

3-1991

# In the Classroom: Creating a Writing-Rich Environment in the Preschool Classroom (Mar. '91)


Michael P. French

*Lourdes University*, [mfrench@lourdes.edu](mailto:mfrench@lourdes.edu)

Kathy Everts Danielson

*University of Nebraska at Omaha*, [kdanielson@unomaha.edu](mailto:kdanielson@unomaha.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/tedfacpub>

 Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Pre-Elementary, Early Childhood, Kindergarten Teacher Education Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

French, Michael P. and Danielson, Kathy Everts, "In the Classroom: Creating a Writing-Rich Environment in the Preschool Classroom (Mar. '91)" (1991). *Teacher Education Faculty Publications*. 13.  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/tedfacpub/13>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Teacher Education at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Teacher Education Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).



# IN THE CLASSROOM

Michael P. French, Bowling Green State University  
Kathy Everts Danielson, University of Nebraska at Omaha

## Creating a writing-rich environment in the preschool classroom

Bess A. Isom  
Carolyn P. Casteel

Teachers see young children's interest in writing in their desire to express themselves by scribbling in books, on walls, and on other surfaces. Writing attempts, however immature, create pride and confidence as children share their products.

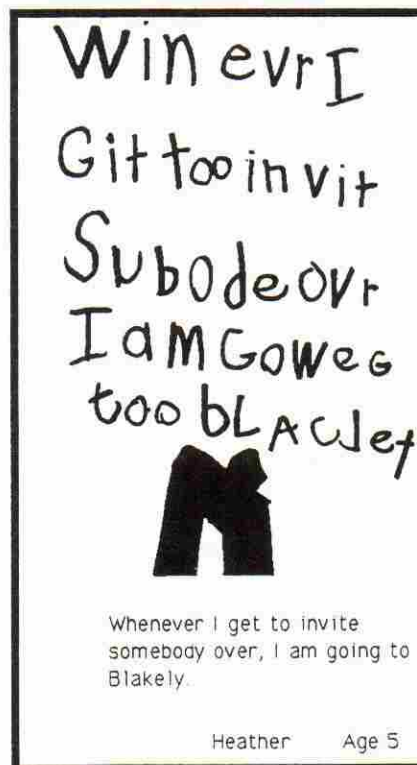
### Journal writing

Many preschool teachers are incorporating journal writing into their instructional programs. A teacher of 5-year-olds in a suburban U.S. Gulf Coast community starts her kindergartners in journal writing on the first day of school. She laminates a folder for each child and labels it "My School Journal by..." and writes each child's name. Each morning the children write a story. At this stage, they usually draw a picture or engage in scribble writing, but they still read their story to others.

The children choose their own topics for their journal each day. Something interesting that happens at home may result in a great story, as in the example.

Children sometimes write about topics studied in the classroom. For example, interesting stories and pictures about how eggs hatch were produced by children after they observed this process in their classroom. Occasionally some children get writer's block, and the teacher encourages them to use picture cards or brainstorm ideas before writing. By the end of the year, the children's writing approximates

### An example of student writing



conventional writing to the extent that the teacher can read their stories to them, and the children can read stories written by others.

### Thematic unit approach

Classroom instruction that is organized according to thematic units offers a rich environment for developing early literacy skills. Two kindergarten teachers who team teach in a rural community design their yearly program around central themes such as the jungle, the sea, the farm, and fairy tales. The teachers organize around three goals in order to build a reading/writing environment.

Create an environment around the theme. These two teachers have very little furniture in the classroom. They prefer a large space for creating a total environment. The teachers begin each unit by constructing one spectacular display. This gets the children excited and interested in the new theme. Also, the display attracts the attention of all others in the school, making the children feel their room is special. For example, the teachers initiated a unit on the farm by converting the outside of the room into the front of a barn. The children entered their classroom through the barndoor, vicariously entering the farm. Gradually, an environment like this grows more elaborate as both the teachers and the children add to it based on increasing thematic knowledge gained through reading and discussion.

When the jungle was the theme for this class, the entire room was converted into a jungle by the teachers and children. This included paper vines draped across the ceiling with monkeys and other creatures hanging from them. A life-size tiger and gorilla were cut from doubled butcher paper, stuffed, and painted; these were placed at strategic locations between large paper plants. A section of the room was adorned by a 5-foot alligator constructed from egg cartons and equipped with teeth made from plastic fork tines. Hanging on one wall was a large illustration of a mound with burrowing creatures inside.

As they gained more knowledge, the children added more animals and plants to the classroom's jungle environment. An illustration of this occurred when the children listened to the teacher read about leaf-cutter ants in the jungle. After learning that the ants slit the leaves of plants, the chil-



dren insisted on slitting the leaves of the construction-paper plants in the room. They also decided to add an ant-eater to their classroom jungle. A theme environment such as this reflects the children's learning and promotes motivation and curiosity. It becomes a natural resource for reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

*Provide for language and concept development.* The teachers provided a wealth of activities and materials pertaining to the theme. For example, they brought in numerous books, pictures, tapes, and models relating to the jungle. Books such as *17 Kings and 42 Elephants* (Mahy, 1987) allowed for language play as its characters romp with a variety of jungle animals during their journey through a wild, wet night. *The Beginning of the Armadillos* (Kipling, 1985) and *It's Me, Hippo!* (Thaler, 1983) were also used to enhance language and reading development. Resources such as *Jungles* (Catchpole, 1984; Podendorf, 1982) provided factual information for concept development. Reading, discussion, questioning, projects, and individual inquiry stimulated the children's growth in the areas of oral language, reasoning, content knowledge, and beginning research skills.

*Provide for group and individual writing.* Classroom discussion results in daily productions of group-dictated, language-experience stories usually followed by individual dictation and illustrations.

Children can experiment further in a classroom writing center supplied with blank books in shapes relating to the theme. For example, during a thematic unit dealing with the sea, blank books in the shape of a shell, a stingray, a shark, and other sea objects were provided. One child wrote the following in one of these books:

I wadr how starfish fil.  
Sumtime I would like to go urd  
to the oshun in see bootofall thigs.  
Oh and scoopa divrs aer spechol too.  
The End  
Sumtime u mit wont to read this storre  
agine.

Krystal  
Age 5

Big book stories can be dictated and illustrated by the children in a variety

of ways. Sometimes the children retell and illustrate a story that has been read to them by the teachers. Sometimes they dictate new content to a familiar pattern. For instance, when the sea was the theme, the children created a big book patterned after the predictable book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin, 1983). The following lines are from the book they created:

Starfish, starfish what do you see?  
I see a gray shark looking at me.  
Gray shark, gray shark what do you see?  
I see a scuba diver looking at me.

This classroom is filled with a variety of reading materials: trade books, informational materials, and the books, charts, and journals written by the children. The teachers read to the children several times a day, and the technique of repeated readings is practiced regularly. Children share their own writings with the group, and the child-authored books become worn with use. Frequently their writing efforts are displayed prominently, such as in the gorilla's hand or on the tiger's back, and are borrowed from the display by children wanting to read them.

In summary, these teachers created a range of experiences in a writing-rich environment. Classrooms like these are sensitive to emergent literacy, recognizing what children already know. Through the reading and writing environment they build a support system for children's literacy development (Jewell & Zintz, 1986). Reading and writing readiness is enhanced through direct involvement in literacy activities that are meaningful to the child and encourage experimentation and exploration (Strickland & Morrow, 1989).

*Note:* Lynda Gunnison and Fran Zeanah of Foley Elementary School and Linda Philippi of Spanish Fort School in Baldwin County, Alabama, are the teachers of the two classrooms described in this article.

## References

- Catchpole, C. (1984). *Jungles*. New York: Dutton.  
Jewell, M.G., & Zintz, M.V. (1986). *Learning to read naturally*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.  
Kipling, R. (1985). *The beginning of the armadillos*. San Diego: HBJ.

- Mahy, M. (1987). *17 kings and 42 elephants*. New York: Dial.  
Martin, B. (1983). *Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?* New York: Holt.  
Podendorf, I. (1982). *Jungles*. Chicago, IL: Children's Press.  
Strickland, D.S., & Morrow, L.M. (1989). Interactive experiences with storybook reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 42, 322-323.  
Thaler, M. (1983). *It's me, Hippo!* New York: Harper & Row.

*Isom and Casteel are associate professors of education at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama.*

## Creating big books and predictable books

Connie Bush Thornell

Young children need to be exposed to an abundance of print. One of the most effective ways I have found for bringing print into my classroom is through the construction of big books and predictable books. In choosing books to use, I avoid books with a poorly constructed story or contrived vocabulary.

Garage sales are a great source of materials for creating books. You can buy old children's books at garage sales and cut out the pictures. Glue these pictures onto tagboard and add the words to the top of the page. You may either recreate the same book in larger format or make up new text for the pictures. By placing the sentences at the top of each page, the child's attention is drawn to the print instead of the picture.

Another method of making big books involves buying two paperback copies of the same book. Cut apart the pictures and glue them onto tagboard. Add the sentences using large print and laminate the pages. This makes an attractive big book.

Old calendars can be recycled to make books. To make these "calendar books," take the calendars and cover the months and dates with lined paper. Write a simple, predictable sentence on each page. For example, if the calendar has animals on each page, you



may write *This is a \_\_\_ or A \_\_\_ says, \_\_\_*. Laminate the book and bind it with metal rings. Children can easily read these books.

You can use the lyrics of songs children know as the text for a big, predictable book. Cut appropriate pictures from magazines and coloring books and mount them on tagboard. Add the words from the song and laminate and bind the pages. Children enjoy singing along while reading the book.

One of my students' favorite books was made by using a picture of each child in the room. To make this kind of book, mount each child's picture on tagboard and write a predictable sentence for each page. For example, *This is Mary. She is five years old. Hello, Mary*. The children rapidly learn to recognize each child's name as well as useful vocabulary such as numbers.

Shape books are another exciting way to bring books into the room. Cut sturdy white paper into the shape of the main character from a book. Then write the text on the shaped pages. For example, if you are studying a unit about fish, cut the pages of the book into the shape of fish and write a predictable sentence on each page. For example, *Fat fish, fat fish, what do you see? I see a striped fish looking at me*. This book, of course, is patterned after Bill Martin's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. Children can illustrate the different fish pages after reading the descriptions.

Children also love pocket books. To make these, cut squares from brown paper grocery bags. Place an even number of squares on top of each other and bind the left side. Using rubber cement, glue the right side and bottom of every two pages together to form a pocket. Place a card with a picture on it in the pocket. On the outside, write a predictable sentence such as *A \_\_\_ is in my pocket* or *I have a \_\_\_ in my pocket*. These books are very inexpensive and easy to make.

Children enjoy helping make "Zip-lock Baggie" books. First, cut pieces of construction paper twice the width and the same height as a ziplock plastic bag. Give a piece of the paper and a marker to each child. Direct the children to fold the paper in half to form book covers and to write *My Zoo Book*

on the front cover. Next, give each child four plastic bags and ask them to draw a cage on each. After they have done that, place their four "Baggie pages" inside their folded cover, with the ziplock opening on the right side.

Staple along the left side of the cover fold. When the pages have been stapled in place, give children an 8½" × 11" piece of drawing paper, and show them how to fold it in quarters. Tell them to draw and color a zoo animal in each part, cut the pictures apart along the folds, and place one picture in each bag. On each page of their assembled illustrated book, write *I can see a \_\_\_ at the zoo*.

The children now have a zoo book that they will cherish. This technique can be used for other units taught in preschool or the early primary grades.

Big books and predictable books can increase young children's engagement with print in the preschool, kindergarten, or first grade classroom. As children begin to love reading, such books can help them understand important concepts about print. In addition to the many benefits big books and predictable books have for young readers and writers, they can be made inexpensively and creatively.

*Thornell is a kindergarten teacher at Magnolia Elementary School in Magnolia, Texas.*

## Cereal boxes foster emergent literacy

Linda Kettenring  
Nancy Graybill

What two words can most incoming first graders read? The answer is *Free Inside!*—the ubiquitous phrase on children's breakfast cereal boxes. Likewise, *Cheerios*, *Fruit Loops*, *Frosted Flakes*, and *Yummy Mummy Monster Mallows* can be read with ease by many beginning first graders.

The popular environmental print of cereal boxes can be used as a spring-

board for instruction. Children find comfort in seeing the familiar print from home being used in their school curriculum. This connection between home and school demonstrates that reading is purposeful and relevant to everyday life.

Activities using cereals and cereal boxes can be integrated across the curriculum. For developing literacy with graphs, each child brings in his or her favorite cereal box. The children place their boxes in columns on the floor according to the type of cereal. Lots of teacher questions may follow: "Which one is most popular?" "How many more Cheerios boxes are there than Raisin Bran boxes?" "Which one is least popular?" Finally, each child makes a bar graph representing the students' favorite cereals.

A discussion of where cereals come from and the different grains used to make cereals leads to a nutrition study. The cereals are graphed another way with columns labeled for cereals made from oats, corn, wheat, and rice. Children can then answer questions requiring them to read and interpret this graph.

*The Little Red Hen* can help children understand how grain is made into food. The story is full of rich vocabulary that describes the process: *sow, harvest, thresh, mill, and grind*. Other children's books related to nutrition and breakfast are *Gregory, The Terrible Eater* (Sharmat, 1980), *Bread and Jam for Francis* (Hoban, 1964), *What a Good Lunch* (Watanabe, 1981), and *Eloise* (Thompson, 1969).

Teachers can also make big books from cereal boxes. First, cut off the box fronts and mount them on double-folded brown butcher paper, which provides a heavy base for the pages of a big book. Box fronts that share a similarity can be paired together on each page like Kix with Trix and Nut and Honey Crunch with Honey Comb. The children may guess why certain cereals are paired together, focusing on the words in the cereal names.

A predictable text can be written to accompany a cereal big book. For example, my students wrote the following text for one of their books:

What did you have to eat this morning?



Did you have *these* or *those*?  
 Do you like *these*?  
 Did you have *these* or *those*?  
 Are *these* good?

Cereal big books may be used for skill instruction such as phonics. For example, rhyming words can be found like *yummy* and *mummy*. Beginning and ending consonants, consonant blends, and consonant digraphs can be taught drawing from cereal vocabulary such as Frosted Flakes and Fruit Loops.

Cereal-related writing activities may include listing and describing. Children can list the cereals made from oats, the cereals made from wheat, and the cereals made from corn and rice. Children can strengthen their sequencing skills by describing how they fix their breakfast in the morning. Signal words like *first*, *second*, *then*, and *finally* can be suggested for guidance. These descriptions can be developed into a published book. Finally, following discussion of the highly persuasive and sensory-appealing nature of words on cereal labels children can combine writing and artistic talents to design their own cereal box fronts.

Using cereal boxes in the first-grade classroom helps build the vital bridge between home and school which, with nurturing, can help children develop into lifelong readers.

*Kettenring is a reading specialist at Maple Avenue Elementary School in Goffstown, New Hampshire. Graybill teaches first grade at New Boston Central School in New Boston, New Hampshire.*

## Teaching comprehension with editorials

Mary A. Furleigh

Reading and writing editorials are a good way to develop reading for the main idea, inferential comprehension, and critical thinking. Although this activity is appropriate for the eighth grade, the level can be adjusted by

**Editorial response form**

Statement of main idea

1. Who or what is the editorial about? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is the title intended to inform or to interest the reader? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the most important point the writer makes about the subject?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Statement of inference

1. What is the author writing about? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is the author for or against this subject? \_\_\_\_\_
3. List one or two reasons the author gives for his or her position. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the author's opinion on the subject of the editorial? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student response

1. Why do you believe the writer is for or against this subject? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you agree or disagree? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do you feel as you do on the subject? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

changing the reading level and subject matter of the editorials.

This procedure is comprised of three steps: selection, directions, and evaluation. The selection of editorials is made using a variety of sources such as local newspapers, news magazines, or school newspapers. The subject of the editorials should be relevant to the students. Initially students can select from teacher-provided editorials but can gradually begin to bring their own editorials.

The students are given the following directions:

1. Read the editorial and discuss it with a parent or another student.
2. Answer the questions on the Editorial Response Form.
3. Based on your answers, write one sentence to answer the following questions:

- What is the subject of the editorial?
- What is the writer's opinion?
- What is your opinion on the subject?
- 4. Turn in the sentences, editorial, completed question and answer form.

This activity can be evaluated by the teacher or by peers. Peer evaluation of this activity is actually a review activity since the student must read, ask and answer questions, and judge writing on a different editorial. If this method of evaluation is to be used, students could write a code on papers rather than their names. For variety, the peer evaluation can also be conducted as a small group activity in which three to four students evaluate one another's work.

*Furleigh teaches at Potter Junior High School in Fallbrook, California.*

## Visual-Auditory Links: A structural analysis approach to increase word power

Susan Peterson  
Patricia H. Phelps

It has been estimated that over 60% of English words come directly or indirectly from Latin or Greek. Therefore, it is important that elementary and middle school students be exposed to common basewords to help them decode new words and unlock their meanings. Visual-Auditory Links (V-A-L) utilizes simple (and often humorous) visuals and accompanying slogans to help students "link" word parts to their meanings.

### Preparing for V-A-L

The first step is to identify which word parts will be taught. An excellent source is *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists* (Fry, Fountoukidis, & Polk, 1985), which includes extensive lists of morphemes and their meanings. Dictionaries and other reference books on the subject of etymology may also prove useful.

The next step is to locate a picture with which to associate the meaning of the word part. For example, a picture of someone writing is an appropriate link for *script*, the Latin root meaning "to write," and a picture of twins would be a good association for *duo*, Latin for "two." Illustrations used by the authors were taken from a clip-art book, *Funny Folks* (Eral, 1982). Most libraries have copies of copyright-free, reproducible artwork like this, but pictures may be drawn or found in magazines, cartoon books, or other publications.

After word parts and illustrations have been collected, a slogan or brief saying is created as a label for the picture. This slogan should help students recall the meaning of the Greek or Latin combining form. For example, "Scriptus, the Writer" became the mnemonic slogan (auditory link) for the picture (visual link) of a rabbit writing on a chalkboard (see Figure 1), and "Duo, the Twosome" was used as the caption for twins (see Figure 2). A

transparency for each V-A-L can be made by the teacher for reference during instruction. A worksheet with small pictures of each V-A-L (without the captions) can be provided for the students to take notes, thereby reinforcing the mnemonic slogan and associated vocabulary. Once completed,

these worksheets will be a handy reference for the students.

The final step prior to instruction is the development of word cards on which are placed English words derived from roots used in the V-A-Ls. For example, from "Scriptus, the Writer" comes *prescription*, *scripture*, *inscription*, and *postscript*; *dual*, *duplicate*, and *duet* are derived from "Duo, the Twosome."

Figure 1

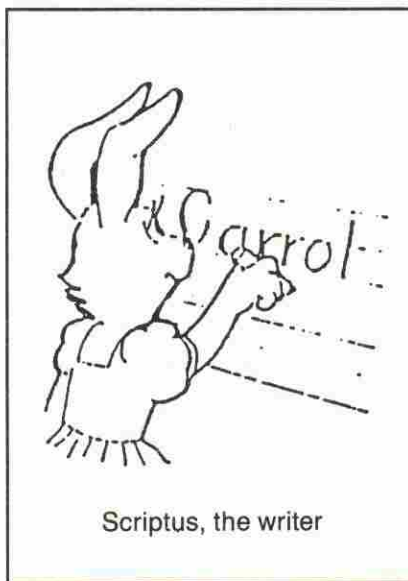
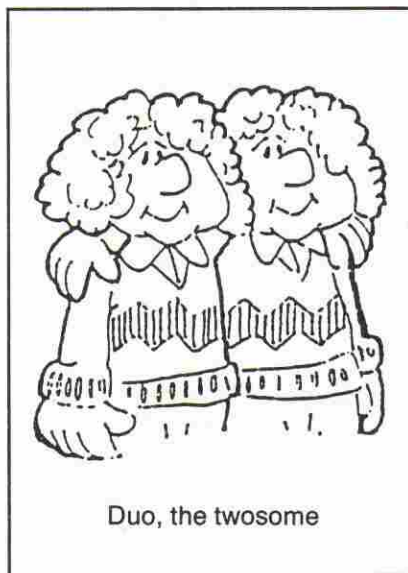


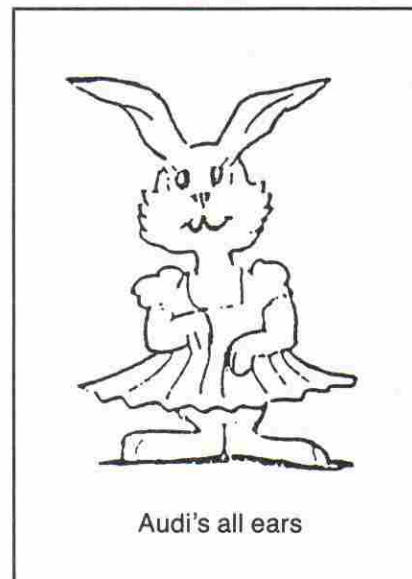
Figure 2



### Instructional sequence

The transparencies are useful for introducing V-A-Ls by discussing the "link" between the pictures and corresponding slogans. Students should be encouraged to draw upon their prior knowledge to contribute derivatives,

Figure 3



as in the following example using the Latin root *audi*:

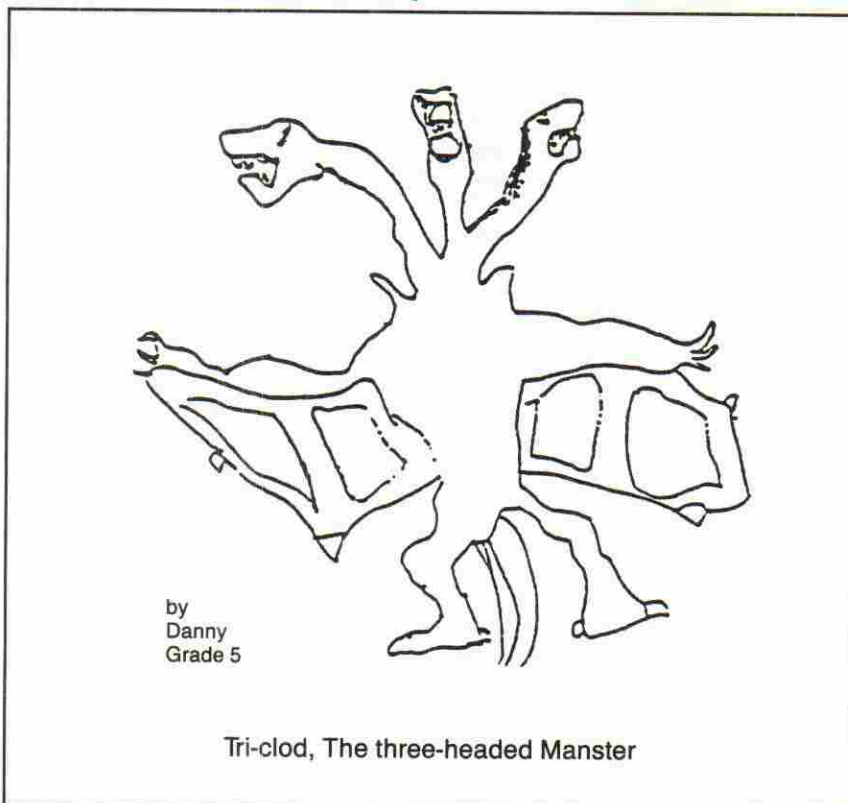
Meet Audi. As you can see, "Audi's all ears." Can anyone guess from looking at the picture what the root *audi* might mean? What are some words that have the word part *audi* [teacher writes responses such as *audible*, *auditory*, *auditorium*]? Now when you hear or see the



Figure 4



Figure 5



word part *audi*, think of those big ears on Audi! (see Figure 3).

In order to reinforce the slogan, students write the corresponding phrase, "Audi's all ears," on their worksheets under the picture.

After the pictures and slogans have been explained, word cards are distributed to students either individually or in small groups. Each student is asked to pronounce the word (e.g., *portable*), state its mnemonic slogan ("Porta, the Carrier"), and use it within an appropriate context in a sentence ("I carried the *portable* typewriter to the office").

Depending on the grade level, it may be worthwhile to explain to students that some words may *appear* to be derivatives because of similarities in spelling. By writing *tricycle*, *tricolor*, *trick*, and *triangle* on the board, students should be able to eliminate the one that does not contain the prefix *tri*, meaning three. Students may further investigate by checking the etymologies in their dictionaries.

A culminating activity involves presenting students with a list of Latin and Greek roots and requiring them to create "Visual-Auditory Links" to share with the class (see Figures 4 and 5). Prefixes and roots can be assigned to individuals or small groups. When students share their mnemonic word links, they should model the procedure used by the teacher and provide derivative cards for the students.

Students' work can be displayed on bulletin boards or hung from mobiles. Collages of derivatives found and clipped from newspapers and magazines would provide an ideal collaborative learning project.

#### References

- Eral, B. (1982). *Funny folks*. Palo Alto, CA: Dale Seymour.
- Fry, E.B., Fountoukidis, D.L., & Polk, J.K. (1985). *The reading teacher's book of lists*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

*Peterson is an associate professor in the Department of Childhood Education at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas. Phelps is an assistant professor in the Department of Administration and Secondary Education at the same institution.*

## Extra readings: Reading outside the classroom

Sandra Bennett Tolar

Students need to be aware of the various types of reading material that they will encounter outside the classroom. In order to prepare my students for these materials, I created what I call Extra Readings. Each week I assign my students a particular reading material that they must bring to class from home. I make the assignment on Monday, and the students have until Friday to bring it to class. At the beginning of class on Friday, we discuss the material collected, and then I give them questions or a specific activity to complete using their reading material.

There are several resources that can be assigned and also several activities that will reinforce reading skills. Listed below are a few of the examples that I've used.

1. *Recipe*: Have students rewrite the directions in their own words.

2. *Menu*: Formulate questions for students in which they would have to locate particular information on the menu, for example, "How much does a particular item cost?" or "Where is the restaurant located?"

3. *Comic strip*: Have students rewrite the comic strip using synonyms.

4. *Can label and cereal box side*: Ask the students certain questions concerning the information given, for example, "How many calories?" or "What percent is iron?"

5. *Weather map from newspaper*: Have students identify symbols and weather vocabulary.

6. *Contents page of a magazine*: Pose questions and have the students identify the page or section in which the answer is found.

7. *Sale advertisements*: Have students determine how much you would save, how to go about buying a particular item, and how to use ads in making selections (see Figures 1 through 4).

8. *Newspaper articles*: Use various newspaper articles for several activities such as (a) find all the words with prefixes, suffixes, or both; (b) determine the topic sentence; (c) find all

Figure 1

### Automobile Ads

1. What makes are the automobiles being advertised? (Ford, Pontiac, Chevrolet?)
2. What types of automobiles are they advertising?
3. List the cost of each of the automobiles.
4. Do they require a down payment? If so, how much is it on each one?
5. Do they offer a rebate? If so, how much is it on each one?
6. Where could you purchase these automobiles?
7. Do they offer a finance plan? If so, explain the type of plan they offer.

Figure 2

### Classified Ads

1. What is the category of the ads you have? Or, name the different categories listed in your ads.
2. What basic information is given in each of the ads?
3. List any abbreviations that may be used and explain what they stand for.
4. Read over the ads carefully. Explain how they are written as opposed to an ordinary paragraph or passage.
5. Select one of the ads that interests you and explain how you would respond to it.

Figure 3

### Real Estate Ads

1. What type of real estate is being advertised?
2. Where is this real estate located?
3. How much does it cost?
4. How would you find out more information about the real estate?
5. List some other important information that is given (if any).
6. In your own words, define real estate.

Figure 4

### Ads

1. What company or store is being promoted in your ad?
2. Where are they located?
3. What is their phone number?
4. What are they advertising?
5. What is their slogan or title?
6. Do you think the product is a bargain? Why or why not?
7. Do you think someone would really notice this ad? Why or why not?
8. What do you think is the purpose of ads?



**Figure 5**

## Sample discussion

*Extra reading:* Cereal box side

*Discussion:* After specifically stating the answers to the questions and pointing out where this particular information is found, I allow the students to elaborate on this information by stating opinions, asking questions, and generating discussions. The following is an example of this type of discussion:

- Teacher: After looking at this information, what are some points that you would like to bring out?
- Student 1: Is it really important for the company to list the two columns of nutritional information?
- Student 2: Yes, most people eat cereal with milk.
- Teacher: Would anyone like to attempt an answer to this question?
- Student 3: I think it might be because some people use dry cereal in recipes and would need to know the nutritional information.
- Student 4: Some people may use skim milk or low fat milk which would be different than the milk on the box.
- Student 1: Why is it important to be aware of the number of calories?
- Student 2: Some people are on diets and count the number of calories they eat.
- Student 3: Other people may be on special diets for which they may need to count the calories.
- Teacher: We determined that calcium is found in milk. Do you know what calcium is?
- Student 1: In science, we found that calcium is an element used in a lot of substances.
- Student 2: It's needed to build stronger bones and teeth.
- Student 1: After looking at the guarantee, my question is do you think any people actually write in or call for their money back?
- Student 2: Well, I think some probably do. Some people really demand satisfaction and will do anything to receive what they are entitled to.
- Student 3: I think that most people really don't take the time to call or write if they don't like the cereal.
- Teacher: Do you think it is important that the companies include all of this information on their products?
- Student 1: Yes, because there are many people today that are very conscious of nutrition for health purposes.
- Student 2: I think it is good because the company is not trying to hide anything about their product.
- Student 3: Well, my thought is that most people are going to buy the product that they like the best no matter what nutritional information or guarantee is provided.

pronoun referents and list the noun to which they refer; (d) write the main idea; and (e) outline the article.

To begin the day each Friday, we have our Extra Reading session. I display questions or specific instructions for the students to follow concerning the particular extra readings they have collected. Students then attempt to carry these out on their own using their resource, the extra reading material.

After they have completed the independent portion of the session, we open for discussion the information that they have collected or performed. I begin by going over the steps, questions, or directions given. Next, I allow the students to express their opinions, ask questions of their own, elaborate on why particular information is important, and point out reasons why being able to read this informa-

tion is essential (see Figure 5).

In selecting a particular extra reading each week, I usually relate it to a subject being discussed in class or use it to reinforce a specific skill for that week. When materials are more difficult to locate or are not available to students, I have extra material on hand.

My students looked forward to these extra readings each week and enjoyed trying to bring them from home. They considered it fun homework and were highly motivated and involved with the activity.

As the year progressed, I could see growth on the part of my students in the areas of newspaper reading skills, locating information, relating information and numbers, study skills, word structure skills, and vocabulary. These extra readings served as an indirect way to teach skills needed for better reading and accomplished the purpose of increasing student knowledge about the application of reading outside the classroom.

*Tolar teaches sixth grade at Jonesboro-Hodge Junior High School in Jonesboro, Louisiana.*

## Computer printers and ownership of writing

Barbara L. Keeton

Young students do not always realize that handwritten words, whether manuscript or cursive, are the same as those they read in print. Computer printers can help students make the transition from handwritten to printed text. The following procedure can be used with individual pupils, reading groups, or entire classes.

Students begin by reading a selection of fiction or nonfiction. The teacher suggests a variety of options that encourage pupil-written expression. Activities might include the creation of a new story line or ending for the selection.

Pupils also enjoy rewriting stories in their own words. When finished, the



students read their stories aloud to the teacher or classmates. For example, a fourth-grader who read Louise Foley's *Tackle 22* wrote the following draft:

There was a team called the wildcats. And there quarterback had the mumps. So they went to the vaca to play football and to practes. And chubs brother was taging along with the wildcats. So his brothers tackled the manager of the team. So they let him play on they team. But the shirt hung past his hands and the helmet went past his eyes. when they told him to pass to the left he passed to the write and the only thing he tackled was a trash can and a dog and a tree. the manager got made at him when he trackled the tree. when he got home, his bigger brother was there and he gave him some excice. And the next day he went to practis and the manager said he was so-rey for yelling at him. And the next day was the big game he tackled axury one on the other team.

After students revise the preliminary copy, the story is typed on the computer. As students watch their stories being printed, reactions are extremely positive. Their feelings of ownership and self-confidence increase, and they feel like real authors.

The draft of the story and final copies are stapled together. Students can now make comparisons between handwritten and computer-printed manuscripts. Connections between different

forms of writing are made.

As a result of this procedure, letter and word associations are enhanced. Word ownership becomes a reality. A bridge between what students write and recognize in print is made. Students begin to take a personal look at their own use of language.

*Keeton is a Chapter 1 teacher in Swink, Colorado.*

In the Classroom is a peer reviewed column that publishes practical ideas for classroom use within the field of literacy education. Submit manuscripts to **In the Classroom, The Reading Teacher, School of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA.** Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to this same address to receive a brochure describing manuscript preparation and submission procedures.

# Oxford University

**June 23-August 17, 1991**

You can combine professional development with personal enrichment this summer. Travel to England with New York University for an intensive summer of study designed for early childhood, K-12, and college teachers of English/language arts. Earn up to 12 graduate credits or attend on a noncredit basis.

This year's focus, *The Teacher as Reflective Practitioner*, looks at reflective practice in language and literacy education across the curriculum and from a variety of viewpoints. You'll spend the first week in Yorkshire visiting British schools, meeting teachers and students, and learning new techniques.

Then, travel to Oxford University where you'll reside on campus at Trinity College and work closely with prominent British faculty. To learn more, call **(212) 998-5245**.

Our School of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions offers other study abroad programs as well. Educational Theatre in London, England, and Humanities and Asian Studies in China are just two exciting possibilities. For complete information, just return the coupon.



## NYU SUMMER

New York University  
**School of Education,  
Health, Nursing, and  
Arts Professions**  
32 Washington Place  
2nd Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
(212) 998-5030

Please send me information about the following 1991 Study Abroad Program:

- English Education/England     Elementary Education  
 Educational Theatre/England  
 Humanities/Asian Studies/China

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

SOC. SEC. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

C54

New York University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.



Copyright of Reading Teacher is the property of International Reading Association and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.