Natural literacy: The link between reading and writing for the emergent reader

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NATURAL LITERACY
THE LINK BETWEEN READING AND WRITING FOR THE EMERGENT READER

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To understand psycholinguistics as it applies to the emergent reader, it is necessary to present an overview of commonly held beliefs among psycholinguists. From this information, it will become apparent why the study of psycholinguistics is interwoven into our study of the beginning reader. It is impossible to separate oral language development and natural fluency from the reading process; they are intricately, yet harmoniously, bound together.

Psycholinguistics, as its name suggests, lies at the intersection of psychology and linguistics. As an independent study, it is about fifteen years old. Linguistic analysis shows that language has two levels—a surface structure, this is, the sounds of written representation of language; and a deep structure, that is, meaning. These two levels of one language are related in a complex way through the system of rules, that is, grammar, or syntax.

Psychology contributes insights about how language must be learned and used. Studies in this area indicate there are severe perceptual limitations on the amount of "surface structure" that we can process to comprehend language. Psychology shows that our working memory is so
constrained that we could not possibly comprehend speech or writing if we analyzed individual words. Psychology also provides data about human learning, showing that learning is rarely the result of a passive exposure to instruction but rather the result of an active search for specific information, which is another reason why rules can be learned but not taught. (Goodman, 1971)

Psycholinguistic research confirms the linguistic insight that language is processed at deep structure levels. We remember things, not individual words. We distinguish elements and relationships that are not actually represented in the surface structure but are construed from the meanings that we derive from the hidden deep structure. (Goodman, 1971)

Psycholinguistic techniques have been applied directly to the study of learning to read. They clearly show the type of information a child appears to need. A child needs to be exposed to a wide range of choices so that he can detect the significant elements of written language. Goodman reports that experiments have shown that beginning readers look for and use orthographic, syntactic and semantic redundancy in written language. (1971) Therefore, a child learning to read, like the child learning to speak, seems to need the opportunity to examine a large sample of language to generate rules and to test and modify these hypotheses. The child is already programmed to learn to read. He needs written language that is both interesting and comprehensible, and teachers who understand language-learning and who appreciate his competence as a language-learner. (Goodman, p. 180)
Psycholinguistics make it possible for us to understand how language is used to communicate thoughts, and how experiences are manipulated through language. To put this basic knowledge to work, it is essential for educators to view reading as a receptive process and readers as users of language. Language cannot be broken into pieces without changing it to a set of abstractions: sounds, letters and words. When it is all together, the learner can use his knowledge of the language structure and his conceptual background as a framework in which to utilize graphic print. Broken into pieces, on the other hand, language has to be learned abstract, piece by piece. In a sense, the reader has to relearn how to use the pieces in the reading task. It is suggested that children who have trouble learning to read are those who are unable to take the abstract bits and pieces of their instruction and put them together. (Goodman, 1972)

The solution to tracing learning problems are in the children themselves. (Goodman, 1972) If we view them as users of language, our goal becomes one of making literacy an extension of the learner's natural language development. Instruction will be successful to the extent that it capitalizes on the children's language learning abilities and their existing language competence.

Perhaps we have been so busy searching for weaknesses in learners that we have overlooked their language learning strengths. This is the thread, the foundation for teachers
of the emergent readers to keep foremost in their minds when determining an instructional model to follow or develop. Motivation for reading as for all other language learning is intrinsic. Language is learned because people need to communicate. The message must be one the learner cares about. Relevance is vital in reading instruction. Therefore, the importance of any particular letters and words in any sequence can be determined only in relationship to the message the whole sequence is conveying.

This has great implication for beginning reading. It means that right from the beginning of instruction, learners must be dealing with meaningful, natural language. The best place to begin is their own language as they use it to cope and express their own experiences. As children strive to get meaning by processing written language, they begin to develop comprehension strategies for selecting and using the graphic information, predicting and understanding grammatical structure, and relating their experiences and concepts to written language. They develop strategies for recognizing when they have gone wrong and strategies for correcting. "Though these strategies seem more complicated than the skills we are used to teaching, they are much the same as those the learners have already learned to use in listening." (Goodman, 1972)

Kavale in his article "Psycholinguistic Implications for Beginning Reading Instruction" (1978) recommends that
if the goal of reading instruction is to direct the beginning reader to the efficient reading processes of the skilled reader, it is suggested that there are clear directions for instruction which should include the following:

1. The period of reading readiness should have its primary focus upon language activities. According to the research done by Kavale and Schreiner, too much time is spent on perceptual and discrimination activities which have only minimal relevance for the reading process. A psycholinguistic framework suggests that language activities are of greater importance. Children must be provided with a wide variety (range) of real and vicarious experiences since readers draw on their own experiential background, conceptual, and language abilities to comprehend. It is certainly true that prior knowledge of the world contributes more information to reading than the visual symbols on the printed page.

2. Prior to formal reading instruction, a beginning reader should understand the nature of reading. The child must become familiar with the concept. Many children do not possess a concept of reading. A child must be led to know what reading and associated concepts mean. This is best accomplished by reading to the child while the child follows along. In this way, the child develops an understanding of the association between print and speech which is fundamental to the utilization of language in reading. (Clay, 1979)
3. From the outset, the beginning reader must understand that the purpose of reading is to obtain meaning from the printed page. It is not enough to just say words since reading without any level of comprehension is not reading. (Goodman, 1972) There must be safeguards to insure that the child does not establish a set response for word-perfect reading, but rather for comprehension-centered reading. Since children enjoy asking questions and listening to answers, emphasis should be upon the fact that reading is like listening in this respect. Beginners must be provided with experiences through which they feel the need to read for their own purposes, that is obtaining information from the printed page. The stress should be on why they are reading, which ultimately will lead beginning readers to the realization that discovering meaning is a reward in itself.

4. It has been suggested that "literacy can become a natural extension of the existing language competence of the learner". (Goodman, 1972) However, this cannot be accomplished if instruction focuses exclusively upon phonics training which establishes visual-acoustic categories only useful for word identification purposes. The beginning reader must have the opportunity to induce the underlying structures of written language. Through examples and contrasts the beginning reader must discover the distinctive features by which letters, words, and meaning can be differentiated. "This is not taught, it is discovered by the child
for himself by means of perceptual and cognitive skills common to many aspects of visual perception." (Smith, 1971)

5. While the beginning reader is expanding competence to facets of written language, the language experience approach is suggested as the basis for a fast start into reading. (Hall, 1978; Kavale, 1978) The dictated language experience stories illustrate for the beginner that reading is talk written down (Lee and Allen, 1963) because of the maximization of the correspondence, the printed word, and the child's language. A child's reading performance improves when materials are written following the child's own syntactic patterns. (Ruddell, 1965)

6. Because of the emphasis upon reading, "reading materials, however simple, must have something to say; there must be some thought to be comprehended." (Goodman, 1972) At all levels, reading materials must have meaning appropriate for the child's life and language. However, most reading series, because of the need for repetition (basal-whole word) or the need for decodable words (phonic-linguistic), possess stilted, unnatural sentence patterns. The artificial language patterns render the syntactic structures useless as a source of information. Thus, a premium is placed upon the graphic information which is useful only for the individual word identification and, consequently, the psycholinguistic processes necessary for efficient reading cannot operate.

7. The development of a large stock of sight words
should be initiated during the early stages of the reading program. It is suggested that these be primarily structure or function words since they act as glue words of language and are usually the most frequent but least regular. Fluent reading is relatively fast reading and a beginning reader who encounters difficulty with individual words is likely to lose much of the information from the printed page because of the load on short-term memory. (Smith, 1971) Therefore, without the necessity for individual identification of structure or function words, the beginning reader can concentrate upon a fast reading rate which will minimize the information losses due to memory overload and, consequently, aid reading for meaning.

8. The next task of the beginning reader involves learning the basic decoding skills. By this time the beginning reader should have discovered the nature of the code by induction. The decoding skills taught should be kept at a minimum since the beginning reader must realize that the ability to recognize words in isolation is not the goal of reading. Therefore, it is necessary to guard against "overskilling" in the decoding area so pronunciation does not become an end in itself but rather a tool to be utilized only when immediate meaning identification fails.

9. Paralleling the code emphasis program, activities encouraging the use of context, should be introduced. Initially, contextual word recognition should be introduced
primarily through oral exercises. Activities dealing with
the auditory factor reduces the number of possible words
which will fit a particular context. For example, the
addition of beginning and ending sound-symbol relationships,
combined with contextual predictions, reduces the number
of possible words even further. Once established by oral
exercises, training in contextual analysis should continue
through the use of written exercises. Finally, the skill
of contextual analysis should be transferred to actual
reading material in which the beginning reader learns to
evaluate responses in reference to the question, "Does the
sentence make sense with this word?" At all times teachers
must encourage risk taking, not recklessly but as a
"psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman, 1976), because
effective reading requires the reader to form expectations
that reduce uncertainty and, therefore, reduce the amount
of visual information required to obtain meaning. The net
result of contextual training is a progressive movement
towards the behaviors characteristic of the skilled reader.

10. Throughout the learning-to-read process, it is
necessary to guard against the reading process being
fractionated into a series of skills rather than a unified
whole. Therefore, the only reading skills taught should be
those essential for the beginning reader to gain information
from the printed page. Increased reading proficiency then
becomes, not the extension and elaboration of existing
skills, but rather the use of those skills in comprehending the printed page. This goal is achieved only through practice, not on isolated skills, but in reading. The one prescription offered by Smith (1971) and Graves (1983) for the learning-to-read process is simply: let children read. Therefore, a majority of instructional time should be spent reading rather than in isolated drill or workbook activities.

With this framework in mind, let's look at the emergent reader and the essential ingredients for success. We as educators must recognize that children who come to us in grades K-1 are already users of language, although most children are not yet users of written language in reading and writing at the time of school entrance. We need to respect, accept and build upon the language children bring with them, to the school setting. According to Smith, the existing use of spoken language is the base for written language learning. The school setting does not teach oral language. What must be offered in school is the opportunity for language expansion and for instruction in written language learning.

Therefore, in pre-reading and beginning reading, it is essential for children to develop the basic concepts that reading is a form of communication and that written language represents meaning. To do this, the teacher can use the children's oral language to create language experience
materials. Children should have real language used in instructional materials within a meaningful communication setting. The abstractness of written language is a stumbling block for the child first learning to read, but that abstractness can be lessened if the content material is directly related to the learner when it represents his own language and experiences. Goodman (1972) and Clay (1979) make it clear when they stress that exposure to print does not come after children learn to read. Exposure is needed to prepare children for reading.

Marie Clay defines reading as a message gaining, problem solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced. According to Frank Smith (1978), it is what the brain says to the eye that is so important in reading. The brain is not packed with visual images. It is not an encyclopedia. The brain has a theory of the world, a complex theory of knowledge that works so well we are unaware of it. We use this theory of the world, not in the past, but in the future. We predict all the time. We only become aware of it when our predictions fail. We must encourage the child to ask himself questions and develop in him strategies for improving his predictions. Inherent in this language/reading acquisition process is the critical feature of literacy.

Understanding natural literacy in children as a predominant and ongoing process for the emergent reader is
critical according to Clay (1978), Mass (1982), Goodman (1972), Smith (1978), and others. Teale outlines an account of how natural literacy in young children occurs. Implicit in Teale's discussion is its dynamic character. Once again is the belief that the child is not a passive responder to stimuli and that the key to this developmental process is the child's interaction with the environment. Teale (1982) suggests that becoming literate naturally is subjective, and therefore the process can best be described as one of learning rather than of teaching. We must, however, be cautious. This leads one to believe that the individual's learning is an isolated, individualistic act. To the contrary, as Teale and other authors point out, the environment, or society, organizes what the child experiences and, as a result, influences the child's cognitive representation and processing in literacy. Teale summarizes the definition of literacy:

...the practice of literacy is not merely abstract skill in producing, decoding, and comprehending writing, rather, when children become literate, they use reading and writing in the performance of the practices which constitute their culture.

Important to stress repeatedly is the fact that children who learn to read and write before going to school do not do so simply by observing others engaged in literacy events and by independently examining and manipulating written language. A child's literacy environment (Teale, 1982) does not have an independent existence; it is constructed in the
interactions between the child and those persons around him.

Critical to this whole process of literacy is social interaction. It appears to hinge upon the experiences the child has in reading or writing activities which are mediated by literate adults, older siblings, or events in the child's everyday life. These events are absolutely essential in both triggering and furthering development.

Interactive literacy events are essential, according to Teale (1982). It is what surrounds the reading or writing per se, what makes literacy "take" in the child. The child is actively involved. She is an actual participant experiencing the motives, goals and conditions associated with the activity as they relate to the reading or writing which is going on.

A second critical feature which surrounds the actual reading or writing is speech. As the child becomes more capable of carrying out the task for himself/herself, the adult gradually involves the child in assuming more of the responsibility for completing the task. Therefore, these interactions involving literacy, internalizes aspects of reading or writing activities and eventually the child comes to the point where he or she conducts these activities for himself or herself.

Teale (1982) notes that it should be emphasized that in the case of literacy development, story and picture book reading episodes are only one type of complex, interactive
literacy-speech events which are at first largely directed by the adults and are progressively internalized into the child's own independent competencies. As well as encounters with books, the children are simultaneously experiencing a range of other activities as a part of daily life in home and community. To further develop this idea of natural literacy as a step beyond reading and writing experiences with parents or literate siblings, the child's independent observations, exploration of, and practice with, written language is important and must be addressed (Doake, 1981). Holdaway's work (1979) indicates that children's individually conducted literacy events, especially their independent re-enactments of familiar storybooks which they have previously experienced in interactive activities with caregivers or older siblings, serve to develop several aspects of their abilities in reading and writing. With this information in mind, we need to examine how the first teacher can expand and build on these skills.

Goodman (1971) summarizes this concept well. Once again he reinforces that the two most important resources a learner has in order to learn reading and writing are competence in oral language and the ability to learn language as it is needed for new functions. Since all language is learned in the context of expressing and comprehending meaning, in literate societies, children begin acquisition of literacy in much the same way as they acquire oral language.
Their environment is saturated with print (signs, magazines, newspapers, TV) and children begin to ask questions about what it means. The first teacher should answer and confirm their observations.

A child's first teacher can do a great deal to move him toward literacy before formal instruction begins. (Mass, 1982) A child stimulated in an environment where writing is valued as an integral part of the day will know a great deal about reading. A child will begin to know the function of writing and begin the essential connection that the purpose of writing is to convey a message which looks a certain way and that can be retrieved (or read) by anyone who knows the system.

Mass suggests that the role of the first teacher is to expand, enrich and build on children's knowledge about stories and books, about speaking and communicating, about reading and writing, and to help them make the connections between what they already know about the functions of language, as well as the real reading and writing engaged in by literate people. Marie Clay's research on the emergent reader goes a step further. She offers guidelines for determining the literacy development and readiness of the emergent reader.

According to Marie Clay, reading begins at home. Certain assets were apparent:

1. Parents and siblings had a high regard for reading.
2. They had been read to regularly from an early age.
3. They had been read to...their questions answered (about words, reading and illustrations).

It is in these situations of sharing books with children that the child learns to bring language and visual analysis to bear upon the task of extracting messages from books. A child who does not have books in his home (suitable books, which are read to him) will have missed experiences with bookish kinds of language, with concepts that are found only in books and with picture exploration, and he will lack practice in coordinating language and visual perception in a way that facilitates progress with reading after entry into school. (Clay, 1979; Smith, 1978; Goodman; 1972)

Parents who respond with enthusiasm to the child's attempt to discover things about himself are providing a richer foundation for schooling than those who generate tension and stress as they instruct the child.

If children have been read to and have been allowed to participate in stories, they will have a good idea of the structure of stories and how to reproduce them. By the time they enter school, most children command a wide use of language to express themselves and to communicate with others. Children with this understanding are well on their way to becoming literate. They have this knowledge: (Clay 1979)

2. The story could be retrieved by re-reading.
3. The text would stay the same at each re-reading.
School age is not the beginning of development or education in its broadest sense; but it is the beginning of society's formal attempts to instruct all children in groups, in skills that are considered important. It is supposed to coincide with a state of reading readiness in the average child, although studies of pre-school children who have taught themselves to read have been reported. (Clay, 1979)

According to Clay's research there are four areas of pre-school development which are critical for progress in reading. If we could insure that the child who entered school had rich and adequate experience in these areas, we might be able to drop from our list of reading programs those that arise from limitation of experience.

1. The pre-school child's language development is vital for his/her progress in reading. We are concerned not only with the development of his/her vocabulary or his/her articulation of sounds, but with the range and flexibility of the patterns of English sentences which he is able to control. His development in this behavior depends almost entirely on the opportunities he gets to converse with an adult. The more of this experience he enjoys, the more mature his language will be on entering school.

The child's ability to control his own behavior, and in particular the movement pattern of his body is related to early reading progress. His ability to learn from his
sensory interchanges with his environment, and to relate this sensory input of information to the output in language or movement activities is an important foundation for the reading experience.

2. Auditory Discrimination. Important learning must take place in this area. Long before the child enters school he has learned to discriminate between vocal sounds sufficiently to differentiate words from one another. Auditory discrimination activities can aim to have the children perceive likenesses and differences in non-vocal sounds, and to perceive the sound of recurring rhyming words in language games, favorite stories and songs. This should prepare them to hear the words that rhyme, and to recognize that spoken words can begin with the same consonant sound when they begin to read. In developing such skills with rhymes, it is important to provide activities that permit frequent and varied repetition and capture rhythmic movement, alliteration and voice modulation.

3. Visual Perception. Just as there is gradually increased control over language in the preschool years, and over movement and body control, so there is a similar continuing increase in the ability to scan new material, organize one's perception of it, remember it, perhaps refer to it by some label or assign meaning in some other way. The child gains this experience in play, in conversations with people who point out objects and features and pictures to
to the child, and in contact with books. However, the preschool "seeing" experiences tend to differ considerably from school experiences. In preschool days, children are constantly looking upon a wide view, viewing much, seeing little. This causes some children to observe far less than they could. Seeing must go beyond just looking. It must become a mental representation of the forms seen. Schoolwork requires near-point vision and the development of new and precise focussing skills.

4. What child starting school does not experience mixed feelings about school and home? Security, self confidence, acceptance, tolerance and a sense of belonging are a foundation for attitudes that encourage participation in effective learning experiences. Happy, relaxed and stimulating relationships between children, and between children and teacher, promote growth of personality, which in turn advances achievement. The following are some important guidelines for teachers and parents which could encourage the young child's self acceptance: (Clay, 1982)

(a) Recognize the individuality of each child.
(b) Listen to, respect and use the child's opinions.
(c) Accept his feelings.
(d) Accept aggressive, rough, tumble play of an exuberant youngster.
(e) Plan word and play so that he can use his particular abilities.
(f) Give time and thought to him and his needs.
(g) Allow opportunities for him to be with his friends.
(h) Participate with him in pleasurable activities.
(i) Make it rewarding for the child to enter into activities which seem to be a weakness.

At the early stage of beginning reading behavior, the transition to "talking like a book" is a very important step in learning. While absolute correctness of the text may not be the aim of reading at this stage, the child learns some of these important concepts: (Clay, 1979)

1. Print can be turned into speech.
2. There is a message recorded.
3. The picture is a rough guide to the message.
4. Some language units are likely to occur in a particular order.
5. There is a particular message of particular words in a particular order.

Educators may feel that the critical thing for a child to learn is his sounds and will provide an elaborate scheme for teaching that over-rated aspect of reading known as phonics. They are teaching the child to go from letters to sounds. Clay reports that current knowledge suggests that we may have to revise our thinking about the value of phonics. A strategy of analyzing spoken words into sounds and then going from sounds to letters may be a critical
pre-cursor of the ability to utilize the heuristic tricks of phonics. And, many children may not need phonic instruction once they acquire and use a sound sequence analysis strategy.

Marie Clay suggests the following methods to help children acquire this strategy:

1. Help children believe that their judgment is good. Help them learn to trust it.
2. Provide reasons to write.
3. Let children manipulate plastic, wooden letters.
4. Encourage diaries, journals.
5. Read to your class. Discuss words--meanings, sounds of words.
6. Rhyme words, talk about beginning sounds, ending sounds.
7. Sequence what happened first, next, etc.
8. Clap children's names as they are said.

By utilizing some of these techniques, children will naturally begin to write, thus unlocking our language and will be well on their way to becoming naturally fluent.

The beginning reader must build the anticipation of the visual patterns that are likely to follow in written language. A picture must be scanned to gather information and it may be scanned in any direction by complex tracking and back tracking. A printed message must be scanned in a different manner; its meaning is dependent upon scanning
in a particular way dictated by the directionality conventions of written language. Pairing visual and auditory stimuli may be critical at this stage for the emergent reader. He may find it difficult to match the flow of auditory signals coming to his ear, with the order of visual patterns on the page of his text. Specifically he may have trouble in relating the timing of the language behavior to the spacing of visual experience.

Until he reached school, the child was free to scan objects, people, scenes, pictures and even books in any direction he chose. Immediately when he became a candidate for reading, he had to learn that in the printed text situation there was an inflexible set of directions for proceeding across print. There are one-way routes to be learned. He must learn to go from top left position across to the right and then return to the next top left position and go across again to the right. For the average five-year old entrant of average ability that is a difficult piece of learning. (Clay, 1979)

According to Clay's research, good readers seem to learn pattern movements for the visual scanning of print. They must act within the constraints of movements imposed by our arbitrary way of writing down our language. Children who learn to read from one-line sentences or captions acquire the left to right movement. Later, they become able to scan two or more lines. Into this general pattern they
build the ability to search visually word by word, in sequence, and later uses the ability to search letter by letter or cluster by cluster, but still in sequence. During the acquisition stage of directional learning, the process can be seriously disturbed by recurrent error. Its stability is temporarily shaken when the child attempts to integrate some new learning (letter features, punctuation, sentences running over one line into a second line) into the established pattern.

Cunningham (1983) really encapsulates the prerequisites for reading readiness. Cunningham and Clay, as well as other noted researchers in this field, agree that:

1. Children must know the purpose for reading.

2. Children must know what reading feels like and sounds like; that it must sound like English. It is an internal feedback meter which alerts good readers when their reading fails to sound right or make sense, and that it is this meter which compels them to reread to self-correct when their attention has been temporarily distracted from gaining meaning.

3. In order to read with comprehension, children must be able to listen with comprehension.

4. Children who are successful in beginning reading know the conventions and jargon of print.

• We read and write, starting at the top left-hand corner, go across the line, and make a return sweep
and go across the next line until we come to the bottom of the line.

- Left hand pages are read before right hand pages.
- That which can be said can be written, can be read.

In reading and writing, terminology must be understood.

5. Children who are successful in beginning reading can visually discriminate letters and words.

The two most important resources any learner brings to learning in order to read and write are competence in oral language and the ability to learn language as it is needed for new functions. (Goodman, 1977) Since all language is learned in the context of expressing and comprehending meaning, in literate societies children begin acquisition of literacy in much the same way as they acquire oral language. Their environment is saturated with print (signs, magazines, newspaper, TV) and children begin to ask questions about what it means. The first teacher should answer and confirm their observations.

Clay maintains that in order to really read, the learner must pay attention to and integrate four cueing systems:

1. Visual attention to print.
2. Directional rules about position and movement.
4. Hearing sounds in words.

When a child can invent spellings, the teacher can be reason-
ably certain the child is beginning to be conscious of sounds in words. (Chomsky, 197)

Children should be encouraged to discover that the string of meaning they hear can be broken down into a series of words, isolated by pauses; that these words can be further segmented; and that the segmented sounds can be represented by letters. These letters can then be used to construct or invent the words they need to express their message.

Downing (1979) maintains that young children are in a state of "cognitive confusion" about words, letters and sounds when they first come to school, and that to become literate, they must understand not only the functions of reading and writing but must also rediscover the coding rules of the writing systems. Children must become conscious of the sounds of their own speech, represent them with letters, create their own spelling systems, and create a representation of their own language.

The concepts of print held by children can be inferred from their writing. (Clay, 1979, p. 83)

Throughout the first year of instruction what the child spontaneously writes tends to be a fair reflection of what he has learned to look at in detail of print...What (he) generates or produces himself tends to tell us what aspects of print he has under his own control. What he copies incorrectly may tell us what is new to him.

Clay maintains that when a child is writing his/her message, he/she must direct attention to the elements of letters,
letter sequences, and spatial concepts, and must synthesize words and sentences to construct even a simple story. This building-up process complements the breaking-down process or visual analysis required of reading. It is important to keep in mind that not all children follow a prescribed sequence.

Mass reinforces the concept that as flexibility in oral language is a pre-cursor to literacy, interactions between teacher and child about language, print, symbols and their meanings will help make explicit the connections between speech and writing, writing and reading, and reading and speaking. If Downing is right about the young child's cognitive confusion, then the first teacher must make explicit those things the child already knows implicitly about oral language and apply this knowledge to the parallel task of reading and writing.

We must consistently reinforce the concept that the purpose of reading and writing is to communicate, that the text contains a precise message which can be encoded and decoded according to a system the child already controls orally, that reading and writing are but two sides of the same coin and parallel the language the child speaks and hears.

Concepts of literacy develop gradually. In a natural language environment saturated with good stories, meaningful conversations and abundant writing materials, this process
can begin even before the child goes to school. Parents and first teachers can foster this development as the language experience it is.

The ability to name letters is indeed the best predictor of success in beginning reading and traditionally much time and effort has been expended to teach all kindergarteners their letter names. In many cases, beginning reading has been postponed until a child could name all upper and lower case letters. Research has shown that letter-name knowledge was an indicator of a lot of experience with reading and writing. Children who came to school able to name all the letters of the alphabet also had many other important readiness skills. Just teaching the letter name without building these other skills would not result in a child's being successful in beginning reading. Letter name knowledge, however, is important since teachers and instructional materials use letter names as an integral part of beginning reading instruction. Therefore, children who do not know letter names may be confused about what tasks they are asked to do.

The language experience approach used to teach reading is a method in which instruction is built upon the use of reading materials created by writing down children's spoken language. The student-created reading materials represent both the experiences and language patterns of the learner. The communication processes of listening, speaking, reading
and writing are integrated in the language arts and reading instruction. Language experience is the most common term. It is often referred to as: language arts approach or integrated language arts program. Each classroom (program) using language experience is unique as is the teacher using it.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN DEVELOPING A READING PROGRAM

Does the program consider children's background experience?

It is important to remember that both children and adults apply knowledge of past experiences to the reading process.

Does the reading program consider how children acquire and use language when teaching word attack skills?

Piaget's studies suggest that language develops from the whole to the part. The psycholinguistic theory says that the teaching of reading must deal with the whole natural meaningful language. Goodman points out that "the actual importance of any letter, letter part, word or word part, at any point in reading is totally dependent on all other elements and on the grammar and meaning of the language sequence". (K. Goodman, 1974, p. 84) Therefore, any reading program strictly adhering to a decoding approach that requires children to first learn sounds, then lists of words, and finally the reading of sentences violates everything we know about children's acquisition of knowledge about language.
It is the opinion of many authorities in reading research that language experience offers many advantages in capitalizing on children's oral language skills and in developing a well-integrated language arts reading program. Language experience may be the basis for reading instruction and supplement the regular reading program. Why?

1. The content is meaningful. The content of experience stories is meaningful to children. This is very important to note since past experience is so much a part of the reading process. Children are talking and writing about things that they know and understand. The concepts and vocabulary are familiar, hence they can easily comprehend their own written language.

2. Children read their own language. Since the reading material is dictated or written by the children themselves, the written language is their own. It is important that children see their words as they will actually appear in printed reading material. In other words, correct spellings must be used. Children's linguistic ability is recognized and used in teaching them to read. By using their language and their experiences, children experience success at the very beginning of reading instruction. They can actually see how language and reading are related.

3. The language experience approach involves all the language arts. As Hall states:
...the language experience approach is based on the inter-relatedness of language and reading. Pupils learn to read in a communication context where reading occurs in conjunction with talking, listening and writing. (Maryanne Hall, 1970, p. 1)

When using language experience, a teacher naturally integrates all four of the language arts areas and each contributes to the development of the other.

4. Reading is an active process. Children become personally and actively involved in reading. They have the opportunity to formulate their own rules, seek out their own patterns and develop their own ways to identify unfamiliar words. Most importantly they find in their own individual stories and group compositions that meaning is the essential element of reading.

Language experience incorporates the following critical steps so necessary for the emergent reader:

1. The beginning reader must be taught to view reading as a communication process. The content of personally composed stories involves concepts within the scope of children's background knowledge and interests. Communication is present as children react while discussing their ideas, as they write to watch the teacher write those ideas, and as they read their ideas. Comprehension is present since children do understand what they say and write. (Hall, 1972)

2. The beginning reader is a user of language. The spoken language which the child possesses is his greatest asset for learning written language. The normal child from
an adequate home environment has mastered the patterns of his native language by the time of school entrance. He still has much to absorb in language flexibility and elaboration; still he has more than sufficient linguistic ability to learn to read. (Hall, 1972)

The child who has learned spoken language in the preschool years displays an amazing feat of linguistic performance. We should make it possible for him to learn to read with equal ease and to draw upon his existing knowledge and understanding of language. In discussions of reading readiness, great attention has been given to the experience background of children and less to their language background. (Hall, 1972) It is important that we as educators look at language facility and how it operates when a child is learning to read.

3. The beginning reader should understand the reading process as one of consciously relating print to oral language. As the beginning reader works with print he changes the unfamiliar graphic symbols to familiar oral language. Reading is defined as the processing of language information in order to reconstruct a message from print. (Goodman, 1968)

In the language experience approach, the child finds translating print into speech greatly simplified since he is reading that which he first said. The message is easily reconstructed when the reader is the author. In the beginning stages of reading, instruction must be designed to
ensure success for the learner.

Five and six year olds view reading and their concepts of language differently than those of their teachers and other fluent readers. (Downing, 1969) Terminology such as "word", "sentence", "sound", and "letter" was unclear to children. These studies indicate that educators must provide language experiences and activities which (a) orient children correctly to the true purposes of reading and writing, and (b) enable children's natural thinking processes to generate understanding of the technical aspects of language.

4. The beginning reader should incorporate the learning of writing with the learning of reading. The written code involves decoding, going from print to speech, and encoding, going from speech to print. In the language experience approach, writing is a natural correlation to reading as a child first watches the recording of thought he has dictated and he progresses gradually to writing independently.

5. The beginning reader should learn to read from materials written in his language patterns. Reading materials will then always convey meaning to a child in natural language phrasing which sound right and familiar to him. According to Hall and others in this area, pre-primer is limited and is also unlike the oral language of the child.

6. The beginning reader should learn to read meaningful language units. In language experience approach reading, children are dealing with thought units from the flow of
their speech. They are dealing with a large piece of language, not with the phoneme-grapheme unit of a word unit. In language experience approach, children learn to read, using the meaning-bearing patterns of language. They will be exposed to reading material which is not controlled in vocabulary and which does not distort language in an effort to limit vocabulary or emphasize phoneme-grapheme relationships. They gradually acquire a reading vocabulary by identifying words from stories which represent the natural flow of written language. Words are not learned in isolation, but in meaningful sentence and story units.

The beginning reader should learn to read orally with smooth, fluent natural expression. The language experience approach provides oral reading situations in which the child can truly "make it sound like someone talking". Teacher modeling is extremely important here. Children begin to develop a sentence sense in reading. In the language experience approach the beginner does learn to supply the rhythm of speech as he reads.

Finally, the relationship of oral and written language can also be shown as punctuation signals are pointed out incidentally, with emphasis on function and meaning.

Language experience approach not only makes use of the valuable resource of the child's speaking ability, but more importantly it cultivates and eases the child's transition from oral to written language. It is the purpose of this
project to reinforce this concept, as well as clearly making the connection between the writing and reading process. If language experience is viewed as the catalyst and momentum for achieving this goal, we can see that emphasis on children's natural literacy is the natural outgrowth so inherent in young children--the need and desire to write. (Richgels, 1982)

Children use print informally when they begin to scribble and attempt to make sense of their environment. (Clay, 1979; Taylor, 1982) They use it when they play and establish social relationships. They enter school and often are not invited to continue this form of personal expression until they can read and have mastered the conventions of handwriting. Grave's research has established that all children can write at five and six years old, enjoy doing so, and can make at this time "some of the most rapid and delightful growth in writing in their entire lives". Against the idea that children must learn to read before being allowed to write, he says 90 percent of children come to school believing they can write, whereas only 15 percent believe they can read.

Calkins in her research, "Lessons from a Child", demonstrates the clear interface between reading and writing. The skills cannot be separated. Calkins states that there is no way one can watch writing without watching reading. While composing, children are reading continually.
They read to savor the sounds of their language, they read to see what they've written, they reread to regain momentum, they read to reorient themselves...they read to evaluate their work and finally to share. (Calkins, 1983, p. 155)

These skills take place during a language experience conference as well as with the child using "invented spellings". The significance for the emergent reader is powerful. When a child is writing and developing ideas they are unlocking the "mysteries of print" as well as the structure and conventions of our language.

Writing involves reading because it reinforces and develops skills traditionally viewed as reading skills. When children are makers of reading, they gain a sense of ownership over their reading. (Calkins, 1983, p. 156)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Cunningham, Patricia and James W. "What To Do Until the Readiness Workbooks Arrive!" *Reading Horizons,* Vol. 23, #1, Fall 1982, pp. 25-34.


The goal of this project is to provide a comprehensive view of the emergent reader. Within this framework, psycholinguistic research will be used as a catalyst for interlocking and bridging the critical role that speaking and writing play in the process. From this core, the language experience approach will be examined and analyzed. This information will be applied to the development of natural literacy in the emergent reader.

The research cited and discussed in this project will intentionally be comprehensive. It is the goal of this writer, to insure that this project will serve as a source of information for teachers working with children from pre-school to grade one. The second component of this project will offer practical, tested ideas and strategies for classroom use.

Finally, it is the writer's hope that kindergarten teachers in the Shoreline School District will find this project and resource guide suitable for use in their classrooms. Integrating language experience techniques into the basal language arts program has been a grade level goal. After reviewing literature in this area, it was decided that a comprehensive, usable overview of current research,
methodology and application was not available. Therefore, this project has been designed and developed with these concerns in mind.

There is little research available specifically isolating or examining psycholinguistics and the emergent reader. Current research is examining the link between writing and reading. Language experience, literacy and psycholinguistics serve to further emphasize and integrate the bond between writing and reading. For the emergent reader, this connection is significant. This learning process begins before formal school entry. Perhaps, we as educators and teachers of reading need to look at our existing programs and implement the resources already available—the child's natural literacy. The project is structured to present an overview of:

Psycholinguistics
Research on natural literacy
Readiness research
Language experience

The reader will find that these topics are intricately interwoven. With a language experience approach as the foundation, a cohesive, consistent structure can be built. A learning environment is established from which an emergent reader can grow, develop and increase awareness and knowledge of the reading/writing process.
Reader
the emergent
A guide for

Beyond the Rainbow
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to give teachers of young children a structure for integrating language experience into their curriculum.

Beyond the Rainbow introduces activities designed to facilitate the reading language process of Kindergarten age children. Feeling unthreatened and secure, the children will naturally want to discover more about language acquisition and usage. Since each child-author has a personal investment in his/her own story, a natural bridge will be formed to link oral and written language without stress.

Language Experience affirms each person's uniqueness and therefore gives added strength to each person's identity. Their perception of the world, of life, is held intact and respected. No one fails or is held accountable for that which he or she is not cognitively ready to pursue. Reading and language development then becomes an exciting adventure where everyone experiences success.
Overview

Introduction and Basic Premises

Guidelines for Developing A Language Experience Classroom

Problem Solving

Ideas for Getting Started

Techniques for Using Language Experience Successfully

Recipes for Language Experience Stories

Skills Developed Using A Language Experience Approach

Playing with Language

Pattern Books

Shared Book Experience

Publishing Students Work

Developing A Publishing Room In Your School

Resources
BASIC PREMISES OF A HUMANISTIC LANGUAGE READING PROGRAM

1. Children's comfortable language is the starting point in a school language program.

2. New language patterns must first be anchored in children's ears with abundant oral activity so that children can later transpose those patterns into their own thinking, speaking, reading and writing.

3. Poems and stories are a prime source of speech models that children can imitate in exploring new patterns of language and in discovering more about the structure of our language.

4. Firsthand experiences, like a field trip, a puppet show, etc. will be for some children a validation of concepts they already are verbalizing; for other children the experiences will be events that lead to language.

5. Class discussion, long over-used as the only means of developing conceptual language, must be balanced by experiences in creative dramatics, creative writing, choral reading, storytelling, independent research, and other uses of language which also enhance the development and expression of concepts.

6. Purely verbal experiences must be balanced with less verbal experiences such as painting, dancing, pantomine, sculpting, music, rhythms, and play without talk which evoke thoughts and feelings that strongly influence the mainstream of language development.
The following guidelines will prove useful for teachers when planning and facilitating activities in a language experience classroom.

**LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

**COMMUNICATION**

_____ Do the children participate comfortably when talking with the group?

_____ Is the real language of children used as a part of room environment? (dictated stories, books)

_____ Is space and time provided for children to express their ideas with many media?

_____ Is space and time provided for children to participate in puppetry, dramatization and pantomime?

_____ Do children have an opportunity to listen to their own language recorded on tapes?

_____ Do children dictate, observe the writing, and illustrate books that are useful in the classroom?

_____ Do children have opportunities to respond to meanings in their environment? Weather, color, shape, size, texture, emotion, sound and motion?
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

HOW IT WORKS

Are children encouraged to "read" and respond to their environment through their senses--hearing, touching, smelling, tasting and seeing?

Are children given the opportunity to learn non-alphabetic symbols in clocks, maps, numerals, graphs and calendars?

Do children discuss topics such as names of letters, words and sentences?

Are children acquiring vocabularies of names of things, words of action, and words in many descriptive categories?

Is there an emphasis on developing an awareness of words of high frequency?

Do children respond to language structures such as rhyming, beginning sounds and predictive sentence patterns?

Do children have opportunities to identify labels and other words in printed form?
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

LITERATURE (CONTACT WITH LANGUAGE)

___ Are many types of books available for browsing and reading—recreation, information, reading skill development?

___ Do children have access to records and tapes that accompany books?

___ Do children have opportunities to repeat words, phrases and sentences of other authors as they listen to and read stories and poems?

___ Are there prints, musical compositions, photographs, etc., available for personal interpretation?

___ Is choral reading a part of the reading/language arts program?

ASSESSMENT OF READING READINESS

LISTENING: AUDITORY PROCESSING (SENTENCE LEVEL)

___ Is the child able to listen with pleasure to picture books and stories read to him?

___ Is he able to respond to simple directions?

___ Is he able to recall a simple sequence of events from a story or an experience related by someone else?
AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION AND PERCEPTION
(WORD LEVEL)

Is he/she able to hear differences in words?

Are these words the same or different?
  wet/pet (beginning)

Are these words the same or different?
  pet/pit (middle)

Are these words the same or different?
  tab/tap (ending)

Is he/she able to recognize and identify rhyming words?

Level I

Listen to these words: made, bad, bid, sad. Which word is different?

Level II

Listen to this word and give a word that rhymes: fit.

Level III

It falls from the sky and rhymes with train. I am thinking of _______.
ORAL LANGUAGE

___ Is he/she interested in communicating ideas, feelings?
___ Is he/she able to use a variety of words to express ideas, feelings?
___ Is he/she able to recall and use new words related to new experiences?
___ Is he/she able to express ideas using complete sentences (for the most part)?
___ Is he/she able to organize ideas with respect to sequence?
___ Is he/she able to express simple interpretation (i.e., materials listened to, series of related illustrations)?
___ Is he/she able to supply endings to simple stories?
___ Is he/she able to recall from stories read to him?
   1. The general sequence of events?
   2. The main idea?
   3. The main character?

___ Does his speech reflect normal intonation patterns with regard to:
   1. Pitch: Inflection signaling questions, statements.
   2. Stress: Key signal words--"but", "because".
   3. Juncture: Appropriate chunking or phrasing of language as opposed to random chunking or isolated word calling.
Intonation patterns are frequently disregarded in considering readiness for reading. If one believes that reading is, at least in part, a process of anticipating what follows in a sequence of words, intonation patterns play a significant role in this anticipation and predicting process.

**VISUAL DISCRIMINATION AND PERCEPTION**

___ Is he/she able to get clues from pictures regarding action, relationships, mood, etc.?

___ Is he/she able to recognize differences in shape and size?

___ Is he/she able to distinguish differences in letters and word forms?

**Level I (Letters)**

Select the letter in the box that is the same as the one in the margin:

A

B P A V D

b
d e b a g

**Level II (Dissimilar Words)**

Select the word in the box that is the same as the one in the margin:

'Sing

am town man sing
Level III (Similar Words)

Select the word in the box that is the same as the one in the margin.

fall

 fail fain fell fall

LITERACY CONCEPTS

___ Is he/she aware of the purpose of reading as a communication means expressing ideas, feelings, stories, messages?

___ Is he/she able to recognize and differentiate?
   ___ letters ___ words ___ sentences
   ___ numbers ___ concepts of sounds

___ Is there an interest in producing writing?

___ Is there an interest in knowledge of letter forms?

___ Is visual scanning developing?

___ Is he/she automatically moving his/her eyes in a left-right direction, beginning on the left side of the page?

___ Is he/she curious about labels and signs to the point of recognizing some and asking about others?
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

____ Is he/she able to share in activities with other children?

____ Is he/she able to listen to others as well as his/her ideas?

____ Is he/she able to select independent activities?

____ Is he/she able to sustain interest independently in these activities for five minutes or more?

____ Is he/she able to listen to a story for at least ten minutes?

____ Can he/she cope with minor stresses?
PROBLEM SOLVING

As a Tool to Facilitate and Gain Independence

Crucial to the successful implementation of any program is developing independent thinkers and movers. Therefore, valuing and respecting oneself and others is an integral part of the learning environment. Students must learn to channel their behavior to insure a creative, cohesive environment that fosters the academic growth of students.

ANTICIPATING AND CHANNELING BEHAVIORS

Anticipating behavior problems is stopping trouble before it begins. Anticipating behavior means that the teacher first observes the students and their individual personalities. Second, the teacher considers the situation in which the personalities will be placed. Third, the teacher evaluates the problem interaction of the personality and the situation. Fourth, the teacher plans to avoid any negative interaction.

Examples: Maintain flexible groups that change periodically. This will help in defusing potentially destructive interactions.

Organize groups to allow leadership qualities to emerge.

Arrange activities that occur simultaneously, but are completed at different time intervals. Allow small groups of children to make independent choices while other groups are involved or supervised by the teacher or volunteers.
DEVELOPING GUIDELINES

Students should help to develop guidelines for expected, appropriate behaviors. This again requires anticipating problems that might arise. Children may misbehave simply because they don't know what is appropriate. With any group of children, planning for a new or unusual experience should begin with clearly defined expectations for individual and group behavior. Once the class definitely understands what is expected, deviation from those expectations should result in one or two consequences.

Examples: Student removed from situation

[Diagram: Time out, BORING STREET]

With the idea that the activities in the room are so interesting that to sit on a chair on "Boring Street" is sheer drudgery and not to be welcomed.

Students need to learn that the choice is theirs and the consequences which follow those choices are also theirs.

Another technique teachers have used with developing responsible behavior is to establish the reason children are in school. This can be an ongoing evaluation tool used to assess and insure the purpose(s) for daily activities.
Procedure:

I. Establish the teacher's job and transcribe it onto chart paper.

II. Students identify reasons why they are in school. The statements made by the children are their commitment to their own education. The chart can be referred to when needed.

Example: "Let's look at our chart today and see if we both did our jobs."

ROLE PLAYING

Role playing is an excellent tool for developing and establishing expected behaviors. It helps young children in developing problem solving skills:

1. It prepares a class to participate in new experiences.
2. It helps students anticipate new experiences and can answer unasked questions.
3. It will help children to see that behavior is caused; that it occurs in a setting and that there are a variety of causes for behavior.
4. It can relieve unvoiced anxiety individuals feel when facing new experiences.
CLEAN UP

Where materials are kept, how materials are cared for and used should be role played. This is an area that seems to need consistent refresher work! This statement helps shift the responsibility back to the students quickly and effectively:

"I can see there are crayons on the floor. Are you telling me that we should no longer have crayons in our room?"

As each game and activity is presented, there should be a brief discussion of the appropriate care for these materials. Often practicing and verbalizing as it is done will help children to internalize the process. Verbal directions about methods of stacking or organizing may be too abstract for many children to remember.

Role modeling as an ongoing technique is helpful for further establishing classroom procedures. The responsibility must be shifted back to the students and hence expected behavior further reinforced. Children will learn at a concrete level that if they don't take care of things, the natural consequence is that the object(s) is removed.
IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

I AM HERE

CARDS

Each child has a card 12" X 4" with their name on it.

Attendance

Each morning they pick up their cards and place them in pocket charts.

Each morning they look to see if I have written a message on it. It may be a sticker, a stamp, the word great! or it may be a sentence. The card is their personal contact with me. Only positive comments are made.

"Dear Mark. I like the way you are really listening and following directions."

Comments may be accompanied by stickers, stamps. Another example:

"You had a 5 + 5 day."

or

"*** cheers for you."

If we are working on a particular letter or number, I may stamp that on their cards with a note.
Purposes:

1. Personal contact with the teacher.

2. Comments are written only in a positive, reinforcing manner.

3. Children may have an older child, volunteer, or a classmate who is already reading, read it to them.

4. Children become aware of another purpose for printed words. This communication has meaning for them.

5. When they are filled, the cards are taken home and shared.

   Positive comments are well deserved and sincerely meant.

Extension:

 Invite children to write on your "I AM HERE" card.
1. Label objects in your room.

2. Label or caption the work completed by your students.

Example: "Jennifer, I like your design with pattern blocks. What would you like to call it? How many red trapezoids did you use? How many green triangles? How many shapes all together?"

Another way to look at diamonds. The child's imagination is the limit!

A Spaceship by Jennifer

4 red trapezoids
4 green triangles
1 yellow hexagon
9 shapes

"I used nine shapes to make my spaceship."

3. Train volunteers to automatically sit down and write down your students' ideas. These are sent home with the child and parents will have a better understanding of what you are doing and how their child thinks.
MESSAGE OF THE DAY

As children come into the classroom each morning, they are invited to read the Message of the Day.

Boys and girls, it is Monday.

Boys and girls, it is raining.

Boys and girls, it is sunny.

It is raining.

It is not raining.

It is good to see you!

These cards are flipped over, one by one, until they have been shared. New messages are added several times a week.

Extension:

1. Is this a true fact or is it false?

2. As they are "read", they can be given to student to take home.

3. Sentences can be cut up and rearranged in sequence.
"ON THE ROAD"

The principal, secretary and librarian play a very important role. They are instrumental in listening, reading and praising the children as they share their very special stories and books.

When a child has completed a project, they are invited to share these with the important and very special people in our school. We call it "On the Road"; i.e., "Jeff, this is so good, take it "On the Road". 
Clear plastic chart made with heavy vinyl.

Write the story on sentence strips.

Once you and your students have worked with the story, cut up the sentence strips into phrases. Have your students sequence the story.

Change function words, nouns, phrases etc. Keep it available for student to use and manipulate.

Add-on for more room for words.

EXTENSION:
After the above activities have been developed, have students illustrate their animal. Put illustrations up, beside each one write the student's contribution.
DRAMATIC IMPROVISATION

"THINKING OUT LOUD"

Risk-free role playing for improving reading performance

Creative dramatics (role playing) develops the whole child without diminishing the uniqueness of the individual. In a risk-free atmosphere, each child will make a contribution. By so doing, the individual self-concept is enhanced as well as strengthening cognitive benefits. In creative dramatics, communication skills of speaking and listening are used. These skills are essential for the acquisition of reading and writing.

Dramatics can enhance readiness, vocabulary development, oral reading skills, comprehension and self concept.

Let children act out stories informally. Activities will be presented throughout project to demonstrate how easily it can be done.
Approximately three times a week children dictate their ideas to an adult. By February, the journals are made very simply with lined paper. The reason for this is to begin writing captions and/or 1-2 sentences under their illustrations. They can then take these and "read" them to friends, other adults, the secretary or principal.
Beginning in September...

**FALL**
use crepe paper to
make a bright, bold
rainbow...

**WINTER**
write messages to
children on leaves,
buds, icicles...

**SPRING**
red, red I like red...

**SUMMER**
BOOKS USING COLORS

By the end of the year, you will have a class collection of all the colors in the rainbow.

RED
Red, red, I like red.
Red is the color of __________.

ORANGE
Orange, orange, I like orange.
Orange is the color of __________.

YELLOW
Yellow, yellow, I like yellow.
Yellow is the color of __________.

GREEN
Green, green, I like green.
Green is the color of __________.

BLUE
Blue, blue, I like blue.
Blue is the color of __________.

PURPLE
Purple, purple, I like purple.
Purple is the color of __________.

Example:

Tear blue shapes, use brads for moveable parts in the book. For yellow, let students dip a finger in yellow paint to add texture to their drawings. For purple, use purple felt in different shapes to add dimension to the book.

Final Activity in June

Children receive their own copy of BEYOND THE RAINBOW
HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY USE THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH
IN THE CLASSROOM

The classroom teacher interested in using this approach may be overwhelmed at the thought of trying to take story dictation with any degree of regularity in a class of twenty-five or more children. The paraprofessional or volunteer can be a very sensible solution to the teacher's dilemma on how to have many children writing "books" and building word banks.

A plan for training volunteers and paraprofessionals to use the language experience approach with children was developed at Delmar-Harvard Elementary School, University City, Missouri. The plan consists of several basic principles which volunteers and paraprofessionals are taught. The following will be the step-by-step procedure described in her article found to be most effective.

1. Set the tone of the meeting with the child by making it a pleasant experience. Start a conversation and then tell the child you would like to work with him. This conveys a pleasant, but firm attitude. Do not ask. This gives them the option to decline. Some teachers may choose to have children only dictate stories when they wish. These directions are mainly for those teachers who wish children to make stories and word banks on a more regular schedule.

2. Have booklets prepared which are bound by construction paper or tag covers. Include about four or five pieces
of lined paper. Take the child to a quiet spot to insure privacy and better concentration.

3. Suggest topics for the story if the child does not have something specific he wants to relate. The teacher may supply some ideas: holidays, field trips, seasons, units of study, etc. Having a picture file on hand can prove very helpful to stimulate ideas.

4. Let the child talk about the topic to the point where he has said everything he wants. Then say something like "I'd like to write down some of the things you've been telling me." This allows the child to see that you are interested in all that he had to say. Since our purpose is to use his experiences as reading material, we must limit what will be recorded.

5. Begin dictation by getting a title for the story. This enables the child to focus on a main idea, and he can elaborate on that theme. This is the initial stage of helping the child "stick to the subject."

6. Have the child sit at your side so he can see what you are printing. Put the book directly as possible in front of the child. Be careful to note that he is watching you as you write. Print neatly and carefully, watching spelling and punctuation. If you are using lined paper, skip a line each time. It is important to have consistent ways in making letters so children find no confusion in sharing each others' stories.
7. Let the child generate a full sentence about the topic before writing what he says. This is necessary since he may change what he has to say. It is also important to let the child generate the sentence. Leading questions may be asked of the child but the story should be in his own words and his grammatical and speech patterns.

8. Say each word aloud as you write. Write no more than four sentences, although the child may continue talking. The reason for this is so the story is not too long for the child to attempt to read. He watches you write so he sees that it is his speech which is being written and read.

9. Read the story to the child. Read smoothly and expressively but try to point to each word as you are reading it. Word-by-word reading should be avoided. Keep the rhythm of the child's language.

10. Read the story again, letting the child read along with you as you point to the words. Sweep your hand from left to right. Again, convey the manner in which the words were spoken.

11. Next, offer to let the child read as much of the story to himself as he can. Assure him you will help him with words he cannot recall. Essentially, you will read along with him as he is first attempting to read, and you will "hold back" slightly when he comes to a word he may remember. At this point the child is role playing what he is reading. He is learning what it feels like to read and actual recogni-
tion of words is very inconsequential and not to be stressed. Confidence in trying to read and enjoyment of reading are two feelings the child should derive from this experience.

12. Ask the child to tell you his favorite word in the story. Then ask him if he can find it in the story. Underline his favorite word.

13. Write the word on an index card or piece of tag. Tell the child this is his favorite word and give him a game to play. He can and should show it to many people, especially take it home and show it to his family, but he must read this word to everyone he shows it to.

14. Write a duplicate copy for his word bank. These cards can be placed in two categories: "words I am learning" "words I know".

15. Suggest that the child illustrate his story. This will serve as an aid in helping the child recall the story the following day. The more detail the better.

16. Suggest to the child that he share his story with a friend.

The next day:

1. Review the title of the story, the picture, the caption under the picture and the favorite word. Put another line under the favorite word if the child remembers it. If he doesn't recall it, read the sentence which contains the word and help him use the contact clues to remember.
2. Help the child read the story from the previous day.

Volunteers and paraprofessionals can be valuable assets in the use of the language experience approach to teaching reading. Providing a step-by-step procedure to follow in conducting an individual experience story, together with adequate explanation for each of these steps, can help them gain confidence and ability to aid the teacher in using this approach.

These techniques should be used and modified as the need arises and the readiness of students is determined.
When young readers have trouble sorting out relevant ideas, the following techniques may help:

1. Discuss the major story points with the student before dictation begins. If a student gives a sentence unrelated to the story, you can review the major ideas already discussed and help the student understand that the sentence may not belong in the story.

2. You may also choose not to write every word or sentence the student says. Instead, listen and then ask the student to say the ideas in a shorter way; or, you may ask, "How do you want me to write that down?" If the student is unable to describe the idea more concisely, paraphrase what the student has said and ask for confirmation before recording it, although it is best to keep the story as close to the child's language as possible.

With increased maturity and experience in generating stories, this problem becomes less apparent. The results are shorter and more coherent. They realize that the ideas shared are more valuable than the length.

Techniques for making the rereading step proceed more easily

1. Select only one portion of the story to reread.

2. Ask children to find and read and answer a specific question.

3. Ask the student to read a favorite part, the funniest, the saddest.
4. You read one sentence and have the child read the next, and so on.

5. Encourage students to read to a classmate, stuffed animal, a quiet author corner, puppet house, imaginary friend, the secretary, another classroom, etc.

Whenever possible, the teacher needs to read individually with the students. When this is not possible, use parents, volunteers or upper-grade students for rereading at school. Instruct helpers to underline known or favorite words and remind them to pronounce unknown words as necessary.

**Word Banks**

Shoe boxes, index boxes, notebook with a letter of the alphabet on each page, metal ring binder. Once words are accumulated in word banks, skill development activities can begin, each suiting the needs of the students. This can be used with large or small groups...find all the words that start with B. Can you read them? Include: color words, descriptive words, favorite words, etc.
STUDENT SELECTED EXPERIENCE STORIES

This is perhaps the most familiar. The students go to the zoo. When they return, they each record their experiences. Depending on their capabilities, students either dictate the story or write it independently.

An important process for beginning readers is to watch as someone writes their dictation. Some children will only be able to dictate a single word while others will continue for pages. The teacher can encourage the child with one-word stories to add more language through directed questioning (what happened? what did you like? what did you see?). The more verbal child will gradually begin to focus more on the print and decrease the length of the story.

This type of language experience helps the student experience reading and writing as a whole process. Although language experience stories help the student gain an insight into writing and reading, these recorded experiences are usually not redundant enough to provide the student with enough practice for beginning reading. Other language experience stories can help to fill this need.

CLASS SHARED EXPERIENCE STORIES

Perhaps a fire fighter presents an assembly at school. The teacher then gleans sentences from the students to produce a class experience story regarding the assembly. The
class shared language experience story provides much the same benefits as individually selected stories, but it also offers some alternatives for teaching children informally about direct and indirect discourse:

1. For direct discourse, if you use different colored pens for different speakers, the children sort out who said what.

2. The use of children's faces with discourse balloons also teaches the concept of direct disclosure.

3. Later, you can replace the pictures with words, (Sue said), thus helping children become aware of this format for written discourse.

4. Direct discourse taken one step further becomes indirect when punctuation marks are removed and the word "that" is introduced (Sue said that...)

Class shared stories can introduce students to a variety of writing forms: reports (written after a science experiment); newspaper articles (reporting a happening by including responses to who, what, why, when and where); descriptive essays (teacher brings in different modeling materials and the students describe similarities and differences); recording memorable events (pet having babies); letter writing (composing a class letter to a sick classmate).
Patterned stories are perhaps one of the best devices to use with beginning readers and writers. The children are stimulated by the predictable patterning as well as their ability to then imitate the book. It is not necessary for them to feel that they must create a whole story, since the book provides the language patterns.

With their repetitiveness and predictability, these stories encourage children to develop and use reading skills. Just think, if each member of a class of 30 wrote a predictable book, the children would be able to practice reading with familiar words and language structures 30 times and probably not get bored with the repetition.
WRITTEN DIALOGUE

Simply defined, this technique involves talking or conversing on paper. Writing notes back and forth provide an optimum motivation for reading as well as writing. When working with a nonreader, read aloud as you write.

DIRECTED LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE STORY

The teacher assumes a great deal of responsibility for experience stories that are preparations for reading a story from a basal reader series or other text. She/he must plan the experience as well as the precise language to elicit from the students. To prepare for a directed language experience story, teachers must preread the text they plan to use and record its concepts and idioms, vocabulary and language constitutions. The teacher tries to incorporate all linguistic elements into the discussion. Then the story is written. At the prereading stage, this can be done orally after reading a story such as Billy Goats Gruff, to introduce students to the linguistic structure and idioms involved in the adventure. By so doing, as children re-tell the story and act it out, their understanding and use of language will be extended and enriched.
Extension

1. Oral reading/impress method. Reread the text orally while tracking with finger.
   (a) Teacher reads and teacher tracks.
   (b) Teacher reads and student tracks.
   (c) Student reads and tracks.

2. Word study. Select high-impact words from the story to be copied onto cards.
   (a) Match word card to story.
   (b) Put word card in a word bank to be used later for writing new language experience stories, copying, and learning word decoding strategies.

3. Varied practice. Make a copy of the story for each student.
   (a) Student can draw a picture for each sentence or group of sentences.
   (b) Cut sentences apart; put them back in order by comparing with the original.
   (c) Cut apart the words in one sentence and put them back in order.
   (d) Take the story home and read it to parents.

4. Listening and reading. Teacher reads a sentence from the language experience story aloud; student points to sentence. For beginners, sentences need appropriate pictures.

5. Language flexibility practice. Choose one word or sentence from the language experience story. Have students
suggest possible alternatives (e.g., synonyms).

6. **Model for writing.** Allow students to use the language experience story later as a model for other creative writing.

7. **Other skill teaching.** Use the language experience story to teach initial letter cues (decoding), sight words, use of punctuation, indirect and direct discourse, etc.

Extension activities using language experience stories are as numerous as a teacher's imagination. Language experience stories can reinforce oral language practice, comprehension skills and auditory training. Teacher-student communication is guaranteed to improve since the language experience story demands sharing of ideas.

Although language experience is recognized as a highly effective method of beginning reading instruction, a possible disadvantage is the lack of vocabulary control which may sometimes occur. Since practices and reinforcements are important in developing a sight vocabulary, it is important that beginning readers have frequent, repeated contact with the vocabulary to be learned. The development of such sight vocabulary is necessary to allow the reader to read more and more proficiently one's own dictation as well as the writing of others.

The Pattern Book activity to be described can provide another means of introducing and reinforcing high frequency vocabulary within the language experience approach. With
this activity the teacher selects a high frequency word (or a few words) which a small group of students or an individual student does not know. These words come from the student's self selection--from student's dictation, a word list or a basal pre-primer. The teacher thinks of a common pattern in which the word(s) might appear.

For example, the word chosen might be "this". The teacher then constructs a pattern using the word "this".

This is a __________.

(a) Have the children cut pictures of interest to them out of a magazine.
(b) Paste each of these on a sheet of lined paper.
(c) With the students, say and slowly print the chosen pattern under the picture pasted on the first page of paper.
(d) Students take turns completing the pattern for each picture on each page.
(e) Print exactly what the student says. Reread as you print.
(f) You may ask the students what letter or sound certain words begin with.
(g) Reread the pattern dictated with the students before going to a new page.
(h) After 7-8 pages have been collected, make a book cover and have the students select a title. Put their names on covers as the authors.
(i) Reread it with them until they feel confident to read it independently.

(j) Select a number of words from the student's book and print each word on a card. These words can be stored in a library pocket pasted in the back cover of the book. Have students practice reading these words. If a student has trouble, have the student find the word in the book and then try to read the word.

(k) Students can share their book with other students.

Such Pattern Book activities have been found to be highly effective with both young and older beginning readers. Pattern books can provide a supportive approach for the introduction and practice of words the student uses in dictation as well as words to be met in the basal reader, thus helping students develop a basic sight vocabulary and experience success.
It is easy to reach agreement on the fact that the teacher needs to accept the kinds of language patterns children come to school with. This is important. However, the goals of the classroom must include instructional activities that help to extend the kinds of syntactic patterns children use and perhaps aid them in becoming more aware of the patterns they are already using.

The following section will give suggestions for these kinds of extension and awareness activities.

A LANGUAGE RICH ENVIRONMENT

An environment filled with story, verse and song is probably the best guarantee that his interest and appeal will be satisfied. Children need to be read to, to become listeners and chanters of familiar stories, poems and songs. Finally, they gain ownership. Many of these literary sources are particularly useful in aiding the development of patterns of varying structures. The emphasis at the beginning is on listening, listening to the ideas and vehicles that carry these ideas. Children will become sensitized to the intonation patterns that characterize certain syntactic elements, the junctures and stresses that are essential to meaning as the arrangement of the words themselves. There are many stories that children will want to hear again and again. This is excellent. The sound patterns they have listened to and memorized become the sound patterns of their own productions. A child will no longer ask to hear a
story again and again, once he/she has learned all he/she needs from a particular section.

**BASIC SKILLS:** Developed and extended as students are introduced to and become involved in the following activities.

**THE STUDENT WILL:**

1. Learn the relationship between spoken words and words in print.
2. Learn the purpose of the mechanics of printing.
3. Learn that sentences convey meaning.
4. Learn to identify what a word is, both in speaking and in print.
5. Learn to identify units of meaning in sentences.
6. Learn that language must make language sense to the ear.
7. Learn the purpose of capitalization, punctuation and spelling.
8. Develop comprehension skills.
9. Develop left to right sequencing.
10. Develop skills to decode and recognize familiar letters, sounds, words and phrases.
11. Learn that oral and written stories can share common forms (patterns).
12. Develop attitudes of sharing, cooperation and interest through individual conferencing and group work.

13. Develop and utilize the above skills according to their individual potential and development.

14. Be an author and have the opportunity to pursue this interest.

PLAYING WITH LANGUAGE

A STEP-BY-STEP INTRODUCTION

SKILLS INTRODUCED AND REINFORCED

Children will learn by dictating chants, riddles and jokes, that words are sets of individual letters and that sentences are sets of individual words. They will also see that words printed follow a consistent left to right sequence.

Children will learn the reason for capitalization and punctuation. They will see the correct letter formations as they are written. They will also learn and reinforce their knowledge of letter names and sounds.

Children will learn that in order for it to make language sense, it must sound like language. Children will learn that language can be added as well as deleted.
LESSON FORMAT

It is important to always remember: the person taking dictation must consistently explain what he/she is doing.

Example:
"You said the 'silly monkey'..."

1. The word I am writing is the.

2. I always begin a sentence with a capital letter.

3. Watch as I print silly. Say the letters with me.

4. See the dot? This is a period. I put it at the end of the sentence to signal I am ready to begin a new thought.

5. When I print what you say, I always start on the left hand side of the page. When I write the words, I go from left to right.

Extension:
After reviewing the selection, ask:

1. Who can find monkey?

2. How many words in this sentence?

3. How do you know this word should end the sentence? It has a period, question mark, etc.

4. How do we know which word should begin the sentence?

Cut up a sentence. A familiar pattern is best.

| WHAT | IS | YELLOW | AND | GOES | CLICK | CLICK? |

Scramble it up and ask the above questions. Add some of your own! You know your students best.
Playing with language allows children to learn to enjoy language manipulation and to begin to discover how our language works.

After printing the riddle, joke or rhyme, read it back to the class pointing to each word as you read. Next, have the children read it with you, pointing to each word as they read. This will discourage halting, word-by-word reading. By pointing to each word, you strengthen correct sound/signal identification. Children also practice left to right sequencing.

After several have been written throughout the week, put the chart pages into a big book. Children can then independently read and enjoy the riddles. Children can also illustrate the riddles.

Extension:

As children look at the book, they can copy words they know and read them to you, to friends or to classroom volunteers. Children can make their own riddle or joke books.

After your students know these inside/out and love them, surprise them by putting them up in the room; then follow the suggestions in the Lesson Format section.
LAZY SHE WAITS
LAZY WAITS
LAZY WAITS
LAZY WAITS
LAZY WAITS
LAZY WAITS
LAZY WAITS
LAZY WAITS
JANE!

By giving the following words, see how many inanimate objects the children can suggest for each:

My name is Skinny. Who am I?

a. A toothpick in a glass holder.
b. A straw for sipping things up.
c. An extra fine tip, felt tip pen.

After reading a story, create a formula to retell the story.

1 Mother + 1 Father + 1 Sister + He's brand new =

Whose Mouse are you?

Snowman
+ Tea
The Snowman who went
for a walk
The size of thumb,
angry frown, lives in
+ deep green grasses
The Gibble

House of straw, sticks, bricks
+ big, bad wolf
3 Pigs
Moses supposes his toeses are roses,
   But Moses supposes erroneously;
For NOBODY'S toeses are posies of roses,
   As Moses supposes HIS toeses to be.

— Anonymous.
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers;
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked;
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

— Anonymous.
The Ballad Of The Cat Came Back

Old Mister Johnson had troubles of his own,
He had a black cat which wouldn't leave its home;
He tried and he tried to give the cat away,
He gave it to a man going far, far away.

CHORUS: Oh, but the cat came back the very next day,
The cat came back, they thought he was a goner,
But the cat came back, it just couldn't stay away.

He gave it to a man going way out west,
Told him for to take it to the one he loved the best;
First the train hit the curve, then it jumped the rail,
Not a soul was found nearby to tell the awful tale.

CHORUS:

He gave it to a sailor who was going out to sea,
He told him for to take it and throw it in the deep;
The sailor's ship disappeared in a big typhoon,
And the sailor and his ship won't be back very soon.

CHORUS:

He gave it to a man going up in a balloon,
He told him for to take it to the man in the moon,
The balloon came down about ninety miles away,
Where he is now, well, I dare not say.

CHORUS:

— Author Unknown.
Two Tooters

A tutor who tooted a flute,
Tried to tutor two tooters to toot;
Said the two to the tutor,
Is it harder to toot, or
To tutor two tooters to toot?

— Anonymous.
A centipede was happy quite,
Until a frog in fun
Said, "Pray, which leg comes after which?"
This raised her mind to such a pitch,
She lay distracted in the ditch
Considering how to

— Anonymous.
I always eat peas with honey,
I've done it all my life,
They do taste kind of funny,
But it keeps them on the knife!

— Anonymous.
Each of us has a linguistic storehouse (memory) in which we deposit patterns of stories and poems and sentences and phrases and words. These patterns enter the memory through the ear and remain available for a lifetime of reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking.

The good reader is a person who looks at a page of print knowing that she will find clues that trigger the memory of familiar patterns.

These patterns range all the way from the plot structure an author has used in a story to a rhyme scheme that hangs a poem together, to the placement of an adjective in front of a noun, to the syntactical design of a sentence, to the underlying rhythmical structure in a line of prose or poetry, to the ed ending as part of the shape of a word.

Reading to children will sensitize children to patterns of words that repeat over and over in our language. It sometimes skyrocket certain individual words into a burst of awareness that make them available to children for the rest of a lifetime; it tunes children's ears to the pronunciation of words and to the cadence of various kinds of sentences in ways that print itself cannot; it develops a special kind of kinship between you and the children and between the children and the literature that helps children know why reading is important.
PATTERNS

CHILDREN UNLOCKING AND FIGURING OUT HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

REPETITIVE SEQUENCE: Key phrases are continually repeated throughout the story.

1. The children will know that the literacy structure of this story is simple repetition.

2. They will put much of this knowledge to work in decoding much of the print.

3. They will later transfer and borrow basic patterns and ideas from a known structure to create their own stories.

An important vocabulary concept for children to learn is the accurate use of comparisons of things around them.

Example: A bus is like a car except there's more of it.

Examples modeled by the teacher will encourage children to create comparisons of their own.

1. A mountain is like a hill except there's more of it.

2. An ocean is like a puddle except there's more of it.

ACTIVITIES: The comparisons could be spoken, written, drawn or acted out by young authors and illustrators.
The following selections were presented at a workshop given by Bill Martin, "Art Heart", the summer of 1983 at Seattle Pacific University. Children are captivated by the Language.
WHEN IT RAINS, IT RAINS

When it rains, it rains
When it snows, it snows
When it fogs, it fogs
When it blows, it blows.

When it's hot, it's hot
When it's cold, it's cold
When you're young, you're young
When you're old, you're old.

When I'm merry, I'm merry
When I'm sad, I'm sad
When I'm good, I'm good
But when I'm bad...

I'm perfectly horri...ble.

by Bill Martin, Jr.

By reading this Instant Reader text aloud to children of any age, kindergarten up, you'll find them chiming in with the exact alternate lines even before you have read them. The reason? First, they subconsciously know that the alternate lines rhyme. Second, they know that each two lines deal with a set of opposites. Third, they know that they can trust the structure to repeat sentence to sentence without variation. They therefore will call out the last line as "When I'm bad, I'm bad". At this point you tell them good naturedly that that isn't what the words say. Then you read the story ending, and they'll chime it right back to you. What word will they savor? Horrible, of course!
A MUSHROOM IS GROWING

1 In wet dark shadows of autumn woods
2 Through leafy rot and Forest litter
   A mushroom grows
3 Pale scavenger of the vegetable world
4 Stranger to sunlight
   Lover of darkness
5 Having no roots
   No leaves
   No flowers
6 Fungus growth
   In a capsule of hours
7 Releasing spores
   To perpetuate its kind
8 Then shrinking
   Dying
9 Quickly decaying
10 Adding to the mulch
   On the wet forest floor
11 That mothers the spores and webs of mycalium
12 That grow more scavengers of the vegetable world
13 Small white dots
   In a witch's circle
14 Silent
   Motionless
   Growing
   and Growing.

by Bill Martin, Jr.

This Little Nature Book text is a single sentence! Its content, however, is the life-cycle of a mushroom. What a blessing for children who don't like "thick" books, or who like to muse and linger over a page until it releases some of its secrets!
Good night, Mr. Beetle
Good night, Mr. Fly
Good night, Mrs. Ladybug
The moon's in the sky.

Good night, Miss Kitten
Good night, Mr. Pup
I'll see you in the morning
When the sun comes up.

1. Read the excerpt aloud several times, inviting the children to chime in as soon as they know how the poem is working.

2. After they have it familiarly in mind, show them the print to read. They will chime it rapidly as they hear it, using only minimum clues to unlock a line of print or an entire couplet.

At some later time you may wish to lift a single word out of the poem for word study, but the children won't permit that too long. Soon they will have it back in its poetic structure, linked together with the ineffable dance of syllables that we call language.

An important value of this kind of chiming comes from children hearing themselves "reading" with the poise and cadence of a mature reader. You can refer to their reading of "Good Night, Mr. Beetle," whenever you need a model of what good reading sounds like. You simply say:

Children, remember how you read "Good Night, Mr. Beetle"? It had a sound-of sense because you spun the words together. Let's read this page the same way you read "Good Night, Mr. Beetle".
OVERHEARD ON A SALTMARSH

a dramatic monologue by Harold Monroe

Nymph, Nymph, what are your beads?
    Green glass, Goblin. Why do you stare at them?
Give them me.
    No.
Give them me, give them me.
    No.
Then I will howl all night in the reeds
Lie in the mud and howl for them.
    Goblin, why do you love them so?
They are better than stars or water
Better than voices of winds that sing
Better than any man's fair daughter
Your green glass beads on a silver string.
    Hush, I stole them out of the moon.
Give me your beads, I want them.
    NO.
I will howl in a deep lagoon
For your green glass beads
I love them so
Give them me. Give them.
    NO.

from Sounds of Mystery

Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1974
FIRE!  FIRE!
SAID MRS. McGUIRE

an old jingle
adapted by Bill Martin, Jr.

"Fire!  Fire!" said Mrs. McGuire.
"Where?  Where?" said Mrs. Bear.
"Down town!" said Mrs. Brown
"What floor?" said Mrs. Moore.
"Near the top!" said Mrs. Kopp.
"What a pity!" said Mrs. Kitty.
"Help!  Help!" said Mrs. Kelp.
"Here I come!" said Mrs. Plumb.
"Water!  Water!" said Mrs. Votter.
"Get out of my way!" said Mrs. Lei.
"Let me see!" said Mrs. Chi.
"Break down the door!" said Mrs. Orr.
"Well, I declare!" said Mrs. Wear.
"Oh help us and save us!" said Mrs. Davis
And she fell down the stairs with a
sack of potatoes.
WHAT IS PINK?

a poem by Christina G. Rossetti

What is pink?

A rose is pink
By the fountain's brink.

What is red?

A poppy's red
In its barley bed.

What is white?

A swan is white
Sailing in the light.

What is blue?

The sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro'.

What is yellow?

Pears are yellow
Rich and ripe and mellow.

What is green?

The grass is green
With small flowers between.

What is violet?

Clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.

What is orange?

Why, an orange
Just an orange!

from Sounds of Numbers

by Bill Martin, Jr. and Peggy Brogan
The following books are selections we have found children truly love. They are introduced here to illustrate different ways to involve children in language. This section is designed to spark the imagination.
Once children have used and enjoyed Brown Bear, the following activities can further extend and enrich their ownership of the material.

1. Introduce the Brown Bear story in large, bold print.

2. As you read and your students "read" with you, reinforce left-right progression.

3. Let children use the chart individually.

4. At a listening post, children can hear and see the story in a different way.
5. Children illustrate Brown Bear (see sample) with the added dimension of creating the animal's environment.

6. Children dictate further information about each animal in the story.

The final product will be a personalized story of Brown Bear, Brown Bear.

Extension:

Unifix cubes (interlocking cubes) can be used for retelling the story.

Interlocking cubes

![Interlocking cubes](image)

Unifix cubes can also be used to develop other stories based on the pattern.

1. Student tells the new story using the unifix cubes to represent the sequence of their story.

2. 4"x4" colored construction paper representing the unifix cubes is pasted down on a story strip.

3. Student dictates the story to an adult.

4. Student can then "read" their story into a tape recorder.

One of the most exciting rewards is to go "On the Road!" Students take their accomplishments to share (of which they
are very proud) with the Principal, Secretary, Librarian and other teachers and students.
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Brown Bear,
brown Bear
what do you see?
I see a redbird
looking at me.
Redbird, redbird,
what do you see?
I see a yellow duck
looking at me.

Yellow duck, yellow duck,
what do you see?
I see a blue horse looking at me.
Blue horse, blue horse, what do you see?
I see a grey mouse
looking at me.

Grey mouse, grey mouse,
what do you see?
I see a green frog
looking at me.

Green frog, green frog,
what do you see?
I see a purple cat looking at me.
Purple cat, purple cat, what do you see?
I see a pink elephant looking at me.

Pink elephant, pink elephant, what do you see?
I see a white dog
looking at me.
White dog, white dog,
what do you see?
I see a black sheep looking at me.

Black sheep, black sheep, what do you see?
I see a goldfish
looking at me.
Goldfish, goldfish,
what do you see?
I see children looking at me. Children, children, what do you see?
Children
We see
a brown bear

a redbird
a yellow duck

a blue horse
a grey mouse

a green frog
a purple cat

a pink elephant
a white dog

a black sheep
a goldfish

looking at us.

That's what we see.
FIRST THINGS FIRST

Everything has a beginning. "First Things First" is good association practice for children.

ACTIVITIES

1. Booklet can be designed.

2. If words are recorded, they can be mounted and used as a reading experience on charts or boards.

Example: "First an egg and then the chick."

"First the pepper and then the sneeze."

"If I were" thoughts help children understand the feelings of others in an enjoyable way. Incomplete clauses:

1. If I were a frog resting on a lily pad, I'd ____________________________.

2. If I were a frog underwater, I'd ____________________________.

Create a Problem:

1. If I were a frog captured and put in a tub, I'd ____________________________.

2. If I were a frog almost a nibble for lunch, I'd ____________________________.

Imaginative thinking:

If I were a kite just going up for the first time, I'd ____________________________.
THE GIBBLE

Skills used and reinforced:

1. Children learn to have fun with language.
2. Children learn the rhyming sequence of a poem.
3. Vocabulary is developed by defining both real and nonsense words.
4. Alliteration is introduced with the sound of "G".
5. Children practice and use creative interpretation and expression.
6. Tracking, child finds and underlines familiar letters, words and phrases.

Example: "What word has to be Gibble?"
"How do you know?"
The Gibble

The gibble is glum and big as a thumb,
it lives in the deep green grasses
and looks around with an angry frown
at everyone who passes.

But should you roam about his home,
you need not fear the gibble;
it's much too small to gobble you all
(though it just might take a nibble).

"The Gibble" from
The Snopp on the Sidewalk
and Other Poems,
By Jack Prelutsky
(a) Children make a "Gibble" stick puppet.

(b) Design background scenery.

(c) Retell the story.

"Put a box around Gibble everytime you find it."

(Great for listening and following directions.)

Extension:

Using geometric shapes, design a border around the background, using rhyming words. The teacher or volunteer can print the words. The words can then be represented by the geometric shapes.
ONE PITCH BLACK VERY DARK NIGHT

Skills used and reinforced:

1. Choral reading
2. Cloze procedure
3. Dramatic interpretation
4. Language usage and expression
5. Published books as the final project
6. Enjoyment of literature

After reading (many times) the book, invite children to:

1. Use their voices to express how the main character must be feeling.

2. Act out in small groups their favorite or newly created parts.

One pitch black very dark night, right after mom turned off the light, I looked out my window only to see...a ________ looking at me. But that ________ didn't frighten me!

Extension

Play with the language! One bright sunny morning, right after I jumped out of bed, I looked under my bed only to see...

![Diagram with four images: an octopus, a ghost, a dinosaur, and a ghost]
Cultural Sequences

These are built-in structures children hear daily. They know, for example, that the hours of the day, the days of the week, the months and seasons, the number system and the alphabet all have dependable sequences.

When I Was One

Have it written on chart paper. The verses go to ten, but children will enjoy adding on verses!

When I was one,
I had just begun.
When I was two,
I was almost new.
When I was three,
I was hardly me.
When I was four,
I was not much more.
When I was five,
I was just alive.
But now I'm six
and as clever as clever,
So I'll go on being six now
forever and ever.

A. A. Milne
THE GINGERBREAD BOY

Extension

1. Children make puppets to retell the story.

2. Children use a map of the story with moveable characters to retell the story.

Extending further

After looking throughout the school for the disappearing Gingerbread Boy, design a map of your school. Label with children different buildings, playgrounds, etc. Each building lifts up; students can draw what happens in each main building. An adult can write the child's description.
THE GINGERBREAD MAN

Story Maze
CUMULATIVE SEQUENCE

Each new line adds a new thought before repeating everything that went before.

The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly

After repeated retellings, children will know the sequence. They can make their own Old Lady and "creatures" to retell it again and again.

We have found laminating the Old Lady increases its durability.
The Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly
A nest is a house for eggs...

An egg is a house for....
The sky is a house for clouds...
a cloud is a house for rain....

A pond is a house for water...
Water is a house for swimming fish....

A swingset is a house for a swing...

The earth is a house for roots....
The grass is the house for insects....
A window is a house for glass....
Fat Cat
use for rhythm, story
sequence etc.
Ask Me What A CARETAKER Does

SIGNS! After reading a book such as Cooper Eden's Caretakers of Wonder, pin a sign on each child. It is a wonderful way to promote communication!
WHOSE MOUSE ARE YOU?

A coloring book to color, "read" and take home!
My brother's mouse—

whose mouse
are you?

he's brand new!
Whose mouse are you?

My brother's mouse...

Your brother's mouse?
My sister’s mouse, she loves me too.

Nobody’s mouse. Where is your mother?
Inside the cat. My fathers mouse, from head to toe.

Where is your father?
My mother's mouse, where is your sister?

Caught in a trap.

She loves me so.
Far from home.

Where is your brother?

Wish for a brother as I have none.

Now whose mouse are you?
Find my sister

and bring her home.

I have none.

What will you do?
Shake my mother out of the cat!

Free my father from the trap!
A paper doll Paddington Bear!

Use him as your students study London, England.

Use him after reading Paddington Bear books.
Just an Idea to branch off from:
main characters can be used as -
puppets
props
art projects, scenery
Use with the story of "THE LITTLE RED HEN"

Hand puppets
Storytelling
Humpty Dumpty

Print Humpty Dumpty

to use Humpty Dumpty.
Children will find many ways.
Lambs For Dinner

- make a book
- use for creative dramatics
- sequencing
SHARED BOOK EXPERIENCE

Preparation:

- Stories should be selected that we know are favorites of young children or that we can judge from experience of children's books will be enjoyed and may become favorites.
- Stories should be fairly simple and readily understood.
- For a two-week period have at least twenty books ready, to share with the children. Ten to twelve of them will become real favorites. Three or four will be the most popular. These are the books that can be enlarged in bold print so that the print can be clearly seen from about fifteen feet. It is not necessary to illustrate all of them because the children will enjoy contributing to some of the books.
- Illustrations need not be polished. Children will be able to enjoy the original (normal size) book during their independent choice time.

Use of the overhead:

Put one or two books on transparencies to obtain enlarged print.
Objectives:

Step I
Introducing the story

1. To provide an enjoyable story experience to all of the children.

2. To motivate the desire to return to the book after it has been introduced.

3. To encourage participation by inviting children to chime in
   • on repetitive sections
   • on obvious words
   • to predict possible outcomes.

Step II
Re-reading the text

1. To increase students' understanding and response.

2. To provide opportunities for all students to gain oral practice of the language in the story by unison, group and individual participation.

3. To help students become aware of the special structures of the story so that these can be used in reconstructing and decoding in later independent readings, or be used as patterns for personal expression.

4. To teach relevant reading skills; i.e., sight vocabulary, structural analysis and the use of letter-sound relationships for decoding purposes.
Pointing:

- Demonstrates the one-to-one relationship between spoken and printed words.
- Demonstrates left-to-right progression.

When teaching, careful word-relates-to-word pointing suggests that reading is a strongly visual task.
# BOOK MAKING!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>COVER</th>
<th>BINDING</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>ELABORATIVE DEVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="MY STORY" /></td>
<td>construction paper</td>
<td>Pages and cover are stapled together, then bound for added durability with mystik or masking tape.</td>
<td>Staple Books</td>
<td>expressible printing past cutouts magazine pictures on pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>posterboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>classroom stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cardboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>group contributions</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>alphabet books</td>
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<td></td>
<td>word fun</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>poems</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>simple sequence stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="POEMS" /></td>
<td>construction paper</td>
<td>Punch holes in pages and use notebook rings or shower curtain rings to bind together.</td>
<td>Ring Books</td>
<td>Type poems or stories, cut out and paste in box. Illustrate with crayons, chalk and water, magic markers, poster paints, fingerpains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>posterboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>group stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cardboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>word fun</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>poems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>collection of poems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="PUMPKIN TALES" /></td>
<td>construction paper</td>
<td>Make pages in the shape of your book—long, tall, like people, animals, things, etc. Bind together with staples and masking tape or try lacing with yarn.</td>
<td>Shape Books</td>
<td>Crumble and paste colored tissue paper. Use string and yarn, fabrics with various textures, wallpaper cutouts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>posterboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>stories about animals, objects, machines, people, etc. poems nursery rhymes innovations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cardboard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(cover is in shape of object, animal, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="CIRCLE BOOK" /></td>
<td>construction paper</td>
<td>Make pages in the shape of your book—tall book, short book.</td>
<td>poems stories about different objects</td>
<td>Combine various art media on same page—fingerpaint, construction paper, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>posterboard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cardboard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(cover is in shape of object)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>EXAMPLE</td>
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<td>BINDING</td>
<td>TYPE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Construction Paper" /></td>
<td>construction paper contact paper over cardboard</td>
<td>Pages folded accordian style. Stapled or glued to covers.</td>
<td>Accordian Books poems patterns sequence stories</td>
<td>marbelizing art effects photographs shapes, triangles squares, circles, etc. tie-dye paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Thin Plywood" /></td>
<td>thin plywood 3/16&quot; wood sheets balsam woodburning sets</td>
<td>Drill hole in cover Use key chain or notebook ring to bind together.</td>
<td>Plank Book poems patterns stories &quot;How to&quot; directions</td>
<td>newspaper cutouts ink sketches splattered paint corrugated cardboard pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Cardboard" /></td>
<td>cardboard covered with contact paper</td>
<td>Staple pages together. Glue to cover.</td>
<td>Contact Books poems collections group stories individual stories</td>
<td>Type stories on pages. Type stories, cut out and paste on pages. Create art impressions with dropped candle wax and food coloring, potato prints etchings art materials, straws, buttons, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Cloth" /></td>
<td>cloth drymount cardboard Need: iron scissors needles thread</td>
<td>Pages folded and sewn down center. Attached to cover with drymount.</td>
<td>Bound Cloth Book poems collection of poems and stories which have been edited and prepared for printing.</td>
<td>photographs ink sketchings splattered paint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PUBLISHING IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Each child who publishes sees himself as a creator of ideas, as a producer of language, as a functioning member of the language community. Publication provides reason for a child to master technical language skills, to modify the form and style of his writing, to examine the works of many authors to know their ideas and language.

Publications may take many forms, and teachers and children will want to modify and add to the suggestions here, but it is hoped that these ideas will provide a starting point.
PUBLICATION OF POSTERS, CHARTS AND STORIES

Early in the child's school experience, the writing he chooses to publish in these forms will be printed in manuscript letters by his teacher, a volunteer, or an older student in his school until the child develops his competency as an independent writer. From the first, however, accompanying art work is the child's own. As he learns to do his own writing, he may want to print his publication himself or to make use of the lettering skills of a fellow classmate.

Publications that take these forms are usually printed so that they may be read easily by those passing, and illustrations may border the printed matter or be attached. Examination of some samples of commercial art and contemporary posters adds an interesting dimension to children's planning and such professional materials may intrigue older children to consider such forms for some of their writing.

Publications that take these forms may be included on bulletin boards in the classroom and in hallways in the school building, at language arts fairs, and in the child's home.
PUBLICATION OF CLASS BOOKS

Sizes of these publications may be determined in advance by paper the teacher has pre-cut, or by consent of those children who will make contributions to the book. Such a publication usually includes the work of several or many students, and there will be occasions when every member of the class will want to contribute something. The pages may be stapled together in a bright cover of stiff paper, with decorations by one or several students, and an appropriate title, or they may be laced together by weaving yarn or heavy string through punched holes.

Written materials may be dictated or written independently, and illustrations will vary in importance from the sole medium of expression to support for print.

These publications become part of the classroom library so that children have an opportunity to enjoy the varied contributions. They may remain in the classroom, be accepted in the school office, be shared with other classrooms, or become part of the school library's permanent collection.
PUBLICATION OF NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES

These may be a class or school project, or may represent the efforts of a small group of children who want to bring about such publications. One of their characteristics is that such publications may be produced in multiple copies, by ditto or mimeograph, and distributed to a wide audience.

If the publishing is done by older students, they may wish to print, write, or type ditto masters themselves. The ditto process lends itself to line drawings for illustrations, and dittos of various colors can be purchased and combined to achieve some variety. A magazine format (with one or wide columns) may enable younger children to prepare their own dittos by printing. Mimeography permits production of a greater number of copies, and they may be more clear, but adult assistance in typing is usually required.

Newspapers and magazines are regularly published, and it is well to consider in advance whether children will enjoy meeting such a schedule and repeating it at intervals, and whether there can be sufficient adult support, in many forms, to insure children's success.
PUBLICATION OF SIMPLE HARD-COVER BOOKS

These publications most often represent the efforts of a single child or of two working together, perhaps as author and illustrator. The author may choose to include dictated materials or writing done independently, or both. If teachers prepare some hard-cover books in advance, with blank pages in them, children may have a clearer idea of what "hard-cover" means.

Published materials in this form may be included in the classroom library or in the school library where they may be catalogued and placed on the shelves with commercially published books, or shelved as a special collection.

If hard-cover bindings are to be made, children and teachers need to keep an eye open for sources of cardboard (non-corrugated) and cover materials. Shirt cardboard, gift boxes, and tablet backs are sources. Paper companies in your community may be able to provide access to their scrap containers. Cover materials, including fabric scraps, wrapping paper, contact paper, and wall paper, may be available from parents who sew, remnant counters in fabric stores, and out-of-date wallpaper sample books.
PUBLISHING ROOM IN YOUR SCHOOL

How To Get Started:

1. Arrange room for six-eight children.

2. Supplies: variety of paper, cardboard, wallpaper, gift wrap, contact paper, pencils, crayons, erasers, marking pens, glue, paste, plastic rings, yarn, drymount tissue, scratch pads, dictionaries, etc.

3. Equipment: typewriter, papercutter, 3-hole punch, long stapler, iron, duplicating machine (opt.), stylus (opt.), woodburning set (opt.), etc.

4. Extras: rubber stamp and pad with the name of your school, labels, stickers, special colored pencils and pens, color books for shaped books, magazines, picture file, fabric, etc.

5. Newsletter request for volunteers: dependable, caring, creative people who can come one-two hours per week on a regular basis; home helpers to sew books, cut out pictures, collect old magazines, save stickers, wrapping paper, etc.

6. Meet with teachers: suggest they have rough drafts of work to send with the children to the Center. Encourage them to meet their parent volunteers and confer with them throughout the year. Discuss editing procedures in the classroom and in the Center. Familiarize teachers with the following forms--checkoff sheet in the class-
room so each child is assured a publishing experience, posted schedule of the Center's open dates and times for teachers, finished/not finished forms that the children will bring back from the Center.

7. Train volunteers. Encourage them to keep in close contact with you to express their needs and concerns. Show them many ways to make books, but encourage their creativity. Teach them the editing procedures you wish them to use. Emphasize the "delicacy" of the editing process, and urge them to contact you or the classroom teacher if there are problems.

8. Set up a schedule to post on the door of the Center. Prepare checkoff list for the classrooms and finished/not finished forms.

9. Have some books already made for the first few writing experiences. Be sure to have many examples of the kinds of books to be made posted in the Center.

10. Go around to the classrooms and "introduce" the Center. If possible, walk the classes through the Center.

11. Tell volunteers and teachers to display finished books in the Center. Use them in the classrooms or set up a table in the library. The books should get lots of use during the year rather than be taken home immediately.
Throughout the Year:

1. Maintain contact with the volunteers. Acquaint them with new ideas and encourage an exchange of ideas among them. Keep a bulletin board in the Center so they can post needs and ideas.

2. Meet with teachers periodically to find out their needs.

3. Encourage teachers to use the students' books in their curriculum and display them for the children to share.

4. Check supplies regularly. Occasionally, send out a request in the school newsletter for more things. Purchase necessary supplies or check with the IMC.

Teacher's Role:

1. Provide an opportunity for writing.

2. Assist children in the editing process. A polished final copy is not necessary; a copy with notations of things to be corrected will do.

3. Familiarize the children with the difference between a rough draft and a final polished work.

4. Discuss the parts of a book: cover, title page, illustrations, etc.

5. Send four children to the Center at one time. All they need to bring is their rough draft. If, however, they want to bring magazine pictures, their own illustrations, etc. to include in the book, fine!
6. Keep a record of who has made a book. Hopefully, all of your children will have made at least one by spring.

7. Provide a class time to share books.

8. Return books to the Center for display.

Publishing Room Helpers:

1. Establish with each child what he is going to do during his session with you; i.e., what kind of a publication he is going to make, what kind of cover he is going to use, etc.

2. Get each child busy doing a title page, illustrations, etc.

3. Work one-to-one on further editing, helping make covers, supplying materials and suggestions, etc.

4. At the end of the session, provide a few minutes for cleaning up.

5. Send the children back to the room with progress slips and/or completed books.
Spring Authors' Conference:

This is a special afternoon to celebrate student authorship. Suggestions for the afternoon include:

- Sharing sessions with small cross-peer groups to tell about their books.
- Speakers in the field of writing or illustrating.
- Refreshments.
- Special recognition for the volunteer helpers.
- Bookmarks or gold seals given to all of the children in recognition of their efforts.

A Word About Editing:

The preliminary writing process takes place in the classroom and so does the editing, for the most part. After the first draft of material, teachers can meet with the children individually; editing committees can be formed; partners can edit each other's work, etc. The important thing is that the children understand you are getting their papers ready for publication.

Checks, circles or other marks can indicate where changes must be made in the final copy. Then the child is ready to go to the Center. The helpers will supervise as he corrects his mistakes on the final draft and completes his book. This can take one-three days. Even with the classroom editing, many children will still need lots of gentle guidance with their final draft.
Note: Don't forget to include a Title Page, Table of Contents and an About the Author page. Writing the name of your school and the date inside the cover makes the publication even more special to the author.
This is a collection of some of the stories I have written since September.

As I continue to bring more writing home, please add these to the blank pages at the back of my book.

Love,
Circulate books throughout school!
RESOURCES


PATTERN BOOKS AND OTHER FAVORITES


Bonne, Lady Rose. I Know a Lady.


Goss, Janet L. and Jerome C. Harste. **It Didn't Frighten Me!** School Book Fairs, 1981.


Krauss, Ruth. **A Hole is to Dig.** Harper.


Martin, Bill, Jr. **Instant Reader's Series.** Holt.

Martin, Bill, Jr. **Sounds of Language Series.** Holt.

Martin, Bill, Jr. **Ten Little Caterpillars.** Holt.


Mayer, Mercer. **Just Me and My Dad.**


Pearson, Susan. **Monday I was an Alligator.** Lippencott Co., New York.


Whitney, Alma. **Leave Herbert Alone.** Addison-Wesley.

