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Douglas H. Brightman
University of Northern Iowa

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Fostering higher level comprehension abilities among fifth-grade students

Abstract

The redefining of functional literacy has been advocated by recent studies of reading achievement. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, (1983) reports the need to implement programs that will foster the development of higher thinking-language abilities. It states that these abilities are essential for meeting the challenges of an everchanging complex world. Students need to interpret, evaluate, and apply what they read. The National Assessment of Educational Progress Report (LaPointe, 1984) concurs with this view: Findings of this project reveal most students are competent in literal comprehension but lacking in higher thinking-language tasks in all areas of the curriculum.

FOSTERING HIGHER LEVEL COMPREHENSION
ABILITIES AMONG FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS

A Graduate Paper
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Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts in Education

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Douglas H. Brightman

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Date Approved

Jeanne McLain Harms

Director of Research Paper

4/29/87

Date Approved

Jeanne McLain Harms

Graduate Faculty Adviser

4/29/87

Date Approved

Ned Ratekin

Graduate Faculty Reader

5/7/87

Date Approved

Greg Stefanich

Head, Department of Curriculum
and Instruction

Fostering Higher Level Comprehension Abilities Among Fifth-Grade Students

The redefining of functional literacy has been advocated by recent studies of reading achievement. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk, (1983) reports the need to implement programs that will foster the development of higher thinking-language abilities. It states that these abilities are essential for meeting the challenges of an everchanging complex world. Students need to interpret, evaluate, and apply what they read. The National Assessment of Educational Progress Report (LaPointe, 1984) concurs with this view: Findings of this project reveal most students are competent in literal comprehension but lacking in higher thinking-language tasks in all areas of the curriculum.

In light of these conclusions, a fifth-grade teacher sought to extend his students' involvement in the reading process. These students, ten and eleven years old, were capable of some higher thinking-language activity. They had the potential to do thoughtful, or interpretative, reading (Wadsworth, 1971; Harms, 1982). Therefore, if given the opportunity, these students could reflect upon their language experiences and have control over them. This ability to monitor language experiences could lead to more sophisticated involvement in the reading process (Baker & Brown, 1984).

At the beginning of the school year, journal writing had been initiated to encourage writing as a process and support reflective thought. This reading project was a natural extension of that journal writing. When readers comprehend, they reconstruct meaning; when readers compose, they actively engage in creating individual interpretations (Squire, 1983). The teacher wrote brief comments to students' journal responses during this project. Teacher-response journals kept by students are mutually beneficial to students and teacher. These journals extend oral language experiences and provide personal written transactions between students and teacher (Goodman & Goodman, 1983).

In examining the students' journals, the teacher discovered that they were responding, for the most part, on a literal level. This discovery led to a search of ways to foster children's involvement in higher thinking-language activity.

Classroom Practices to Foster Interpretative Reading

From the search of professional literature, the teacher found other ways to extend the literature-based comprehension-composition connection represented by the journal keeping of literature experiences. Suggested strategies were teacher collaboration, dialogue with inner audiences, and peer workshop, or interpretative communities.

Teacher collaboration. Several ways for a teacher to collaborate with students in order to encourage involvement in the reading process are suggested.

Children benefit when teachers read aloud and model the comprehension-composition process. As the teacher thinks the process aloud, children select those elements that are relevant to their own reading experiences (Graves, 1983). Modeling serves as a referral point and provides students with solutions to problems they may encounter when reading (Murray, 1985). Teacher modeling as a collaborative experience can be shared with the whole class, small groups or individual students.

Conference teaching is another opportunity for teachers to collaborate with students. During a conference the student and teacher listen to the student's thinking and drafting of meaning. They focus on the content and process being used. Throughout the conference the teacher looks for the student's potential, builds upon it, and encourages individual interpretations. The student solves problems, answers challenging questions, or discovers new information (Graves, 1983, 1985).

Dialogues with inner audiences. Thoughtful readers create meaning through the use of inner audiences; they talk to themselves. These inner audiences are similar to the other self of the writer (Murray, 1982). They cause the reader to concentrate on the content, meaning and focus of the text. Thoughtful readers dialogue with their inner audiences and create individual interpretations. These inner audiences are multifaceted (Graves, 1985) and can include personal experiences, the author/illustrator,

other works, the genre, personal problems and another culture (Harms, unpublished).

Most instruction in reading ignores children's inner audiences and stifles their individual interpretations. Traditionally, children have viewed the teacher as the most important audience and the answer in the teacher's guide as the only correct answer. Children need opportunities to extend their thinking-language abilities and compose individual interpretations (Graves, 1985).

Children have the ability to consider different audiences and can advance beyond the literal level of reading. Young children usually are able to consider a single audience in a concrete sense. Older children with a background of literature experiences have the thinking-language abilities to select their own audiences. They can simultaneously consider different audiences and interact with these audiences on the interpretative level (Harms, 1982, unpublished).

Pearson and Tierney (1984) suggest that thoughtful readers plan, compose, edit and monitor their reading. When planning, thoughtful readers reflect upon some commonly accepted reading behaviors, such as goal-setting, predicting and self-questioning. When composing, they view the text as a blueprint for creating meaning and building interpretations. Composing readers also strive for coherent holistic interpretations in which everything fits together.

Thoughtful readers, as editors, examine their interpretations of the text and redraft meaning. "Good students engage in behaviors such as rereading, annotating the text on the page with reactions, and questioning whether the model they have built is what they really want" (Pearson & Tierney, 1984, p. 151). When students are editors, they need support and feedback on what they are doing. This provides an excellent opportunity for the teacher to collaborate with students.

Finally, thoughtful readers control their planning, composing and editing through monitoring. The monitor manages the reading process and dialogues with the inner reader. The inner reader, like the writer's other self, affirms understanding and expresses approval of meaning (Pearson & Tierney, 1984).

Graves (1985) believes that thoughtful readers use internal and external audiences when composing meaning. Thoughtful readers first read for themselves. They use their other self to create individual interpretations. Graves states, "Reading for the other self can be sloppy, systematic, or involve large amounts of rereading." (p. 196) Thoughtful readers also interact with external audiences. These include the teacher, the group in which interpretation is taking place, and the audiences chosen by the reader.

Peer workshops. Classrooms can foster children's use of different audiences and become interpretative communities. Graves

(1985) believes that these interpretative communities provide one of the most important approaches to reading, the child-centered audience.

Peer workshops, small groups of assigned children, provide children opportunities to examine the meaning of works within a safe low-risk setting. The diminished role of the teacher in these workshops encourages children to own their reading experiences and explore different audiences.

Peer workshops can strengthen the self-concept of children as well as extend their range of audience. Through these workshops, children can receive encouragement to share their individual interpretations with the teacher and the whole class (Murray, 1985).

Implementation of Recommended Instructional Practices

The recommended practices were incorporated into a reading instructional program based on quality picture books. With short units of whole language, children could more readily focus on interactions with inner audiences. Their efforts to interpret stories were supported by journal writing, peer workshops, and teacher modeling and conferencing.

Preparation for the project involved the teacher selecting picture books and gathering biographical information concerning the authors. Picture books which had potential for interpretative experiences were selected (see Appendix). These volumes had well

developed themes and layers of meanings. The school librarian assisted by gathering multiple copies of these books. Information concerning each author was obtained from the reference series, Something About the Author (Commire, 1971-1982) and organized into folders for classroom use.

The grouping for the basal reading program was used for this project. The twenty-one fifth-graders with reading instructional ability on the third-grade and fourth-grade levels made up six small groups. These children were the lower achievers from two classrooms; another teacher was responsible for the higher achievers.

Other preparation included arranging the classroom: Desks were clustered in groups of four to facilitate student interaction. Picture books were displayed in the room. Also, an informational bulletin board entitled Understanding Audience listed the five types of inner audiences and promoted the workshop organization as a reading-writing connection.

During the first workshop session, the teacher explained the use of inner audiences and workshop grouping. Each group was to select a picture book, read, and respond to it in their journals and the peer workshop.

Following the first session, the teacher read and responded to the journal entries of each group. This response included generating questions which would encourage students to create

meaning on the interpretative level, because the students, for the most part, retold the literal elements of the story.

The following journal excerpts were typical responses.

Mark's journal response for The Biggest Bear, by Lynd Ward

I thought that the book was very good. I thought that the illustrations were great. I liked how the author said that the little kid had to shoot the bear because it had been doing bad things around the house. But the kid never shot the bear because the bear smelled maple sugar so the bear and the kid got caught in a trap. Some men came from the zoo. They said let's take the bear to the zoo. So they did.

Teacher's supportive questions

Which illustration did you like the best? Why do you think the size of the bear changes in different pictures? Is there a hidden meaning?

Tim's journal response for The Biggest Bear, by Lynd Ward

I think the story was very neat and interesting. I thought the way they described the bear was awesome. I also liked the pictures of the bear pulling the little boy through the woods. I also would like to say that the one part where the one man shoots three bears in a row was really outrageous. Another thing I would like to say that the way the grandfather said, "It's better a bear in an orchard than an orchard in the bear."

Teacher's supportive questions

The author did a lot of interesting things in the story. Do you think the author meant for the bear to be a symbol for something? Fear? The grandfather is funny throughout the story? Why?

Justin, also a member of this group, used a personal experience in his journal response. He responded to the teacher's written comments in the journal and discussed the book with Tim

in the peer workshop. Tim wrote of his collaboration with Justin.

Justin's journal response for The Biggest Bear, by Lynd Ward

It was a very interesting book. The pictures were fantastic. I kind of can relate to this book because I have a B-B gun and one time I shot a raccoon. And we have a bear skin rug so I know what they look like. My grandpa once shot a bear and made a rug he lives on a farm. (that's where I shot the raccoon). The writer made the book go smoothly when you read it. The pictures gave life to the book. If the pictures weren't there the book would not be as good.

Teacher's response

Your personal experiences add to your meaning of this story. Do you think the bear skin represents something? Pride over fear?

Justin's response

I think the bear represents fear for grown ups. They have to be stronger than a bear. For pride and power.

Tim's response

Justin gave me something I didn't think about before that the pictures help the story alot. If there wasn't a picture of the bear and grandfather then I wouldn't understand what the bear meant to good!

The supportive questions and positive comments, written by the teacher, were attempts to collaborate with students and foster individual interpretations. At first the students did not react in their journals to the teacher's comments. Students were satisfied to select and respond to another book.

During the second workshop session the teacher read aloud Tico and the Golden Wings, by Leo Lionni, and modeled the reading process. This modeling clarified for students their task and provided examples of the various inner audiences available to readers.

The teacher's journal response for Tico and the Golden Wings, by Leo Lionni

As I began reading the book I thought about all the friends I had caring for me when I was growing up. Parents, brothers, teachers etc. . . . They cared for me, but they could not fulfill my dreams. That I had to do myself. Being three semesters in college studying to be a pastor - flying like Tico with his golden wings; something wasn't right. My dream needed to be changed. As I discovered my interest in teaching, happiness grew.

I wonder if the author stated the theme of the story in the last lines? "We are all different. Each for his own memories, and his own invisible golden dreams."

I wonder if dreaming and searching for purpose fulfills our lives?

I wonder if the author intentionally positioned Tico on each page?

I wonder what other ideas the author has written about? He appears to be a sensitive person.

The benefit of this modeling became evident on the third day.

Small group discussion preceded journal writing, and more interpretative journal responses were given.

During the third session, an all-class conference revealed students' reasons for not responding to teacher's questions. They were viewing the teacher in the traditional sense; as the one with the only acceptable answer. Students feared they would be incorrect. Students needed reassurance of their ownership and

their abilities to comprehend-compose meaning. An activity was introduced to help diminish the students' insecurity in responding. Each group was asked to generate questions concerning one of the books they had read; they were encouraged to write questions which might not have answers and then were asked to share those questions with the class. Through this activity students attempted posing questions which encouraged thoughtful reading.

By the end of the first week, the workshop routine had been established, and students were collaborating with each other. Some groups chose to read their picture books aloud, discussing meaning as they read while other groups read silently and then discussed them. Thoughtful reading was apparent as students orally rehearsed ideas and wrote in their journals. Most students appeared to have acquired an understanding of audience and were composing meaning on the interpretative level. Personal experience and dialogue with the author/illustrator were the two audiences most frequently chosen by students.

A routine for the collaborative efforts of the teacher was also developed. At the beginning of each class period, the teacher quickly checked on group activity and assisted those groups needing direction. After working with groups, the teacher met with individual students. These conferences led to more effective group interaction because the teacher modeled interpretative responses to

reading. The daily journal responses by the teacher also changed.

Less questions were asked and more positive comments shared.

Teacher-Student Responses to the Program

The responses of students in their journals provided much information about their involvement in the reading process and their interaction with peers and the teacher. A sampling of the students' journal responses during the three-week project is presented in this section. The amount of reading per student ranged from eight to sixteen volumes with an average of twelve.

Teacher collaboration. Teacher modeling seemed to stimulate interest in certain books. Also, the depth of students' written responses was influenced by their feelings toward the books and the oral interaction within their groups. All-class sharing encouraged groups to reconsider books and extend their interpretations.

Modeling of Bedsread, by Sylvia Fair, and Swimmy, by Leo Lionni, produced the following responses.

The teacher's journal response for Bedsread, by Sylvia Fair

Why are memories of our childhood important? People can have the same experience and interpret it differently. My four brothers and I all grew up in the same house, but all of us remember our growing up differently. The important value of love though is in all our memories. When thinking of old people in nursing homes we need to remember they were children once. I wonder how cooperation fits into this story? I wonder if our memories should be of things or people? Memories to be valuable need to include happiness. Interesting,

powerful thought from the text - Amelia said the picture should have the sun in it. The sun shone every day when she was a child. It's important that children experience happiness in their lives. It's needed for tomorrow's memories.

Ann's journal response for Bedspread, by Sylvia Fair

This story is very interesting. It's neat the way the author made the two sisters different from each other. Maud seemed to be a good sewer, but Amelia had a pretty creative mind but a bad hand for sewing. The author uses very good words. And this story reminds me of my sister and me. We barely ever agree. Sometimes we do agree on things. When we do agree, it seems like a miracle.

Teacher's supportive questions

Why do you think the author chose two sisters so different in attitude? Do you think the two sisters loved each other? How do you know?

The teacher's journal response for Swimmy, by Leo Lionni

What was the reason Lionni used different colors? (bright and dull colors) Was it to set mood? Where Swimmy is sad and lonely did Lionni plan that page to be empty, grey and have only Swimmy on it? I wonder if this book speaks of loneliness, courage, leadership and cooperation? When someone experiences sadness and loneliness - if they work through those feelings - can they provide leadership for others? When we have problems, sometimes we have to redirect our attention on positive experiences.

Nicole's journal response for Swimmy, by Leo Lionni

Swimmy is like getting in a fight with really close friends and so you move away for a little while and you get sad and all of a sudden you get new friends and they tell you to find your friends so he did. How did Swimmy think of the idea. And I think he went away cause the fight is getting so bad.

Teacher's supportive comments

Sounds like you are thinking about the girl friendship problems of fifth-grade? Using problem-solving audience?

A daily log helped the teacher monitor progress and plan meaningful learning experiences. The teacher was available to model a story or to conference with individual students or small groups. Each class period usually ended with an all-class conference.

The teacher discussed with the students how they could prepare for a peer-teacher conference. After the discussion, the teacher prepared and distributed copies of this list of questions as a guide.

1. How is our group working together?
2. Are our group's discussions on the interpretative level?
3. Are different audiences being considered by our group?
4. What book has been the most meaningful for our group?
Why?
5. What plans for other reading activity does our group have?

Students benefited from these small group conferences. They evaluated and planned their own learning.

Interpretations based on dialogue with personal experiences.

Personal experience was the most frequently used audience by students. Students enjoyed responding to On the Way to the Movies, by Charlotte Herman. They identified with the characters and events of the story.

Nicole's journal response for On the Way to the Movies, by Charlotte Herman

This book is a good book because Sherman has already seen the movie so he tries to scare Freddie, but he doesn't even know what a vampire is and here Sherman is scaring Simon. Simon was not only seeing Sherman he was seeing more, alot more. Then it relates to me and Lindsey but the other way

around. The pictures were excellent because the face was just the same and the formation of his body.

Teacher's response

Your thinking moved from the literal to interpretative level when you related your own story. Good for you! Continue creating meaning.

Matt's journal response for On the Way to the Movies, by Charlotte Herman

This story kind of reminds me of my cousin Joey. Boy, is he a brat. Freddie is just like Joey and I'm like Simon.

This story seems to remind most people in your group about personal experiences. Why do you think people in your group relate to this story using personal experiences? What is the author's main idea?

All-class sharing stimulated new insights into this book.

Students discussed the illustrations. They noticed how Sherman's posture was the same as Simon's imaginary characters. They also shared information about Charlotte Herman: She writes about personal experiences and about observations of her own children.

This information led Chad to a discovery concerning the background of two pictures.

Chad's journal response for On the Way to the Movies, by Charlotte Herman

I saw in the book that the lady in the window was curious about the boys when Simon was helping Freddie find his nickel. First she was sitting in a chair in the window then she was on her knees in the chair looking at them. I think it's neat when Simon finds a weakness in Freddie and Freddie finds a weakness in Simon.

Teacher's response

Interesting observation! Never thought about it before. Thanks. Your thought about weakness really creates meaning.

After several class discussions about this book, Tim shared his interpretation.

Tim's journal response for On the Way to the Movies, by Charlotte Herman

I liked the part when Simon said vampire blood is ketchup or tomato juice and Ragu! I thought the meaning was it's not always the youngest who get scared. What do you think?

Teacher's response

Interesting thought. Let's talk about it.

Tim's journal response following a discussion with the teacher

Fear most of the time overcomes our imagination a bunch!
We need to learn to control our fear.

Teacher's response

Yes, I agree. We should not let fear control our imagination.
Deep thinking.

Interpretations based on dialogues with author/illustrator and other works. Experiences with certain books led students to consider other books written by the same author. Tim had heard the teacher model Swimmy and became interested in learning about Leo Lionni. After referring to the author file, Tim independently read several other books by this author.

Tim's journal response for Frederick, by Leo Lionni

I thought the way the author wrote the meaning (It's okay to be you) was really nice. I think that the mice thought the rays of the sun and the colors of summer like they were real. I also think that it wasn't Frederick's doing! What do you think?

Teacher's response

I wonder if the meaning is we each have special abilities to develop and it's important that we develop them. Also that we share them with others.

Tim's journal response for Geraldine, The Music Mouse, by Leo Lionni

I thought this story meant that music is in you. I also liked how the author wrote and he did the pictures. I wonder if something like this has happened in his life?

Teacher's response

Your thoughts reflect good thinking. Hope you take time to discuss them with your group.

Tim's journal response for Tico and the Golden Wings, by Leo Lionni

I thought the story was lovely. It was full of meaning. The author must really be a thoughtful person when awake.

Teacher's response

How do you think Tico felt? Have you ever had similar feelings?

Tim's response

I can't really say what he felt, but I can relate to his feelings! I had wanted to be different. I think we all want to be different sometimes!

Teacher's response

Good use of personal experience. You're a thoughtful reader.

Tim's journal response for Swimmy, by Leo Lionni

I thought that with all the books he's wrote that have meaning show how thoughtful he is! Lionni might be my favorite author with all the meaningful books he's wrote! I thought the meaning is people can work together if they try. Why was Swimmy the only black fish in his group?

Teacher's response

Good question. You think there's something to the color? Your consideration of the author is very good. Thoughtful reading.

Tim's response

You are right with what you said to Todd. We all are special in our own way!

Teacher's response

Yes, we are all special - we just have to find our uniqueness.

Interpretations based on dialogue with a problem. Jeff's response to Cinderella, by Nonny Hogrogian, reflected his concern for Mrs. Zehr, the school's music teacher; her husband had died the day before Jeff read this book. Through collaboration with the teacher he also read Annie and the Old One, by Miska Miles.

Jeff's journal response for Cinderella, by Nonny Hogrogian

I wonder why Cinderella wanted hazel twig? Mrs. Zehr is kind of like Cinderella. I wonder if the illustrator made the dove on the gravestone as a sign of a hazel twig, because the doves came when Cinderella brought the hazel twig. I noticed that there are doves in the top right hand corner. I also noticed that there are flies around the grave where Cinderella is because probaly Cinderella is so dirty because her stepmother treats her so badly.

Teacher's response

Sensitive thinking. Interesting, I'll have to look at that picture again.

Jeff's journal response for Annie and the Old One, by Miska Miles

Annie is like Mrs. Zehr. They both are dealing with death. One is trying to keep somebody from dying, but death can't

be stopped. It comes unexpected. Mrs. Zehr didn't know, Annie did.

Teacher's response

Thoughtful thinking. Death is scary sometimes, but it's part of life.

Jeff's response

Annie doesn't want her grandmother to go to Mother Earth. Death is hard to deal with when the person is someone close. I'm kind of dealing with death because I don't want my great grandmother to die. I want her to live to be one hundred years old before she dies.

Interpretations based on several audiences. Cinderella, by

Nonny Hogrogian, stimulated much sharing within small groups and interaction with several audiences. One group referred to the encyclopedia in researching the symbolism of the hazel twig and found that traditionally it was considered to have supernatural powers. This sharing led another group to consider the symbolism of the doves also in the story and another to examine the design of the book. The latter noticed the frames and endpapers: The endpapers have hazelnut branches in full bloom. In this discussion, the teacher explained full circle themes and the purpose of frames in folktales.

The following group explored different audiences when comparing several versions of Cinderella.

Stephanie's response for Cinderella, by Nonny Hogrogian

I liked this book. I think it was neat how the two stepsisters wanted a dress and jewelry and all Cinderella asked for was a hazel twig. I also liked

how the author wrote and drew the pictures and how all the pictures had frames.

Teacher's response

Why do you think the author has Cinderella's father give her the hazel twig? Do you think that there is a deeper meaning? Why do you think the author framed the pictures?

Stephanie's response

Cause that is not much to ask for and it's not expensive. She is caring that she doesn't need gifts to love someone. Yes, I think they framed the pictures to get your attention and for the pictures to be more attractive.

Teacher's response

Do you think the frames set the mood for the folktale? Did you know there are over 400 versions of Cinderella in the world?

Erin's journal response for Yeh-Sen, by Ai-Ling Louie

Was a great book. I wasn't real interested in it. I liked the other Cinderella [Hogrogian's Cinderella] because I know it better than I know this one. It didn't interest me. It was very confusing. It gets you confused.

Teacher's response

Honest response. Did you notice the fish? How is it like the dove in the other book? It's a hard book to understand without a background in Chinese culture. Maybe you could look at it again with your group?

Erin's journal response for Cinderella, by Paul Galdone

this book is pretty good. It's just like the book we just read. [Brown's Cinderella] I wonder why when the stepsisters come home from the ball the godmother is still in the room. Almost all the ladies and the daughters have moles. Cinderella and the prince in one picture look real, the people in the back look fake.

Teacher's response

Why does the illustrator draw the daughters with moles?
What do you think this story says about pride? humility?

Stephanie's journal response for Cinderella, by Marcia Brown

Out of the four Cinderella books we have read [Brown's Cinderella, Galdone's Cinderella, Hogrogian's Cinderella & Louie's Yeh-Sen] this one is the best. This one I grew up knowing. When I know something for a long time I learn to like it. My favorite part was when she acted like she wasn't at the ball and acted tired. I like this book. This book has dull colors. Yeh-Sen has very soft colors. The Cinderella where they cut off the toe and heel [Hogrogian's Cinderella] had dull colors too. I have a lot of dreams about me being Cinderella! I have had a stepsister before, but not anymore. But on my Mom's side I have a stepbrother and a stepsister.

Teacher's response

Good use of audiences - personal experience, comparison of books, and dialogue with author/illustrator.

This group took about four class periods reading and discussing these different versions: They interpreted and evaluated the works. They also read about the authors and referred to the encyclopedia for the history of the Cinderella tales. When they realized the origin of the Cinderella tales, their appreciation for Yeh-Sen, by Ai-Ling Louie, increased.

A dialogue with culture enhanced an appreciation for another picture book, The Seeing Stick, by Jane Yolen. While responding to this book, some students read about the author and others compared the illustrations in this book to their basal reader's selection of the same story.

Kandi's journal response for The Seeing Stick, by Jane Yolen

I really thought the book was neat, the pictures and the colors. I thought that blind people wore dark glasses but in this book they had their eyes shut. I compared our reading textbook and I looked up The Seeing Stick and the pictures weren't as good. They ruined the story by the pictures in the textbook. I didn't know that the old man was blind. I've seen a girl who was blind and she wanted to get something but she didn't know what she was getting. In the pictures (colored) no black was in it. In the first page there wasn't to many people. It was a neat book.

Teacher's response

A lot of interesting thinking. Did you read about the author?

Tim's journal response for The Seeing Stick, by Jane Yolen

I loved the story and thought the author is a very thoughtful person when she writes. It is also an interesting fact that she is a Quaker. I thought the meaning was people are never blind. Why did she write about this story? I thought it was neat with what the author said about when she writes a book, she will read it to the wall, bathtub and her husband.

Students' Reflection on Their Thoughtful Reading

Through this program students acquired an understanding of the different audiences used by thoughtful readers. They collaborated with each other and the teacher to engage in interpretative reading. Students recognized changes in their reading strategies and viewed themselves as thoughtful readers. At the end of this period of time, students were asked to answer the following questions.

Are you becoming a more thoughtful reader?
How do you know?

Heath - Yes, I do think I am becoming a more thoughtful reader. I am feeling the same feelings and I get deeper in the meaning. I am thinking about the story.

Matt - I really like this program. I have a sense of achievement and I am getting to better levels of interpretations. I am concentrating more on the books as I read.

Tim - I think I am. "Yes" I see new things that I didn't see when I read books before! I know by the time I take to discuss the books and by what I write in my journal. When I read I interpret what's going to happen next. I also ask my brain questions! The ones that I think about are the ones most interesting to me.

Staci - Yes, I am a thoughtful reader. I am asking myself questions. I am thinking over the questions, seeing if I can answer them, I am thinking over the story too.

Stephanie - When we started this program, I was rewriting the story, but now I think I'm getting into a deeper level cause I'm going back to my own experiences. As I read, I reread some pages, paragraphs, and sentences.

Ann - Yes, I think I am. Because I get more interested in certain books. I imagine myself being one of the characters. I also compare my life with their lives.

Nicole - I think I been more thoughtful as a reader. I think I've gotten into the books more than I ever have.

Stacy - Yes, because now when I read silently, I read more slowly and get better meaning.

Sara - Well, I think that at the beginning I was just kind of writing down what it said in the book. Now I am getting deeper in thinking. Cause if I don't understand it I would reread so I would understand it. I am rereading paragraphs and understanding the meaning better.

Chad - Yes, I am becoming a more thoughtful reader. I am starting to think more about books when I read them. It helps me think to read out loud.

The last day of the program was a celebration affirming students' growth as thoughtful readers. As part of this

celebration, the teacher shared information about one of his favorite authors, Tomie de Paula, read aloud The Clown of God by this author, and entertained the class with his clown marionette.

Conclusion

The follow-up of this project which involved encouraging older children to engage in thoughtful reading indicated that the students were able to transfer these strategies to other reading experiences and listening in the read aloud session: Students generated interpretative responses and shared their dialogues with inner audiences.

From this project, thoughtful reading can be extended to explore the nature of different genres, personal-social problems, and cultures through inner audiences. Full length works and opportunities to compare and contrast works and those from different genres can be part of assisting children in interpretative reading activity. Students also need opportunities to express their in-depth understandings of works through many modes.

From peer and teacher records of thoughtful reading, parents can gain further insight into their children's comprehension-composition development.

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Appendix

Picture Books Selected for the Study

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- Baker, B. (1983). The turkey girl, illus. H. Berson. New York: Macmillan.
- Baylor, B. & Parnall, P. (1978). The other way to listen. New York: Scribners.
- Brown, M. (1954). Cinderella. New York: Scribners.
- Brown, M. (1961). Once a mouse. New York: Scribners.
- Cooney, B. (1958). Chanticleer and the fox. New York: Crowell.
- Crews, D. (1983). Carousel. New York: Greenwillow.
- de Paola, T. (1978). The clown of God. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- de Paola, T. (1980). The knight and the dragon. New York: Putnam.
- Ehrlich, A. (1982). The snow queen, illus. S. Jeffers. New York: Dial.
- Fair, S. (1982). The bedspread. New York: Morrow.
- Galdone, P. (1978). Cinderella. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Goble, P. (1978). The girl who loved wild horses. New York: Bradbury.
- Herman, C. (1980). On the way to the movies, illus. D. Dawson. New York: Dutton.
- Hogrogian, N. (1971). One fine day. New York: Collier.
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- Jonas, A. (1983). Round trip. New York: Greenwillow.
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- Lionni, L. (1979). Geraldine, the music mouse. New York: Pantheon.
- Lionni, L. (1983). Cornelius. New York: Pantheon.
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New York: Morrow.
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- Louie, A. (1982). Yeh-Sen, illus. E. Young. New York: Philomel.
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- Miles, M. (1971). Annie and the old one, illus. P. Parnall.
Boston: Little, Brown.
- Peet, B. (1972). The spooky tail of Prewitt Peacock. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin.
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Macmillan.
- Sharmat, M. (1980). Gila monsters meet you at the airport, illus.
B. Barton. New York: Macmillan.
- Stevenson, J. (1977). Could be worse. New York: Morrow.
- Thayer, J. (1980). Applebaum's have a robot, illus. B. Weissman.
New York: Morrow.
- Ward, L. (1952). The biggest bear. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Williams, J. (1980). One big wish, illus. J. O'Brien. New York:

Macmillan.

Yashima, T. (1955). Crow Boy. New York: Viking.

Yolen, J. (1977). The seeing stick, illus. R. Charlip & D.

Maraslis. New York: Crowell.