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Susan I. McMahon

Taffy E. Raphael

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BY **DR. SUSAN I. MCMAHON AND DR. TAFFY E. RAPHAEL**

From teachers' lounges to principals' meetings, from schools to districts, from local to national professional meetings, the talk has turned to literature as the basis for reading instruction and to reader response as part of current instructional models. In this article, we examine the movement to literature-based reading instruction and outline its potential value for use in elementary reading instruction. Finally, we offer some instructional plans and suggestions for implementation.

THE MOVEMENT TO TRADE BOOKS

The growing interest in using literature to teach reading reflects a major change, not only in the materials and methods used to teach reading, but also in our fundamental beliefs about how literacy is developed, about learners and learning, and about the nature of curriculum materials.

Educators had for years been guided by behavioral psychology and related theories that sought to explain the learning of observable behaviors. In reading, that tended to be defined as oral reading fluency and literal comprehension. These behavioral theories suggested that to be fair to our students, we should take the complex processes involved in reading and divide them into smaller, more manageable units, assuming after mastery of units or skills, students could put them together to read.

To understand how that may have affected young readers, it may be useful to apply that logic to something more visible, such as basketball. Imagine breaking down the game into manageable units so that young learners would not be overwhelmed by the complex nature of the game. Then imagine teaching youngsters to play basketball by asking them to practice holding the ball throughout kindergarten, then spend first grade bouncing the ball, second grade running with the ball, third throwing free throws, and so forth. Imagine then, how students might respond when they enter middle school, having mastered the individual skills and ready now to put them together to play the game. When the coach looks for volunteers for the team, it may not be surprising to hear students respond, "I don't like basketball," when, in fact, they've never experienced the game. Such parallels might be drawn if we consider the number of students who, even when able to read, choose not to engage. This often results because students spend too little time reading text and instruction focuses on the accumulation of skills, not the holistic process of meaning construction and personal response.

Educators have also seen changes in beliefs about what counted as "reading." In our own state, we were guided by definitions of reading that were influenced by the models that pervaded our field. We believed that students needed to learn to "break the code" and thus, emphasized teaching sound/symbol relationships so that once a word was decoded, readers could tap into their extensive oral language and understand what they were reading. The definition of reading that was adopted in our state in the mid-80's reflected growing beliefs that reading involved more than decoding or getting meaning from the print, and rather, was an interactive process in which meaning resulted as an interaction between readers and text within a particular context (see Wixson, Peters, Weber, & Roeber, 1987) . This interactive view was consistent with growing emphasis on comprehension instruction, prompted by researchers such as Durkin (1978-79) and Pearson & Johnson (1978).

More recently, with the emphasis on literature based reading instruction, attention has focused on readers' personal response and literary understandings as being critical to the reading curriculum as well as the more traditional decoding and comprehension skills (Harker, 1987; Rosenblatt, 1991; Walmsley, 1992). We suggest that literature use promotes students' enjoyment of literature, and it may, in fact, promote the development of reading skills *in the authentic contexts in which they will be used.*

Finally, the move to literature instruction reflects a change in our beliefs about curriculum materials. For years, we believed that since reading was complex and reading instruction difficult, and since elementary teachers were responsible for teaching all subject areas, teachers' guides were critical to insure that proper reading instruction occurred. The guides evolved into the mandate of how reading should be taught to all children, rather than continuing as tools in the hands of professionals. The movement underlying the use of literature for reading instruction underscores a shift from mandated stories with accompanying skills and teachers' guides to curriculum materials in the hands of professionals who know their students' needs and interests and, thus, can make the best instructional decisions.

WHY USE LITERATURE?

While the need for change from longstanding views of learners, learning, and materials is apparent, one may question the specific choice of literature as the new basis for reading instruction. Many reasons have been offered to support their use:

Access to Books Promote Better Readers

Children with greater access to books read more, and both school and classroom libraries can provide greater access to books, which provides children the much needed practice to improve their developing skills. Therefore, books displayed in the classroom in a selected area and used as an integral part of the reading program increase the likelihood that children will read and, with increased practice, continue developing as critical readers.

Reading Literature Develops Skills

Good literature provides natural opportunities to enhance vocabulary, text structure knowledge, and fluency. Literature provides positive and powerful language models, such as images and story patterns, facilitating children's development of reading and writing abilities, and helping them create diversity in imagery and story structures of their own. In addition, teachers have more material in good literature for developing students' abilities for critical thinking when, for example, they delve into characters' goals and purposes.

We May Be Over-Teaching Reading Skills

Some are concerned that the use of literature as a basis for reading instruction may short-change time needed to teach reading skills. Yet, we may be too focused on the need to teach these extensively. First, we may have been over-teaching skills that students have already mastered. Taylor and her colleagues (Taylor & Frye, 1988; Taylor, Frye & Gaetz, 1990) found that teachers felt so tied to teaching skills on standardized tests that they spent instructional time focusing on those skills and strategies. Yet, many of their students demonstrated success in these skills on *pretests* that occurred *before* formal instruction. Second, contexts which immerse learners in literary experiences enhance students' interest in reading and, in turn, increase students' time spent reading which may naturally lead to skill development.

Reading and Discussing Literature Promotes Personal Growth and the Betterment of Civilization

Unlike other school subjects, literature relates to our feelings, rather than serving as a source of information. It takes us away from our daily lives but allows us to return somewhat changed. At the same time, it provides knowledge about the foundations of our civilization. Some suggest that American society benefits if students—our future leaders—have opportunities to read and understand our culture as represented through literature.

These reasons have led to reform efforts in state departments and local districts. For example, California's guidelines for reading instruction advocate the use of literature,

specifically to encourage aesthetic values of literature; hone intellectual skills; develop improved citizenship; refine individual's feelings, personality, and interpersonal relationships; and deepen a sense of ethical responsibility. A Fairfax County, Virginia, project sponsored by the Virginia State Reading Association and the American Association of Publishers underscores the value of literature by encouraging teachers' active participation as members of literate communities discussing children's and professional books. Publishers of basal reading programs have adopted policies using intact literature selections in student anthologies and promoting trade book use.

With such changes in attitudes across the educational system, our future debates are likely to focus less on whether to use a skills- or literature-based approach and more on what constitutes appropriate instruction while using literature. Though support for literature-based reading programs on the part of practitioners and researchers grows, even some of the strongest advocates caution against assuming that literature alone can solve the many difficulties associated with learning to read. Future directions involve reconceptualizing the role of reading instruction with literature at its base, and the potential support of the remaining language arts in students' literacy development.

HOW TO USE LITERATURE EFFECTIVELY

Many instructional issues confront classroom teachers as they strive to include more literature in the form of individual "trade books" rather than basal readers or anthologies in their instruction. This section addresses: (1) selecting books, (2) previewing, and (3) implementing skills and strategy instruction.

Selecting Literature

Book selection is a challenging aspect of the movement to trade books. Most teachers are certified with one course in children's literature and may not have a deep knowledge of the range of trade books, authors, genres and so forth. Further, school budgets may not include trade books. Yet, it is important that:

All Students Experience Quality Literature

Too often only the better readers are encouraged to read trade books of high quality and interest since less able readers frequently spend their time practicing skills, but all students must experience the models of imagery and language use present in literature. To facilitate comprehension, the teacher may ask students to read silently if she feels the prereading activities will provide sufficient support or she may suggest students partner read, read chorally, or, occasionally, follow along as she reads.

Literature Selections Reflect Students' Prior Experiences, Cultures, and Ethnicity

The authors and the content of books should reflect students' particular life experiences. Teachers can select trade books that illustrate the variety of our American culture in terms of ethnic diversity; non-stereotyped gender roles; and multiple geographic areas and settings. Further, book selection should include those with handicapped characters and senior citizens. By selecting such texts, teachers help some students draw on their own life's experiences and others to expand their awareness of those whose cultures and social groups may differ.

Students Are Allowed Some Choice of Literature

While it is important to encourage students to read a variety of texts recognized as quality work, it is also important to allow students voice in selecting their own reading materials, particularly if teachers want students to learn that the enjoyment of reading is valued. Such voice may be present in determining the genre or author students wish to read, voting on a book to be read aloud, and choosing the books they read during sustained silent reading.

Students Learn How to Make Informed Choices for Future Reading Experiences

Teachers' creation of opportunities for students to have a voice in the literature they read is critical for helping students enhance their ability to select literature. By incorporating a variety in literary genres, award-winning, classic, and popular books, teachers introduce students to the "range of the possi-

ble." The more students know of the possibilities available to them in the world of literature, the greater the potential that they will choose from a wide range of different books.

SOURCES FOR PREVIEWING TRADE BOOKS

Previewing trade books is helped by publications that review new and classic literature. Some publications (e.g., *The Horn Book or Choices*) are devoted to reviewing trade books; others, such as professional journals (e.g., *The Reading Teacher, Language Arts, and The New Advocate)* include monthly columns with such reviews. Further, support staff knowledgeable about available trades books in teachers' own communities (e.g., school and public librarians, reading and language arts coordinators, and the buyers from local children's book stores) can be helpful.

CONTEXTUALIZING SKILL AND STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

Arguments for the use of trade books do not suggest that teachers abandon instruction in skills and strategies that enable students to become more capable readers, but rather, that it be used to help students understand specific texts. Therefore, such instruction must be based on students' needs, whether in whole class or a small group, rather than on a prescribed curriculum. The following examples illustrate both students' needs and the contextualizing of instruction.

Making predictions helps readers anticipate text and monitor comprehension. As a fourth-grade classroom began a unit on World War II and Japan, their classroom teacher knew that they had little knowledge about the time period or about experiences in war and felt that the students would benefit from using predictions to monitor whether or not they were understanding their texts. The literature they read at the beginning of the unit was an historical fiction selection, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (Coerr, 1977). As she gave students their books, the teacher asked them to predict what they thought the book was about. They discussed their ideas and explained how they reached their own predictions. Some used words in the title;

others information from the picture on the cover, or the text on the book jacket. Through discussion, students identified three information sources for drawing predictions. After reading a section of the book, the teacher led a discussion about what students had learned and how this information related to their predictions, to underscore how predictions help to monitor text comprehension. Then they revised their predictions based on the new information from their reading. Thus, students learned, *within the context of authentic reading activity*, how to generate, monitor, and revise predictions, a set of activities inherently more meaningful than practicing predicting from isolated paragraphs.

As a second example, fifth-graders reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (O'Dell, 1960) helped their teacher create an authentic opportunity to develop skills associated with word identification and vocabulary development. During class discussion, students noted the book included many terms not in a typical 10-year-old's reading vocabulary. Following this discussion, a think-sheet was created so that students could record "unusual," "interesting," or "unique" words. Figure 1 shows one of Eva's list of words from the end of this unit.

Students constructed their own lists and, in whole class discussion, shared new words learned, raised questions about meaning, or demonstrated how they were able to determine the meaning of unknown words. Their teacher modeled how to use context clues, ask classmates, or use other resources within the room (e.g. a dictionary). The major difference between this activity and ones associated with more traditional approaches is student ownership of the process of word identification and the means for learning them with instructional support from their teacher.

Skills and strategies are important aspects of reading instruction, so teachers can begin the transition to literature-based reading programs by considering those skills and strategies essential to their students' reading success, then incorporating them into the daily reading of trade books. However, developing the skills focus as part of a literature-based reading program can lead to "basalizing" the

Name _____EVA,_____   Story/Article *Island of the dolphins*

Moving Through: Vocabulary

Date	Word	Page	Meaning
12/18	seams	173	A line, fold, or groove formed by joining together
12/20	isolation	182	(can't find it.)
	galleons	182	A large sailing ship of former times with three masts
	excavations	183	To uncover by digging expose to view
	era	183	A period of history.

Figure 1
A page of Eva's word list from Island of the Blue Dolphins

literature. Critics have coined this term to describe those contexts in which there is: (1) an emphasis on skills and strategies over meaning-making and (2) a focus on *isolated* skills and strategies.

Advocates of the use of literature for reading caution against an instructional model that is functionally equivalent to the prereading, guided reading, and postreading question-answering activities often described in teacher's guides to basal reading series and accompanied by written activities around isolated skill instruction. Just as there is nothing inherently wrong with the quality of the literature that is used in student anthologies of basal reading programs, there is nothing inherently correct about mapping old instructional practices onto trade book materials. Instruction should be embedded within the context of the particular books children are reading and should remain subordinate to the primary goal of reading instruction: teaching the process of constructing meaning and personal response.

USING A BOOK CLUB APPROACH

Incorporating literature into the reading program can focus on supplemental approaches such as allowing students sustained silent reading time to independently read self-selected trade books, buddy reading in which cross-age peers share literature as the older reads aloud to the younger student, and reading corners in which students are encouraged to engage in independent or small group activities after reading trade books. However, the use of trade books as an integral part of the reading instructional program requires a deeper level of commitment and more extensive planning. One such program, Book Club, was developed by a team of elementary school and university teacher/researchers (McMahon, 1992; Raphael, McMahon, Goatley, Bentley, Boyd, Pardo, & Woodman, 1992) and is described below.

Book Club centers on small, student-led discussion groups as the focal point of the lesson. In these groups, students discuss
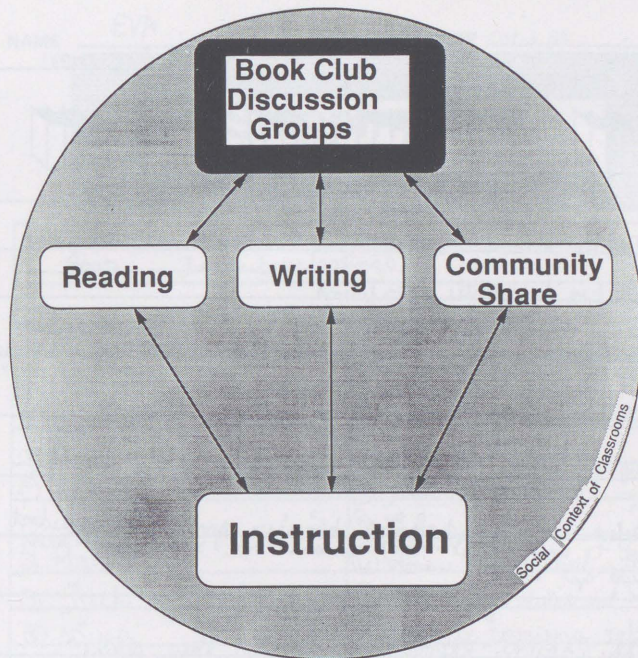
Figure 2
The Book Club Components

issues of interest to them as a result of reading trade books. This approach includes four basic components that support the book clubs: (1) reading, (2) writing/representation, (3) whole class discussion, and (4) instruction (see Figure 2). These four components are present each day, but the amount of time devoted to each varies.

Reading

The reading component includes book selection and increasing students' ability to read and interact around text through a variety of means (e.g., reading silently, orally, in pairs; listening to the teacher or a peer read). Students apply such knowledge taught about skills and strategies (e.g., prediction, summarizing, sequencing) as they read.
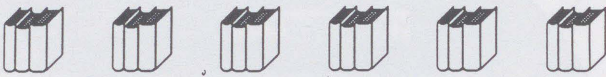
Writing

The writing/representation component presents opportunities for students to express personal response using writing, illustrations, and graphic displays as they record their thinking in their reading logs or extended writing activities. Reading log entries are completed daily with more

extended written activities occurring after completing a single book or a series of theme-related books.

With the reduced workbook use associated with literature-based reading instruction, reading logs have assumed a more prominent role in the development of literate students. Though reading logs take many shapes and forms, they share the common feature that students maintain a written record of their thoughts, feelings, questions, reactions, and evaluation of what they are reading. Readings logs may be (1) a specific type of dialogue journal, as in the cases described by Barone (1991), Dekker (1991), and Atwell (1983); (2) an entry prompted by a specific question or comment, as described by Au and Scheu (1989); or (3) a site for students' individual reflections on the books they will discuss in small groups or within the whole class (McMahon, 1992; Raphael et al., 1992). Regardless of the format, logs are designed to elicit personal response, application of skills and strategies, or the synthesis of ideas within a text. In contrast, extended written activities promote students' synthesis of ideas and information across texts (e.g. comparing/con-

NAME EVA   DATE Oct 1, 1991

different - Movie from the Story

① at a carnaval - setting

② No frog but a turtle - her friend

③ Winnie was catching fire.flys when she met the stranger

④ No Elves but fairies. - Grandmother thought

⑤ No milkman in the story.

⑥ Before in the beginning Winnie's grandmother didn't say not to sit in the road because her stockings and dress would get dirty.

⑦ She doesn't climb a tree in the story.

⑧ They told the stranger in the book that they were teaching her how to ride a horse and in the movie they said they were on a picnic.

⑨ They didn't talk to Winnie about the spring yet.

⑩ Tuck didn't tell her about carving the "T" in the tree.

⑪ Tuck proved to Winnie about the spring. and made ...

Figure 3
Eva's Reading Log Entry: Brainstorming Similarities and Differences

trasting, critiquing, expanding upon text read).

For example, by the end a unit that focused on fantasy, Eva and her peers in Ms. Pardo's fifth grade class had read chapter books such as Babbitt's (1975) *Tuck Everlasting* and Dahl's (1961) *James and the Giant Peach*, as well as heard a read aloud fantasy book and watched the movie version of the Babbitt book. After doing daily reading log entries that involved such writing as a sequence chart depicting major events in a story, a character map of key characters, favorite sections, critiques of the individual

books, and so forth, students moved to the extended writing event as they developed ideas for a theme of their choice. The log entries in combination with more specialized think-sheets comprised the basis for an extended writing activity that involved comparing and contrasting two major texts of the unit. Eva chose to compare and contrast the book and movie version of *Tuck Everlasting*. In her log entry, shown in Figure 3, from October 1st, we can see the first page of her two-paged brainstormed list of 25 ideas that differentiates the two versions. In addition to ideas listed in Figure 3, she included such dif-

The form (handwritten worksheet):

NAME EVA   **DATE** Oct 3, 1991

Stepping Out
Comparing/Contrasting Books & Ideas

I am going to compare/contrast ___Movie___ and ___Book___ ___Tuck Everlasting___

Things that are alike:	Things that are different
① Winnie	① Toad - Turtle
② music Box	② horse of metal
③ Jesse	③ Miles didn't go fishing
④ Miles	④ Tuck shot the stranger
⑤ stranger	⑤ Fair
⑥ Mae	⑥ Winnie didn't climb a tree
⑦ Tuck	⑦ The stranger didn't shot Miles
⑧ spring	⑧ Wasn't snowing - setting mo
⑨ Wood	⑨ Watten, Watress
⑩ constable	⑩ Jesse came to pick W. up-breaker
⑪ horse	⑪
⑫ Winnie's Grandmother	
⑬ Winnie's Father	
⑭ Winnie's Mother	
⑮ Winnie's Children	
⑯ Tomb stone	
⑰ jail house	

Figure 4

Eva's Across-Text Synthesis Think-sheet: Comparing/Contrasting

ferences as "There wasn't any housekeeper in the story," "Winnie wasn't sitting on the rocker in her room but on a swing in the yard," and "In the story they didn't run through a corn field."

On October 3rd, using a specialized think-sheet as a guide, she was reminded to include similarities across the two versions (e.g., characters such as Winnie and the stranger; scenes such as the spring and the jail house) as well as differences (see Figure 4). She turned to her list of 24 differences as she determined those that she wished to include in her essay.

The next day, she incorporated many of the ideas into a rough draft of a report whose purpose served to summarize the essential elements of the plot, note important ways she thought the two versions were alike and ones in which they differed (see Figure 5).

Though there clearly are many ways in which this draft could be expanded and improved, it is important to note that she has used this activity as opportunity to practice a number of strategies often taught through instruction that is isolated from the books students read. She compared/contrasted, summarized, brainstormed, categorized, and identified important ideas. She was involved in extended writing in that she engaged in different aspects of writing (e.g., planning, drafting) as she wrote about the two books. Over

Figure 5
Eva's Rough Draft

the course of the academic year, Eva and her peers had many such opportunities which led to greater control over a number of reading/writing strategies, a key goal in any reading instructional program.

The collaborative team developing the writing activities for Book Club used the concept of "synthesis" to guide identifying various strategies and response formats to incorporate into the instructional format. Figure 6 suggests two major categories of synthesis: within-text synthesis and across-text synthesis.

Within-text synthesis involved both comprehension-oriented activities designed to help students bring together information contained within the book (e.g., mapping, char-

acter maps), as well as response activities designed to encourage personal reflection and interpretation (e.g., critique, favorite book parts). Across-text synthesis encouraged students to consider ideas from different books within a theme unit, such as in the extended writing activity described above, developing ideas around a theme (e.g., survival, effects of war), considering what was learned from different books in a unit, and so forth. Figure 6 reflects sample ideas, rather than an exhaustive list.

Discussion

The discussion component occurs on two levels: (1) whole class, or Community Share, and (b) student-led discussions, or Book

event representation

character maps

sharing sections for discussion

Within-text synthesis

predictions

sequence charts

categorization

critique

reflection

theme/issues identification

what I learned. . .

Across-text synthesis
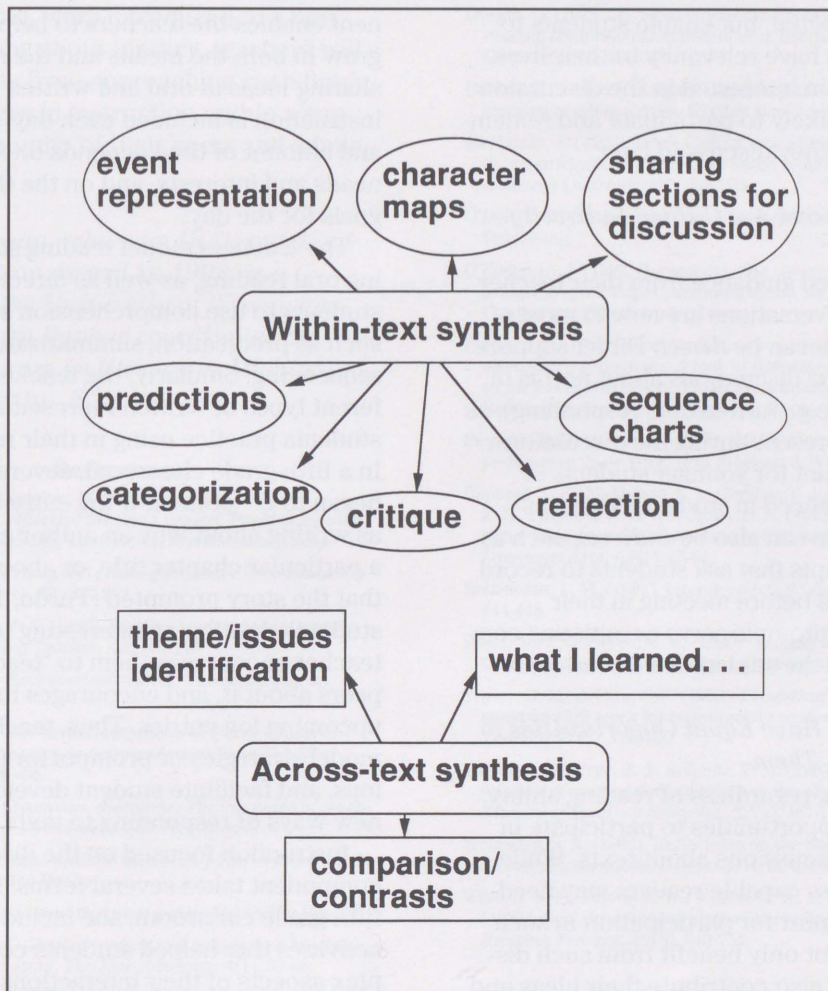
comparison/ contrasts

Figure 6

Guide to Within- and Across-Text Synthesis Activities

Clubs, from which the program takes its name. Book Clubs are groups of three to six students which pursue topics that have emerged from their reading, their reading log entries, or the Community Share discussion. While mature readers enjoy talking about books as much as reading them, in traditional reading programs, discussions about books rarely sound like authentic conversation about books. Instead, they look more like the common teacher student interactions in which the teacher controls the conversation, initiating questions, eliciting students' response, then evaluating the answer and moving on to the next student (Cazden,1988).

Many teachers who have adopted trade books for their reading program have found that students not only enjoy discussing books in small groups, but they also demonstrate tremendous insight into the reading and learn a lot from one another. These small groups may take a variety of formats in terms of leadership, focus, and purpose (Anderson, Waggoner, & Commeyras, 1992: O'Flahavan, 1992; Short & Pierce, 1990). However, some key commonalties remain across groups:

• *Students Have Opportunities to Pursue Issues Relevant to Them*

When students control the content of discussions, an eavesdropper may not see immediate connections between the text and the conversation as students explore personal experiences, feelings, and questions. However, researchers who have analyzed these conversations have shown that they are

not only connected, but enable students to see that books have relevancy to their lives. Students remain interested in the discussion and are more likely to participate and remember the topics they discussed later.

• *The Discussions Are Guided Indirectly by the Teacher*

Students need guidance from their teacher since such conversations are new to most of them. Guidance can be *direct*. Direct support includes holding discussions about norms of conversation (e.g., turn-taking, responding), as well as being present during the discussions, usually important for younger students or those inexperienced in student-led discussions. Guidance can also be *indirect*, such as using log prompts that ask students to record particular ideas before meeting in their groups. These prompts serve as initiating comments to begin the student-led discussions.

• *All Students Have Equal Opportunities to Participate in Them*

All students, regardless of reading ability, should have opportunities to participate in small group discussions about texts. While some of the less capable readers may need additional support for participation in such groups, they not only benefit from such discussions, they also contribute their ideas and feelings. Teachers may find that heterogeneous groupings enable these students greater openings for participation because the more capable readers may provide more stimulating ideas that prompt discussions, particularly in the beginning. Providing all students a chance to engage in conversations about texts enables all readers the opportunity to see each text in new and interesting ways.

INSTRUCTION

In the Book Club program, the instructional component includes all teacher-led activities designed to support and facilitate students' reading, writing, and discussion, including teaching about: (a) the strategies and skills to enhance reading, (b) the range of written activities, (c) *what* students share from their representations, and (d) *how* they share during their discussions. This compo-

nent enables the teachers to help students grow in both the means and the methods of sharing ideas in oral and written forms. While instruction is included each day, the focus and amount of time depends on students' needs and interests, and on the teachers' goals for the day.

The teachers model reading strategies during oral reading, as well as directly teaching students to use comprehension strategies such as predication, summarization, and sequencing. Similarly, the teachers model different types of written representations that students practice using in their reading logs. In a fifth grade classroom, several students began to generate new log entry topics such as writing about why an author chose to use a particular chapter title, or about feelings that the story prompted (Pardo, 1992). When students develop an interesting idea, their teacher encourages them to "teach" their peers about it, and encourages its use in upcoming log entries. Thus, teachers can model strategies or prompts for the reading logs, and facilitate student development of new ways of responding to texts.

Instruction focused on the discussion component takes several forms. In Pardo's fifth grade classroom, she includes many activities that helped students consider complex aspects of their interactions around books: (1) listening to and critiquing tapes of their Book Club discussions, (b) role-taking a Book Club session using a transcript of a discussion, then talking about how they felt in different roles (e.g., a "bossy" student, one who rarely or never spoke), (c) establishing guidelines for future discussions, and (d) teacher and student modeling of question-asking, turn-taking, and responding to each others' contributions (Pardo, 1992).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The field of literacy instruction is always an interesting one, perhaps never as exciting as today. There are major changes in the very bases of our approaches to reading instruction—changes in conceptions about learners, about materials, and about teaching. Such changes are never easy to put into practice. Like the students who benefitted greatly from interacting with their peers around books

and in so doing, were introduced to a new way of thinking about literacy, teachers will benefit greatly from approaching such fundamental changes in instruction within a supportive community of their peers and administrative units.

Susan McMahon, who won IRA's outstanding dissertation award in 1992, is a professor at the University of Wisconson–Madison. Taffy Raphae coordinates the masters program in literacy at Michigan State University. ☞

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