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A handbook for a first grade literature based reading program

Crista Gay Bernard
University of Dayton

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**A HANDBOOK FOR A FIRST GRADE
LITERATURE BASED READING PROGRAM**

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education,
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

Crista G. Bernard

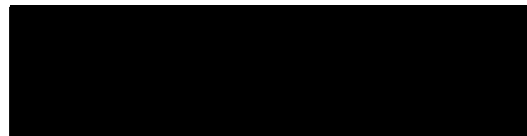
School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

Dayton, Ohio

April 1991

Approved by:



Official Advisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'J' or 'L'.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my mother, who encouraged and guided me through my graduate work, with deep appreciation for all of her support.

To my past, present, and future students whose lives will be enriched by children's literature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With special thanks to Dr. Paul Lutz and Angela Nesmith for their valuable assistance with this project.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Background

"What are the best ways of leading a child to literacy?" has been one of the most controversial questions in education. Although basal reading programs have dominated the classroom for decades (90% of American teachers relied on the basal as of 1980, Koeller, 1981), there has been a gradual increase in the number of teachers using a literature based reading program.

New Zealand, the country with the highest literacy rate in the world, has been teaching with literature for over 20 years. Australia, Canada, and England, in the last ten years, have been working towards active literacy using children's literature as a base. Several states in our country are beginning to utilize these powerful models by recommending "real" books and making changes at the state levels. Vermont, New York, New Mexico, and Arizona are just a few who have begun to make the change (Routman, 1988).

Justification of the Problem

The number of Americans who cannot read and write sufficiently, according to PLUS (Project Literacy US, 1987), is more than 23 million. As educators, we have been ordered to increase the standardized test scores of our

students — teach our students how to read and write. Although test scores may reflect an academic approach to reading, they will never be able to measure the attitudes and practical applications of real readers. There is a need for a change — to move towards "active literacy." The way we teach reading and writing is critical to this development. Through current teaching experiences and well-documented research, literature based reading programs have been found to have a positive effect in the development of "active literacy" — the development of readers.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this project was to design a handbook for activities to be used in a first grade literature based reading program.

Procedures

Subjects

The handbook was designed for first grade teachers and students of inner city schools.

Data Collection

A variety of resources was used in the development of the handbook. They include a computer search, current research, journals, professional books, and the writer's own teaching experience.

Format of Handbook

1. Definition of literature

2. Advantages of literature based reading programs
3. Basic elements of a literature based reading program
4. Components of a first grade literature based reading program
5. Books, activities, and lessons to be used for a first grade literature based reading program

Definition of Terms

Active Literacy — The ability to inject one's own thoughts and intentions into messages received and sent; the ability to transform and to act upon aspects of the world via the written word.

Basals — A reading program that includes stories that are often revised and abridged, which focus on phonics and the teaching of isolated skills.

Big Books — Large books with large print that usually contain a pattern in the text.

Choral Reading — Students read together as a group.

Journals — A daily diary in which the child can write his or her thoughts, feelings, or experiences.

Literature Based Reading Program — A reading program that uses literature to teach reading and writing.

Whole Language — A philosophy which refers to meaningful, real, and relevant teaching and learning. All language processes are learned naturally and in meaningful context as a whole.

Conclusion

"Most students can learn to read regardless of the approach if the teacher is sincere, cares about kids, and believes in the method and materials being used. The larger issue, however, is that the student may well learn how to read without ever acquiring the desire to read or a real understanding of what is read. A reader, after all, is a person who chooses to read for pleasure and information and who can pass standardized tests and complete school assignments. A literate person, in the broadest sense of the word, is one who is continually reading, writing, thinking, listening, and evaluating for real purposes in real-life situations" (Routman, 1988, p. 16). Through current teaching experiences and well-documented research, literature based reading programs have been found to have a positive effect on the development of readers. Therefore, this study has been undertaken to provide a handbook consisting of activities to be used in a first grade literature based reading program.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

There are at least two goals for every school reading program: (1) to teach students how to read, and (2) to make them want to read. Schools have been reasonably successful with the first goal, less so with the second. Good literature in the reading program can help teachers make students want to read.

Literature includes a wide spectrum of books: picture books, folktales, fables, myths, fantasy, science fiction, poetry, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, nonfiction informational books, and biographies. There is, however, much more to literature than the variety of books included. Charlotte Huck, who has promoted the use of quality literature in the reading program longer and more vigorously than any other American educator (Routman, 1988), defines literature in this way:

"Literature is the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language. The province of literature is the human condition; life with all its feeling, thoughts, and insights. The experience of literature is always two dimensional, for it involves both the book and the reader!!"

(1987, p. 4)

Literature has proved to be an excellent vehicle for developing, enhancing, and enriching lifelong, active literacy. There are many valid reasons for using

literature as the base of a beginning reading and writing program. Some advantages of literature include:

1. Literature allows meaning to dominate.
2. Literature use concentrates on the development of readers rather than the development of skills.
3. Literature promotes positive self-concepts in beginning readers.
4. Literature promotes language development.
5. Literature promotes fluent reading.
6. Literature deals with human emotions.
7. Literature exposes students to a variety of story structures, themes, and authors' styles.
8. Literature puts children in contact with illustration at its best.
9. Literature makes reading fun.

(Routman, 1988, p. 20)

Literature has proved to be a valuable tool for teaching beginning readers. One of the greatest values of using literature in the reading program is that children experience joy in reading and become "hooked on books" (Huck, 1987). If given the opportunity to read "good," quality literature, students can experience reading as a positive learning experience. It is easy to see how critical early reading experiences are, especially at the elementary level. As elementary teachers, our goal should not be simply to teach our children how to read, but instead to produce children who do read. There is little value in just having the ability to read if one never uses it.

Literature has the power to influence children in many fashions. Because literature is concerned with feeling, it can educate the heart as well as the head (Huck, 1987). Literature enables the students to learn to identify with the characters' feelings and emotions. Besides developing compassion, literature also develops the imagination. Children are able to experience new places, meet new people, and see new things that they may never have been given the opportunity. Good literature not only entertains, it educates. Literature helps children learn.

A variety of studies have been conducted which support the success of the literature-based approach to literacy. One such study was done by Cohen (1968), who used a control group of 130 second grade students (who were taught with basal readers) and compared them to 155 children in an experimental group using a literature component along with regular instruction. The children in the experimental group were read to with 50 carefully selected children's trade picture books. The books were then followed up with a variety of meaning related activities. The experimental group showed significant increases over the control group (on Metropolitan Achievement Tests and A Free Association Vocabulary Test) in word knowledge ($p < .005$), reading comprehension ($p < .05$), and quality of vocabulary ($p < .05$).

Another controlled study that was conducted by Eldredge and Butterfield (1986) involved 1,149 children in second grade in 50 Utah classrooms. The researchers compared a traditional basal approach to five other experimental methods, including two which used variations of a literature based program. The researchers discovered that 14 of 20 significant differences among the instructional

methods favored the literature approach teamed with a series of special decoding lessons taking no more than 15 minutes daily. Eldredge and Butterfield were able to conclude that:

The use of children's literature to teach children to read had a positive effect upon students' achievement and attitudes toward reading — much greater than the traditional methods used.

(1986, p. 35)

One of the more recent experiments dealing with literature based reading and children at high risk of failure was conducted with 225 kindergarten children at a school on New York City's west side. Of these children, 92% came from non-English speaking homes, 96% lived below the poverty level, and 80% spoke no English when entering school. Children's literature and language experience approaches to reading and writing were the major instructional goals. Skills were taught primarily in meaningful context as children asked for help in writing. Neither basals nor workbooks were used. As the year concluded, all 225 students could read their dictated stories and many of their picture books shown in class. Some students were even reading on a second grade level. The following year, all 350 in first grade were reading English — 60% on or above grade level. Only three of the 350 failed to pass district comprehension tests and those three had been in the United States less than six months.

In conclusion, a study was done by Rasinski and Deford (1985) to indicate why literature based reading approaches may have a profound positive effect on learners. They compared three first grade classrooms, using different approaches to teach reading: content centered mastery learning, traditional basal, and child

centered literature based approaches. The researchers looked less at achievement than at student conceptions about reading assessed through interviews.

Each student was asked to respond to the following: "What is reading?" or "What happens when you read?" Their responses were then rated — high score of 7 if the answer was "meaning related" to a low score of 1 if the answer was "letter-sound related." Mean scores showed that children from the literature based program conceived reading to be more of a meaning related activity than did the other children. The mean scores were: mastery group, 3.45; basal group, 4.32; and literature group, 49.1.

Good readers in all three groups tended to define reading as being concerned with meaning, while poor readers saw it as a process of converting symbol to sound. Natural texts support reading as a meaning related activity.

Although each study mentioned employed its own brand of literature based reading instruction, several basic premises are found often in the different approaches. The elements of instruction varied depending upon the age of the student. Some of the basic elements that were implemented into all of the literature based reading instruction include:

1. Premises learned from "natural readers." Advocates of Whole Language tend to believe reading skills can be acquired in much the same manner as learning to speak (Forester, 1977; Holdaway, 1982). Durkin (1961), for example, identified 49 from a pool of 5,103 students in first grade who had received no formal reading instruction but entered school reading at a grade equivalent of 1.5 to 4.6.

Although these 49 "natural readers" had different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and IQ levels, there were several common factors found in the reading models they had at home. Their families had a high regard for reading, children were read to regularly from age two forward, and parents answered frequent questions about words and reading.

Learning to read naturally begins when parents read to young children and let them handle books, and that process is continued with the teacher reading aloud and including books naturally in the classroom.

2. Use of natural text. In every study examined, researchers were emphatic about using children's literature written in natural, uncontrolled language. Basal reading programs tend to isolate sounds, letters, and words from the language systems (Goodman, 1988). Their use of controlled vocabulary and syntax also causes a loss of style and makes language less natural and less predictable.
3. Neurological Impress Method. In the studies that involved beginning readers, a variation of the Neurological Impress Method was employed. In Chomsky's study, children "read" in the trade book while following along with the recorded version on audio cassette. Eldredge and Butterfield used reading pairs where poor readers were teamed with average readers. They sat together and read aloud from the same book while the faster reader touched the words as they were read and the slower reader repeated them.

The use of Big Books, as suggested by Holdaway and White, also allows for a form of neurological impress. Big Books are usually trade picture books which

have been reproduced in a format large enough to be seen from 20 feet away.

With Big Books teachers can have their students follow their fluent reading.

4. Reading aloud. Another characteristic of literature based programs is that teachers regularly spend time reading aloud to their students. Reading aloud was a basic element found in all of the studies reviewed. Being read to is the essential element in the backgrounds of "natural readers." It is also the key that has unlocked literacy growth for many disabled readers.

5. Sustained silent reading. Sustained silent reading is the time provided for students and teacher to read materials of their choice without interruption. Each study that was reviewed included a time for children to be alone with books.

The time children spend in independent reading of books "is associated with gains in reading achievement" (Anderson, et al., 1985, p. 119). Opportunity to reread favorite books or to read something new is the best way to give children the practice they need to apply their newly learned skills.

6. Teacher modeling. Another important element is that of teacher modeling. One of Holdaway's three basic requirements of the Shared Book Experience is that teachers need to present new books with wholehearted enjoyment.

It is essential that teachers model behaviors indicating the importance of reading. Teachers themselves should read during sustained silent reading. Students must learn the value of reading — teachers must model how important reading is.

7. Emphasis on changing attitudes. An affective approach to reading is also a recurring element of literature based programs. "When children learn that

reading and books are enjoyable and worth their time, they will spend more self-initiated time in books" (Fielding, Wilson, and Anderson, 1984, p. 151). A student's attitude toward reading is critical to their development as a reader.

8. Self-selection of reading materials. Positive attitude toward reading seems to be affected by allowing children to select their own reading materials. Every study examined had a time when students were encouraged to find and read books of their own choosing.
9. Meaning oriented with skills often taught in meaningful content. Most studies reviewed suggested teaching reading skills as they relate directly to the books and writings of the children (Holdaway, Chomsky, Larrick, Cohen, Boehnlein).
10. Process writing and other output activities. In each study a follow-up output activity accompanied reading experiences. Most of the follow-up activities involved writing. The children in these studies who progressed the most achieved in both reading and writing.

Literature has proved to be an excellent vehicle for developing, enhancing, and enriching lifelong, active literacy. Early experiences with the richness and variety of "real" reading materials seems to give children reason to read, teaching them not only "how to read, but to want to read" (Trelease, 1985, p. 6). The affectivity of literature based, Whole Language programs gives meaning and pleasure to the reading process, thus making skills instruction at last meaningful (Jacobs, Tunnel, 1989).

CHAPTER III
A HANDBOOK FOR FIRST GRADE
LITERATURE BASED READING PROGRAM

There are many ways to teach reading and writing with literature.

Although every teacher has his/her own brand of literature based reading instruction, there are several basic elements that are implemented into a literature based reading program. Components of a first grade literature program might include the following:

Shared Experiences

Shared book experience

Reading aloud to children

Development of strategies, including word attack skills

Children sharing their own published books/projects

Collaborative writing

Journal Writing and Book Publishing

Reading Groups

Literature Extension Activities

Independent Reading

Included in these components are:

- * Hearing good literature, an average of six to eight books as well as three to five poems daily. Higher-level questioning techniques are utilized.
- * Reading one or more predictable books with teacher guidance. (Predictable books are easy to read because of rhyme, repetition, natural language flow, meaningful story, and quality illustrations.)
- * Development of reading strategies, including word attack skills instruction. As much as possible, word attack skills instruction is integrated into the total reading process.
- * An opportunity for students to share completed literature extension projects, published books, and read to the class.
- * Independent reading of self-selected books with a nightly "sign-out" program and check-in the next day.
- * Writing journals, daily writing of personal experiences and stories using invented spelling.
- * Literature extension activities — book publishing, illustrating individual books and poems, story writing, letter writing, collaborative writing,

individual activities evolving from thematic units, involvement with the creative arts.

(Routman, 1988, p. 54)

Shared Experiences

The majority of the shared experiences time is spent reading to and with children. Short predictable books, requested favorite books, Big Books, poems, children's published books, and books from the classroom and school library collection are all a part of these shared experiences.

Much of the reading that takes place daily occurs during Shared Book Experience, which was developed by Don Holdaway. During this time, the students and teacher gather informally in the "reading center" — a specially designated place in the classroom where children sit comfortably on the floor. A Shared Book Experience includes:

1. Rereading a familiar book.
2. The students' retelling of what happened in another familiar story.
3. Sharing a new book with the students.
4. Song, chart, rhyme, poem, or lesson which focuses on the development of reading strategies.
5. Reading a personal favorite story of your own.

During this time, children are encouraged to participate through listening, choral reading, predicting story outcomes, open-ended questioning, predicting words and phrases, and reacting to story events. Shared book time is a high energy time for the teacher and students with emphasis on the mutual enjoyment of literature.

Journal Writing and Book Publishing

Daily writing on topics selected by students is an integral part of the reading-writing process. Students invent their own spellings using whatever visual and letter-sound knowledge they have. They write about anything they choose from personal happenings and family, to stories and poems. Stories can be taken from their writing journals and transcribed into books. Journal writing should take place daily and last about twenty minutes.

Reading Group

The purposes of reading group are to read a familiar book for pleasure in a supportive setting, to develop reading strategies, and to build confidence in students as readers. Through modeling, guided practice, and feedback, the student gradually moves toward independence. The teacher selects a book that she feels the students can succeed with and which they will be able to read with minimal teacher guidance. Emphasis is on developing oral fluency in reading and encouraging students to make sense of print through strategies they are developing.

Independent Reading

One of the most important parts of the literature program is the wide reading students are encouraged to do. Once a book has been read and discussed in shared experiences, multiple copies are placed in the reading center. The students are encouraged to select a book to read. The students who are unable to read the stories independently may choose to look through the pictures and retell

the story in their own words. Through desire and practice eventually the student reads the book.

Literature Extension Activities

Literature extension activities are an important part of the language arts program. A literature extension activity is any meaningful extension of a favorite book. These activities may include rereading for different purposes, retellings of stories, innovations on stories, collaborations on stories, comparison charts of different versions of a tale, categorizing stories with similar themes, illustrating favorite scenes and characters, acting out a story, writing stories for wordless picture books, making a mural, creating simple puppets for a dramatization of a predictable text, analyzing all the books by one author, reading with a partner or partners, charting the sequence of story events, using listening centers with tapes of favorite stories, etc.

Literature extension activities are often used in place of workbooks and worksheets. Basic concepts can be taught and reinforced through literature without the use of any worksheets. Book projects can be developed to reinforce reading, writing, and thinking skills. Typical book projects will involve recognizing and reproducing a rhythmic pattern, retelling a familiar story, understanding cause and effect, matching illustrations with text, drawing conclusions, recalling a sequence of events, making comparisons, writing in complete sentences, and using descriptive words.

Some examples of literature extension activities include:

Literature Extension Activities

Book: I Know an Old Lady

Author: Rose Bonne

Extension Activities

- Have students draw and label a large picture of the old lady that shows in her stomach the animals she swallowed.
- Write a story about the old lady. Tell why you think she swallowed the fly. Did she like eating flies? Was it an accident?
- Choose another animal the old lady might have swallowed. In addition to an original rhyme, draw a picture. Put students' original rhymes and illustrations into a class book. (Example: I know an old lady who swallowed a snake. Oh, what a mistake to swallow a snake.)
- Make a mobile of the things the old lady swallowed.

Book: The Hungry Thing

Author: Jan Slepian and Ann Seidler

Extension Activities

- Create a Hungry Thing shape book. Use the shape book to have children write the story of The Hungry Thing in their own words with their own illustrations. The shape book could also be used to have children write "All About the Hungry Thing." Students could be asked to include where he comes from, why he is so hungry, what his favorite foods are, all about his family, etc.

- Make a Hungry Thing bulletin board or mural. Have children draw pictures of actual foods but label them as the Hungry Thing would. Draw or paint a big Hungry Thing in the center.
- Collect and cut out food photographs from magazines and newspapers, or bring in labels from supermarket items. Paste each label or picture on a page in a blank book of pages that have been stapled together. The student writes the real word and the rhyming nonsense word below it.
- Have students create their own original rhyming couplets for the Hungry Thing by modeling the pattern in the book. Be sure to do some oral examples together first.

Book: The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Author: Eric Carle

Extension Activities

- Have students create their own predictable books based on modeling the pattern of words and pages from "On Monday . . . " through "On Friday . . . " but changing the name of the animal and the foods eaten. The book could be The Very Hungry Animal, The Very Hungry Boy, etc. Illustrations are done to match with text.
- Show a film or filmstrip on butterflies or insects with life cycles.
- Ask the children to paint a picture of their own beautiful butterfly. Ask them to tell an original story about their butterfly.

- Encourage children to look for caterpillars and bring them to school. If the caterpillars are put in suitable containers, the children will witness the metamorphosis from caterpillar to cocoon to butterfly. Make a chart or write a story about the life cycle.

Book: The Gingerbread Man

Author: Ed Arno

Extension Activities

- Encourage children to write their own version of the story. The main character could be changed to the Chocolate Chip Man, etc., and the other characters and final outcome could be changed as well.
- Students can act out the story using their own original conversation and body movements to tell what happened.
- Make gingerbread cookies.
- Make a gingerbread man out of clay.
- Compare and contrast different versions of The Gingerbread Man. Make a Venn Diagram of the stories.

Book: The Napping House

Author: Audrey and Don Wood

Extension Activities

- Have students draw and label a big picture of the Napping House, where everyone is sleeping. Make sure students put the characters in the correct sequence.
- Have students write another version of the Napping House using different characters.

Book: Teeny Tiny

Author: Jill Bennet

Illustrator: Tomie dePaola

Extension Activities

- Have students write a predictable story about the great, big _____, who lived in a great, big _____, etc.
- Have the students make teeny tiny stick puppets, which can be used for a retelling of the story.
- Have students rewrite the story in their own words, with their own illustrations.

Book: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Author: Judith Viorst

Literature Extension Activities

- Have each student write a story about a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day that they have had. Put children's stories into a class book.

- Pretend Alexander had a terrific day. What happy events might have happened? Have students write a story about Alexander and the fantastic, terrific, great, very good day.
- Have students create a magic potion that will get rid of a "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."
- Have students design a pair of pajamas that Alexander would be happy to wear.

Book: Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Author: Paul Goldone

Extension Activities

- Have students rewrite the story, pretending that the Three Bears were home.
- Have students pretend that they are Goldilocks. She has to write a letter to three bears to apologize.
- Have the students invent a new kind of cereal for bears. They will design a box for their cereal, including a name and a list of ingredients on their box.
- Pretend Goldilocks found a plate and a cup next to each bowl of porridge. Students should draw a picture of what else the Three Bears are eating for breakfast.

Book: Millions of Cats

Author: Wanda Gag

Extension Activities

- Describe an imaginary cat in detail to a partner. Have your partner try to draw it as you explain it. (Decorate a school window with cat paw prints and display students' drawings around them.)
- Have students brainstorm as many different kinds of cats as they can. Then, have them write five or more words to describe one of the cats. Draw a picture to match their description.
- Have students design wrapping paper using a cat pattern.
- Have students write a story about their pet cats.
- Read the story Have You Seen My Cat? by Eric Carle.

Book: The Tenth Good Thing About Barney

Author: Judith Viorst

Extension Activities

- Have students create a pet booklet illustrating many kinds of pets.
- Have students select their favorite pet from the booklet and write why they think it makes the best pet.
- Have students create a list of ten good things about their pet or favorite stuffed animal. Encourage them to use the same style as the author, Judith Viorst, does in the book.

- Create a Share Your Pet Day at school. Have students share three important things about their pet with the class.

Book: Where the Wild Things Are

Author: Maurice Sendak

Extension Activities

- Have students make a list of make-believe creatures from stories they have read or been told.
- Have students pretend that they are a Wild Thing. Have them draw a picture of what they would look like and give their Wild Thing a name.
- Have students write another story about the Wild Things.

Book: Sylvester and the Magic Pebble

Author: William Steig

Extension Activities

- Have students describe the main events of the story in sequence.
- Suppose Sylvester had turned into a lake instead of a stone. How would it have changed the story? How would Mr. and Mrs. Duncan have found him? Have students write a new story about Sylvester.
- Have students think of five extraordinary uses for a pebble or rock. Have them draw a picture of their favorite idea.
- Have students create their own magic object. Have them draw and write about its magic.

Book: Blueberries for Sal

Author: Robert McClosky

Extension Activities

- Have students create an original meal using blueberries. Make sure they name their creations. (You may want to have the students paste their menus inside construction paper folders. Have them decorate the fronts and invent restaurant names.)
- Have the students make a sign to place at the bottom of Blueberry Hill. Have them use mostly B words on their sign.
- Have students make a list of foods that can be picked. Have them categorize their list into foods that can be eaten raw and foods that require cooking before eating. (Make into a chart.)

Book: Ira Sleeps Over

Author: Bernard Waber

Extension Activities

- Have the students draw a picture of their favorite thing to sleep with.
- Have students predict what Ira would have done if Reggie had not had a bear, too. Have students write a story about their prediction.
- Create a My "Beary" Special Thing Day at school. Have students bring their favorite thing to sleep with. Have them share why it is special with their class.

- Have the students create a wardrobe for Tahtah. (Display the completed teddy bear paperdolls in the library. Label the display A Teddy Bear Fashion Show.)

Book: Miss Nelson Is Missing

Author: Harry Allard and James Marshall

Extension Activities

- Have the students pretend they are a student in Miss Nelson's classroom. Write five things they would feel when they met Miss Viola Swamp.
- Have the students think of three unlikely things that may have happened to Miss Nelson. Have them write a story and illustrate their unlikely suggestions for Miss Nelson's disappearance.
- Have the students design a new disguise for Miss Nelson. (This activity would make a great bulletin board during Halloween. Title the bulletin board "A New Disguise for Miss Nelson.")
- Have students make a comparison chart of Viola Swamp and Miss Nelson. How are they alike? How are they different?

Book: Curious George

Author: H.A. Rey

Extension Activities

- Have students cut out pictures of other animals that might be in the zoo with him. Have them label the pictures with appropriate names of the animals. Paste the pictures and labels on yellow construction paper hats.
- Pretend that Curious George did not escape from the jail and needed some advice about what to do. Have the students write Curious George a letter to tell him what they think he should do.
- Have students write another story about Curious George and the trouble he gets into.
- Have students make "George's Banana Pops": Put half of a banana on a popsicle stick. Dip into a mixture of one-half lemon juice and one-half water. Roll banana in crushed Grape Nuts, place on wax paper, and freeze.

Book: The Doorbell Rang

Author: Pat Hutchins

Extension Activities

- Have students make a class book titled "Nobody Can." Each student will complete a sentence naming activity they do well and illustrate themselves involved in the activity. (Nobody can _____ like _____.)
- Have students create and illustrate a menu for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

- Have students write a new ending for the story. Who came to the door at the end of the story? What happened next?
- Have students make chocolate chip cookies to be used as they act out the story.

Book: Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel

Author: Virginia Lee Burton

Extension Activities

- Have students create a giant scrapbook to retell the story.
- Have students create collages of machines that, like Mary Ann, have facial features.
- Have students compose the personal history of a favorite possession. Have them complete the story frame: My _____ is called _____. I love it because _____. When it is very old, I will _____.
- Have students review the occupations mentioned in the story. Then, design an occupations chart.

Book: Deep in the Forest

Author: Brinton Turkle

Extension Activities

- Have students write a collaborative text for the story.
- Have students illustrate a favorite scene from the story. Then, have them write a caption about it.

- Have students construct a fantasy bed out of shoe boxes.
- Have students collect leaves and experiment with various art techniques (leaf print, clay leaves, laminating leaves).

Book: Chicken Little

Author: Steven Kellogg

Extension Activities

- Have students create stick puppets and use them to dramatize the story.
- Have students create a new disguise for Toxy Loxy. Then, have them develop an alternative story scenario in which the wily fox dons that disguise.
- Have students discuss and research the sky. Students can then make dioramas that depict the sky during the day and night.
- Have students create a wanted poster with a picture and description of an original animal character.

Some literature based reading programs have incorporated author studies into their reading and writing program. One author is chosen each month. The students explore the books of a particular author. They discuss the author's writing style, character setting, theme preference, and artistic style, including preferred medium and techniques.

Two examples of author studies include:

PAT HUTCHINS

About the Author

Pat Hutchins has written a variety of books including a series about a monster family, a series of simple books with little or no text, and even a book about a greedy pirate, One-Eyed Jake. This variety is a nice contrast, and gives children the opportunity to make choices and to express preferences.

Pat Hutchins, a British author, is married to a film director who has illustrated some of her books. She has two sons, Morgan and Sam, who have become characters in her books.

What to Emphasize

1. **Unique Style:** Pat Hutchins creates illustrations with a unique and distinctive style. Her use of warm colors — greens, yellows, and oranges, and her use of tiny designs that create texture and pattern are hallmarks of her work. Children will begin to notice that many of her books feature illustrations that rely almost entirely on greens, yellows, and oranges. Discussing her use of tiny designs to stimulate texture in animal fur, bird feathers, plant life, etc. will help children to instantly identify her particular artistic style.
2. **Humor:** Pat Hutchins' books are full of good humor. This is an important part of many of the children's books you can explore together. You can begin this topic by asking the children how her books make them feel; then how some of the books make us laugh out loud. Identifying the humor in books helps children to begin to appreciate that quality in an author's writing ability.

3. **Cultural Differences:** Because Pat Hutchins is a British author, some of her word choices reflect that culture. Titch, for example, is the name of one of her characters in her books. In England, titch is used as a nickname for a small person.

Books

1. Rosie's Walk — This is a story about a fox who tries unsuccessfully to capture Rosie, the hen. It is a great story to act out.
2. Changes, Changes — This story is told entirely through the illustrations and has no text at all. Two wooden dolls create a house out of a set of wooden blocks. When the house catches on fire, the dolls change some of the blocks into a fire engine and extinguish the fire. The water from the hose gets so deep that the dolls have to change the blocks into a boat. The story continues in this way as each problem is met with a change in the construction of the blocks.

Students can see how many different designs they are able to create using the same number of blocks. Each child could also create a small booklet using construction paper block shapes.

3. The Doorbell Rang — This is an amusing story about a mother who bakes a batch of cookies. Her two children become dismayed as more and more children arrive at the door, leaving fewer cookies for them.

Students can bake chocolate chip cookies that can be used to act out the story. They see firsthand how quickly the number of cookies per child dwindles.

Extended Activities

When discussing the language differences mentioned earlier, encourage the children to listen for words that might not be familiar to them. Make a list of the British words or phrases Ms. Hutchins uses and list their American counterparts next to them.

Many children are fascinated by Ms. Hutchins' use of tiny design work in her illustrations. Give students pre-drawn shapes to fill with tiny designs. Try writing each child's name in large, block letters. Let the children fill their names, using tiny designs.

Changes, Changes, Clocks and More Clocks and More Clocks, Rosie's Walk, and The Surprise Party have been made into films produced by Weston Wood.

Many children will notice similarities between Rosie's Walk and the Roadrunner cartoons they see on television. Let them create their own class book with Rosie and the fox or the Roadrunner and Wylie Coyote caught in similar but original situations.

EZRA JACK KEATS

About the Author

The books of Ezra Jack Keats were created from his own experiences of growing up in a lower income family in the inner city. Mr. Keats' early years and his struggle to become an artist read like a movie script. His story, his

relationship with his father and mother, and his tenacious hold on his dream is inspiring, and children warm to this author.

Ezra Jack Keats was the youngest child of Polish immigrants who settled in Brooklyn, New York. They lived in a small apartment not unlike those pictured in many of his books. The family had little money for extras like art supplies, which young Ezra desperately wanted. Ezra was encouraged by his mother (he once painted the top of her kitchen table with drawings which she protected with her finest tablecloth rather than scrub away). But Ezra's father did not want his son to become an artist for he thought he'd never be able to support himself. Openly opposed to his son's dreams, Ezra's father nonetheless would occasionally bring him a tube of paint, saying that a starving artist had used it to pay for a bowl of soup at the restaurant where he worked. Ezra believed these stories for a long time until he realized that his father had been buying the art supplies from his small earnings as a waiter. As children sit spellbound at these stories of Keats' early life, his books about inner city children and their everyday lives and problems take on new meaning. They have obviously been written by someone who has experienced the same lifestyle firsthand.

What to Emphasize

1. Inner City Setting: Most of Mr. Keats' books are set in the inner section of a great city. He portrays this world realistically, but kindly. Somehow his vivid illustrations, full of bold colors and collage techniques, bring warmth to the harshness of the inner city. Discuss how this setting is similar to or different from

the students' own home environment. Because his books are often drawn in the same setting, there is a neighborhood feel about the bulk of his work.

2. **Characters and Themes:** Ezra Jack Keats' books are about children and the situations they face in their everyday lives. His books are about growing up, often with a perspective unique to an inner city child. Children can relate to these characters no matter what their socioeconomic background because the situations and themes portrayed in his books are universal to all children. From exploring the winter world of a snowy day to adjusting to a new baby in the family, children all over the world experience these same feelings and thoughts.

Many of Ezra Jack Keats' books feature one neighborhood where the reader meets the same group of children over and over. We meet Peter, for example, in Keats' first book, The Snowy Day, and watch him grow older in successive books such as Peter's Chair and Whistle for Willie. Other repeat characters include Louie, Roberto, Amy, Archie, and Willie, the dog. After reading several of these books, the students begin to feel a warm kinship with Mr. Keats' characters, and a family feeling is established.

3. **Collage:** Throughout his work, Mr. Keats incorporates collage as a special technique that adds warmth and realism to this art. Younger children may be unfamiliar with collage, and Keats' illustrations will focus their interest on his artwork and will emphasize an eye for careful observation. Collage is an art form that children will love to create. This may be because it is so free form and often involves collecting, an activity most children love. Mr. Keats' books are the beginning of a school year's worth of collage-related activities.

Books

1. Louie — This is a story about a quiet, lonely child and how he interacts with art objects. Two children are putting on a puppet show for their friends. Louie, who has never spoken to the children, is in the audience and instantly falls in love with Gussie, a hand puppet. After the play, Louie speaks to Gussie and later has a vivid dream about the puppet. In the end, the child who owns Gussie gives the puppy to Louie. This book can be a wonderful introduction to a unit on puppetry. As part of a puppetry unit, the children can bring in lots of found items and spend part of a day creating all kinds of puppets from these objects. The students can then be split into small groups and work cooperatively to put together a show using their puppets.
2. The Trip — This story was published three years after Louie. In this story, Louis has moved to a new neighborhood and is feeling lonely and sad. He once turns to art to dispel these unhappy feelings. Louie creates a diorama peep box from glue, colored paper, and an old shoe box. He pretends that he enters his peep box world and flies in a toy airplane back to his old neighborhood where he finds his old friends dressed in Halloween costumes. As his mother calls to him and brings him back to reality, Louie hears the children of his new neighborhood calling "trick or treat" outside his window. In the end, Louie joins them, wearing a giant ice cream cone costume.

There are many parallels between these two companion books. The children immediately notice Gussie, the puppet, in many of the pictures in Louie's room in The Trip. There is also continued reinforcement through both books that

Louie, a lonely, introverted child, finds solace through art. The Halloween costumes of a giant mouse and an ice cream cone are designs that are also found in Louie. It is fun to look through these books to find similarities and to discuss how these similarities tell us so much about the character of Louie.

Students will enjoy creating their own dioramas. This can be done individually or in small groups.

4. Psst, Doggie — This is a wonderful, silly book about a cat and dog who dance their way through the pages of the book. For the most part a wordless book, Psst, Doggie tells all the action through the illustrations. The simple plot is about a cat who invites a dog to dance, and the reader sees them dancing a different dance, in appropriate costumes on each page. The children will be swept up by the silliness and excitement of each dance.

5. The Snowy Day — Mr. Keats' first book is a Caldecott Medal winner and a very popular book with young children. The children are always glad to see their old friend, Peter, again and it's a good time to review all that was previously learned about Ezra Jack Keats.

Extended Activities

Collage construction gives young children an opportunity to explore and to create, using a variety of materials. They also learn to problem solve and to think about placing certain items so as to create a design or effect. Collage is so free form that even students who don't feel confident with other activities like their unfinished project.

Encourage the children to create a collage picture like Mr. Keats', adding a scrap of newspaper or a bit of fabric or wallpaper to a picture they have drawn. It is helpful to demonstrate and to brainstorm different ways of arranging paper, such as folding and twisting, before beginning the collage work. Put all the extra paper in the art center so the children can continue to create during free times.

Evaluation of a literature based reading program is a great concern for many teachers. Teachers are under enormous pressure from both administrators and parents to be more and more accountable for students' progress. However, there are workable alternatives to multiple choice and "fill in the blank" graded assignments. Valid measure of progress through process evaluation can substantiate a grade and yield valuable information for instructional needs. Some alternative methods of meaningful evaluation include:

Running Records: Some teachers are beginning to take "running records" of students' oral reading to assess what strategies they are using. Running records were developed by New Zealand educator Marie Clay as a way to observe, record, and carefully analyze what the child does in the process of reading. Learning to take a running record will give teachers valuable information and insight about a child's reading behaviors. In approximately five minutes, a teacher can take a running record on any page of any book. Using about a hundred to two hundred word sample, the teacher notes the child's exact oral reading — repetitions, substitutions, insertions, omissions, self-corrections, and where the child has needed and received help in order to proceed. While the procedure

seems confusing initially, with practice it becomes a simple task and an excellent diagnostic and analytical tool.

Tape Recording Oral Reading: Some teachers tape record students' oral reading several times during the school year to show progress. These oral records can be shared with parents and the students themselves as a way of noting increased fluency and phrasing as well as overall reading gains.

Oral Responses: The way students respond in oral discussion, as well as the kinds of questions students ask, gives information as to their language processing and thinking. A child's reading strengths and responses to literature can be observed in many situations. Asking a child to retell a story orally through daily book check gives information about his skills in sequencing, summarizing, paraphrasing, and interpreting, as well as about his memory for text and recall of details.

Oral Reading: Oral reading can also be used evaluatively. Unlike the old "round robin reading" of the basal where the goal was word-perfect reading and "sounding out" without regard to meaning, process teachers use oral reading to determine the reading strategies the child is using and then guide the child towards more strategic reading.

Reading Records: Reading records, folders, and notebooks can be used to document reading progress from month to month; they will indicate how extensively the child reads, as well as a student's reading habits and preferences.

Reading Response Logs: A look at the reading log or reading spiral demonstrates the child's written ability to synthesize and interpret information from silent reading and oral discussion, as well as give an opinion about the book. The

reading notebook can be used to evaluate students' written responses to literature. Students can be asked to write predictions before reading a chapter silently, write a brief summary, answer a question the teacher has posed, give their opinion of the book, describe a character, write a letter to a character, keep track of some difficult vocabulary they want to learn, or just write their personal reactions and comments to what has been read.

Writing Journals: The student's unedited, daily writing about personal experiences or topics he chooses to write about, shows how well the student is organizing his thoughts, what conventions of print he is using, handwriting and spelling development, and knowledge of phonics and the English language, as well as giving the teacher insight into the student's thinking and what is important to him.

Writing Folders: The writing folder, with the student's weekly work throughout the year, includes drafts, revisions, final copies, work in progress, possible future writing topics, skills the student holds himself accountable for and vocabulary he is using.

Conferencing: Some teachers are beginning to use a conference approach as the main method of evaluating their students' reading and writing behaviors and progress. Conferencing with students allows us to analyze the kinds of errors made, the problems the students may be encountering, the strategies they are using — giving valuable information on how the child is organizing his language and pointing up specific needs for instruction.

Written Tests: Because almost all our comprehension activities center around oral discussion and higher-level thinking through active questioning, teachers sometimes give a written test after a book has been completed in group. Students are expected to write in complete sentences. Questions are thoughtful and open-ended and will center around key issues that have already been discussed.

Responses will differ greatly and reflect individual interpretations; the student is evaluated on how thoughtfully and completely he has answered the questions.

Extension Activities: Book projects, collaborative writing, and original activities that children come up with in response to the literature, all indicate the level of understanding and appreciation that has taken place. The way children respond to literature through art, drama, and music demonstrates their perceptions and interpretations.

Self-evaluation: Self-evaluation is evaluation of the highest level. Observing the child's predicting, confirming, self-correcting strategies tells us whether or not the child is in charge of his own reading. A child who consistently self-corrects and self-monitors is reading for meaning. When the child is allowed to self-select much of what he reads and writes and to keep his own reading and writing records, he is also involved in evaluating what he can and wants to read and write.

Reading aloud to children daily, shared reading, guided whole class reading, shared writing, journal writing, literature extension activities, publishing children's writing, self-selected reading, author studies, and evaluation are components that have been discussed in this handbook which can easily be added to the language arts program. It is not difficult to start by adding one or more of

these components. Many teachers have found adding poetry and journal writing a very workable way to begin. As teachers, we need to begin to make educated choices about how and what we are teaching and to trust ourselves and the children. Well-prepared, well educated teachers with a positive belief and acceptance of children as natural learners can choose a variety of approaches in teaching. We must provide successful reading and writing experiences for all children., regardless of ability levels. Children's literature offers optimal choices, pleasure, and satisfaction for everyone involved in the education process.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Getting children interested in and excited about reading is one of the most important contributions teachers can ever make in our society. In spite of living in one of the largest, wealthiest, most highly technical nations in the world, we also live in a nation where illiteracy is a tremendous problem. According to Kozol (1983), the United States illiteracy rate is four times higher than the Soviet Union's and five times higher than Cuba's.

One way to help overcome this problem is to turn students on to reading through literature. The use of literature for teaching literacy is tried and tested, grounded in research, and based on the natural learning theory.

In the real world, reading, writing, speaking, and listening are highly integrated activities, and so they should be in our classrooms.

"A child's world should include a wealth of the best language, and that language does not come from syllable counts, workbooks, and instructional manuals. It comes from writers, dreamers, and poets."

(Johnson, 1987, p. 155)

Teaching with literature at the beginning levels is difficult and demanding, yet the extra efforts are rewarding. The joy returns to teaching and learning as

teachers and students begin to share the excitement and pleasure of good literature.

This handbook is designed to support teachers in making the change to move away from the skill-oriented basal text and accompanying worksheets and toward pleasure-oriented children's books and self-selected writing activities. The ideas and suggestions presented are intended to show teachers that change is possible. It is intended to be a beginning for teachers who know that the magic of a good story can engage readers, keep them reading, and help them discover that joy we experience from reading ourselves.

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