectural drawing or mathematics) in which writing is not the primary vehicle for communication and representation. My reading of Gardner suggested to me that students who would *draw* or *dance* an interpretation of literature were engaging in many of the same developmental processes they would experience when writing, and perhaps engage in other important processes as well that were *not* available through writing.

I had no solid evidence to support this possibility, however, and so in the last few years have undertaken a study of what students think about when they compose artistic texts to interpret literature.

A CLASSROOM STUDY

With John Coppock (1994), I conducted research in an alternative school to study the composing processes of students engaged in non-written literary interpretations. In order to study their composing processes, we filmed students as they read a story, chose collaborators (or decided to work alone), discussed potential mediums for interpretation, imputed meaning to the story, and worked out an interpretive "text" such as a dance, a painting, a song, or other type of composition.

The story they responded to was William Carlos Williams' "The Use of Force," in which a doctor narrates an account of a house call he makes during a diphtheria epidemic. The doctor must extract a throat culture from a young girl who has displayed symptoms of the illness. The girl battles him savagely and hysterically to prevent him from examining her throat, and her parents try to help the doctor by holding her down and shaming her into complying. During the course of the struggle the doctor develops contempt for the parents and passion towards the girl. Against his rational judgment, the doctor becomes lost in "a blind fury" to attack and subdue her. In "a final unreasoning assault," he overpowers the girl and discovers her "secret" of "tonsils covered with membrane." The story ends with a final act of fury in which the girl attacks the doctor "while tears of defeat blinded her eyes."

The teacher had stocked the room with an abundance of artistic supplies such as paper, pencils, chalk, and markers; musical instruments including both a sophisticated keyboard synthesizer and a simpler keyboard instrument; a computer with a graphics program; tinker toys; and paper and instruments for writing or drawing. In addition, students could go to their on-site dormitory rooms to get other supplies, and this opportunity enabled students to supplement the provisions with guitars, musical tapes from their private collections, props for plays, and other materials.

After filming the entire episode, we took four sets of students and, in separate sessions, played back the videotape and asked them to recall and discuss what they had been thinking about during their reading and response. Through this procedure we learned much about how these students developed their interpretive texts. The students we interviewed included one boy who drew a picture representing the relationship between the two central characters in the story; two girls who choreographed a dance representing this same relationship; four boys who worked on a sophisticated keyboard synthesizer to create a soundtrack that represented the changing moods and rhythms of the story; and a group of three boys and one girl who scripted and dramatized the story.

The interviews revealed that in composing their texts the students engaged in a variety of processes that teachers value in writing. Students drew on a wealth of personal experiences to inform their reading of the story and to compose their texts; they empathized with the characters by relating parallel experiences; they imbued their texts with personal meaning; and they represented their understanding symbolically. Further, students drew on previously-read texts both to inform their reading and to create their own texts; they drew on historical knowledge to interpret the story and create their own texts; they produced compositions that were sensitive to the mood and tempo of the story; they generated alternative endings to the story through their interpretations. Finally, students viewed their work on this text as part of a larger composing process; they recognized the ambiguity of the story, their own texts, and human experience; and they strove to communicate their understanding of the story to others. Additionally, the process of creating these interpretive texts appeared to serve a dual purpose: the students' thoughts both *shaped and were shaped by* the texts they composed. In other words, two simultaneous processes took place. On the one hand, as you would expect, students' thoughts about the story served as the material from which they developed their interpretations. On the other hand—and more significantly—*the process of composing their interpretive texts served to change the way they thought about the story.* That is, the process of artistic composing served an instrumental purpose in students' thinking about the story, enabling them to think through their interpretations in such a way that their ideas developed in complexity through the act of composing.

ACCOUNTS OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

Students from each case study reported drawing on personal experiences to compose their texts. Martha, who participated in the choreographed interpretation, played the role of the girl in the story. ("Martha," like all student names reported, is a pseudonym.) She said in her interview that she empathized strongly with the girl; that she, too, hated to have people look inside her and get to know her. She said that she hated going to the dentist and have him open her mouth to look inside; and just like the girl in the story, often fought the dentist's efforts to look within her.

Martha's portrayal of the girl through her role in the dance, then, was informed by tremendous fears similar to those experienced by her character. The experience of kinesthetically playing out those fears through her participation in the dance enabled her to create a personally meaningful spatial text, one that allowed her to infuse personal meaning into the written signs of the story. Her process of composition revealed the process that Rosenblatt calls "interinanimation" (1978) which readers experience when participating in an aesthetic response to literature.

Martha and her collaborator, Jane, created spatial relationships in order to depict their understanding of the story. Jane reported that they represented the adversarial relationship between the doctor and girl through their positioning relative to one another: "When the doctor is trying to get her around to his way of thinking, we figuratively did it by going around in circles opposite each other." Jane and Martha also created spatial relationships to depict the characters' emotional states during the story. In order to do so, they needed to reconstruct the story line.

In Williams' text the story ends with the girl attacking the doctor in a blind fury following his forcible extraction of the throat culture. Jane and Martha decided to focus on the doctor's feelings, rather than to follow the story line strictly:

> Jane: We did another dance at the very end and we were practicing on it and like she's sheltered like the little girl is hidden. She won't let anybody find out what her secret is and that's what she's doing. She is hiding and the doctor is trying to follow in her footsteps to try to figure out what is going on. And at the very end when it says that she did have [diphtheria], in the dance we made her die. She just fell and the doctor picked her up and carried her. Because like we were going to have the doctor die with her because it was like the third patient he had died and he was dying inside, but [our teacher] didn't really like that. And after we started thinking you know how he gets underneath the skin real hard, it is like we started thinking about it too and he doesn't really die. He tries to help her and stuff. We went further than the story went.

Here Jane and Martha attempted to represent the figurative death of the character by physically having her die. After their teacher's intervention they constructed another figurative representation of the story's ending, as described by Jane:

> That is when they finally figured it out. It is like at the very end they walked together. It's like they walk two steps and when you do a little pause, the doctor shelters her and just looks at her because he's died with her. His whole life has just gone down the drain because it's another kid, he feels it's all his fault this time. And that is how I really felt when I was doing the dance.

In composing their own interpretive text they focused on the characters' emotions rather than on the literal story line provided by Williams. Their focus on the doctor's emotions required them to rewrite the ending and represent it through spatial relations. Their composition of their choreographed text, then, enabled them to play out the emotions of the characters in ways not available through writing.

Westerners have been seduced by the notion that intelligence can be measured quantitatively through standardized tests.

How does one assess creativity, particularly in domains in which one has little formal knowledge?

A group of four boys approached their interpretation quite differently. They used a sophisticated keyboard instrument to compose a soundtrack that depicted the changing moods and rhythms of the story. None of the four was a trained musician; the keyboard instrument, however, provided such a great range of potential sounds and dubbing capabilities that even a person with rudimentary knowledge could program it for a soundtrack. The boys reported that their musical accompaniment was intended to represent the story line:

> Cory: They had this funky like *Star Trek* sound going on and I said, "This has nothing to do with the little girl not wanting to show her parents how she had the disease that could kill her, and they were like "r-r-r-r-r-r," and they had this funky sound on, and I was like, you know, at first, you know, you need to have like a fight going, and then at the end where she was so enraged over—so enraged from defeat, that kind of mellowed out some because it, it would show the feelings and the end of defeat that the little girl was going through.
>
> Q: So did you say that the loud part showed the rage?
>
> Cory: Yeah, and her struggling, you know, how, having a kind of an intense sound because of her struggling, not wanting to open her mouth, not wanting to let that, that doctor do a throat culture.
>
> Q: Uh huh. And then the mellow sound was her.
>
> **Jake:** Defeat.

As noted, the interpretive texts revealed the students' thinking about the story, and the process of composing the texts changed their thinking about the story. Jane, one of the dancers, reported that her feelings about the doctor changed through her portrayal of him:

> I finally figured out what it is like to be in the position of the doctor. That is why I didn't hate the doctor so much because I knew how he felt. . . . [I learned about] how the doctor felt. I knew his feelings, but knowing it and feeling it is totally different things. [I learned] about myself, that I can feel their feelings. I see how they feel.

The process of composing nonverbal texts also changed students' understanding of the story. Dexter, who drew a picture of the relationship between the doctor and the girl, related that the meaning of the drawing changed as his picture developed. For instance, Dexter's depiction of the doctor was quite threatening; yet he revealed that when he started his drawing he was not certain what the threatening figure would stand for:

> Dexter: I wasn't really sure if it was him going to be the doctor or not until the end of the story, I mean, until the end of the drawing, because I was thinking, well, it could be this person that she, that she has imaged in her mind and uh—or this could be an analogy of diphtheria, but then I said it doesn't matter. It's just a doctor. It was going through her mind, [inaudible] but I liked to read. The first time I'd read the doctor; the second, the analogy. It's just through that one story.
>
> Q: So you mean, even after you drew the face and everything, it wasn't the doctor yet?
>
> Dexter: Uh huh. I mean it could have been a lot of things. It depends on your view point of the picture, but what I was thinking is—it was the doctor and then it was an analogy of the whole attitude of the story, and then it was the, her parents' attitude, or the parents, especially her parents.

Dexter's attribution of multiple meanings to the dominant figure in the drawing suggests that when he created his own text he ascribed meanings for that figure that he had not considered prior to having drawn it, meanings (such as the mother or a disease) which the graphic image itself does not readily suggest. Not only did the picture represent his view of the characters, the process of drawing the picture enabled him to develop new ideas about the story. The process Dexter experienced through drawing is similar to the one that Applebee (1981) attributes to writing. Applebee argues that educators should consider:

> writing as a tool for exploring a subject. . . . [W]riting can be a powerful process for discovering meaning rather than just transcribing an idea that is in some sense waiting fully developed in the writer's mind. Our language provides a whole panoply of devices that not only convey our meaning to others, but help us develop the meaning for ourselves. . . . [W]e tend to overlook the extent to

> which these devices help us generate new ideas "at the point of utterance." (100)

TRANSMEDIATION

Also overlooked is the potential that other tools have for enabling similar processes. As the experiences of these students illustrate, non-written texts are capable of providing the same potential for enabling the construction of meaning as written texts. Yet their production is rarely sanctioned in English/language arts classes.

Throughout history artists have engaged in "transmediation" (Suhor 1984); that is, they have interpreted one type of text through another. Biblical scenes and stories have been interpreted through paintings, sculptures, masses, dances, and other mediums. Poets have written odes on Grecian urns and other works of art. Animators have interpreted classical music through stories, as illustrated in the film "Fantasia." Architects have represented values through building designs. The point is that all of these forms of transmediation have been culturally valued as means of constructing meaning and have been respected and revered by the public as well as by the artists themselves. The appreciation of non-written interpretations of life and literature has not, however, broken through the barriers of the English/language arts classroom, where writing has established exclusive rights "as a unique mode of learning." The research I have reported on students' artistic response to literature suggests that such a view is not simply wrong, but potentially disabling to students as well when, as Gardner has argued, students' most potent means of thinking may come through areas other than the logical and linguistic realms.

RECONCEPTUALIZING TEACHING AND LEARNING

One point I need to stress is that any effort to change instruction cannot be done piecemeal, but must be part of a larger effort to reconceptualize teaching and learning. John Ackerman has criticized the "writing to learn" movement for insisting that by including "writing to learn" activities in a classroom, teaching and learning will change. Ackerman (1993) argues that "the technology of writing will not, on its own, bring about the intellectual and social changes that our field has traditionally valued" (351); rather than being an agent of change, it is part of a greater change in how we view teaching and learning.

In other words, if a teacher who lectures incessantly suddenly starts assigning journals, the introduction of journals into students' meaning-making repertoire will likely change very little else about the class unless the teacher makes an effort to make wholesale changes in the overriding conceptions of classroom process that govern life for teacher and students.

Similarly, through research conducted with Pamela Fly (Smagorinsky and Fly 1993, 1994; cf. Marshall, Smagorinsky, and Smith 1994), I have found that using small groups does not necessarily guarantee that students will engage in lively, interactive discussions; rather, the type of discussion that takes place in a small group is in part a function of the type of discussion that takes place during the continuum of discussions that take place in the class as a whole. "Small groups" are not a panacea for involving students, as is often believed, but rather are highly dependant on the patterns of discourse that surround them in the overall instruction.

My point in making these references is that a teacher simply cannot begin, out of the blue, to allow students to dance interpretations of literature and expect immediate growth-producing results. The introduction of multiple intelligence activities must be accompanied by large changes in the values of the classroom, and concomitant changes in what students believe to be appropriate and acceptable ways of thinking and communicating in an English class.

A teacher, for instance, needs to reconsider the whole issue of assessment when pondering the introduction of multiple intelligence activities into the core curriculum. How does one assess creativity, particularly in domains in which one has little formal knowledge? Are student interpretations to be valued according to the apparent quality of the finished product, or according to what they appear to have learned through the process of creating it? How central are multiple intelligence activities to be in terms of overall assessment; in other words, should they displace conventional evaluations such as writing, or supplement them as extra credit opportunities? Must all students participate in multiple intelligence activities, or should students who are primarily strong in logical analysis be permitted to choose not to engage in them? Should students only operate in their areas of strength, or should they distribute their responses amidst the areas in which they are weak as well?

Of course, there are no definitive answers to these questions; teachers must sort out the answers according to their personal situations, including the overall values of the schools and communities in which they teach. My point is that multiple intelligence activities, like "writing to learn" opportunities, small groups, portfolios, and other pedagogical methods, are not in and of themselves educational panaceas, but activities that may present excellent learning opportunities when used thoughtfully in the midst of a comprehensive reconceptualization of teaching and learning.

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Note

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EJ SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

What is English?

"Upon the answer to the question 'What is English?' depends the status of the subject. Unless a good and proper answer is found and that right speedily, the place of eminence which it so justly occupies will be taken by what their proponents call the 'social studies.' Obviously mere drill on correctness—or 'accuracy' if you please—cannot justly occupy one-fifth, more or less, of the school course. Competence in the use of the vernacular for practical purposes is better, because more inclusive. It suggests speaking and reading, as well as writing.

"Next comes useful information—who's who and what he wrote—the modicum of knowledge of things literary which enables intelligence in ordinary conversation and which guides in the choice of one's reading. To these add reasonable emphasis on capacity for enjoyment, not of skilful technique nor of criticism, but of the vicarious experience itself, the phase of life and feeling embodied. This means of course ability to interpret the literary language, the language of imagination and suggestion instead of the language of fact and abstract analysis."

James Fleming Hosic. 1920. "Editorial." *EJ* 9:10 (Dec.): 600.

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MULTIPLE WAYS OF KNOWING: CURRICULUM IN A NEW KEY

CHRISTINE H. LELAND AND
JEROME C. HARSTE

A critical insight for language arts educators is that knowing and learning are not merely language processes, nor are they merely cognitive processes.

The children in Becky Lane's second-grade class at School 92 in Indianapolis were discussing how they might go about drawing a picture of what the story *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (Steig, 1969) meant to them personally. Natalie immediately empathized with Sylvester and said that the story made her think about how much she loved her family and how sad she would be if she had to stay all alone. Dominique said that the story made her think about magic wishes and what she would wish for if she had the chance. When Jason said that the story was about a donkey who turned into a rock, several children pushed him to think more deeply. "Yes, it was about a donkey," Latoria said, "but, what does the story mean to YOU? What does it make you think about?" Latoria was asking Jason to stretch himself, to make personal connections and offer a personal interpretation. This is exactly what "Sketch to Stretch" as an instructional invitation is meant to do (Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988, p. 353). Children read or listen to a story, and then they are invited to move from language into art to show what the story means to them.

In this class, as in Carole Hall's second-grade class next door, the art produced by the children in response to this invitation was quite diverse. Although a few children simply drew pictures of Sylvester or his family, most used the opportunity to express their own feelings about their families, what it's like to be alone, and what they would wish for if they had a magic pebble. James drew piles of money (Figure 1a); Whitney drew himself playing basketball "one on one" with Michael Jordan (Figure 1b); Victoria drew a new bike (Figure 1c). Other children, like Brittani (Figure 1d), drew pictures of their families. In talking about her picture, Brittani said that she loved her family and would hate to be all alone. David, however, drew a very detailed picture of himself, smiling broadly as he sat by a campfire next to a tent (Figure 1e). He said that he liked to be alone when he was camping in his backyard. Although David was the only one who had positive feelings about being alone, his opinion was readily accepted by the other children.

A New Perspective

These experiences in Mrs. Lane's and Mrs. Hall's second-grade classrooms are part of an effort to find out what happens when students and teachers are encouraged to use multiple ways of knowing in mediating their experiences with the world. Historically, language arts programs have been largely verbocentric, focusing more on "language" than on "arts." Within this tradition, language has been seen as the dominant way of knowing, particularly in the context of schooling, where oral or written language is thought to be the necessary precursor for acquiring knowledge. According to Moffett (1992), "Schools have seldom bothered much about learning divorced from language. Most traditional subjects are cast into language and cannot be learned without words" (p. 86). The arts have assumed a secondary importance, often relegated in elementary schools to the end of the day or the end of the week, when the children are too tired to do the "important" subjects. "Because there is such a bifurcation of cognition and affect in our educational theories, we plan for students to think in the morning and to feel in the afternoon. We teach what they need to 'think' about in the morning and the things they don't really have to 'think' about in the afternoon" (Eisner, 1990, p. 36). Recently, however, other warning voices have been heard (Gardner, 1983; Greene, 1990). These authors, too, argue that an overreliance on language for making meaning is unwise; it impedes the development of other ways of knowing and sets unnecessary limits on how and what our students learn. Eisner's (1990) summation of the need for a change in focus cuts to the heart of what education is all about: "As long as schools operate on an essentially linguistic modality that gives place of privilege to a kind of literal, logical, or mathematical form of intelligence, schools limit what youngsters can learn" (p. 37).

Historically, language arts programs have been largely verbocentric, focusing more on "language" than on "arts."

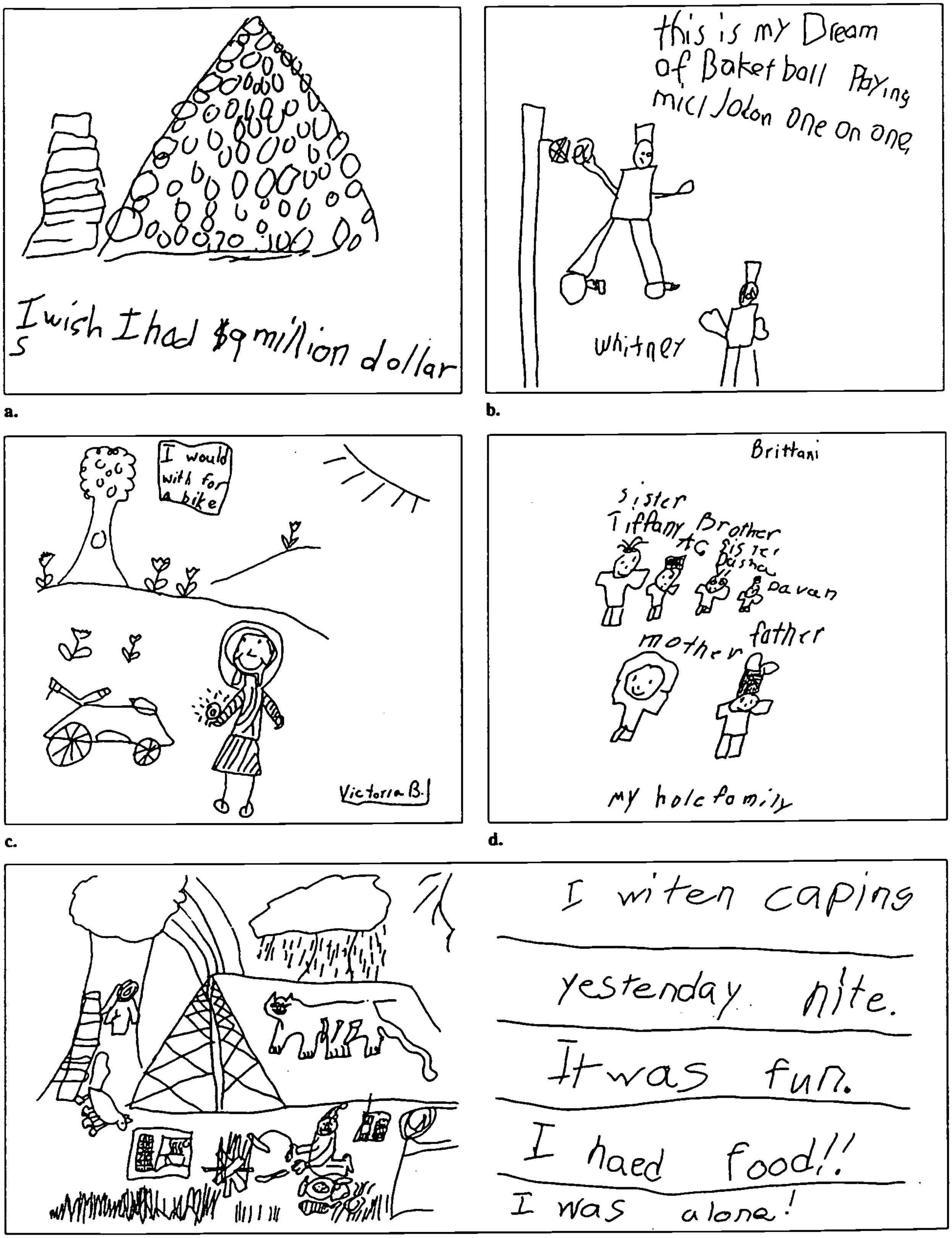
What are these other ways of knowing? According to semiotic theory, they are sign systems which we have created to express meaning and to mediate our world. These sign systems include art, music, mathematics, drama, and language; they offer different perspectives. "Music can express feelings we cannot put into words; language is a better medium for humor than math; yet math can represent concepts that are not easily represented in art, and so on" (Berghoff, 1993, p. 218). The argument has been made by Halliday (1975) that our "culture is itself a semiotic system, a system of meanings or information that is encoded in the behavior potential of the members" (p. 36). The verbal potential (language system) of a culture is but one part of the culture's more general semiotic system. In short, "a constellation of cognitive, aesthetic, and psychomotor skills is brought to the surface when we consider students' abilities to understand and perform in numerous sign systems" (Suhor, 1992, p. 229).

In addition, Gardner (1990) speaks of multiple intelligences. He describes seven intelligences, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial (art, architecture), bodily kinesthetic (athletics, dance), interpersonal (politics, sales), and intrapersonal (knowledge of self). Gardner sees each intelligence as a kind of talent that has been valued by various cultures over time. Unlike Gardner, we see ways of knowing not so much as talents that some may have and others may not have. Rather, we see them as potentials by which all humans might mean. Seeing education in terms of multiple ways of knowing suggests the possibility that new voices can be heard and new perspectives on knowing can come to be valued. The result is not simply more access, but that everyone's education is expanded.

One valuable contribution of the whole language movement has been the insight that successful readers need to be able to make flexible use of cue systems when reading. Whole language began when Kenneth Goodman (1967) observed that all readers use graphophonemic, syntactic, and semantic information simultaneously when reading. What distinguishes successful readers from not-so-successful readers is the flexibility in their use of cue systems when reading. We wish to make a similar argument: In order to be literate, learners need to be able to orchestrate a variety of sign systems to create texts appropriate to the contexts in which they find themselves. Said differently, just as a whole language definition of reading depends on the flexible use of multiple cue systems in language, our new concept of literacy involves the flexible use of multiple sign systems.

It is this hypothesis that we invite readers to explore. In its more moderate form the argument runs: "Communication systems have varying potentials to express particular ideas. If we encourage only those forms of communication that highlight language, many types of meaning will necessarily be neglected because they simply are not amenable to linguistic expression" (Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988). In its more radical form we see the argument as a call to rethink the very premises that undergird learning theory and hence education. A good language arts program is one that expands the communication potential of all learners through the orchestration and use of multiple ways of knowing for purposes of ongoing interpretation and inquiry into the world. According to this new definition, a good language arts program encourages learners to move among the

A good language arts program is one that expands the communication potential of all learners through the orchestration and use of multiple ways of knowing for purposes of ongoing interpretation and inquiry into the world.


I wish I had $9 million dollar s
this is my Dream of Baketball Paying micl Jodon One on one
whitney
I would with for a bike
Victoria B.
Brittani
sister Tiffany
Brother AC
sister Dasha
Davan
mother
father
my hole family
I witen caping yestenday nite. It was fun. I haed food!! I was alone!

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Figure 1. Samples of Children's Responses to the Invitation to Draw a Picture of What *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* Meant to Them

different sign systems, flexibly using each one to gain new perspectives and propel learning and inquiry.

The movement between and among sign systems is known as transmediation. Transmediation occurs when meanings formed in one communication system are recast in the context and expression planes of a new sign system (for example, we take something we know verbally and recast it in art). We see transmediation as a fundamental process in literacy. Movement between and among communication systems provides the opportunity for new perspectives on our knowing and, hence, for the expression of an expanded range of meanings. Transmediation encourages reflection and supports learners in making new connections.

David connected one aspect of the story *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (Steig, 1969) to a camping experience that he remembered. Up until this moment he had made no contribution to the class discussion about the book. Transmediation supported him in making personal connections and in reaching out to the group. According to Bateson (1972), learning always involves "finding patterns that connect." Although personal connections can be made through language, they can also be made through the use of alternate sign systems. David knew that he didn't feel the same way as the other members of his class, but he wasn't sure why. He was hesitant to draw at first, saying that he didn't know what the story meant to him. When he finally began, he said that he would draw a picture of a time when he was all by himself, just like the time Sylvester became a rock on Strawberry Hill. As he worked on his picture, however, David became more animated and enthusiastic about what he was doing. He began to talk about the fact that although Sylvester had felt hopeless and miserable, he had enjoyed being alone in his tent. By the time the picture was finished, David had become personally involved and constructed his own meaning of the story. While he had been silent during the class discussion, he now had a voice and was eager to share his picture with the group and talk about what the story meant to him.

Inquiry-Based Curriculum

Say "curriculum" to most educators and what they think of is mathematics, science, social studies, language arts, and so forth. This association is so strong that even when teachers are asked to organize their language arts curriculum around units of study, the typical response is to find a topic and then web what one might do in science, social studies, mathematics, language, and so forth. This approach prioritizes the disciplines rather than the process of inquiry.

An alternate approach is to explore what curriculum might look like when it is organized around the inquiry questions that children ask instead of being organized around preselected material from the disciplines. In this case, students are encouraged to choose a topic, explore their personal relationship to the topic, and then use the disciplines as heuristic devices for learning more about the topic. Instead of seeing the disciplines as propellers of curriculum, we can reconceptualize them as research tools and encourage students to find out how different disciplines provide new perspectives and different answers to their questions. For example, a student studying the sun would get different kinds of assistance from the content knowledge of various disciplines. Biology would provide information about the relationship of the sun to plant and animal life. History would provide information about past beliefs and practices relating to the sun. Chemistry would provide information about the physical composition of the sun. Literature could provide access to the world of mythology and an exploration of the role that the sun has played in human thinking across time.

Examples of inquiry-based curricula in action are rare since the most common methodology found in classrooms today focuses on questions that are given to students by teachers or textbooks. Instead of using students' own inquiry as the underlying structure, most "mandated curriculum is loaded with someone else's voice asking all of the questions and demanding all of the answers" (Copenhaver, 1993, p. 6). Working with Carolyn Burke as their mentor, Joby Copenhaver and Rise Paynter created an organizational device they called "Discovery Club" as part of their curriculum and invited a fifth-grade class to generate and pursue their own "Wonderful Questions." Discovery Club took place during the last hour of the day, three times a week. Since students were encouraged to be collaborative, they often found it helpful to work in teams where individual members had related research interests. For example, "Eli had a question about how planets were formed, and Steve wanted to know more about the force that kept planets on course. They teamed up with Josh on his questions about the universe" (Copenhaver, 1993, pp. 7–8). The researchers report that they "were struck by the diversity, the complexity, and the honesty of the questions. Kids asked questions we had no ready answers for, and while we teachers may have been occasionally overwhelmed by the complexity of some questions, the students themselves were always willing to collaborate in the exploration of those complex questions" (p. 8).

In an inquiry-based curriculum, the sign systems become research tools as well when students ask, "How would an artist depict this topic? What would the topic be like if music were the mode of expression?" These and other questions support children in exploring the potential of a topic, as well as propel them into research as they, more often than not, end up interviewing musicians, visiting art museums, and the like.

Fortunately, there is more and more research documenting the role that various sign systems play in learning. Hubbard's (1989) investigation of children's use of drawing and writing, and Short's (1990) study of the role of sign systems in children's learning provide snapshots of sociosemiotic curricula at work. More recently, Berghoff's (1993) study of first graders' use of multiple sign systems in their early reading and writing offers a number of insights. In this case, the researcher and classroom teacher worked collaboratively to keep music, art, drama, and math opportunities always present in the environment. In the inquiry into Colonial America, children were invited to be museum curators, inhabit an Indian wigwam, make quilts, read poetry rhythmically to the beat of drums, hear Indian legends, tell math stories using the flannel board cutouts of Pilgrims and the Mayflower, view art of the era, draw portraits of themselves and their friends, and paint with dyes made from squash and berries (Berghoff, 1993, p. 219). In addition, the children used sign systems to recognize or create special places in the room. These places defined relationships and gave the children "permission to create worlds in which they had the power to shape events" (p. 224). Berghoff concluded that the children in this first-grade classroom used a full range of sign systems to engage in socially and intellectually productive processes. The children identified topics of study and then used sign systems and disciplines as a way to gain new insights into these topics.

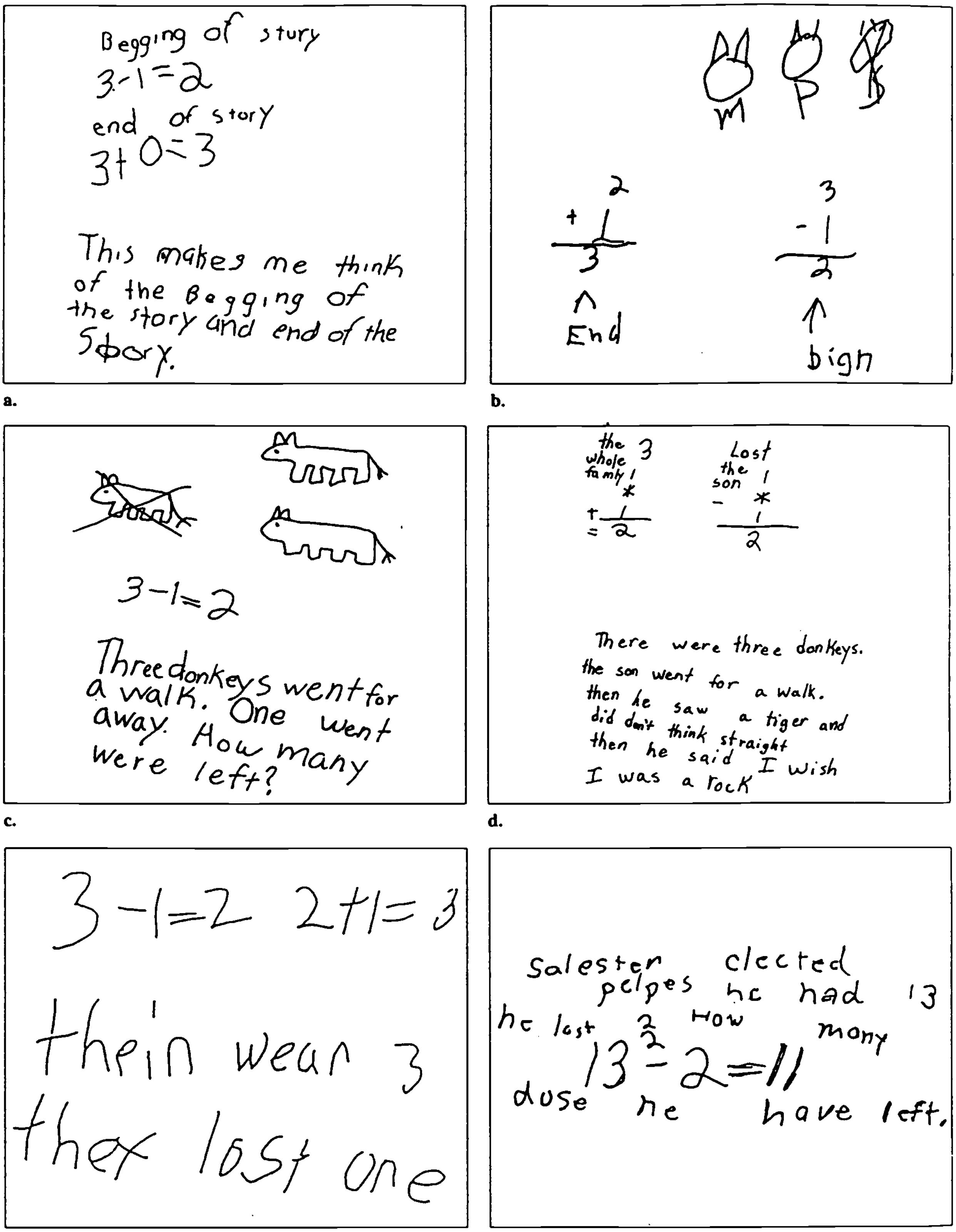
Thinking in Sign Systems

The whole language movement taught language educators how to set up environments that supported children in thinking like readers and writers. Now we need to extend these insights beyond language to sign systems. Specifically, we need to ask, "How can we set up classroom environments that support children in thinking like artists? . . . like mathematicians? . . . like musicians? . . . like dramatists?"

The second graders who transmediated the story *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (Steig, 1969) into art were also invited to consider how they could think about the story as mathematicians. Although the story has no particular emphasis on mathematics, many of the children easily connected the story to their own ideas about how mathematicians think. They used combinations of words, pictures, and numbers to express the idea that the three donkeys at the beginning of the story became two donkeys when Sylvester wished himself into a rock—and then became three again when he was able to wish himself back to his original form (Figure 2a–e). William, however, went beyond the story to create a math problem about Sylvester and his collection of pebbles (Figure 2f). For him, the invitation to "think like a mathematician" provided an opportunity to go beyond a simple retelling of the story with numbers. In William's view, mathematicians are people who see "number stories" all around them. They don't need a special book about a particular number story; they find number stories in everyday events.

To explore what thinking in various sign systems means, Jerry Harste and Jean Anne Clyde worked with 45 teachers in a course on Multiple Ways of Knowing. Teachers taking this course interviewed experts in the sign systems; read in the area (for example, Kirby & Kuykendall, 1991); and experienced and created curricular invitations that they might use in their classrooms to invite children to explore these sign systems. Teacher-researcher teams studied what happened in the classrooms, not so much to prove the value of a multiple-ways-of-knowing curriculum as to unpack the effects that occurred.

Shortly after the course began, Darlene Horton, a graduate student from Louisville, and Vicki Bumann, a teacher from an ungraded primary classroom in the Louisville Public Schools, reported that they had invited their children "to think like inventors." Initially, they said they had asked the children in Vicki's room to take inventory of all the recurring problems they had in their lives. After further discussion with members of their family, each child was asked to select one problem and then devise solutions for it. Victor, a Chapter I student, came to the conclusion that the major problem in his life was that he was always losing his pencil. Darlene and Vicki agreed. The Chapter I teacher was on him constantly because of this problem. Victor's invention in-



Begging of story
3-1=2
end of story
3+0=3

This makes me think of the Begging of the story and end of the Story.

a.

2
+1
3
↑
End

3
-1
2
↑
bign

b.

3-1=2

Three donkeys went for a walk. One went away. How many were left?

c.

the whole famly 3
1
*
+ 1
= 2

Lost the son 1
*
- 1
2

There were three donkeys. the son went for a walk. then he saw a tiger and did don't think straight then he said I wish I was a rock

d.

3-1=2 2+1=3

thein wear 3
thex lost one

e.

salester clected pelpes he had 13
he lost 2 How mony
13-2=11
dose he have left.

f.

Figure 2. Samples of Children's Responses to the Invitation to Think about *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* as a Mathematician

volved a pencil, his desk, and two pieces of Velcro. One strip was glued to the top of his pencil, the other to his desk. At the time that Darlene and Vicki relayed this incident, Victor was ecstatic. He hadn't lost his pencil for a whole week. And there were even more side benefits. Other children were impressed with his success and wanted his invention. By Thursday he had begun selling his patent to other children for 25 cents. By Friday he was the class expert on marketing. Other children began asking for appointments to see if Victor thought their "inventions" would sell.

The Opportunity to Rethink Learning Theory and What Schools in a Democracy Are All About

Experiences like Victor's and David's are important. They remind us that in a democracy, children should have equal access to education. But for many children who are not verbally proficient, access to education is anything but equal. In the final analysis, introduction of a multiple-ways-of-knowing curriculum allowed Victor and David the opportunity to write a new identity and allowed their classmates and teachers to hear their voices. If curricular reform does not result in changed interaction patterns—child to child, child to subject matter, child to teacher—one has to question seriously whether or not anything has really changed. What a theory changes in the day-to-day interaction patterns of a classroom says a lot about whether that theory is important, as well as whether or not it offers anything new.

Although studies of young children (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984) have yielded a number of important findings, two observations are particularly cogent in the present context: First, all instances of literacy were found to be multimodal. When we say a child is engaged in writing, what we really mean is that writing is the system of meaning highlighted in this literacy event. In reality, writing more often than not involves talking to others, reading and rereading, and sometimes even drawing or sketching to get ideas straight or presented as clearly as the writer wants. Although picturebooks contain two (if not more) modes of expression, we typically take a verbocentric stance and talk about them as if the text is all that is important. We found that being literate meant being able to create a multimodal text that was appropriate to the context in which the language learner found himself or herself.

The second observation was that a theory of difference is a theory of learning. Young children were never very interested in demonstrating what it was they already knew about language. They were always more interested in showing us what was new or what they were currently working on. And they were right. By concentrating on the new rather than the known, they naturally set themselves up for more learning. In short, we found that young children were good learners. They stayed at the edge of their learning because that's where there is always the best chance of learning more. The importance of edges in learning is also highlighted in much research on creativity: "By working at the edge of their competence, where the possibility of failure lurks, mental risk takers are more likely to produce creative results" (McAleer, 1989, p. 101).

We found that being literate meant being able to create a multimodal text that was appropriate to the context in which the language learner found himself or herself.

A multiple-ways-of-knowing curriculum builds on these insights by supporting the learner in taking a new perspective on knowing. Such a curriculum is more democratic because it allows children whose dominant ways of knowing are something other than language a way to gain voice and to write their own identities. A multiple-ways-of-knowing curriculum also supports inquiry by appreciating diversity. Children are supported in finding their own voice through any one of several ways of knowing. The public sharing of this knowing creates new edges and propels learning. For too long, education has focused on consensus. Consensus is what objectives, Madeline Hunter, and the various standards projects are all about. Eisner (1990) argues that while uniformity of outcome was regarded as a major educational virtue in the traditional model, the "cultivation of productive differences" is an important goal within the general notion of multiple intelligences (p. 33). Finding ways to provide optimal environments for fostering differences is crucial. Although they might have a general social mission that entails giving students access to certain generic materials, schools should also be places where children "can follow their bliss, develop their proclivities, and foster their intelligences—the ones they have the inclination to pursue" (Eisner, 1990, p. 35).

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A New Definition of Literacy

According to an evolutionary pattern that our collective knowledge seems to follow, we first get excited about new ideas that appear to have promise; we want to find out more, and a great deal of excitement is generated. "After the first blush of enthusiasm, we need to step back and take stock of what we know and what we really need to look at more carefully. Only after such a process can we move on to the next plateau" (Teale, 1992, p. 8). This progression is both inevitable and healthy. At the present time, many of us have a great deal of enthusiasm for whole language. We can both see and feel the changes that this movement has made possible for teachers and children in classrooms. Success, however, should not preclude process. Neither theory nor curriculum ever sleeps. Despite the instructional progress brought on by whole language, we need to keep moving forward. Instead of sanctifying the past, we urge whole language educators to take what they have learned about supporting children in reading and writing and move it across the curriculum. A multiple-ways-of-knowing curriculum builds on the whole language base and extends it.

The inclusion of multiple ways of knowing into language arts programs necessitates a new definition of what it means to be literate. Instead of whole language, we need to think "whole literacy." A truly literate person is one who can mediate his or her world through multiple sign systems—not just language. Although language often serves as the glue in our multimodal work with children in classrooms where the emphasis is on using sign systems to gain new perspectives, one result is that thinking is pushed, and so is language. Although "knowledge gives the illusion of residing in books, people, and disciplines," in reality it "is a relationship that resides between and among people, disciplines, and sign systems in particular times and contexts" (Harste, 1994, p. 1223).

We see curriculum as a metaphor for the lives we wish to live and the people we wish to be. To this end, collaborative inquiry is a much-needed curricular frame. As we look to the future, the only thing we can guarantee our children is that they are going to face massive problems that they will need to solve collaboratively. Solutions might be found in the disciplines if they are viewed not as subjects to be studied but as perspectives on knowing. Together, disciplines and sign systems provide learners with new perspectives on knowing, foster inquiry, propel learning, and start much-needed conversations. It is these stories that are told in the transmediations that the children in Carole Hall's and Becky Lane's classes produced in response to *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (Steig, 1969). When sign systems are used to help readers see education as inquiry, whole new educational agendas and understandings are born. For us, the research agenda for the future needs to focus on multimodal learning and to unpack the ways in which language and other sign systems operate both in specific instances of learning and in education more generally.

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"BRIDGE TO UNDERSTANDING AWARD"

The United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY) announced today the creation of an award to be given to organizations that provide programs using books about life and culture in other countries. Named "The Bridge to Understanding Award," it was established in memory of Arlene Pillar, an educator who served USBBY as newsletter editor from 1984 until her untimely death in 1990.

In recognition of the award, a special logo was commissioned by USBBY and designed by Leonard Everett Fisher. The logo symbolizes the bridge to understanding whose foundation is a row of books.

International understanding is an important focus of the work of USBBY and its parent organization, International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). In creating this award, USBBY hopes to encourage more programs that feature books about other countries and cultures, thereby opening up a child's world and building bridges between children in the United States and other parts of the world. Preference will be given to programs that focus on contemporary life and culture.

The Bridge to Understanding Award carries a monetary prize of $500 and an inscribed plaque. Among the organizations eligible for this award are schools, scout troops, clubs, bookstores, and libraries. The program may be a one-time event or an ongoing series that serves children ranging from kindergarten through tenth grade. The selection committee will consider such criteria as the number of children reached by the program and the impact on the community as demonstrated by publicity coverage or anecdotal evidence. To be considered, the program must occur within 1994.

Application blanks are available from the USBBY Secretariat, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, DE 19714. Deadline for submissions will be December 1, 1994, and the first annual award will be presented in 1995 at the annual meeting of the International Reading Association.

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