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Other People / Other Places In Recent (2003-2004) Children's Book Award Winners / Contenders From Five English Speaking Countries

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Readers of all ages can travel the world over by reading good books. Books entertain; they inform; they inspire. Books can reflect the present; they can transport readers back in time; they can take readers into the fictional future; and they can carry young and old readers into fantasy land. On these trips by "book," readers meet all kinds of people, many like themselves and some who are different.

This presentation centers around the two most recent years (2003-2004) of winners of and contenders for selected children's book awards from five mainly English speaking countries: Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the United States. The focus is mainly on people and places reflected in the books. Brief attention will also be given to humor, one of several characteristics common to books from all five countries.

Though this report involves books in which awards were announced in 2003 and 2004, it is part of a larger study covering 24 years, back to awards announced in 1981. This presentation is a part of the American Reading Forum's 25th anniversary. The presenters' collection does include the winners of the awards for 1980, but they were never included in the study; they were added to the collection after the study was well underway.

This report is the seventh about parts of the total study that have been given at annual meetings of the American Reading Forum. Summaries of the previous presentations, all included in yearbooks of the American Reading Forum, are the following:

Aaron, I. E., & Hutchinson, S.M. (2003). Most recent (2002) contenders for and winners of children's book awards in five English-speaking countries. In W. Trathen (Ed.) *Reading at the Crossroads: Yearbook of the American Reading Forum, XXIII.*

Aaron, I.E., & Hutchinson, S.M. (2002) 2001 contenders/winners: Children's book awards in five English-speaking countries. In W. Trathen (Ed.) *A Literacy Odyssey: Yearbook of the American Reading Forum*, XXII.

Aaron, I.E., & Hutchinson, S.M. (2001) Three years (1998-2000) of children's book award winners/contenders from five English-speaking countries. In G. Moorman, & W. Trathen (Eds). *Multiple perspectives in the Millennium: Yearbook of the American Reading Forum,* XVIII.

Aaron I.E., & Hutchinson, S.M. (1998). 1997 Contenders/winners: Children's book awards in five English speaking countries. In R. Telfer (Eds.) *Finding our literacy roots: Yearbook of the American Reading Forum,* XVIII.

Aaron I.E., & Hutchinson, S.M. (1996). Children's book awards and 1995 shortlists from five English speaking countries. In K Samperel, & B. Hayes (Eds.) *Literacy: The information superhighway to success: Yearbook of the American Reading Forum,* XVI.

Aaron , I.E., & Hutchinson, S.M. (1991) Literacy through literature: International award winning children's books. In B. Hayes, & K. Camperell (Eds.) *Literacy: International, national, state and local: Yearbook of the American Reading Forum,* XI.

The two presenters began collecting award winners only from the five countries in 1986, 19 years ago. They collected winners back an additional five years, to 1981. In each of the earlier years through 1991, approximately 10 to 12 winning titles were added to the collection. In 1992, 13 years ago, all contenders (finalists) as well as winners were collected, accounting for up to as many as 75 to 80 titles each year. The 2003-2004 books of concern in this report total 154. It should be noted that Great Britain's award dates are those in which the books were originally published; the remaining four countries list the year in which the awards were given, one year after publication.

The Awards, Announcement Dates, and Sources of Books

The Awards

The selected award categories and the sponsoring organizations are the following:

A1. AUSTRALIA: PICTURE BOOK OF THE YEAR (Children's Book Council of
    Australia) (CBCA)
A2. AUSTRALIA: BOOK OF THE YEAR-EARLY CHILDHOOD (CBCA)
A3. AUSTRALIA: BOOK OF THE YEAR-YOUNGER READERS (CBCA)
A4. AUSTRALIA: BOOK OF THE YEAR-OLDER READERS (CBCA)
C1. CANADA: AMELIA FRANCES HOWARD-GIBBON AWARD
    (Canadian Library Association) (CLA)
C2. CANADA: BOOK OF THE YEAR FOR CHILDREN (CLA)
G1. GREAT BRITAIN: KATE GREENAWAY MEDAL (Chartered Institute of Library
    and Information Professionals) (CILIP)
G2. GREAT BRITAIN: CARNEGIE MEDAL (CILIP)
N1. NEW ZEALAND: RUSSELL CLARK MEDAL (Library and Information
    Association of New Zealand Aotearoa) (LIANZA)
N2. NEW ZEALAND: ESTHER GLEN MEDAL (LIANZA)
U1. UNITED STATES: CALDECOTT MEDAL (American Library Association) (ALA)
U2. UNITED STATES: NEWBERY MEDAL (ALA)

The collection began with Caldecott and Newbery Medals of the American Library Association. The selected award categories from the four non-U.S. countries were those the two presenters concluded were most like those of the United States awards.

Library associations administer the awards in Canada (CLA) and in the United States (ALA). The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA), which includes librarians, handles

the Australia awards. The awards in Great Britain are given by CILIP, a recent merger of librarians and information professionals. New Zealand's awards are administered by LIANZA, which also includes both librarians and information specialists.

All five countries have awards for illustration and for quality of literature. Australia has two in-between categories (A2-Elementary Readers, A3- Younger Readers). The A2-Elementary Reader's titles were considered as illustration and the A3-Younger Reader's books as quality of literature. Throughout the rest of this report, the letters and numbers in the above listing of awards (as A1, A2, C1) will be used to identify award categories

Announcement Dates

Award announcement dates vary some from year to year and from country to country. All countries except the United States announce shortlists, usually from approximately four to as many as 10 titles for each award, depending upon the country, several weeks to several months before winners are selected from the shortlisted books. The United States announces winners and honor books at the winter meeting of the American Library Association. Announcement dates for 2004 are given in Figure 1.

Figure 1. 2004 Announcement Dates for Shortlists and Winners

	Shortlists	Winners
Australia	April 6	August 20
Canada	April 12	June 9
Great Britain	April 30	July 9
New Zealand	August 9	September 14
United States	---	January 12

Sources of Books

Figure 2 lists the sources used in 2003 and 2004 for obtaining books. A single bookstore in each of the four non-U.S. countries serves as the source for the shortlisted books. Several local bookstores are used to obtain the United States titles and those non-U.S. titles available in the United States.

Figure 2. Sources of Books
>   Australia: Angus & Robertson Bookworld, Melbourne
>   Canada: Mabel's Fables, Toronto
>   Great Britain: Harrods, London
>   New Zealand: Children's Bookshop, Auckland (Ponsonby)
>   United States: Local bookstores

Availability of Non-U.S. Titles in the United States

When the study began in 1986, very few of the non-U.S. titles were available in the United States. The situation is quite different today, as may be noted in the table below. Almost all (90%/93%) of the Canadian and the British books are published or distributed in the United

States. One-half (48%) of the Australia titles are available in the United States. Only one of 20 (5%) of the New Zealand titles is published or distributed in the United States. It should be noted, however, that if New Zealand's Margaret Mahy writes a children's book, it will likely be marketed in the United States very soon thereafter. The one in 20 titles is Mahy's *Alchemy,* shortlisted in 2003 for New Zealand's Esther Glen Medal.

Table 1. Available (Published or Distributed) in the United States (2003-2004)

	Illustration	Qual. of Literature	Total
Australia	9 of 24 (38%)	14 of 24 (58%)	23 of 48 (48%)
Canada	20 of 20 (100%)	16 of 20 (80%)	36 of 40 (90%)
Great Britain	15 of 16 (94%)	12 of 13 (92%)	27 of 29 (93%)
New Zealand	0 of 10 -	1 of 10 (10%)	1 of 20 (5%)
	44 of 70 (63%)	43 of 67 (64%)	87 of 137 (64%)

Other People (Diversity)

A sampling of titles from 2003 and 2004 winners and contenders is presented below. Most of these examples center around minorities; however, within a given race, social or ethnic group, diversity exists (as different economic levels and rural versus city dwellers).

A1 (2003) *In Flanders Fields* (Allies/Germans)
A3 (2003) *The Barrumbi Kids* (Aborigine/Whites)
A4 (2004) *Njunjul the Sun* (Aborigine/Whites)
A4 (2004) *Saving Francesca* (Italian/Australian)
C1 (2003) *Solomon's Tree* (Canadian/Indian)
C1 (2004) *Suki's Kimono* (Japanese/Canadian)
C2 (2003) *Hana's Suitcase* (Japanese/Czech/Jews)
G2 (2003) *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (Autistic boy*)*
G2 (2003) *The Garbage King* (Ethiopians)
N1 (2003) *The Immigrants* (Maori/Australian Whites)
N1 (2004) *Oh Hogwash! Sweet Pea* (Maori)
N2 (2003) *Taming the Taniwha* (Maori)
U1 (2004) *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (French/Americans)
U2 (2004) *An American Plague* (African American/Whites)

Readers meet Aborigines in Australian books; Indians and Japanese Canadians in Canadian Books; Maoris in New Zealand titles; Irish and Scottish people in British books; and African Americans, Latin Americans, and Asian Americans in the United States books. These are just examples of the many people young readers meet as they read these books. Mary titles also focus on the majority populations in the countries. Across countries and groups, it may amaze young readers to learn that people are so much alike, regardless of where they live.

Other Places

Books can take readers on trips to other places. Settings for the titles from five countries often are in the country in which the books were first published. However, occasional settings are in other countries, as may be noted in the titles in the samples listed below.

A1 (2003) *In Flanders Fields* (Flanders)
A1 (2004) *Two Summers* (Rural Australia)
A2 (2004) *Little Humpty* (Australian outback)
A3 (2003 *The Barrumbi Kids* (Australian outback)
A4 (2004) *How to Make a Bird* (Melbourne)
C1 (2003) *The Art Room* (Northwest Canada)
C1 (2004) *Ode to Newfoundland* (Newfoundland)
C2 (2004) *Hana's Suitcase* (Japan/Austria/Canada)
C2 (2004) *Last Days of Africville* (Halifax)
G1 (2003) *The Shape Game* (London)
G2 (2002) *The Edge* (England)
N1 (2003) *The Immigrants* (New Zealand/Australia)
N2 (2004) *Jacko Moran Sniper* (Flanders/New Zealand)
N2 (2004) *Thunder Road* (Auckland)
U2 (2003) *Hoot* (Florida)

Commonalities Across Countries

Common elements (such as settings, characteristics, and themes) can be seen in books from all five countries. Winners and finalists across countries have stories involving humor, bullies, good family relations, dysfunctional families, prejudice, and war. The titles listed below all contain examples of humor, to illustrate one of the elements common across countries. Some of these books will bring smiles to the faces of young readers; others will make them laugh out loud. People laugh - and cry - in a universal language.

A1 (2003) *Diary of a Wombat*
A2 (2004) *Snap! Went Chester*
A3 (2003) *Horrendo's Curse*
A3 (2004) *TruckDogs: A Novel in Four Bites*
C1 (2004) *Stanley's Party*
C1 (2004) *This Is the Dog*
G1 (2002) *Albert Le Blanc*
G1 (2003) The *Pea and the Princess*
G1 (2003) *Ella's Big Chance*
N1 (2004) *Oh Hogwash Sweet Pea!*
N1 (2004) *Napoleon and the Chicken Farmer*
U1 (2003) *My Friend Rabbit*
U1 (2004) *Ella Sue Gets Dressed*
U2 (2003) *Hoot*

Brief Reviews of Selected Titles

As examples, 13 of the illustrated and 12 of the quality of literature books are reviewed in brief form below. For each book, the literary type or genre is given, and when available, the interest level in terms of grades is included in parentheses. These 25 titles are given as examples from the total collection for the two years, mainly to reflect people, places, and humor. An asterisk (*) to the left of an author/ illustrator name indicates that the book is a winner. Others were finalists (shortlisted or Honor Books).

Illustrated Titles

*A1 (2003) Norman Jorgensen/ Brian Harrison-Lever (ill.) *In Flanders Fields.* Freemantle Arts Center Press. (US: Simply Read Books, 2003) (3-5) Flanders Fields, World War I, early Christmas morning, robin trapped in barbed wire between enemy trenches, young Allied soldier risking his life to rescue the bird, empathy across enemy lines: In text and expressive illustrations, the story tells how the spirit of Christmas across enemy trenches temporarily silences the soldiers' weapons. (Historical fiction/ Realistic fiction)

A1 (2004) Libby Gleeson/ Ann James (ill.) *Shutting the Chooks In.* Scholastic Australia. The story, told in lyrical text and appealing, dreamlike illustrations done in charcoal and oil pastels, is about a young boy whose job is to round up the chooks before nightfall and to feed them. When he discovers that one chook is missing, he goes back to find the stray. (Also shortlisted for Book of the Year: Early Childhood.) (Verse)

*A2 (2003) Penny Matthews/Andrew McLean (ill.) *A Year on Our Farm.* Scholastic Australia. In watercolor illustrations and text, " a year on our farm" (a small Australian farm) is reviewed month by month, season by season in terms of activities and jobs associated with that time of year. (Also shortlisted for Australia's Picture Book of the Year) (Information/ Realistic fiction)

A2 (2004) Margaret Wild/ Ann James (ill.) *Little Humpty*. Little Hare. (US: Simply Read Books, 2004) Big Humpty tires of constant play with Little Humpty, who asks inanimate objects (rock, bush, pebbles) to play with him. Then Big Humpty takes him a long way over the desert on the way to the Big Waterhole. Little Humpty, along the way, guesses the kind of animals he will find at the end of the journey. When he arrives, he finds many playmates. Illustrations containing much orange and yellow project the heat of the desert. (Fantasy)

*C1 (2003) Susan Vande Griek/Pacal Milelli (ill.) *The Art Room.* Groundwood. (US: Groundwood, 2002) In blank verse and oil paintings, a tribute is paid to painter Emily Carr, a gifted Canadian artist of the early 1900s. (Verse/Information)

C1 (2004) Sir Cavendish Boyle (lyrics)/ Geoff Butler (ill.) *Ode to Newfoundland.* Tundra. (US: Tundra, 2003) (All ages) Butler's love for Newfoundland is shown in the illustrations accompanying the lyrics of the provincial anthem of Newfoundland and of Labrador. The illustrations give readers a tour of parts of the Province and include native plants and animals. An Afterword explains the background of a number of the illustrations. (Verse/Information)

C1 (2004) Chieri Uegak/ Stephane Jorisch (ill.) *Suki's Kimono*. Kids Can Press. (US: Kids Can Press, 2003) (K-3) Strong-willed Suki, despite protests of her two older sisters, insists on

wearing to school on the first day the blue kimono and clogs her grandmother (obachan) had given her; her obachan had then taken her to a street festival. Fellow first graders had snickered at first but then applauded when she demonstrated a dance she had seen at the festival. After school, Suki's sisters complained that nobody had noticed their new clothes. Suki's kimono, in contrast, had made her the center of attention. Watercolor illustrations carry out the Japanese theme. (Realistic fiction)

G1 (2002) Nick Butterworth. *Albert Le Blanc*. Collins. (US: *Albert the Bear*, Candlewick, 2003) (PS-up) Sad-faced French bear Albert Le Blanc, newly arrived in a toy store, gets the attention of the other toys. They put on a show to try to make the toy bear smile. The accidental fall of one of the clumsy performers not only makes the bear grin but makes him laugh out loud. (Fantasy)

G1 (2003) Anthony Browne. *The Shape Game*. Doubleday. (US: FSG, 2003) (2-up) In text and illustrations, Browne tells of a family visit to the Tate Gallery in London, a day he says changed his life. He presents copies of selected Gallery paintings with his family viewing them, or occasionally with the family being part of the paintings. His mother's shape game played on the way home from the Gallery is one he continues to play. (Autobiography)

*N1 (2003) Allan Bagnall/Sarah Wilkins (ill.) *The Immigrants*. Maillinson Rendel. After her mother's death, Maria leaves Sydney aboard a small ship to find her father in the New Zealand gold fields. The story setting is 1858. Young Ihaia, a Maori crewmember, talked the captain into letting Maria serve as ship's cook to pay for her passage. Maria and Ihaia spend much time together on the trip. On the weeklong crossing of the Tasman Sea, they ran into a bad storm but were able to keep afloat. Colorful illustrations add depth to the story. An epilogue reports that Maria and her friend Ihaia later married and remained in New Zealand. Several Maori words are used in the text. (Realistic fiction)

*N1 (2004) Lloyd Jones/Graeme Gash (ill.) *Napoleon and the Chicken Farmer*. Mallinson Rendel. French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, on summer vacation in Corsica, sponsors a Napoleon-look-alike contest. Chicken farmer Manoli, longing to be something else, wins the contest, which was judged by the Emperor himself. Manoli likes his new image so much that he won't go back to chicken-farming – until the chickens revolt! Appealing illustrations in striking color accompany the text. (Fantasy)

*U1 (2004) Mordicai Gerstein. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*. Roaring Brook Press (Millbrook). In lyrical prose and expressive ink and oil paintings, Gerstein tells the true story of a young French aerialist's daring walk in 1974 between the two towers of New York's World Trade Center, more than a fourth of a century before their destruction on 9/11/01. (Information/Biography)

U1 (2004) Steve Jenkins & Robin Page. *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* Houghton Mifflin. (PS-3) In cut-paper collage pictures and text phrased as questions, readers are shown illustrations of animal/bird/insect body parts (tails, eyes, mouths, noses, ears, and feet) and are asked about their use. In all, 30 different animals/birds/insects from around the world are shown. At the end further information is given about each one. (Information)

Quality of Literature Titles

A3 (2003) Leonie Narrington. *The Barrumbi Kids.* Scholastic Australia. Dale (white) and Tomias (Aborigine) are best friends in and out of school and feel comfortable in both white and Aborigine cultures. The story, set in Australian outback in a small, isolated community, contains many references to animals and plants of the area as well as to Aborigine customs and beliefs. (Realistic fiction/Fantasy)

A3 (2004) Graeme Base. *TruckDogs: A Novel in Four Bites.* Viking Penguin. (US: Abrams, 2004) (3-7) In four bites (chapters) and a nip (afterword), the author retells the story about the TruckDogs, told to him by Molly, his dog. Part truck, part dogs, the TruckDogs face bullies, rambunctious adolescent TruckDogs, and other part truck, part animals. Illustrations depicting specific TruckDogs add to the humor. The setting is modeled on the Australian outback. (Fantasy)

A4 (2003) Catherine Bateson. *Painted Love Letters*. (University of Queensland Press) (US: International Specialized Services, 2002). Chrissie's Dad Dave, an artist, is dying of lung cancer, and Chrissie, Mum, and Dave himself are facing the inevitable. Dave's life seems to be hanging on until a planned exhibition of his paintings takes place. Nan, Mum's mother, comes from Sydney to the Brisbane area to be with them. Though the shadow of death hovers over the entire story, growing trust among family members develops. (Realistic fiction)

A4 (2004) David Metzenthen. *Boys of Blood & Bone.* Penguin Australia. (US: Penguin, 2004) This story interweaves present-day Australians and a small group of young World War I Aussie soldiers at Flanders. Henry, soon to be off to University, learns about Andy, who was killed in World War I fighting, from Andy's war diary kept by his fiancé, now 101 years old. Actions described occurred in a small Australian town and in Melbourne, France, Scotland, and England. The devastation and horrors of trench warfare are described vividly. (Realistic fiction/Historical fiction)

*C2 (2003) Karen Levine: *Hana's Suitcase.* Second Story Press. (US: Whitman, 2003) (5-8) The suitcase of a young Jewish girl, who died at Auschwitz, on display in a small Holocaust museum in Japan, motivates the Director to trace the history of the suitcase's owner. Young readers will learn much about the tragic Holocaust from the interweaving of historical fiction and information, supported by photographs. (Information/Historical fiction)

C2 (2004) Dorothy Perkyns. *Last Days of Africville.* Beach House Publishing. (US: Beach House Publishing, 2003) (4-7) Twelve-year-old Selina, an African Canadian living in the Halifax area in the mid 1960s, is the main character in the story about relationships, prejudice, and survival. As the only black student in her sixth grade class, she faces prejudice from fellow students, but it is counteracted by her superior academic performance and her athletic ability. Uncertainty arises for her and her community when the city council plans to abolish Africville for other construction. (Realistic fiction)

*C2 (2002) Sharon Creech. *Ruby Holler.* Bloomsbury. (US: HarperCollins, 2002) (3-7) The 13-year-old "trouble" twins, Dallas (a dreamer) and Florida (a rebel), have spent their entire lives in a run-down orphanage, spelled briefly by stays in foster homes, until foster parents quickly

return them to the orphanage. Then Sairy and Tiller, a country couple, take then to their isolated but peaceful Ruby Holler home. Good cooking, understanding, and patience lead the twins to feel loved and wanted. (Realistic fiction)

G2 (2003) Mark Haddon. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.* David Fickling. (US: Doubleday, 2003) (7-up) Haddon, in this skillfully written novel, set in Swindon and in London, takes readers into the narrowed world of 15-year-old autistic Christopher, a genius in mathematics and in science. When falsely accused of killing a neighbor's dog, he sets out to find the real killer – and also learns a family secret. The vivid descriptions (sad with touches of humor) of the effects his condition has upon him, his parents, and those he meets will help readers to understand autism better. (Realistic fiction)

N2 (2003) Margaret Mahy. *Alchemy.* HarperCollins. (US: McElderry, 2003) (7-up) Seventeen-year-old Roland and classmate Jess, a recluse who is ridiculed by her peers, are drawn together, first by trickery and then by similar supernatural abilities, in this tale involving blackmail, unbridled ambition of a politician/magician, and alchemy. (Fantasy)

*N2 (2004) Ken Catran. *Jacko Moran Sniper.* Lothian. In this sequel to *Letters from the Coffin-Trenches*, shortlisted in 2003 for this same award, Jacko, a street kid from a dysfunctional family, found his element in the army and became an expert sniper and a World War I hero fighting in the trenches of Flanders. When Jacko returned to civilian life after the war, he had very serious adjustment problems. The story, set mostly on the terrible battlefields of Flanders, is well written but is strong emotional fare.

U2 (2003) Stephanie S. Tolan. *Surviving the Applewhites.* HarperCollins. (4-7) Teenage (13) spike-haired Jake, kicked out of Rhode Island schools and foster homes, comes to North Carolina to live with his grandfather. After Jake is expelled from his North Carolina school, he is enrolled in a "home school" run by the disorganized Applewhite family. Jake survives, thanks to attention from four-year-old Destiny and the family dog plus a singing role in a community musical production. (Realistic fiction)

U2 (2004) Jim Murphy. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793.* Clarion Books. A mysterious fever devastated Philadelphia, the Nation's capital, killing several thousand people and causing mass evacuations (including President Washington and other government leaders). Medical doctors and others debated causes and treatments. This book is a scholarly, documented look back at an important part of United States history. (Information/History)

The 154 Winners/Contenders for 2003/2004

Listed below are references for the 154 winning and contending titles for the past two years (2003/2004) in the 12 award categories. For non-U.S. titles available in the United States, the U.S. publishers or distributors and dates of publication are included. When interest levels were available, that information is presented in terms of grade levels. An asterisk (*) to the left of an entry signifies that the book is a winner. All other books are contenders (shortlisted titles or honor books).

A1. AUSTRALIA: <u>Picture Book of the Year</u> (CBCA)
 *Joan Grant/Neil Curtis (ill.) *Cat and Fish.* Lothian. (US: Simply Read, 2005)
2 Margaret Babalet/Andrew McLean (ill.) *Reggie, Queen of the Street.* Viking Penguin.
0 Libby Gleeson/Ann James (ill.) *Shutting the Chooks In.* Scholastic Australia.
0 John Heffernan/Freda Blackwood (ill.) *Two Summers.* Scholastic Australia.
4 Stephen Michael King. *Milli, Jack and the Dancing Cat*. Allen & Unwin. (US: Philomel,
   2004) (PS-3)
   Colin Thompson. *The Violin Man.* Hodder.

 *Norman Jorgenson/Brian Harrison-Lever (ill.) *In Flanders Fields.*
   Freemantle Arts Center Press. (US: Simply Read, 2003) (3-5)
2 Pamela Allen. *The Potato People.* Penguin Books Australia.
0 Jackie French/BruceWhatley (ill.) *Diary of a Wombat.* Harper Collins.
0 Australia. (US: Clarion, 2003) (PS-3)
3 Bob Graham. *Jethro Byrde, Fairy Child.* Walker Books (US: Candlewick, 2002) (PS-2)
   Leigh Hobbs. *Old Tom's Holiday.* ABC Books. (US: Peachtree, 2004)
   Penny Matthews/Andrew McLean (ill.) *A Year on Our Farm.* Scholastic Australia.

A2. Australia: <u>Book of the Year: Early Childhood</u> (CBCA)
 *Pamela Allen. *Grandpa and Thomas.* Viking Penguin.
2 Margaret Babalet/Andrew McLean (ill.) *Reggie, Queen of the Street.* Viking Penguin.
0 Tania Cox/David Miller (ill.) *Snap! Went Chester.* Hodder.
0 Libby Gleeson/Ann James (ill.) *Shutting the Chooks In.* Scholastic Australia.
4 Margaret Wild/David Legg (ill.) *Baby Boomsticks.* ABC Books.
   Margaret Wild/Ann James (ill.) *Little Humpty.* Little Hare. (US: Simply Read, 2004)

 *Penny Matthews/Andrew McLean (ill.) *A Year on Our Farm.* Scholastic Australia.
   Pamela Allen. *The Potato People.* Penguin Books Australia.
2 Simon French/Donna Rawlins (ill.) *Guess the Baby.* ABC Books. (US: Clarion, 2003) (PS-2)
0 Sofie Laguna/Kerry Agent (ill.) *Too Loud Lily.* Omnibus Books. (US: Scholastic, 2004)
0 Lisa Shanahan/Emma Quay (ill.) *Bear And Chook.* Hodder.
3 Jane Tanner. *Playmates.* Penguin Books Australia.

A3. AUSTRALIA: <u>Book of the Year: Younger Reads</u> (CBCA)
 *Carole Wilkinson. *Dragonkeeper.* Black Dog Books. (US: Hyperion, 2005)
2 Graeme Base. *TruckDogs: A Novel in Four Bites.* Viking Penguin. (US: Abrams, 2004) (PS-2)
0 Steven Herrick/Caroline Mageri (ill.) *Do-Wrong Ron.* Allen & Unwin.
0 Glenda Millard/Caroline Mageri (ill.) *The Naming of Tishkin Silk.* ABC Books.
4 Ruth Starke. *Stella by the Sea.* Penguin.
   Michael Stephens. *Mudlark.* Angus & Robertson.

*Catherine Bateson. *Rain May and Captain Daniel.* University of Queensland Press.
   (US: International Specialized Book Services, 2003) (PS-3)
2 Ann Fienberg/Kim Gamble (ill.) *Horrendo's Curse.* Allen & Unwin. (US: Annic
0 Press) (2-5)
0 Simon French. *Where in the World.* Little Hare Books.
3 Steven Herrick. *Tom Jones Saves the World.* University of Queensland Press.
   (US: International Specialized Book Services, 2003) (PS-3)
   Martine Murray. *The Slightly True Story of Cedar Hartley*

(who planned to live an unusual life).
  Allen & Unwin. (US Levine, 2003) (4-9)
  Leonie Narrington. *The Barrumbi Kids.* Scholastic Australia.

A4. AUSTRALIA: <u>Book of the Year: Older Readers</u> (CBCA)
 *Melina Marchetta. *Saving Francesca.* Viking Penguin. (US: Knopf, 2004) (7-up)
2 Scot Gardner. *Burning Eddy.* Viking Penguin.
0 David Metzenthen. *Boys of Blood & Bone*. Penguin Australia. (US: Penguin, 2004)
0 James Moloney. *Black Taxi*. Angus & Robertson.
4 Martine Murray. *How to Make a Bird.* Allen & Unwin.
  Garth Nix. *Mister Monday.* Angus & Robertson. (US: Scholastic, 2003) (4-7)

 *Markus Zusak. *The Messenger.* Pan Macmillan Australia. (US: *I Am the Messenger.*
  Knopf, 2005)
2 James Aldredge. *The Girl from the Sea.* Penguin Books Australia. (US: Penguin 2004)
0 Catherine Bateson. *Painted Love Letters.* University of Queensland Press.
0 (US: International Specialized Book Services, 2002)
3 Jan Bone. *The Song of the Innocent Bystander.* Penguin Books Australia. (US: Dutton, 2004)
  (9-up)
  Alyssa Brugman. *Walking Naked.* Allen & Unwin. (US: Delacorte, 2004) (7-up)
  Meme McDonald & Bori Monty Pryor. *Njunjul the Sun.* Allen & Unwin.

C1. CANADA: <u>Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Medal</u> (CLA)
  *Linda Bailey/Bill Slavin (ill.) *Stanley's Party.* Kids Can Press. (US: Kids Can Press, 2003)
  (PS-2)
2 Kathleen Bradford/Leslie Elizabeth Watts (ill.) *You Can't Rush a Cat.* Orca.
0 (US: Orca, 2003) (PS-3)
0 Geoff Butler. *Ode to Newfoundland.* Tundra. (US: Tundra, 2003) (YA)
4 Jean Little/Werner Zimmerman (ill.) *Pippin the Christmas Pig.* Scholastic.
  (US: Scholastic, 2004) (PS-3)
  Robert Munsch/Janet Wilson (ill.) *Lighthouse.* Scholastic. (US: Cartwheel Books, 2003) (PS-3)
  Sheryl McFarland/Chrissie Wysotsk (ill.) *This Is the Dog*. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
  (US: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2003) (PS-2)
  Barbara Reid. *The Subway Mouse.* Scholastic. (US: Scholastic, 2005)
  Maxine Trottier/Stella East (ill.) *The Paint Box.* Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
  (US: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2003) (K-3)
  Ruby Wiebe/Michael Lonechild (ill.) *Hidden Buffalo.* Red Deer Press.
  (US: Red Deer Press, 2004) (PS-3)
  Chieri Uefgak/Stephane Jorisch (ill.) *Suki's Kimono.* Kids Can Press.
  (US: Kids Can Press, 2003) (K-3)

 *Susan Vande Friek/Pascal Milelli (ill.) *The Art Room.* Groundwood.
  (US: Groundwood, 2002) (PS-3)
2 Anne L. Carter/Alan & Lea Daniel (ill.) *Under the Prairie Sky.* Orca. (US: Orca, 2002) (PS-5)
0 Douglas Cowling/Jason Walker. (ill.) *Hallelujah Handel.* North Winds.
0 (US: Scholastic, 2003) (4-7)
3 Wallace Edwards. *Alphabeasts.* Kids Can Press. (US: Kids Can Press, 2002) (All ages)
  Nancy Hundal/Brain Deines (ill.) *Camping.* Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

(US: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2002) (PS-3)
Julie Lawson/Paul Mombourquette (ill.) *The Klondike Cat.* Kids Can Press.
(US: Kids Can Press, 2002) (All ages)
Annette LeBox/Karen Reszuch (ill.) *Salmon Creek.* Groundwood. (US: Publishers
Group West, 2002)
Majorie Blain Parker/Janet Wilson (ill.) *Jasper's Day.* Kids Can Press. (US: Kids
Can Press, 2002) (PS-up)
Jack Siemiatycki & Avi Slodovnick/Doris Barrette (ill.) *The Hockey Card.*
Lobster Press. (US: Publishers Group West, 2002) (PS-3)
Andrea Spalding/Janet Wilson (ill.) *Solomon's Tree*. Orca. (US: Orca, 2002) (K-3)

C2. CANADA: <u>Book of the Year for Children</u> (CLA)
 *Brian Doyle. *Boy O' Boy.* Groundwood. (US: Groundwood, 2004) (4-8)
  Michael Bedard. *The Painted Wall and Other Strange Tales.* Tundra.
  (US: Tundra, 2004)
2 Grace Casselman. *A Hole in the Hedge.* Napolean Publishing. (US: Sagebrush
0 Education, 2003)
0 Sarah Ellis. *The Several Lives of Orphan Jack.* Groundwood. (US: Groundwood, 2003) (2-5)
4 Natale Ghent. *No Small Thing.* HarperCollins Canada. (US: Candlewick, 2004)
  Jean Little. *Brothers Far from Home.* Scholastic.
  Jean Little. *I Gave My Mom a Castle.* Orca. (US: Orca, 2004) (4-up)
  Dorothy Perkyns. *Last Days of Africville.* Beach House Publisher. (US:
  Beach House Publisher, 2003) (4-7)
  Eric Walters. *Run.* Penguin.
  Friedo Wishinsky. *Just Cal Me Joe.* Orca. (US: Orca, 2004) (2-6)

 *Karen Levine. *Hana's Suitcase.* Second Story Press. (US: Whitman, 2003) (5-8)
  Joan Clark. *The Word for Home.* Penguin Canada.
2 Debroah Ellis. *A Company of Fools.* Fitzhenry & Whiteside. (US: Fitzhenry &
0 Whiteside, 2002) (3-6)
0 Debroah Ellis. *Parvana's Journey.* Groundwood. (US: Groundwood, 2002) (5-up)
3 James Heneghan. *Flood.* Groundwood. (US: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002) (7-up)
  Julie Lawson. *A Ribbon of Shining Steel: The Railway Diary of Kate Cameron.*
  Scholastic Canada.
  Jean Little. *Birdie for Now.* Orca. (US: Orca, 2002) (4-7)
  Kenneth Oppel. *Firewing.* HarperCollins Canada. (US: Simon & Schuster, 2003)
  (4-7)
  Irene Watts. *Finding Sophie.* Tundra. (US: Tundra, 2002) (5-up)
  Paul Yee/Harvey Chan (ill.) *Dead Man's Gold and Other Stories.* Groundwood.
  (US: Groundwood, 2002) (6-up)

G1. GREAT BRITAIN. <u>Kate Greenaway Medal</u> (CILIP)
 *Shirley Hughes. *Ella's Big Chance.* Bodley Head. (US: Red Fox, 2005) (1-up)
  Anthony Browne. *The Shape Game.* Doubleday. (US: FSG, 2003) (2-up)
2 Alexis Deacon. *Beegu.* Hutchinson. (US: FSG, 2004) (K-2)
0 Alan Durant/ Debi Gliori (ill.) *Always And Forever.* Doubleday. (US: Harcourt,
0 2004) (PS-3)

3 Neil Gaiman/Dave McKean (ill.) *The Wolves in the Walls.* Bloomsbury. (US: Harper, 2003) (4-up)
  Mini Grey. *The Pea and the Princess.* Red Fox. (US: *The Very Sweet Pea and the Princess-to-be,* Knopf, 2003) (1-up)
  Andrew Matthews/Bee Willey (ill.) *Bob Robber and Dancing Jane.* Jonathan Cape. (US: Jonathan Cape, 2003) (1-4)
  Chris Wormall. *Two Frogs.* Bodley Head. (PS-up)

 *Bob Graham. *Jethro Byrde, Fairy Child.* Walker. (US: Candlewick, 2003) (PS-2)
  Giles Andrea/Nick Sharratt (ill.) *Pants.* David Finkling Books. (US: Random House, 2003)
2 Simon Batram. *Man on the Moon.* Templar. (US: Candlewick, 2002) (PS-3)
0 Nick Butterworth. *Albert Le Blanc.* Collins. (US: *Albert the Bear,*
0 Candlewick, 2003) (PS-up)
2 Lauren Child. *That Pesky Rat.* Orchard. (US: Candlewick, 2002) (PS-2)
  Lauren Child. *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?* Hodder. (US: Hyperion, 2003) (1-up)
  David Melling. *The Kiss That Missed.* Hodder. (US: Barron's, 2002) (PS-2)
  Helen Ward. *The Cockeral and the Fox.* Templar. (US: *The Rooster and the Fox,* Millbrook, 2003)

G2. GREAT BRITAIN. <u>Carnegie Medal</u> (CILIP)
 *Jennifer Donnelly. *A Gathering Light.* Bloomsbury. (US: *A Northern Light,* Harcourt, 2003)
  David Almond. *The Fire Eaters.* Hodder. US: Delacorte, 2004) (4-7)
2 Mark Haddon. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.* David
0 Fickling Books. (US: Doubleday, 2003) (7-up)
0 Elizabeth Laird. *The Garbage King.* Macmillan. (US: Barron's, 2003) (5-up)
3 Michael Morpugo. *Private Peaceful.* Collins. (US: Scholastic, 2004) (5-up)
  Linda Newbery. *Sisterland.* David Fickling Books. (US: Random House, 2004) (YA)

 *Sharon Creech. *Ruby Holler.* Bloomsbury. (US: HarperCollins, 2002) (3-7)
  Kevin Brooks. *Martyn Pig.* Chicken House. (US: Scholastic, 2002) (5-up)
2 Anne Fine. *Up on Cloud Nine.* Doubleday. (US: Delacorte, 2002) (7-up)
0 Alan Gibbons. *The Edge.* Dolphin (6-up)
0 Lian Hearn. *Across the Nightingale Floor.* Macmillan. (US: Putnam, 2002) (9-up)
2 Linda Newbury. *The Shell House.* David Fickling Books. (US: Random House, 2002) (9-up)
  Marcus Sedgwick. *The Dark Horse.* Dolphin. (US: Random House, 2003) (6-up)

N1. NEW ZEALAND: <u>Russell Clark Medal</u> (LIANZA)
 *Lloyd Jones/Graeme Gash (ill.) *Napoleon and the Chicken Farmer.* Mallinson
2 Rendel.
0 Pamela Allen. *Grandpa and Thomas.* Penguin/Viking.
0 Gavin Bishop. *The Three Billy-Goats-Gruff.* Scholastic New Zealand.
4 Ngareta Gabel/Ali Teo and Astrid Jenson (ill.) *Oh Hogwash, Sweet Pea!* Huia.
  Richard and Pamela Wolfe. *Mouse on the Moon.* Scholastic.

 *Allan Bagnall/Sarah Wilkins (ill.) *The Immigrants.* Mallinson Rendel.

2 Pamela Allen. *The Potato People.* Viking.
0 David Elliot. *Pigtails the Pirate.* Random House.
0 Diana Noonan/Elizabeth Fuller (ill.) *The Best Dressed Bear.* Scholastic New
3 Zealand.
  Diana Noonan/Christine Ross (ill.) *Auntie Rose and the Rabbit.* Scholastic
  New Zealand.

N2. NEW ZEALAND: Esther Glen Medal (LIANZA)
 *Ken Catran. *Jacko Moran Sniper.* Lothian.
2 Ted Dawe. *Thunder Road.* Longacre.
0 Brian Falkner. *Henry and the Flea.* Mallinson Rendel.
0 V.M. Jones. *Juggling with Mandarins.* HarperCollins.
4 V.M. Jones. *The Serpents of Arakesh.* HarperCollins.

 *David Hill. *Right Where It Hurts.* Mallinson Rendel.
2 Ken Catran. *Letters from the Coffin-Trenches.* Random House.
0 Sarah Ell. *When the War Came Home.* Scholastic New Zealand.
0 V.M. Jones. *Buddy.* HarperCollins.
3 Margaret Mahy. *Alchemy.* HarperCollins. (US: McElderry, 2003) (7-up)

U1. UNITED STATES: Caldecott Medal (ALA)
2*Mordicai Gerstein. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers.* Roaring Brook Press.
0 Margaret Chodos-Irvine. *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed.* Harcourt. (PS-K)
0 Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?* Houghton.
4 Mo Williams. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Hyperion. (PS-1)

2*Eric Rohmann. *My Friend Rabbit.* Millbrooke Press. (PS-3)
0 Mary Howitt/Tony DiTerlizzi (ill.) *The Spider and the Fly.* Simon & Schuster.
0 (PS-3)
3 Peter McCarty. *Hondo & Fibian.* Holt. (PS-4)
   Jerry Pinkney. *Noah's Ark.* Sea Star. (K-3)

U2. UNITED STATES: Newbery Medal (ALA)
2*Kate DiCamillo/Timothy Basil Ering (ill.) *The Tale of Despereaux.*
0 Candlewick. (2-7)
0 Kevin Henkes. *Olive's Ocean.* Greenwillow. (5-up)
4 Jim Murphy. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow
     Fever Epidemic of 1793.*Clarion. (5-9)

 *Avi. *The Cross of Lead.* Hyperion. (4-7)
2 Nancy Farmer. *The House of the Scorpion.* Atheneum. (7-12)
0 Patricia Reilly Giff. *Pictures of Hollis Woods.* Random House. (4-7)
0 Carl Hiaasen. *Hoot.* Knopf. (4-7)
3 Ann M. Martin. *A Corner of the Universe.* Scholastic. (4-7)
  Stephanie S. Tolan. *Surviving the Applewhites.* HarperCollins. (4-7)

In Summary

   This report focused mainly on people and places in recent (2003/2004) winners of and contenders for the top children's book awards in five mainly English speaking countries: Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the United States. The 154 children's books that formed the basis for this report are among the very best books published during the period of the study. It is hoped that this review will aid teachers, librarians, teachers of teachers, and others in the selection of books to use in their work with children and with college students preparing to be teachers. Children who read these books will strengthen their understanding that people, regardless of where they live, are much more alike than they are different.

Understanding the Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Component of Family Literacy: A Re-Examination of Research

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Parent involvement is important to children's language and literacy development, especially in light of the fact that "the parent is the child's first teacher". Research has demonstrated that children's development is stimulated through strong and positive interactions with their parents (Jacobs, 2004) and that parents play a central role in children's language and literacy development (Dickinson & Tabor, 2001; Hart & Risley, 1995; 1999). A unique approach that offers parents opportunities to interact with their children is called Family Literacy. Family literacy programs differ from other educational programs in that they focus on educating both the child and his/her parents within the same program. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on previously published research about the parent-child interactive literacy component in family literacy programs, drawing out implications for elementary teachers and teacher educators.

What is Family Literacy?

Family literacy programs provide services to families who have an adult with an educational need and who also have a child ranging in age from birth to age 8. They are based on the concept that families need to receive a combination of services to make lasting changes in their lives by improving their level of literacy. Family literacy, as defined by the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy programs, is unique in that it is composed of four instructional components:

1. Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.

2. Parenting education so that parents become their child's first teacher and full collaborators in the education of their child.

3. Adult education so that parents may become economically self sufficient (adult basic and secondary-level education and/or instruction for English language learners).

4. Age-appropriate early childhood education so that children can experience success in school and in life (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Together, these four components aim to improve the literacy and basic education levels of the parents, help parents become full partners in the education of their children, and support children in reaching their full potential as learners. Services provided by programs must be of "sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 2). Although all four components of family literacy are considered to be interrelated, each component should offer a separate instructional program with the goal that the components will build on each other and use high quality instructional services to meet the goals of families and of family literacy (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

In an effort to encourage high quality programs, federal legislation states that Even Start (or family literacy) programs must use "instructional programs based on scientifically based reading research and the prevention of reading difficulties for children and adults, to the extent research is available" (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p.2). Using scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) as a foundation for instruction is important since it requires programs to rely on methods and practices

proven to be effective.   States, districts and schools can be confident that all children

entering school will be ready to learn to read and that their parents will be able to support

their children's learning as well as develop better literacy skills themselves (U.S.

Department of Education, 2003).

In the next section we look at the component that is unique to educational

programming, namely, parent-child interactive literacy, in order to consider research

related to the topic.

<center>Parent-Child Interactive Literacy</center>

The purpose of parent-child interactive literacy in family literacy programs is to

enhance the language and literacy development of children. As stated above, research

has demonstrated that parents play a central role in children's language and literacy

development (Dickinson & Tabor, 2001; Hart & Risley, 1995; 1999). Recent research

shows that a strong correlation exists between children's academic achievement and the

amount of time they and their parents spend together doing shared activities (Eliot, 1999).

In addition to greater academic gains, children who spend time interacting with their

parents also benefit from greater emotional and social growth that fosters attachment,

resilience, and protective factors necessary for their development (Werner, 1996; Powell,

2004; Pianta, 2004). Children also benefit in terms of their language and literacy

development from frequent parent-child book reading (e.g., Bus, van Ijzendoorn, &

Pelligrini, 1995; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Senechal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley,

1998). Regardless of socio-economic status, Hart and Risley (1995, 1999) found that the

way parents talk to their children influences children's language use, vocabulary

development, and learning. Further, Darling and Westberg (2004) found through a meta-

<center>3</center>

analysis of the impact of parent involvement on reading acquisition of children kindergarten to grade three, that training parents with specific strategies about how to teach children to read produced the best results.

The parent-child interactive literacy component in family literacy programs can boost both the parents' and the children's development and learning, increase parents' knowledge about the way their children learn and the importance of play, and enhance parents' understanding of the role of the parent as their child's teacher (National Center for Family Literacy or NCFL, 2003). It provides supervised time for parents to learn how to interact with their children to foster language and literacy development.

Parent-child interactive literacy, therefore, is a unique intervention program in that parents and children are learning together rather than individually. It is a purposeful time to "increase and facilitate meaningful parent child interactions focused primarily on language and literacy development in a high-quality learning environment where they can learn and play together" (Jacobs, 2004, p. 197). However, little research has been conducted that examines what programs are doing during parent-child interactive literacy to know what might constitute high quality programming. In the next section we summarize a study that was conducted at the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy at Penn State in order to reflect on the implications of the study for elementary teachers and teacher educators.

Study Summary

The purpose of the previously published study was to determine what occurs during the parent-child interactive literacy component and to learn how programs administer this component in family literacy programs (Grinder, Longoria Saenz, Askov,

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& Aldemir, 2005). In particular, we wanted to know the extent to which language and literacy development is explicitly and/or implicitly taught during the parent-child interactive literacy activities. To answer this and related questions, we conducted our study using qualitative methods. We gathered information through individual phone interviews with administrators and/or teachers from 24 program sites from 19 of the 73 family literacy programs across Pennsylvania. These sites were selected because previous statewide assessments (Van Horn, Kassab, & Grinder, 2002) indicated that they had met the majority of the Family Literacy Performance Standards required by the state.

The phone interview questionnaire consisted of 14 questions that focused on designing, administering, and assessing the interactive literacy component for all ages of children in family literacy programs.   Sample questions included: "What is the purpose of the interactive literacy component?" and "What information did you use to decide how to structure parent-child interactive literacy time?" Additional probes were used to gather more in-depth information about some of the questions.

Although the study results are presented in detail in another publication (Grinder, et al., 2005), some findings are particularly interesting not only to family literacy educators but also to those individuals involved in elementary teaching and teacher education since many of the families who participate have school-age children in the family literacy program. The study revealed several challenges that programs staff encounter as they implement this component of family literacy. Conceptually, parent-child interactive literacy activities should focus on language and literacy development of children through interactions with parents. However, program administrators overwhelmingly defined this component as a time for parents to work on parenting skills

taught during the parenting educational component of the program.   As a result, few comments by the administrators from the phone interviews related to the explicit and intentional teaching of literacy skills. Of the 24 sites interviewed, only eight (35%) site administrators and/or teachers mentioned literacy as one of the purposes of parent-child literacy interactions, while 15 (65%) sites did not mention literacy in their conversations at all.

The phone interview results revealed that programs focus primarily on administrative concerns. The information used to structure interactive literacy programs seems to be extraneous to the goals of the component as defined by the legislation. Site administrators and/or teachers appear to be preoccupied with working around barriers to implementation, such as the physical setting of a site, parents' needs and schedules, transportation, services provided by collaborative partners, and the make-up of the group. Although these sources of concern are important considerations in ensuring participation and meeting the educational needs of parents and children, they are not consistent with the goals of the parent-child interactive literacy component.

To implement an effective component focusing on parent-child interactive literacy, and to follow the mandate of No Child Left Behind, family literacy programs are supposed to use appropriate information such as scientifically-based reading research to design interactions that will assist both children and their families in literacy development. When program staff were asked during the interview what information they use to design and/or plan parent-child literacy interactions, no program spontaneously mentioned using scientifically-based reading research (SBRR). When probed by the interviewer about using SBRR, a variety of responses were provided that

ranged from answering the question directly to "never thought [about parent-child literacy interactions] as scientifically-based". Thus, only a small number of program staff were able to identify that they used resources that support scientifically based reading research.

Finally, and most importantly for K-12 teacher educators, program staff mentioned the difficulty of coordinating the parent-child interactive literacy component with elementary schools (since family literacy programs can serve children through age 8 with federal funds). Although a few program staff mentioned collaborating with elementary school staff members, the majority commented about the difficulty they had collaborating with schools to meet the needs of this component for school-age children. Elementary school teachers were viewed by family literacy administrators and/or teachers as being overwhelmed and as not understanding family literacy programs and the four component structure. To family literacy staff members, schools seemed reluctant to commit to a relationship with family literacy programs.

Discussion

To implement an effective program, family literacy administrators and teachers need to have a fundamental understanding of the crucial role of the parent-child interactive literacy component. Many programs seem to lack cohesiveness in this component, beginning with its purpose in relation to the other components of family literacy programs. Rather than using the parent-child interactive literacy component to focus on children's language and literacy development through interactions with parents, program staff define this component as a time for parents to interact with their children in working on parenting skills. Family literacy programs need a better repertoire of best

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practices within the parent-child interactive literacy component to achieve high quality family literacy programs.

Family literacy programs also need to improve their collaborations with elementary schools to better address the parent-child literacy interaction needs of school-age children. This age group is often overlooked because of the difficulty family literacy programs staff have in making connections with elementary school teachers. However, children may need the most support from their parents when they make the transition from preschool to elementary school. Fundamentally, family literacy program staffs perceive that elementary school teachers do not understand that family literacy programs exist to prepare at-risk children for successful school experiences. If elementary school teachers begin to understand that the goals of family literacy programs are similar to those of the schools, then working relationships may improve.

 A further challenge to the creation of these programs lies in the fact that some elementary teachers are seen by family literacy program staff (and parents) as not wanting contact with parents. More specifically, some elementary teachers may not value the parents as "teachers", especially if their literacy skills are marginal. If parents' skills are marginal, they may lack the confidence and—without assistance—the ability to help with volunteering or even with homework (Jacobs, 2004). And teachers may conclude that parents are uninterested in their child's education, as sometimes happens what low-literacy parents are unable to read or respond to teacher notes written in too complex a way.

Clearly, parent-child interactive literacy programs can help parents have a better understanding of the academic needs and requirements of their children (Jacobs, 2004).

However, finding time for parents to interact with children in or out of school is often a challenge. A complex of factors must come together to create successful parent-child interactive literacy programs in elementary schools. These include scheduling, facilities, understanding and integration of the four components, and most importantly, team work (Jacobs, 2004).

Family literacy programs are in an ideal position to remedy the lack of communication and/or understanding between parents and elementary school personnel. When family literacy staffs take parents and children to school to meet the elementary school teachers, the sense of a partnership between teachers and parents can be developed. Teachers can learn to respect what parents can do and can tailor expectations to the parents' abilities. In this context, communication must be established in ways that will benefit the children as they begin formal schooling, the time in which they most need parental support. Parent-child interactive literacy "in the elementary school setting, within the context of a quality family literacy program, can help bridge the gap between student achievement and parent involvement" (Jacobs, 2004, p. 206).

So, how does this happen? First, and foremost, teacher educators must inform their students of the value of family literacy programs and the importance of communication and coordination with all parents regardless of literacy level. Second, family literacy program staff need to take the initiative to make their work known to the elementary schools, particularly the four component model of family literacy programs so that the transition to school is smooth for those children most at risk of school failure. Finally, elementary school staff must be helped to understand they are part of a

continuum of services for at-risk children that includes the involvement of low-literate

parents (Jacobs, 2004).

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Reciprocal Mapping: Scaffolding Students' Expository Writing

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"Why do you think you need extra help in reading?" I asked a preadolescent whom I had just begun tutoring. He thought for a moment, looked me in the eye, and said, "When I read, I don't know what's important."

While this exchange was only part of the assessment process, his insight into his own situation taught me to pay attention to what students know and can articulate about their own reading difficulties. I shared with him that I thought he was really smart to be able to tell me what his problem was and that he would benefit from knowing how authors write. I explained that there are accepted "rules" or patterns for communicating ideas and that if he learned to recognize the way text was written, he would understand which set of "rules" the author had used and that that would help him be able to grasp what was important in the author's message. Planning for intervention, I first introduced narrative text structure and then patterns of expository text structure. Soon the young man's reading comprehension seemed to take off. With time, he had more confidence in his ability and, as a result, his overall general school achievement improved dramatically.

The above experience also became a turning point in my own understanding of the importance of text structure for both reading and writing. Because reading and writing are reciprocal processes, the strategy described here, Reciprocal Mapping, is designed to support students using both reading and writing. Research in classrooms with narrative text structure with second graders and with special populations is described elsewhere (Fine, 1991, 2004). In this article, I will describe Reciprocal Mapping in detail, discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the process, tell why information text is used, and relate research in a third-grade classroom in which students' understanding of expository text was mediated using this process.

What Is Reciprocal Mapping?

Reciprocal Mapping is a strategy for teaching reading and writing by reading quality literature and examining author's craft to improve students' writing. The teacher selects a text that is a well-developed, well-written example of a type of text structure. After reading the text, students do a retelling of the content while the teacher assesses and supports them in the retelling process. This might include asking probing questions when necessary. Then the students reread the text carefully with the teacher's explicit instruction so that they will be able to create a graphic organizer depicting the author's text structure. The teacher may guide the students in a whole class exercise in which the students use a prepared graphic organizer to write in boxes representing the parts on their individual copies. The readers carefully examine the writing to decide which key ideas to include. Then the students become writers by creating a prewriting plan of an original text on a graphic organizer that parallels the author's plan drawn under the original graphic, as shown in the example of a problem-solution text structure graphic organizer in Figure 1.
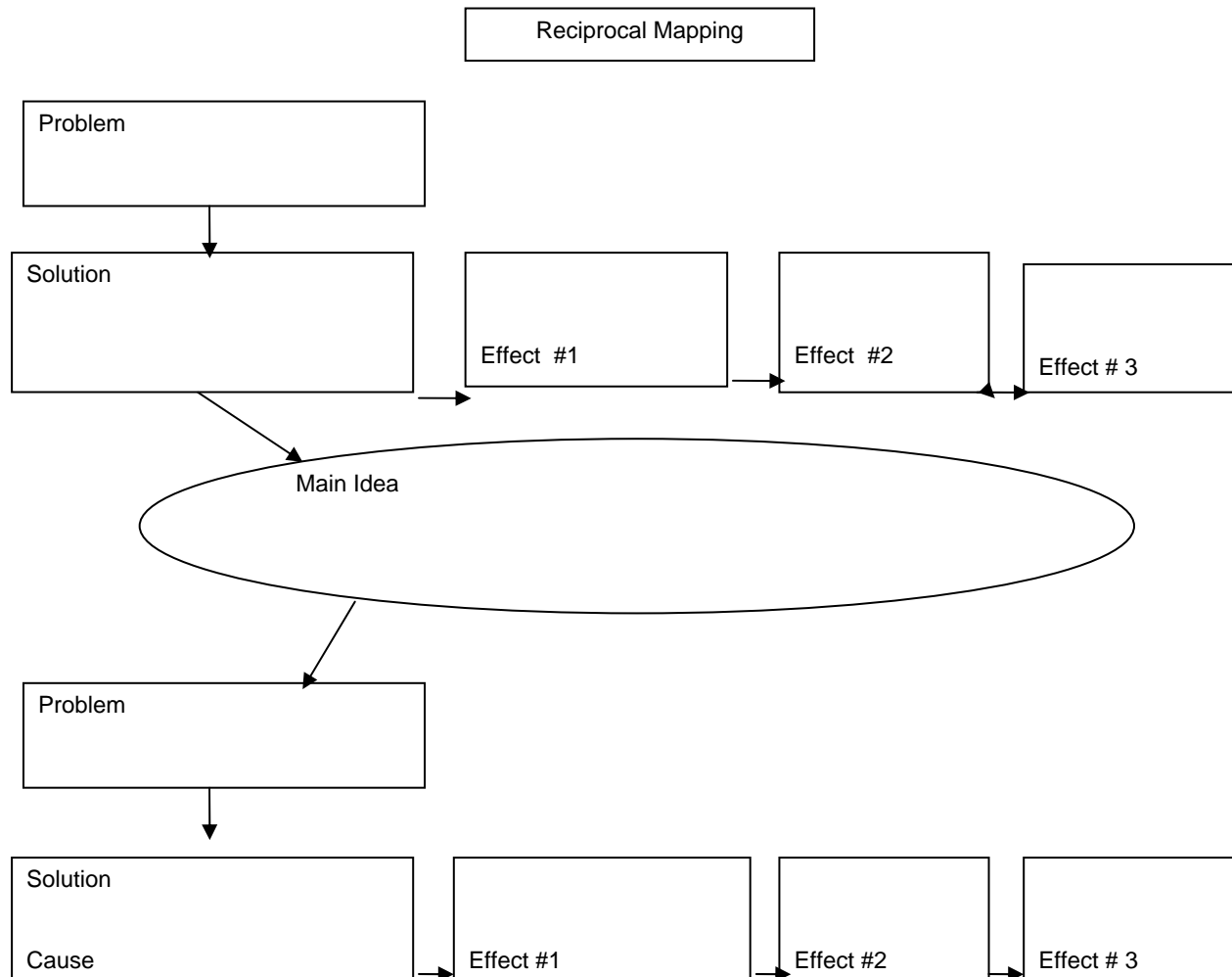
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│   Reciprocal Mapping    │
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┌─────────────────┐
│ Problem         │
│                 │
└─────────────────┘
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        ▼
┌─────────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│ Solution        │   │              │   │              │   │              │
│                 │   │ Effect #1    │   │ Effect #2    │   │ Effect # 3   │
│                 │   │              │   │              │   │              │
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        ▼
     ╭───────────────────────────────────────────────╮
     │      Main Idea                                │
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┌─────────────────┐
│ Problem         │
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│ Solution        │   │              │   │              │   │              │
│                 │   │ Effect #1    │   │ Effect #2    │   │ Effect # 3   │
│ Cause           │   │              │   │              │   │              │
└─────────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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Figure 1. Graphic of problem–solution text structure. The original book may be graphed on the top half. The students discuss the main idea of the text and create a prewriting for their original text in a parallel graphic below the original book's graphic.

What Is the Theoretical Base for Reciprocal Mapping?

Reciprocal Mapping uses quality literature, graphic organizers, and explicit instruction as an activity that can lead students to higher levels of cognition about the processes of reading and writing. Quality literature is used to share the level of language for its aesthetic value and because of the influence it has on writing. According to Tierney and Pearson (1983) teachers need to help students see that both reading and writing are processes that share many of the same stages. For instance, whether students are reading someone else's writing or creating their own writing, they need to focus on creating meaning. Much research has shown that teaching text structure improves students' comprehension and writing (Flood, Lapp, & Farnan, 1986; McGee & Richgels, 1985; Harvey, 1998).

Students use the graphic organizer to go through the process of recreating a visual of the author's prewriting stage. It may be created by students drawing boxes and writing in the information or by providing the students with a graphic organizer pattern on which to write. In either case, students engage kinesthetically and actively process the text structure as they write it. The graphic organizer provides a visual link, a bridge from the words or abstract symbols back to the concrete picture level (Bruner, 1986).

The graphic organizer provides a support for the learner consistent with what Bruner called scaffolding (Ninio & Bruner, 1978). It supports students' problem solving through their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), the level at which they can learn with the guidance from others to develop higher levels of understanding (Karpov, 2005). Having had teacher guide them through activities using a graphic organizer, the students are more likely to transfer their understanding to other texts. For this reason, the activity may be called a leading activity, one that leads the learner to a higher level of cognitive functioning.

Why Using Reciprocal Mapping with Expository Text?

There are many forms of expository text, including autobiography, biography, concept books, informational books about the natural or social world, fictionalized information books, and how-to books. These all share the common characteristic of telling about the real world in potentially fascinating way. For this reason many students find it motivational to read expository text and actually prefer it to narratives (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). By using Reciprocal Mapping with informational texts, students are preparing to learn how to better comprehend the form of writing that is found in most textbooks.

There are common text structures in expository writing. These include description, sequence, comparison, cause and effect, and problem and solution (Meyer & Freedle, 1984). Research has shown that good readers look for these patterns (Meyer, Brandt, & Bluth, 1980).There are signal words that indicate which text structure is being used (Vacca & Vacca, 1999). Some texts use only one of these for their organization. However, most use a combination of the patterns (Tompkins, 2005). Reciprocal Mapping may be focused on learning one or any combination of these patterns. The more familiar students become with the patterns, the more comfortable they will be when reading information texts.

Research in a Third-Grade Classroom

I was able to share the process of Reciprocal Mapping using expository text in a third-grade classroom. Most of the students were very familiar with narrative text structure, or story grammar, but were not very familiar with expository text structure. One of the first considerations was how to create a smooth transition from a narrative to an expository focus.

To bridge from reading mostly narrative text to expository text, the classroom teacher had started with a science fiction narrative, *The Green Book* (Walsh, 1982). This was an excellent choice because, similar to expository text, this genre has lots of "facts, but they are not necessarily true. They are presented, however, in a believable format so that the invented world

holds delight for the readers. It also has a combination problem/ solution and cause and effect text structure involving the very realistic, believable characters.

The characters in *The Green Book* had to solve the problem of what to do when their home planet is dieing due to the effects of pollution and is no longer able to support life. The solution, leaving the planet, entailed may other subsidiary problems or effects. These included the demands that the characters had to plan what had to be taken, get used to being on a space ship for a very long time, and finally, when they reached another planet, decide if the planet could sustain life (see Figure 2).

As a first step, the students retold the story chapter by chapter. This allowed the teacher to check for comprehension of the events taking place. Then the class created a map using the expository test structure. Because the third-graders were preparing for the state assessment test in writing, Florida Writes!, we were sure to include the opportunity to map the details under each effect.

The Green Book: Problem and Solution with Cause and Effect
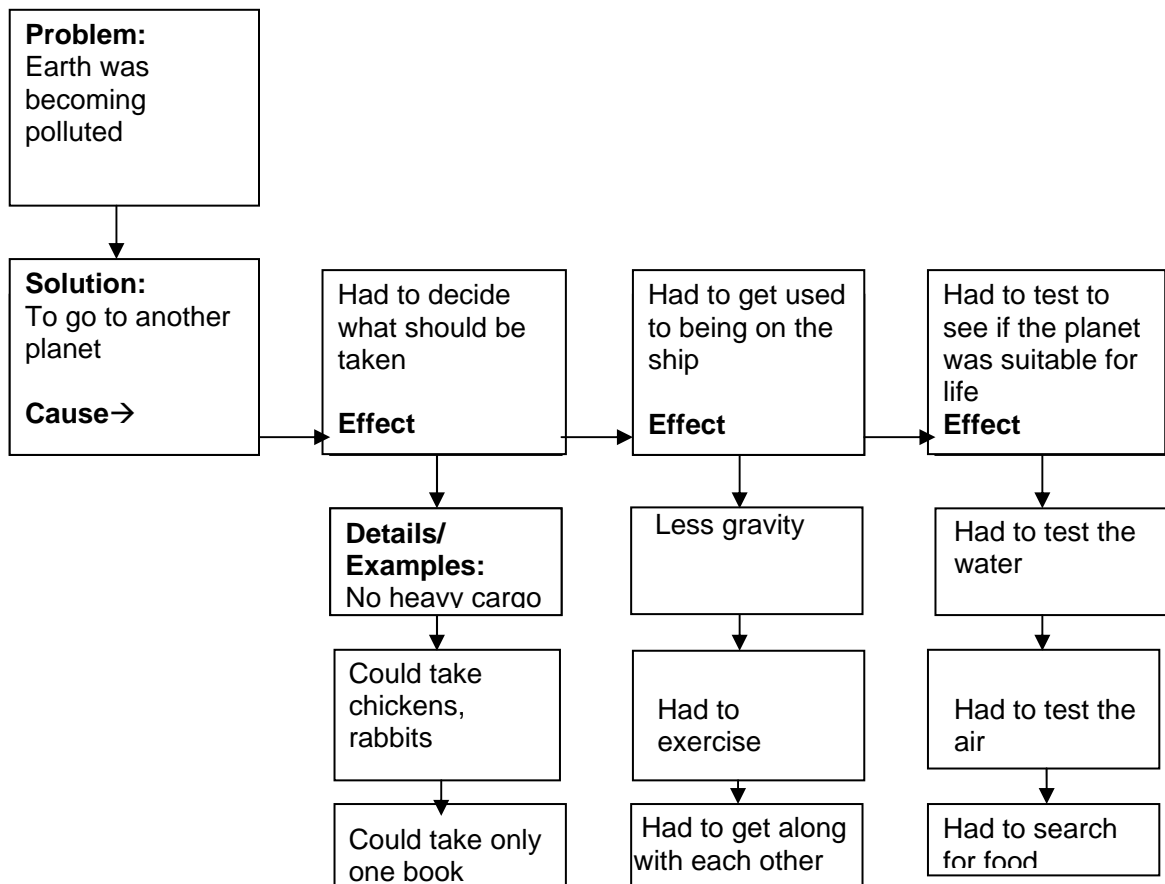

Figure 2: This is a graphic organizer showing the expository structure used in parts of *The Green Book* by J.P. Walsh, (1982).

At the conclusion of this activity, the students were asked to write a retelling of the text as if they were telling it to someone who had not read it (Brown & Cambourne, 1987). Based on the students' retellings, it was apparent that the students would benefit from a mini lesson on signal words to familiarize them with how writers use key words to indicate a particular expository pattern. A list of signal words along with examples was shared with the whole group (Vacca & Vacca, 1999, p. 397). The list of words was kept in a personal portfolio for future reference while writing.   Following the mini-lesson there were teacher-student and student-student conferences to scaffold the students' growth in the use of signal words. Students added them to their own work. Their written pieces were shared in a community meeting during a writer's workshop session.

Once the students had mapped the text structures in the science fiction book, we proceeded to map a fictionalized information book, *Flute's Journey: The Life of a Wood Thrush* (Cherry, 1997). This book presents the problems of migratory birds by personifying the main characters, wood thrushes, birds whose existence is threatened by the destruction of its natural habitats. The book may be classified as a fictionalized information book because it includes much information, but it also includes anthropomorphic characters, Flute and his mate, Feather.

The Reciprocal Map again focuses on a combination of problem-solution and cause and effect structures (see Figure 3.) The solution had effects that are described with details and supports.

Flute's Journey: The Life of a Wood Thrush
Problem and Solution with Cause and Effect

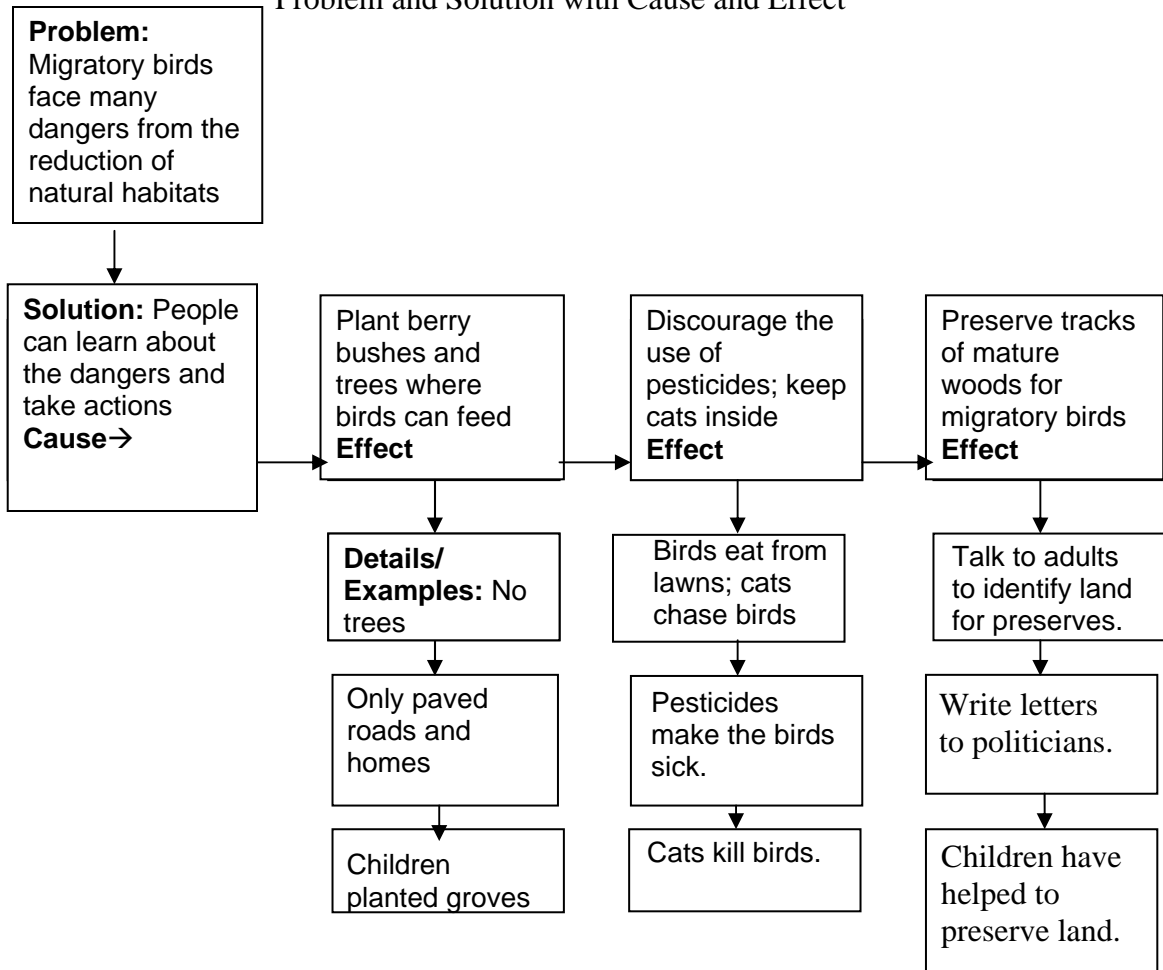|			
Problem: Migratory birds face many dangers from the reduction of natural habitats			
Solution: People can learn about the dangers and take actions **Cause→**	Plant berry bushes and trees where birds can feed **Effect**	Discourage the use of pesticides; keep cats inside **Effect**	Preserve tracks of mature woods for migratory birds **Effect**
	Details/ Examples: No trees	Birds eat from lawns; cats chase birds	Talk to adults to identify land for preserves.
	Only paved roads and homes	Pesticides make the birds sick.	Write letters to politicians.
	Children planted groves	Cats kill birds.	Children have helped to preserve land.

Figure 3: A Reciprocal Map of the *Flutes' Journey* displays the problem-solution and cause and effect text structure.

Using the map of *Flutes' Journey* as the model, the students wrote their own prewriting plans on the graphic organizer. Students were given freedom to write about whatever they wished, but were reminded that their own experiences often make for the most detailed and interesting topics. One wrote about steps that his family had to take in preparing to move to another state when his dad had changed jobs. Another wrote about her practicing to reach her goal to be an Olympic skater, while another wrote about practicing her dance routines for her recital. Each of these was a true expository text with combined problem-solution and cause and effect text structure many details for support. "Remembering Dances" is an example of the latter (see Figure 4).

Remembering Dances

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┌─────────────────┐
│ Problem: I can't│
│ remember        │
│ dances.         │
│                 │
│                 │
└────────┬────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
│ Solution:       │   │ I have to make  │   │ Visualizing     │   │ One part at a   │
│ Practice at home│──▶│ time slots.     │──▶│                 │──▶│ time            │
│                 │   │                 │   │                 │   │                 │
│ Cause→          │   │ Effect          │   │ Effect          │   │ Effect          │
└─────────────────┘   └────────┬────────┘   └────────┬────────┘   └────────┬────────┘
                               ▼                     ▼                     ▼
                      ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
                      │ Details/        │   │ Put music on    │   │ Do 1 part       │
                      │ Examples: Do    │   │                 │   │                 │
                      │ homework quickly│   │                 │   │                 │
                      └────────┬────────┘   └────────┬────────┘   └────────┬────────┘
                               ▼                     ▼                     ▼
                      ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
                      │ Eat my after    │   │ Close eyes      │   │ Do 2 part       │
                      │ school snack    │   │                 │   │                 │
                      │ quickly         │   │                 │   │                 │
                      └────────┬────────┘   └────────┬────────┘   └────────┬────────┘
                               ▼                     ▼                     ▼
                      ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
                      │ Stay on task at │   │ Review in mind  │   │ Do 1 & 2        │
                      │ school so I     │   │                 │   │                 │
                      │ don't have extra│   │                 │   │                 │
                      │ homework        │   │                 │   │                 │
                      └─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘
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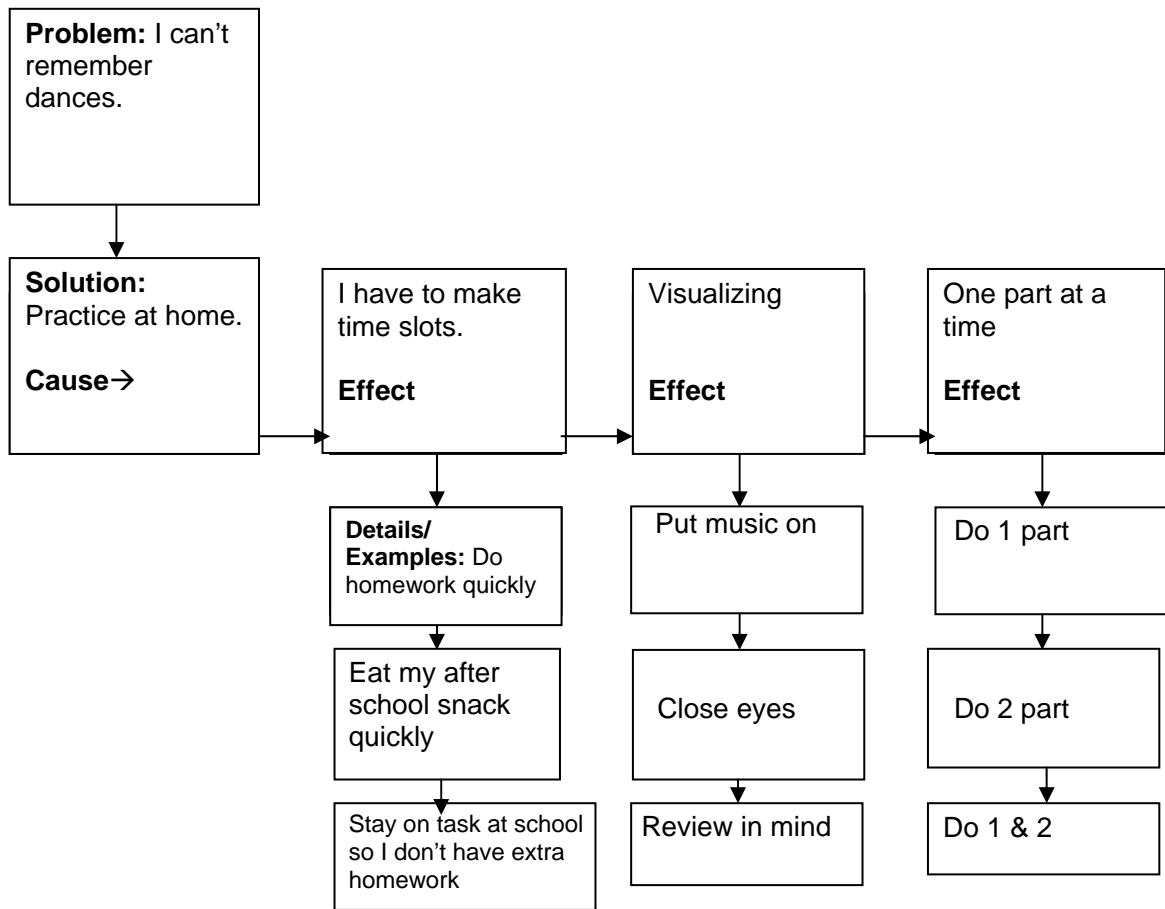
Figure 4: A student's Reciprocal Map illustrates her thinking through the same type of text structure as was found in *The Green Book*.

Following the prewriting using the map, the student below was able to write her expository composition incorporating the combined problem-solution and cause and effect text structure.

Remembering Dances

Plea, suso, potopura? No, no, is it suso, plea, potopura? I don't know all the steps. All I know is I have a big situation. I can't remember my dances. There are many little problems and solutions that come with not being able to remember dances.

For a start, you have to make time slots. Time slots are different pieces of time like a schedule. To do this you have to do any homework quickly so that you don't take up valuable practice time. My mom always said: "Time keeps moving even if you're not." Also if you eat an after school snack you would have to eat it as quickly as a mouse

scurries also not to take up practice time. And don't forget to stay on task in school. Then you won't have extra homework to do.

Not only do you have to make a schedule but you also need to visualize. To visualize is to review a step or dance in your mind. A good way for anyone to start visualizing would be to put on the song you're dancing to and lay down. Then close your eyes and pretend to watch the dance as you review in your mind.

Most importantly you must do one part at a time. To start you must have a large area where you can dance safely. Secondly, you must divide the dance into three parts. Do part one three times. Then do the second part three times. Then do parts one and two together three times. Now do the third part three times. Finally do the whole dance three times and do it with music.

Now you know some solutions for not remembering dances. They may not be a perfect cure but you can certainly improve by making time slots, visualizing, and doing one part at a time. Happy dancing!

This third-grade student was able to organize and write about how she solved her own "big situation" and learned her dance routine. She systematically organized her thoughts and was able to include not only her own voice but that of her mother!

By careful examining (through mapping) the text structure of a well chosen model, then planning and mapping their own texts (based on the model), they are able to create more sophisticated final results. By making reading/writing connections in this way, students' writing tends to be longer, more complex, and more fluid. Reciprocal mapping allows students to more fully appreciate the author's craft and develop an understanding of text structure needed for learning from textbooks. Additionally, they develop a sense of voice by writing about what they know from their own lives. This process can also affect their reading comprehension as well as their motivation, because students learn that they have a method at their disposal for knowing what is important in what they read. Then, when working from a well-understood model they are able communicate what they want in their writing in far more effective ways. Although experts know that reading and writing are indeed connected, a method like Reciprocal Mapping allows students both to grasp this and realize benefits of these connections.

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A Lexical Analysis of Informal Reading Inventory Graded Word Lists

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As assessment of children's reading abilities becomes of more concern to teachers, the use of informal reading inventories has become of interest to researchers and policy makers alike (Paris & Carpenter, 2003; Paris, Paris, & Carpenter, 2001; Paris & Hoffman, 2004). The use of the IRI has been suggested for assessing children's oral reading rate, accuracy of decoding, fluency, comprehension, and retelling (Paris, Paris, & Carpenter, 2001; Tompkins, 2003). Although the content of these inventories varies, virtually all contain graded word lists in some form (Cooper & Kiger, 2005).

Graded word lists can be used for various purposes. According to Richek, Caldwell, Jennings, and Learner (1996), a student's performance on word lists can provide important diagnostic information about word recognition abilities. (p. 50) Tompkins (2003) states that students read the lists until they reach a point that is too difficult for them indicating the level at which the graded passages are begun (p. 80). Bader (2002) states, "...a graded word list may be used as a starting point in administering graded reading passages or to gain additional insight into the types of word recognition errors made." (p. 20).

Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to describe the similarities and differences between words included in the graded lists on six different informal reading inventories published after 2001 through a formal lexical analysis. This analysis seeks to describe how the word lists differ in length of words, inclusion of words at multiple levels, and the words that appear on different inventories.

Development of Word Lists in Informal Reading Inventories

Without question, the learning of words from lists is a staple of early reading instruction. Beginning with Thorndike in 1921 to Dolch in 1932, these lists of words have been used for both instruction and assessment (Kauffman, 2000). According to McCormick (2003), informal inventory word lists are generally used for two purposes: 1) to determine the level of passages to be read in oral reading assessment, and 2) to provide information about the student's ability to decode words in isolation without the context of phrases and sentences (p. 96).

Among the various informal inventories reviewed there is not consistency in reporting how word lists are developed. Some authors of inventories used in this study carefully describe the process by which the word lists in the inventories were composed. For example, Johns (2001) provides an in depth explanation of how the 20 word lists in the Basic Reading Inventory were constructed. His word lists were derived in part from the EDL Core Vocabularies and Basic Skills Work List: Grades 1-12 (pp. 112-117). The usability of the lists was also assessed in a pilot study described in the manual. Leslie and Caldwell (200) state that the sight words that comprise the QRI-3 lists came from the passages and were checked for readability level using the Standard Frequency Index (p. 414).

On the other hand, other authors provide little of no technical information about the development of the word lists in their assessments. This was the case with the Classroom Reading Inventory, Ninth Edition (Silvaroli & Wheelock, 2001). In the appendix of their inventory, Woods and Moe (2003) provide information on the development of the passages but not the word lists (pp. 263-268). Bader (2002) indicated the use of graded word lists (unspecified) and "readers that appeared to be appropriate to

2

each level" (p.159). Bader further reported that a comparison of her word lists to the

Slosson Oral Reading Test and found a correlation of 0.92 (p. 159).

<div align="center">Method</div>

Six informal inventories were selected for analysis based on year of publication and

inclusion of word lists between Pre-Primer (PP) and grade 6. If an inventory included

word lists for grades seven and eight, these were not used in the analysis. The inventories

selected for this study were the *Critical Reading Inventory* (Applegate, Quinn, &

Applegate, 2004), the *Bader Reading and Language Inventory* (Bader, 2002), the *Basic*

Reading Inventory (Johns, 2001), the *Qualitative Reading Inventory* (Leslie & Caldwell's

2001), the *Classroom Reading Inventory* (Silvaroli &Wheelock, 2001), and the

Analytical Reading Inventory (Woods & Moe, 2003).

To prepare the lists for analysis, each sight word list (grades PP-6) was entered

into an Excel spreadsheet. This enabled the investigator to alphabetize the lists for

review, and to count the letters of each word as well as to determine average length of

words per grade. Each list was coded according to grade level and inventory title. This

allowed the investigator to compare the lists more easily. To frame the analysis in this

study, the author was informed by the work of Hiebert and Martin (2004). In their

discussion of children's word learning they differentiate between uniqueness in highly

meaningful words, highly regular words, and high frequency words. Of particular interest

were the identification of unique words--words that appeared only in one inventory list--

and the identification of duplicated words--words that appeared on more than one

inventory list. Further, among the identified duplicated words, the investigation sought to

identify at what grade levels these words appeared. Finally, the corpus of unique words

was compared to the original 220-word Dolch List (1945) to ascertain what percentage of this list was used in the inventory lists evaluated.

Results

The first step in the analysis was to count the total number of words used at each grade level across the six different inventories. Next, at each grade level, duplicate words were removed from the total count to determine the number of unique words. As defined here, an unique word would be one that appears on only one inventory. These results are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Total number of words and total number of unique words by grade level.

Grade Level	Total Words	Unique Words	Percentage of Unique Words
Pre-Primer	184	104	56.52%
Primer	250	157	62.80%
One	272	200	73.53%
Two	268	234	87.31%
Three	272	258	94.85%
Four	269	253	94.05%
Five	270	255	94.44%
Six	266	258	96.99%
TOTAL	2051	1719	83.81%

As may be expected, the six inventories use many of the same words at the beginning grade levels. From grade three and higher, the inventories show virtually no

4

overlap in word selection. Duplicated words were evaluated in two ways. First, the goal was to compare individual words across grade levels. This analysis looked at the words that appeared on more than one inventory at the same grade; for example, appearing at grade three on two different inventories. In all, 242 words were identified (See Appendix A). This is approximately 14% of the words identified. At the lower levels, a set of four words--he, the, saw, went--appeared on all six inventories

The next step in the analysis was to identify words that appeared on more than one list, but at different grade levels. In all, 175 individual words were identified that were present on more than one grade level list (See Appendix B). This represents a little more than 10% of the words reviewed. The most extreme example was the word "morning." This word appeared on five different inventories. At the lowest, this word was included on a pre-primer list. At the highest, it was included on a grade 4 list.

Next, using the average length of words was evaluated using only unique words. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Total number of unique words and average length by grade level.

Grade Level	Unique Words	Percentage of Unique Words
Pre-Primer	104	3.60
Primer	157	3.95
One	200	4.50
Two	234	5.09
Three	258	5.84

Four	253	6.66
Five	255	7.03
Six	258	7.94

As illustrated in Table 2, the length of the words increases by grade level. Word length is one indicator of linguistic complexity. Ability to read longer words has been correlated to spelling achievement and recognition of contextual vocabulary (Fry, 1977).

The final level of analysis was to compare the words on the inventories to the original list by Dolch (1945). There are 220 words on the standard Dolch List. Roughly 78%, or 171 of these words were included on one or more of the inventories evaluated (See Appendix C). As would be expected, many of these appeared in the first three grades. Of the words that appeared at more than one level, 41% came from the Dolch List.

<center>Discussion</center>

The purpose of the present study was to compare word lists from six representative informal reading inventories. The lists were compared based on uniqueness of the words selected by the inventory authors, the average lengths of the words, placement of the words on more than one grade level, and inclusion of Dolch words. As reported, the following summarizes the findings of the analysis:

1.   There was more duplication of word selection at the lower grade levels. Given the finding that 78% of words included in the Dolch list were identified, this finding makes sense. The Dolch list is designed for readers below grade 3.

<center>6</center>

2. The average length of words included on the lists increases with grade level. Since word length is a factor in many readability formulas, this also appears to be a predicted finding.

3. More unique words are identified in the upper grades. As previously stated, the inclusion of words from the Dolch list at the lower level accounts for the duplication of words at these levels. Accordingly, in the upper grades (three and higher), the lists appear to be more unique.

4. A relatively low percentage of words were found on more than one grade level—a little more than 10%.

5. The Dolch list is highly represented. 78% of the words on the Dolch list were included in one or more of the word lists. Of the duplicated words, 41% came from the Dolch list.

Informal reading inventories (IRIs) are a staple component in reading assessment. Each is unique based on their individual word lists, reading passages, and other types of informal assessment protocols. As a result of this investigation, one should question whether informal inventories are interchangeable. That is, are the results on one likely to reliably predict results on another? With regard to the word lists on the six inventories investigated, the answer is likely to be "yes and no." The results of word list reading at the lower grades are more likely to be reliable across inventories due to the relative high degree of duplication—especially in regard to Dolch words. On the other hand, due the high number of unique words at the higher grade levels, comparing performance on these lists may be less reliable.

Some may want to use sight word lists to determine a student's reading level. There should be questions about this approach, however. In some IRIs, for instance,

students are simply asked to read lists of words in an untimed condition while in others words are to be presented in a timed condition. Given this variance, it might best not to make decisions about reading levels from word lists but instead to follow the testing procedures of most inventories. In these cases the word lists are used to determine beginning reading levels for passage reading and to provide information about a student's decoding abilities. In not one of the six inventories investigated did the authors indicate that their word lists could be used to determine instructional reading levels. (For research findings in which *flashed* word recognition scores predict instructional reading levels, see Frye and Trathen [2005] in this volume.)

With regard to contemporary practice, how should we view these word lists? First, as indicated above, the word lists function as a critical component of the inventories in which they are found. Second, they do provide a sampling of words to be used for assessing word recognition and decoding skills. As such, and as one of multiple measures, the lists provide practical information. Further, one may use word lists for initial screening—followed by more formal assessment of reading skills and strategies. Finally, in the words of Dolch (1945), "if a child has difficulty in recognizing common words, it is a good thing to discover how many he knows of the 220 words which make up about two-thirds of easy school reading material" (p. 101). This kind of information is not insignificant—and maybe everything old is truly new again.

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Appendix A: Duplicated Words at Grade Level
(#) Number of inventories on which the words appear.

PrePrimer	Primer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
he (6)	saw (6)	before (5)	always (4)	story (3)	nervous (3)	furnish (3)	accomplishment (3)
the	went	children (4)	anyone (3)	arithmetic (2)	concern (2)	bravely (2)	ridiculous
and (5)	day (4)	hear	garden	bread	decorate	embarrass	consideration(2)
can	house	after(3)	teacher	danger	disturb	error	definite
get	little	again	through	food	dozen	guarantee	graceful
like	put	began	afraid (2)	forest	government	ignore	minimum
see	they	could	bad	half	jealous	indication	minor
to	what	drop	beautiful	hang	ocean	magical	nephew
at (4)	are (3)	farm	birthday	honor	official	operation	psychology
go	around	friend	branch	human	prairie	plantation	reluctant
you	came	made	clean	moan	sample	prevent	research
do (3)	come	never	cowboy	nurse	settlers	terrific	technical
in	green	next	dragon	passenger	slope	typical	undergrowth
not	have	there	elephant	removed	vicious	vision	accomplishment
that	new	where	guess	rib	windshield		ridiculous
will	now	airplane (2)	hide	wisdom			consideration
with	out	another	I'd				definite
a (2)	play	bear	job				graceful
about	two	coat	light				
all	want	cry	mile				
am	about (2)	farm	mountain				
but	all	feet	old				
dog	away	find	part				
down	big	food	remember				
good	boy	from	should				
have	call	give	such				
her	did	grass	turn				
here	father	hand	unhappy				
house	from	happy					
I	funny	how					
is	give	hurry					
look	had	ice					
man	help	laugh					
me	him	leg					
my	into	long					
no	is	men					
one	just	met					
said	know	morning					
she	like	new					
stop	many	night					
was	mother	off					
we	not	pet					
	of	please					
	other	ready					
	our	school					
	red	shoe					
PrePrimer	Primer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
	said	sound					

	said	sound					
	show	story					
	some	surprise					
	something	town					
	soon	water					
	take	wish					
	then	work					
	thing						
	trees						
	was						
	who						
	with						
	work						
	yes						
	your						

Appendix B: Words that appear on more than one grade level.

Number of Levels	Word	Lowest Grade	Highest Grade
5	morning	pp	4
4	because	p	5
4	through	2	5
3	before	p	2
3	came	pp	1
3	could	pp	1
3	down	pp	1
3	find	pp	1
3	from	pp	1
3	have	pp	2
3	here	pp	1
3	know	pp	2
3	make	pp	1
3	out	pp	p
3	school	pp	1
3	street	pp	2
3	these	p	2
3	thought	1	4
3	will	pp	1
3	with	pp	1
3	work	pp	1
2	**about**	pp	p
2	**afraid**	1	2
2	after	p	1
2	again	p	1
2	and	pp	p
2	animal	p	1
2	are	pp	p
2	argument	5	6
2	attractive	4	6
2	away	pp	p
2	ball	p	1
2	be	pp	p
2	been	pp	2
2	big	pp	p
2	bike	1	4
2	birthday	p	2
2	blue	p	1
2	book	pp	p
2	boy	pp	p
2	bread	1	3
2	brown	p	1
2	business	4	5
2	but	pp	p
2	can	pp	p
2	chief	3	4
2	children	p	1
2	choice	3	5
2	college	5	6
Number of Levels	Word	Lowest Grade	Highest Grade
2	come	pp	p
2	communicate	4	6

Number of Levels	Word	Lowest Grade	Highest Grade
2	creature	4	5
2	cry	1	2
2	curious	3	5
2	different	2	5
2	doctor	2	3
2	eat	p	1
2	eight	1	3
2	electric	3	4
2	escape	3	4
2	family	1	2
2	farm	pp	1
2	fast	1	2
2	father	p	1
2	fight	1	2
2	fish	p	1
2	fly	p	1
2	food	1	2
2	friend	pp	1
2	get	pp	p
2	giant	1	5
2	girl	pp	p
2	give	p	1
2	goat	pp	p
2	good	pp	p
2	government	4	5
2	graceful	5	6
2	green	p	1
2	had	pp	p
2	happy	pp	1
2	has	pp	1
2	heard	1	3
2	help	p	2
2	her	pp	1
2	home	pp	p
2	house	pp	p
2	human	3	4
2	if	pp	p
2	in	pp	p
2	invitation	4	5
2	is	pp	p
2	island	3	4
2	jungle	4	5
2	law	2	3
2	liberty	4	5
2	light	1	2
2	like	pp	p
2	little	p	1
2	live	p	1
2	love	1	2
2	man	pp	p
Number of Levels	Word	Lowest Grade	Highest Grade
2	matter	2	3
2	medicine	4	5
2	moan	3	5
2	mother	p	1

Number of Levels	Word	Lowest Grade	Highest Grade
2	mountain	2	6
2	much	p	1
2	my	pp	1
2	necessary	5	6
2	need	p	2
2	never	p	1
2	new	p	1
2	no	pp	p
2	not	pp	p
2	now	pp	p
2	of	pp	p
2	old	1	2
2	on	pp	p
2	open	1	2
2	or	pp	1
2	other	pp	p
2	over	pp	p
2	painful	5	6
2	parachute	4	5
2	party	pp	1
2	passenger	3	4
2	people	2	4
2	pet	1	2
2	picnic	1	3
2	pilot	3	4
2	precious	3	4
2	put	p	1
2	ride	p	1
2	run	p	1
2	said	pp	p
2	saw	p	1
2	see	pp	p
2	seventeen	4	6
2	she	pp	p
2	should	2	3
2	silence	3	4
2	some	pp	p
2	song	1	2
2	soon	pp	p
2	sound	1	2
2	stop	pp	p
2	story	1	2
2	take	pp	p
2	telephone	2	3
2	that	pp	p
2	there	p	1
2	thermometer	5	6
2	they	p	1
Number of Levels	Word	Lowest Grade	Highest Grade
2	thing	p	1
2	think	p	3
2	thirty	2	3
2	this	pp	p
2	three	p	1
2	together	1	3

2	top	1	2
2	train	pp	p
2	turn	p	2
2	under	p	1
2	unhappy	2	3
2	vehicle	5	6
2	violet	4	6
2	wagon	p	1
2	was	pp	p
2	water	1	3
2	went	pp	p
2	what	pp	p
2	when	1	2
2	who	pp	p
2	wish	pp	1
2	yesterday	3	4

Appendix C: Dolch words that appear in the inventory word lists.

a	did	help	new	show	want
about	do	her	no	sing	warm
after	does	here	not	sleep	was
again	done	him	now	so	we
all	don't	his	of	some	went
always	down	hurt	off	soon	what
am	drink	if	old	start	when
an	eat	in	on	stop	where
and	eight	into	one	take	which
are	every	is	open	ten	white
around	far	it	or	thank	who
as	fast	its	our	that	why
ask	find	jump	out	the	will
at	first	just	over	their	wish
away	fly	keep	own	then	with
be	for	kind	play	there	work
because	from	know	please	these	would
been	funny	laugh	pull	they	write
before	gave	light	put	think	yes
big	get	like	ran	this	you
black	give	little	read	those	your
blue	go	live	red	three	
brown	going	look	ride	to	
but	good	made	round	today	
call	green	make	run	together	
came	grow	many	said	under	
can	had	me	saw	up	
clean	has	much	say	upon	
come	have	my	see	us	
could	he	never	she	walk	

Fluency: Implications for Classroom Instruction

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The term fluency is defined by *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing* as "freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 85). Fluency bridges the gap between word recognition skills and comprehension. In other words, fluent readers do not spend inordinate time and resources decoding words and can therefore concentrate on comprehension. When a student reads fluently, his decoding is effortless and often so fast that he is unconscious of his ability to simultaneously recognize, decode and comprehend.

Step into any classroom in the United States today, and you may encounter the following scenario. Students in a small group take turns reading aloud a page or paragraph. One student is randomly selected and begins reading "his" page. He begins to read orally and frequently stumbles over words. The teacher constantly prompts him or even "gives" him the correct words. He continues reading haltingly, word by word, with little or no expression. He struggles to complete the page, and in doing so, punctuates his reading with heavy sighs and breathing. After this labored attempt at reading aloud, this student catches the teacher's eye as if to ask, "Do I have to continue? Am I through now? Don't you want someone else to read?" The wish is granted and now it is someone else's turn to read, but not before the teacher asks a few questions just to make sure everyone has comprehended the reading. Of course, our friend is able to answer only a few, if any

questions. Thus, it is apparent that this student has derived little meaning from the printed words on the page.

Why does this scenario matter? Most scholars would argue that gaining meaning from the reading is the ultimate goal in reading. However, in order for meaning-making to occur, one must process the text accurately and automatically. Students who do not read fluently, like the one in the example above, spend too much mental energy decoding the words, often inaccurately, which likely results in poor comprehension. This inability to read fluently and comprehend text can also adversely affect an individual's motivation to read. Students who experience difficulty in acquiring basic word recognition skills are not as motivated to read as their more capable peers. These dysfluent readers read less text in a given amount of time than more fluent readers. Indeed, reading practice is thought to be a powerful contributor to the development of accurate, fluent reading (Allington, 2001; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Krashen, 1993; Postlethwaite & Ross, 1992; Stanovich, 1986), yet research has demonstrated that dysfluent readers spend less time reading than their more able peers (Allington, 1983; 1984). It is nearly impossible for slower readers to catch up with classmates who read at normal rates unless they invest significantly more time and energy in reading.

Fluency has been a neglected topic in the field of reading instruction in recent years. Currently, however, there is a renewed interest in fluency among researchers and literacy advocates. The National Reading Panel, for instance, considers fluency to be an essential part of reading development and takes up the issue in some detail. Further, some researchers have broadened an earlier working definition of dyslexia as essentially

involving significant deficits in "single word reading" (Lyon, 1995) to one that combines the quick, accurate reading of text with "good understanding" (Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003). In this view, dyslexics, among other difficulties, experience a striking and primary failure to establish reading fluency.

Although there is a growing awareness among some teacher educators that fluency is an important issue, this is not reflected in serious treatments of the topic in methods texts—the work of Rasinski (2003) is something of an exception here--or in general classroom practice. In light of this, it seems important to survey some of the rich and useful strategies that clinicians, teachers, and researchers have developed for promoting this critical skill. This is a representative rather than an exhaustive overview.

Effective Instructional Techniques for Building Reading Fluency

There is a substantial body of research that explores instructional interventions designed for building reading fluency and for use in classrooms and reading clinics. Modeled oral reading, supported oral reading, repeated reading, and performance reading have established efficacy as instructional techniques designed to aid teachers and clinicians in developing more proficient and fluent readers.

Modeling Fluent Oral Reading

Modeling fluent oral reading for less able students may facilitate fluency development. Reading aloud to students in an expressive, effortless, and natural manner provides a model of what reading orally should sound like. Students are able to hear how the reader's voice "brings alive" the written text. By drawing students' attention to the fluent, oral rendering of text, the message is conveyed that meaning is communicated through the expression, intonation, and phrasing of the words. Rasinski (2000) suggests

asking students to remember how the teacher read the passage and how the teacher's expressiveness affected their understanding. This enables teachers to send the message that fluent, oral reading is more than just reading accurately (Rasinski, 2003); it is also *how* the words are interpreted.

When reading aloud challenging texts to students, teachers may adjust their reading rate and demonstrate that fluent reading is not necessarily fast reading; again, the emphasis is on deriving meaning and interpreting the text. When reading a technical passage, the teacher may choose to slow down and process the text more deliberately, and then discuss this adjustment of the reading rate with her students (Rasinski, 2000).

Reading aloud also provides students with an opportunity to hear text that they may otherwise be unable to read on their own. As Cohen's (1968) study demonstrates, modeling fluent oral reading significantly increases comprehension and reading vocabulary. Reading to students exposes them to more sophisticated vocabulary (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998); through read-alouds, students are exposed to the vocabulary of decontextualized language that they are more likely to encounter in written text than in oral language (Beck & McKeown, 2001). This read aloud builds comprehension and vocabulary by providing a springboard for meaningful discussions where students develop a critical understanding of the text including specified vocabulary words.

Through a clear, expressive, oral reading of text, the teacher can heighten students' interest in reading. This creates an enjoyable experience for listeners. As Trelease (1995) shares with teachers, human beings are "pleasure-centered." By reading aloud to students, we are conditioning them to associate reading with pleasure. Teachers

who love to read their own materials and enjoy reading aloud to their students are the pillars of successful models of fluent reading (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991).

Supported Oral Reading

Teachers who successfully model fluent reading understand the importance of moving students toward a level of independence. Students may begin by watching or listening to their more capable teacher read the text, then attempting the same task with the teacher present in order to guide or assist the student with the task by providing immediate feedback. Supported oral reading may be used as a scaffolding device to ease the transition from total teacher modeling to student independence (Rasinski, 2003).

Supported reading, coached reading or assisted reading, refer to a more proficient reader supporting the dysfluent reader. The more proficient reader progressively reduces the assistance offered as the less fluent reader becomes more independent (Rasinski, 2003). Rasinski characterizes supported oral reading as having a minimum of two readers who read aloud the same text. Supported oral reading may be depicted through different configurations.

Choral reading one-on-one with a student has been referred to as the *Neurological Impress Method (NIM)* or *assisted reading* (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). As with most supportive methods, material at the student's instructional level should be read. Heckelman's (1969) neurological impress method was used for dysfluent remedial readers and was supposed to "impress" the words into the student's brain. Currently, this method involves the student and teacher simultaneously reading the same text aloud at a reasonably swift pace. The student sits with the teacher and they hold the book together. As the teacher points to the words, she reads into the student's ear. The teacher controls

the pace, expression, pitch and any other prosodic features and can adjust them accordingly. This lesson continues until the teacher notices the student becoming fatigued. Because this method of assisted reading is completed using one-on-one teacher support, it is very labor-intensive but has been quite successful in improving the reading fluency of remedial readers (Hollingsworth, 1978).

Another variation of choral reading similar to the NIM involves pairs of readers. These pairs usually comprise one reader who is more proficient than the other. Keith Topping (1987) also recommends pairing adults (parents, teacher, aides, tutors) with a student, as well as pairing two students. This technique is easily adaptable for both classroom and clinical use. The material should be chosen by the less proficient reader and should be on his instructional reading level. The paired reading session may start out with both readers reading aloud (together) the same text. However, the more proficient reader does not read into the student's ear as done during the NIM. The more proficient reader should read with expression and intonation and should begin reading at a pace slightly faster than what the less-proficient student may generally read. When the more proficient reader notices the student gaining confidence, then the more proficient reader should either stop or lower her voice to a whisper so that the student is supporting himself more. There should be an established signal that the less-proficient student initiates which indicates his desire to read the text independently.

An adaptation of paired reading is Marie Carbo's (1978) "talking books." Books are recorded on audiotapes or CD's and played for the student as he follows along in his copy of the book during the initial reading. During the second reading of the book, the student should read along with the tape. This *reading along with the tape* should

continue until the student is able to read the text independently. When recording these books or stories, the more proficient reader should use caution and make sure the recording is at a rate where the student is able to follow along and attend to the printed text. The reader should also read with expression and intonation when recording the text.

Older struggling readers may use the recording technique as a way to build their reading fluency. These older readers can record books for the purpose of assisting children in elementary schools or even relatives in becoming more fluent readers. Because the books or stories may not be recorded until the reader is able to read the text fluently with proper prosodic features, this may take multiple re-readings for these older struggling readers. After they have practiced reading the text so that they are able to record the text with a fluent reading, then they, too, have undergone a fluency intervention known as practice reading or repeated reading.

Echo reading (Morris & Slavin, 2002) is anther form of supported reading, which includes the student echoing, or repeating, the lines of print the teacher reads aloud. The material chosen should be no harder than the student's instructional reading level. The teacher reads aloud as she finger-point-reads the text; once again, the teacher is reading with the appropriate prosodic features. The student then echoes back the text, also finger-point-reading what the teacher just read aloud. During this process, the student may feel comfortable enough to take the lead. If this is the case, the teacher should gradually release the responsibility of the reading to the student.

Repeated Reading of Connected Text

The oldest and most widely cited and used method to improve reading fluency is the repeated reading technique (Meyer & Felton, 1999; National Reading Panel, 2000;

Samuels, 1979; 2002; Torgesen, Rashotte, & Alexander, 2001). Repeated reading requires students to read aloud a passage at the appropriate reading level, several times, until the desired rate of reading is achieved. The National Reading Panel (2000) found the repeated reading method to be the only instructional technique for which there is consistent, positive support of efficacy in increasing reading fluency. In the two decades since its inception, more than 100 studies have been published testing the repeated reading method (Samuels, 2002).

A consistent finding indicates that repeated readings produce statistically significant improvement in reading rate, word recognition, and oral reading expression on the practiced passage (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Repeated reading of connected text has shown improvements in rate, accuracy, and comprehension (Bowers, 1993; Dowhower, 1987; O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1985; Samuels, 1979).

Why are repeated readings of text so beneficial? As with any task, the more practice, the more natural and automatic the task becomes. Fluent readers spend little cognitive attention or mental energy on decoding words. Through practice in instructional level material, decoding may become so automatic that there is plenty of mental energy left for comprehension. Repeated reading offers this model of fluency development.

Assisted repeated reading requires a more proficient reader to be present. A 50 to 300 word passage is chosen at the student's instructional reading level (Dowhower, 1989). The more proficient reader provides a "fluent first reading" for the less proficient reader, where the focus is on reading the passage with appropriate accuracy, rate, and prosody. The student practices reading aloud the passage until a certain criterion reading rate is achieved.

After each reading, the teacher or student may choose to chart the reader's rate on a graph, or at least keep some record of the reader's rate (Allington, 2001; Blachowicz, Sullivan, & Cieply, 2001; Dowhower, 1989; Meyer & Felton, 1999; Morris, 2005; Rasinski, 2003). The student should see the rate continue to rise, if the repeated readings are effective. Typically only three to four re-readings with daily sessions averaging 10-15 minutes are required to improve the reading rate (Bowers, 1993; Young, Bowers, & MacKinnon, 1996;). Morris (2005) suggests three readings for each passage. This process continues with the instructional level material gradually increasing in difficulty.

As mentioned above, during assisted repeated readings, the teacher may begin modeling for the student by orally reading a portion of the text or by reading the entire text aloud, focusing on the rhythmic and syntactic cues of the passage with prosodic reading (Meyer & Felton, 1999). The student then reads the text multiple times throughout the week in the presence of the teacher. If the student begins to compromise the meaning of the sentence or reads inaccurately a large portion of the sentence, the teacher may draw his attention to the miscues or ask the student to reread the sentence (Morris, 2005).

The repeated reading techniques require reading rate benchmarks, and many reading scholars have used or adapted Hasbrouck and Tindal's (1992) curriculum-based oral reading fluency norms for students in grades 2-5 to create criteria for reading rates (Allington, 2001; Blachowicz, Sullivan, & Cieply, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000). The criteria depend upon the grade level of the passage being read. Rasinski (2003) uses the following criteria when targeting the number of Words Read Correctly Per Minute (WCPM), which offers a combined accuracy and rate score:

Grade Level	Target Number of WCPM (Rate and Accuracy)
Late First Grade (Second Half)	60
Second Grade	90
Third Grade	100
Fourth Grade	110
Fifth Grade	120
Sixth Grade and above	140

Morris (2005) suggests a range as a guide to expected oral reading rates:

Grade Level	Target Range of WPM (Rate)
First Grade	30-70
Second Grade	60-90
Third Grade	80-110
Fourth Grade	95-120
Fifth Grade	110-140
Sixth Grade	110-150
Seventh Grade	115-160

Repeated readings have proven efficacy in improving student's decoding, rate, and comprehension when implemented on a regular basis. Reading clinics across the country use repeated readings as a method for developing fluency in struggling readers. The one-to-one teacher to student ratio creates an intimacy that motivates and engages students in these clinical settings. However, classroom teachers with a 25 to 1 student to teacher ratio may face challenges in implementing repeated readings in the classroom. An

option for classroom teachers may be to pair a less fluent reader with a more fluent reader to reduce the direct responsibility of the classroom teacher. Either way, orally reading the same passage multiple times provides the practice dysfluent readers need in order to become more accurate and automatic when decoding the text; thus, freeing cognitive resources for the demands of text comprehension.

Although many classroom teachers are intellectually aware of the scientific evidence supporting repeated readings, many teachers still face the dilemma of how to make repeated readings appealing and engaging. Performance reading may offer a variation of repeated reading where students are provided with a legitimate purpose for completing repeated readings.

Performance Reading

Performance reading embraces the primary feature of repeated readings (Allington, 2001; Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999; Nathan & Stanovich, 1991; Rasinski, 2003). Students read and rehearse a script, poem, speech, or passage multiple times throughout a week in preparation for their week-end performance. Because students are performing for an audience, students are charged with repeatedly reading their text with the notion of "hooking their audience" (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). This requires students to engage in a full understanding of the text if their performance is to render full audience engagement (Rasinski, 2003; Stayter & Allington, 1991).

Poetry begs to be performed and offers the elements of repetition, rhythm, rhyme, and word phrases that may aid in developing fluency (Perfect, 1999). By reading aloud poetry, students perform repeated readings for authentic purposes. The meaning of poetry

is carried not only in the written words but also in the oral interpretation. This can become an enjoyable and exciting part of a classroom experience. Poetry Coffeehouses or Cafés provide a creative setting for imaginative and personal performances. The performances reflect individual interpretations of poems while providing the opportunity to practice toward fluent expressive reading. In addition, poetry's brevity engages many students, and often, they are not as reluctant to read poems multiple times.

While poetry tends to be an individual performance, Reader's Theatre engages many in performance reading. In Reader's Theatre, the emphasis is on reading the spoken words from the script with the appropriate gestures. This form of repeated reading requires students to execute the performance with fluency and a full understanding of the text while heightening student interest in pronunciation, intonation, duration, and pitch of their oral language; dialogue is also emphasized and enhanced with appropriate gestures such as shrugging shoulders, facial expressions, pointing fingers, snapping, nodding heads, chin scratching, etc. (Flynn, 2004). Planning and extensive practice time must be allotted by classroom teachers for successful performance reading.

Many teachers plan for multiple Reader's Theatre performances each week. Because most scripts include between five and ten parts, a typical classroom with 25 students may include three to four "Theatre Troupes" each week. During a weekly theatre session, each student in the class is provided a copy of the group's script with his part highlighted. Teachers may choose to assign parts or students may audition for the parts. The teacher usually reads through the scripts with each group modeling a fluent reading of the text to be performed. In addition, the teacher also asks students comprehension questions which may focus on story elements, characterization, reader response, etc.

Students are often assigned to read their parts of the scripts at home and then have time in class to practice or read their scripts (Griffith & Rasinski, 2004). With this amount of repeated reading, it is very likely that students may read and reread their parts as many as 20 times before the performance. It is critical that the teacher meet with different troupes to provide feedback before the performance; this feedback may focus on the correct pronunciation of words, reading with expression and emotion, and reading with the appropriate rate and volume. Then on Fridays for approximately 15-30 minutes, it is time for each troupe to perform.

Reader's Theatre differs from plays or other types of performances because readers read their parts aloud rather than memorize them. Reader's Theatre encourages students to *interpret* the text that they are reading and to read with an *appropriate* speed or rate rather than just simply reading fast.

Strategies like Reader's Theatre and Poetry Café provide an authentic venue for students to *perform* a script, poem, speech or play from a book or story they have read, using minimal props (Allington, 2001; Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999; Rasinski, 2003). In each case, students read and re-read the script or poem so that in the end, they will perform with fluency, appropriate prosody, and a complete and thorough understanding of the text. Because props are minimal, students read from their scripts, and use their expression, intonation, rate and other prosodic features to convey the meaning of the story/poem to audience members. A flawless performance results from many repeated readings. These methods of performance reading offer authentic, gratifying, and engaging forms of repeated reading that are sure to motivate students and

provide teachers with evidence of students' improved reading fluency (Griffith &

Rasinski, 2004; Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999).

Conclusion

There is now increasing evidence at hand that achieving fluency is necessary for

effective reading ability. Nonetheless, this issue receives comparatively little attention in

reading methods texts, journals devoted to practice, or at national reading education

conferences. It seems appropriate, therefore, that educators more thoroughly acquaint

themselves with both the breadth and depth of strategies available for the cultivation of

fluency. While this survey of fluency instructional methods is not exhaustive, it does

highlight useful techniques that have shown positive results in clinical and quasi-

experimental research. The methods surveyed here offer teachers a variety of

participation structures that range from clinic to classroom, from individual to whole

group, yet all can be rewarding and engaging for students and teachers alike.

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1964-2004: A retrospective on reading instruction (Highlights and Lowlights)

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At the 2004 American Reading Forum Conference at Marco Island, Florida several educators, whose experiences in the field of literacy span over four decades, came together to identify and discuss highlights and lowlights of reading education. Panelists consisted of individuals from a number of universities throughout the United States. Each panelist was responsible for a specific decade and together, with audience participation, created a list of highlights and lowlights in reading education for their particular decade. As a culminating activity, each group was asked to identify any future trends, issues, and concerns which might affect the field of literacy in the 21st century. The following paper summarizes the comments made during the presentation and provides educators with insights into the future of reading education.

1960s: The Age of Educational Idealism

The 1960s presented significant challenges to the citizens of the United States. Americans were embroiled in political and social challenges which threatened the stability of the nation. On the national scene Americans struggled with issues of poverty and civil rights. Internationally, the United States was involved in the war in Vietnam. These significant events spawned public outcry and Americans found themselves involved in protests and riots throughout the country. Americans were also haunted by events from the previous decade. In 1957 the Soviet Union launched its first unmanned rocket, Sputnik, into space. Americans feared that they were falling behind in the space race and believed that national security would be compromised if American education failed to respond to these disturbing national and international trends.

In 1958 Congress passed the National Defense Education Act. The $1-billion law paid for college student loans, scholarships, and scientific equipment for public and private schools. The act emphasized the study of math, science, and foreign languages and fueled the movement for curriculum reform in other areas of education. The Sputnik crisis also provided academics with an opportunity to contribute to education policy and curriculum. Suddenly, academic institutions were eagerly sponsoring research which

focused on updating teaching methods, and understanding of the complexities of the learning processes (20th Century Education, 2005).

Highlights

Armed with the initiatives passed in Congress in the late fifties, educators and politicians began to tackle the political, economic and social challenges of the 1960s. One of the highlights of the 1960s political agenda of the United States was the effort made to eliminate the disturbing trends of poverty which plagued the United States. In 1965 Congress approved the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA). A portion of ESEA funding went to support the Title One program which funneled money to high-poverty communities by targeting extra resources to districts with the highest concentration of poverty. These districts generally had the lowest academic performances among their students and had the greatest number of obstacles to raising that performance.

The War on Poverty and its ensuing focus on humanitarian initiatives encouraged educational researchers to search for the best methods to reach and teach children. An explosion of research emerged during the 1960s which examined whether meaning-centered or skills-based reading instruction was the most beneficial method for teaching children to read and write.

The Great Debate of 1967

Jeanne Chall, a psychologist at Harvard University, conducted research in classrooms and interviewed teachers and textbook publishers. Based on her extensive research, she published her findings in *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967). In this publication, Chall compared the difference in *Phonics* and the *Look Say* methods. Phonics was known for its emphasis on code and consisted of teaching sounds associated with particular symbols (letters of the alphabet). Children learned to read by sounding out new words, one at a time. The Look Say method emphasized a meaning-centered approach and consisted of teaching whole words using flash cards. Students learned to recognize the entire word by sight without breaking the word into parts.

Chall's findings suggested that learning to read was a developmental process and that phonics was a more effective method. Children, who were taught only holistic methods, appeared to do better in the early years, but fell behind their peers because they lacked the skills needed to transition into independent reading. Reading programs that advocated 'consistent and substantial systematic phonics' instruction and used reading programs with stories that used highly controlled vocabulary had the greatest level of success with children. The phonics approach claimed that once children mastered sound-letter relationships, they would able to focus on comprehension tasks (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998).

Text and the reader

Louise Rosenblatt was Professor Emeritus of English Education at New York University. Although her career spanned several decades, she is most closely associated with the research which she conducted on the role of teaching literature with a focus on the relationship between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt 1964, 1968). Rosenblatt's approach to reading rejected the New Criticism of the late 1930s through the 1950s which asserted that texts themselves were central to literature instruction and that teachers were to teach students how to analyze texts while discouraging students from expressing their individual responses to the text.

Rosenblatt challenged this notion and advocated a paradigm shift in the teaching of literature away from viewing the text as authority to a view that focused on the reader's relationship with text (Rosenblatt, 1964, 1968). The focus of Rosenblatt's research on reading was referred to as Reader Response Theory. According to Rosenblatt, readers were encouraged to incorporate their personality traits and experiences as they sought to understand and respond to the text which they were reading. As the reader reads, he or she will derive a personal understanding of the text based on his or her individual reactions to the words and images presented in the text. The transaction between the reader and the text highlighted the special meaning that these words and images had for the individual reader and determined what that work communicated to the reader. The transaction between the reader and the text became known as Transactional Theory (1969). Rather than emphasize formal analysis of a text, the primary goal of instruction from a transactional perspective was to foster students' trust in the expression of their individual experience with the text (Church, 1997).

1970s: Educational Pioneering

Rosenblatt continued to pursue reading research into the 1970s with her second significant work, *The Reader, The Text, The Poem* (1978) in which she outlined the differences between the two opposing modes of experiencing a text: efferent and aesthetic. Readers who focused on efferent reading were motivated by specific needs to acquire information. Readers concentrated on the context of the material rather than form. When readers attended to aesthetic reading, they considered their own lived-through experiences or engagement with the text. According to Rosenblatt, it was the responsibility of teachers to help students understand and discover the pleasure and satisfaction of both modes of reading.

Lowlights

Much of literature instruction which took place in the schools in the early 1970s focused on applying the 'correct answer' to worksheets, tests and textbook questions. As a result, students were often left to cultivate an understanding of efferent rather than aesthetic reading. Teachers stressed reading accuracy over enjoyment. To gain greater understanding of text, teachers often initiated round robin reading activities in their

reading classrooms. In round robin reading the reader is expected to take full responsibility for a small section of the text by reading that portion out loud.

Round robin reading mislead teachers into believing that they were able to monitor a child's oral reading, however, they soon encountered problems with this instructional approach. During round robin reading, students found it difficult to attend to the features of text which could aid their understanding of the text. Instead of developing students' understanding of the text, round robin reading had the reverse effect by further reducing students' motivation to read (Ediger, 2000). Although round robin reading proved to be an unsuccessful attempt at improving students' reading experiences, researchers continued to pursue more effective means for reading instruction and began to pay closer attention to the reading activities which took place in the schools.

Highlights

As researchers examined reading instruction in the schools, they discovered that students spent minimal time participating in independent reading activities. To facilitate more opportunities to develop efferent and aesthetic reading skills, researchers called for more independent reading opportunities for students. Durkin (1979) found that the amount of time which teachers dedicated towards independent reading was an essential ingredient in an effective reading program. Durkin found that teachers were spending too much time on activities that did not promote growth in reading. Students spent as much as 70% of the time allotted to reading instruction doing 'seat work' which usually consisted of completing workbooks or worksheet exercises that were found to be completely unrelated to growth in reading. Teachers spent large amounts of time asking questions that had little or no instructional value and did not promote reading comprehension. In order to create an educational environment that would develop and sustain improved reading development, teachers needed to spend more time focusing on authentic reading and writing opportunities which ultimately lead to improved reading achievement.

The increased focus on authentic reading and writing opportunities supported the popularity of the whole language movement which became popular in the late 1970s with the work by Goodman (1980) and Smith (1988). Whole language proponents claimed that the most effective method for teaching children to read occurred when they were immersed in real reading and writing. According to whole language supporters, readers rely more on the structure and meaning of language rather than on the graphic information from the text. Reading and writing was viewed as a process in which both reader and writer were active participants in the construction of meaning as they interacted with the text. The holistic approach to reading and writing development set the tone for reading research in the 1980s through the early 1990s.

1980s: Time of Transition

During the 1980s, American education found itself in a time of transition. Just as whole language was becoming more visible in literacy classrooms, American education

came increasingly under fire by politicians and business leaders. In response to increasing skepticism of American public schools, Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell formed a commission comprised of 18 members including a former governor, political and business leaders, several University Presidents, school board members, principals, superintendents, and one Teacher of the Year to present a report on the quality of education in America. In April of 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education published their report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The purpose of this document was to warn Americans that our preeminence in international commerce, industry, science and technology was being overtaken by competitors outside the United States. To keep our competitive edge, we needed to reform our educational system for the benefit of all. There was a pervasive fear in society that the foundation of American society was being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that permeated the American school system.

Lowlights

Publication of the document, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) served as an important landmark for the American education system. The documents grim predications suggested that individuals who did not possess high levels of literacy would be disenfranchised in the future. The document further asserted that 23 million American adults were functionally illiterate and that many 17 year olds did not possess higher order intellectual skills.

Political, business and educational experts began to search for solutions to the educational crisis. At the local and state levels, stakeholders began to call for education reforms which placed tougher academic standards on schools, teachers and students. State and local levels of government enacted comprehensive education-reform legislation by adding to graduation requirements, decreasing the average class size, and requiring students to pass standardized tests. Demands were placed on teachers to take and pass literacy and other content area exams and teacher education programs had to redesign their programs to reflect new, teacher-licensing requirements.

Individuals like E.D. Hirsch, Jr. and William Bennett advocated a return to the classics for college students and back to the basics for public school students. As the 1980s saw an increased level of accountability and outside influence of education, it was, ironically, a time when whole language flourished and literature based instruction and process writing took hold in many schools.

Highlights

As Whole Language began to take center stage in the United States as a movement in the 1980s, it challenged the conventional wisdom of educational curriculum. Prior to the 1980s, basal textbooks stressed early code emphasis that was popular from the 1960s to the early 1980s. Suddenly, coding was no longer the focus of reading education. Instead, reading research established meaning as the core, not the residual outcome, of reading (Goodman, 1980). Although complete consensus and

agreement among reading experts was difficult to achieve, Whole Language supporters tended to believe that skills were better taught in the act of reading and writing genuine texts for authentic purposes than taught directly and explicitly by teachers. Many reading teachers believed that young readers would have to learn the alphabetic principle by sheer immersion in print.

The 1980s saw an emphasis on process rather than product in professional publications. Prior to the 1980s, qualitative research had very little visibility within the reading research community. By the 1980s and 1990s researchers began to see the merits of qualitative research. Research articles in leading reading journals eagerly included qualitative research designs. The notion of Teacher Researcher also gained popularity during the 1980s. Teacher research provided valuable information to other teachers since it encouraged teachers to daily observe and gather data about their students in various learning situations. Based on this data, teachers were encouraged to adjust their instruction to best meet the student's needs and empowered teachers to think and act like professionals. Towards the close of the decade, the whole language movement was facing increased scrutiny. Increased emphasis on accountability and skills-based assessment did not take into account instruction that supported meaning-centered curriculum. Increased debate among educators arose when these complex, rich teaching approaches did not lend themselves to easy measurement on tests (Pearson, 2004).

1990s: Age of Accountability

The 1990s ushered in the age of accountability with increasing legislative control regarding reading instruction and research. By the 1990s reading research had experimented with a wide range of reading approaches from skills-based to meaning-centered. It appeared that reading researchers were attempting to compromise their positions by embracing a balanced approach to reading. Balanced reading combined the best of phonics instruction and the whole language approach to teach both skills and meaning and to meet the reading needs of individual children.

Highlights

Balanced Reading. Researchers (Snow et al., 1998) suggested that the best way to teach reading was to expose students to solid skills instruction, including phonics and phonemic awareness with embedded reading and writing experiences in whole texts. The combination of both skills-based and meaning-centered instruction helped students see the relevance of phonics for themselves in their own reading and writing and helped students facilitate the construction of meaning.

Lowlights

Balanced Reading. As reading researchers were beginning to understand the ramifications of balanced literacy, they found themselves confronting a new challenge in the classroom, adapting balanced literacy to the increasing number of English Language

Learning (ELL) students in American classrooms. Data from the Adult Literacy Services (as cited in Lapp, S., and Braunius, M. 2001) suggested that 32 million people in the United States spoke a language other than English, a 38 percent increase since 1980. Approximately 19.8 million immigrants enter the United States each year and 1.7 million of those who are aged 25 and older have less than a 5th grade education. Eighty percent of the adults who are illiterate in English are also illiterate in their native language (Adult Literacy Services, 1999). Many teachers were not adequately prepared to deal with ELL students in their classrooms. Teachers were unfamiliar with ELL students' language and cultural backgrounds and were frequently overwhelmed by the demands of teaching the curriculum to students who were unable to speak English (Whelan-Ariza, 2006).

Highlights

Bilingual Education. The large number of immigrants to the United States had a significant effect on the schools. States began to consider how they could meet the demands of educating a population of non-English speaking children. One solution that presented itself was the creation of bilingual educational programs. Bilingual education in the United States had traditionally been implemented as a remedial program for language minority students to learn English. More successful bilingual programs, however, stressed the importance of biliteracy for both English and non-English speaking students. In two-way bilingual immersion or dual language programs language minority and language majority students are integrated throughout the school day as they learn content through the languages rather than spending time on explicit language instruction (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Thomas and Collier, 1998). These programs strived to combine the best of immersion and bilingual education and offered language majority and minority students the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate (Genesee, 1985; Swain, 1984)

Lowlights

Bilingual Education. Bilingual education faced harsh criticism in the 1990s. In states like California, legislation (Proposition 187) was introduced to make illegal aliens ineligible for public social services, public health care services and public school at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. According to Proposition 187 teachers were required to report anyone whom they thought to be illegally in the United States. The proposition was found to be unconstitutional by the courts, however, in June 1998 Proposition 227 passed in the California legislature. According to the proposition, all children in California public schools shall be taught in English. All children were placed in English language classrooms and were to be temporarily educated through sheltered English immersion during a transition period not normally intended to exceed one year. Once English learners acquired a good working knowledge of English, they were transferred to English language mainstream classrooms.

Highlights

Technology. The 1990s also witnessed the infusion of technology into the schools. The goal of technology was to have computer-related activities woven into the daily fabric of classroom routines through planned activities such as teacher interactive demonstrations, thematic integration and innovation, diverse collaboration and addressing the special needs student population.

Children used technology in their classrooms to complete a variety of tasks including keeping classroom calendars, composing and printing out notes, and making to-do lists. Ultimately, these simple tasks lead to more academically collaborative writing activities where children used technology to enhance their writing, thinking, learning and communicating.

Researchers cautioned that schools must commit to supporting children and teachers as they prepared to handle the changes and demands of technology. Teachers must also be informed and given the opportunity to learn more about infusing technology into their classroom.

2000s: Age of Resilience

The 1990s experienced increased external challenges to education, however, the 2000s witnessed even more stringent external control placed on schools, students, teachers and educational research. Despite the heavy burden of these controls, educators appeared to be even more resilient and determined to meet the educational needs of their students.

Lowlights

The twenty-first century witnessed a phenomenal amount of external control in the classroom. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001) ushered in standards-driven reform in the schools. According to the NCLB guidelines states are required to implement standards and assessments aligned to those standards. Children in grades three to eight are to be annually assessed in reading and math and are required to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) towards meeting those goals. Failure to make AYP may result in a number of progressive interventions including providing students with vouchers to attend schools of their choice, curriculum and staff changes, schools restructuring and possible state takeover.

With the NCLB policies in place, school districts are forced to set aside a portion of their Title 1 funds to pay for supplemental education services for their low achieving, disadvantaged students. School districts must also provide funding and other resources to increase parent involvement in education. Schools with over 40% poverty population can apply for Title 1 funds for school wide programs to strengthen the entire school (National PTA, 2002).

Highlights

As the reading community learns to deal with the stringent demands on No Child Left Behind, educators remain dedicated to their professional responsibilities to prepare children to become good readers and writers. Effective preparation does not simply consist of children understanding the rules of a language or the skills necessary to read a sentence, but they must possess the desire to read or write.

As professionals, we need to rise above the reading debates and controversy and focus our attention on encouraging children to enjoy reading and writing and consider how to create stimulating learning environments where students are exposed to meaningful print and an abundance of reading and writing materials that are accessible for students.

To foster a love of books, teachers need to talk about books and relate them to the lives of their students and most importantly, teachers need to have high expectations of students' success. High expectations are a motivating factor that can help students academically succeed (Mandel-Morrow, 2004).

Viewing the field of literacy instruction and research, it has become clear that reading has faced many challenges in the past forty years. As a profession, we continue to face many of the same challenges of the past. During the past months of 2004, there has been a lot of anxiety over politics and policies effecting reading instruction. Problem areas include the harsh realities of testing requirements, instructional mandates that don't meet the needs of students and shrinking state and local resources for education. At the same time, there has never been such widespread public and political support for increasing reading performance for all children and eliminating the achievement gap. Society is showing a genuine interest in improving reading outcomes for all learners (Farstrup, 2004).

Clearly, reading professionals need to examine their roles in the twenty-first century. Educators need to ask important questions like, 'Who should be making programmatic and instructional decisions: policymakers who are outside the classroom or expert teachers and reading specialists?' The educators of 2004 continue to maintain the same high level of professional responsibility to teach children to read and write as they did forty years ago, yet if teachers and schools are to be held accountable for students' academic performance, then they need to be given the resources, professional development support and professional discretion to make those decisions.

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Two Birds-One Stone: Helping Pre-Service Teachers Connect Reading and Writing While Learning to Demonstrate Reflective Practice

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The field of secondary reading was beginning to emerge in the 20th century when W. S. Gray (1925) helped to popularize the assertion that "Every teacher should be, to a certain extent, a teacher of reading." Later Bond and Bond (1941) authored the first methods text on developmental reading in the high school, asserting that every subject demands specialized reading skills which must be developed within that discipline. In the early 1970's research in content reading emerged as a focus, and in 1973, eight states required course work in content area reading instruction for secondary teacher certification. Ten years later, thirty-one states had this requirement. Teachers who integrated content reading strategies into their classroom instruction reported greater confidence in their teaching (Pearce and Bader, 1986) and that their lessons were better organized for student success (Conley, 1986). Furthermore, the research of Alvermann and Swafford (1989) indicated improved learning on the part of students who were taught and used content reading strategies. In the 1990's, national standards for performance were established in almost all subjects, and the subsequent push for higher test scores renewed an interest in teaching students strategies to read to learn in many secondary content classrooms.

The field of secondary reading has come a long way since the time of Gray and Bond and Bond's groundbreaking work. However, the report of the International Reading Association Commission on Adolescent Literacy tells us that we still have a great deal of work to do. The Commission (1999) reminded us that attention has " . . . long been focused on the beginning of literacy, planting seedlings and making sure they take root, but without careful cultivation and nurturing seedlings may wither and their growth become stunted." Pre-service secondary content teachers do come to our classes interested in learning ways to nurture the seedlings of their students' abilities to read-to-learn; however, the importance of writing to this process is still a stretch for many. For example, those pursuing teaching endorsements in physical education, music, or art, even those seeking endorsements in science, math and history, have had trouble seeing the value of writing and its connection to reading. In fact, they often object to requirements that they model for and teach their students how to write to learn.

Our department, which admits approximately 200 students per year seeking certification as content area middle school and high school teachers, recognized the need to address this challenge at the same time that we were aligning our curriculum to the national performance standards established by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment

and Support Consortium INTASC for preparing pre-service teachers. Our attention was drawn to the ninth INTASC standard: "The professional educator is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2004). Yes, it is important that our teacher candidates become reflective practitioners, practitioners who regularly take the time necessary to look back upon what was accomplished in class and base future teaching decisions on those outcomes. But how is this reflection best demonstrated? And how can we instill in our students the importance of such reflection?

As content literacy methods course instructors, we saw this as an opportunity to meet two challenges with one adjustment in curriculum. After all, one way to demonstrate reflective practice is through writing. We were already teaching our pre-service teachers about the writing process, its traits, and assessment, but the value of these skills and concepts had not yet become meaningful to our students. By devising a reflective writing assignment that would speak to the standards teacher candidates must meet, we hoped to help our students grasp the value of writing to learn.

On the pages that follow, we describe both our curriculum and the adjustments we made in order to embed a new writing task, one that would help our students make the reading/writing connection, and at the same time, provide them with instruction in self-reflective practice through writing. We then share samples of their writing to demonstrate the results garnered. Finally, we will discuss several relevant implications for future practice.

A Writing Task Refocused

Some time ago our departmental faculty realized that there was a shortcoming in the materials forwarded to prospective cooperating teachers on behalf of our students. This folder typically included student transcripts, resumes, an application form, and an essay in which students were asked to explain their "philosophy of teaching." The philosophy essays tended to be theoretical in nature, and the folder itself did little to introduce the combined knowledge, skill and dispositional strengths of our student teaching candidates to practitioners in the field.

We soon decided that "letters of introduction" (750- 1,000 words in length) would better serve this end. In these letters students would be encouraged to address a) their talents, interests and career goals; b) their desire to work with secondary youth; c) their pertinent experience; d) their willingness to try new ideas and strategies; e) their desire to become continuous learners, and; f) the reasons why they should be considered for an internship placement. In considering their audience, our students would be encouraged to think of "what *you* would want to know about a prospective student intern that was requesting placement in *your* classroom." Finally, and perhaps most importantly, students would be reminded that their folders already contained resumes, applications and

transcripts. Instead of reiterating what could be found in these documents, their letters of introduction should contain analytic, descriptive, and reflective writing in the form of anecdotes illustrating personal change and growth related to teaching.

Students were told that their anecdotes should show what happened, who was involved, why things were done the way they were, and most importantly, what was learned. We would emphasize that through this "reflective" aspect of their writing, students would be creating meaning, primarily for themselves, but also for their prospective mentors. By reading their letters, prospective cooperating teachers would be able to see how the students came to understand and use their experiences and thus how they would be able to grow personally and professionally.

This assignment would become part of our "writing to learn" unit of our content literacy courses. Students would write these essays in several drafts. Each would then have opportunities to give and receive input to and from peers using the Six-Trait Assessment Rubric (Culham, 2003), the analytic assessment model used in nearly all k-12 classrooms in our region. Training in the use of the Six-Trait Rubric would also be provided to our two graduate assistants so they, too, might provide tutorial assistance to literacy methods students, and assist instructors in the time-intensive task of analytic scoring.

The Reading/Writing Connection

While most pre-service content teachers understand the importance of reading in their specific content areas, they do not always see the connection between reading and writing. Integrating the new task of writing a letter of introduction required us to help our students understand how reading and writing were reciprocal processes that resulted in improved construction of meaning. Our best efforts to explain how proficiency in one affected the other fell most often on disinterested ears. We would encourage students to consider some of the connections between reading and writing: Writers compose, putting their thoughts into written words that carry meaning. Readers compose too—as they construct meaning from what they read. Writers plan by gathering information according to purpose. Good readers also plan their reading by considering what they know about the topic, and setting a purpose for reading. Writers revise their writing through a multiple writing process. Readers revise and deepen meanings as they take in more information across a text. By emphasizing the reading/writing connection, we endeavored to help our pre-service teachers understand that when we read like a writer, we anticipate what the author has to say. Conversely, when we write for a reader, we gain perspectives on our subject, our audience, and ourselves.

But this discussion only takes us so far, and students often remain unconvinced. At this point, therefore, we now demonstrate how both reading and writing can be improved through responsive assessments. Our focus here will be on writing.

Using Assessments to Improve Writing

When teaching our students about writing assessment, we stress that communication is essential for effective assessment, and developing a common language around writing assessment has always been a cornerstone of our writing-to-learn unit. In it we introduce the two main types of assessment that are used to analyze writing, the holistic and the analytic. We explain that *holistic* assessment involves feedback based on a general or whole impression. Often, when writing is scored holistically, anchor papers are used. These are exemplars of strong, acceptable, and weak writing, and student writing is compared to them. Since the whole is greater than the sum of its parts in this approach, all aspects of a piece of writing—its content, organization, voice, mechanics, etc., are considered together. The focus is on how the writing addresses its objective, as a whole.

We then point out to our students that as useful as holistic assessment is, it has its pitfalls. First of all, expecting a middle school or high school student to provide a peer with holistic feedback can be an unrealistic expectation. Without addressing specific aspects of students' written work, a peer's assessment may be viewed as arbitrary or capricious. Additionally, without specific feedback, writers can be at a loss as to what specific improvements are needed. Inevitably we get heads nodding and stories as one student or another explains how they earned an "A+" from English teacher and then a "B-" the very next semester, from another. Teachers in all content areas purport to know good writing when they see it. However, when asked to pinpoint what makes a piece of writing "good," the waters tend to become murky.

We also explain that in order to address these pitfalls, analytic assessment tools that examine multiple traits of writing have been developed. Papers assessed in this fashion provide feedback on each trait separately, thereby recognizing relative strengths and weaknesses within the paper. We then explain how analytic assessment is frequently used in the revision and editing stages of process writing. We point out that Diederich (1974) developed one of the first analytic scoring systems for high school and college students. He divided writing performance into two main categories: general merit (ideas, organization, wording and style) and mechanics (usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and neatness). Other analytic tools have been developed since. One of these is the Six-Trait Assessment Tool (Culham, 2003), originally developed for 4th-12th grade students peer editing.

The Six Trait Assessment Tool for Writing

Teachers need a "common language" to discuss what good writing looks like, and how to recognize it in a variety of forms. By developing a language centered around what good writing looked like, teachers can define for themselves "the hidden criteria that lies under the surface of most writing process classrooms" (NWREL, 2002, p. 4). Fortunately, teachers in Washington State and in much of the Pacific Northwest speak a common language when it comes to talking about writing: the 6+1 Trait Model of assessing writing.

In the early 1980s, a group of teachers in Beaverton, Oregon and Missoula, Montana decided that they wanted to reconstruct their standardized writing assessment tools. These teachers wanted a framework from which they could not only assess student writing, but teach it as well—to use assessment to guide instruction. The framework that they developed "[is] an assessment tool that works in concert with the curriculum to guide instruction so all students can successfully meet their writing goals" (Culham, 2003, p. 19). After reading and sorting through hundreds of student essays, six themes, or traits, emerged: *ideas* (details, development, focus), *organization* (internal structure), *voice* (tone, style, purpose, and audience), *word choice* (precise language and phrasing), *sentence fluency* (correctness, rhythm and cadence), and *conventions* (mechanical correctness). Recently, a seventh trait, *presentation*, has been added as an optional stylistic feature to be considered. Presentation can include such items as handwriting, formatting, layout, and the like.

We like to explain to our students that not all teachers use the same 6+1 Trait Model when assessing student writing. Some use more traits, and some compress the list into four or five categories. However, most teachers involved with the creation of this assessment instrument agree that the above attributes are the foundation of what constitutes good writing, taking grade level, the assigned task, and specific content area into consideration. When teaching writing using the 6+1 Traits, often one or more of the traits is given a higher value. For example, a science teacher may value the traits of organization and conventions, while a social studies or English teacher may value the traits of voice and ideas. Such flexibility is part of what makes this rubric useful to all content area teachers—specific traits can be highlighted for different audiences and purposes.

After introducing the 6+1 Trait Model, secondary education pre-service teachers get a "crash course" in using it to assess and talk about student writing. First, they are introduced to each trait and samples of its use. They then practice using the rubric by scoring a series of essays written by other secondary students. It is at this point that we ask them to write a piece of their own, the letter of introduction to be read by potential cooperating teachers. Suddenly, the skills and concepts of writing instruction and assessment take on new meaning. Now they will be reading one another's work, not just to fulfill an assignment or assist one another in reaching a grade in the class. Now they are writing to assure their placement with a mentor teacher. The reading and writing connection now takes on deeper meaning.

Through two and one half weeks of composing and peer editing, students become comfortable conversing in the specific language of this model. However, the process of incorporating reflection into the letters of introduction is a significant challenge. Many struggled to complete this task. Some complained that never in their content area training were they required to do this kind of writing. Indeed, most content-area standards do not address this skill. Realizing that many of our students don't have the writing skills required to complete this assignment, we three authors set out to create a curriculum that would explicitly guide their learning.

Adjustments to Our Curriculum: The Importance of Voice, Word Choice, and Organization

At the heart of the letter to a potential cooperating teacher, students had to describe, analyze, and reflect on some personal experience that led them to insight and growth. Most often, however, we received a formal and detached sounding account of what had occurred. We needed a means to help them understand that the tone, (voice) of their letters must also engage the reader and play a role in the demonstration of reflective thought. The successful demonstration of voice is achieved through carefully chosen words (word choice) and a composition that flows from one idea to the next in an engaging and easy-to-follow way (organization).

Hence, we modified our curriculum to place an emphasis on the traits of voice, word choice, and organization. These traits, more than the others, get at the heart of descriptive, analytical and reflective writing—writing that shows what was done, who was doing it, how it was done, why it was done, and most importantly, what was learned in the process. Of course, this last aspect needed extra emphasis, because it goes to the heart of reflection. To think about and critique one's own performance is critical to becoming a reflective writer, and one hopes, a reflective practitioner.

Our modified curriculum has four components: a) general suggestions; b) tips and effective examples of use of voice; c) tips and effective examples of use of word choice; d) tips and effective examples of use of organization and, e) sample letters to put it all together. Here, in condensed form, are samples from that curriculum:

A) General Suggestions:

Having brainstormed ideas to put into their letters, pre-service teachers are encouraged to incorporate ideas from the following seven suggestions:

Show instead of tell: Instead of listing a series of experiences or accomplishments, recount a situation that shows you in a situation using the skills and knowledge that you want to communicate in the letter. Show the reader what the situation looked like, what it smelled like, what it sounded like. By showing instead of telling, you can communicate your dispositions towards honesty, fairness, and caring. If you choose to merely tell, your writing could instead communicate a disposition of emotional and intellectual detachment.

Write from experiences. Your reflection can show a disposition towards honesty if you write from your own authentic experience. Robert Frost (2004) wrote, "If there are no tears in the writer there will be no tears in the reader." If you are writing about things that you have not thought, felt or believed before you wrote them, the writing will ring false.

What were you thinking and what were you feeling? Give the reader insight into your internal dialogue during the situation you are recounting. This can help to illustrate the reasons why you did what you did as well as what you were feeling at the time. What you were thinking and feeling is as important as what you were doing. Show the reader how the cognitive and affective domains intersect in order to communicate dispositions that are combinations of both.

Reflect upon the situation. Show the reader why the incident you included is important to who you are as a teacher. How did you feel? What did you learn? How did you change? Why? Why did you act the way you did? Showing that you can analyze your behavior after the fact shows that you are open to learning from experience. The process of reflection also communicates that you are interested in thoughtfully considering your experiences and using them to improve your teaching. The desire to improve your practice of teaching is an important and valuable disposition.

Be intentional in your vocabulary. Choose words that accurately describe your situation. The clearer and more engaging the language you use, the less the work the reader must do. Use the kind of words you would use if you were recounting this incident as a story.

Choose one or two key values. The length of this letter makes it impossible to address more than a couple of key ideas. Selecting and staging the key ideas can increase their impact and focus the overall point of the reader. Begin by asking yourself, "what do I want the reader to take away from this?" The answer should be the key insight around which the letter is organized.

Be yourself. Often in letters of introduction, we try to show how we fit the characteristics we think are desired of us. This is an opportunity to show who you are and why you want to teach. You presence in this program testifies to your qualifications. This is your chance to select one or two of your many accomplishments and bring them to life in the mind of your reader. Who are you? What drives you?

B) Voice:

From their "crash course" in scoring student papers using the 6+1 Trait Model, our students learn that *voice* identifies the unique identity and perspective of the writer. They know that voice, "is the heart and soul, the magic, the wit, along with the feeling and the conviction of the individual writer coming through the word" (NWREL, 2002) and that voice is the aspect of writing that gives identity and context to the content. When scoring for voice, they learn to determine if the writer maintains a consistently engaging tone. They learn that when a piece of writing reflects who the writer is as a person, it has a strong voice.

In order to help our students transfer this concept to their own letters of introduction, we provide examples of successful voice that can be studied and adapted. When reading excerpts like the one that follows, they are encouraged to read them

silently first, and then out loud in order to get an idea of the cadence and patterns that lend clarity and individuality to each writer's voice.

> Three young teenage boys walked into the small, dusty classroom near St. James Cathedral in Seattle and shyly offered their names, Huynh, Tuan, and Truong. They knew a little English so I breathed a sigh of relief knowing it would not be necessary to start from scratch on my first tutoring assignment.
>
> <div align="right">Student Letter of Introduction, Winter 2004</div>

When reading this example, our students are encouraged to consider how the writer opens with lots of detail, making clear for the reader what was happening, and how the writer felt about it. Phrases like, "walked into the small, dusty classroom" and "so I breathed a sigh of relief" evoke a sense of place and emotion. We point out that this brief paragraph also communicates a wealth of experiential information. Without a list, or bulleted points, the writer describes his experience tutoring and working with students learning English as a second language. Furthermore, by honestly describing the fears and tensions he was feeling, the writer reveals some of his personality.

Students are then asked to compare the episode near St. James Cathedral to the one that follows:

> Prior to teaching in Japan, I was involved with two different theatre groups and traveled throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Colorado performing social issue plays aimed at young people. As part of Taproot Theatre Company's Road Company, I performed in schools, detention facilities, and rehabilitation centers.
>
> <div align="right">Student Letter of Introduction, Fall 2002</div>

Our students are encouraged to consider how both examples describe experiences but with very different voices. The second example is very neutral in tone. It is difficult to identify any unique expression of the personality of the second writer.

Voice provides identity and context to the content—it reflects who the writer is as a person. Strong voice is revealed through the use of carefully chosen words, words that specifically and uniquely tell the story that the writer is trying to communicate. Hence the next section of the curriculum focuses upon word choice.

C) Word Choice:

In scoring student papers for word choice, our students were asked to consider differing pairs of descriptions such as:

> The beautiful colors of this morning's sunrise were awesome.
> The deep indigo and vibrant orange of this morning's sunrise were awe-inspiring.

Both of the descriptions communicate basically the same information. The second description, however, uses words that are specifically chosen to communicate certain perceptions and feelings. Being intentional about word choice leaves no doubt as to the intent of the writer. Judicious use of a thesaurus as well as jargon, slang and dialogue become important in the effective use of this trait.

In our curriculum we endeavor to transfer this knowledge to the task at hand by encouraging the use of powerful verbs and rich adjectives to bolster the clarity of voice. To make this point we encourage our students to read from yet another letter written by a peer, and while doing so, note the word choice:

> After three years, I handed over the wheel of the middle school program (this student had taught drama after-school) over to others so that I could spend more time with my sons and their activities. This turned out to be a rather bumpy road as my youngest struggled academically and was finally diagnosed with learning disabilities when he entered middle school. As his mother and his advocate I witnessed a normally sunny little boy, tearfully deal with his frustrations at being labeled by educators. Concerned and also frustrated by the situation, I feared that he might become another "statistic." I researched and found an alternative school for him to complete his education. In an atmosphere where the teachers' instructional strategies and approaches were able to promote my son's interests, (while still addressing required subject matter), I saw the resulting changes in his report cards and, more importantly, in his personality. I'll admit, even I was a bit skeptical when he brought home his very first A's and B's and rushed to phone his teacher to find out if there was some sort of mix up, but through this very personal experience I became aware of the negative effects of labeling and the importance of acknowledging different learning styles. While a difficult time for my son and our family, this understanding will only help me when teaching students and to always be mindful of their individualities.
>
> <div align="right">Student Letter of Introduction, Winter 2004</div>

In analyzing passages like the one above, our students can discern how the words that they choose can provide their readers with an idea of who they (voice) are as well as how they might be disposed to engage in active problem solving, reflection to meet the individual needs of prospective students. Nonetheless, for many of our students, judicious use of voice and word choice can be undermined by poor organizational skills.

D) Organization:

When scoring student writing for organization, our students are trained to look to see if the structure that the writer uses to sequence events or details is logical and effective. They look to see if the writing has a flow that smoothly guides the reader through the content. They look for thoughtful transitions to show how ideas between paragraphs or sections are connected and to see if the writing has a clear beginning and ending. However, the genre of reflective writing called for in the ninth INTASC standard has one additional component. Anecdotes should illustrate what happened, who was involved, why things were done the way they were, and most importantly, *what was learned*. Once again, we used several excerpts from student writings to illustrate this type of organization. For example:

What happened:

A few summers ago, I lived in a cabin. This was no romantic log cabin: this was a camp counselor's cabin…

Who was involved:

Without a doubt, there was a group of boys that I will never forget—I will always remember them as the "Lord of the Flies" boys…they all had similar Beatles haircuts, sensible yet stylish clothes, listened to angry music, and went around in a little "West Side Story" gang of sorts. When I first met them, they would have nothing to do with me. I was, to them, an authority figure, not to be trusted.

Why things were done the way they were:

When these boys realized that we had read many of the same books in common, and also both loved math, something lit up in their eyes. Perhaps it was the realization that I could be an adult that they could relate to, and trust.

What was learned:

Those boys brought home an important lesson in my life: School isn't just about learning equations in math or analyzing a certain portion of text in English. While learning these essential skills should not be marginalized, I've never forgotten the times in my academic career when a teacher would somehow find a way to bring a classroom filled with diverse students to a place where they could all cooperate and trust one another…it is so important to make each student feel included.

E) Putting it All Together-Sample Letters:

To analyze is to break into component parts. One of the pitfalls of teaching writing by using analytic assessment can be the difficulty students can have grasping the idea of reflective writing as a whole. For this reason, we provide our students with full samples of introductory letters. The two letters that follow show instances of learning in the lives of the authors, and both show why the events included in the letters are important to the authors' decisions to become teachers.

In the case of the first example, the pre-service teacher who had worked with Huynh, Tuan, and Truong, we point out that the author uses a number of anecdotes to show the journey that led to the decision to teach. By way of contrast, in the second example, the author spends the entire letter on one pivotal experience. Both letters speak in a strong voice, choose words carefully, and are organized to clearly communicate values they have learned through reflection on their experiences.

Example One:

Dear Colleague,

Three young teenage boys walked into the small, dusty classroom near St. James Cathedral in Seattle and shyly offered their names, Huynh, Tuan, and Truong. They knew a little English so I breathed a sign of relief knowing it would not be necessary to start from scratch on my first tutoring assignment. What was the best way to begin? I had learned from my advisor that they had just arrived in the U.S. from a refugee camp in Singapore. Searching around together, it became clear they had undergone much suffering in their escape from Vietnam and the succeeding journey. This gave us a platform from which to build a lesson plan. We worked on the vocabulary to put the story together; boats, pirates, quiet, thirsty, storm, crying. I taught them sentence structure and use of tense with the elements of the story. Gradually they were able to describe their journey in the new language, write it down, and having achieved that, their minds were stimulated to move on to more achievements. Working with these wonderful boys and attaining a sense of accomplishment, planted the idea that one day I could become an English teacher.

I also have three sons of my own and they have presented challenges of an entirely different kind. One of them, when he was fourteen, became entirely unmanageable. He ran with a rough crowd, stayed out all night and used drugs. In working with a counselor, we were fortunate enough to get our family functioning better. I learned worlds about working with young people in staying with my son, naming expectations, following through, and finding ways of improving communication. Working through this challenging problem with my son gave me an important experience to help me to teach in our diverse and demanding school environment.

I became more convinced to become a teacher while finishing my B.A. at Antioch University four years ago. The opportunity became available to take a course in teaching English with other students in the Education cohort. I built an original curriculum with the theme "Words that Destroy, Words that Heal." My first practice class was about a black blues singer from the Mississippi Delta named Son House. Most students responded positively to the lesson. How shocked I was when one of the students, an African American female, said that a white person cannot be qualified to teach about black people and their experiences! This made for an interesting discussion and even more important, provided a valuable experience for me in being confronted in the teaching role and dealing with it openly, but firmly.

I now have the opportunity to make a change in my career. After 25 years in the computing business I plan to become a secondary school Language Arts teacher. Why such a transformation? In working with young people in different contexts and facing challenges, I feel a sense of mission to convince them that they need to learn to read well, write well, listen well, and speak well to be successful. A lifelong love of drama, novels, and poetry fuels my desire to teach literature

Currently I am a student in the Masters program at Western Washington University in the Woodring College of Education. Now that I am in a formal course of study and getting closer to understanding what is required of the classroom teacher, my anticipation increases. I look forward to the adventure ahead in an actual classroom. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

<div align="center">Student Letter of Introduction, Winter 2004</div>

Example Two:

Dear Colleague:

Fourth grade was a traumatic year for me. I managed to set a record for missed assignments and had a difficult time adjusting to my teacher's idea that I must be responsible for my own work.

Fifth grade improved. I was beginning to understand that life in Mr. O's world was relatively simple. If students completed their work, things were pretty fun. We launched rockets, attended the theatre, and used computers

far more advanced than those in other classrooms. While all of these things stick with me, one moment stands out with stunning clarity.

We were to give oral reports on the presidents of the United States. After our oral report was complete, we were to conduct a press conference playing the role of our assigned president. My report on John F. Kennedy went pretty well and I was feeling fairly confident as I began my press conference.

It is important to note that we had a preternaturally politically aware group of students. One of the students, a fellow fifth grader, asked me (Kennedy) who the minority-whip was while I served in the Congress. I had no idea what a minority whip was, let alone who held this position, so I did what I figured any good politician would do, I dodged the question. I said that with the pressing business of the presidency on my mind I had forgotten this minor piece of information, but that one of my aids would provide this fact later.

At this point Mr. O stopped my press conference. I took a deep breath, preparing to be reproached for my misdirection. Instead, Mr. O complimented me. He told me, and the class, that I had done exactly what a president would have done and that this was the essence of the assignment. I learned two things from that lesson that I have carried with me throughout my educational and work experiences.

 First, words are powerful. The ability to communicate ideas to a group of people and to incite thought is a wonderful and important thing. Second, there are few people more important than master teachers.

Every instance I have had to teach, lead, or mentor students over the course of my career I have thought of this experience. Be it as a Forest Ranger discussing salmon stream restoration with a group of sixth graders or leading college students into the wilderness, I have tried to use experiences to create a context for learning. Throughout these opportunities I have discovered a profound joy in helping others learn. It is my hope to continue helping others learn as I pursue a career in education.

Thank You,

                              Student Letter of Introduction, Winter 2004

By highlighting the traits of voice, word choice, and organization, and providing our students with many examples, students can clearly see what effective analytical, descriptive and reflective writing looked like. The above examples give form to some previously vague concepts, and solidify what was expected for this very important assignment. These examples, coupled with extensive time for peer editing and critique,

clearly illustrate for our students the importance of being a good, reflective writer, no matter the content area.

Discussion

The field of secondary level literacy methods courses has come a long way since Gray popularized the idea that every teacher should be a teacher of reading. More and more pre-service content-area teachers come to our classes interested in learning ways to nurture their students' abilities to read to learn. However, the connection between reading and writing still eludes many who haven't yet realized the value of modeling and teaching their students how to write to learn. While in the process of aligning our department's curriculum with national performance standards our attention was drawn to the ninth INTASC standard which prescribes that professional educators should be reflective practitioners. As content literacy methods instructors, we saw this as an opportunity to meet two challenges with one adjustment in curriculum. By devising an authentic reflective writing assignment that spoke to the ninth standard we could, at the same time, help our students make the reading and writing connection and better understand the value of writing to learn.

Upon completion of this new writing assignment, it is not unusual for our students to reflect and share their perceptions of its value. Their comments are often unsolicited, but many appear on our confidential formal class evaluations at the end of the quarter. In these comments students speak of the significance of being given an assignment that is both "high stakes" and "authentic." One student wrote, "I was happy to have the opportunity to show a potential cooperating teacher who I am and how my experiences will affect my teaching style." Another wrote, "I now understand what you meant when you said that writing is thinking and that we don't understand what we know until we see our own words explaining the meaning of our own experiences."

Pre-service teachers from content areas where writing is rarely required, and/or those who have not had opportunities to receive peer-input on their writing, express gratitude for the support they are given by other students in the class, the graduate assistants, and the instructor. Many of these same students share the appreciation of the multiple deadline "layered" method of the writing process. Often students remark that had they been left to their own devices, they would have put off the assignment until the last moment, resulting in letters that would not be nearly as effective. In the words of one student, "I really appreciated all of the support we received throughout this process. I don't consider myself a very strong writer, so I was glad to have the curriculum as well as my peers' input as a guide."

This curriculum helped our students understand the specific composition skills required to become better analytic, descriptive, and reflective writers. By being deliberate in our guidelines, we clearly articulated for our students the steps they could take to craft writing that reflects their lived experiences. For example, one student wrote, "It was neat to be able to reflect upon my own history, and how I've always been moving towards becoming a teacher, even if I wasn't always aware of it."

Indeed, the task of reflective writing is new to many pre-service content-area teachers and, very honestly, until we embarked on this new curriculum we hadn't considered how important our role could be in teaching it. The significance of the type of curriculum we developed may have additional significance for school of education graduates, who are seeking "second stage" or advanced certificates. Over 40 states require teachers to meet additional requirements beyond those required for their first certificate (National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, 2004, p. D-1) and many states now encourage their teachers to seek National Board Professional Teacher Certification (NBPTC). Many second stage certificate processes and the NBPTC process require portfolios which are evaluated based upon the teacher's ability to read and interpret the written language of standards, and to compose descriptive, analytic and reflective writing about how their teaching meets them (Burroughs, 2001). Hence, in order to be successful, teachers must make connections between what they read about teaching, how they teach, and how they write about their teaching. As content literacy specialists, this has always been our intention, and this curriculum is our first step in helping pre-service teachers articulate their understandings of reflective practice.

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The Reading Practices of Preservice Teachers:
On Becoming Critical Consumers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to catalogue and analyze the reading practices of a group of 36 language arts methods students. The study found that although these preservice language arts teachers considered themselves readers, they engaged in very little self-initiated leisure reading, they spent significantly more time watching movies than reading, they implemented very few of the reading strategies they learned in their content reading course, and they were relatively unaware of the reading strategies they do use. Implications for teacher education are discussed.

Developing a Context for the Study

Preservice language arts teachers use a variety of reading strategies in their daily reading practices, but are often unaware of how these strategies function, or how to teach their students to develop their own reading strategies. Current research in preservice teachers' attitudes, practices, and beliefs reveal that many of them either struggle with their own reading practices, or do not value the reading strategies they are taught in content reading courses during their university studies (Dynak, 1996; Bean, 2001; Wolf, 2001; Barry, 2002; Griffin, 2003; Lesley, 2004). As a result, they don't put those practices and strategies into effect in their teaching. In addition, researchers have found that unless preservice teachers experience effective teacher education programs that challenge them to reflect and reshape their teaching beliefs, they will revert to teaching their students using literacy practices, strategies, and learning styles they already know (Haar, Hall, Schoepp, & Smith, 2002; Sloan, Daane, & Giesen, 2004; Hoffman et al., 2005).

In my language arts methods courses, I had seen just enough of this disconnect—students' lack of awareness of the strategies they invoked as they read, and their inability or reluctance to use content reading strategies in their actual classroom teaching—that I wanted to research it more fully in order to provide my students opportunities to be effective reading and language arts teachers in their student teaching placements, and on into their teaching careers. Initially, I wanted to find out more about my students' reading and writing practices, and how they actually might use these practices in their teaching. I also wanted to know more about the strategies they learned in their content reading course, and how they might put them to use in their teaching. In order to shape my own study, I turned to a couple of other studies of preservice and new teachers. Gupta (2004) for instance, borrowed Manna & Misheff's (1987) categories of *Transactional Readers* and *Reduced Readers* to characterize students in a teacher training institute in Singapore. Transactional Readers "interact with the text to create meaning and enjoy reading" (p. 69). Reduced Readers "perceive reading as painful and are reluctant readers" (p. 69). Gupta found that out of 29 participants in the study, only three characterized themselves as Transactional Readers, while 26 characterized themselves as Reduced Readers (Gupta, 2004).

In another study—of former intern teachers in their first five years of teaching—Barry (2002) found that although many former intern teachers valued the reading strategies they were exposed to in content reading courses, several found that they had little time or motivation to implement such strategies in their content area classrooms. One chemistry teacher noted, "With 110 kids, I only do [writing] when I have lots of time" (p. 140). In addition, Barry cited a second-year biology teacher who "loved the theory behind" *concept maps*, but found that "Kids hate them. I find them difficult to assess" (p. 140). In addition, Bean's (2001) study also looked at how preservice teachers implemented content reading strategies in their field placement sites. His findings suggest that preservice teachers often put aside the strategies they learned in content reading as a result of the influence of their cooperating teacher. They lack the ability to adapt content reading strategies to the dynamic sociocultural context of the field site classroom.

Before proceeding further, however, the terms *literacy practices, reading practices,* and *reading strategies* need to be clarified, lest it seem that they are interchangeable. They do not mean the same thing. Literacy practices are the reading, writing, speaking, listening, presenting, and thinking practices that members engage in as a function of being in a particular group or setting. Reading practices are one subset of literacy practices. They are all the different ways that one might engage in reading. For instance, reading alone is one particular reading practice. Further still, reading fiction alone is a different reading practice than reading a textbook alone; they engage different thought processes, different purposes. etc. Reading within a reading circle or book club is another reading practice. Reading aloud to children is yet another reading practice. There are dozens of other examples of reading practices, but these should suffice to illustrate the point.

Within each of these reading practices, there are particular reading strategies that one employs in order to engage in particular reading practice. A strategy, to borrow Barry (2002) borrowing from Harris & Hodges (1995), is "a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored to improve one's performance in learning" (p. 132). For instance, when one reads aloud to a child, there are any number of strategies at one's disposal to make the reading event meaningful. Reading out loud with vocal inflection is one strategy; by doing so, the reader helps to bring particular characters, emotions, and situations to life for the child. The child in that setting engages in particular reading strategies too, that include a great deal of active listening, and perhaps vocal participation as well. However, when one reads alone, rarely is a read-aloud strategy invoked. In this setting, the reader engages other strategies. Furthermore, in a book club setting, readers invoke other strategies, such as oral reading, discussion, journaling, thinking out loud, and choral reading. In a literature circle format—a particular type of book club— participants engage the reading of a text using role-specific strategies such as question master, passage picker, word wizard, or connector. These examples illustrate the difference between practices and strategies, and hint at the range of strategies available to readers within various literacy practices.

The Study

Among my other roles in our reading program, I teach an integrated language arts methods course to secondary English majors, in the semester before they do their student

teaching. During the semester that I enacted this study, I taught two sections of this course, with a total population of 39 students: 20 in one class, and 19 in another class. Of these 39, 36 chose to participate in the study. It is important to note that during this semester, students not only take their final set of university classes—including content reading and this language arts methods course—but they engage in a 4-week field-based practicum as well. This means that they design units and lessons in this language arts course, and then teach those lessons to students in real classrooms. This provides students the opportunity (in theory) to make connections from their course work to their field work, and it provides the teacher-researcher the opportunity to see how well students actually make these connections. The purpose of this study was to explore just how students engaged reading practices and strategies and implemented them in their own teaching practices.

Like Gupta, I was interested in how my students perceived themselves as readers. I wondered whether most of them would label themselves as reduced readers, or transactional readers? And like Barry and Bean, I was interested in the relationship between reading strategies learned in content reading, and the practices they actually implemented in their field sites and first year teaching. Building from these studies, I developed a cluster of driving questions which I hoped to address in some form: a) Do my secondary language arts majors consider themselves readers?, b) What are their reading and writing practices, and what patterns emerge from a systematic study of their literacy backgrounds?, c) When they read, what strategies do they employ, and what connection do these preservice teachers make between their own reading and the reading practices they will engage in with their students?, d) Do preservice teachers actually use the reading strategies they learn in content reading?, and e) If not, why not? What can be done in the language arts methods course to make those connections?

Grounded in these questions, and the studies of Gupta, Barry, and Bean, I developed a three-step approach to data collection. First, I developed a survey designed to gather information about my students' current reading and writing practices, and their literacy upbringing—the Literacy Self-Assessment (see Figure 1). Second, I developed a graphic organizer—the Reading Strategies Self-Assessment—which asked students to articulate the types of reading they engaged in, and the strategies they employed in these contexts (see Figure 2). Third, I analyzed the language arts units students created for my course, and which they would be teaching out in their field site, in order to assess their use of content reading strategies in their actual teaching.

The Literacy-Self Assessment

My desire to survey my students' literacy practices was not purely for research purposes; I also wanted to model for them a survey strategy that they might use to gather background information about the literacy practices of their own students. Using a simple model outlined in one of the textbooks we were using for the course (Strickland & Strickland, 2002, p. 37, 39), I developed my Literacy Self-Assessment and asked students to complete it in as great a detail as they could. While the Stricklands' survey was only ten questions long—a good model for my preservice teachers to use with their students—I was interested in obtaining greater details about my students' literacy practices. My survey consisted of 25 questions about students' current literacy practices—reading, writing, viewing, etc.—and the literacy environment in which they grew up. The survey was distributed in paper form, but also in electronic form as an attachment

to email, in order to enable students to type right on their form in greater detail than provided on paper. This survey was deliberately designed as an open-ended questionnaire to provide students the opportunity to offer details about their literacy experiences, rather than to elicit only a number on a likert scale. It was, however, possible to code the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in such a way so as to convert student responses to number codes that would provide similarly quantitative data.

The Reading Strategies Self-Assessment

In order to understand how preservice teachers engage reading strategies in the units that they design and implement during their methods field experience, I first needed to establish a baseline regarding their own use of reading strategies. With this in mind, I developed the Reading Strategies Self Assessment, which asked students to articulate the strategies they use when they read (see Figure 2). The top half of the tool asked students to simply write about the strategies they use; it functioned as a free-write journal. The bottom half of the tool was divided into two columns—leisure reading and academic reading. After free-writing about their own reading strategies, students were to categorize those strategies into at least these two domains. This dichotomy was borrowed from Gupta's study, but it seemed to fit my project as well.

Integrated Language Arts Units

Students in my methods course are not English majors, but Integrated Language Arts majors. This may be semantic two-step to some, but for us it was a significant distinction. While these students took a great number of courses in the English department, they also studied journalism, theatre and film, media and communications, and pop culture and folklore. Furthermore, in my class, we prepared ourselves to teach the six language arts—reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing—in an integrated structure. The culminating project for the course was to design an integrated language arts unit. This meant that it could not simply be a unit on "The Noun," or "Grammar," or even a unit focused solely on a single novel. It needed to integrate these six language arts. It needed to provide their students opportunities to read, write, listen, speak, view, and visually represent. Within this constraint, my methods students were relatively free to operate. For instance, I did not demand that they specifically incorporate reading strategies from their content reading course; however, by the end of the semester, after having begun to see patterns in their literacy practices, I was very interested in the extent to which they actually did make connections from content reading to the units they were designing in my course and implementing with students in their field sites.

Findings

While there were 25 questions to the survey, the findings could be synthesized into a few categories. Furthermore, not all of the findings could be gathered from the survey alone, but also from the Reading Strategies Self Assessment, as well as an analysis of the units that the methods students produced. The analysis revealed insights into preservice teachers' beliefs about themselves as readers, their reading practices, their reading strategies, their movie viewing practices, their use of writing practices and strategies, and the extent to which they incorporated any specific reading strategies learned in their content reading course.

Students as Readers

Students almost unanimously saw themselves as readers; however the reading in which they engaged was almost exclusively academic reading. When asked: *Do you consider yourself a reader?* in question #7 of the Literacy Self-Assessment, nearly all of the students did consider themselves readers, as opposed to Gupta's study, where most students considered themselves reduced readers. Of the 36 participants in the study, 33 students (92%) considered themselves a strong or very strong reader. Two students (6%) considered themselves average readers. One student (2%) considered himself a below average reader. These students read on average 10-15 hours a week. Most of this reading was for school. This school reading fell into two categories: 1) academic reading, such as textbooks and articles, and 2) quasi-leisure reading, characterized by novels they had to read for school.

Quasi-leisure Reading

In order to explore the reading strategies students employed, I created the Reading Strategy Self Assessment, which broke reading practices into a simple dichotomy: academic reading vs. leisure reading. It was a dichotomy borrowed from Gupta's study, but it seemed to fit my project when I began. However, this simple dichotomy fell apart as the study proceeded. Despite considering themselves readers, students engaged in very little self-initiated leisure reading; when asked to discuss and characterize their leisure reading, 29 students (81%) described only leisure reading that was initiated by their university coursework. As a result, I generated a new category—quasi-leisure reading—to describe their situation. In general, these students considered themselves readers mainly because they had so much required reading for school. However, outside of school, other activities competed for their leisure time.

Reading Alone or with Others

For the most part, these students do not read in groups; they prefer to read alone. Of the 36 participants, 33 (92%) preferred to read on their own. Two participants (6%) were comfortable reading either alone or with others. Only one (2%) said that she preferred to read with her best friend. This is interesting, in light of the fact that cooperative reading group settings such as literacy circles have worked their way into the mainstream of constructivist and social constructivist pedagogy. For preservice teachers who will soon be expected to teach their students to read in groups, they do very little of it themselves.

Books and Movies

While these students characterize themselves as readers, their responses about movies offer a complex and contrasting picture. When asked: *Would you rather read a book or watch a movie?*, ten students (28%) preferred movies, 16 (44%) preferred books, and ten (28%) said that it depended on circumstances, such as their mood. While this might suggest that students lean toward preferring books over movies, other statistics reveal something else. While students read on the average 2-3 novels every 10 weeks, they watched 2-3 movies every week. One student

responded that she watched one movie per day in her home, and three every month at the movie theatre.

Growing Up with Reading & Writing

In the childhood homes of these preservice teachers, when reading did take place, it was confined for the most part to newspapers or magazines. In 33 of these homes (92%), the family received the newspaper daily, although it was not necessarily read on a daily basis. In 15 of these homes (42%), the family received regular magazine subscriptions. In 3 of these homes (8%), the Bible was read regularly. In 8 of these homes (22%), fiction was read by at least one parent on a regular basis. Beyond these examples, very little other reading was reported, with a few exceptions. One student reported that her father was "always reading"—biographies, novels, the *New York Times*. Another student reported that she remembered her father reading and writing a great deal during the time he was in college. One other student reported that her dad and sister "read different books all of the time." Finally, one other student reported that the family read *Time* magazine, *Newsweek*, *National Geographic*, and "all kinds of literature." Furthermore, in these same 36 homes, students reported that even less writing occurred than reading, and consisted of little more than grocery lists, cards, and letters.

Students as Writers

Students explained that they spent on average 4 hours per week writing; however, time spent writing ranged from 1 hour per week, to 12 hours per week. Most of this writing was academic in nature—papers and projects for classes. After papers, journals and emails constituted most of their other writing. It was unclear how many of the journal responses were personal, or represented required writing for courses; however, it can be assumed that some of these journalings were in response to academic assignments, since journals were part of the course requirements for my class. All writing was not academic, however. Of the 36 students in the study, 11 students (31%) articulated that they wrote some type of creative writing. Poetry was listed six times. Other types of creative writing included screenplays, songs, and short stories. In addition, when asked, *What were the last three things you have written?,* one student responded "homework, emails, and wedding vows."

The Writing Process

How students engaged the writing process was interesting as well. Of the 36 students in the study, 15 (42%) responded that they wrote only one draft, and then edited that draft. Of the 36 students, 14 (39%) clearly articulated that they engaged the writing process by writing multiple drafts of essays. Seven students gave various responses, ranging from "it depends" to "whatever is necessary." Again, this is compelling in light of the fact that these preservice teachers will soon be expected to teach writing to their students within a writing process approach.

Reading Strategies

When students were asked to list the reading strategies they actually use when they engage in reading practices, few could articulate clear strategies. Most of the responses fell into categories such as: "take notes," "write a brief summary," "skim," "write down interesting thoughts," "underline," "highlight," "re-read," and "read aloud." Beyond these types of responses, none of the students invoked specific reading strategies studied in their content reading course. Furthermore, in the units they created for my language arts methods class, very few preservice teachers included reading strategies taught in their content reading course. The most common, and they were each used only twice, were: 1) the Anticipation Guide, and 2) a RAFT activity. The one large exception was that several students incorporated Literature Circles in their unit plans. However, this was one strategy that we explored in great detail in my class, so it cannot serve as clear evidence that students brought content reading strategies into the units they created and taught.

Summary of Findings

The study found that although these preservice language arts teachers considered themselves readers, they engaged in very little self-initiated leisure reading, they spent significantly more time watching movies than reading, they implemented very few of the reading strategies they learned in their content reading course, and they were relatively unaware of the reading strategies they do use. All of these findings pose significant implications for the teaching of language arts methods.

Conclusions & Implications

Similar to the findings of many of the studies I read, there is a significant disconnect between the reading strategies these preservice teachers value in theory, and the reading strategies they put into practice in their own reading or in the reading they assign in their classrooms. In response to this disconnect, many researchers (Moje, Young, Readance, and Moore, 2000; Bean, 2001; Lesley, 2004) argue that content reading methods courses need to present these reading strategies in greater context. As the language arts methods instructor, however, I recognize the valuable role that my course—and other content methods courses—can play in addressing this disconnect. My course can and should be a conduit—a connector— between the often decontextualized strategies learned in content methods, and the real world contexts of the field site classroom. As the language arts methods instructor, I have the opportunity to engage students to consider the reading practices they already enact, and to make meaningful use of the strategies they learn in content reading. If it doesn't happen in my methods course, then when will preservice teachers learn to really engage the principals and practices learned in their content literacy course? However, because these language arts majors have difficulty seeing the connections between content reading and language arts, I am deeply concerned that intern teachers in other content areas will have an exponentially more difficult time drawing these connections. If I can't figure out how to help my preservice teachers

incorporate literacy practices into their language arts units, how can we expect a science or math teacher to do the same?

Having said this, however, finding ways to engage content reading strategies meaningfully within the larger goals of the language arts methods course is not as simple as finding places for methods students to insert content reading strategies into their lesson plans. My secondary language arts methods students clearly struggle with the task of turning their reading strategies, or their lack of awareness of their reading strategies, into useful practices for their own students. Moje, Young, Readance, and Moore (2000) argue that effective literacy instruction happens when teachers become critical consumers. "Critical consumers situate recommendations, determining where they are coming from and where they would like us to go. Critical consumers continually question claims, analyzing, comparing, and evaluating what is said" (p. 403). Developing the use of content reading strategies in the language arts methods course is not simply about finding insertion points for reading strategies. It begins by making preservice teachers more critically aware of the role these reading strategies play in the overall task of educating students, and by giving them opportunities to confront their own reading practices as they begin to shape the reading practices of their own classrooms.

In response to the challenge of making my students critical consumers of literacy practices, I have begun to reshape my language arts methods course to give preservice students opportunities to confront their own reading practices and to engage content reading strategies in their teaching and planning. First, I have begun to find places where students can meaningfully incorporate content reading strategies into their language arts work. Midway through the semester students must bring in one lesson from the unit they are developing, and teach that lesson in a micro-teaching setting. Within this lesson, students must incorporate one reading or literacy strategy they have learned in their content reading course.

In addition to such small insertion strategies, however, I have been developing ways for these preservice teachers to be critical consumers—to think about literacy practices, and the literacy expectations we place on students out in schools—in more critical ways. First, we enact a Literacy Culture Project, in which preservice teachers study the literacy culture of the school they have been assigned for methods and student teaching. They gather general demographic data about the school and community, and specific data about the literacy culture of the school— its test scores in reading and writing, and attitudes and practices surrounding reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing. My preservice students also interview at least one student in their new school to find out more about this student's literacy background and practices. With all of this data gathered, they create a powerpoint presentation and write a short paper addressing how they will teach literacy within this school literacy culture.

In addition to this project, we have incorporated "new" texts into the course: Jim Burke's (2003) *The English Teacher's Companion* and Patrick Finn's (1999) *Literacy with an Attitude*. Using these two texts, we confront the critical literacy issues at stake for students. We lay our own literacy practices and upbringings on the table, and compare/contrast them to the students we encounter in our schools. In this way, preservice teachers engage literacy beyond just playing with decontextualized, one-size-fits-all reading strategies. Instead of simply figuring out ways to

insert content reading strategies into their units, they are reconceptualizing their units to address the literacy needs of their particular student populations.

Beyond my class however, the real challenge lies in encouraging other content methods instructors to re-envision their courses to address the critical literacy issues at stake for their preservice teachers. If language arts methods students have difficulty engaging content literacy principles and practices, one can only wonder what challenges face math, science, and social studies preservice teachers.

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Figure 1

Literacy Self Assessment

Directions: The Stricklands (2002) text suggested that teachers develop and implement some kind of literacy survey, of no more than 10 questions, designed to allow you some insight into the literacy background, beliefs, and practices of your students. I thought we might try that here, although I have created a slightly expanded list of 25 questions. I am sending this electronically. I want you to respond to each question in as much detail as you care to. This will help me understand more about your literacy backgrounds, and it gives us some things to work on and develop throughout the semester. Bring a copy to class, but send an electronic copy back to me as well.

1. How much time do you spend reading each week?
2. What kinds of things do you like to read?
3. What were the last three things you have read? Why did you read each one?
4. Do you read on your own, or in conjunction with others, such as in a reading discussion group?
5. Would you rather read a book or watch a movie?
6. When you read a book, do you ever discuss it afterwards with friends? When you watch a movie, do you ever discuss it afterwards with friends? Describe to some extent the kinds of things you discuss.
7. Do you consider yourself a "reader"? How would you define that?
8. What's the best book you ever read or one of your favorites? When did you read it and why was it memorable?
9. What would you consider a "good" book?
10. Do you ever go to libraries or bookstores? How often? For what purpose?
11. Is reading important in your life? Explain a bit.
12. How much time do you spend writing each week?
13. What kinds of things do you tend to write?
14. What were the last three things you have written?
15. When you write, do you write multiple drafts? Do others read your drafts and offer you feedback? In other words, to what extent do you actually engage in the writing process?
16. How often do you go out to the movies?
17. How often do you watch movies at home or at someone's home?
18. Growing up, to what extent did you read on your own outside of school?
19. Would you consider yourself a strong reader in elementary school? High school?
20. Do you consider yourself a strong reader now? Explain.
21. Growing up, to what extent did you write on your own outside of school?
22. Would you consider yourself a strong writer in elementary school? High school?
23. Do you consider yourself a strong writer now? Explain.
24. What kind of reading took place in your home growing up? Did your family have daily newspaper delivery, or weekly news magazines? Who read those texts? How often?
25. What kind of writing took place in your home growing up? Who did this writing? To what extent was it done willing, and to what extent was it done as a necessity, or a requirement?

Figure 2

Reading Strategies Self Assessment

Directions:
When you read, what do you do? In particular, what strategies do you use? Do you use different strategies for leisure reading than for academic reading? When the reading gets difficult, what do you do? Write about this in as much detail as possible in the lined space below. During our discussion, we'll extract the key points into these two columns.

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Leisure Reading	Academic Reading

A Reaction to Understanding the Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Component of Family Literacy

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Background on Family Literacy Programs

The Even Start family literacy program was established in 1989 to improve the literacy of young children and their parents by providing services for early childhood education, adult education, parenting education, and parent-child interactive literacy activities (St. Pierre, Ricciuti, Tao, Creps, Swartz, Lee, & Parsad, 2003). The program model is based on the intergenerational transfer of cognitive skills (Sticht, 1992) and the development of literacy within the family context (Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983). At present, more than 50,000 low-income families participate in Even Start programs across all 50 states in the U.S. (Goodling Institute, 2005).

While the concept of family literacy is well-represented in the literature (e.g., DeBruin-Parecki, & Kroll-Sinclair, 2003; Heath, 1983; Paratore, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 2000; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Wasik, 2004); there is still a lack of substantial research on the design, implementation, and outcomes of family literacy programs. The ARF session presented by Eunice Askov, "Family Literacy: Understanding the Parent-Child Interactive Literacy Component" is a promising step toward conducting and disseminating research on family literacy programs.

The Study

Askov and her co-researchers, sought to examine how family literacy programs in Pennsylvania implemented parent-child interactive literacy time, with specific attention to the "extent to which language and literacy development are explicitly and/or implicitly taught during parent-child interactive literacy activities." (Grinder, Askov, Saenz, & Aldemir, 2005, pp. 2-3). One of the common criticisms of family literacy is that research has not shown the "value-added" impact of family literacy programs in comparison to more traditional adult education and early childhood education programs.

The study reported by Askov sought to address this issue by gathering data on the parent-child interactive literacy component of family literacy programs. The findings of this study indicate that many of the surveyed programs did not identify literacy as a major focus of the interactive literacy component of their family literacy programs. Rather, the activities and instruction appeared to focus on parenting skills during this component of the program. In addition, it was noted that programs had difficulty providing interactive literacy time for school-aged children due to scheduling conflicts and lack of support from elementary school teachers.

Responding to the Research Findings

After reflecting on these findings, it appears to this author that several important trends warrant consideration. The Even Start legislation requires programs to include interactive literacy activities for parents and children; however, support to do so is lacking. Many educators who teach in family literacy programs may not be experts in this area since certification does not exist for family literacy. Training is currently available from the National Center for Family Literacy, and a Certificate of Graduate Studies is available through Pennsylvania State University. Such professional development, however, is expensive and difficult to pay for when family literacy programs tend to be grant-funded, with very limited budgets for training and professional development. Professional development needs to be a priority for family literacy educators so they can understand the power of the interactive literacy component of Even Start. To this end, the professional development must focus on the language and literacy development of young children, the influence of parents on children's literacy development and learning, and research-based methods for promoting literacy development and parent involvement in education.

Another issue of concern is that few materials are available that clearly outline and describe the types of activities and experience that are most beneficial for inclusion in parent-child interactive literacy time. As a result, many family literacy programs must invent their own curricula using instinct and creativity. For example, the author of this response serves as an evaluator for several Even Start programs in her state. While observing in these programs, she has frequently found that program personnel cite their reason for implementing certain parent-child interactive literacy activities as "these activities are fun" without reference to the research or theory that supports the activities. While it may be true that a seasonal craft project may be fun, this activity does not provide the type of language and literacy support that Even Start children need to be able to succeed in school (Wasik, 2004). Clearer guidelines are needed for the interactive literacy component to help family literacy program personnel understand the types of activities that are most beneficial for children and their parents. These guidelines might come in the form of sample lessons (provided to all Even Start programs free-of-charge) that are cued to a developmental continuum listing the progression of language and literacy skills for young children. Another option is the development of video tapes of exemplary parent-child interactive literacy activities that can be distributed to all Even Start programs.

The level of knowledge that family literacy educators have about children's language and literacy development and how parents can support such development is also an area of concern. It is this author's experience that many of the family literacy educators in her state are adult educators by training, but they are expected to have in-depth knowledge about children's literacy and language development. More professional development is needed in this area, but it is a challenge as most family literacy programs operate on very small budgets. Providing on-line training or teleconferences that Even Start programs can access free-of-charge are promising ways to provide the professional development that family literacy educators need related to language and literacy development.

The lack of coordination between family literacy programs and elementary teachers is a serious challenge. Even Start programs are designed to serve families with children through age 8, but the study conducted by Askov and her colleagues indicated that most of the programs had difficulty developing working relationships with elementary schools and their teachers. This

difficulty is likely due, at least in part, to the lack of knowledge or experience many teachers have regarding parent involvement and family literacy. In addition, given the tight budgets and busy schedules of family literacy educators, they may not feel they are able to visit the elementary schools attended by all of the children whose families are enrolled in a family literacy program. When these challenges are combined, a very difficult situation arises. This issue is most likely best addressed in a two-pronged manner. First, elementary teachers need professional development in the areas of parent involvement and family literacy so they can understand the power and promise of family literacy programs for their students. Second, family literacy programs need to be proactive in establishing working relationships with elementary teachers. Possible routes for doing this are to hold informational meetings with elementary teachers, prepare and share informational brochures about family literacy, and develop efficient methods of communication between family literacy programs and elementary schools. In addition, teacher education programs must prepare preservice and inservice teachers to work collaboratively with parents and other educational programs for the benefit of their students.

Closing Thoughts

The Even Start program is currently under fire for failing to produce expected results (St. Pierre, Ricciuti, and Tao, 2004). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) recently rated the Even Start program as "Ineffective" based on three National Even Start Evaluations (Office of Management & Budget, n.d.). As a result of this rating, President George W. Bush's proposed 2006 budget completely eliminates Even Start funding. Family literacy educators must act now to implement Even Start programs with fidelity so each component is of high-quality, including parent-child interactive literacy, and research must be gathered to show the impact of the program on the literacy development of parents and children.

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An Undergraduate Reading Practicum:
Improving Teacher Preparation

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As a reading teacher working on a Master's degree fifteen years ago, I did not see hands-on instructional reading practice until I had completed the mandatory Reading Clinic experience. Research reveals that there is a clear link between effective professional development and increased student achievement. Darling-Hammond (1996) has argued that a more complex, knowledge-based and multicultural society is creating new expectations for teaching. These new expectations require, more than ever, that teachers know their subject areas deeply and also understand how students think in order to create learning experiences that actually work to produce learning (Paez, 2003). Especially in the area of reading instruction, current pre-service teacher education and in-service training must be modified to include a greater emphasis on supporting at-risk children in the classroom (Allington & Walmsley, Eds., 1995).

Credible research exists showing that teachers' instructional preparation increases student achievement. Darling-Hammond (1996) found that teacher preparation correlates more highly with student achievement than does class size, overall spending, or teacher salaries. It accounts for 40% to 60% of the total achievement variance after taking students' demographics into account. Munro (1991) discovered that when teachers examined contemporary learning approaches and developed their own explicit learning theories; the number of their effective teaching behaviors increased significantly. Similarly, he found that 73% of these teachers' students—especially the lowest-achieving students—showed statistically significant learning gains.

Moreover, research also tells us that teachers without sufficient teacher education preparation can actually be less effective at helping students learn. Teachers who lack effective classroom management skills, regardless of how much content they know, cannot create a classroom environment that promotes student learning. A study of alternatively certified teachers with only subject-matter knowledge demonstrated that they had "strong misconceptions" about appropriate ways to teach the content and were unable to integrate their subject knowledge with teaching practices to allow effective instruction (McDiarmid & Wilson, 1991). Teacher certification standards and even schools of education vary greatly in the ways they prepare teachers. But Kaplan and Owings (2003) assert that teacher certification can be a "strong predictor of teacher quality" when the content knowledge of teacher candidates is linked to teaching practices *and* to opportunities to try out what they have learned in well-supervised settings.

A Pre-professional Practicum

In an effort to link content knowledge to teaching practice, I created a field-based practicum experience for pre-service teachers at the University of Cincinnati, Clermont College. The practicum was situated in a three credit hour undergraduate course that all early childhood

education majors must take: Developmentally Appropriate Reading Practices for Early Childhood Education. The purpose of the course modifications was to integrate early literacy practices with hands-on field experience. The design of this experience was to be much like the reading practicum with which I was involved as a graduate student in the late 1980's at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. The main difference was that that program was a pull-out program, while our pre-teachers would be working in the local classrooms in an inclusive environment with in-service teachers. The course required that ten hours be spent in early literacy settings. An observation log/portfolio of narratives relating to the observation experience became the culminating project for the course.

I chose for the course text, *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success* (1995), published by the National Research Council. This text provided specific recommendations from America's leading researchers on how to help children become successful readers and was written in a conversational format directed toward parents, teachers and child care providers. Class time was designated to discuss the text and to expand upon intervention strategies or progress monitoring techniques that were being used in the classroom. Typically, we also shared an example of quality children's literature that could lend itself to early literacy instruction.

At the start of the quarter, the principals and the school psychologist visited us to describe how they were assessing and monitoring Kindergarten and first grade students at Batavia Elementary School. They provided our practicum students with a general introduction to the school, its goals and its students. And in particular, they provided students with an introduction to the way that the school was monitoring students progress and providing intervention where needed. Specifically, they introduced basic concepts behind the instrument they were using to guide their efforts with early readers: Dr. Roland Good's DIBELS--Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, assessment system of early literacy development (Good, 1998).

After this introduction, our pre-teachers were assigned to Kindergarten and First Grade classrooms where teachers trained them in the use of DIBELS techniques and in strategies to use in assessment and/or intervention sessions.

Observation

Because I felt that the pre-teachers and the cooperating teachers in our practicum needed to see me in the field, I regularly traveled to Batavia Elementary to observe pre-teachers at work and to express appreciation to cooperating teachers. This was also my chance to observe some interventions at work. Here I saw my students becoming teachers, and even "uninvolved" students became engaged.

Because several students lived far from our campus and were placed in schools closer to their homes, I visited their cooperating teachers to discern the type of reading instruction that was taking place. In these other contexts pre-service teachers were experiencing Reading Recovery, Guided Reading, Repeated Reading and a host of reading interventions at work in early literacy settings.

The cooperating teachers were a key component in the success of this program. They discussed tips for organizing the classroom, talked about generating the Word Wall, and provided ideas for organizing books, and students reported feeling for the first time like "a teacher instead of a student." Most pre-teachers had an open relationship with their cooperating teachers and regularly discussed strategy and planning. Student observation logs turned in at the end of the quarter revealed that cooperating teachers often made copies of different interventions that the pre-service teachers could try with the students and they provided booklets/articles about early literacy that proved useful. Often those articles made their way into our class discussions at the college as we related field experience to the theory we read about in our text. Common topics included: phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, word segmentation activities, fluency instruction, vocabulary immersion and the use of worksheets.

More specifically, however, students were working with veteran teachers cooperatively developing reading strategies and activities to uncover the "*hows*" and "*whys*" of reading performance. They discussed balanced literacy instruction and the building blocks necessary for an effective reading program to work. They conversed about struggling readers and planned interventions to scaffold the early readers' progress to the next level of reading competence. The veterans mentored and encouraged their protégés to try new interventions and design strategies to produce success for early readers who had never thought themselves competent.

University Learning into Classroom Practice

The National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction describes a series of critical features of excellence in reading teacher preparation programs. These include a comprehensive curriculum and the development of a cohesive knowledge base for effective teacher decision making. These in turn are paired with a variety of course-related field experiences. In addition, the Commission recommends providing a forum where pre-teachers can try out supervised instruction and gain a sense of autonomy.

With these things in mind, the classroom-based practicum reported on here was designed to provide students with opportunities to monitor student learning and assist teachers with planning and carrying out intervention lessons. Contemporary approaches to teaching reading taken from our text were applied in the classroom, and pre-teachers developed their own explicit strategies under the guidance of a mentor. Through this practicum I was able to establish clear links between methods and concepts learned at the university and the adaptation and implementation of these in a "live" classroom setting. There they had opportunities to draw from their background and interact with appropriate role models (Hoffman et al., 2003) and to be a part of the planning and decision-making process. This is the kind of thing the Commission recommends for producing effective teachers. In addition, reflected on their coursework and their work in the schools through observation portfolios.

Student Gains

In order to be making adequate progress in critical early reading skills, DIBELS sets the following benchmarks:

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

In the middle of kindergarten, students should be able to identify initial sounds of words with confidence. Students with scores of at least 18 correct sounds per minute are likely to achieve the end-of kindergarten goal. By May, 82% of the kindergarteners at Batavia Elementary were scoring 35-45 sounds per minute on phoneme segmentation fluency, and were considered "established" emergent readers. By the end of the first grade, students should have 35-45 sounds per minute on phoneme segmentation fluency. By May of 2003, 95% of Batavia Elementary first graders in classrooms where our students were assisting with intervention and progress monitoring, scored up to 45 sounds per minute.

Oral Reading Fluency

In the category of Oral Reading Fluency, on-track readers should have 40 correct words per minute at the end of first grade. Seventy percent of these first graders were considered established readers by May of 2003 (scoring 40 or more correct words per minute), 18% were emergent readers with some risk indicated (scoring 20-39 correct words per minute), and only 12% were considered at risk, scoring 19 or fewer words per minute.

The fact that students made gains on these measures is undisputable. Principals Moellmann and Willis contend that the DIBLES assessment and progress monitoring approach in combination with the one-on-one tutoring and intervention provided by our practicum students were indeed factors in the success of kindergarten and first grade students. This is the first year of a continuous DIBELS approach in intervention, and the cycle of monitoring and assessing students on a regular basis and intensive one-on-one tutoring is appears to be paying off. There was, then, an evident benefit for the school and its early readers, but there was also a clear benefit to the students that could be seen in their observation logs.

Pre-Teacher Gains

In this practicum, pre-teachers became involved in an invaluable field experience that centered on a vision of literacy, quality teaching and quality teacher education (Hoffman et al., 2003). To lend emphasize the effects of the practicum experience, I have chosen to use the pre-service teachers' words—quoting verbatim from their observation log portfolios.

Tricia stated in her May 15, 2003 entry:

> I have truly learned more from this experience than any other here at Clermont. I loved being in the classroom and feeling like I was making a difference. I enjoyed trying many different interventions, and developing a professional relationship with my mentor.

Similarly, Amy M. states:

> I really learned a lot from going into the classroom. I recommend doing this again with the reading classes to come. I believe that to learn how to do something it needs to be hands-on, in the classroom, not just learning by a book. I would have loved to be in more classrooms in my schooling and hope to be in the years to come. I feel like you learn so much. I would like to get the chance to be in the classroom at the start up of school year. This would be a big help to observe how the teacher starts to get her class procedures in order. Thank you for assigning this project of going into the classroom to us. I feel like I have learned so much more than what I would have learned by reading a text book.

And Jennifer:

> I have enjoyed the DIBELS program, because for the first time I was not sitting in the classroom observing the students, I was actually working hand in hand with the students. Working with the students has allowed me to see some real results and some real successes. Watching these children improve and putting them on the path to becoming good readers has been a priceless experience. I feel as though I have really done something of importance with these children. I do feel that observations are important, but it is great to finally get involved.

Conclusions

Teachers who are prepared in ways like those recommended by the National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction (1995) are likely to be more successful and confident than other beginning teachers in making the transition into the teaching profession. Placing students in a carefully constructed practicum created for them the conditions that the Commission sees are needed for successful teacher preparation. Our students were able to take the knowledge base absorbed at the University and work with it in classrooms in ways that contributed to their confidence and decision-making abilities. They worked with on-going assessments and interventions derived from current research on early literacy learning. Their interactions with at-risk children and with model teachers led to responsive and flexible teaching and a growing sense of professional autonomy. (Even if a prescribed reading program was imposed, students often had the flexibility to administer interventions or share books in an important one-on-one relationship with students in these classrooms.) And these undergraduates became active and engaged members of the learning community—members willing to raise questions and make contributions--that extended from their University classrooms to the their school placements.

In the future, an effort will be made to find a way to assess this program to help determine if, indeed, teachers of reading prepared in this way are more confident, autonomous, flexible, and informed in their practice than students who simply spend time in classrooms observing. I continue to inquire about the best way to train teachers of early literacy, but the undergraduate reading practicum has emerged as an effective way to engage students, assist in schools, and learn from teachers.

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