Tennessee

Reading Teacher

A PUBLICATION OF THE TENNESSEE READING ASSOCIATION • Vol. 32, No. 1 • Fall 2003

Connie Jordan Green: *Tennessee Writer of Historical Fiction*

Tennessee Reading Teacher

Journal of the Tennessee Reading Association

Editor......Edward J. Dwyer, East Tennessee State University

Assistant Editor...... Heidi Williams Ford, East Tennessee State University

Editorial Review Board......Sandra Allen Faidley

Sherri Bain, Nashville Public Library

Anita Fleenor, Washington County Schools

Crystal Flores, East Tennessee State University

Mary Craig Hart, Johnson City Schools

Angela Kyte, East Tennessee State University

Robert T. Martindale, Johnson City Schools

Lana Smith, University of Memphis

Carole F. Stice, Tennessee State University

Ellen Stites, Johnson City Schools

Catana Turner, University of Virginia/Wise

Departments

Instructional Strategies......Carole F. Stice, Tennessee State University

Meet the Author ...... Betty and Mike Roe, Tennessee Technological University

Classroom Action......The Editors

Professional Books......Elinor Ross, Tennessee Technological University

Notable Books......Karen I. Adams, Central Michigan University and Pam Petty, Western Kentucky University

East Tennessee State University is a Tennessee Board of Regents institution and is fully in accord with the belief that educational and employment opportunities should be available to all eligible persons without regard to age, gender, color, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Printed by East Tennessee State University Press.

Tennessee Reading Teacher

Vol. 32, No. 1 Fall 2003

Table of Contents

Meet the Author

Connie Jordan Green: Tennessee Reading Teacher

By Betty and Mike Roe . . . 2

Reading First: What has the International Reading Association been doing?

Jerry Johns, President and Cathy Roller, Director of Research and Policy . . . 4

Investment in Teacher Preparation in the United States:

A Position Statement of the International Reading Association . . . 5

New Collection Calls Attention to Beginning Teachers' Experiences

International Reading Association News Release . . . 8

Professional Books

Supporting Struggling Readers and Writers

By Elinor Ross . . . 9

The Role of Reading Instruction in Addressing the Overrepresentation of Minority Children in Special Education in the United States

A position statement of the International Reading Association . . . 11

International Reading Association Calls Upon Government Leaders to Make Reading and Literacy the Cornerstone of Education Reform and "Consider the Best Long-Term Investment You Can Make" . . . 17

Instructional Strategies

Integrating Art and Reading by Making Prop Boxes

By Carol F. Stice . . . 19

Classroom Action

Magnetic Sheets

By Kathleen E. Dawkins and Rhonda Combs . . . 20

Adopted Reading Books for Special Education Preschoolers

By Julia Gibbs . . . 21

A Good Beginning

By Rochelle Stanly Owens . . . 21

Making Key Words and Rime Flip Books

By Anne Kitchens and Kathe Crawford . . . 21

Dog Days are Good Days!

By Charlotte Blair and Spicey Gould . . . 22

Relating Science Topics to Real Life

By Kathy Leonard . . . 23

Notable Books for Young People

By Karen I. Adams and Pam Petty . . . 24

Meet the Author

By Betty and Mike Roe

Connie Jordan Green: Tennessee Writer of Historical Fiction

When Connie Jordan Green was young, she had several things she wanted to do: live on a farm, write a book for children, write a newspaper column, teach in a college, and live on a lake. She has accomplished all but one of these goals: she has never lived on a lake. Her daughter warned her not move to a lake, because then she wouldn't have any reason to go on.

Authors of books for young people frequently started out their professional lives as teachers, so it isn't surprising that Connie Green did so. However, her undergraduate academic emphasis in college is a little unusual for a person who became a writer of young adult fiction. Connie graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Science and Math Education from Auburn University.

Connie Jordan Green

Connie married her high school sweetheart, Dick Green, during college. They returned to Oak Ridge after graduation. Connie taught fifth grade in Oak Ridge for a year, and then taught junior high school math.

After the birth of her son, Connie quit teaching. While at home, she wrote some stories for a nephew who was a couple of years older than her son. She read about a writing contest in Cleveland, Tennessee, sent in a story, and her story won a prize. A woman from Lenoir City, who had also won a prize, called Connie and invited her to join a critique group of women who were serious about their writing. Connie joined this group whose members were active in entering contests and working on writing improvement. They met every other week, and each writer had to bring something she was working on to each meeting.

One of the goals for the critique group was to write different kinds of material to enter in contests. This caused Connie to begin to work more on her writing, and she attempted a variety of genres, including essays, articles, and poetry. A poem that she wrote about baking bread won prizes in several contests, and that motivated her to write more poems.

An essay Connie wrote about gardening won first prize in a prestigious contest. By this time, she was living on a farm near Lenoir City, where she could apply her enthusiasm for gardening. A new section editor of the *Lenoir City News Banner* decided that she wanted the paper to have a gardening column, and a friend of Connie's told the editor that Connie wrote about gardening. Connie was asked if she wanted to try writing such a column. Naturally, she said that she would. The column was originally supposed to last through the summer, then was extended through the winter, and, finally was extended "until she ran out of something to say." That was in March 1978, and she is still writing the column today.

When Connie began to write in earnest, she was also handling responsibilities as a wife and mother. She had three children to care for, and that made finding time and quiet for writing a challenge. She was fortunate, however, to have a small log cabin on her property, behind the house, where she could go for a little peace to write. Now that her son and two daughters are grown and married, she does most of her writing in her study, which was formerly her son's bedroom.

Connie wrote her first book for young people, *The War at Home,* starting in 1982. The idea for the book

came from a place and a situation, and she had to people it. The place and situation came from her own childhood. Her family moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, from Kentucky in 1944, the summer before Connie entered first grade. She had first-hand experience with life in the gated community of World War II Oak Ridge during her childhood.

Connie wrote the manuscript in the log cabin with pen and pencil on a legal pad. She then typed her hand-written draft. After many revisions, she sent her manuscript out in 1983. She got a rejection, but it was in the form of a nice personalized letter. Having heard that it was a good sign to have an editor respond in this way, she sent it out again. Her next rejection was a typed letter that was less personal, but not too discouraging. The next rejection, however, was just stamped on a letter, and she felt that things were going in the wrong direction. She sat down and read her manuscript again, and discovered that she didn't like it; there was something wrong with it. She put it away for about two years before she realized that her main character, Mattie, was her problem. With this realization, Connie rewrote the whole book and sent it to another budding author, Lou Kassem, to read. Lou made some suggestions and told her to send the manuscript to Margaret McElderry, a highly regarded publisher. She did this in the fall of 1987.

After sending off her manuscript, she haunted the mailbox, but time passed, and she didn't hear anything. In February of 1988, she stopped haunting the mailbox, and, of course, her acceptance letter came in mid-February. It said, "We would like to publish the book if you are willing to do some rewriting." She was willing, but there was a five-page single-spaced letter of suggestions for changes. Connie finished the rewrite by fall, and the book came out in 1989. So ended a seven-year process.

The War at Home is a book with an exceptionally strong depiction of time and place and an engaging story of a close-knit East Tennessee family. The characters are realistic, well-rounded people with whom readers can empathize. *The War at Home* was one of the ALA Best Books for Young Adults and the New York City Library Books for the Teen Age and was nominated for the 1991-92 Volunteer State Book Award Master List. *The War at Home* is being reissued by Iris Press this fall, under the Tellico Books imprint.

During the time that Connie was involved in writing *The War at Home*, she was also presenting writing workshops. Thinking that it might be good to acquire some academic credentials to lend credibility to her activities, she entered a graduate program in creative writing at the University of Tennessee. In 1987, she received her M.A. in Creative Writing.

Emmy, Connie's second book for young people, started with a character, a girl who lived in an Eastern Kentucky coal-mining town in 1924. Once again, Connie drew upon family history. Her mother's father and two brothers worked in the coal mines of Southeastern Kentucky, and her own father was a coal miner for about four years. She grew up listening to the adults in her family telling stories about living in coal-mining towns and working in the mines. The children, including Connie, often went to sleep to the sound of them telling stories from the past.

Connie wrote this book in the summer of 1990 during a period when she was teaching English for the University of Tennessee. When the book was finished, she sent it off to Margaret McElderry, and it was accepted immediately. There was only one hitch. She had called the main character Libby, and that was to be the book title. At the last minute, an editor discovered that Katherine Paterson had just published a book that was called *Lyddie*. She was afraid that the name was too close. Connie renamed her protagonist and her book *Emmy*, and she and her editor proceeded to change the name in the galley proofs. There were so many places where the name was mentioned that they missed changing it three places. The book had been out a month when Connie's sister pointed out the problem. *Emmy*'s awards include being named one of the New York City Library Books for the Teen Age and a Notable 1992 Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies.

When she is writing a juvenile novel, Connie stays closely involved with it until the end of the first draft. She also doesn't do too much editing and revising until she has the first draft finished. She writes the whole book by hand before typing anything or, now, before entering anything on the computer. When she thinks that something that came earlier might conflict with something she has just written, she puts a sticky note on the page and continues to write. During her subsequent revisions, she uses these notes to check for possible discrepancies. She gets feedback from her critique group and takes it into consideration as she revises.

Talking to children who have read her books is extremely satisfying to Connie. She says, "The characters are alive for them. They ask great questions about the books, about the characters, and about why things happen." School visits often result in requests for autographs on scraps of paper, arms, and other unusual items, which she finds humorous. She also enjoys reading children's

reviews of her books and receiving letters from the children. She always answers the letters.

Connie is a wonderful person to be around, unfailingly upbeat and pleasant, with a terrific sense of humor. She describes herself as curious; studious; and willing to take a certain amount of risk, as long as it doesn't involve physical danger. She says that she likes more things than she dislikes; as a matter of fact, she likes almost everything that she does, even housework. At the top of things she enjoys are reading and being challenged intellectually. In the latter category, she likes to teach classes that require study on her part.

When asked what she is proudest of, Connie says, "I like to think that I have never done any great harm to anyone… I'm proud of the way my kids have turned out to be productive and pleasant people, and I'm proud that I have managed to stay married for 45 years." Her family is a major source of pride. Her husband, Dick, is, she says, "very generous natured." He is tolerant of the time she spends writing and communing with other writers, and he even reads her manuscripts. She has also used her children as sounding boards and "victims." She said that, when they were young, they often would admonish each other, "Watch what you say. It may end up in Mom's column." Last, but not least, she swells with pride when mentioning her six grandchildren.

Connie is an active member of a number of writer's organizations. She is treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors for the Tennessee Mountain Writers. One of those students whom she taught in fifth grade serves on this board with her and attests to how good she was as a teacher. Attendance at writing workshops that she has lead has verified that fact for us, as well. When critiquing the work of others, she is gentle and helpful with her suggestions, making people feel good about their efforts, even when she is pointing out flaws.

Connie has another young adult book written. She is currently in the process of sending it out to publishers. It focuses on one of the characters in *The War at Home* that we came to care about, so we hope it is published soon. In the meantime, she continues to produce columns and is thinking about putting together a volume of poetry. Maybe that's why she laughed when we asked what she liked to do in her spare time.

Connie Green's books are great resources for historical thematic units. Look them up and put them to use. You'll love them. Let's hope she never moves to a home on a lake and stops writing.

Reading First: What has the International Reading Association been doing?

Jerry Johns, President and Cathy Roller, Director of Research and Policy

International Reading Association

During the last several years, the most important policy related to beginning reading has been Reading First. Because of the Reading First legislation (which is part of Title I of the No Child Left Behind [NCLB] Act), approximately 5 billion dollars will be devoted to improving reading instruction over the next five years. The money will be targeted at high-poverty, low-performing schools. The basic position of the Association is that excellent reading instruction can be delivered within the framework of the Reading First section of the NCLB law. We believe that it is possible under the law to deliver both very good and very bad instruction. It is our responsibility as an association to do everything we can to make sure that the law is implemented well and that many children, who otherwise would not have learned to read, do learn to read.

In order to help, we have created several products available at our web site <www.reading.org>.

- Summary of the National Reading Panel Report
- What is Evidence-Based Reading Instruction?: A Position Statement of a the International Reading Association
- Facilitators for a Reading First Implementation Workshop (contact <kbaughman@reading.org>)
- *Evidence-Based Reading Instruction: Putting the National Reading Panel Report into Practice (available in the online bookstore).*

Investment in Teacher Preparation in the United States: A Position Statement of the International Reading Association

Released for Publication in April, 2003

Preparing beginning teachers in the United States to teach reading well must be a top priority. Currently, there is great variability in the competence of beginning teachers as they emerge from their teacher preparation programs. Some beginning teachers have as many as 24 semester hours of work related to reading instruction while others have as few as 3 semester hours (Hoffman & Roller, 2001). Better-prepared teachers who are competent to teach reading are essential if national and state goals for closing the reading achievement gap (i.e., differences in reading achievement between African American, Hispanic, and Native American students and their white counterparts) are to be realized.

In the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the U.S. federal government focused unprecedented resources (more than $1 billion per year for a period of six years) on reading instruction in high-poverty, low-performing schools. If we want to close the achievement gap in the United States, targeted resources and professional development are absolutely essential. However, without a simultaneous investment in improving teacher preparation programs, we will continually be faced with beginning teachers who are under-prepared to deliver high-quality reading instruction. Thus, the International Reading Association calls for a major national investment in teacher preparation. We must ensure that every beginning teacher is competent to teach reading from the first day on the job.

Standards for Reading Teacher Preparation Programs

Every teacher must receive quality preparation on all aspects of research-based reading pedagogy. Teacher education programs must get preservice teachers off to a running start on acquiring the knowledge, skill, and will it takes to be an effective teacher. The International Reading Association has standards for the preparation of classroom reading teachers (International Reading Association, 1998). In brief, every teacher education program in the United States should ensure that its students have appropriate know-how in the following areas:

Foundational Knowledge and Dispositions

- know how reading develops
- know how oral language helps students acquire written language
- know how to read research reports and appropriately adapt classroom practices to match research evidence

Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials

- know how to select curriculum materials and help students learn how letter-sound relationships work
- know how to teach students to make sense out of the texts they read
- know how to develop strategic readers and writers
- know how to match curriculum materials to students' needs and levels of competence

Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

- know how to assess the progress of every student and change instruction when it is not working
- know how to communicate results of assessments to various stakeholders, especially parents

Creating a Literate Environment

- know how to set up, organize, and manage a classroom so that students can and will learn to read
- know how to motivate students to do their best work
- know enough about and value the cultures and languages students bring to school to use those differences as resources rather than as excuses for not teaching them well

Professional Development

- get their practical experience under the best teachers our schools can provide as mentors
- continue to receive mentoring support throughout their first five years of teaching
- participate in, initiate, implement, and evaluate professional development programs

Preparing Teachers to Close the Reading Achievement Gap

Closing the achievement gap in reading is essential; however, this task will not be simple. High-poverty, low-performing schools must have excellent reading teachers. Currently, they have the least prepared, least experienced teachers (Education Week, 2003). Reversing this situation so that the best teachers teach the students who most need expert teachers will require a comprehensive approach. Teachers in these schools, and indeed in all sites, must be well prepared to implement research-based programs and practices, and they must have the knowledge and skill to use professional judgment when those programs and practices are not working for particular children. Every link in the professional preparation of reading teachers—from preservice to induction to inservice professional development—must be strong so that teachers have the knowledge and skill necessary to exercise informed professional judgments. Only if teachers are well prepared to implement research-based practices and have the professional knowledge and skill to alter those practices when they are not appropriate for particular children will every child learn to read.

Teacher preparation and professional development alone cannot erase the reading achievement gap. Much more attention must be paid to the work conditions surrounding teachers. In a recent study, the Educational Testing Service (Bruschi & Coley, 1999) reported that

> on average, teachers perform as well as other college-educated adults across all three literacy scales [of the National Adult Literacy Survey]. Teachers with four-year degrees performed similarly to others with four-year degrees, and teachers with graduate studies or degrees perform at a comparable level to other adults with graduate studies or degrees. (p. 3)

However, teachers did not have salaries comparable to their counterparts. The authors note, “There are large differences in earnings between teachers and other managerial and professional workers. Teachers rank near the bottom of the list” (p. 3).

The Need for Research

Research on the effectiveness of reading teacher preparation programs is sparse. To date there are large-scale studies that examine relationships among broad variables such as certification, program length, and subject matter knowledge (Whitehurst, 2002) or fine-grained studies that examine training related to developing teacher expertise on very specific topics such as teaching comprehension strategies (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). The International Reading Association’s National Commission on Excellence for Reading Teacher Preparation has completed the first and only quasi-experimental study of teacher preparation for reading instruction that simultaneously includes multiple sites, multiple data sources (including interview, observation, and student achievement data), and longitudinal data. It joins the nine studies reviewed by the National Reading Panel indicating that preservice teacher preparation does impact beginning teachers. It extends these findings to suggest that effective reading teacher preparation improves student reading achievement.

Given the crucial role of the teacher in providing excellent reading instruction, it is appalling that we can point to only one such study. In an era in which everyone is calling for evidence-based practice, there is very little evidence. We call on the U.S. federal government for a major investment in reading teacher preparation research. We encourage teacher educators to conduct research on their teacher preparation programs. We cannot have evidence-based teacher preparation with the paucity of existing evidence.

Recommendations

Teacher educators must

- take advantage of existing resources to improve preparation for reading instruction,
- aggressively advocate for more resources to improve preparation for reading instruction,
- extend teacher education programs through the first years of teaching to provide adequate support for excellent reading instruction, and conduct research on teacher preparation programs and their ultimate impact on student achievement.

Federal, state, and local policymakers must

- focus resources on improving teacher preparation for reading instruction,
- hold educators accountable for using increased resources for increased teacher competence in reading instruction, and
- invest in research programs focused on teacher preparation for reading instruction.

Adopted by the Board of Directors

References

Bruschi, B.A., & Coley, R.J. (1999). *How teachers compare: The prose, document, and quantitative skills of America's teachers.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Education Week. (2003). *Quality counts 2003: If I can't learn from you...: Ensuring a highly qualified teacher for every classroom*. Washington, DC: Author.

Hoffman, J.V., & Roller, C.M. (2001). The IRA

Excellence in Reading Teacher Preparation Commission's Report: Current practices in reading teacher education at the undergraduate level in the United States. In C.M. Roller (Ed.), *Learning to teach reading: Setting the research agenda* (pp. 32–79). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

International Reading Association. (1998). *Standards for reading professionals* (Revised 1998). Newark, DE: Author.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: National Institutes of Health.

Whitehurst, G.J. (2002). Research on teacher preparation and professional development. Retrieved February 5, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/inits/preparingteachersconference>.

Related Resources from the International Reading Association

Books

Roller, C.M. (Ed.). (2001). Learning to teach reading: Setting the research agenda.

Journal Articles

Cantrell, S.C. (2002). Promoting talk: A framework for reading discussion in teacher education courses. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45, 642–651.

Commeyras, M., & DeGroff, L. (1998). Literacy professionals' perspectives on professional development and pedagogy: A United States survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 33, 434–472.

Grant, R.A., & Wong, S.D. (2003). Barriers to literacy for language-minority learners: An argument for change in the literacy education profession. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy,* 46, 386–395.

Hausenblas, O. (2002). Whose knowledge? Which knowledge? Reflections on teacher education. *Thinking Classroom/ Peremena*, 3, 47–48.

Hoffman, J., & Pearson, P.D. (2000). Reading teacher education in the next millennium: What your grandmother's teacher didn't know that your granddaughter's teacher should. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 35, 28–44.

Lefever-Davis, S. (2002). The preparation of tomorrow's reading teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 56, 196–197.

Maloch, B., Fine, J., & Flint, A.S. (2002/2003). "I just feel like I'm ready": Exploring the influence of quality teacher preparation on beginning teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 56, 348–350.

Maring, G.H., Levy, E.W., & Schmid, J.A. (2002). Variations on a cybermentoring theme: Six literacy projects involving preservice teachers and students across grade levels. *Reading Online,* 6(4). Available: <http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=maring2/index.html>.

Stokes, S.M., Kaufman, T.U., & Lacey, A. (2002/2003). Preparing teachers of the 21st century: Creating technological literacy in a teacher education program. *Reading Online*, 6(5). Available: <http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=stokes/index.html>.

Teale, W.H., Leu, D.J., Jr., Labbo, L.D., & Kinzer, C. (2002). The CTELL Project: New ways technology can help educate tomorrow's reading teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 654–659.

Xu, S.H. (2001). Exploring diversity issues in teacher education. *Reading Online*, 5(1). Available: <http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_index.asp?HREF=action/xu/index.html>.

New Collection Calls Attention to Beginning Teachers' Experiences

In the First Few Years: Reflections of a Beginning Teacher

NEWARK, DELAWARE, USA—Tina Humphrey, author of *In the First Few Years. Reflections of a Beginning Teacher*, a new collection of essays published by the International Reading Association, understands that in the first years in the profession, teachers face new challenges daily. Beginning teachers, especially, need a friend to guide them, give advice, share triumphs—and on the most difficult days, to remind them of why they entered education in the first place.

"My hope is that new teachers will find some sense of comfort—a feeling that what they're going through is normal and that they're not alone. Maybe reading about my experiences will help new teachers find peace and a sense that they can do this," explains Humphrey.

This book comes at a time when being a young teacher seems especially daunting. "Certainly many of the issues [in the classroom] are timeless, but today there's the reality of Columbine, September 11th, and war images surrounding our classrooms as well," Humphrey comments. "Teachers have always carried the torch of 'protector,' but today that title seems to be even heavier. I can't think of a more important career in the world today—or a more difficult one."

In these 22 essays intended to inspire beginning teachers to stick with it, Humphrey shares observations, insights, and personal experiences from her first three years of teaching. She writes with humor, honesty, and compassion about topics such as:

- embarrassing first-year moments,
- challenging students,
- heartaches in the classroom,
- differences between today's societal pressures and those of the past, and
- life outside teaching.

Every essay in the collection emphasizes hope, optimism, and wisdom. For example, in an essay titled "What a Difference a Year Makes," Humphrey writes, "Someday, the confidence fairy will come and sprinkle magic powder over your head, and you will learn the valuable lesson… at the heart of teaching: Always ask yourself, what is the best way to allow my students to learn to the best of their ability?"

Although Humphrey focuses on the first years of teaching, she says, "I also hope that veteran teachers will read this book and smile. Perhaps my essays will be a reminder to those who've been there of how far they've come and how much new teachers need them."

In the First Few Years: Reflections of a Beginning Teacher can be ordered for US $12.95 by calling the Association directly, toll-free 800-336-7323, ext. 266.

For further information about the book, log on to the "Coming Soon" section of the Association's online bookstore at <http://www.bookstore.reading.org>, or contact Janet Butler, telephone (302) 731-1600, ext. 293, e-mail <jbutler@reading.org>.

The International Reading Association is a community of reading professionals with over 80,000 members in nearly 100 countries, dedicated to promoting higher achievement levels in literacy, reading, and communication by continually advancing the quality of instruction worldwide.

International Reading Association News Release

By Elinor Ross

Supporting Struggling Readers and Writers Strategies for Classroom Intervention 3-6

By Dorothy S. Strickland, Kathy Ganske, and Joanne K. Monroe. (2002). Portland, ME: Stenhouse and Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 250 pp., paperback. ISBN: 1 57110 055 5. IRA members $18.00/nonmembers $22.50. To order call 1-800-336-READ, ext. 266.

This book opens with the familiar adage, "Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember, Involve me, I understand," which seems to set the tone for what follows. Filled with practical, hands-on, research-based ideas for helping low-achieving readers, this "how-to" book covers the essentials of reading instruction. Although it is admittedly aimed at struggling readers in grades three through six, I found the book to have broader application with good ideas for teachers of all children at a wider range of levels. The authors "believe that for most students the intermediate years provide the last opportunity to address the prevention of continued failure in reading and writing" (p. ix). They claim that in this text you will find "an emphasis on differentiated instruction and ideas for integrating interventions for struggling students with regular classroom instruction" (back cover). The intended audience for this book is preservice and inservice teachers and administrators.

Some chapters are clearly directed toward struggling readers, such as examining the contexts for at-risk learners, motivating reluctant readers, meeting the needs of English Language Learners, and focused intervention, but others deal with reading comprehension, fluency, writing, and vocabulary that are relevant for all learners. One helpful chapter offers ideas about organizing and managing small groups for instruction.

The most useful part of the book may be Part Two, the Strategy Bank. There are 21 specific strategies grouped into six categories: instruction, assessment, test taking, home/school connections, and professional development. Each strategy consists of three major parts: "What It Does," "How to Do It," and "What to Look For." For example, one strategy is "Double-Entry Journals" (page 204). First the strategy is defined by saying that the pages in these journals are divided into two columns with each student writing a meaningful quotation in the first column and a reaction to the quotation in the second column. In the next part, the teacher is instructed to provide directions to the students for implementing the activity by asking them to make a heading for each column: "Quote" and "Reactions" or "Reflections." In the final phase the teacher is basically assessing the student's work by examining the type of personal response. This particular strategy includes "Variations," which offers seven alternatives, including the option of "I Predict" and "What Happened" as headings for the two columns. This part of the book may be photocopied for classroom use.

Each chapter opens with a photograph accompanied by a brief explanation of the contents of that chapter. This introduction is often followed by a section called "Background and Issues." All chapters contain an additional photograph, and most include one or more figures that provide specialized information in graphic form. The authors refer to researchers and authorities within the content of the chapters and provide an extensive bibliography near the end of the book. The writing style is easy reading with vignettes used to illustrate major points. The authors often recommend assessment strategies appropriate for the activities they suggest. Resources at the end of the book may be particularly helpful for teachers of struggling readers and writers. These resources include lists of high-interest, low-vocabulary books and books with predictable text, picture books for read-aloud/think-aloud instruction, sources for leveled fiction and nonfiction text for guided silent reading, and resources for choral reading and Readers' Theatre. A brief review of the nine chapters follows.

In Chapter 1 the authors focus on settings where students are at risk of failure. While admitting that low-achieving children can be anywhere, they identify the following conditions as likely to cause difficulty: linguistic and cultural differences, learning disabilities, and lack of motivation. They point out that research shows that nearly 90% of children who are poor readers at the end of first grade will remain poor readers at the end of fourth grade and will continue to experience failure and defeat throughout their school years. Helpful intervention strategies include allowing students more time, providing a variety of materials to be used in an integrated manner, allowing diversity of response to

instruction, monitoring progress systematically, and establishing a program of home support.

The second chapter recognizes motivation as a crucial element in all learning and attributes motivation for learning to read and write to students' interests, attitudes, and engagement. A book-rich class environment that has a conveniently located library with books for a wide range of reading levels encourages many students to read. The authors suggest the following situations for inspiring reading and writing: multimedia book reviews, biography parades, visiting authors, and publishing possibilities.

English Language Learners (ELL) is the subject of the next chapter. The authors stress learning to use English to communicate in socially and culturally appropriate ways, such as letting students respond to stories through creative dramatics, using art to stimulate discussion, involving ELL in small-group activities, and conducting searches for idioms.

In Chapter 4 the authors discuss strategies for organizing and managing the classroom, monitoring progress, adjusting the nature of instruction, and collaborating with the home and with special programs. They stress the need for a large, uninterrupted block of time for language arts in order to provide differentiated instruction, and they give an example of a schedule featuring a reading/writing workshop (Table 4.1, pp. 45-46). There are basically two ways to adjust for struggling readers: multilevel instruction and a whole-part-whole framework, according to the authors. Chapter 5 continues the discussion of classroom management but focuses on small group instruction, particularly as it occurs during guided reading and literature circles. The nine roles assigned to members of literature circles (Figure 5.6, p. 83) are especially intriguing. They are designed to make all students active participants, and five of them are discussion director, illustrator, investigator, vocabulary enricher, and summarizer/predictor.

Exploring Words is the title of Chapter 6, and the authors point out that what children know about words affects their ability to comprehend, or make meaning. This chapter includes several pages on word games and activities which should make learning word meanings more motivational that dictionary study. Several pages are also devoted to word sorting, "which has the advantage of actively engaging students, both physically through manipulation of word cards, and mentally by encouraging them to generate and share ideas about the placement of their words" (p. 98).

The authors treat reading fluency in Chapter 7, a topic that is currently receiving a great deal of attention. Lack of fluency can hinder struggling readers' attempts to make meaning. Some students have minimal decoding skills, read hesitantly with no expression, and ignore punctuation marks. Suggestions for helping these students include modeling with read-alouds, engaging students in choral readings and Readers' Theater, using relatively easy texts, encouraging multiple readings of text, and inviting visiting readers.

The two mainstays of literacy, reading comprehension and writing, are the subjects of chapters 8 and 9. Good comprehenders recall key information in a text, understand the elements of text, make sense of it, and read purposefully, but these strategies challenge struggling readers. According to recent research, strategies that low achieving students need include comprehension monitoring, cooperative learning, use of graphic and semantic organizers, question answering and question generation, story structure, and summarization. In order to improve writing, every child needs instruction that is rooted in the writing process, a predictable structure to the writing instruction (sample schedule given), and ready access to the "tools of the trade" with instruction in how to use them (examples: different writing tools and paper, dictionaries, word wall of frequently misspelled words, and publishing materials). In Figure 9.1 (p. 174) the authors list 100 commonly used words and suggest that they be placed on an index card or bookmark for struggling writers to use at their seats. They give ideas for story writing with a Story Planning Guide (Figure 9.3, p. 186) and for writing reports using the I-Search Planning Sheet (Figure 9.4, p. 189).

For those of you who have struggling readers and writers in your classroom—and who doesn't?—this book is well worth getting. You will find solutions to many of your problems and more ideas than you will have time to use. Students are likely to develop more positive attitudes toward reading and writing from the success-oriented strategies, and the assessment thread that runs throughout the text lets you know if your students are "getting it."

The Role of Reading Instruction in Addressing the Overrepresentation of Minority Children in Special Education in the United States

A position statement of the International Reading Association: December 2003

A strong collaborative relationship among classroom teachers, school-district curriculum leaders, Title I literacy specialists, and special education teachers is essential for reducing the reading achievement gap in the United States between African American, Hispanic, and Native American students and their white and Asian/Pacific Islander counterparts. The International Reading Association is particularly concerned that lack of appropriate reading instruction and early reading interventions among low-performing minority children is contributing to the overrepresentation of these children in the high-incidence disability categories of mental retardation (MR), emotional disturbance (ED), and specific learning disability (SLD). Once they are identified and placed in these categories, children may not have access to a comprehensive curriculum that includes reading instruction that is responsive to their individual differences.

Although the problem of overrepresentation of minority children in U.S. special education programs is complex and requires actions taken on many fronts, the Association can contribute to the solution by advocating for effective early reading instruction for all children and collaborative and sustained interventions in reading before children are referred to special education.

What evidence do we have of overrepresentation of minority students in special education programs?

The issue of overrepresentation of minority students in special education programs, particularly within some regions and states in the United States, is a concern of special education researchers (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Artiles, Trent, & Palmer, in press; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002) and the object of study by policy groups such as the Office of Civil Rights and the National Center for Education Statistics.

There is evidence that higher proportions of Native American, African American, and Hispanic students are identified as having the high-incidence disabilities when compared with the proportions of white students identified (Parrish, 2002). For example, African American students are 2.88 times as likely as white students to be identified and placed in MR programs, 1.92 times as likely to be identified and placed in ED programs, and 1.32 times as likely to be identified and placed in SLD programs (Parrish, 2002). These odds ratios are statistically significant for all three high-incidence disability categories.

What is the extent of the reading achievement gap and its relationship to overrepresentation of minority children in special education programs?

National Association of Educational Progress data over the past 30 years document a somewhat fluctuating but persistent reading achievement gap between white students and African American, Hispanic, and Native American students. For example, the average reading scores of white students are higher than those of black students at ages 9, 13, and 17 (Donahue, Voekl, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999). As the Figure (see next page) indicates, the gaps decreased between the early 1970s and the late 1980s. Since then, the gaps have remained relatively stable or have increased.

Recent studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (2002) document large gaps in student achievement on school tests as early as kindergarten. For example, 73% of white kindergartners were proficient in letter recognition, but only 59% of African American and 49% of Hispanic kindergartners were proficient. There were similar differences among races for recognition of words' beginning and ending sounds and for print familiarity—skills typically identified as important for success in school (NCES, 2002). Diverse learners are more likely to be referred for additional testing and placement in special education programs because achievement tests typically do not assess literacy skills that they may have acquired outside school, and these skills often differ from the ones these children are expected

to have when they enter school. If, indeed, the issue is reading, the more appropriate educational response is to match children's individual learning capabilities and needs with the most appropriate reading instruction within the least restrictive environment, such as the children's classrooms.

How do early reading difficulties affect special education referral and placement outcomes?

A large body of descriptive and correlational work suggests that reading difficulty may be a factor in special education referral and placement decisions. Data indicate, for example, that 80% of the children referred for an SLD are referred because of reading problems (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). This is a substantial number of children because SLDs account for approximately 50% of the children placed in special education (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Although there are no direct data linking reading difficulties to the MR and ED categories, there is a plausible chain of logic suggesting that early reading difficulty is a factor in special education referrals. Reading difficulty may trigger concerns about learning that result in MR placements. The logic chain for ED placements is even stronger: Early reading difficulty leads to failure, and failure is often a contributing factor in misbehavior that may lead to ED referrals (Losen & Orfield, 2002).

Contributing to the Reading Achievement Gap

Ineffective instruction

The first issue that must be addressed if we are to solve the overrepresentation of minority students in special education is the quality of classroom instruction. Are the referred children "failing," or are the classrooms failing the children? That the overrepresentation of minority children in special education tends to increase as both poverty and the proportion of minority children present in the population increase (Oswald, Coutinho, Best, & Singh, 1999) suggests that poor instruction (i.e., classroom instruction that is not guided by systematic assessment or adapted to meet individual differences) is a plausible explanation for children's low achievement. For example, general achievement for students in high-poverty, predominantly nonwhite schools is comparatively low. The quality of the teaching force assigned to high-poverty schools (for example, having high numbers of inexperienced and noncertified teachers and using paraprofessionals), the relatively limited availability of reading material and other resources, and the physical condition of schools are factors significantly worse in high-poverty, predominantly nonwhite schools. Thus, the lack of high quality instruction in reading combined with these other factors may be responsible for the reading failure that prompts the referral of so many minority children to special education programs.

Another issue is the belief held by some teachers that poverty creates deficits in children's functioning and preordains them to reading failure. There are, of course, strong correlations among poverty, minority status, and achievement. However, poverty itself does not necessarily result in low learning potential or reading failure, as witnessed by a significant proportion of children and schools who "beat the odds" (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999). Although we do not wish to minimize the potential consequences of poverty for children's learning, an alternative explanation is that teachers in these environments are unfamiliar with children's home cultures, background experiences, and/or language differences, and thus they make judgments about children's competence using inappropriate criteria. It is the Association's position that judgments about all children's literacy competence be made after children have had the opportunity to participate in a high-quality classroom reading program.

Uncoordinated services

Another major factor contributing to low reading achievement is the lack of coordination among the regular education, Title I, and special education programs and teachers (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). At present, services for reading are fragmented and the inability of the school systems to function efficiently contributes to the existence of reading achievement gaps between poor and affluent, and minority and majority children. In 33 U.S. states, the special education funding system pays schools on a per-labeled child basis (Greene & Forster, 2002). There are restrictions on serving those children with funds from other sources, and many special education children cannot receive services from reading specialists funded through Title I or other reading-specific state and local reading programs. Often, the professionals who teach children with high-incidence disabilities do not have as much expertise and education in teaching reading as reading specialists teaching in the same buildings. It is the Association's position that the professional best qualified to deliver reading instruction be determined at the local level.

A revision of special education identification procedures that involves strong collaboration among

regular educators, reading specialists, and special educators is essential. Because the reason for many children's referrals to special education is reading difficulty, all professionals who provide reading instruction must work together to ensure both individualized and sound goals that are determined through systematic and continuous evaluation of students' literacy capabilities. Schools must have the flexibility to determine which professionals serve which children. Funding sources and program regulations must not constrain these important decisions. It is the Association's position that placement in the high-incidence disability categories should occur only after classroom teachers, school- or district-based reading professionals, and special educators have collaborated to implement and sustain moderate, classroom-based interventions.

Starting out behind

As noted earlier, data indicate that an achievement gap is present when children arrive at kindergarten. However, in traditional assessments, language and literacy skills—such as storytelling and dual-language development—that would highlight culturally relevant strengths of minority children are often overlooked (Garcia, 2000; Nieto, 1997). Many children from poor and minority families have not had the same exposure to the school-valued language and literacy skills that white and higher socioeconomic status children have had. The experiences that poor and minority children have had often are unrecognized in school environments. What teachers often read as lack of achievement are the different forms of diverse learners' preliteracy experiences (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Neuman & Celano, 2001).

A Call for Collaboration

Strong collaboration for the delivery of education services involves all the various education professionals serving a school building or district. In a collaborative approach, a child is initially identified because of low achievement. Once he or she has been identified, the first determination is whether the student's low achievement represents a failure to respond to adequate classroom instruction or results from the classroom instruction itself being inadequate. If the classroom instruction currently provided is inadequate (i.e., many of the children are making little progress), the first task, before or alongside any intervention with the child, is to improve classroom instruction.

If the classroom instruction is adequate (i.e., many children are making satisfactory progress), the first level of intervention is to determine whether the child's achievement improves with modest instructional changes implemented at the classroom level. The classroom teachers, reading specialists, and special education professionals collaborate in planning and implementing the intervention. If the modest intervention does not elevate the student's achievement level, then a second, more intensive level of intervention with a mindful response to systematic and frequent assessment—such as extended learning time (before- and after-school and summer programs) and/or small-group and one-on-one instruction—is conducted by the classroom teacher and/or the reading specialist, who collaborate with special educators to design and implement the modified reading instruction. Such interventions should continue until the child reaches expectations or additional assessments are requested. At this third level of intervention, a decision is made about the child's educational progress and the possibility of a special education placement and an alternative educational plan.

Ensuring collaboration is a major challenge in the United States for school districts, states, and the federal government. Because there are separate funding streams and regulations for regular, special, and compensatory education, and because the U.S. federal government is a major funding provider for special and compensatory education, collaboration cannot be accomplished without strong commitment from the U.S. Department of Education. There are existing models of collaborative programs suggesting that such systems are feasible given the appropriate federal, state, and local collaborations (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Risko & Bromley, 2000).

The implementation of excellent reading instruction must be the first step in the collaboration process. As noted earlier, poor minority children are attending schools that have less-qualified teachers, fewer materials and resources, and no adaptations of curricular goals to accommodate diversity, and that are in poor physical condition. There must be systematic efforts to strengthen teachers' professional development and to provide appropriate materials, resources, and curriculum designs.

Extensive professional development related to culturally responsive and effective reading instruction is essential for the most effective professional collaboration. Often, paraprofessionals, special reading teachers, and special education teachers do not have adequate preparation for teaching reading. There is wide variability among the colleges of education regarding preservice course requirements in the area of reading and even more variability among state teacher certification requirements at the elementary level. Additionally, states pressed by

the need to fill teacher vacancies frequently offer waivers of the minimum requirements for certification.

In some states, special educators have no more—and sometimes have less—required coursework in reading than elementary classroom teachers. All these professionals must be adequately prepared for reading instruction. Inservice programs to develop their expertise will be very important to the success of collaborative intervention. With effective collaboration, the boundaries between special education, regular education, and compensatory education are blurred. Such collaboration invites all educators to take new roles in classrooms (for example, as team teacher, classroom observer, tutor, and small-group instructor).

Collaboration among professionals is a complex activity requiring conscious effort and commitment. Therefore, it is imperative that significant professional development efforts focus on effective collaboration. Teacher preparation programs must provide preservice teachers with an understanding of both the need for collaboration and the skills related to it. Preservice teachers' field experiences must include opportunities to collaborate with other education professionals in developing and implementing effective reading instruction.

Addressing the Overrepresentation Issue

Effective collaboration alone may not solve the problem of overrepresentation of minority children in special education. It is possible that even with such collaboration in place, higher proportions of minority children will be identified for special education programs. However, the logic of this position statement suggests that poor initial reading instruction may be leading to inappropriate classification of minority children in the high-incidence disability categories. High-poverty schools have large concentrations of minority children, and these schools often have uncertified personnel delivering reading instruction. Early and intensive intervention is often unavailable. Once children experience difficulty in reading, it is probable that they will not receive the most appropriate instruction they need in a timely fashion.

Strong collaboration focusing first on effective reading instruction, then on modest in-class reading interventions, and finally on more intensive small-group and one-on-one tutoring in reading is a crucial sequence for reducing the overrepresentation of minority children in special education in the United States. If quality instruction combined with timely and appropriately intense reading interventions does not solve the reading problem that is the source of the referral, then it is time to consider alternative programs such as special education. If educators deliver excellent reading instruction to children before considering a special education placement, they will identify more of the children for whom special education is truly appropriate. If children are identified correctly, the proportions of minority children in special education in the United States most likely will reflect the proportions of minority children in the general school population, and the risk of being placed in special education will be similar for children of all racial and ethnic categories.

Recommendations

U.S. Department of Education

- Allow for the commingling of funds that will enable more services to be delivered to all children.
- Support inservice programs in the area of reading to develop the teaching capacity of classroom teachers, special reading teachers, paraprofessionals, and special educators.
- Continue to insist on the disaggregation of data by ethnic and racial background.
- Provide early literacy education through preschools.

U.S. state governments

- Create incentives for the implementation of collaborative intervention programs.
- Provide funds for improving regular classroom instruction.
- Support reading specialists.
- Support early literacy education through preschools.

School districts

- Create a delivery system that pulls together personnel and funding that ordinarily would be segmented into special, regular, and compensatory education.
- Provide time for extensive and powerful professional development in reading for all professionals and paraprofessionals involved in providing reading instruction.
- Ensure that all schools are adequately maintained and provide appropriate materials and resources.
- Offer early childhood programs that focus on preliteracy education.

Regular classroom teachers

- Welcome other education professionals into the classroom.
- Participate willingly in improving daily classroom instruction.
- Seek professional development.

Title I teachers and reading specialists

- Participate in collaborative programming planning.
- Advocate for the implementation of collaborative intervention programs.
- Provide leadership for other professionals in the area of reading.

Special educators

- Become experts in reading instruction and assessment.
- Collaborate with other professionals to develop effective reading interventions.

Principals

- Lead the team of educators to facilitate collaboration.
- Be strongly knowledgeable about reading and reading instruction as well as curricula, including collaborative intervention programs.
- Provide reading professionals with adequate time for professional development.
- Implement a strong professional development program in reading.

Teacher educators and professional developers

- Learn how to assess students' reading strengths and needs, and plan and deliver effective instruction for all students.
- Ensure that all preservice and inservice teachers both understand the capabilities and the learning needs of all students and have opportunities to collaborate with a range of educational professionals in providing appropriate instruction for all students.
- Provide preservice and inservice teachers with opportunities to learn about and practice culturally appropriate teaching strategies.
- Prepare preservice and inservice teachers to set high expectations for minority students through preservice and ongoing professional development opportunities.

Parents

- Be advocates for equitable assessment and placement of children.
- Request and respond to information about trends in special education placement at the local school district and state levels.
- Participate fully in the school's intervention program.
- Become knowledgeable of the programs and services available.
- Inform the school about your efforts at home and your concerns about your

References

Allington, R.L., & Walmsley, S.A. (1995). No quick fix: Rethinking literacy *programs in America's elementary schools*. New York: Teachers College Press; Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Artiles, A.J., & Trent, S.C. (1994). Overrepresentation of minority students in special education: A continuing debate. *Journal of Special Education*, *27*(4), 410–437.

Artiles, A.J., Trent, S.C., & Palmer, J.D. (in press). Culturally diverse students in special education: Legacies and prospects. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Donahue, P.L., Voekl, K.E., Campbell, J.R., & Mazzeo, J. (1999). *The NAEP 1998 reading report card for the nation and the states*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Donovan, M.S., & Cross, C.T. (Eds.). (2002). Minority students in special and gifted education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Garcia, G.E. (2000). Bilingual children's reading. In M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 813–834). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Greene, J.P., & Forster, G. (2002). *Effects of funding incentives on special education enrollment* (Civic Rep. No. 32). New York: Center for Civic Innovation.

Losen, D.J., & Orfield, G. (Eds.). (2002). *Racial inequality in special education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). Trends in the achievement gap in reading between white and black students. In *The Condition of Education 2002* (Indicator 8). Retrieved January 3, 2003, from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2002/section2/indicator08.asp>.

Neuman, S.B., & Celano, D. (2001). Access to print in low-income and middleincome communities: An ecological study of four neighborhoods. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *36*, 8–26.

Nieto, S. (1997). We have stories to tell: Puerto Ricans in children's books. In V.J. Harris (Ed.), *Using multiethnic literature in the K–8 classroom* (pp. 59–94). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Oswald, D.P., Coutinho, M.J., Best, A.M., & Singh, N.N. (1999). Ethnic representation in special education: The influence of school-related economic and demographic variables. *Journal of Special Education*, *32*(4), 194–206.

Parrish, T. (2002). Racial disparities in the identification, funding, and provision of special education. In D.J. Losen & G. Orfield (Eds.), *Racial inequity in* special education (pp. 15–37). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Risko, V.J., & Bromley, K. (Eds.). (2000). *Collaboration for diverse learners: Viewpoints and practices*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Taylor, B.M., Pearson, P.D., Clark, K.F., & Walpole. S. (1999). *Beating the odds in teaching all children to read* (CIERA Rep. No. 2-006). Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. U.S. Department of Education. (2001). *Digest of education statistics, 2001*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Zhang, D., & Katsiyannis, A. (2002). Minority representation in special education. *Remedial & Special Education*, *23*(3), 180.

Advertise

in the

Tennessee Reading Teacher

The *Tennessee Reading Teacher* reaches more than 5,000 educators twice each year. This journal welcomes advertisers. The rates are very reasonable. For $200.00 a full page advertisement will be published, while the cost is $100.00 for a half page. While reaching many potential consumers, advertising in the *Tennessee Reading Teacher* helps offset the cost of this publication and supports the Tennessee Reading Association, an organization dedicated to promoting literacy among the people of Tennessee. Please send your ads to: Sandy Smith

Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education
Tennessee Technological University
Cookeville, TN 38501

International Reading Association Calls Upon Government Leaders to Make Reading and Literacy the Cornerstone of Education Reform and "Consider the Best Long-Term Investment You Can Make"

Press Release: December 2, 2002

NEWARK, DELAWARE, USA—How can government leaders, reading professionals, and community leaders help students develop the critical skills they need to become strong readers? According to Jerry L. Johns, president of the International Reading Association, in a letter sent to United States governors this week, "As you survey the emerging needs of your constituents and assign priorities for the limited resources currently available in this demanding economic environment, the International Reading Association would like you to consider the best long- term investment you can make. That investment is making reading and literacy education the cornerstone of your education reform package."

Johns continues, "A comprehensive approach within your state is the critical element to bolster the effectiveness of your work force, attract business investment, and reduce crime and related expenditures for public safety and social services. Your direct efforts in support of effective education reform will produce a higher functioning work force and a more informed, responsive citizenry."

The letter also points out that "the Work force Investment Act of 1998 defines literacy as 'an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.' This definition presents a broader view of literacy than the traditional definition of just an individual's ability to read." As information and technology have increasingly shaped our society, the skills required to function successfully have gone beyond reading, and literacy has come to include the skills listed in this current definition.

Johns makes several recommendations in his letter based on ideas developed by the Association that are also reported in position statements and other consensus documents. He explains that students are usually expected to acquire basic reading skills in the first through third grades. But to get the most out of reading instruction in those years, and to develop reading fluency in later years, "children need to be prepared with critical early skills."

In addition, the letter points out that the Association believes a comprehensive literacy program includes the following elements:

- **Qualified Teachers:** All personnel responsible for teaching at the elementary, middle and secondary levels (K-12) must be appropriately prepared, qualified, and licensed.
- **Early Childhood Literacy:** Children need to be prepared with critical early skills: good listening and speaking skills, familiarity with language structures, age-appropriate vocabulary and concepts about print.
- **Optimal Classrooms:** Children have the right to classrooms that optimize learning opportunities. Children also need access a wide variety of books and other materials in the classroom, school and in community libraries.
- **Quality Reading Instruction:** Excellence in classroom reading instruction can be achieved by a combination of reduced class size, high quality teacher preparation, programs and ongoing professional development.
- **Adolescent Literacy:** Adolescents deserve and benefit from access to reading instruction emphasizing comprehension, interpretation, and analysis of text that is individually appropriate. Skills are enhanced by the opportunity to read and discuss reading with others.

The new federal programs found in the No Child Left Behind and the Reading First legislation include multi-year grants designed to help schools and districts improve children's reading achievement using scientifically proven methods of instruction. In his letter to the governors, Johns states, "Resources are available to you from the U.S. Department of Education

Early Reading First program. Also the Head Start program is changing to involve increased emphasis on early literacy elements."

"More than ever before it is evident that a solid, functional education for each citizen will be the key to

continued economic advancement, social progress and, ultimately, international stability," Johns continues. "Without the necessary literacy skills to use with new technology and the fiercely competitive marketplace of today, upon graduation, students will be at a decided disadvantage."

Many states continue to wrestle with massive budget cuts, which hinder State support to children's and young adults' literacy education. The International Reading Association has taken a strong position to increase funding to support appropriate literacy education, especially for children who are most in need. In his letter to the governors, Johns concludes, "Adequate funding would provide for appropriate books and materials, professionally trained teachers, and adequate classrooms where young children and young adults can develop their best literacy skills to succeed in their academic and professional lives."

The Association firmly believes that adequate funding will improve many impoverished schools and move literacy education forward while improving the overall quality of life for us all. The Association's Urban Education Initiatives Commission offers assistance in understanding and meeting the complex literacy needs evident at each level of the student's development. For more information on the International Reading Association's Urban Education Initiatives Commission and other related initiatives, visit the Association's web site, <www.reading.org>.

The International Reading Association is a community of reading professionals with over 80,000 members in nearly 100 countries, dedicated to promoting higher achievement levels in literacy, reading, and communication by continually advancing the quality of instruction worldwide.

Plan Ahead! . . November 14-16, 2004

Tennessee Reading Association Annual Conference

Building Literacy for Lifelong Learning!

Featured presenters include

Dr. John Mangieri, Dr. Cathy Block, and Dr. Stephen Layne, author of the best selling book, ***The Teacher's Night Before Christmas.***

Enjoy the wonderful opportunities to meet with a share ideas with fellow teachers.

The beautiful holiday light displays in nearby Nashville and Opryland Hotel are marvelous, too.

More information will be coming to you in the spring and summer.

Embassy Suites Hotel • Franklin, Tennessee • Call 1-800-Embassy
Single Room: $119 • Double Room: $119

By Carol F. Stice

Integrating Art and Reading by Making Prop Boxes

Purposes: To encourage understanding of stories and other reading materials.

- To foster appreciation of descriptive and other enriching details.
- To provide an academically worthwhile and artistically engaging classroom activity for students.

Focus: All readers, especially young children, should have the opportunity to experience text as enjoyable rather than something that is read strictly for the teacher and preparation for some form of evaluation.

Procedures: There are many ways to respond to text that can be both academically sound and enjoyable.

Making Prop Boxes is one such activity.

1. The reader compiles a list of items important to the material read. This might be a story or informational text. In a story, a listing of major characters is important.
2. The reader begins a collection of objects related to the material read. Some common objects can be easily obtained while others can be drawn or photographs can be used. Magazines and the Internet are good resources.
3. Mount pictures on pieces of construction paper. Some students like to make frames out of other pieces of construction paper to add another esthetic dimension.
4. The student can put the photographs and real objects in a clean shoe box or other container. The box can be decorated with key ideas relative to the story or expository text. For example, each student might be assigned a different state to research and prepare a prop box relative to that state. See accompanying photograph.
5. When the prop box has been completed, the student can develop a script for an oral presentation concerning the material read, contents of the prop box, and the design of the prop box. The props in the box can be used as prompts during the oral presentation. This also encourages rapt attention from the other students as they are eager to see what comes out of the prop box.
6. Older children can use their prop boxes with younger students. They can encourage younger students to make prop boxes, too. It can be helpful demonstrating how a story presented on a flannel board can also be presented using a prop box. This helps to develop the concept of story structure.
7. A simple rubric describing basic requirements can easily be developed. For example, a prop box on one of the states might include: 1. an outline map of the state, 2. the state bird, 3. state flag, 4. date it entered the United States, etc.

Prop Box

Follow up: Students can share prop boxes with other students through creating a display in the school library. This can also be a good way to encourage oral language development through presentations. Further, using prop boxes and telling about contents can be a good way to develop a foundation for studies in 'readers theater.'

Making prop boxes is fun and academically sound. Children can express themselves artistically and academically in a most enjoyable manner. There are countless variations on this idea: Have fun in your classroom trying a variety of uses for prop boxes!

Magnetic Sheets

By Kathleen E. Dawkins and Rhonda Combs

In the Classroom Action feature in the Spring/Summer 2002 issue of the Tennessee Reading Teacher, Donna Miller presented a great idea about using cardstock and magnetic tape to make bulletin board characters. The idea is to make a color copy of a character from a book or other source onto cardstock and cover it with a plastic film such as Contact. A little piece of magnetic tape is cut and glued onto the back of the character. We really think this is a wonderful idea for teachers who have access to a color copier and the time to cut, contact or laminate, and glue. Budgets are tough and that is a cost effective and creative approach for enhancing learning experiences.

Using magnetic sheets can save time for teachers. Magnetic sheets are generally 8 by 11 inches and made for any inkjet printer. This product is available in glossy or matte finish. The matte finish is often better for classroom use as it does not reflect the glare of fluorescent lights. The sheets are also available with a peel and stick surface. This way you can use any existing pictures or other lightweight items you already have in your classroom and adhere them directly to the magnetic surface. These would be especially useful for family pictures that the children bring from home. In a families unit, you could create an "Our Families" wall using the photos that the children brought from home. Then when the unit is completed, the children have a wonderful reminder of the unit to take home and put on their refrigerator.

Both types of sheets are available from several sources including office supply stores, mass retailers such as Wal-Mart, and web sites. You can print numerous images on a single sheet by cutting and pasting in a Word document. There are countless images to download from the Internet and software programs. Further, you can scan images, as well. For example, Arthur the Aardvark books are often used in classrooms. Through a Public Broadcasting System (PBS) sponsored web site, you can download, for free, images of all the characters from the books. Imagine all the things you can do with these magnet sheets in your classroom!

A couple of other ideas for using magnetic sheets are making puzzles and printing pictures. You can print characters, scenery, or maps. A map of the United States could be printed and each state cut out individually. The students would then be able to practice their geography in a self-correcting manner by putting the states and/or regions together. Using a digital camera, you can photograph the students and then print a wallet photo for each child to take home for the refrigerator. The magnetic sheets can also be drawn on using permanent markers. The children can draw and cut out their own representation of the characters or events. This is a great way to foster creativity.

By having the characters from numerous stories and activities available in a center, the children can create their own stories using a wide variety of available characters. For example, you could have only one or two characters from a story available and encourage children to tell "fractured" stories based on the familiar story of the characters that the children know. Metal dry erase boards, covered cookie sheets, and file cabinets all make great center areas. For storage of the magnets, a manila envelope works great. These ideas can really enhance the students' learning experiences.

Kathleen Dawkins is a student in the Interdisciplinary Studies in Education program at East Tennessee State University. She plans to pursue a career in teaching in the elementary school.

Rhonda Combs earned her Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education from East Tennessee State University in December, 2003. She plans to begin teaching in an elementary school in 2004.

Adapted Reading Books for Special Education Preschoolers

By Julia Gibbs

The children in my classroom have very extensive special needs. There are children with severe cerebral palsy, blindness, profound hearing loss, and a variety of other disabilities. I have found a way to teach these students to recognize words in a book. I use picture symbols (BoardMaker by Mayer Johnson) to represent every single written word on a page. Enter the key word "BoardMaker" to visit the web site. These symbols must be simple and concrete. The symbols are then coded into verbs, nouns, possessors, and adjectives. Each picture is printed out in black and white and then the background is colored to highlight the picture for those students with visual impairments.

For each book that is adapted there is a sequence of events that must occur. For example, if I wanted to adapt the book *The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* by Margaret Houser, I must first make a copy of each page. Second, the pages must be hand colored unless you have a color copier. Third, under each written word place its corresponding symbol. Fourth, laminate or contact each page and then place the pages in sheet protectors in a three-ring binder. This makes it very easy to turn the pages. Then read the book to the students. I have found that very soon after becoming familiar with a book the students can read the words with or without the accompanying symbols. Last, but most important, I always send a smaller version of the book home with each student and encourage the parents to read with their children.

Julia Gibbs teaches preschoolers at Union County Developmental Preschool in Maynardville, Tenn.

A Good Beginning

By Rochelle Stanly Owens

Kindergarten students often enter kindergarten scared and nervous. Some students have never been away from home and this is their first school experience. I have found that music helps to ease their fears. A song that I have found helpful is one I call the "Name Song." Every student's name is on a different bear on a bulletin board so we can see how each one is spelled. Each child has their own song that is sung to the tune of "Camptown Races." It's quite possible that you might think of another tune and/or try several tunes.

During circle time or group time we sing a several name songs each day. I point to the letters as we sing. This helps the children to learning how to spell their names, encourages letter recognition, and eventually learning how to spell the names of other members of the class. This song also gives each student a feeling of confidence because they are personally recognized and honored. They also gain a sense of ownership and membership in our class because they have their own name, bear, and song. The song is as follows:

B-r-a-n-d-o-n

Brandon, Brandon

B-r-a-n-d-o-n

Brandon is his name.

Brandon is his name.

B-r-a-n-d-o-n

Brandon is his name.

I hope that other teachers will find this activity helpful and their students will benefit from it, too. It's fun and academically sound as well.

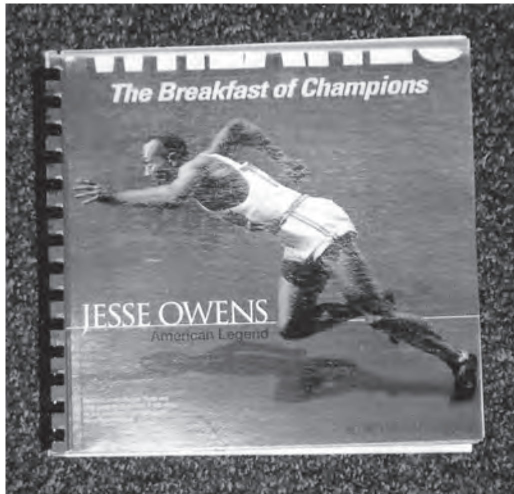
Rochelle Stanly Owens teaches kindergarten at Tazewell-New Tazewell Primary School in New Tazewell, Tenn.

Making Key Words and Rime Flip Books

By Anne Kitchens and Kathe Crawford

Children of all ages love to construct things. When such activities lead to productive learning experiences, all the better. Flip books can be easily constructed from a variety of resources such as greeting cards, cereal boxes, mat board, and cover weight paper. It seems that most schools have a comb binding machine, a machine that is seldom used. Take off the dust cover, have fun, and use this wonderful book-making invention! The machine we use is the Ibico binder, and it takes comb binders such as those produced by GBC. The books can be produced very inexpensively but are sturdy. The students enjoy the experience very much.

A detailed description for making phonics flip books is presented below. Researchers have concluded that it is relatively easy for novice readers to learn rimes (we call them "chunks" with our students) because they are very



consistent in the sounds they represent. For example, the *ank* rime represents the same sound in bank, tank, rank, blank, etc. For a listing of common rimes and onsets, see the article by Tony Dalton and Deb West on page 22 of the Spring/Summer *Tennessee Reading Teacher, Vol. 31.*

The measurements presented, of course, do not need to be followed exactly. On the other hand, with these measurements it is possible to make two flip books with one 11.5 inch comb binder. You will need the half-inch wide comb binders.

Steps to Follow:

1. Cut 10 pieces of 110 lb. cover weight paper 1.75 inches x 2.5 inches and 2 pieces of mat board 4.75 inches x 3 inches for each flip book. You may want to use paper of different colors. Paper such as Georgia-Pacific Card Stock works very well.
2. Print the letters and combinations of letters needed in a 72 pt. font on a word processor. Arial and Verdana are good fonts for making flip books.
3. Cut out the letters and combinations of letters and tack the onsets onto the smaller pieces of 110 lb. paper with a glue stick. Cover the letters with laminating film such as Contact. Affix all the letters in approximately the same place on the smaller pieces. Affix the rime the same way but on the left side of the mat board and at the same height level as the onsets.

4. Punch holes with the binding machine in all the pieces of 110 lb. paper and then punch holes in the mat board. Adjust the punch levers so that you get the appropriate number of holes. Avoid getting holes on the edges of either the onset or the mat board pieces. Using a comb binder, complete the flip book.
5. Make a label for the flip book and tack it onto the back of the flip book with a glue stick. Cover the label with self-sticking adhesive such as Contact. You might want to frame the label. See the model label below:

"Ack" Chunk Book
Prepared By:
Ima Reeder
October, 2003

Making flip books can be a thoroughly enjoyable activity for both you and your students. The rime flip books are very useful for reinforcement of common rimes and onsets. It is easy, fun, and inexpensive to make a set of rime flip books for your classroom. Further, you'll undoubtedly find a lot of other uses for flip books as well.

Anne Kitchens is librarian at Fairmont Elementary School in Johnson City, Tenn.

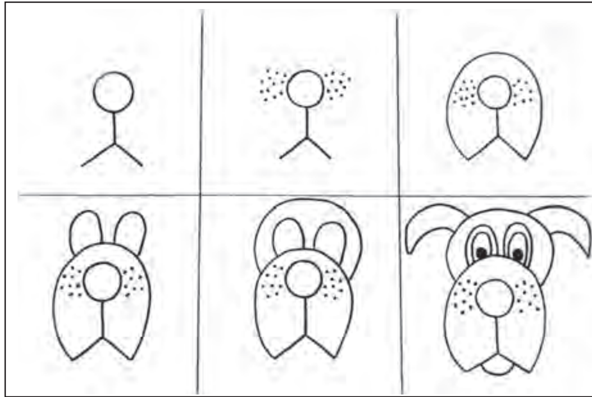
Kathe Crawford is an instructional assistant at Washington Elementary School in Kingsport, Tenn.

Dog Days are Good Days!

By Charlotte Blair and Spicey Gould

Everybody who has any sense loves dogs! Dogs are some of the best people we know. In our classrooms, good stories featuring dogs are always very popular with our students. For example, there is a great collection of short stories about brave dogs in *My Hero, My Dog* by Betsy Byars (2000, New York: Henry Holt ISBN 0-8050-6327-7).

Also, the article by Mary-Beth Kafut titled *Reading with Rover* (*Tennessee Reading Teacher*, Fall/Winter 2002) provides references to a lot of wonderful stories about dogs for young children.



An enjoyable activity that can accompany reading and study of dog stories is drawing a dog. This is very easy to do and delights even people who like cats! Follow the illustrations presented in the photograph step by step and you'll find you and your students can make great dog drawings. The first time you do this activity with your students you might enjoy doing it without telling them what they are drawing and they will be delightfully surprised when their dogs finally appear on the page. It is easy to do variations, particularly with the ears. This adds a lighter touch to such activities as making story maps related to dog stories or writing original stories about pets. Have fun and enjoy some dog days with your students!

Relating Science Topics to Real Life

By Kathy Leonard

As we begin a new unit in science, I try to find activities that will help the students relate the topic to something from their everyday life. Because our textbook is difficult at times even for good readers, I have to utilize other resources to help every student succeed. To start our unit on sound, I ask the students to think of a familiar place where they could write a poem describing the sounds they hear. For example, this place might be the cafeteria, gym, music room, or baseball field. I encourage the students to choose the type of poem they want to write after discussing examples such as acrostic, free verse, and question poems. The students follow a poetic format and type their poems on a computer. They also illustrate the page containing the poem. Please see the photographs of poems written and illustrated by two of my students.

ORCHESTRA
BY: ANNA SANDERS
Opening and closing cases.
Running through a simple song.
Cellos plucking.
Hand's keeping beat.
Everyone talking.
Scraping chairs on the stage floor.
Tuning our instruments.
Rosining our bows.
A violin hitting a high pitched note.

I encourage each student to be very descriptive when writing about the sounds. Because many of my students do not have access to computers at home, I give every child an opportunity to type their poems at school. The students also illustrate their sound poems. As the students finish their poems, I place them in a notebook. This book becomes our Book of Sounds. The students really enjoy

At Home
BY:Keaghan Glassmyer

Baby Splashing
Water Running
Baby Crying
Shower Going
Garage Door Opening
At Home

Clancy Screeching
People Talking on the Phone
Chairs Scooting
Music Playing
People Going Up and Down the Stairs
At Home

Mom Yelling for a Bib for My Sister
Drawers Opening
Cabinet Doors Closing
Dishwasher Going
Fan Whirling
At Home

Dryer Clinking
Washer Washing
Computer Humming
Printer Printing
Door Closing
At Home

reading each other's poems. As an extension to this activity, we share our Book of Sounds with elementary school students. For example, kindergarten children can use the Book of Sounds as a way to reinforce their study of letters and sounds.

Kathy Leonard teaches science and mathematics to sixth graders at Indian Trail Middle School in Johnson City, Tenn.

Notable Books for Young People

By Karen I. Adams and Pam Petty

Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories

While not a new collection of poems, first person narratives, and photographs, Ms. Atkin's work, gathered from Hispanic migrant children in California's Salinas Valley, is extremely important in light of contemporary concerns. Repeatedly the media and politicians address the issues of legal and illegal immigrant workers and their rights, bilingual education as an approach to schooling for increasing numbers of English language learners in U.S. schools, the overall state of the economy, as well as more universal issues such as cultural identity and the meaning of family. In researching this ALA Best Book for Young Adults, Atkins moved to California and interviewed migrant workers in the fields and in their homes. She worked to understand all aspects of their lives—the events that determined their moves to the United States, whether legally or illegally, their living and working conditions, and their goals for themselves and their children.

The black and white photographs are compelling and sensitive in showing the extended families of these migrant children. The poems are presented in both Spanish and English, as the nuance of poetry can be so difficult to translate completely. The longer narrative stories written by the children themselves are introduced with specific background information on them. The reader finishes this easily accessible collection with a much fuller picture of the lives of the characters portrayed. Issues addressed include the hidden prejudice faced by those, such as Andrea Martínez, who, although an immigrant from Oaxaca, Mexico, does not speak Spanish when she arrived in the United States because she is a Zapotec Indian and only speaks the dialect of Zapoteca. She thus finds herself unable to communicate with either the "gringos" at school or other Hispanic youth. The problems of gangs, so prevalent in U.S. schools, teenage pregnancy, and families separated by employment opportunities are also included.

Atkin is surely to be highly commended for this thoughtful and thorough presentation of the lives of these children of migrant farmworkers. The early adolescents to whom this book will easily appeal may find another of her works, Voices from the Streets: Young Former Gang Members Tell Their Stories, also of interest.

Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories. Interviews and photographs by S. Beth Atkin. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993.

Sisters/Hermanas

Sisters/Hermanas is the slim but powerful story told by award-winning author Gary Paulsen, of two fourteen-year old girls, Rosa and Traci, each trying to ensure future success. Rosa is an illegal alien from Mexico City who has crept across the border into Texas in search of a better life for herself and for her mother to whom she regularly sends money. Tragically, without a green card, the only employment she has been able to find is that of prostitution. Traci, in contrast, is from a rather wealthy family with a mother who is convinced that the only key to Traci's future can be found through beauty pageant trophies and popularity.

The story is told through a shared narrative technique, alternating between Rosa and Traci as they consider their lives, and particularly as each is preparing for their work: Rosa for the streets and Traci for high school cheerleading tryouts. Rosa feels driven to succeed, to make money for her family and to support her own dreams of a modeling career. Traci is driven by her mother, who reminds her how important a good marriage to a successful man will be for her future welfare. In a sense, each girl is prostituting herself. In the end, when Rosa is arrested at the mall in the same store to which Traci's mother has brought her to shop for an important dress, the reader's sense is that each girl is trapped. Rosa is clearly aware of the consequences of her trap, while Traci is only beginning to sense hers.

Paulsen has arranged the book so that when read from one direction it is in Spanish and from the other it is in English. Thus, this story of two adolescent girls, culturally and linguistically different but otherwise quite similar, is accessible to both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking readers. This is a book for mature readers, but the lesson is an important one for adolescent girls facing a future full of difficult choices.

Paulsen, Gary. *Sisters/Hermanas*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993.

Abuela's Weave

Castañeda has followed his successful novel for early adolescents, Among the Volcanoes, with another story of Guatemala, this time a story for younger readers. Again, some of the same themes appear, including the role played by superstition and the importance of family. Young Esperanza, who is learning to weave from her grandmother, her "Abuela," must also accompany her to the market to sell her beautiful woven fabric, because her Abuela has a facial birthmark which causes some to believe that she must be a witch. For this reason they will not buy the fabrics directly from her. Therefore, Esperanza and Abuela have developed a plan whereby Esperanza initiates interest in the fabrics before her Abuela closes the sale. Thus, not only can Esperanza learn to weave from her Abuela, she can also learn how to cope with life at the market. Clearly both experiences are preparing her for a successful life in this rural locale.

Some younger listeners and readers may be puzzled by this prejudice or superstitious response to physical differences, but they can be helped to consider the kinds of prejudice people with different physical characteristics or of different ethnic backgrounds may encounter in our own country. The broad application of this simple story is quite valuable.

The illustrations provided by Sanchez add to the beauty and authenticity of this story, complete with the national "huepil," a woven blouse worn by rural Guatemalan women as a mark of cultural and regional identity. This story of the love and mutual trust exhibited by Esperanza and her Abuela will be enjoyed by young listeners, but it may also be read by older children and early adolescents studying Latin American cultures.

Castañeda, Omar S. *Abuela's Weave*. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. New York: Lee & Low Books, Inc., 1995.

My Name is María Isabel

Alma Flor Ada has, in a very simple and straightforward manner, told the story of third-grader María Isabel Salazar López and her difficulties in adjusting to a new school after her family's move to the U.S. mainland from Puerto Rico. Because there are already two Marías in the classroom when she arrives, her teacher decides to call her "Mary López," not understanding the importance of her name to her identity nor the cultural fact that Salazar is the family name while López is her mother's maiden name. María's agony as she is belittled by the teacher when she fails to respond to the new name of Mary and her struggles to bond with classmates and a new country are quite moving for the reader.

While he story concludes in a rather contrived and happy way, the impact of María's struggle is one for children and adults to consider thoughtfully and to apply to their daily encounters with others in our increasingly multicultural society. Teachers and other adults might discuss with young readers the ways in which María might have been treated more sensitively when she arrived in her new classroom, and children might internalize these ways as they prepare to greet those who might be new to their own country and language. Identity is so very important to maturing children, and this story of unintentional harm caused to María's fragile sense of self offers an important moral lesson for all readers.

Ada, Alma Flor. *My Name is María Isabel*. Illustrated by K. Dyble Thompson. Translated from the Spanish by Ana M. Cerro. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993. (An Aladdin Chapter Book)

Navajo: Visions and Voices Across the Mesa

Not unlike some of the migrant children in Beth Atkin's collection of poems and narratives, Begay presents, through his original poems and twenty-one of his well-recognized paintings, some of the realities and conflicts of contemporary life for Navajos in the southwestern United States. In his introduction, Begay details some of the harsh realities of his own childhood. At the young age of five, he was, by law, removed from his family and sent to a government boarding school, where he would remain until eighth grade. The government's purpose was to "assimilate" these children as quickly as possible. They were not allowed to speak their own language, and if caught doing so, had their mouths washed out with soap. They were required to attend government-sponsored churches, and could only return home to see their families for two weeks at Christmas and in the summer. No other visits with family were allowed. Begay summarizes the purpose of this by stating, "it was believed that losing our culture would make us become successful." While this time period was painful for Begay, he also believes that he learned much during this time so that he could live in both worlds effectively. In fact, he continued to live, at the time of this book's publication, in "a square-

cornered house" that contained all of the modern conveniences and technological connections, while spending weekends in his rounded Hogan on the mesa, without running water, television, or telephone.

Again, while this is not a particularly new book, it is nevertheless a powerful collection of poetry and art that effectively capture, in Begay's words, "visions and voices from across the mesa—past and present." He presents creation stories, stories of valued family and community members, descriptions of everyday occurrences and annual events, as well as stories of ironic interplay between Navajo beliefs and the cultural beliefs of those from the "outside." This book has never received the publicity of other works such as Byrd Baylor's Caldecott Honor book "Hawk, I'm Your Brother," but it is a work of continuing value that should not be overlooked in it's understanding of some aspects of United States history and contemporary ways of life and beliefs.

Begay, Shonto. *Navajo: Visions and Voices across the Mesa*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1995.

Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book

This Caldecott Honor book from 1971 is not mentioned much today, but Swahili continues to be a language spoken in many African nations, including Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Republic of Congo. Muriel Feelings wrote this book with the explicit "hope that young boys and girls of African origin will enjoy learning to count in Swahili, together with gaining more knowledge of their African heritage," and that they might "one day speak the language—in Africa." As is evident in other books reviewed above, language is intrinsic to one's personal identity and sense of self worth. It is tied to understanding and valuing other peoples and ways of life. What a wonderful mechanism for approaching these various purposes for such a young audience as the preschool and primary grade children for whom this book is intended!

Not only do children learn how to count from one to ten in Swahili, but they also learn some valuable facts about the continent of Africa through sentences attached to each number word and through Tom Feelings' beautiful illustrations. These facts include the knowledge that Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa, that coffee trees are grown throughout all parts of East Africa, and that the Nile River flows through much of East Africa between Egypt and Uganda. To value an individual is also to value that individual's culture and language. The Feelings have provided a wonderful mechanism for helping young children to value the people, language, and culture of Central and Eastern Africa. It is clearly time to give renewed attention to this award-winning picture book.

Feelings, Muriel. *Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book*. Illustrated by Tom Feelings. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1971.

Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book

In a companion piece to Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book, the Feelings' received another Caldecott Honor Medal and numerous other awards for their Jambo Means Hello, a Swahili alphabet book. This longer book, including words for all the applicable letters of the alphabet, with the omission of Q and X, provides equally strong lessons and information for use with primary grade children. It too seems to be seldom used some thirty years after its publication, but the content and beautiful illustrations are just as valuable today. Again, with our increasingly globally-connected world, understanding other countries and their languages is becoming more important daily. And, as many linguists would remind us, the younger we start with children in providing them with new words and languages, the more easily they will learn and be excited about such knowledge.

As a final note, adults who might be traveling to any of the Swahili-speaking countries would do well to have learned the basic numbers, words, and facts included by Muriel Feelings in these two books.

Feelings, Muriel. *Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book*. Illustrated by Tom Feelings. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1974.

The Lady of Guadalupe

Tomie de Paola, always a popular author and illustrator of works for young children, is also one of the few to include serious legends and religious content in his works, many of which are placed in other countries. The Lady of Guadalupe, also available in a Spanish language version

as Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, tells the story of the patron saint of Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe, who appeared to a poor Indian named Juan Diego in 1531. Juan is chosen especially by the Virgin, who appears to him in the robes of an Aztec princess, to go to the Bishop of Mexico to tell him to build a church in her honor on the hill where she is standing. Although the Bishop does not initially believe Juan, the miracle provided by the Virgin of Guadalupe is finally convincing. In the dead of winter, she sends Juan to the top of the hill to gather roses of Castile to take to the Bishop. Although he knows that such roses do not grow in the winter, Juan obeys her direction and indeed finds the roses growing. Taking this miraculous gift to the Bishop in his "tilma," the cactus-fiber cape he is wearing, Juan finds that not only are the roses convincing, but that the ordinary tilma has changed to display a painting of the Lady just as he had last seen her at the foot of the hill of Tepeyac.

The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City was indeed built on this spot, and millions of people still come here to pray to her, especially on her special day in remembrance of this event, December 12. Juan's tilma, now over 400 years old, is still enshrined and its image unchanged. What better way to understand a people than to understand their patron saint and their beliefs?

---

de Paola, Tomie. *The Lady of Guadalupe*. New York: Holiday House, 1980.

Madeline

An older book with a rather simple international perspective but one that has clearly stood the test of time is Ludwig Bemelmans' Caldecott Honor Award-winning Madeline, first in his series of stories about this young Parisian child. Thousands of young girls have Madeline dolls and know the opening lines by heart:

In an old house in Paris
that was covered with vines
Lived twelve little girls in two straight lines.
In two straight lines they broke their bread
and brushed their teeth and went to bed.

The book's cover features the Eiffel Tower. The inside flyleaves of the book include Bemelmans' sketches of famous landmarks in Paris such as the Place de La Concorde with the Obelisk, and throughout the book there are sketches of Notre Dame, the Church of the Sacre Coeur (Sacred Heart), the Tuilleries Gardens, and the Gardens at Luxembourg. Many young children are hooked, as was I, upon tboheir first enjoyment of this book with the desire to one day visit Madeline's Paris.

While today's children and adolescents have a plethora of excellent literature available to them in addition to the classic Madeline, a recent article in the Sunday New York Times "Travel" section, entitled "Taking Children to the Realm of Culture," featured a father's description of taking his five-year old daughter to Europe for the first time. He and his wife selected Paris as the first place to begin introducing the treasures of Europe to their daughter because she "had gotten a taste of the city through Ludwig Bemelmans and his books about Madeline, the plucky schoolgirl." So they struck out in Paris, "using Madeline as a sort of tour guide," with their daughter, "clutching her book like a map of the stars' homes in Beverly Hills, as they visited the Paris landmarks that figure in her heroine's daily life." Clearly some things never go out of style!

Bemelmans, Ludwig. *Madeline*. New York: The Viking Press, 1939.

The Snowy Day

As we consider multicultural and international content and values in books for children and adolescents, it may be interesting to re-examine the wonderful groundbreaking Caldecott Award book from 1962, The Snowy Day. It reads simply as the story of young Peter's wonder and fun in the city's snow one wintry day—making snow angels, sliding down hills, shaking tree limbs, and crunching along. Although the snowball he has saved in his pocket quickly melts away, the snow does not, and the next morning there is even newly fallen snow for him to enjoy with his friend from across the hall.

While the story does seem simple and forthright today, at the time of its publication it was quite groundbreaking for Keats to have written and illustrated this story with an African American child as the central character. So much has changed in forty-two years! But one thing that has not changed is that this is truly a delightful story to share with young preschoolers and early primary grade children, particularly in the snowy winter months.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*. New York: Viking Press, 1962.

The Story of Ferdinand

Another simple and enjoyable story for young children that has clearly stood the test of time is Munro Leaf's The Story of Ferdinand. The opening line, "Once upon a time in Spain there was a little bull and his name was Ferdinand," is such a lovely introduction to this nonconformist character. His mother is concerned that he does not want to run and play with the other little bulls that butt their heads together and try to act fierce. Instead Ferdinand repeats throughout, "I like it better where I can sit just quietly and smell the flowers." His wise mother, noting that he is not lonesome, allows him, then, to "just sit" and "be happy."

Through a great deal of subtle and not-so-subtle humor, Leaf not only tells about the peace-loving Ferdinand but also describes the whole celebration of the traditional bullfight in Spain. PETA and other opponents of bullfights will not be offended by this story, nor will true bullfighting aficionados. Instead, all will simply enjoy and value Ferdinand and cheer strongly for him at the story's conclusion as they envision him "sitting there still, under his favorite cork tree, smelling the flowers just quietly," knowing that "he is very happy." Thus young children can learn about another country and its traditions and festivities while also learning to value individualism. This, again, is an older book that can still be enthusiastically shared with and enjoyed by young children.

Leaf, Munro. *The Story of Ferdinand*. Illustrated by Robert Lawson. New York: The Viking Press, 1938.