# THE FLORIDA LITERACY JOURNAL

A Publication of the Florida Literacy Association
Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter 2020

# Message from FLA Chair, Laurie Lee

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to 2020! I am pleased to introduce the first edition of the *Florida Literacy Journal* of the New Year and the new decade! The journal is an important avenue for helping FLA fulfill its mission. That mission is to *promote quality literacy instruction, clarify educational issues for decision makers, support research in literacy, and advocate life-long reading*. We know that as you peruse the articles in the journal you will find those that relate to each facet of the mission. We are extremely grateful to those who contributed to this edition and to our editors, Dr. Elsie Olan and Dr. Rebecca Powell who organized the issue into the valuable resource that it is for educators.

As 2019-2020 chair of FLA, I would like to personally invite you to renew your membership in our organization if you haven't yet done so for this year, or become more active if you are a member. Please feel free to email me at Llee@fcrr.org if you are interested in serving on our board! We are always looking for dedicated educators to help us work towards our mission. In addition, we hope that you will participate in the activities of your local council if you have one in your area – you will definitely grow professionally and your participation will help others do the same.

As 2019-2020 chair of FLA, I would like to take this time to thank you for the work you do every day for your students. Whether you are a classroom teacher (veteran or newbie), university professor, literacy or instructional coach, school or district administrator, parent, media specialist, school counselor, or pre-service teacher, we know that your work positively influences the lives of the students in our state. Thank you for dedicating yourself to serving students – you truly touch the future. As we look toward to that future we know there will be successes and challenges along the way. As members of a vibrant professional organization, it is good to know that we can celebrate our successes with one another and we can face the challenges together as we work to provide the best education possible for our kids.

Best wishes as you begin 2020. Enjoy this issue of the *Florida Literacy Journal*. We hope that you will learn something new and that the articles will cause you to reflect upon your practice as a literacy educator. Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

Laurie Lee, 2019-2020 FLA Chair

## Message from Editors

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the re-launch of the *Florida Literacy Journal*! As we move into 2020, we (Elsie L. and Becky) are excited to share a look into curated articles related to literacy trends and initiatives that span the boundaries of time, context and content. This 2020 vision includes seminal work in literacy that painted a picture of Florida needs and student learning. Understanding that students' and teachers' needs have changed, we must not forget the initiatives, inquiries and teaching practices that informed our field.

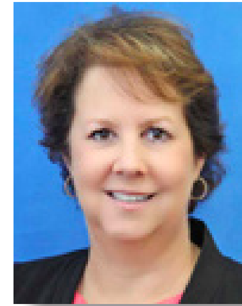
As we envision the future, it is time for us to share transformative classroom practices and for teachers to have a voice in educational research and decision-making. As you explore these articles, we hope that you will ponder how, if at all, these initiatives and trends still influence, affect, or alter your classroom practices.

As Editors of *FLJ*, we take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to authors who have chosen *FLJ* to disseminate their research and practice. Further, we would like to thank Joyce Warner, our vice-chair and publications chair, reviewers and other supporting staff for the success of this Journal.

We are more than happy to receive contributions for our next issue from teachers, doctoral candidates, teacher-educator researchers, advocates of teaching and learning and scholars to ensure the consistency and the success of the *Florida Literacy Journal*.

Elsie Lindy Olan, Ph.D.

Rebecca L. Powell, Ph.D.



Editors

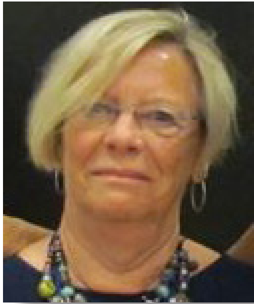
## Message from Publication Chair

It is so exciting to welcome back this journal from its three-year hiatus. As the Florida Reading Association transitioned to the Florida Literacy Association, the *Florida Reading Journal* (aka *The Florida Reading Quarterly*) cocooned, just waiting. And now, the long-awaited butterfly emerges as the *Florida Literacy Journal*. With over a decade of *Florida Reading Journal* published literacy studies to build upon, the new *FLJ* will continue as a themed quarterly, seeking manuscripts of new studies from doctoral students, working educators and those who "think they might have something to offer" (as we learned at the *FLJ* presentation during the 2019 FLA conference).

But first, this inaugural edition of the new *FLJ* provides a historical look at literacy studies from over the past 50 + years. The readers will recognize the names of known literacy scholars as well as ideas, some still in debate, some still in practice. This unique step back in time offers a broad range of perspective, reminds us from where we have come and sets the stage for the future.

It is with real pride that we introduce the 2020 edition, Volume 1, # 1 winter issue, of the *Florida Literacy Journal*. Be sure to look to the Florida Literacy Association website for a call for manuscripts for the next Winter edition.

Joyce V. W. Warner, Ed.D.



Publications Chair for the Florida Literacy Association

Editors ........................................................................... Elsie Lindy Olan, Ph.D., University of Central Florida
Rebecca L. Powell, Ph.D., Florida Southern College

Publications Chair .......................................................................... Joyce Warner, Ed. D. Barry University, Retired

## EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Kathleen M. Alley, Ph.D. ........................................................ Mississippi State University
Anne W. Anderson, Doctoral Candidate ........................................ University of South Florida
Cavel Austin, M.Ed., Secondary ELA Teacher .................................. Jones High School, Florida
Brian Flores, Ph.D. ........................................................................ Salisbury University
Aimee Frier, Ph.D. ...................................................................... University of South Florida
Audra Gruel, M.Ed.,Secondary ELA Teacher ............................ Lake Brantley High School, Florida
Daphne Harris, M.Ed., Elementary Reading Coach ........................................ State of Florida
Evelyn Hollen, M.A., Elementary Principal ................................................. State of Florida
Diane LaFrance, Ed.D. ................................................................... Florida Southern College
Stephanie M. Lemley, Ph.D. .......................................................... Mississippi State University
Erin E. Margarella, Ph.D. ............................................................. Western Kentucky University
Nancy Misuraca, .................................................................. Brooker Creek Elementary School
Tessa Noell, B.S., Middle School ELA Teacher ........................................... State of Florida
Sarah Pennington, Ph.D. .................................................................. Montana State University
Lindsay Persohn, Ph.D. ................................................................ University of South Florida
Enrique A. Puig, Ed.D. ................................................................ University of Central Florida
Ruth Sylvester ........................................................................ Cedarville University, Ohio
Mellissa Teston, Doctoral Candidate ........................................... University of South Florida

# Curating Literacy from a Historical Perspective

*Volume 1, No. 1, Winter 2020*

## Table of Contents

A View Into A Multi-Age Primary Classroom ........ 9
*Charley McClaren*

Aesop's Fables: Centuries Of Timeless Advice ........ 11
*Gerry Bohning*

Assessment of Pupils' Oral Language Expression: An Important Factor In Diagnosis Of Reading Abilities ........ 14
*Helen J. James*

Computer Managed Instruction Brevard County ........ 17
*Joe Fitzgerald*

Critical Thinking Vis A Vis Critical Reading ........ 19
*John Follman*

Encounters Among the Language Arts ........ 21
*Lee Mountain*

It Takes Pep To Teach Reading! ........ 23
*Inez W. Tanner*

Intention And Context: Missing Elements In Portfolio Assessment? ........ 25
*Carolyn J. Eichenberger*

Parent Involvement – It Works! ........ 28
*Marston B. Lewis*
*Yvonne B. Marrow*

Psychological Aspects of Teacher-Pupil Relationship ........ 30
*Robert M. Allen*

What Readability Formulas Can and Cannot Predict ........ 35
*Nancy Marshall*

Reading Diagnosis in Real Classrooms ........ 37
*Janell P. Kelsius*
*Evelyn F. Searls*

Shifting Pedagogical Responsibility: The Use of TAG for Self and Classroom Community Assessment ........ 44
*Nina Zaragoza*
*Barbara C. Cruz*

**The Relationships Between Reading Ability and Other Commonly Tested Areas As Measured By Two Widely Used High School Achievement Tests**........ 51
*Thomas M. Goolsby, Jr.*
*Robin H. Huber*

**The Use of Comics to Foster Initial Reading Instruction**........ 56
*Edward J. Shaffer*

**Building Council Success – Use Notebooks!**........ 59
*Donna J. Read*

*The Florida Literacy Journal* is published in Winter, Spring, and Summer by the Florida Literacy Association. Membership in the FLA includes an electronic subscription. Institutions may subscribe to the electronic edition for $75.00 per year. The foreign subscriber rate for the electronic version is $100.00 per year. Correspondence should be addressed to the editors at: elsie.olan@ucf.edu /rpowell@flsouthern.edu

*The Florida Literacy Journal* is published for members of the Florida Literacy Association and all others concerned with reading. Because *The Florida Literacy Journal* serves as an open forum, its contents do not necessarily reflect or imply endorsement of the FLA, its officers, or its members.

## Call for Manuscripts

The editors invite submissions of manuscripts for *The Florida Literacy Journal*, the refereed journal of the Florida Literacy Association. We invite submissions geared toward improving literacy instruction and innovation at all levels with a firm grounding in current theory and research. Suggested topics include literacy project descriptions, research or theoretical pieces with pedagogical implications, or issue-centered pieces addressing timely literacy topics of local, state or national interest. Preference is given to articles that most directly impact Florida learners. While theoretical and research articles are invited, please keep in mind that this is a journal primarily for FLA members, who are predominantly practicing teachers and literacy specialists. We encourage articles from PK-12 and adult-level practitioners, literacy researchers and doctoral students, as well as articles written by other experts in the field.

*The Florida Literacy Journal*'s audience is largely composed of PK-12 practitioners in the state of Florida. The FLJ editors are interested in exploring topics of interest to Florida educators and valuable in their daily literacy practices. We welcome submissions from researchers as well as PK-12 teachers. The thematic calls listed below are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely meant to be helpful to authors as they consider topics for publication. Please review the submission guidelines before submitting a manuscript.

**Submission Guidelines are online at:** http://www.flareads.org/Publications/FLJournal

### *Ongoing Annual Theme: Florida Standards in Action*

FLJ has an ongoing interest in submissions related to the implementation of the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) across K-12 classrooms. Manuscripts that highlight how individual teachers have adapted their instruction to integrate the arts, technology, and the content areas are of particular interest. We also have interest in articles that discuss how districts have addressed the challenges and lessons learned related to the implementation of LAFS and the Florida Standards Assessment.

### *Ongoing Call for Book Reviews*

FLJ has an ongoing interest in reviews of professional texts related to teaching and the themed calls for 2019-20. Reviews should be between 750-1000 words and should offer an overview of the book, not a detailed synopsis or an in-depth essay. Examples of published book reviews can be found in previous editions of FLJ.

## Publication Themes for 2020 will be announced on the website soon!

http://flareads.org/publications/

Volume 1, Issue 2: April 2020
Submission deadline: February 1, 2020

Volume 1, Issue 3: August 2020
Submission deadline: June 1, 2020

# Into a Multi-Age Primary Classroom

*Charley McClaren*
Pinellas County Schools, Florida

**What are the advantages of a multi-age primary classroom?
The author shows how readers and writers develop easily and naturally in such a classroom.**

I watched as Michael struggled to carry Caity's reading backpack down the hall after school. They were discussing Caity's birthday party the next day. This was not an unusual scene on a Friday afternoon except that Michael was five and Caity was turning eight. Both of these students were members of a special multi-age class in a unit called the Primary House, which consisted of three classrooms of K-2 students. The 5-year olds enter school knowing they will have the same teacher and classroom for the next 3 years. The advantages of this multi-age setting will be discussed as well as how reading and writing instruction takes place.

Let's go back to the first day of school in August of the second year of the Primary House. Nine 5-year olds joined an already established community of learners from the previous May. For two-thirds of the class it was as if we had been only on spring break. All of us were filled with fresh enthusiasm for learning without the usual first day of school worries. As a teacher I was able to concentrate my attention on just nine new faces. The first week flew by like a dream. I was thrilled with how easily the rookies settled into our routines. The 6- and 7-year olds helped the younger ones go to the library, find their lunch money, and get on the bus. It was the smoothest opening of school I had ever experienced.

Our day begins with calendar activities, with students on the carpeted area in front of the rocking chair. Here students are encouraged to share their home experiences. One student is selected to have her-his news typed as the "Daily News." One of the older students sits at the computer keyboard as the class slowly spells out each word of the dictated sentences. The younger students listen and join in on sounding out the words. What a joy it is when the younger students volunteer to read the "Daily News." Often the class claps when one of the 5-year olds reads the passage. "She can read now!" Nadrea excitedly blurts out. We all note and celebrate the growth of the early readers. Everyone is a reader and a writer.

Next our class enjoys a shared reading experience. The big book shared usually deals with the theme we are studying. Our themes were selected by the students last spring. All ages are able to relate to the story in their own way. At first the younger students just listen as some of the more experienced listeners share their responses. During the year I notice the younger students have rich responses as well. Many days a short phonics or comprehension lesson follows, using text from the shared book. Next the students choose two literacy centers at which to work for the next hour. The veterans show the rookies how to express themselves at Writer's Corner, choose a story tape to listen to at the Listening Center, write stories at the Technology Center, read poems and songs at the Poetry Center, or read or write with a friend. As the teacher I am free to teach my small guided reading groups. When problems arise the children go to each other for help and rarely interrupt me.

## *READING GROUPS*

I was able to start reading groups the second week of school because I knew more than half of my class from the previous year. I usually have six reading groups. I meet with the early readers everyday and the fluent readers every other day. Because I assess the students continually with running records, students change reading groups often. The children do not question what group they are in or with whom. They all enjoy the special attention of a small group lesson with their teacher.

The early readers are called to their group by name. These groups have 5-, 6-, and 7-year-old members in them and are quite flexible. I step the readers through different levels of books (as in Reading Recovery levels). These guided reading lessons with the early readers include rereading familiar text, reading a new book, guided writing, or phonics activities. They reread their books with a buddy and also take books home to reread. It is so exciting to watch 5-year olds emerge as readers early in the fall. All around them they see and hear readers and writers. How can they not be motivated, challenged, and encouraged?

What about the fluent readers? They are given a chance to sign up for the book they would like to read. These literacy circles usually last for 1-2 weeks depending on the length of the book. The books often go along with our theme or feature certain authors. A variety of books is offered and a child rarely chooses a book that is too easy or too hard. Their literacy circles include rereading certain parts, discussing confusing points, and sharing responses. As they leave their group, they are given a reading assignment and a question of their literature log. They often go off to a corner of the classroom to read and write a response. They will share their written ideas in the next group meeting.

After the groups have met, the lights are turned off.

This is a signal for the students to clean up their centers and return to the carpeted area in front of the rocking chair. The students can share something they wrote, a poem they enjoyed, or a problem they are having. In the remaining minutes the class reads, signs poems or songs from the chart stand, or enjoys a new book. Writer's Workshop will follow after mathematics and lunch.

### WRITER'S WORKSHOP

Writer's Workshop opens with a reading of a selection from children's literature. Hands fly up to share personal responses to the book. Jacki shares, "I liked the way he described his grandmother. My grandmother isn't like that." Often the children notice the reason I chose the book: an interesting lead, a thoughtful ending, or descriptive language. We discuss the writer's craft, and I encourage the students to try this technique in their writing. The young authors return to their tables to write in their journals. Often the students will try the experienced author's technique. This attempt is highlighted during sharing time. Many students write about the theme we are studying.

During quiet writing time I write, confer with a student, or meet with a small group of writers. In these small groups I focus on a skill that I have noted these individuals need help with. We may design a web and then write a logically ordered paragraph on that topic. Or I may call a few students to the group to work on spaces between words or writing approximations using all phonemes. These groups are based on the writers' needs, not necessarily age. Many younger students excel as writers and move into complex writing for their age. A few older students still struggle with mechanics. I find the variety of different stages of writers very exciting.

After 20-30 minutes of writing time, the writers are encouraged to meet in the author's circle to share. This is another time during the day when we celebrate each other's growth. Students are allowed to share their writing. "You did a good job with your beginning," Anthony responds. I am always impressed by the quality and quantity of the 5- and 6-year olds' writings. The young learners are encouraged and helped by hearing many good models.

### THEME STUDIES

After Writer's Workshop we move into theme studies. The students explore themes such as ocean, America, and save the earth. Students suggest research projects on animals, people, and places related to the theme. The students team up to write questions, read books, and write reports on theme topics. Art projects relating to the theme are an option. Reports are shared and art projects are hung on the walls as a theme progresses. In concluding the theme, the class writes together about what we have learned. These shared writings become books in our classroom. Students' writings on our themes are published in a monthly newsletter. The themes seem to make connections and give focus to many of the processes of reading and writing we learn all day long.

The past, present, and future themes are also carried home in theme backpacks. The backpacks are centered around different habitats, animals, and countries. Each backpack may include several books, a cassette or video tape, puzzle, pictures, and always a writing journal. The backpacks allow students to expand their knowledge on a theme. This also provides opportunities for them to share their learning with their parents, bringing their families into our community as well.

After 20 minutes of free choice activity centers, students are asked to clean up and meet a final time in front of the rocking chair. The students are encouraged to reflect on their learnings and the day's happenings. I highlight tomorrow's events. We end the day singing. We sing about our theme, holidays, or songs with a "we are a family" message. As the bell rings, small groups of multi-age students bounce down the hall. I believe every student leaves feeling confident as a reader and writer and knowing that she/he is a special part of a community of learners.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The reviewers of this article wanted more information about how this program was started and what problems were encountered. The author gave the following information in a telephone conversation with the editor.

Several teachers who had taught the K-2 grades noticed the wide range of student abilities and the similarities in student needs at each grade level. With the concurrence of the administration, they organized and planned the Primary House. They involved key parents in the PTA in the planning and promoting of the program. Parents could decide against having their child participate; however, this occurred only once in the two years the program had operated at the time this article was written. The major problem encountered was the lack of grade level designations for the classrooms in the Primary House. This was a problem for parents who felt the need to know that their child was in first grade or second grade; it was not a problem for the students in the Primary House. They would make continuous progress over the 3 years' time with the same teacher. The principal met one-on-one with parents to reassure them. At the end of the 3 years, students could move to an Intermediate House (covering the curriculum in grades 3-5), could return to a traditional grade 3 classroom, or could stay another year in the Primary House with no stigma of having "failed" a grade.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1995-1996, Vol. 32, no. 4 (1996), pg. 14.

# Aesop's Fables: Centuries of Timeless Advice

*Gerry Bohning*
Barry University, Miami, Florida

Tortoise, clad in running sneakers and marathon racing skills, "crossed the finish line just before the tornado of dust and fur that was Hare flew by. Tortoise had won the race." Tortoise moralized, "Hard work and perseverance bring reward." Stevens (1989) adapts the classic fable of *The Tortoise and the Hare* to a familiar contemporary setting. The fable, as a part of wisdom literature that began centuries ago, is concerned with right conduct and obligations; the societal concerns of the past are much the same was those of today.

Fables are not fixed in time or place, and readers tend to interpret them in their own familiar setting. This feature has made them a timeless resources in ancient and modern classrooms. This article places the Aesop fable in its historical context, presents a discussion guide as a springboard for using fables in the elementary classroom, and offers an annotated booklist of fables. Taken together, the information provides encouragement for teachers to use fables as an instructional resource.

## *HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE*

Fables belong to cultures worldwide, and their origins can be traced in ancient India to collections of animal stories, in Egypt to story papyri, and in France to the poetic verses of La Fontaine. In the Western world, fables are usually associated with the name Aesop. Aesop, a legendary Greek slave who lived about 620-560 B.C., cast his cautionary stories as fables. Some scholars doubt the existence of Aesop because animal fables appeared in Greek literature two centuries before Aesop (Sutherland & Arbuthnot, 1991). Early fables were part of the oral tradition and Aesop left no written collection, so all we know for sure is that the name of Aesop and the fable have continued to be thought of as one over the centuries.

The first known written collection of Aesop's fables was made about 320 B.C. by a statesman of Athens (Blackham, 1985); translations and adaptations have continued to present times. Collections of fables were the first illustrated books ever published (Hobbs, 1986), and artists over the centuries have added their pictorial interpretations of the stories. Ash and Highton (1990) feature distinguished artists from the past in their collection of *Aesop Fables*. Stories and pictures come together to focus on the essence of the fable, the moral.

The fable is meant to instruct and generalize a moral that society respects. The crow "opened her beak and cawed loudly to show that she could sing. As she did so, the piece of cheese fell to the ground." The fox ran off with the cheese, leaving the crow to moralize, "Beware of flattery, it may not be meant." The crow is left to ponder the folly of her vanity (Kincaid, 1993). The fox and the crow's cautionary story instructs people on what they ought to think about as they conduct their lives. The fable's unique rhetorical purpose, to teach a lesson, makes it an important resource in the elementary classroom for incorporating discussions about how children should treat each other and how they would like to be treated.

## *FABLES IN THE CLASSROOM: A DISCUSSION GUIDE*

Fables have been adopted by and incorporated into our American culture to the degree that few school children grow up today without the admonition to heed Aesop's warning that "actions speak louder than words" or "one good turn deserves another." This universality serves to make fables ideal for use in the elementary classroom.

Blackham (1985) describes a fable as a tactical maneuver to prompt moral thinking. As instructive examples, fables offer children a mirror for self-examination. In *The Lion and the Mouse* (Santore, 1988), the mouse "set to work to gnaw the ropes and succeeded before long in setting the lion free." Readers are prompted to reflect that sometimes the weak are able to help the strong. Fables help children recognize other people's rights and feelings and are emotionally satisfying because the message focuses on worldly wisdom and counsels of social virtues and justice. Animals are often used to represent human behavior, and thus, morals are presented in a nonthreatening way. Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991) note that children enjoy the wisdom of fables because they see that the lessons apply to everyone.

Fables are a springboard to prompt discussion. It is the nature of a fable to provoke the reader to think about what is presented (Blackham, 1985). What is the mistaken judgment in the fable? What is the application in our own lives? Fables can help children become aware of our common humanity (Pillar, 1983) and generate feelings for justice. There should be opportunities in the classroom to dramatize and write fables. Children take stands about conduct through their fables, and reasons for selecting their positions should be discussed (Ricker, 1989).

The following is a discussion guide for use with fables and leads to elementary children writing their own.

The guide is based on recommendations from Stewig and Nordberg (1995) and views the role of the teacher as encourager rather than final authority. It is intended that the guide's steps be used in sequence.

A. Interpreting and clarifying the message
   - Retelling
   - Improvisation

B. Clarifying and extending the message
   - Describing
   - Personalizing

C. Writing
   - Additional episodes
   - Children's own fables

How is the guide translated into actual practice? The following fable, Example is Better Than Precept (Handford, 1954, p. 135) and accompanying questions to prompt discussion show the sequence and use of the guide.

A. Interpreting and clarifying the message

- Retelling: Retell the fable from the mother crab's point of view. Retell it from the crab son's point of view.
- Improvisation: How would you look and move, if—

You were a crab son walking on the beach?
You were a mother crab giving advice?

What would you say if—

You were the mother crab and you call in father crab to explain about the son's faults?

You were the crab son and you call in a friend crab to explain mother crab's advice?

B. Clarifying and extending the message

- *Describing*: A friendly starfish who always tells the truth has watched the crab mother and son incident. How will she describe it to her starfish children? Describe what you think will happen if someone showed mother crab her tracks in the sand? Describe what you think would happen if someone made a video of mother crab walking along the beach and showed it to her?
- *Personalizing*: Have you ever given advice to someone? Tell about the incident. How was your advice like or unlike mother crab's? In your own words, tell what lesson the fable gives for wise behavior in life? What is the moral we need to remember?

C. Writing

- *Additional episodes*: Good literature simulates writing. Children can write additional episodes for the crab mother and son. How should the mother and son treat each other? At this point the writing is not necessarily a fable of their own but a story, a follow-up episode with the same setting and characters. Children should talk about their episode and explain their thinking to an audience—to a partner or a small group.
- *Children's own fables*: After listening to, reading, and discussing several fables, children can write their own. The discussion of Aesop's fables and children's own episodes have been the prewriting stage of the writing process.

## *SUMMARY: TIMELESS ADVICE*

The father advised his sons: "If you help each other, it will be impossible for your enemies to injure you. But if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick in that bundle" (Winter, 1947). The sons learn that in unity is strength. Fables continue to give our society moral strength by instructing children about timeless human virtues and failings.

## *FABLE BOOKLIST*

The following booklist is annotated to help teachers select appropriate collections of fables for their classroom lessons and discussions. The list follows Aesop's caution, "It is quality, not quantity that counts" (Handford, 1954).

Ash, R., & Highton, B. (compiled by). (1990). *Aesop's fables*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. Fables and illustrations selected from numerous antique editions from the last 100 years.

Bader, B. (prepared by). (1991). *Aesop & company with scenes from his legendary life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Introduction gives a brief historical account of Aesop.

Bishop, D. et al. (prepared by). (1998). *Bilingual fables & folk tales*. National Textbook: Lincolnwood, IL. Includes Chiquita y Pepita: The City Mouse and the County Mouse, and Tina la Tortuga y Carlos el Conejo: The Tortoise and the Hare.

Black, F. (retold by). (1991). *Aesop's fables*. Kansas City: Ariel Books. Featured 13 old favorites.

Calmenson, S. (retold by). (1988). *The children's Aesop*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Millis. Humor and action in drawings, moral highlighted in banner.

Clark, M. (retold by). (1990). *The best of Aesop's fables*. Boston: Little, Brown. Amusing drawings of 27 fables.

Gatti, A (retold by). (1992). *Aesop's fables*. New York: Gulliver Books. Delightful wisdom of 58 fables.

Hague, M. (selected & illustrated by). (1985). *Aesop's fables*. New York: Henry Holt. Features 14 fables, alive with color and detail; every classroom needs this edition.

Handford, A. A. (translated by). (1954). *Fables of Aesop*. New York: Penguin. A collection of 207 fables from Latin and French sources.

Holder, H (illustrated by). (1981). *Aesop's fables*. New York: Viking. Beautifully detailed illustrations of 9 fables.

Kredel, F. (illustrated by). (1975). *Aesop's fables*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap. A collection of 152 fables.

Kincaid, E. (illustrated by). (1993). *Aesop's fables*. Newmarket, England: Brimax Books. Strikingly bold illustrations.

Lobel, A. (written & illustrated by). (1980). *Fables*. New York: Harper & Row. Caldecott winner; original contemporary fables patterned after Aesop.

Murphy, F. B. (retold by). (1994). *The fables of Aesop*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. Collection of 103 fables, some in pen and ink, some in full color.

Santore, C. (selected & illustrated by). (1988). *Aesop's fables*. New York: JellyBean Press. One fable on left-hand page, full page illustration on right; a joy to look at again and again.

Stevens, J. (adapted & illustrated by). (1984). *The tortoise and the hare*. New York: Holiday House. Clever contemporary drawings.

Testa, F. (illustrated by). (1984). *Aesop's fables*. New York: Northsouth Books. Assortment of fables, pencil drawings.

Winter, M. (illustrated by). (1947). *The Aesop for children*. New York: Checkerboard Press. A classic Aesop, first published in 1919; large print.

## *REFERENCES*


Ash, R., & Highton, B. (compiled by). (1990). *Aesop's fables*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Blackham, H. J. (1985). *The fable as literature*. Dover, NH: Athlone.

Handford, A. A. (translated by). (1954). *Fables of Aesop*. New York: Penguin.

Hobbs, A. S. (Ed.). (1986). *Fables: Five hundred years of illustration and text*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum.

Kincaid, E. (illustrated by). (1993). *Aesop's fables*. Newmarket, England: Brimax Books.

Pillar, A. (1983). Aspects of moral judgement in response to fables. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 16(3), 39-46.

Ricker, S. L. (1989). Reading/language arts: Writing an original fable. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, 5(9), 17-18.

Santore, C. (selected & illustrated by). (1988). *Aesop's fables*. New York: JellyBean Press.

Stevens, J. (adapted & illustrated by). (1984). *The tortoise and the hare*. New York: Holiday House.

Stewig, J. W., & Nordberg, B. (1995). *Language arts in the elementary classroom*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Sutherland, Z., & Arbuthnot, M. H. (1991). *Children and books* (6th ed.). New York: HarperCollins.

Winter, M. (illustrated by). (1947). *The Aesop for children*. New York: Checkerboard Press.


Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1995-1996, Vol. 32, no. 3 (1996), pg. 17.

# Assessment of Pupils' Oral Language Expression: An Important Factor in Diagnosis of Reading Abilities

*Helen J. James*
The University of West Florida

The major goal of diagnosis is to obtain sufficient information about a pupil's strengths and weaknesses to select appropriate objectives and to plan effective instruction. It appears that better planning may result if the diagnosis includes assessment of a pupil's oral language expressive ability.

It should be clear that pupils who express ideas clearly, use complex sentences, define words by classifying, and conform to Standard English dialect have strengths which should transfer very directly to the comprehension aspects of reading. For such pupils, the major learning task may be the decoding skills. For them, the Language-Experience approach can utilize their strengths and produce written materials of high interest, leading to the development of a sight vocabulary comparable to the language of good children's literature. If a pupil has no perceptual problems, he can be expected to master decoding skills with appropriate instruction and to comprehend easily with suitable guidance.

What has not always been clear to teachers is that many pupils who possess excellent oral language expressive abilities may fail to make progress in a Basal Series program because their strength, good oral expression, interferes with their attending carefully to the early phases of instruction. Learning one word or phrase at a time may be too dull, and repetition on a daily basis may force the highly verbal pupil to ignore the teacher's instruction. When a teacher understands the need of such pupils to think about interesting ideas and to express what they think, he will substitute the Language-Experience approach, which includes almost any activity in which pupils can see that oral expression and written expression are related closely.

There are many pupils—found at all grade levels, from all socio-economic levels—who, for one reason or another, have not developed oral language expressive skills sufficient to assure success in the academic environment. Whatever else may be said about these pupils, it seems evident that they have a weakness which may impede learning to read. It is essential that the teacher determine the precise nature of the weakness, for instructional planning must minimize the influence of the weakness and utilize other known strengths to overcome it.

Two areas of weakness are anticipated by teachers of young children; immature speech and impaired speech. Time, listening to good literature, and opportunities to experiment with speech patterns should eliminate immature speech; speech therapy, dental aids, and hearing aids may overcome impaired speech of certain types. Success in initial learning and acceptance by teachers should reduce the influence of both immature and impaired speech on pupils' learning to read.

During the past three years, university students at both undergraduate and graduate levels have collected oral responses to various stimuli at various grade levels. The analysis of these has shown that, when these are considered in connection with other data of pupils' behaviors in reading-connected activities, the oral language expression either confirms or supplies needed clues to five types of causative conditions: (1) limited intellectual functioning, (2) language deprivation, (3) experiential deprivation, (4) poor self-concept, and (5) divergent dialect. In many instances, especially with older pupils, two or more conditions prevailed, making instructional planning very complicated—but not impossible.

According to Smith, Goodman, and Meredith (6), divergence in dialect from Standard English creates multiple learning problems, therefore multiple instructional problems. Some pupils may have a divergent dialect but actually possess good thinking abilities and very adequate expressive abilities in their own speech communities. These pupils differ in many ways from others who have experienced language or experiential deprivation; yet, both types of pupils may [have]poor self-concepts as well as divergent dialects. It is essential that the teacher identify as accurately as possible precisely how pupils express themselves so that he knows both their thinking abilities and their use of words.

The classification scheme utilized during the past three years has been that suggested in 1964 by Monroe and Rogers (3). Their purpose was to provide teachers with a means of estimating the level of oral language skill attained by children aged five or six. It has been found that their scheme serves teachers well for any grade level, provided the teacher knows the levels of performance expected for a specific age. Since 1964, some authors of reading texts have referred to the scheme and have suggested its use, although very few have given specific recommendations for instruction based on diagnostic results.

Students prepared an informal diagnostic instrument, described in another article in this journal, and then

planned instruction to test their tentative diagnosis. Three types of stimuli have proved to elicit oral responses of sufficient length and complexity to permit adequate analysis: (1) a live animal in a cage, available for pupils' observation and discussion for at least an hour; (2) a colorful picture showing people and/or animals engaged in an interesting activity; (3) a picture drawn by a pupil after a meaningful classroom experience. A general, non-cueing direction, such as "What is happening?" or "Tell me a story about this," frequently stimulated a pupil to explain what he thought about the situation, using his own insights, vocabulary, and sentence patterns.

The procedures followed in the informal assessment of oral language skills, using Monroe and Rogers' scheme, provided measures of not only oral language expressive abilities (concerning thinking and verbalizing) but also needed information of word meanings, dialects, concept attainment, and background of experiences. A comparison of the results attained by a pupil in the four categories suggested implications for initial instructional plans that could not have been derived from analysis of only vocabulary and reading test results.

The results seemed to support the findings reported by Sigel *et al* (5), Kagan *et al* (2), John (1), and Shipman and Hess (4) that analyses of children's oral language expression provides clues to their cognitive structures and their analytic and synthesizing abilities. The results definitely supported the findings of linguists that analysis of samples of a child's oral language expression enables a teacher to describe the child's dialect (speech sounds, meaning units, vocabulary, intonation, and sentence patterns).

During the investigations, it became clear that certain conditions interfere with a child's production of "stories": (1) lack of rapport between the teacher and the child in the situation; (2) lack of practice in telling a story; (3) lack of terms needed to explain a situation; (4) expectancy that the teacher wants objects named; (5) poor self-concept; and (6) habits of expecting specific cues before responding. Consequently, it is sometimes necessary to collect several samples of an individual child's verbal behavior to ascertain the possible nature or cause of the child's difficulties.

On the basis of tentative diagnosis, students planned instruction that would [realize] an identified strength and supply a pattern or experience to help overcome a weakness. For category 1, listening experiences were provided in an area of a pupil's interests; then, retelling or sequencing of ideas gave the pupil an opportunity to see relationships. As often as possible, dramatization or role-playing were incorporated into language arts activities to encourage thinking and [verbalizing].

For category 2, science materials were utilized to provide various forms, sizes, and colors; over a period of time, pupils improved in naming, describing, and [classifying] many types of objects. With success in these activities, pupils felt comfortable when asked to pattern specific sentences (Category 4), and they became efficient in transforming sentences in various ways.

For category 3, use of a tape recorder seemed to stimulate many children to produce more language. A teacher cannot be certain that this will be suitable for [all] children; usually, several sessions are required to encourage shy children to (speak/talk) freely when they are being taped. Dramatization and role-playing seemed [very] effective with many children.

In the elementary school, interest centers have provided the greatest opportunities for eliciting a variety of oral responses. In teacher-initiated activities, it is possible to give practice in patterning, describing, explaining what happened, sequencing, and classifying. When pupils initiate the activities, they give evidence of following what teachers had done, with creative adaptations.

For language- or experience-deprived pupils at all levels, the Language-Experience approach seems to be the most appropriate, as the strategy of providing a stimulus and eliciting discussion can produce charts of words, taped stories,dictated stories, written compositions of various types, outlines, and art objects. Whatever is produced can be used to provide the words to be studied. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for either the production of stories or the study of words or sentences.

Many surprising discoveries have been made during these investigations. Two are particularly worthy of attention, for they exemplify the importance of assessing oral language expression.

Teachers in a rural Northwest Florida school had complained many times that their pupils "did not seem interested in studying grammar." Samples of written work provided evidence that many pupils had pronoun usage and subject-verb agreement problems as far as Standard English grammar was concerned. When university students collected samples of oral responses, they found that over fifty per cent of the pupils in several grades revealed the same usage problems. A check of the adult population's oral expression substantiated the conclusion that there is a divergent dialect in the community that is very rigid and accepted. Consequently, teachers are now providing more good literature and music and less drill on Standard English usage. Pupils are becoming aware of multiple dialects; it is hoped that they will assume a second dialect, that of Standard English, in their academic work. The reason for acquiring Standard English usage has shifted from impersonal obedience to personal selection because of

recognized needs in taking standardized tests, writing letters related to college or jobs, and attaining a good job. This change in attitude has been reflected in reading improvement based on curiosity about regional differences in language as demonstrated by story characters and newspaper reports.

A fourth-grade white girl in a middle-class community came to the university for testing because both teacher and parents were unable to determine why she was not achieving in social studies and science. Spelling and word-recognition tests revealed adequate skills for fourth grade; oral reading of a paragraph appeared to be satisfactory until questions were asked that required knowledge of vocabulary and inferential thinking. A Slosson Intelligence Test score of 98 indicated average intellectual functioning. Various phonics and spelling tests confirmed that she had good decoding and encoding skills. An item-analysis of the Slosson Intelligence Test then revealed that vocabulary items had been missed regularly. It was decided to collect a series of oral responses to various stimuli. Almost invariably, her statements indicated that she lacked the terms for many objects in pictures, that she did not classify words in any meaningful manner, and that she spoke very short sentences. A rating of 3 was the highest attained in any category of the classification scheme.

Concerning the latter case, it might be conjectured that the classroom teacher could have acquired that information in the on-going classroom situation. And the teacher was the first to admit it! However, lack of awareness of a way to collect evidence to assess skills was a very real reason or overlooking this type of diagnosis. Moreover, the teacher honestly believed what other teachers believe to be true: When a pupil can pronounce all the words and can spell correctly, there is a tendency to assume that the pupil possess all the skills necessary for academic progress.

Over a period of nine months, remediation instruction was planned to provide many concrete sensory experiences with language attached to objects and ideas as efficiently as possible. Possibly the most difficult task was helping the pupil to understand that, if she pronounced a word correctly, she could not read with comprehension unless she knew the meaning of that word. It was necessary to balance success in concrete experiences with frustration in comprehension in a way that would prevent lowering her self-concept.

Current investigations are being directed toward collecting samples of verbal behavior during regular classroom activities. This approach seems to be successful, although the time required for a specific pupil may be longer than desired. It does seem, at this point, that classroom teachers can become better diagnostic teachers when they utilize the classification scheme proposed by Monroe and Rogers.

## *BIBLIOGRAPHY*

1.John, Vera P. " Children and Language Acquisition." *The New Elementary School*.Washington, D. C., ASCD (NEA) and DESP (NEA),1968, pp. 18-49

2. Kagan, J., et al. "Information Processing in the Child: Significance of Analytic and Reflective Attitudes." *Psychological Monographs*, 78(1):entire number,1964.

3. Monroe, Marion, and Rogers, Bernice. *Foundations for Reading: Informal Pre-reading Procedures*. Chicago, Illinois, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1964.

4. Shipman, Virginia C., and Hess, Robert D. "Conceptual Development in Preschool Children: Effects of Home and Family." *The New Elementary School*.Washington, D. C., ASCD (NEA) and DESP (NEA), 1968. pp. 22-37.

5. Sigel, Irving E., *et al*. "Styles of Categorization and Their Intellectual and PersonalityCorrelates." Paper presented at a meeting of the American Psychological Association, St.Louis, Missouri, September, 1963.

6. Smith, E. Brooks;Goodman, Kenneth S., and Meredith, Robert. *Language and Thinking in the Elementary School*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970.pp.48-64.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1968-1973, Vol. 8, no. 2 (1972), pg. 10.

# Computer Managed Instruction Brevard County

*JOE FITZGERALD*
Brevard County Schools • Rockledge, Florida

Brevard County has instituted a program of Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) to aid the classroom teacher in providing for the reading needs of individual students. The program, through a simple process, makes information concerning reading areas of strength and weakness readily available and easily obtainable. This information enables the teacher to identify areas of need for the year level, class, and individual student. Specific references to specific remediating materials are also provided through CMI.

The CMI program got its start in the summer of 1972 when a task force of classroom and special reading teachers was organized to develop a computerized program for the Scott Foresman **Open Highways 4** and **Ventures Reading Mastery Tests** which are used country-wide.

The task force analyzed each test, each question of each subtest, and the skill it purported to test. This was accomplished by assigning individuals and small groups to critically examine each question, decide the skill being tested, and determine references to supplementary Scott-Foresman reading material which could be used if remediation was found necessary. In addition, reference was made to skill correlated materials from other sources, commonly found in most schools.

Discussion and review of the skills involved in each question, materials found to be useful for problem areas, past experiences, etc., helped to pinpoint specific skills and provide meaningful remediating references. The information gathered was then put into data processing form for computerization.

Data processing personnel conducted meetings for inservice teachers, curriculum coordinators, and administrators, concerning the purposes, functions, and uses of the data supplied. Personnel from each school were designated as test coordinators and assigned the task of inservicing their faculties concerning the uses of CMI for their school. In addition, each school was visited by the supervisory reading person for that area, who further explained the uses of CMI.

During this time, experimental and dummy print-outs were run and reviewed. Adjustments were made and errors corrected. Preliminary print-outs, descriptions of the program, etc., were distributed during the pre-planning period and the early fall of 1972. Utilizing the mastery test results from the spring testing, teachers began using the CMI program.

A simple procedure has been set up:

1. Teachers request the pre-gridded answer sheets (from CC or directly from Data Processing)
2. They administer the appropriate mastery test
3. They forward competed answer sheets to Data Processing for scoring

Within a short period of time, the teacher receives the following reports from Data Processing:

1. **Rank Order Listing**. This report ranks students according to the total number of points scored and to percentile. At the same time, it denotes the maximum number of points possible for each subtest score (word and phrase meaning, sentence and paragraph meaning, main idea, relationships, critical reading, locating information, word analysis, dictionary skills), as well as the total number of points each student scored. Also denoted are any scores occurring at or below the 25th percentile.
2. **Missed Question Reference Report**. This report identifies by individual student each question missed, in each subtest area, and provides reference to specific correlated remediating materials, such as the Scott-Foresman duplicating masters or overhead visuals; in addition, it contains specific references to other non-Scott-Foresman materials commonly found in each school. (A missed Question References Abbreviation key is also provided to further identify the references on the Missed Question Reference Report.
3. **Frequency Distribution**. This report shows, for each question of each subtest, the number and percentage of students who made the correct response, made a wrong response, left it blank, or made a multiple response.
4. **Norms**. This report shows, for each subtest and for the total test, the mean, median, standard deviation, and quartile scores for each group.
5. **Cumulative Gummed Labels**. A gummed label, showing subtest scores, total score, and total percentile, is affixed to each student's reading folder.
6. **Workbook Attachments**. For each page in the **Open Highways 5** and **Vistas Workbooks**, a workbook attachment is provided, listing the students who scored at or below the 25th percentile on the subtest skills covered on that page.

To further aid the classroom teacher in the important task of reading instruction, a self-directed inservice activity in the understanding and effective utilization of test results, prescription planning, materials, equipment,

and evaluative tools is provided. Also provided is a one-hundred page correlated reading instruction guide to activities, materials, and equipment useful in remediating specific skill and subject deficiencies.

Teacher reaction to the CMI has been highly favorable and some valuable benefits, not originally anticipated, have resulted. Although the program was designed to be used by teachers of 4th and 5th year students, *Teachers of any year level* having students reading at the level of, or completing, the **Open Highways 4** or **Ventures** book *may utilize* the CMI program to advantage. For example: A junior high teacher has a number of students reading at this level or completing these books, and wants to know how best to provide for their needs within the scope of the Scott-Foresman reading program, together with related reading materials; the teacher, simply following the procedure outlines above, will receive a complete print-out for the students tested. Other advantages of the CMI program have been noted:

1. Fall placement and planning by 5th year teachers is greatly facilitated.
2. The classroom teacher is relieved of the time and effort involved in hand-scoring the tests. All scoring is done by computer.
3. The classroom teacher is relieved of the time and effort involved in transcribing the results of the test to the students' cumulative folders. Printed cumulative Gummed Labels are simply affixed to the folders.
4. Teacher planning for the individual student is greatly facilitated, and the students' strengths and weaknesses are shown on the Missed Question Reference Report.
5. A listing of skill related reading materials is provided, saving the teacher the time and effort required to look for such materials.
6. Students are easily grouped, according to needs shown on the Workbook Attachments.
7. The teacher can evaluate the instructional program by noting questions missed, types of errors, etc.

Presently, only the **Open Highways 4** and **Ventures Reading Mastery Test** have been programmed for this service; however, favorable reaction has already sparked discussion as to the possibilities of expanding the CMI program.

Brevard County Schools
1260 South Florida Avenue
Rockledge, Florida 32955

Reprinted from Florida Reading Quarterly, 1973-1979, Vol. X, no. 1 (1973), pg. 18.

# Critical Thinking Vis A Vis Critical Reading

*John Follman*
University of South Florida

Critical thinking has long been an important educational objective for at least two reasons. One reason has been that students should develop critical thinking ability as a skill to be used in everyday life. The other reason is that critical thinking ability has been seen as a desirable citizenship objective. Extensive bibliographies of critical thinking have been reported by Ennis (6), Follman (7), and Harcourt, Brace, and World (19).

Critical reading has also long been an important educational objective for the same reasons but with a specific emphasis on interpretation, evaluation, and application of printed material. Extensive bibliographies of critical reading have been reported by Dawson (2), Eller and Wolf (3), Gray (11), King and Ellinger (12), and Stauffer and Cramer (16).

Until recently the definitions of both constructs, critical thinking, and critical reading, have been characterized by ambiguity, confusion, imprecision, and uncertainty. This ambiguity and uncertainty proliferated because of the abundance of theoretical articles of differing definitions and the dearth of empirical articles of the definition of critical thinking and critical reading. In a recent correlational and factor analytic study of critical thinking tests, Follman (7) inferred from the critical thinking tests' interrelationships and factor structure that critical thinking is not one ability but a composite of different abilities particularly recognition of assumptions, judgements if conclusions follow from statements, and relevance of evidence.

Approximately the same time, Wolf, et al. (21) in a major study also defined critical reading as a composite of abilities including: semantics, logic, and authenticity in writing; and literary forms, components of literature, and literary devices. Preliminary analysis of the *Ohio State Critical Reading Test* developed in this study indicated that this test again represents not a general ability but a composite of specific abilities.

Critical thinking and critical reading have been linked theoretically by Gainsburg (9), and Wolf, et al. (21) among many others but there has been little empirical documentation of this hypothesized interrelationship. However, a correlation of .769 was found between the *Watson-Glaser Test of Critical Thinking* and the *Martin Reading Comprehension Test* described by Glaser (10) as a test for critical reading. The fact that 69% of the variance between these two tests is joint is empirical evidence for the theoretical linkage between critical thinking and critical reading. It is assumed until empirical evidence indicates otherwise that critical thinking and critical reading overlap substantially.

In an analysis of three critical thinking tests Follman, et al. (8) found *A Test of Critical Thinking Form G* (17) superior to two other critical thinking measures. Total test reliability estimates have been moderately strong to strong. It is therefore submitted that Form G total and subtest scores are reliable measures of critical thinking for college, high school, and junior high level students. Other useful critical thinking tests include: the *Cornell Critical Thinking Test Form X* (4) for junior high level students, and *Form Z* (5) for university undergraduate and graduate students; and the *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal* (18) for junior high through university level students.

The *Ohio State Critical Reading Test* developed in the Wolf, et al. (21) study for use in grades 1 through 6 appears from the preliminary evidence to have reliabilities satisfactory for use on the elementary level, when it becomes available. Other critical reading tests include: the *Intermediate Reading Test-Science* (13) and the *Intermediate Reading Test-Social Studies* (15) for fifth grade level students; and the *Reading Comprehension Test* (14) for high school and college level students.

It is suggested that there is adequate empirical and theoretical justification for the hypothesized substantial overlap between critical thinking and critical reading; for the definition of critical thinking as a composite of abilities, particularly recognition of assumptions, judgements if conclusions follow, and relevance; that there are reliable and/or valid measures of critical thinking and critical reading; and that the enhancement of critical thinking and/or critical reading is a viable educational objective.

Reviews of the literature of approaches to enhance critical thinking have been described by Burton (1), and Werkmeister (20). Descriptions of approaches to the enhancement of critical reading include comprehensive review by Gray (11), an annotated bibliography by King and Ellinger (12), and a detailed description by Wolf, et al. (21).

Typical approaches to the enhancement of critical thinking and/or critical reading have included games, newspaper and magazine analyses, preparation of advertisements, propaganda analysis, etc. In addition, ability in critical thinking and/or critical reading has been examined as an objective of many traditional academic content areas including civics, history, language arts, logic, mathematics, science, social studies, among others.

In conclusion it is apparent that there is considerable overlap between critical thinking and critical reading. It is also apparent that skill in critical thinking and/or critical reading is an objective that can and should be implemented in many content areas. Critical thinking and/or critical reading may be operationally defined as total test score on any of several reliable measures, however, it is suggested that a more rigorous approach would be to define critical thinking and/or critical reading as a subtest skill of the kind identified, particularly recognition of assumptions, judgements if conclusions allow, and relevance of evidence. Having selected one or more subtests as measures of the critical thinking and/or critical reading skill(s) desired a teacher could then attempt to enhance the skill in some way.

## *REFERENCES*

1. Burton, W.H., Kimball, R. B., and Wing, R. L. *Education for Effective Thinking*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960.
2. Dawson, M. A. *Developing Comprehension/ Including Critical Reading*. International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 1968.
3. Eller, W., and Wolf, J. B. “Developing Critical Reading Abilities,” *Journal of Reading*, 10, 1966, 192-198.
4. Ennis, R. H., and Millman, J. *Information about the Cornell Critical Thinking Test Form X*. Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1961.
5. Ennis, R. H. *Information about Cornell Critical Thinking Test Form Z*. Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1961.
6. Ennis, R. H. “A Concept of Critical Thinking,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 32, 1962, 81-111.
7. Follman, J. C. “A Factor Analytic Study of Three Critical Thinking Tests, One English Test, and One Logical Reasoning Test.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University,January, 1969.
8. Follman, J. C., Burg, E., and Miller, W. “Statistical Analysis of Three Critical Thinking Tests.” Paper presented at National Conference on Measurement Meeting, February 6, 1969, Los Angeles, California.
9. Gainsburg, J. C. “Critical Reading is Creative Reading and Needs Creative Teaching, *The Reading Teacher*, 6, 1961, 185-192.
10. Glaser, E. M. “An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking,” *Teachers College Contributions to Education*, No. 943. New York Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941.
11. Gray, M. M. “Research and Elementary School Critical Reading Instruction,” *The Reading Teacher*, 22, 1969, 453-459.
12. King, M. L., and Ellinger, B. D. “An Annotated Bibliography of Critical Reading Articles,” *Elementary English*, 44, 1967, 365-377.
13. Maney, E. S.” Literal and Critical Reading in Science,” *Journal of Experimental Education*, 27, 1958, 57-64.
14. Martin, M. E. *The Construction of a Diagnostic Reading Test for Senior High School Students and College Freshmen*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939.
15. Sochor, E. E. “Literal and Critical Reading in Social Studies,” *Journal of Experimental Education*, 27, 1958, 49-56.
16. Stauffer, R. G., and Cramer, R. *Teaching Critical Reading at the Primary Level*. International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 1968.
17. *Test of Critical Thinking Form G, Instructors Manual*. American Council on Education, 1951.
18. *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal References*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., Test Department, 1964.
19. *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal References*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., Test Department, 1964.
20. Werkmeister, W. H. *An Introduction to Critical Thinking*. (3rd Edition) Lincoln, Nebraska: Johnsen Publishing Company, 1963.
21. Wolf, W., Huck, C.S., King, M. >, Ellinger, B. D., Gansneder, B. M., and MacDougall, J. J. Critical Reading Ability of Elementary School Children. Ohio State University. Final Report Project No. 5-1040, Contract No. OE-4-10-187, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, June, 1967.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1969, Vol. V, no. 3, pg. 22.

# Encounters Among the Language Arts

*Lee Mountain**
Reading Center
Graduate School of Education
Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, N. J

Imagine that you are observing an encounter group in action. The aim of this encounter group is to form meaningful relationships among its members. But its members are not human beings. They are personifications of the language arts areas. They are creatures that represent punctuation, phonics, spelling, grammar, literature and all the other areas of learning connected with English Language Arts.

Try to imagine the action at that encounter group. PHONICS reaches out to SPELLING and finds that the attraction is mutual. REMEDIAL READING confronts LITERATURE and they come to blows. CREATIVE WRITING is frustrated by PUNCTUATION, but PUNCTUATION forms a meaningful relationship with INTONATION.

If you can imagine these encounters, you can begin to get a crystal-ball vision of what will be happening in the English Language Arts in the 1970's. We are not going to reach the point where all the Language Arts subjects join hands and start on a "Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice" relationship. But we are going to reach the point where some of the encounters result in meaningful joinings of English Language Arts subjects.

The one element that will do the most to promote these joinings in the 1970's is linguistics. Wide use of linguistics as "the tie that binds" the English Language Arts together started in the 1960's. It may be the force that dominates our area in the 1970's because we can already see the benefits of some of the encounters that linguistics has brought about.

These benefits became apparent to me while I was working with a group of linguistically-oriented teachers. We tried to find out which encounters really worked in the classroom. We experimented with many different joinings of English Language Arts subjects. Some were effective. Some were not. Eventually we discovered that two areas had exceptionally good potential for forming meaningful relationships with all the other areas. Those two areas with the best potential were (1) speaking-listening skills and (2) transformational grammar. So, in the lessons we prepared for a kindergarten through sixth-grade linguistics program, we tried to use speaking-listening skills as the roots of the English Language Arts tree and transformational grammar as the trunk of the tree. With this plan all the branches seemed to fall into place.

Most linguists are in agreement about the primacy of the speaking-listening skills. They would like to see the teaching of all other English Language Arts areas rooted in speaking and listening. Whether you are teaching syllabication or Shakespeare, a linguist would want you to relate your teaching to the oral aspect of our language.

Many linguists also agree that transformational grammar is the grammar most likely to gain ascendancy in the 1970's since it is truly "computer age" grammar. With basic sentences, morphemic strings, and formulas for transforms, transformational grammar provides the type of system through which language [*sic*] might be fed into a computer.

Hence, most linguists would give their blessings to the encounters I'm going to describe now. In these encounters either transformational grammar or speaking-listening skills are brought together with another English Language Arts area. The classroom lessons that developed from these encounters demonstrate what may be happening in the classrooms of the 1970's.

## *Encounters with Speaking-Listening Skills*

Punctuation is often taught in isolation. It is presented from the punctuation chapter of an intermediate-grade textbook or workbook. A few basic punctuation skills are taught in the primary grades but they get very little exercise, since many educators assume that the composition abilities of primary pupils are very limited. Perhaps punctuation skills could be taught meaningfully in the primary grades if they were related to speaking-listening skills.

A linguistically-oriented first grade teacher decided to arrange some encounters between oral work and punctuation. She showed her pupils some connections between signals they could hear (pauses and changes of pitch) and signals they could see (punctuation marks).

Let's follow the steps in her teaching of just one piece of punctuation—the (???) of direct address. This teacher started by having her pupils explain the difference in meaning between such spoken sentences

1 *Dr. Lee Mountain teaches in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University and is the senior author of the NEW DIMENSIONS IN LANGUAGE SERIES (English Language Arts Worktexts for elementary grades).

as *Catch, Mother* and *Catch Mother*. Then she taught the oral reading skill of pausing for the comma (???) direct address. The second grade teacher followed up by teaching this class to insert the comma of direct address in original sentences.

By following a similar procedure with the period, the question mark and punctuation marks, these primary-grade teachers enabled many of their pupils to punctuate their compositions with a degree of skill not usually achieved until the intermediate grades.

Joining primary punctuation with speaking-listening skills may come to be an accepted practice in the 1970's. Of course, this encounter does not remain meaningful at advanced levels since there is not a one-to-one relationship between pauses in speech and marks of punctuation. However, the encounter does enable primary pupils to progress farther faster in punctuation than they could if punctuation were taught in isolation.

Consider spelling. In many textbooks spelling is related only to composition. But perhaps the presentation of spelling words could be improved by arranging encounters between spelling and some speaking-listening skills.

One teacher who was dealing with disadvantaged pupils found that they could not follow her explanation of the spelling lesson that involved changing final letters to make new words—going from *cat* to *can* to *cap*, for example. Somehow, they just hadn't grasped the concept of final sounds.

She was able to help those students when she arranged an encounter between her spelling lesson and an extremely elementary phonics lesson, thereby rooting her presentation in the speaking-listening skills.

She showed her pupils a ribbon bow and said, "What is this?"

A little girl volunteered, "A bow."

Then the teacher held up a toy boat. She told her pupils, "Say the word *bow* and add a final sound. If you add the right final sound, you'll make the word for this toy."

At once a boy said, "Boat. Bow . . . boat."

She went through the same procedure to lead her group from *bow* to *bowl* to *bone* orally. She reinforced the teaching by moving orally from car to cart and then to *card*.

By then, the light seemed to have dawned for quite a few of her pupils. The concept of changing the final sound made sense orally. And when they returned to the spelling lesson, it made sense in writing, too.

## *Encounters with Transformational Grammar*

Grammar has undergone cycles of criticism as a subject unrelated to communication skills. Some of the criticism was just since traditional grammar was often taught as a subject unto itself. Its most meaningful joining was with Latin. Now, however, with new transformation grammar, we can develop some intensely interesting combinations.

One teacher tried relating the study of transformational grammar to computer programming and succeeded so well that her class tried to build a machine that could generate sentences for a weather report.

Another transformational grammar teacher told her pupils that they knew more about their language than they were conscious of knowing. Because of their built-in knowledge of the way English sentences are made, it was usually possible for them to come up with just the sentence they need at the very moment they wanted it. But suppose they had to explain the process to a visitor from outer space. Their attempts to explain the sentence-making process, orally and in writing, enabled them to improve all their communications skills while deepening their understanding of how our language works.

Still another teacher joined transformational grammar with reading comprehension. This encounter involved "cracking open" long difficult sentences to find their meaningful parts and then reassembling the parts for easy comprehension.

These examples of effective encounters among the English Language Arts indicate directions that may be profitable to follow in the 1970's.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1971, Vol. VII, no. 3, pg. 10.

# It Takes *Pep* To Teach Reading!

By Inez W. Tanner

At least a third of all pupils in a given grade, states Arthur Heilman (1), are reading below the arbitrary grade level standard which they are expected to achieve because of physical handicaps, intellectual capacity, educational factors, emotional trouble, and home environment.

It should be obvious that teachers are limited in what they can do to remedy a number of these causes of reading retardation, but they can assume the responsibility for improving the educational factors. Teachers can correct most of the educational factors simply by putting *P E P – Preparation, Enthusiasm, and Practice*—into the teaching of reading.

The teacher's first step in *Preparation* is the vital one of learning to use and interpret a number of diagnostic tools to find the present reading status and needs of her pupils. Correct diagnosis can be the key to success. Since standardized achievement tests are considered diagnostic only at a general level, it is suggested that more refined diagnostic tests as well as informal reading inventories, such as those developed by Sheldon (2), Betts (3), and Spache (4), be used. The importance of teacher observation and judgment should also be considered.

The second step in *Preparation* is to secure a variety of fresh and appropriate materials, keeping in mind that many of the slower readers have become the best listeners in the class because of their dependence on listening skills. Obtain several grade levels of three or four basal reading series together with the enrichment materials, such as library books, records, films, filmstrips, and poetry, which are listed after each story in the series. A number of games and motivators, as well as materials of high interest with easy or moderate vocabulary, such as those suggested by Heilman[1] should also be secured. Current materials might include some of the phonetic and linguistic programs now available.

The teacher's third step is the preparation of lesson plans. These plans should be flexible and include time for group and individual instruction in concept development, word analysis, comprehension and study skills, silent and oral reading, and enrichment experiences. In teaching these reading skills, the successful teacher might use a basal reader approach, an individualized approach featuring "self-selection" of materials, a strictly phonic system, a language-experience approach, or a combination of these, fitting the methods to the needs of the group and the needs of individual children.

Let us now discuss the *E* in *P E P*, which stands for Enthusiasm. Aubrey Haan (5), tells us, "What the teacher is and feels is in large measure the curriculum the child experiences," He goes on to say that the teacher's aspiration for individual children is felt by them. If the teacher is enthusiastic the children feel it; they feel it by the way the teacher speaks and laughs and smiles; they feel it by the eagerness and warmth, the fun and excitement the teacher puts into the lessons.

Music, poetry, pantomime, creative writing, and topics of interest from the content areas are all used by the enthusiastic teacher to make learning to read more like play than work.

The most reluctant readers will usually respond to poetry, especially humorous poems. For example, a very slow sixth grade class was able with little assistance to turn William Jay Smith's poem, "Parrot" (6) into a delightful choral reading featuring solo parts for a sailor and a parrot, with other lines designated for the entire group. How rewarding it was to have pupil after pupil (mainly boys) volunteer to take the parrot's part and manage the shrill, rasping, bird-like voice with pleasure and reasonable. M ease.

A recording called "Miss Polly Has A Dolly" (7) was used recently by the writer to enrich as tory in the first grade. Interestingly enough, the boys sang as loudly and rocked the make-believe dolls in their arms just as vigorously as did the girls in the class. Even the slowest readers learned to read most of the words in the song, and when asked what the word "bill" meant in reference to the doctor as

'He wrote on a paper for a pill, pill, pill,
I'll be back in the morning with my bill, bill, bill," one young fellow quickly stammered, "It's . . . it's an unhappy letter about money that somebody wants."

A second grade boy was inspired to read for the first time during a science class after he had proudly measured the distance his grasshopper could jump and his enthusiastic teacher had quickly written on the chalkboard, "Jim's grasshopper can jump five feet." Looking up from the grasshopper to the teacher to the sentence, he read in a surprised voice the exact words the teacher had written. Jim had grasped at last the idea that "reading is just talk written down." He had caught the teacher's enthusiasm; he had felt the teacher's aspiration for him and responded to it by reading.

The last *P* in *P E P* stands for Practice, a word that means to do, to perform, or carry on often or habitually. Most skills are learned by repeated use and

the skills of teaching reading are no exception. It takes practice to diagnose well, but diagnosis is continuous so opportunities for acquiring this proficiency through practice will go on and on, as will the opportunities for gaining proficiency in the choice of ever-changing methods and materials used in the teaching of reading.

## REFERENCES

1. Heilman, Arthur W. *Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, Inc., 1961.
2. Sheldon, William D. *The Manuals of The Sheldon Basic Reading Series*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1963.
3. Betts, Emmett A. *Handbook on Corrective Reading for the American Adventure Series*. Chicago: Wheeler, 1956.
4. Spache, George D. *Diagnostic Reading Scales*. Monterey: California Test Bureau, 1963.
5. Haan, Aubrey. *Elementary School Curriculum: Theory and Research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1961.
6. Sheldon, William D., Lyons, Nellie, and Rouault, Polly. *The Reading of Poetry*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1963
7. Sur, William, McCall, Adeline., et al. *This is Music, Grade 1*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1962.

Reprinted from: *Florida Reading Quarterly,* 1964-1968, vol. II, no. 2 (1966), pg. 26.

# Intention and Context: Missing Elements in Portfolio Assessment?

*Carolyn J. Eichenberger*
Saint Louis University, Saint Louis, Missouri

Advocates of portfolio assessment (Farr & Tone, 1994; Harp, 1991; Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991) argue that by examining artifacts in portfolios teachers can learn a great deal about children's progress as readers and writers. These advocates appear to treat artifacts as proof of learning. However, artifacts are not created in a vacuum, so the examination and assessment of artifacts should not occur in a vacuum. Students, as well as teachers and parents, are stakeholders in assessment and therefore should have an investment in assessment. Tierney et al. (1991) contend that "…portfolios have the potential to contribute to everybody's understanding of the students' ongoing learning in ways which are positive and grounded in reality" (pp. 51-52).

Examining artifacts in portfolios can, indeed, tell us some things about children's progress in developing literacy. However, when the artifact is examined without regard for the person who produced it, then assessment stands outside what is assessed. First, I offer a story about an artifact that was produced as a result of an instance of language use in which I was a participant to illustrate the kinds of knowledge one can glean about literacy development from examining artifacts. Then, I offer a second language story, resulting from the first, to illustrate what can't be learned from simply examining pieces of work produced by children without regard for the children or their thought processes.

## *LANGUAGE STORY ONE*

Stephanie, age six and in first grade, sat with me on the sofa at her grandmother's house sharing a few moments before her bedtime. Stephanie's dad was taking her to the Cincinnati Reds baseball game the following day. She had never been to a professional baseball game, so, ever the teacher, I was trying to talk about what she might expect to happen. During the conversation, I teasingly told her she had to practice something.

Stephanie: Practice what?

Carolyn: Like this: "Daddy, buy me peanuts. Daddy, but me a hot dog." There are lots of neat things to eat at the ballpark.

Stephanie: Wait! Wait! Wait! (At this point Stephanie ran to get paper and a pen). Okay. Now, tell me again what there is to eat. (She wrote "To eat torrmomr" and then scribble out "torrmomr.") I know it's tomorrow. I don't need that word there. Hot dog. (She wrote "hot dog.")

Carolyn: And peanuts. (She wrote "peanuts.") And push ups. (She wrote "pu," stopped, and looked at the program on the television.)

Stephanie: Pu-ush. (She wrote "ush up.") I want cookies, too. (She wrote "cookeis.") I'll get some peanuts in a can.

Carolyn: At the ballpark peanuts come in bags.

Stephanie: Oh. I have to write that so I don't forget. (She added "in a bag" after "peanuts.") I don't really like hot dogs. (She scribbled out "hot dogs.")

Carolyn: And ask your daddy to buy me a Reds' jacket. (She wrote down "Reds cote.")

Carolyn: Well, it's not really a coat, it's a jacket. (She scribbled out "cote" and wrote "jackit.")

Stephanie: I have to find the total. (She drew a line under "cookeis" and wrote

"Total 1.95" and drew another line.) Will I remember to ask for these? (She wrote "yes No," drew a circle under each word, and filled in the circle under "yes.") I have to remember to say, "Please and thank you." (She wrote "Please thank you" at the top of the paper.) Yes, I will remember. (She wrote "Yes" above "Please thank you." Then she folded the paper and wrote "don't tuch Plese" and added a smiley face.) (See Figure 1.)

## *WHAT I KNEW FROM STEPHANIE'S LIST*

As Stephanie's aunt and a teacher, I am often asked by her parents and her grandmother to give my opinion of Stephanie's growth as a literacy learner. So, during the production of the list, I was thinking about what I knew about Stephanie as a result of watching this instance of language use. The following represents some of my thinking concerning what I could reasonably assume about Stephanie's abilities form this one instance.

Stephanie knows what a list is supposed to look like.

She knows that things cost money, that the costs can be totaled, and that decimals are involved in writing amounts of money.

She has a good sense of the letters that are in words from looking at them, although she does not always remember them in the correct order.

She has had an instructional history with standardized

test formats, evidenced by her filling in the bubble under "yes."

She is aware of long vowel markers, though she sometimes uses them inappropriately.

She is aware of the social requirement for politeness.

She is not aware of variant spellings for the short u sound heard in "touch."

She has not mastered the plural ending "ies."

She needs more control over the motor aspect of writing.

Upon reflecting at that point, I felt she was developing at least "on schedule" as a reader and writer, a worry her grandmother and I shared because Stephanie was placed in first grade at her school even though she was chronologically eligible for kindergarten placement. Her use of invented spellings, her willingness to edit her own work, and her choice of form were all suitable for her age and for the task.

## *LANGUAGE STORY TWO*

However, a much different picture of Stephanie was soon to emerge. I often collect samples of children's writing to show students in my reading education courses, so I asked Stephanie if I could keep her work—to hang on my refrigerator. She looked at me in silence for several seconds. Hen, without a word, she located another piece of paper and began the list anew.

With no assistance from anyone, she reproduced the list with minor variations. To my astonishment, she spelled every word correctly. Her handwriting showed more control. She added "drink" to the list and included "hot dog." When she finished she handed the paper to me with the comment, "Here, Aunt Carolyn. This one can be for you. The other one was just for me." (See Figure 2.)

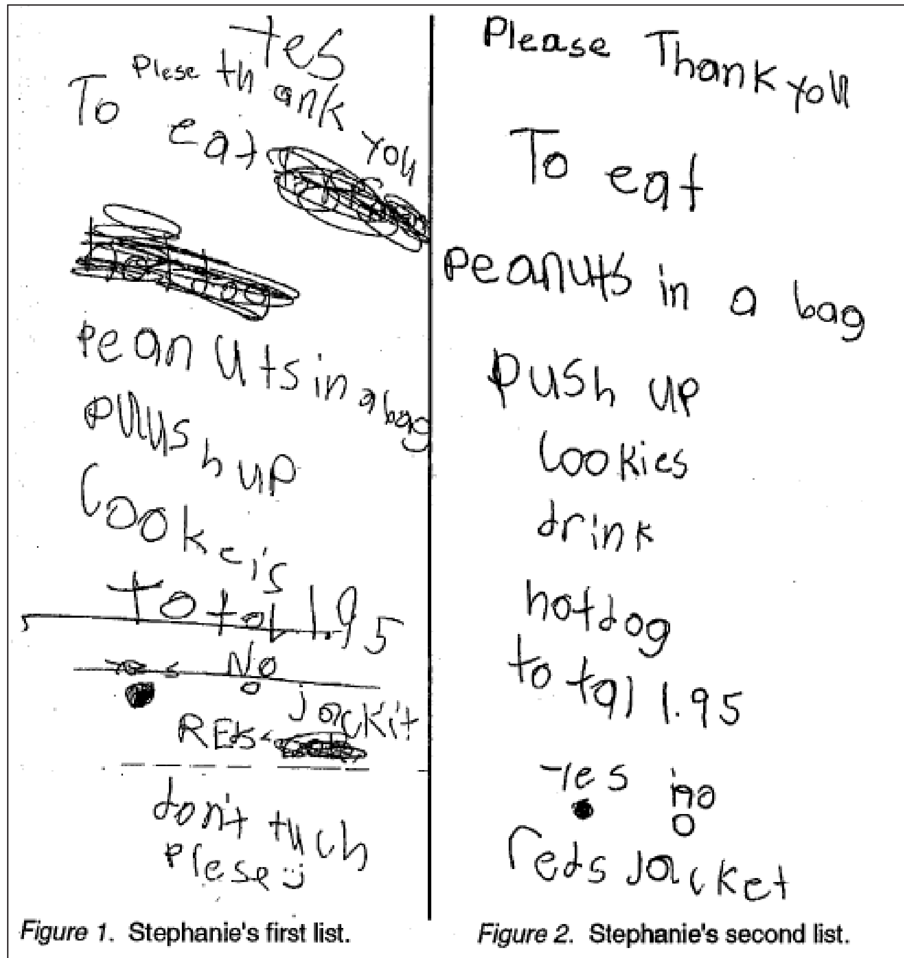



*Figure 1.* Stephanie's first list. *Figure 2.* Stephanie's second list.

## *WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY ACTIONS*

I changed my stance at this point, from examining what Stephanie knew and was able to do, to examining what I learned from these two incidents. What I had failed to take into account in my evaluation of Stephanie's abilities was that, in the first instance, the paper made writing a public act; my request had changed Stephanie's intentions and the context. Writing was now to be shared with an audience. Therefore, it had to look neat and words had to be spelled correctly. The first instance of writing was private, and the purpose was to serve as Stephanie's memory job. If Stephanie could read what she had written, then it was good enough.

Reflecting about my observations of these two instances of Stephanie's language use has left me wondering about teachers' assessment of their students' abilities based on portfolio items. How often are children's abilities misjudged because we fail to take into account children's intentions and the contexts in which work is produced? An artifact reflects little about the author's intention. An artifact reflects little about the context in which the author made decisions or the thought processes involved in those decisions. Although I was involved in the production of the first artifact, I still underestimated Stephanie's abilities because I failed to take her intentions into account. We need extensive and intensive conversation with ours students to inform our judgments. An artifact can't tell the whole story—only the learner can.

Examining and assessing a student's artifacts without having a conversation with the student privileges the artifact over the person. When the artifact and the person are connected via a conversation that reveals the context in which the item was produced, the intention of the author, and the strategies and thinking processes employed, then the person rather than the product is privileged. Perhaps some of us, from time to time, have failed to appreciate or consider the learner's stance. In our zealous search for "authentic evidence" to support our judgments of language growth, we examine the physical evidence that the artifact provides without examining the personal processes that caused the artifact to be created. To be invested in assessment, teachers, parents, and students must collaboratively take into account the processes that resulted in the creation of artifacts that are examined. Only then is the full potential of the individual revealed.

## REFERENCES

Farr, R. & Tone, B. (1994). *Portfolio and performance assessment: Helping students evaluate their progresses as readers and writers*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Harp, B. (1991). The whole language movement. In B. Harp (Ed.), *Assessment and evaluation in whole language programs* (pp. 1-17). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Tierney, R. J., Carter, M. A., & Desai, L. E. (1991) *Portfolio assessment in the reading-writing classroom*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1973-1979, Vol. X, no. 1 (1973), pg. 18.

# Parent Involvement – It Works!

*Marston B. Lewis*
Polk County Public Schools
*Yvonne B. Marrow*
Babson Park Elementary School

In today's fast-paced every moving-society, it has become increasingly difficult for parents and teachers to communicate concerning the student. More and more primary aged children are from homes where both parents work; thus, it is nearly impossible for conferences to be held during the teacher's working hours. Many times when parents are able to "catch" the teacher for a minute at a PTA meeting or at the supermarket and want information on how best they can help their child, teacher's responses are far too general in nature. "Read to him" is a good suggestion, but is not specific enough. Home-school activities can be a vehicle for providing opportunities for reinforcing skills and concepts taught at school as well as for fostering positive relations between home and school.

With the passage by the Florida Legislature in 1979 of the Primary Education Program (PREP) where parent involvement was mandated, the question becomes not **should** parents be involved in the educational process, but **how** can teachers involve them.

The basic steps for planning and implementing a parent involvement program in a school, grade, or an individual classroom are:

1. Provide a parent handbook.
2. Hold a parent workshop.
3. Construct activity calendars.

You will need to determine the type of format wanted for the workshop. While a workshop with one person leading and instructing the whole group is adequate, one with rotating centers is much more exciting! This way all grade level teachers can be involved and share responsibility and parents can experience center rotation as used in many classrooms.

Four suggested centers for the workshop:

1. A center with an appropriate filmstrip on parent involvement such as *Who Me? Teach Reading?*

**Figure 1**
**Second Grade Home Activity Calendar**
**December 2**
**Reading/Language Arts**

**MON** Using the all purpose game board for December, play with your child's vocabulary words. Put them on cards, one player draws a card, must say word and tell what it means or use it in a sentence. Throw dice and move around the board.

**TUES** Using the following blends, have your child think of Christmas words or toys that begin with each: bl, tr, gl, gr, fl, fr, cl, st, pl, br, dr. Write them down and save the list for tomorrow night. See also page 23 in Parent Handbook for more blends.

**WED** Have your child put Tuesday's words in alphabetical order. We have just started on second letter alphabetizing, so it may be a problem at this time. If so, just write any words that begin the same on the same line, alphabetizing by only the first letter.

**THURS** Using the home reading book, read to each other. After two pages each, stop and ask each other a question about what was read. Work on reading with expression and observing periods and question marks.

**FRI** Have child cut out 3 toy pictures from a newspaper or magazine and paste at the top of a piece of paper. Have child write a "make-believe" story about these toys and read it to you. Give help with spelling if requested.

Cut and return:

-----------------------------------------------

I have completed the home activities with my child on:

Mon. ______ Tues. ______ Wed. ______
Thurs. __________ Fri. ______
Child's Name ______________
Parent's Signature ______________

(Kenneth L. Clouse, Instructional Materials, Felton, Ca.).

2. A center with a "walk" through the parent handbook, (This could be a taped presentation).
3. A display of classroom materials (including basal series used), parent resource materials, and the refreshments can form another center.
4. An additional center can include a demonstration of games and their uses and (if time allows) be a "make and take" activity.

After parents have had the opportunity to rotate through the centers, the workshop leader should then explain the parents' role in reviewing and reinforcing at home what has been taught at school. This can be carried out through the use of weekly calendars constructed by the classroom teacher using the previous week's skills and concepts. Calendar activities need to be planned for easy implementation in the home. Design the activities to be completed in 15-30 minutes depending on the grade level and for 5-7 days a week. Calendars may include activities using weekly spelling words, vocabulary words, and materials found in the parent handbook and library books. Once a format has been decided upon, prepare a form for the calendars so activities simply have to be filled in each week. See the sample in Figure 1.

At additional workshop activities, parents can complete questionnaires on how much they are already doing to help their children. Some examples are: "Questionnaire for Parents: How Much Reading is Happening in Your Home?" ("Reading is a Family Affair" Florida Right to Read) and "A Report Card for Parents" by Jean Williams, Frenso Unified School District.

As a final and possibly the most important activity of the workshop, encourage parents to sign a contract promising to participate in the program by completing activities in the calendars.

While calendars of home activities are not a cure-all for the educational problems teachers encounter, it is felt that they can be a step in the right direction. Efforts need to be made to be sure the home and school are both working toward the same goals. If only one child shows a positive benefit, the program will have been worth all the effort.

There is much recent evidence which shows that children's academic achievement can be linked directly to parent involvement in the educational process. During the last two decades, research and educational programs have provided evidence that differences in children's academic achievements could be linked directly to the value placed on education by their parents. Specifically, significant increases in achievement have resulted when parents participated in the educational process by tutoring their children, using activities that reinforced classroom instruction. As parents become involved and begin to understand what really goes on in the education of their children, they are usually more willing to support the teachers' and the schools' efforts.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1984-1986, Vol. 21, no. 4 (1985), pg. 18.

# Psychological Aspects of Teacher-Pupil Relationship

*Robert M. Allen*
Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics
University of Miami

As a psychologist, I am a student of human behavior. The reading teacher's role, unlike mine, is to do battle with the everyday academic difficulties of children. As a psychologist concerned with issues of differential diagnosis in the broad area of mental retardation, I have learned that we must speak of this condition not as a single entity but as complex phenomena subsumed under a single inadequate rubric. We have also discovered rather painfully that we must talk about different kinds of learnings rather than of learning. Furthermore, we no longer can point to intelligence but to intelligences. In other words, human processes are multidimensional rather than single entities. This is my rationale for the theme that there cannot be a meaningful discussion of the psychological aspects of *the* teacher-pupil relationship. Consistency demands that I address the topic in terms of the psychological aspects of teacher-pupil relationships.

How may we talk about teacher-pupil relationships in a meaningful manner? In the assessment of intellectual ability and efficiency we have learned that the processes we call intelligence change as the infant matures to childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Whereas the early intellectual assessment techniques were concerned with neurological functions, test items, as in the Revised Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, Form L-M, in the Gesell Development Scale, and in the Cattel Infant Intelligence Scale, gradually move from sensory-motor performance to those tasks involving verbal concepts at varying levels of abstraction. So it is with relationships that the pupil has in all aspects of his phenomenological field or life space. Individuals within social groups need to identify patterns of authority and esteem. This occurs in the family and in the Cub Scout or Brownie group; why not in the school? Recognize, if you will, that in each situation rights and privileges, responsibilities and obligations become defined as the child learns his roles in relation to persons above and below him in the pecking order. The school is one situation which has a built-in line of authority flowing downward from the teacher to the pupil. While this may be a general condition of this particular type of interpersonal relationship, its specifics must not be hard and fast.

From the point of view of child development teacher-pupil relationships will necessitate change. From kindergarten through the sixth grade, usually five to 12 years of age the developmental changes require a continuous re-orientation in teachers' attitudes regarding expectancy for social conformity and tolerance for misbehavior. Moreover, the zeitgeist of rebelliousness is moving downward in chronological age and school grade.

Turning from the grade-age relationship, the teacher is also faced with differences as they pertain to "boy" and "girl."

Boys do start school with more adjustment problems than girls but the latter catch up and surpass the boys as approximately seventh grade. But I am getting ahead of my intended sequence of presentation. I would prefer to relate the concept of teacher-pupil relationships to the developmental concepts of Piaget whose theory is based on two cornerstones useful for understanding the necessary modifications in teacher-pupil relationships. According to Maier2 the first of these is encompassed in biological growth which "points to all mental processes as continuations of inborn motor process." Secondly, the development of the human organism may be ascribed to the "process of experience—the original of all *acquired* characteristics—which enable the individual to have his existence apart from the others in his phenomenological field. Therefore physical and psychological maturation are the two basic building blocks in the development of the human organism. This physical and psychological parallelism influences the changing nature of teacher-pupil relationships.

Utilizing information regarding the etiology of human behavior and bearing in mind that the biological and the experiential events are but two sides of the single arganism, we may begin to build a word picture of the psychological aspects of the teacher-pupil relationships. There emerges an actual Hollywood-type script replete with fast moving, ever-changing scenes as the two actors, the teacher and the pupil, flit across the screen.

We start with Act I, the sensory-motor phase, from birth to two years of age, which involves primarily sensory and motor experiences.

A teacher-pupil relation as we conceive of it does not exist; the parent stands in as the teacher surrogate. Beyond the reflexive stage, the infant's developing behavior schema depend on repetition so that gradually cognitive behavioral units emerge. Slowly the infant gives up his "autistic, non-interpersonal, self-initiating and perpetuating behavior" to acknowledge the world around him.

The beginning of what later proves to be an interpersonal relationship emeges early in the third substage or third scene of Act I during which three processes of human behavior emerge—"imitation, play

and effect." These are the three primary building blocks for future teacher-pupil relationships. It is during this third substage in development that the ego-centered child begins to recognize the autonomy of others in his environment. Furthermore, at the end of the second year of life "identification," as a psychological process, becomes evident. Through this process the young child is able to imitate a model, the first teacher, usually the mother. This the first inkling of a teacher-pupil relationship which may different from our notion of this interpersonal relationship, but nevertheless the first of its kind in the long chain of such social interactions that populate the lives of teachers and pupils.

The second act of life as conceived by Piaget, is the Preconceptual Phase which occupies center stage in the drama of development from years two to four. The major characteristics of this phase are the young child's avidity for investigation and play. Both of these important activities require *I-Thou* rather than *I-It* relationships. This, in turn, assumes the presence and influence of the *other-person* sharing the youngster's phenomenological field.

The interpersonal relationships of this developmental phase do not require the presence of a formal, *state-department-of education-certified* teacher, but the teacher is there in the forms of parents, siblings, and peers. The person-to-person relationships of this age are spontaneous models essential for growth in intellectual efficiency, role playing, and for the beginnings of a self-concept, to mention just a few of the antecedents of later life. These experiences enable the child to evaluate his environment, to give up more of his subjectivity, and to adapt himself to social living.

The teacher-pupil relationship of this period also serves as a vehicle for identification. The caring adult, the teacher in this relationship, helps inculate obedience and respect despite the three-year old's negativism. It is essential that the many teachers in the young child's social and familial surround furnish him with healthy, constructive, and stable identification material. As this stage ends, we enter Act III-the Phase of Intuitive Thought—which takes our young actor from the fourth to the seventh year of life. It is during this developmental phase that the scenario approaches what we generally think of as a teacher-pupil relationship.

Piaget characterizes this life-period as one in which social interest widens and in which "repeated contact with others necessarily reduces egocentricity and increases social participation." Sensory-motor experience is *subservient* to the developing reasoning process, i.e., the motor *acting-out* gives way to speech as the major modality for thought expression. While behavior shaping has been an on-going process, the opportunities for increasing the frequency and variety of learning experiences widen within the context of personal interactions.

For the child to accommodate to, and assimilate from, the happenings in his life space he must go more and more beyond himself, reduce his egocentricity, and increase his tolerance for the viewpoints of others. The latter may be learned only from the human models with whom he has daily intercourse. Play becomes more social rules take on meaning, and obedience to adults becomes more important. Towards the end of this phase the child enters school. A teacher-pupil relationship becomes a more tangible reality and the umber of significant adults has increased by at least one—the first grade teacher.

What are the more significant facets of this emerging new relationship? The six-year old, the first grader, needs help in turning from the single authority of the parent to the multiple authorities of the teacher, the policeman or woman directing traffic at the school crossing, the principal (usually even more august than the teacher), and the class monitor. These are in addition to the parents, siblings, and peer group. The teacher should understand how difficult it is for the child to adapt to the plethora of stimuli emanating from so many interpersonal relationships. The teacher also needs to appreciate that the child accepts adult authority in thought even though in action he seems to be rebellious. The child enters teacher-pupil relationships with a posture of compliance. Even where non-compliance is the behavior of the moment, the teacher should bear in mind that the child views his own non-compliant behavior as an aberrant reaction. He expects to be admonished for this act since he feels that any transgression against adult authority must have a consequence—punishment. This "inherent" concept of justice comes to an end as the child enters the next developmental stage.

Gradually the child becomes aware of a difficulty in multiple adult relationships—their basic inconsistencies. This is especially noticeable when the teacher's middle-class attitudes conflict with the lower socio-economic background of the child, or when the child comes from a subculture different from the larger culture of the community. Currently this refers specifically to the problems related to civil rights issues, to desegregation, and to the adjustment of the children of Cuban exiles in Dade County, for example. From the psychoanalytic point of view, with its emphasis on the experiences during the early years of life, a teacher-pupil relationship takes on even more significance. Greater responsibility is imposed on the teacher to furnish the child with introjection-models that could yield health, constructive attitudes and action patterns. During the early years, the models should include respect for the

individuality of the child, patience, fairness, giving, and withholding rewards in terms that the child can appreciate, and an effort to understand the lag that exists between thought and action. These concepts in the teacher's comprehension of the pupil relationship are encouraged by Piaget[3] in these words: "Thought always lags behind action and cooperation has to be practiced for a long time before its consequences can be brought fully to light by reflective thought" (p. 114). How better to tell you, as teachers, that the interpretation of the observed seeming impulsive, thoughtless behavior of the child is one event in the long practice chain leading to the next phase of Concrete Operations which takes our child from seven to 11 years of age.

In this act of our longitudinal movie scenario the pupil is more involved with the teacher in direct and prolonged relationships. In the stage of concreate operations, considering only the teacher-pupil interaction, the youngster is making a significant ideational shift. In the earlier stages his reasoning processes were at first pre-logical, then very specific and concretistic. Events were evaluated only in the actually observed "givens" of the situation. Now the child enters the realm of inductive reasoning. As Maier2 so aptly puts it: The child can now explore several possible solutions to a problem without necessarily adopting any one, because he can always return to his original outlook. His awareness of manifold approaches to one object elasticizes his previously rigid and intuitive approach, and permits him to order his sense data along two levels of cognitive thought" (p. 126). He can now assess the relationship between parts to create a whole and he is able to classify events, objects, and even people. In essence, he is capable of a higher order of thinking-induction.

The child's emancipation from dominance by parents, since he spends a goodly portion of his day away from home, necessitates a shift in identification or assimilation models. Who is handiest? The teacher. What is necessary for the teacher to know in order to sense the child's on-going processes so that she may succeed in the effort to build a positive relationship? Well, play may become a medium for understanding the child's social world. Conversation may be directed to the end of making meaning of the events in the youngster's life space. People are placed in some hierarchy as the child tries to explore his relationship to each of these. If he seems to be puzzled by the plethora of *relationship-vistas* opened to him by his school attendance, you should remember that the young scholar has to make many adjustments not demanded on him during the first six years of his life. Of these new relationships the one with the teacher will occupy a special place. Whereas the younger child interpreted the request "to hold on" as a command to keep his hand closed on the hand of the adult; the child in this later stage of development interprets the teacher's request to "hold on" as an obligation to conform behaviorally.

The teacher-pupil relationships during this phase should also take into consideration that rules are beginning to take on meaning as regulators of behavior. Therefore the teacher-model in these interactions has to conform to the rules she makes up for the conduct of the class and to the code of the larger society as a seven to 11 year-old conceives of them. This includes the more familiar rules concerning dress, personal appearance, anti-social behavior, and just "being a teacher." The child strives for objectivity in the application of rewards and punishment by teachers, adults, and peers. To deny the child of this age the opportunity to reciprocate for an injustice is almost an unforgivable violation of the mutality of respect between the teacher and the pupil. And to lie is the worst of all possible transgressions. This last appears to contradict the view that the younger child and teenager do not look upon a little lie to an adult as a serious offense. This is so, but for different reasons. For the former, the younger child, fact and fancy are intermingled and not too well differentiated. The teenager, who is in the throes of the struggle for independence, considers that all is fair in this ware between the generations.

Finally, we approach the last act in the script of child development. The Piagetian phase of Formal Operations takes our actor from the child of 11 years of age to the adolescent of 15 years. What are the major changes as he passes through this stage on his way to becoming a "youth?"

First, there is a continuous enhancement of his ideational or thought processes. He can go beyond the here, now, and tangible to reach into the realm of symbolic reasoning. That of which he is aware, cognition, can deal with objects and events in the absence of real objects and events.

Second, regarding his social life, the young person has new techniques available for coping with interpersonal contingencies and thus he is in a position to influence the nature of these relationships. He can sort out the multiplicity of social ties and establish them in a vertical *rank order of importance* to himself rather than maintain the horizontal order of equal significance for all persons. Gradually the authoritarian relationships assume a hierarchy which permits placing a teacher-pupil relationship in a category definitely removed from the parent-child, other significant adult-child or significant peer-child relationships.

The teacher establishing a teacher-pupil relationship should be sensitive to the on-going psychological

changes occurring during this phase. The youngster involves symbolism as well as concretistic approach to problems. Cognition can deal with higher order of abstractions. This subsumes an enhanced ability to deal with relationships that exist among events. Ability to deal with the questions and problems in this manner transfers to social relationships as well. The concept of relativity emerges. Piaget[3] characterizes this phase of intellectual and social development in these terms: "The youth wants to broaden his ideational horizon and is ready to respond to new concepts not only academically, cognitively, but also in his interpersonal activities. These latter must appear to be reasonable to him. He probes for meanings as he relates to people, no longer accepting them, especially adults, on face value" (p. 285). Of the latter, parents of 11 to 15-year old children are quite aware of the changing parent-child relationships. We puzzle, wonder, and search for the reasons why the lovable preteener has become the terror of the teens. With regard to the teacher, her awareness of the pre-teen and teenager's expectancy for the acquisition of moral values will be most helpful. A teacher-pupil relationship at this point in time should afford the youngster school experiences that will reinforce the opportunities for constructive values to emerge therefrom. It is possible that during this stage of Formal Operations transfer may take place to non-school interpersonal relationships.

Permit me to review briefly the development phases in Piaget's schema of life: The sensory-motor phase takes the child from birth to two years of age. He matures from the substage of reflexive behavior to the point where he is capable of devising new means to obtain a very tangible goals. The teacher-pupil relationship of this period is the parent-child affiliation wherein simulation is most necessary to ensure physical, neurological, and psychological growth.

The stage of concrete thinking operations sees maturation from repetitious verbal speech in the ego-centered two-year old to the mobile and systematic thought-organization essential to problem solving in the 11 year-old child. The stage of formal operations, at 11 years of age and upward, leads to the youth who can think abstractly formulate hypotheses, engage in inductive reasoning, and check solutions to problems.

It must be patently clear to you that the movement through the stages necessitates a fluid definition of the term "teacher-pupil relationship" such that both within and between stages the nature of the teacher-pupil interaction is in a state of flux. The somewhat dependent six-year old requires and demands from his teacher that which a 14-year old would disdain. The emphasis is on the modification of teacher-pupil relationships as experiences change with alterations in development, in learning, and in functioning by the pupil. Maier[2] summed up the essence of social interaction as follows: "The burning questions of our day—the problematic issues of international and intergroup relationships—seem to be directly correlated to the degree of personal satisfaction and meaningfulness each individual can find himself" (p. 279). In addition to finding personal satisfaction and meaningfulness for themselves, teachers should help their pupils toward "becoming."

I hope I have justified the hypothesis that we should think in terms of teacher-pupil relationships rather than embark on the futile search for *the* teacher-pupil relationship. At this point I would like to comment on how the teacher may search for guides and principles for establishing pupil relationships. Most of my remarks have concerned themselves with the child. It is equally important to recognize the viability of the teacher as a person in this situation. This approach involves the self-concepts of teachers and pupils, how they think of themselves, as the basis of their mutual interactions. These building blocks could help improve the school atmosphere. Both teacher and pupil need to feel valued by the other and by significant persons in the school. This is my opportunity to tell principals and supervisors that a teacher's feeling of worth filters down to the children in the class. Both teacher and pupil need to feel that their tasks are meaningful and significant. Trivia and busywork assigned to the teacher by the principal on the one hand, and the same assigned b the teacher to the pupil on the other, make for dull, uninteresting, and resentful relationships.

One of the primary conditions for better learning is knowledge of results. This can contribute to a healthy teacher-pupil relationship if the former will minimize uncertainty of accomplishment as much as possible. Not only should the child have a measure of his strengths and weaknesses, but the criteria should be in terms that are meaningful to the child.

The teacher should strive to create an atmosphere that is maximally free of useless tension and to encourage the constructive use of freedom. Healthy personality development is enhanced in a climate in which the child is not afraid to make a mistake, is encouraged to express his opinion, and moves in the direction of self-actualization. The teacher who is fearful of new experiences will not empathize with the child's exploratory probing. Neither can grow in this climate. By osmosis, or imitation, or introjection, this inhibitor to "becoming" is assimilated by the pupil to the detriment of a healthy teacher-pupil relationship. The scenario is almost finished. Have we assimilated something from this lengthy verbal moving picture? I hope it is this: every person chooses his way in this

world. Every teacher is what he or she is because of somebody. Let us be what we can because of our pupils.

My absolutely final comment is an excerpt from Jerome S. Bruner's book, TOWARD A THEORY OF INSTRUCTION, in which he writes: "Intellectual development depends upon a systematic and contingent interaction between a tutor and a learner." At last I know what has been bothering me: I have been thinking, along with you, of "teacher-pupil relationships" when we should have preferred the "tutor-learner" relationships. Through healthy teacher-pupil relationships both may give each other opportunities for fuller emotional development, for emotional support in daily stress, help in promoting positive self-regard, and a harvest of accepting learners and accepted tutors.

## *REFERENCES*

1. Bruner, J. S. *Toward a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1966.
2. Maier, H. W. *Three Theories of Child Development*. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
3. Piaget, J. *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1968-1973, Vol. 5, no. 2 (1969), pg. 20.

# What Readability Formulas Can and Cannot Predict

*Nancy Marshall*
College of Education, Florida International University

In the December, 1981 issue of the *Florida Reading Quarterly*, Smith, Palmer, and Palmer mentioned a problem with readability formulas; they often yield readability figures which are considerably **lower** than the reading levels of students. Readability formulas are used to predict the necessary reading level of students who are to read the text, yet they frequently fail to do this. This article is an attempt to explain why readability formulas often fail to predict ease of comprehension and what can be done about it.

## *The Intended Function of Readability Formulas*

Readability formulas are designed to estimate the difficulty of stories for the purpose of putting stories in the basal readers. For stories, there does seem to be a strong positive correlation between comprehensibility (ease of understanding) and readability. This is because of the nature of stories, however, not because of the nature of readability formulas.

Stories, as a whole, are written in close approximation to written language. The length of sentences and the vocabulary used are the two principle factors in most readability formulas. In general, the longer the sentences and the less common the words are, the more difficult the text is. This is true of both oral language and written stories.

## *Why Readability Formulas Fail with Textbooks*

Textbooks often contain significantly more information than can be processed by listening to the text once. It is this density of information that tends to make textbooks more difficult than readability formulas indicate. Readability formulas don't measure familiarity with context. Consequently, both of the following sentences would have the same readability even though the first one requires a more sophisticated reader.

1. We are in concert with one another.
2. We listened to the concert together.

Another problem with using readability formulas with textbooks is that in complicated, informative text, simple sentences are often more difficult to comprehend than complex sentences (Marshall and Glock, 1978). Complex sentences often show how pieces of information relate to each other. Thus, neither word frequency nor sentence length accurately predicts the difficulty of textbook materials.

## *How to Determine the Difficulty of Textbooks*

If readability formulas fail to accurately predict the comprehensibility of textbooks, how can one figure out the difficulty of a textbook? The answer, although as of yet incomplete, comes from a body of contemporary research into how various characteristics of informative text affect comprehension. That research reveals that:

1. Words and phrases that evoke concrete images are easier to understand and remember than abstract words and phrases (Paivio, 1970).
2. The greater the number of new ideas that are introduced in a short space, the more difficult is the text to understand (Haviland and Clark, 1974).
3. Repeated information is remembered better than information that is mentioned only once (Haviland and Clark, 1974).
4. Information that students have encountered previously, at least in part, is more easily understood than unfamiliar information (Marshall and Glock, 1978).
5. Well organized text is easier to understand than text that does not follow outline format (Murphy and Bienko, 1981).
6. Textbooks that intersperse stories with information defeat their purpose since students remember the story and nothing else (Heidi, 1981).
7. Information is remembered better if it is stated explicitly (Kintsch, Mandel, and Kozminsky, 1977).
8. Information is remembered better if it is explicitly related to other information (Marshall and Glock, 1979).
9. Information that is highlighted in the text by making the major ideas clear is remembered better (Clements, 1979).
10. Text that is accompanies by *relevant* pictures is easier to understand, especially if the illustrations make the ideas concrete (Shallert, 1979).

One can turn these findings into a convenient checklist to help determine the comprehensibility of a text book. Such a checklist might be similar to the one below.

### *Comprehensibility Checklist*

Name of text:
Publisher:
Date:
Grade level adopted for:

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Are the major concepts concrete or are they explained as concretely as possible? | | |
| 2. Are the suggestions in the teacher's manual for making concepts concrete? | | |
| 3. Are more than two new concepts introduced on a page or in a section? | | |
| 4. Are the major concepts mentioned often? | | |
| 5. Are the major concepts used in a variety of contexts? | | |
| 6. Are the major concepts physically highlighted in the text? | | |
| 7. Would the students normally have knowledge relevant to the major concepts? | | |
| 8. Does the textbook introduce major concepts so that students can understand them? | | |
| 9. Does teacher's manual give guidance for introducing concepts so that students can understand them? | | |
| 10. Are the headings and subheadings relevant to the content? | | |
| 11. Do headings and subheadings contain major concepts? | | |
| 12. Is the textbook free from stories? | | |
| 13. Are the sections free from interspersed questions? | | |
| 14. Are experiments, tasks, etc. clearly separated from content? | | |
| 15. Are the relationships among ideas clearly stated? | | |
| 16. Does the teacher's manual give suggestions for helping students relate ideas? | | |
| 17. Does the teacher's manual give suggestions for helping students deal with stated relationships (e.g., because, however, therefore)? | | |
| 18. Are the pictures, graphs, etc. relevant and consistent with the text? | | |
| 19. Do the pictures, graphs, etc. help to make concepts concrete? | | |
| 20. Does the teacher's manual give suggestions for using the illustrations to promote learning? | | |

Is this book appropriate for grade __________ students?

---

The more checks that are put in the "yes" column, the easier the textbook will be for the students to read. Such a checklist can help the classroom teacher to determine if a textbook meets the students' readability needs and, if not, why. It can also help teachers decide on the kinds of assistance the students may need in reading a particular book. In addition, it can help textbook committees select books that should be comprehensible to the students.

## *REFERENCES*


Clements, P. The effect of staging on recall of prose. In R. O. Freedle (Ed.), *New Directions in Discourse Processing*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1979.

Haviland, S. E. and Clark, H. H. What's new? Acquiring new information as a process in comprehension. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior.* 1974. 13, 512-521.

Heidi S. *The interference of narration on recall of exposition*. Paper presented at the International Symposium in Text Processing, Fribourg, Switzerland, September 1981.

Kintsch, W.; Mandel, T. S.; and Kozminsky, E. Summarizing scrambled stories. *Memory and Cognition*, 1977, *5*, 547-552.

Marshall, N. and Glock, M.D. Comprehension of connected discourse: A study into the relationships between the structure of text and information recalled. Reading *Research Quarterly*, 1979, 14, 10-56.

Murphy, M. C. and Bienko, D. M. *Can new ideas be made more accessible through text engineering?* Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Dallas, December 1981.

Paivio, A. On the functional significance of imagery. *Psychological Bulletin*, 1970, 73, 385-392.

Shallert, D. L. *A comparison of content and structural contexts in learning from expository prose*. Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, San Antonio, December, 1979.

Smith, E.H.; Palmer, B.C.; and Palmer, P.A. Reading forumlas: Can they be dangerously misleading? The *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1981, 18, 23-26.


Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1982-1984, Vol. 19, no. 2 (1982), pg. 14.

# Reading Diagnosis in Real Classrooms

*Janell P. Kelsius*
*Evelyn F. Searls*
University of South Florida

At a State of the Art Conference in 1982 Gerald Duffy presented a paper entitled, "Fighting Off the Alligators: What Research in Real Classrooms Has to Say About Reading Instruction" (Duffy, 1982). He took his title from the old saying: "When you are up to your ass in alligators, it's difficult to remember that your original objective was to drain the swamp." The gist of Duffy's message was that those who train teachers, as well as those who supervise them, must put themselves mentally into the shoes of teachers and ask themselves whether the strategies they recommend to teachers are reasonable in terms of the daily pressures of classroom life. When Duffy took over a second grade classroom for six weeks, he found that many recommendations he had previously made to teachers in reading methods classes were quickly discarded because of the pressures of classroom management, social complexities, and accountability concerns.

For years as teacher-trainers, we have extolled the virtues of using an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) to obtain information about students' reading abilities. In addition, we have recommended testing students with lists of sight words, phonics inventories, and even non-classified IQ tests such as the Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT) and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). This small battery of tests was to be administered to each student individually and could be completed in an hour's time, once teachers were experienced in doing it. Surely, we said to pre- and inservice teachers, you can find small blocks of time here and there to test individuals students. However, recently as a result of observing in the schools and talking to teachers who attended our inservice workshops and graduate classes, we have come to realize that teachers really don't have time for individualized testing.

As a result of these experiences, we began to search for and develop assessment techniques that classroom teachers can use as they instruct groups of children. Although teachers must focus on an individual for diagnosis, they can do this as they instruct students in group situations. Teacher observation has long been considered a valuable method for identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, but such observation needs the structure of written records. To make this easier for the teacher, we have developed a number of simplified teacher checklists and student response forms.

If we can demonstrate to teachers that diagnostic information can be readily obtained as they engage in the regular instructional program in reading, we hope teachers will see the value of ongoing diagnosis. In addition, we believe teachers will develop a diagnostic mind set that will lead them in the discovery of other ways they can obtain information about students without individual testing.

It is our intent in this article to share a number of the forms we have developed. Teachers are encouraged to use them when appropriate or to modify and adapt them to their classroom situations.

## *Cumulative Record Information*

While not a part of instruction, the cumulative record information is a prerequisite for instructional planning. Among other things, it guides the pacing of instruction, placement of students in material, and grouping of students. Today it is common for cumulative records to be housed in a central location in the school rather than in individual classrooms. The form in Figure I is one that teachers can use to record information from students cumulative records so that they will have this information readily available.

## *Directed Reading Thinking Activity*

The most common instructional strategy used to teach reading in elementary classrooms in the Directed Reading Activity (DRA) recommended by basal reading series. A modification of the DRA, developed by Stauffer (1969), is the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), which requires students to predict and then read to confirm or reject their predictions. Because the value of having students predict before they read is now widely supported in the literature, we recommend that teachers substitute the DRTA for the DRA at least once each week. While using the DRTA and the checklist provided in Figure 2 (adapted from Gillet & Temple, 1982), teachers can secure valuable information about an individual's ability to make predictions that reveal an ability to make predictions that reveal an understanding of the material. While all students participate in the DRTA, the teacher records information on only one student. By focusing on one student each time the DRTA is used, teachers will, over time, be able to get information about each member of a group.

The DRTA can be adapted for listening comprehension if teachers read the selection out to students. Known as the Directed Listening Thinking Activity (DLTA), this procedure can be used in all

grades to assess students' ability to predict, irrespective of reading ability.

## *Oral Reading*

Teachers often have students read orally in a group for diagnostic as well as other purposes. The use of an Oral Reading Checklist (see Figure 3) enables teachers to quickly identify major reading errors as well as answers to comprehension questions at literal, interpretive and evaluative levels. We recommend that students read the whole selection silently before reading orally. As one student reads orally, other students listen with books closed, using markers as place holders. Enforcing a listening situation helps to prevent peers from giving aid to the oral reader; this is especially important when the oral reading is done for purposes of diagnosis.

## *Background Knowledge*

Students' background knowledge about a topic influences their success in comprehending what is read (Tierney & Cunningham, 1984). Therefore, it is helpful for teachers to ascertain whether certain student's poor comprehension performance might be caused, in part, by the fact that they have limited background knowledge. However, assessment of background knowledge should only be done if teachers feel that students have some knowledge of the topic. If teachers know that the topic is unfamiliar to most of their students, such assessment wastes valuable teacher time.

A useful procedure for assessing background knowledge is the Prereading Guided Reading Procedure (PreGRP), an adaptation of the Guided Reading Procedure (Manzo, 1975), both of which are especially useful with factual material. Students are asked to tell everything they know about a topic prior to reading the material. The teacher records all responses on the chalkboard or chart paper. With teacher assistance, students categorize the responses under four or five headings. Then students read to determine whether the information they have generated is accurate (Spiegel, 1980). By using this procedure, teachers can determine what vocabulary and conceptual backgrounds the students have and what needs to be developed prior to having the material read. Figure 4 provides a form on which teachers can record their observations of students' background knowledge. In addition to using the form with the PreGRP, teachers may use it to record such observations when implementing the DRA, DRTA, or DLTA.

Background knowledge can also be obtained through the use of the form, Individual Assessment of Background Knowledge (see Figure 5). The teacher selects vocabulary words that are specific to the topic and asks students to define them before they read. After students have completed this form, teachers can ask the following questions as they examine the responses of each student:

1. What percent of the vocabulary did the student know before reading?
2. How many correct concepts about the topic did the student provide?,
3. How many incorrect concepts about the topic did the student provide?

## *Summary*

Having put ourselves mentally into the shoes of classroom teachers, we have resisted the temptation to include a number of other informal diagnostic instruments. For example, a phonics test is conspicuously absent; however, the mastery tests included in most basal series now provide such information. We have focused on diagnostic techniques that can be used as teachers instruct students in reading groups. As a result, we haven't increased or decreased the number of alligators, but neither have we encroached on the time teachers need to fight them.

## *References*


Duffy, Gerald G. "Fighting Off the Alligators: What Research in Real Classrooms Has to Say About Reading Instruction." *Journal of Reading Behavior*, vol. 14 (Summer 1982), pp. 357-373.

Gillet, Jean W., and Charles Temple *Understanding Reading Problems*. Boston, Mass.: Little Brown, 1982.

Manzo, Anthony V. "Guided Reading Procedure." *Journal of Reading*, vol. 18 (January, 1975), pp. 287-291.

Spiegel, Dixie L. "Adaptations of Manzo's Guided Reading Procedure." *Reading Horizons*, vol. 20 (Spring, 1980, pp. 188-192,

Stauffer, Russel G. *Directing Reading Maturity as a Cognitive Process*. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1969.

Tierney, Rober J., and James W. Cunningham. "Research on Teaching Reading Comprehension." In *Handbook of Reding Research*, edited by P. David Pearson. New York, NY: Longman, 1984.


Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly,* 1984-1986, Vol. 22, no. 4 (1986), pg. 14.

Figure I
Student Cumulative Record Information

Student ____________ Grade ____________ Date ____________

School Information

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Absenteeism | Excessive | Normal |
| School Transfers | Number | ____________ |
| Grades Repeated | Grade(s) | ____________ |
| Summer School | Grade(s) | ____________ |

Special Assignments (Place check in blank if service is provided)

| | |
|---|---|
| Guidance Counselor | ____________ |
| Chapter I Reading | ____________ |
| Learning Disabilities | ____________ |
| Emotional Handicap | ____________ |
| Other ____________ | ____________ |
| ____________ | ____________ |

Basal Text Assignment ____________
Level/Grade

Report Card Performance – Progress Relative to Ability (previous year)

| | Very Good | Satisfactory | Needs Improvement | Unsatisfactory |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| Spelling | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| Language | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

| | Satisfactory | Needs Improvement | Unsatisfactory |
|---|---|---|---|
| Work Habits | ____ | ____ | ____ |

Health Problems ____________

Student Cumulative Record Information
(continued)

Standardized Test Information

Reading/Language Achievement Test performance (previous year)

| | G.L. | Stan. | %ile |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vocabulary | | | |
| Comprehension | | | |
| Total Reading | | | |
| Language | | | |

Is there a difference of two stanines or more between vocabulary and comprehension performance? Yes ____ No ___

Was last year's performance consistent with performance in previous years? Yes ____ No ___

If performance is below average, when did the problem first appear? ____________
Grade

Intellectual Performance (if given) Above Avg. Avg. Below Avg.

Home Information

Complete the following if the information is available:

Parent(s) or guardian(s) with whom student lives ____________

Number of siblings ____________

Is the student on free or reduced lunch? ____________

Figure 2

DLTA/DRTA Checklist

Student ______________ Basal Text ________/________ Date ________
Level/Grade

| | Usually | Occasionally | Seldom |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offers spontaneous predictions | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Makes sensible predictions | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Shows background knowledge of topic when predicting | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Changes predictions when necessary | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Explains predictions clearly | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Justifies predictions from text | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Uses explicit information | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Uses inferred information | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Uses others' predictions to extend or modify own ideas | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Shows original thinking | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Uses illustrations to get information | ______ | ______ | ______ |

Date ____________________

Figure 3

Reading Group ____________
Basal Text ____________
Level/Grade

Oral Reading Checklist

| Student Names | Omits words | Adds words | Won't attempt words | Loses place | Points finger | Ignores punctuation | Wd. by wd. reading | Poor phrasing | Little expression | Words Mispronounced or Substituted (Circle words that changed text meaning) | Comprehension<br>L = Literal<br>I = Interpretive<br>E = Evaluative<br>(Score responses "+" or "-") |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |
| | | | | | | | | | | | L<br>I<br>E |

Date ____________________

Figure 4

Reading Group ____________
Basal Text ____________
Level/Grade

Group Record of Background Knowledge

| Student Names | Activity (e.g. PreGRP, DRTA, DLTA) | Topic | Student's Background Information | | | Student's Knowledge of Meaning Vocabulary | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Strong | Adequate | Weak | Strong | Adequate | Weak |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Figure 5

Individual Assessment of Background Knowledge

Student ____________________ Basal Text __________/__________ Date__________
Level/Grade

Topic ____________________

| New Vocabulary | Definition (Before Reading) |
| --- | --- |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |
| ____________________ | ______________________________ |

Write all you know about the topic.

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

# Shifting Pedagogical Responsibility: The Use of TAG for Self and Classroom Community Assessment

*Nina Zaragoza, Florida International University*
*Barbara C. Cruz, University of South Florida*

**TAG is a strategy used to facilitate evaluative growth in students as they respond to each other's work and progress.**

More and more educators are beginning to examine the role evaluation has on the academic and social growth of students. Although traditional forms of assessment based on comparative data are still the norm, the movement toward authentic, performance, and especially portfolio assessment is becoming increasingly prevalent. Scholars (Roble & Flett, 1988; Nelson-Legall, Kratzer, Jones, & DeCooke, 1990; Webb, 1993) point to a subtle paradigm shift that is occurring in the responsibility for learning -- the students are assuming a more active role in their own learning, in large part exhibited by the emphasis that teachers are placing on self-evaluation and self-monitoring.

Self-evaluation can be broadly understood as the process by which students monitor their individual progress in learning and understanding. Although self-evaluation is an improvement over the typically competitive, norm-referenced types of assessment found in most of our nation's schools, it is usually still derived from traditional external measures of evaluation, and so continues to be a vehicle for students to measure their growth against that of others. The traditional approach of assessment and evaluation existing to police -- rather than enhance -- learning inadvertently promotes a competitive and threatening environment (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1993).

When self-evaluation is embraced in a collaborative framework and is coupled with a sense of history about oneself, however, it can be a satisfying and pleasurable process (Goodman, 1992). Students who evaluate themselves using previous work as a benchmark become confident, active, purposeful learners. Such self-understanding, along with alternative informal assessments, can drive instruction in a continuous cyclic progress that can be very effective (McLain & Mayer, 1994; Muni, 1993). Van Kraayenoord and Paris (1993) describe how promoting self-evaluation in an authentic context can foster ownership of personal learning. The realization that the power of evaluation and grading does not rest solely on the teacher can motivate and empower students to become responsible for and committed to their own learning (Owings & Follo, 1992).

Zaragoza (1997) argues that such self-assessment can only occur in a risk-free environment that promotes respect, understanding, tolerance, and trust; it presumes an equitable classroom where all students are treated justly. This safe and nurturing atmosphere takes time to develop, of course. The teacher must establish the classroom tone from the very first day, working methodically to "de-program" students from the competitive system to which they have become accustomed. The transformation is gradual, with the teacher moving through stages and roles, scaffolding student self-assessment skills throughout (Rudd and Gunstone, 1993).

One method that we have enjoyed with resounding success is peer feedback, which is provided within the context of open conversations within the classroom community. The strategy that we employ is called "TAG" and is described here.

## *TAG*

TAG is an acronym for, "Tell What You Like, Ask Questions, Give Ideas/Suggestions." TAG is a concrete strategy easily understood and embraced by students that helps them evaluate their own work as well as the work of others (Zaragoza, 1987; Zaragoza & Vaughn, 1992; Zaragoza, 2002). It is a patterned way of responding to written work that is conducted in a respectful and non-threatening way. This easy-to-remember strategy provides children with the opportunity to actively respond to their peers' writing in process and publication, as well as in response to reading aloud and personal portfolio evaluations. TAG is taught to the children on the first day of class and sets the tone for the academic year. As children gain independence in its use, much of the responsibility of the classroom discussions shifts from the teacher to the students. It is this pedagogical shift that enables children to begin to feel the power of their own decisions and take responsibility for their own learning and progress. This pedagogical shift also serves as the foundation of a community that gives all of its members full equity within the teaching/learning relationship.

Although this structure allows students the flexibility of response, TAG also provides boundaries that keep all responses positive and constructive. It is imperative that the learning environment be conducive to diversity in thought, opinion, and ability. Once children understand that their efforts and beliefs will be respected, they are prompted to take greater cognitive and affective risks.

The TAG strategy also addresses teachers' concerns

about dealing with the negativity and cruelty that commonly emerges from classrooms that are founded on competition and traditional comparisons of students for evaluation. We believe that the cruelty that is so often exhibited by our students is at least in part due to the inherent structure of our classrooms and society. (For further discussion on this issue see Powell, 1998 and Zaragoza, 2002.)

When TAG becomes the major vehicle of response in a classroom community, responses that are negative or comparative lessen considerably if the teacher facilitates respectful responses. We have observed this phenomenon on many occasions and are encouraged by the possibility of creating supportive, constructive, and democratic learning environments for our students. The following are actual classroom sessions that use TAG as the foundation for response.

## *TAG and the Writing Process*

During the writing process children work through writing as all authors must do as they endeavor to produce a thoughtful written product. They create drafts, decide on which to publish, work through revision, editing and final publication (Atwell, 1998; Graves, 1983; Zaragoza, 2002). Students are also given an opportunity to share their work during all stages of the process as they seek response and guidance from their peers. Children sign up to share their work with the full community. Students can either sign up or they can go in the order of the class list so all students have equal access to sharing. Because most children in a safe environment want to share, we find that the class list works well. This list is in full view of the whole community and children have the right to pass on their turn if they do not want to share at that time.

**Examples**

In the following dialogue, Deanna, a fourth grade student, has just finished reading to the class a draft about going to the movies with Letrice. The students follow the TAG patterned response model of "Tell What You Like, Ask Questions, Give Ideas/ Suggestions."

Deanna: "T", tell what you like.
(Children raise their hands to respond. Deanna calls on Bryan)
Bryan: I liked that you talked about getting popcorn.
Deanna: Why?
Bryan: Because that's what I get when I go to the movies.
Jessie: I liked that you had dialogue in your story because I use dialogue, too.
Deanna: Thank you. OK. "A," ask questions.
Chris: Why did you choose that movie for your story?
Deanna: Because I really saw it last week.
Ginger: Did you ask Letrice permission to use her name?
Deanna: Yes, and she really saw the movie, too. "G," give ideas.
Pedro: Maybe you can tell us why you picked the movie.
Deanna: Thank you. Another "G."
Yessenia: Maybe you can put in who took you to the movies and where it was.
(Teacher enters conversation.)
Mr. Brown: Yes, Deanna could tell us more details about where the movie was showing. When an author tells us about the place of the story what is that called?
Maria: Setting.
Mr. Brown: Okay, we usually call the place in the story setting. Any other words?
Ahmad: Area.
Mr. Brown: Yes! And I just thought of another one—locale! So Deanna will you use some of the ideas they've given you?
Deanna: Yes.
Mr. Brown: Which ones?
Deanna: The one about where the movie is.
Mr. Brown: Okay, so you are going to tell us more about the setting.
(Deanna goes over to the sign up sheet to call up the next author(s) on the list.)
Deanna: Tatiana, Tamara, and Alonso.
(The coauthors read their story, "The Crazy House," together.)
Delvin: I like how you said "The Crazy House," because it was funny.
Tati: Thank you. Two more.
Letrice: I liked when you left Tatiana because she ran slow.
Sylvester: I like how you all three helped each other read the story.
Tati: Why?
Sylvester: Because it shows that you cooperated.
Alonso: "A," Ask questions.
Sandra: Why did you write that story?
Tamara: We wanted to write a scary story. Another "A."
Julie: Why did you go inside the crazy house?
Tati: We wanted to see what was inside.
Mr. Brown: What's a word that might describe them? (No response.)
Mr. Brown: They wanted to see what was inside so they were _______?
Carlos: Interested.
Mr. Brown: Yes Interested! Another word?
Robins: Wondering.
Mr. Brown: Yes, all of those words. Go ahead with

| | |
|---|---|
| | "G." |
| Alonso: | "G," Give ideas. |
| Alex: | Maybe you can put in more details. Like what Tatiana said when you left her behind. |
| Tati: | Thank you. Another "G." |
| Shakeva: | Maybe you could tell us more about what was in the house and how it looked. |
| Tati: | Thank you. |

In a classroom community that is just learning to respond, more teacher intervention is usually necessary. Because children are typically unaccustomed to the collegial give-and-take environment that a strategy like TAG can engender, the teacher may need to provide more direct guidance and direction as the classroom community evolves. In the following exchange, Mary has just finished reading her draft about her mother making her clean up her room before she is able to go to the park.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary: | "T," Tell what you like. |
| Raul: | That she went to the park. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Ask him why he likes that part, Mary? (No response.) |
| Ms. Kelley: | Say, "Why do you like that part?" |
| Mary: | Why do you like that part? |
| Raul: | Because I like to go to the park. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Good, so you identified with that part. Rasie your hand if you like to go to the park, too. (Most hands go up.) |
| Ms. Kelley: | Okay, Mary take another "T." |
| Mary: | "T," Tell what you like. |
| Fran: | That there was food because I like picnics. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Good, you defended your answer, Fran. Go on to "A," Maria. |
| Maria: | "A," Ask questions. |
| Lou: | I like that your mother made you clean your room. |
| Ms. Kelley: | We're on "Ask questions now. Let's change what you said to a question. (No response.) |
| Ms. Kelley: | Let's see, maybe starting it with the word why. Why _______? |
| Lou: | Why did your mother make you clean your room? |
| Ms. Kelley: | Good! Now, it's a question. |
| Mary: | Because it was messy. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Raise your hand if your family makes you lean up before you can do something else? (Hands go up.) I do that with my son, too. Before he goes anywhere, he has to clean his room. Mary go on to "G"-Give ideas. |
| Mary: | "G," give ideas. |
| Chris: | You should tell us who helped you clean your room. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Does an author have a choice about what to put in their stories? |
| Danny: | Yes. |
| Ms. Kelley: | That's right. So, let's give suggestions in a way that we know the author has a choice. How can we do that? |
| Sue: B | By saying it nicer. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Yes, when we say things more nicely authors feel safe. Also, let's change the word "should" to "could." This way we aren't bossing the author around but we're just giving suggestions. Go on Chris, give your suggestion again and use the word "could." |
| Chris: | Maybe you could say who helped you clean your room. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Mary did anyone help you clean your room? |
| Mary: | Yes, my little sister. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Do you think you might put that detail in your story? |
| Mary: | Yes. |
| Ms. Kelley: | Okay, that's up to you because you're the author. Let's give Mary a hand. Everyone needs to clap because we're all one community. (Students applaud.) |

### *Discussion*

The above interactions are useful in understanding the TAG strategy. It is noteworthy that because "T-Tell what you like" is required first, all responses begin in a positive manner. This forms the basis for establishing a safe, accepting environment. When the community gets to "A-Ask questions" and "G-Give ideas," the tone of the exchange has already been set and the ensuring questions are usually appropriate and positive. If they border on negativity, the teacher helps with rewording. For example, as in the second conversation, some students have the initial tendency to overlay corrective with comments like "You should---" or questions like "Why didn't you make it longer?" This is understandable if students are accustomed to traditional teacher responses that highlight weaknesses instead of strengths. When students are consistently facilitated to word all aspects of TAG positively and constructively, the tendency to over-correct disappears.

Just as teachers guide the tone of the conversation, they also facilitate follow-through after the TAG session. With questions such as, "Deanna, will you use some of the ideas they've given you," follow-through is encouraged and expected. Because Deanna said that she would use the suggestion about placing setting in her story, Mr. Brown will talk about this inclusion with

Deanna as she revises her piece. He will also help the co-authors of "The Crazy House" revise their story using Alex's suggestion about putting more details and dialogue. Ms. Kelley, too, will encourage Mary to include the detail about her little sister before the story is published. In fact, the "A" and "G" of TAG are directly related to helping authors revise and edit their pieces and influence subsequent follow-up conversations and lessons.

These community exchanges also provide valuable information for teachers as they make important curricular choices. Mr. Brown, for example, will use the children's comments about their books to help select other books for the classroom library. He can also use his students' comments to decide on what issues to pursue or elaborate on in future writing/reading sessions.

## *TAG and Reading Aloud*

**Examples**

The TAG strategy can also be used when children participate in reading a piece of literature to the full class, as is evidenced by the following discussion. Note that comments can be about the child's actual reading or about the piece of writing itself.

Mr. Brown: Jessie, your name is next on the list to read aloud.

Jessie: I don't want to go today. Yessenia (the next child on the class list) can go. (Yessenia goes to the front of the room and reads from a Dr. Suess book. Before she begins, she recognized children who are ready to listen by saying "Michael is looking at me. Naomi is ready…" During the reading she asks her classmates questions such as: What do you think will happen next? Do you think the cat will clean up after himself? When she is finished she begins TAG.)

Yessenia: "T," Tell what you like.

Pedro: I like that you read really loud so we could all hear you.

Yessenia: Thank you. Another "T."

Sandra: I like that you picked that book because I like that book, too.

Yessenia: Thank you. "A," Ask questions.

Daniel: Did you ever read that book before?

Yessenia: Yep, last week during silent reading. Another "A."

Christine: What's another book you're reading?

Yessenia: One of the books about dinosaurs.

Mr. Brown: Why are you reading that book?

Yessenia: Because I like dinosaurs and I'm doing my individual presentation on dinosaurs. "G," Give ideas.

Brian: Next time maybe you can pick a book with more dialogue.

Yessenia: Okay. Another one?

Douglas: If I was the author I would put more about what the mother said when she got home. (Full class discussion continues as children connect to the book and their own writing ideas.)

## *Discussion*

When children read aloud a piece of literature to the class they are taught and encouraged to ask the audience questions so that all remain active participants. After the reading, children automatically begin the response session and begin with a positive comment. This opening remark can be either about the child's actual reading or about the piece of writing itself.

As in other areas of the curriculum, Mr. brown sometimes uses the "A" and "G" to teach a skill or facilitate other kinds of connections. Notice that in this conversation he did not choose to expand on Yesenia's reason for reading a dinosaur book. He could have connected to this point in a number of ways, however. For example, after Yessenia gave her reason, Mr. Brown could have asked the whole class, "Think about why you are reading your books? What are some of the reasons why you have chosen your book?" In this way children continue to be placed in a position of evaluative power where they assess reasons for their own learning decisions and listen to the decision making processes shared by their peers.

Mr. Brown could have also extended this discussion by building on children's comments and ideas about the writing of the piece. For example, he could have asked Douglas and others what dialogue they would include, where, and why. This would have pushed the community to respond to and evaluate the work of authors who are not in the immediate community.

## *TAG and Portfolio Evaluations*

**Examples**

Children also use TAG as they compile and respond to their work portfolios and those of their peers. This structure enables children to maintain a positively critical attitude as they interact with their own work. Using the TAG strategy in this manner encourages students to reflect and be their own best evaluators. The following exchange shows how this response system is contextualized during the introduction of portfolios.

Mr. Brown: (After giving each student a folder filled with a variety of work): Why do you think we gave these folders to you?

Deanna: To see our work.

Willy: So that we can get our grades.

Mr. Brown: Okay, who's work is it? Is it mine?

Ginger: No, mine.
Mr. Brown: Yes, it's your work. You always have a right to see your own work. Will the work in your folders always stay the same or do you thin it will look different in two weeks?
Jean: Different, 'cause we'll do new things.
Mr. Brown: That's true. Why do we do new things?
Pedro: 'Cause we're a good class.
Mr. Brown: True, and also it helps us to do what? (No response.)
Think about it when we do new things and different things it helps us see things in other ways and helps us to ________?
Sandra: Have fun.
Letrice: Learn.
Mr. Brown: Okay, how do we know if we're learning?
Gwendolyn: We have school.
Mr. Brown: Yes, hopefully we're learning in school. When you look at your portfolio, how do you know you've learned? (Teacher writes "improve" on board.) You know you're learning if you improve or show improvement. What's another word for improvement? (No response.) I'm thinking of a word that starts with p-r.
Alex: Progress?
Maria: Proud?
Mr. Brown: Yes, you know you've learned when you show improvement or progress. Raise your hand if you feel proud when you progress in your work. (Children raise hands.) Now how do you know you've improved or progressed in diary writing?
Carol: Because I write everyday.
Mr. Brown: Okay, so if you used to only write once or twice a week and now you write everyday, that shows improvement. Anyone else?
Elena: If I write more.
Mr. Brown: Yes, that's another way that improvement is shown if your diary entries get longer…we call that fluency. Are the teachers the only ones who know you are learning? Do you know?
Michael: Yes.
Mr. Brown: Raise your hand if you need to improve in diary writing. Writing process? Think to yourself, "What do I need to improve on?" Raise your hand and tell us what you want to improve on.
Janet: Writing process.
Mr. Brown: What part?
Janet: Writing longer stories.
Mr. Brown: Anyone else?
Pierre: Using back and front of the paper.
Mari: Behaving in the cafeteria.
Mr. Brown: (To the student teacher) Ms. Kelley, what is your goal?
Ms. Kelley: To write in my diary more.
Mr. Brown: Other goals?
James: Read more in silent reading.
Natalie: Talk more in reading discussion groups.
Mr. Brown: Do we always have to think about what we need to improve on or can we also talk about what we've done really well?
Marilyn: What we do well.
Mr. Brown: Yes, we tell ourselves and each other what we like. How does it make us feel when we think about what we do well?
Chris: Happy.
Naomi: Proud.
Mr. Brown: Who's proud of you?
Maria: Ms. Barnes (the principal).
Mr. Brown: Who else?
Julie: Our families.
Debbie: You.
Mr. Brown: Okay, raise your hand if you're proud of yourself when you do well? (Children raise their hands.) So when we look at our portfolios we think about what we're proud of, we ask ourselves what we need to improve on. What does this remind you of? (No response.)
Mr. Brown: What do we do that always starts with what we like?
Walt: TAG.
Mr. Brown: Yes, so that's what we'll do when we respond to our portfolios. Does anyone know another word we can use when we talk and think about our work? (No response.) When we look and discuss our work we evaluate our work. Let me write it on the board. So we will use TAG when we evaluate our portfolios. We'll always start with "T" just like when we share our writing but if we're evaluating by ourselves we'll say to ourselves: "Let's see, what am I doing well in?" Or "What is my favorite piece of work?" When we get to "A" what questions could we ask ourselves?
Sandra: What do I need to improve on?
Mr. Brown: Okay, now what will we do with the "G" of TAG?
Alex: Give ideas.
Mr. Brown: Yes, "G" stands for give ideas. It can

also stand for "Goals." We can think about what our goals can be to help us improve even more. Are you the only one that can evaluate your portfolio or can someone help you?

Robin: Someone can help you.

Mr. Brown: Yes, and if you are helping each other, you will look at each other's work and do TAG just the way we do it with all our work: Tell what you like, then ask them questions about their work, and then maybe give them ideas about how they can improve or what other work they might want to include in their portfolio.

### Discussion

This final conversation is a clear illustration of how a teacher can facilitate the use of TAG as the children evaluate their present work, progress, and future goals. Because work is evaluated and re-evaluated in a supportive environment, students become comfortable honestly deciding whether or not they have met their goals. When they do meet their goals, they create new ones; if they haven't, they carry over the same goals until they are met. Because these evaluation take place consistently over the course of the school year, they directly influence student progress as students and teachers monitor daily work.

The teacher can also directly address these goals during everyday activities. For example, right after diary writing Mr. Brown might say, "Raise your hand if you are working on writing more in your diary. Okay, I see you are, James. So how did you do today? Did you meet your goal? Compare yesterday's entry with today's and see if you have."

Mr. Brown's students are being taught and encouraged to analyze their work and make critical decisions about their learning. Within their classroom, based on critical constructivist theory (Freire, 1973), students are given continual opportunity to evaluate themselves and their peers within a safe, noncompetitive, and respectful environment. They meet this responsibly fully and positively as they work through TAG. TAG is a structure that enables individual and collective growth across the curriculum.

### Some Concluding Thoughts

Classroom communities can be established so that students become active decision makers during the learning process. This transfer of responsibility from teacher to students can occur successfully and quite rapidly if the teacher is not the sole authority in the evaluative process and is willing to share that responsibility with the classroom community and each individual child. As students feel safe, respected, and powerful within a community that recognizes their strengths and guides them toward continued learning, they become reflective, engaged learners. The use of TAG is a significant way to facilitate this major pedagogical shift. This shift, too, is a crucial step in building classrooms that are founded on principles of democracy and social justice. When teachers and students create and experience classrooms founded on respect for all voices, we all come closer to a more just society.

### References

Atwell, N. (1998). *In the middle: New understandings about reading, writing, and learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. NY: Continuum.

Goodman, J. (1992). *Elementary schooling for a critical democracy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Graves, D. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

McLain, K. & Mayer, V. (1994). *Informal literacy assessment: An organized meld of evaluative information*. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED366936

Muni, A. (1993). *Grades versus portfolios*. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED363616)

Nelson-Legall, S., Kratzer, L., Jones, E. & De Cooke, P. (1990). Children's self-assessment of performance and task related help seeking. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 49, 245-263.

Owings, C. & Follo, E. (1992). *Effects of portfolio assessment on students' attitudes and goal setting abilities in mathematics*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 352394)

Powell, R. (1998, October). *Achieving equity in Classrooms: guidelines for educators*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Association for multicultural Education, St. Louis, Missouri.

Roble, D. & Flett, G. (1988). Conflicting goals in self-evaluative information seeking development ability level analysis. *Child Development,* 59, 97-106.

Rudd, T. & Grunstone, R. (1993). *Developing self-assessment skills in grade 3 science and technology: The importance of longitudinal studies of learning*. Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching, Atlanta, GA: (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 358103)

Tierney, R. J., Carter, M.A., & Desai, L. E., (1993). *Portfolio assessment in the reading-writing classroom*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Van Kraayenenoord, C. & Paris, S. (1993, December). *Self-assessment: Children's perspectives on their literacy activities in the classroom*. Paper presented at the Annaul Meeting of the National Reading Conference, Charleston, SC> (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED365952)

Webb. N. (1993) *Assessment in the mathematics classroom*. Reston, VA: The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Zaragoza, N. (2002). *Rethinking language arts: Passion and practice* (2nd ed.) New York: Taylor and Francis.

Zaragoza, N. (1987). Process writing for high-risk and learning disabled students. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 26, 290-301.

Zaragoza, N. & Vaughn, S. (1992). The effects of process writing instruction on three second grade students with difference achievement profiles. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 7(4), 184-193.

Reprinted from Florida Reading Quarterly, 2001-2002, Vol. 32, no. 2 (2001), pg. 19.

## Questions — Questions — Questions

***Ask an Expert***

***If you have a question, we will find an answerx***

Send your literacy and education questions to FRQ, and we will find a specialist in the field who will respond in the new "Questions — Questions — Questions" column to be featured each issue.

*Dr. Nancy Williams*
College of Education, EDU 162
University of South Florida
4202 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620
(813) 974-5912
FAX (813) 974-0938
nwilliam@tempest.coedu.usf.edu

Nina Zaragoza is a faculty member at Florida International University. She is currently on leave and is teaching English in Vladimir, Russia. She may be contacted at nzaragoza@yahoo.com.

Barbara Cruz is an associate professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of South Florida in Tampa. She may be contacted at bcruz@tempest.coedu.usf.edu.

# The Relationships Between Reading Ability and Other Commonly Tested Areas As Measured By Two Widely Used High School Achievement Tests

*THOMAS M. GOOLSBY, JR.*

and

*ROBIN H. HUBER*

The Florida State University

Most widely accepted achievement tests stop testing skills of reading at grade 8 or 9. Achievement tests designed for grades 9 through 12 usually require a very substantial grasp of reading skills and mostly call for comprehension and/or interpretations in subject matter areas of the curriculum.

Major efforts to teach the basic skills of reading very often terminate as early as grade four or five. At the fourth or fifth grade level at least three students in five will still need a substantial amount of instruction and practice with basic skills of reading. Many students do not have a good grasp of the skills of reading when they enter the seventh grade. Reading instruction in the junior high school is usually called "remedial." Since the student has not previously learned the skills of reading, instruction in reading at the junior high school level, even though rarely existent, is not "remedial" but is simply a continued part of reading instruction. There is a great need for continued instruction in the skills of reading for at least a part of the student population through grade twelve.

It is estimated that at least one-third of this year's freshmen will drop out of school before they graduate. The average (the mean of the distribution of the reading scores) reader for this group is approximately two years below his grade level in reading. It is believed that reading problems are a major reason or many drop-outs. In the light of what has been alluded to above, it is justifiable to consider the relationships between reading ability and other commonly tested areas in standardized high school achievement tests. Any interrelationships presented are considered to be fair estimates.

Since achievement tests at the high school level depend greatly upon the reading skills, it is especially important for one to carefully consider the measures other than achievement measures to detect poor readers. Reading tests and non-verbal measures should present need and very useful information in most cases where a problem of reading exists.

The major purpose of this paper is to present and discuss the interrelationships among those measures presently taken at the high school level in two widely accepted achievement test batteries.

## *Description of Test Batteries*

*The Tests of Academic Progress (TAP)* provide a measure of student progress toward widely accepted educational goals. It is a multi-level test with items complete in one test booklet for grades 9-12. Different but overlapping tests make up the battery in which student's skills and understandings are measured by items appropriate to their grade level. The tests reflect the specifications of currently accepted curriculum practices as recommended by subject-matter experts and professional organizations.

Test 1: Social Studies is designed to measure the general long-range goals and more specific objectives which are ultimately aimed at preparing responsible democratic citizens. Explicitly, the test provides for applications of knowledge and functional understandings in new situations in the areas of American history, geography, world history, government, economics, and sociology. It further deals with applications of such skills as recognizing valid generalizations, distinguishing between descriptive statements and value judgments, and interpreting maps, graphs, and tables.

Test 2: Composition provides a measure of the student's ability to apply his knowledge of writing skills (capitalization, punctuation, grammar and usage, organization, and spelling) in letters, paragraphs, themes, and other writing situations.

Test 3: Science is designed to measure student progress toward the goals of traditional science programs, but is constructed to emphasize the ability to use scientific reasoning and skills. Factual information is not stressed as a separate element but as a basis for concept development and problem solving. Items for measurement of these skills are drawn from the subject areas of biology, physics, and chemistry.

Test 4: Reading is a measure of the student's ability to identify facts and relationships, to comprehend them, to apply these understandings in drawing conclusions and making inferences, and to evaluate materials to discover the theme or intent. The situations presented are to test the student's proficiency in these tasks in work-type reading situations drawn from a variety of subjects.

Test 5: Mathematics contains items which involve the application of concepts and operational skills in many

situations. Emphasis is placed on the understanding of basic concepts, rather than on mechanical manipulation, in the areas of mathematics suitable to the grade level: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, structure (number systems and patterns), properties of relations and functions, and more advanced topics.

Test 6: Literature is designed especially to measure the student's abilities in reading and interpreting literature in the form of the short story, novel, essay, narrative poem, lyric poem, and drama. Skills involved include understanding words, phrases, and sentences in context, understanding content, understanding the use of literary devices, and applying literary knowledge to new selections.

*The Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED)* are designed to measure the general educational development of students in grades 9-12, with one test for all grades. The nine subtests in the battery have to do with subject areas included in the high school curriculum, but they are constructed so that they measure the development of broad skills and abilities in high school students of all grades regardless of the subjects they are taking.

Test 1: Understanding of Basic Social Concepts is constructed to test the student's knowledge and understanding of contemporary social instructions and practices. Items are not based on content of specific courses but they were chosen to represent the knowledge considered necessary for the generally educated person to think completely about contemporary social problems.

Test 2: Background in the Natural Sciences measures general scientific knowledge from the physical and biological sciences, though content is not restricted to that contained in the high school curriculum. The test should indicate not only the background the student has acquired but also the depth of this interest in, and his aptitude for, scientific study.

Test 3: Correctness and Appropriateness of Expression should provide an indication of the student's mastery of basic elements in effective writing (punctuation, usage, capitalization, spelling, diction, phraseology, and organization). Items are presented in actual writing situations in which the student must detect and correct errors.

Test 4: Ability to Do Quantitative Thinking is actually a very general and practical mathematics test containing problems in which every high school graduate should be able to solve. The test is designed as a measure of background and general aptitude in mathematics with only a small proportion of items reflecting highly specialized course content.

Test 5: Ability to Interpret Reading Materials in the Social Studies and Test 6: Ability to Interpret Reading Materials in the Natural Sciences measure the student's ability to read and think critically about a variety of materials in each area. Specific abilities include understanding what is stated, understanding what is implied, and evaluating critically.

Test 7: Ability to Interpret Literary Materials provides a description of the understanding which a student derives from reading literary materials. In prose and poetry over a wide range of styles and types of literature the student is asked to demonstrate his reading comprehension skills as well as his knowledge of important literary elements (characterization, imagery, mood and tone, and style).

Tests 5, 6, and 7, while constructed as reading comprehension tests, are intended to measure how well the student can use what he has learned in interpreting, evaluating, relating, and applying ideas and concepts, new and old. These tests are the heart of the battery in that they represent measures of skills which should be the outcome of any genuine educational experience.

Test 8: General Vocabulary measures a specific ability to recognize the meaning of words in context as commonly found in reading. A composite score based on all eight of these tests constitutes a good measure of general scholastic aptitude.

Test 9: Use of Sources of Information tests the student's ability to use sources of information available to him such as textbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias, globes, maps, atlases, periodicals, and public libraries. This score is not included in the composite because it is less indicative of general educational development than are those scores on Tests 1-8.

Though both test batteries under consideration propose to measure educational development or progress of the high school student, they have adopted somewhat different methods. While TAP is a multi-level test with different but overlapping tests for each grade from 9 to 12, ITED is a single instrument to e used with all of the grades 9-12. This practice is in keeping with the philosophy of the ITED authors; they are mainly concerned with measuring ultimate and lasting outcomes, rather than specific and immediate results, of educational experience. The single instrument design includes items which reveal students' progress toward attaining these ultimate goals. TAP authors used as their guidelines current curricular practices, while ITED authors looked to guidelines which define any educational experience, not only formal school instruction.

Despite differences in statement of goals and in presentation of materials, the two batteries, in final consideration, do seem to agree on the educational elements deserving major emphasis. Both are concerned with the student's ability to think critically, and both

purport to measure, not the student's factual knowledge or mechanical skills, but his ability to use his knowledge and kills in new learning situations.

A quick comparison of the individual tests in the batteries as presented in Table 1 shows that organization is different for the two, but they are similar in their major emphases. ITED does not present a single measure of reading comprehension as does TAP but yields three of those measures in Tests 5, 6, and 7—Ability to Interpret Reading Materials in the Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences, and Ability to Interpret Literary Materials. TAP includes both a general reading comprehension test (Test 4) and a separate test to measure ability in reading and interpreting literature (Test 6) which corresponds to ITED Test 7.

Each test battery includes a social studies test (ITED Test 1 and TAP test 1) and ITED Test 5 involves knowledges and skills in the Social Sciences as well as reading comprehension skills. Measures of natural science development are provided in Test 3 of TAP and Tests 2 and 6 of ITED. Both batteries include sections involving composition skills: Test 2 of TAP and Test 3 of ITED. Development of students' mathematical abilities is measured in Test 5 of TAP and Test 4 of ITED, though the ITED test is designed to measure practical abilities rather than to reflect subject content at any specific level. Unlike TAP, the ITED battery provides a separate measure of general vocabulary skills in Test 8. In TAP measures of students' abilities to define words in context are included in both the Reading (Test 4) and the Literature (Test 6) sections. In addition, ITED includes a test of the student's ability to use information sources (Test 9).

**TABLE 1**

**BATTERY CONTENTS**

| *TAP* | *ITED* |
|---|---|
| Test 1: Social Studies | Test 1: Basic Social Concepts |
| Test 2: Composition | Test 2: Background in Natural Sciences |
| Test 3: Science | Test 3: Correctness and Appropriateness of Expression |
| Test 4: Reading | Test 4: Quantitative Thinking |
| Test 5: Mathematics | Test 5: Interpreting Reading Materials in the Social Sciences |
| Test 6: Literature | Test 6: Interpreting Reading Materials in the Natural Sciences |
| | Test 7: Interpreting Literary Materials |
| | Test 8: General Vocabulary |
| | Test 9: Use of Sources of Information |

### *Data and Discussion*

Analyzing the influence of reading ability on test performance in high school is a more difficult task than consideration of the same questions with regard to the elementary level, a subject discussed in a previous article.1 The ability to read is a vital part of the educational process at all ages, but becomes increasingly more important at the secondary level where a great part of the information to be acquired is available only through printed materials. It is clear that, in testing for educational development, reading must be a part of most any area.

Tables 2 and 3 provide comparable data for analyzing the relationship of reading ability to the areas tested by TAP and ITED, respectively. Correlation coefficients of one subtest with another are useful in determining the extent to which the subtests measure different things, i.e. different aspects of educational development. Rules of thumb for justifying that two tests are useful in that they do measure different things were discussed in the article mentioned above. To review: Coefficient of .65 or lower-use of both tests justified; coefficient between .65 and .79—questionable value in using both tests; coefficient of .80 or above—seriously questionable value in using both except in special circumstances of emphasizing certain curricular aspects.

Correlation values between tests for TAP are presented by grade in Table 2, where Test 4: Reading is used as the measure of reading ability upon which our analysis is based. The table shows that the relationship of each subtest with reading in TAP is similar over grades 9-12; correlations being highest with Test 6: Literature (.82-.84) and lowest with Test 5: Mathematics (.66-.70). It would be expected that the

**TABLE 2**

**INTERCOLLECTION BETWEEN TEST 4: READING AND ALL OTHER TESTS OF THE TESTS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Grades 9-12

| *Test* | *Test 4: Reading at Grades* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1: Social Studies | .80 | .78 | .78 | .82 |
| 2: Composition | .77 | .80 | .76 | .77 |
| 3: Science | .75 | .74 | .72 | .71 |
| 5: Mathematics | .69 | .70 | .68 | .66 |
| 6: Literature | .83 | .84 | .82 | .83 |

Literature test would correlate highly with reading since it is a measure of comprehension as well as a measure of literary knowledge.

Utilizing the rules of thumb as stated above, there is reason to question the value of including both the Reading test and the Literature test in the same battery. The Social Studies test shows a high relationship (.78-.82) with Reading and so does the Composition test (.76-.80), but coefficients over all grades for both of these tests and the Literature test would justify their use in a battery which is designed to emphasize a variety of objectives. Both the Science test and Mathematics test would fall in this same category (Science: .71-.75 and Math: .66-.70).

Correlations of the various subtests with measures of reading ability are presented in Table 3 for ITED. There being no single reading test as such in the battery, the correlation table is based on Tests 5, 6, and 7. Though the three tests are concerned with three different subject matter areas, they are substantially related (.75, .78, and .74). Undoubtedly, the binding element is their common emphasis on reading comprehension.

**TABLE 3**

**INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEASURES OF READING COMPREHENSION (TEST 5, 6, AND 7) AND ALL OTHER TESTS OF THE IOWA TESTS OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Composite for all grades 9-12*

| | *Measures of Reading Comprehension* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Test 5 | Test 6 | Test 7 |
| 1: Basic Social Concepts | .75 | .69 | .66 |
| 2: Background in Natural Sciences | .61 | .66 | .56 |
| 3: Correctness and Appropriateness of Expression | .64 | .58 | .65 |
| 4: Quantitative Thinking | .63 | .58 | .54 |
| 5: Interpreting Reading Materials in the Social Sciences | .** | .75 | .78 |
| 6: Interpreting Reading Materials in the Natural Sciences | .** | .** | .74 |
| 7: Interpreting Literary Materials | .** | .** | .** |
| 8: General Vocabulary | .75 | .67 | .75 |
| 9: Use of Sources of Information | .66 | .67 | .61 |

* Coefficients were derived for each grade in each school in the sample and the composite presented is the weighted average over all grades.

2 Thomas M. Goolsby, Jr., and Robin H. Huber, "Reading Skills as Related to Other Commonly Tested Skills in the Elementary School," *The Florida Reading Quarterly*, II, (March, 1996), pp.48-57.

Test 4: Quantitative Thinking is at related to the three comprehension tests (.54, .58, .63), and Test 8: General Vocabulary is most highly related (.67, .75, .75). Understandably, Test 1: Basic Social Concepts and Test 5: Interpreting Social Studies Materials are highly related (.75). All of the tests may be justified for inclusion in a battery concerned with providing measures of achievement in all areas.

It is evident then, from both the description fo the tests and the correlation tables, that reading abilty is important in most of the subtests in the two batteries. Comparing the degree to which the two batteries are related to reading ability as measured by the tests discussed above, the TAP battery tests yield consistently higher correlation coefficients than their counterparts in ITED. It may be that the ITED batttery tests are to a slight degree less dependent on reading skills than those of TAP.

The information presented in this paper strenghtens the realization of the need for special emphasis on reading, not only at the elemtnary level, but also at the secondary level. In an earlier article invovling elementary tests, reading is shown to be a considerable part of all areas. Within either of these high school batteries, reading achievement would be an influential element in measurement in any area, and this fact should be considered before administering tests to a student who is weak in reading so that he may be given tests in the other curriculum areas which are least dpenedent on reading ability.

## *REFERENCES*

1. Goolsby, Thomast M., Jr., and Huber, Robin H.
2. "Reading Skills as Related to Other Commonly Tested Skills in The Elementary School," *The Florida Reading Quarterly*, II, March, 1966.
3. Lindquist, E. F., (Director). *The Iowa Tests of Educational Development*, Science Research Associates, 1952.
4. Scannel, Dale P., (Director). *Manual for Adminstrators, Supervisors, and Counselors,* TAP, Houghton Mifflin Co.
5. Scannel, Dale P., (Director). *Teacher's Manual*, TAP, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964.
6. Scannel, Dale P., (Director). *Tests of Academic Progress*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964.
7. State university of Iowa, Iowa City. *General Manual, ITED*, Science Research Associates, 1959 edition.
8. State University of Iowa, Iowa City. *Manual for the School Administrators, ITED*, Science Research Associates, 1957 edition.

Reprinted from *The Flordia Reading Quarterly,* 1964-1968, Vol. 3, no. 1 (1966), pg. 32.

# The Use of Comics to Foster Initial Reading Instruction

*Edward J. Shaffer*
Glassboro State College, Glassboro, New Jersey

If there is a place for comics as a medium for initial or early reading instruction, little evidence supports the contention. Comic art as suitable reading material has been widely deplored by teachers and parents (1). Concomitant with general antipathy among educators for using comics as a wholesome recreational reading activity, many teachers have discouraged or rejected completely any attempt to incorporate familiar comics or cartoons into plans for initiating, fostering or maintaining reading facility.

The aversion that many parents and teachers have for comic reading, apparently, is not shared by children. This medium has an appeal unmatched by any other form of reading material (2). Perhaps the comic-like characters and format of the well-known Dr. Suess series of beginning readers accounts in part for their widespread allure and popularity.

Is it proper and reasonable for teachers to avoid a medium for instruction that has proven merit in terms of interests, appeal, and popularity? Gertrude Hildreth is one who believes there is reason to use comics as a source of reading material. She says, "there is definitely a place for the better comic strips because they help children learn to read while enjoying the humor and adventure." (3)

In order to substantiate the premise that familiar comic characters and scenes might stimulate and improve reading achievement of school beginners, a project was undertaken during 1964-65 at the Florida State University, Tallahassee, in cooperation with the Broward County, Florida, schools.

## *Design and Procedure*

A control group used its conventional plan for teaching first grade reading which included a basal series with supplementation by experience charts. The experimental group followed its traditional plan, similar to that of the control group, for four days per week. On Fridays, this group was exposed to scenes from familiar comics projected on a screen by an overhead projector. Borrowing techniques from the language-experience approach, teachers recorded on the chalkboard and charts pupil reactions and interpretations of comic characters, situations, and scenes. The script or "balloons" were emptied before projection. Pupils read their personal language and not that found in the comic projections. Following a group discussion and recording of various impressions on the chalkboard and charts, the experimental group were given a printed form of the same scene that was projected so each pupil might write at his seat another interpretation or impression more suitable to him. The reading skills period was limited to approximately 60 minutes each day in both groups. Dependent stimuli given the experimental group was offered in lieu of a regular skills period and not in addition to regular work. Also, both groups were informed of the general purposes of the study to neutralize the so-called placebo and Hawthorne effects.

Independent measures were intelligence as measured by the California Test of Mental Maturity, age at the beginning of the study, and reading readiness as measured by the Metropolitan Readiness Test. The criterion measure was achievement on the California Reading Test given at the termination of the 1964-65 year. The variables applied to the experimental group were introduced in October and maintained through April.

Information about each student used in the study was recorded on IBM cards. Means and standard deviations were computed by the BMDOID (4) computer program. All calculations made by computer programs were performed by the IBM 709 computer located on the campus of the Florida State University in Tallahassee.

## *The Findings*

The "t" test was employed to find the differences between the groups on the independent measures of intelligence, reading readiness, and age. A significant "t value" was obtained when the mean intelligence score of the girls in the experimental group was compared to the mean score of the girls in the control group. This led to the decision to carry out the analysis of the result using the reading achievement scores as the dependent variable in a two by two factorial analysis of covariance. Intelligence was the independent measure or covariate. The design allowed a contrast of (1) the performance of subjects by treatment, (2) the performance of subjects according to sex, and (3) the performance of subjects based upon both sex and treatment.

The variation in the number of students in each group led to the determination to use the general linear hypothesis to carry out the analysis of covariance design. The general linear hypothesis was used because it does not require equal cell sizes.

First grade children, who supplied their own captions for familiar cartoons and used them in a language-experience approach with beginning reading instruction, did not significantly differ at the .05 level

of significance in reading achievement from a control group of first grade students taught in a conventional manner and setting.

The total mean achievement scores for the boys in the experimental and control groups did not differ significantly from the total mean achievement scores of the girls in the experimental and control groups.

No significant differences were found between the total mean achievement scores of the boys in the experimental group when compared to the boys in the control group and the girls in the experimental group (at the .05 level of significance). No significant differences were found between the total mean achievement scores of the girls in the experimental group and the girls in achievement scores of the girls in the experimental group and the girls in the control group.

The effects of utilizing projected comic material in a first grade reading program where students supply captions and prose, interpret and discuss, record personal language in comic situations remain inconclusive. Children in the experimental groups did as well on the reading achievement test as the children in the control groups. The treatment was enjoyed by the children and teachers. This could be justification enough for this type of program in beginning reading instruction. The long range outcome of the cartoon stimuli might show added justification for their use.

It seems reasonable to believe from the evidence shown in the study that interjecting of projected comic materials into a first grade reading program must be helpful in stimulation for reading event though the process does not significantly affect total reading achievement.

### *REFERENCES*


1. DeBoer, Joh J. and Martha Dallman, *The Teaching of Reading*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960, p. 258.
2. Marston, William Moulton, "Why 100,000,000 Americans Read Comics," *The American Scholar*, Vol. XII (Winter, 1943-44), p. 35.
3. Hildreth, Gertrude, *Teaching Reading*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1958, p. 255.
4. Dixon, W. J. (ed.), *BMD Biomedical Computer Program*. Los Angeles: Health Sciences Computing Facility, Department of Medicine, University of California, January 1, 1964.


Reprinted from *The Flordia Reading Quarterly*, 1967, Vol. 3, no. 2(1967), pg. 26.

**TABLE 1**

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT MEASURES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

| *Independent Measures* | *Experimental* | *Control* |
|---|---|---|
| Sample Size | 62 | 72 |
| Mean Intelligence | 106.15[a] | 100.97 |
| Standard Deviation | 19.49 | 18.24 |
| Age (months) Mean | 73.82 | 74.15 |
| Standard Deviation | 3.95 | 5.19 |
| Reading Readiness Mean | 56.00 | 54.56 |
| Standard Deviation | 13.04 | 9.86 |

[a] Mean Based on Sixty-one Scores.

## TABLE 2

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT MEASURES ON AN OVERALL COMPARISON BASED ON SEX FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS[a]

| *Independent Measures* | *Female* | *Male* |
|---|---|---|
| Sample Size | 53 | 81 |
| Mean Intelligence[b] | 106.77 | 101.15 |
| Standard Deviation | 20.00 | 17.99 |
| Mean Age | 73.57 | 74.28 |
| Standard Deviation | 3.91 | 5.08 |
| Reading Readiness Means | 56.08 | 54.67 |
| Standard Deviation | 11.60 | 11.33 |

[a] Independent measures are defined as intelligence, age, and reading readiness.
[b] Mean based on fifty-two scores.

## TABLE 3

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT MEASURES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS ON THE BASIS OF SEX WITHIN THE TWO GROUPS

| *Independent Measures* | *Experimental* | | *Control* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* |
| Sample Size | 23 | 39 | 30 | 42 |
| Mean Intelligence | 113.23[a] | 102.15 | 102.03 | 100.21 |
| Standard Deviation | 17.67 | 19.55 | 20.55 | 16.61 |
| Age Mean | 73.52 | 74.00 | 73.60 | 74.55 |
| Standard Deviation | 3.87 | 4.04 | 4.00 | 5.91 |
| Reading Readiness Mean | 58.78 | 54.36 | 54.00 | 54.95 |
| Standard Deviation | 11.98 | 13.51 | 11.05 | 9.02 |

[a] Mean based on twenty-two scores.

# Building Council Success –Use Notebooks!

*Donna J. Read*
Florida Atlantic University

As president of a local reading council this year, I recently inherited two huge boxes of materials which have been passed on from president to president over the last 16 years. As I looked through these materials, it became obvious that much of it should be organized and put in the hands of current executive board members if these leaders were to be the most effective in carrying out the responsibilities during the year. The solution seemed to be loose-leaf notebooks filled with this valuable information. And so the endless hours of compiling notebooks began.

At first the goal was to develop a notebook for each officer in the council, but later I realized each committee chair needed a notebook also. In order that the notebooks be informational and attractive, I obtained 14 black loose-leaf notebooks with one for the president being slightly larger. I put the name of each office/committee on a notebook using yellow, permanent super stick gothic letters. Then I collected cartoons from The Charlie Brown Dictionary by C. M. Schulz. While it is possible to cut the cartoons out of the book, I chose to photocopy and color each cartoon and then add a "talking bubble" for each.

The cartoons selected for each notebook related in a humorous way to some facet of each council leader's responsibilities. For example, one cartoon in the president's notebook is a picture of the entire Peanuts group including Snoopy and Charlie. The talking bubble over the cartoon reads "I'd like to introduce the board . . . " Another cartoon is Snoopy dressed as a referee and blowing a whistle. The talking bubble states "Will the meeting please come to order!" There are a total of nine cartoons on the cover of this particular notebook.

After the cartoons for each notebook were selected and their bubbles were typed, the cartoons were then glued onto the notebooks using rubber cement. I then covered them with a transparency which was secured with yellow plastic tape around the edge of the cover. The final effect was a collage that appeared framed by the tape!

Although the outside of each notebook is appealing, the inside is too. Using notebook dividers, I included some pertinent information in all of the notebooks, regardless of office or committee. This information consisted of a list of board members with addresses and phone numbers, a copy of the bylaws and the list of responsibilities for each officer (which I highlighted with a yellow marker), a complete membership list, photocopies of past committee reports, council stationery loose-leaf paper and pen, a calendar, a place for minutes of board meetings, and the council newsletter. In addition, depending upon the responsibilities of an office or committee, other unique categories were created, such as a section with sample election ballots from previous years for the Nominating Committee. Thus the number of categories varied for each notebook; the president's notebook has 22 different sections, consisting primarily of one category for each committee where duties and original committee reports are kept. In the Program noteboo, the sections are devoted to each month in which an activity is sponsored. The first section begins with September for the Membership Tea and Concludes with June, our Transition Bruch. Any materials pertaining to these events are carefully filed under the appropriate heading.

I presented these notebooks to the Board Members at our Transition Brunch. They smiled as they read their own notebook and then passed the other notebooks around and laughed. Some of their comments were, "I like this one . . . ", "This one is hysterical . . . ", "What a clever idea", etc.

The wonderful feature of these notebooks is that they can be tailored to any reading council just as they were for our council. Additionally, they will remain in our council for years to come, passed on to new officers and committee chairpersons. This will establish a history for each succeeding Board Member and hopefully make them more effective and efficient council leaders. This year will surely be the test!.

Reprinted from *Florida Reading Quarterly*, 1982-1984, Vol. 19, no. 2 (1982), pg. 26.

Leading
the Way
to Literacy