

Shelby A. Wolf

University of Colorado at Boulder, USA

The flight of reading: Shifts in instruction, orchestration, and attitudes through classroom theatre

They say the people could fly. Say that long ago in Africa, some of the people knew magic. And they would walk up on the air like climbin up on a gate. And they flew like blackbirds over the fields. Black, shiny wings flappin against the blue up there.

Then, many of the people were captured for Slavery. The ones that could fly shed their wings. They couldn't take their wings across the water on the slave ships. Too crowded, don't you know.

The folks were full of misery, then. Got sick with the up and down of the sea. So they forgot about flyin when they could no longer breathe the sweet scent of Africa.

(p. 166, from *The People Could Fly* by Virginia Hamilton. Text copyright © 1985 by Virginia Hamilton. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.).

Flight is a powerful metaphor in literature. From the wings of Icarus in Greek mythology to the soaring dreams of enslaved African Americans, flight is freedom, while melted wax and forgotten wings bring only heartache and misery. Flight is also associated with the *reading* of literature. Here the imagination takes flight, for books are often said to transport individuals in time, space, and affect (Wolf & Heath, 1992).

The engaged reader shifts perspective from the real world to take on alternative ideas, actions, and emotions of those in the world of words. Yet, shifts in perspective and possibilities for flight are often limited to those who have positive and repeated access to text with ample opportunities for expressing their interpretations through multiple symbolic systems.

The fusion of old tales with new possibilities is a critical feature of this article, though here I focus not on a scene from African American folklore, but on an ethnically diverse urban classroom. The metaphor for the telling of this tale is also flight, but the story it surrounds is one of reading. This yearlong classroom study takes a careful look at a class of third- and fourth-grade children who were labeled as at risk for school failure.

When I first met these children and their teacher, Natasha, the classroom reading instruction centered on round robin reading (traditional you read a page, I'll read a page oral reading). In Natasha's daily reading program, she gave the children (a) orientation questions prior to orally reading a page with a focus on new vocabulary, (b) guidance in decoding as a single child read a page, and (c) follow-up comprehension questions before proceeding to the next page and the next reader. Her reading instruction was marked by known-information questions (Cazden, 1988) and recounts that summarized past events (Heath, 1982), and the children's response to the instruction was markedly disengaged.

Natasha's own reaction to the children's less-than-enthusiastic response was to seek out alternative methods for her instruction, particularly in the area of drama, for when her children put on small plays in free time and on the playground she noted their enthusiasm for "hamming it up." Rather than sighs of resignation and complaints of "Do we have to?," all typical of Natasha's call for "reading time," many of the children were eager to act.

The flight of reading: Shifts in instruction, orchestration, and attitudes through classroom theatre

THIS STUDY follows an ethnically diverse, third- and fourth-grade urban classroom of school-labeled remedial readers as they moved from their daily instruction in round robin reading to the construction of a classroom theatre in which they interpreted and performed literary text. Unlike most studies of drama in the classroom, here I focus more on the shifts in decoding and comprehension than on literary interpretation, arguing that this is an aspect of dramatic work rarely researched. Through participant observation, audio and video recording, artifacts, and interviews, I analyzed the patterns of children's reading over time. In this piece, reading is metaphorically compared to flight, emphasizing that shifts in the sense of what it means to be literate are often limited to those who have positive and repeated access to text with ample opportunities for expressing

their understandings through multiple symbolic systems. These shifts are enhanced or limited by at least three components: teachers' instructional strategies, children's orchestration of reading resources, and children's and teachers' attitudes toward reading. In this study, the children experienced the flight of reading—an experience that broadened instruction and available resources as well as changed attitudes from doubt to belief, if only for a short time. In their flight, the children achieved linguistic and physical wingspread as interpretations expanded to include negotiated and extended discussion enfolding personal experience, art, voice, and gesture. Most important, the children learned to shift perspectives not only to see themselves as characters or as actors, but to see themselves as *readers*.

El vuelo de la lectura: Cambios en la instrucción, orquestación y actitudes en el teatro del aula

ESTE ESTUDIO se ocupa del seguimiento de un curso de recuperación en lectura de niños de tercero y cuarto grado, de origen étnico diverso, en el tránsito de la situación cotidiana de instrucción en lectura a la construcción de un teatro en el aula en el cual interpretaron un texto literario. A diferencia de la mayoría de los estudios sobre drama en el aula, enfoco el estudio más en los cambios en decodificación y comprensión, que en interpretación literaria, argumentando que éste es un aspecto del trabajo dramático pocas veces investigado. A través de la observación participante, grabaciones de audio y video, artefactos y entrevistas, analicé los patrones de lectura de los niños en el tiempo. En este trabajo, la lectura se compara metafóricamente con un vuelo, enfatizando que los cambios en la significación del concepto de alfabetizado, están a menudo limitados a aquellos que tienen acceso positivo y frecuente al texto, con amplias oportunidades para expresar su comprensión a través de múlti-

ples sistemas simbólicos. Estos cambios son favorecidos o limitados al menos por tres componentes: las estrategias de enseñanza de los docentes, la orquestación de los recursos de la lectura por parte de los niños y las actitudes de los niños y los docentes hacia la lectura. En este estudio, los niños experimentaron el vuelo de la lectura, una experiencia que amplió la enseñanza y los recursos disponibles, y también cambió actitudes desde la duda a la creencia, aunque fuera por un corto tiempo. En su vuelo, los niños lograron expandirse lingüística y físicamente, al tiempo que sus interpretaciones se ampliaron para incluir la discusión extendida y negociada referida a la experiencia personal, el arte, la voz y el gesto. Más importante aún, los niños aprendieron a cambiar perspectivas no sólo para verse como personajes o como actores, sino también para verse como *lectores*.

Lesen wie im Fluge: Abwechslungen durch Anweisungen, Ausführungen und Verhaltensweisen durch Schauspielen im Klassenraum

DIESE STUDIE verfolgt eine ethnisch vielseitige dritte und vierte städtische Klasse von schulseitig bezeichneten hilfsbedürftigen Lesern, wie sie aus ihrer täglichen Leseunterrichtsrunde in die Gestaltung eines Klassenraumschauspieles überwechselten, wobei sie Lesetexte interpretierten und vortrugen. Anders als bei den meisten Studien vom Schauspielen im Klassenraum konzentriere ich hier mehr auf die Verschiebungen im Entziffern und Begreifen als auf literarische Auslegung, indem ich argumentiere, daß dies ein kaum erforschter Gesichtspunkt der schauspielerischen Arbeit ist. Durch die Beobachtung der Teilnehmer, Audio- und Videoaufnahmen, darstellerische Hilfsmittel und Befragen analysierte ich über einen Zeitraum die Lesemerkmale von Kindern. In diesem Aufsatz wird das Lesen sinnbildlich mit dem Fliegen verglichen, wobei betont wird, daß Verschiebungen in dem Sinne was es bedeutet belesen zu sein, oftmals begrenzt sind auf jene, die begünstigten und wiederholten Zugang zu Texten mit reichlichen Möglichkeiten der Ausdrucksform

haben, um ihr Verständnis durch vielseitige symbolische Systeme auszudrücken. Diese Verschiebungen sind verstärkt oder begrenzt durch wenigstens drei Komponenten: Anweisungsstrategien der Lehrer, Gestaltung von Lesemitteln durch die Kinder, und die innere Einstellung zum Lesen von Kindern und Lehrern. In dieser Studie erleben die Kinder das Lesen wie im Fluge—eine Erfahrung, welche die Anweisungen und verfügbaren Mittel ausdehnte, sowie die innere Haltung von Bedenken zu Überzeugung änderte, wenn auch nur für eine kurze Zeit. In ihrem "Flug" erreichten die Kinder eine linguistische und physikalische "Flügelspanne", während Interpretationen sich erweiterten, unter Einbezug von erörterten und ausgedehnten Diskussionen, welche persönliche Erfahrung, Kunstverständnis, Stimme und Ausdruck entfalteten. Am wichtigsten jedoch ist, daß die Kinder lernten, Perspektiven zu verschieben, nicht nur um sich selbst als Charaktere oder als Schauspieler zu sehen, sondern sich selbst als Leser zu sehen.

リーディングの飛行： 教室での演劇を通して見られる指導、総合化、態度におけるシフト

この研究は、都会の学校に在籍する民族的に多様な小学3年生、4年生を追跡調査したものであり、彼らはシリーズ物を読むという日常の指導から移行して、教室での劇場を構築することによって読解用テキストを解釈し、演じるという低学力救済目的の授業を受けた。教室における演劇を対象とした多くの研究と異なり、本論では文献の内容理解より音読と理解におけるシフトに多くの焦点が当てられており、この点が演劇活動においてこれまでめったに研究されなかった側面であるという主張がなされている。児童の読みのパターンは、その被験者たちの観察、オーディオやビデオテープによる記録、作品、インタビューを通して時間をかけて分析された。本論においてリーディングは比喩的に飛行にたとえられており、いわゆる読み書きという意味でのシフトが可能となるのは多くの場合テキストに積極的に何度もアクセスし、理解したことを多様な手段を使って表現する十分な機会を与えられている生徒に限られている

ということが強調されている。こうしたシフトは少なくとも次の3つの要素によって高められ、また限定されている。それは、教師による指導のストラテジー、児童によるリーディング教材の総合化、リーディングに対する児童と教師の態度である。この研究で、子供たちは指導と手に取れる教材の幅を広げ、ほんの少しの間ではあるが疑念から信念へと態度を変えるという経験、すなわちリーディングの飛行というものを経験したのである。その飛行において子供たちは理解というものを個人の経験、芸術、声、ジェスチャーを織り込んだ交渉的かつ広範なディスカッションへと発展させ、言語的、肉体的翼を広げることができたのである。さらに重要なことは、子供たちが自分自身を登場人物や役者として見るだけでなく、視点をシフトさせることによって読み手としても見るができるようになることを学んだことである。

Le voyage de la lecture : changements de pédagogie, d'orchestration, et d'attitudes au moyen d'une classe de théâtre

CETTE ÉTUDE suit une classe urbaine, hétérogène sur le plan ethnique, d'élèves de troisième et quatrième année étiquetés comme élèves en difficulté, lors de leur passage d'une pédagogie où chacun lit chaque jour et à son tour à une pédagogie de construction d'une classe théâtre dans laquelle ils interprètent et réalisent un texte littéraire. A la différence de ce qui se passe la plupart du temps quand on étudie une pièce de théâtre en classe, je me centre davantage ici sur les changements de décodage et de compréhension que sur l'interprétation littéraire, en considérant que c'est un aspect peu étudié du travail théâtral. En procédant par observation participante, enregistrement audio et vidéo, fabrication d'objets et entretiens, j'ai analysé les structures de lecture des enfants au cours du temps. Dans cette pièce, la lecture est comparée métaphoriquement à un voyage, en soulignant que les changements de ce que signifie savoir lire-écrire sont souvent limités à ceux qui ont un accès positif et répété au texte et de nombreuses occasions d'exprimer leur com-

préhension par de multiples systèmes symboliques. Ces changements sont encouragés ou freinés par au moins trois composantes : les stratégies pédagogiques des enseignants, l'orchestration des ressources de lecture par les enfants, et les attitudes des enfants et des enseignants envers la lecture. Dans cette étude, les enfants ont fait l'expérience du voyage de la lecture—une expérience qui a élargi l'enseignement et les ressources disponibles, fait passer les attitudes du doute à la croyance, fut-ce pour un temps limité. Dans leur voyage, les enfants ont progressé du point de vue linguistique et physique au fur et à mesure que les interprétations s'étendaient pour inclure une discussion négociée et étendue prenant en compte expérience personnelle, art, voix, et geste. Le plus important est que les enfants ont appris à changer leurs représentations d'eux-mêmes non seulement en tant que personnages ou en tant qu'acteurs, mais aussi en tant que lecteurs.

In our own conversations, I talked with her about the potential of drama to engage children in both mind and body in the interpretive reading of text. This suggestion was based on research I had done in children's theatre, but neither Natasha nor I were qualified to lead the children in their drama work. Together, we enlisted the help of Bill, a high school drama teacher working on his Ph.D., who introduced the children to classroom theatre—a blend of creative drama and Readers Theatre that has much in common with regular theatre (Wolf, Edmiston, & Enciso, 1997).

In Bill's subsequent instruction, he offered the children opportunities to (a) participate in theatre games to exercise their voices and bodies as well as build concentration, and (b) collaboratively produce theatrical interpretations of selected scenes in published texts. He encouraged the children to think like actors, using the technical vocabulary and the strategies of those on the stage—marking their scripts to note body movement and intonation, arranging for a prompter if needed, and running their lines repeatedly, though they enacted the final performance with handheld scripts.

Thus, with the help of a drama teacher who introduced classroom theatre to the children under study and the commitment of a classroom teacher interested in trying out alternative methods of reading instruction, I analyzed the process of social change as the participants constructed a theatre in the classroom. This was the central question of the study: What kinds of interpretive behaviors (e.g., language, movement, stance toward stories) arise in round robin reading and how might these behaviors shift with the introduction of classroom theatre?

Although the answers to this question turned out to be somewhat comparative in nature (contrasting the two instructional techniques), in many ways a comparison sets up a straw man argument. Round robin reading is roundly discredited in the research literature. A brief but insightful example from Cox and Zarrillo (1993) explained, "There is one way of reading a core book that guarantees boredom and turns the experience into a chore: round robin reading.... This is a practice that no authority recommends, including those who write and promote basal readers" (p. 107). Still, round robin reading was what Natasha and her children did before Bill and I arrived.

Our introduction of classroom theatre was an intervention, purposefully constructed to see if we could move a group of relatively dispirited, struggling readers into engagement with literature. While it is widely acknowledged that a central purpose of school is to connect children with literary text, how to do it remains a question of debate (Beach & Hynds, 1991; Chall, Jacobs,

& Baldwin, 1990). This research was designed to encourage dramatic interpretation of text so that the children could learn to negotiate among texts, their own ideas, and other players' interpretations as well.

Still, a caveat is in order before I proceed. At this point, the reader might expect an exploration of the children's enactment of text with a thorough explanation of the plays they ultimately performed. But that is not the case in this article. Elsewhere, I have carefully documented the children's classroom theatre literary interpretations and enactments (Wolf, 1993, 1994, 1995; Wolf et al., 1997), concentrating on the 10 sessions that Bill led which culminated in a final performance for schoolmates and family members. The focus was on children as actors, critics, and characters as they experienced the creative and critical features of a dramatic curriculum, learning to shift perspective from self to other through voice, physical action, and connection to other characters.

In this article, however, the children as decoders and comprehenders will be in the foreground with their roles as interpreters of text in the background. This is not to say that reading does not entail, indeed *require*, a balance between substantive, socially constructed conversations about literature (e.g., Eeds & Wells, 1989) with the ability to make "inferences important to the coherence" of text (Pearson & Fielding, 1991, p. 824) as well as the skills to independently unlock the black and white on the page (e.g., Juel, 1991). All are needed. Still, in the light of ongoing debates among reading researchers (see, e.g., Smith, 1997) as well as in the public's oft repeated calls for back to basics, I believe it is critical to assess how innovations in drama, which lend themselves well to rich interpretive work, can also influence children's abilities to decode and comprehend what they read.

If we are to make convincing arguments for alternative instructional strategies, then I believe we need to see how teachers like Natasha, who was fairly attached to a traditional round robin reading approach, and children like the 17 school-wise and turned-off kids she taught, come to rethink how they view reading.

The opening metaphor of this article is critical to my argument. Not only was the reading of *The People Could Fly* (Hamilton, 1985) an instrumental turning point in moving the children from the tepid basal stories they routinely read to the possibilities of talking about and acting out literature, it became a metaphor for the magic that is lost to children when they view reading as the enemy. Traditional instruction, particularly an instructional strategy like round robin reading, has little potential to lift children off the ground. Yet, flight is possible if children are given the opportunities to construct their own wings and experience the sensation of being able to read text fluently, with sound comprehension and rich

interpretation that arises from myriad conversations about potential meanings.

In the following section, I offer a theoretical framework for the study and outline three components that play critical roles in learning to read: (a) the teachers' instructional strategies, (b) children's orchestration of the multiple resources involved in reading, and (c) teachers' and children's attitudes toward reading. Next, I introduce the players and their scene as well as discuss data collection and analysis. In subsequent sections, I follow the development of the components for the children beginning with (a) the period prior to the introduction of classroom theatre, (b) through the period of classroom theatre, until (c) after the completion of the classroom theatre sessions. I close with a reflective discussion.

Theoretical framework and components of reading

Bringing theatre to the classroom is not a new idea. Creative dramatics have been a part of American classroom life since the 19th century when midcentury instruction emphasized expressive oral interpretation, marked not simply by memorization and repetition, but by analysis and meaning-making (Heath, 1991; Robinson, Faraone, Hittleman, & Unruh, 1990). Yet, today, although there is a strong match between current reading theorists and experts in drama, children who are labeled at risk are often limited to traditional reading instruction with an emphasis on skill and drill (Allington, 1991; Shepard, 1991). Drama is a frill, an extracurricular activity to be explored only after the basics are mastered.

Even when such labeled children spend a fair amount of their time with texts, their connections are often superficial with few opportunities for immersion, collaborative interpretation, or enactment. In the spirit of engaging children holistically in the full range of language uses, however, some educators have begun to argue for informed and sensitive uses of drama for such labeled children (e.g., Enciso & Edmiston, 1997).

Studies of classroom theatre that include a sustained view of children's growth in text understanding and their ability to negotiate plans among themselves, around potential audiences, and with actual written text are rare. Most discussions of drama center on its possibilities for enhancing an appreciation of literature as well as its emphasis on oral interpretation, but few of these very generalized claims are substantiated by research (Robertson, 1990; Sloyer, 1982).

Even rarer are studies that focus on what happens to children's decoding and comprehension when they interact with text in dramatic ways (for example, see the unpublished dissertation of Mayberry, 1975, cited in Winegarden, 1978). Typically classroom drama is noted for its ability to help children learn "about specific con-

texts and issues [such as]...understanding an event in history [and] interpreting or elaborating on a character or situation in literature" (O'Neill, 1994, p. 407), not on how children can learn to be fluent decoders of text.

The theoretical framework for this study began with an emphasis on theories of reader response (particularly Rosenblatt, 1991, who argued that readers' life experiences shape their textual understandings); theories of social constructivism (leaning heavily on the work of Bakhtin, 1981, and Vygotsky, 1978, who emphasized that meaning is socially negotiated and mediated through multiple sign systems); and finally, theories of nonverbal communication (especially the work of Stanislavski, 1961, who expressed the belief that interpretation depends not only on an analysis of the inner life of a text, but on the external physical action that accompanies the words and demonstrates meaning to others).

While these theories grounded the study as a whole, other research literature was more helpful in understanding the particular results of what happened to Natasha and her children as they began the year with round robin reading and then experienced the influence of classroom theatre.

Thus, the theoretical framework for this article emerged not as the original guiding force, but as a way of explaining (a) Natasha's instructional strategies over the course of the year, (b) the children's orchestration of available resources for reading, and (c) the influence of Natasha's and her children's attitudes on reading and academic work in general. These three components form a triangle; each component touches on the others and affects and is affected by their interrelationship. Although this section and those to follow separate out these components for organizational purposes, in reality they cannot be separated.

Teaching, learning, and attitudes all lean on and shape one another. Teachers' instructional choices effectively operationalize children's views of how to orchestrate reading processes, and these in turn bring children to form attitudes about reading. Conversely, children's attitudes flow back through their orchestration to teachers' instructional strategies, influencing teachers' attitudes about how to guide children through the reading process.

Instructional strategies

Textbooks designed for teachers and theoretical articles on reading have changed in recent years with the revolution in cognitive psychology and the influence of social constructivists. Educators currently see reading as active, socially negotiated, strategic, and based on multiple knowledge sources. They describe instruction that promotes this view of reading in promising prose, while

more traditional techniques are portrayed in less flattering description (e.g., Raphael & Hiebert, 1996).

While criticism of skill and drill instruction is appropriate, what can't be forgotten is that teachers today are often the victims of past research. While research is rapidly highlighting new discoveries, teachers are left with the artifacts of less current understandings—textbooks, workbooks, and standardized tests—which are a part of their professional socialization. Instructional strategies that may seem naive or misguided were often touted in the past and resulted in the kinds of packaged programs that are so highly lamented though still used today.

One result of packaged programs, emphasizing skill, drill, and fill-in-the-blank, and their partner in standardized testing has been the emergence of a particular register known as teacher talk (Heath, 1978). When this talk centers on reading and comprehension of text, children are often asked to answer direct questions that are then evaluated according to a known answer already held in the mind of the adult. This Initiation-Reply-Evaluation pattern (Cazden, 1988) is common to reading groups in the elementary grades; the children's answers are evaluated according to the match with the answer in the teacher's manual.

In the later grades the pattern continues, aligning adolescents' answers with the accepted interpretations found in assorted guides to literature. The singularity and uniformity of possibility are often in direct contrast with current understandings of and suggestions for the teaching of reading, particularly low-level questions that focus on memory. Still, depending on its purposes, the pattern can be useful in providing information and guiding children toward socially acceptable classroom practices (Wells, 1993).

Roehler and Duffy (1991), however, advocated more effective teacher actions when giving information: "*Explanations* are explicit teacher statements about what is being learned..., why and when it will be used..., and how it is used [while] *modeling* is what teachers do to show students how to do a curricular task" (pp. 867–868, emphasis in the original). The modeling of tasks and the talk surrounding demonstrations lead students to understand and act on the cognitive and social processes involved in the construction of learning.

Teachers mediate student learning by asking higher level questions that concentrate on the students' constructions of meaning—the why and what if as opposed to the what and where (Wolf, Mieras, & Carey, 1996). They also gradually release the responsibility (Pearson & Fielding, 1991) of question-asking to their students, encouraging them to construct queries based on their own interests and concerns (Commeyras & Sumner, 1995).

Orchestration of resources

Explicit explanation, modeling, high-level questions, and release of responsibility lead us to a second component of reading—the student's orchestration of multiple resources. As students learn to read they call on various resources: (a) book handling knowledge (Clay, 1991), (b) understanding of text structure (Stein & Glenn, 1979) and grammatical structure (Bussis, Chittenden, Amarel, & Klausner, 1985), (c) word recognition and decoding (Ehri, 1991), and (d) content background knowledge (Beach & Hynds, 1991).

Although Bussis et al. (1985) outlined slightly different resources, their definition of reading is "the act of orchestrating diverse knowledge in order to construct meaning from text while maintaining reasonable fluency and...accountability to the information contained in writing" (p. 71). They emphasized the balance of these resources and suggested that proficiency in reading depends on control of the orchestration process as well as momentum:

Children's ability to read words accurately and fluently...often improved within a given reading performance, as they gained familiarity with the text and were better able to orchestrate multiple cues from story line, grammar, vocabulary, and rhythm of the writing... Some children struck a rough balance between attention to momentum and word accuracy from the beginning of learning, and they maintained that balance as they became more proficient. Other children started by investing most of their energy in accurate word identification. Their progress toward proficiency was marked by an increasing concern for momentum in reading. (pp. 144–145)

Thus, for Bussis and her colleagues, the orchestration process is the balance of *knowledge*, *accountability* (word accuracy), and *anticipation* (momentum/fluency)—a tripartite model that helps us understand what happens as children orchestrate individual cognitive resources to read text aloud. However, the primary data were recordings of individual children reading to an adult. The analytic focus was on the child/adult interaction, as well as the child's story investment, self-monitoring, problem solving, and verbal expression. The present study strengthens the model by adding social negotiation between peers and nonverbal interpretation to the orchestration. Reading is not solely dependent on what happens in the head, but on the interaction of people as they discuss possibilities and express their interpretations through both verbal and nonverbal means.

Attitudes toward reading

A third component of reading vital to this study stresses children's attitudes toward reading, which are directly connected to the instruction children receive and

their mastery of orchestration processes. These in turn flow back into the teachers' attitudes, which are formed not only by their professional socialization but by their perceptions of the children they teach. Since the focus of schooling is on mastery, with a particular emphasis on reading, when difficulties appear, attitudes can plummet.

As Daneman (1991) explained, "People who are unskilled at reading are...severely handicapped in their ability to acquire information from written text. Nowhere is their handicap more evident than in academic settings, where reading is the major medium for acquiring knowledge and skills" (p. 512). Thus, the continual emphasis on the importance of reading can create an environment where once children start to fail they build expectations for future failure.

The idea of expectations is critical to understanding how children approach difficult tasks. Dweck and Bempechat (1983) tied expectations to children's theories of intelligence. Children with an *entity* theory "tend to view intelligence as an attribute they possess that is relatively global and stable, that can be judged as adequate or inadequate, and that is both limited and limiting" while children with an *incremental* theory "view intelligence as something they produce—something with great potential to be increased through their efforts" (p. 244). The child working from an entity theory concentrates on "looking smart," while the child who works from an incremental theory focuses on "becoming smarter" (p. 245). Thus, the child can respond to the challenge of reading with either avoidance or persistence—with either doubt or belief.

Dweck and Bempechat (1983) suggested that some teachers have an entity orientation for their students. They define children according to the labels given, and when their students are not categorized as smart, teachers still want their children to *feel smart*. Within an "entity" orientation, teachers try to protect their children from mistakes, believing that untarnished success would convince children of their intelligence. Unfortunately, this creates even more problems in the long run. As Dweck and Bempechat argue:

Yet it is precisely this regime of programmed success that has been shown to be ineffective in promoting persistence, and to foster, if anything, greater debilitation in the face of obstacles.... In such an environment, or in other environments that do not protect them, these children would be likely to interpret setbacks as failure.... It may also be the case that when these children do encounter obstacles or commit errors, teachers are apt to gloss over the errors or supply the answer in a well-meant attempt to prevent discomfort. (p. 251)

Conversely, teachers working from an incremental view guide children through difficult challenges, rather than avoid them. They interpret children's understandings in terms of potentialities and create places to highlight children's expertise in lieu of their limitations. Indeed, their efforts are not focused on helping children *feel* smart, but rather creating opportunities for children to *get* smart.

Method

In the following sections, I provide a description of study participants and classroom setting as well as the methods of data collection and analysis.

Participants and setting

The names of the children, the teacher, the theatre director, and the school are pseudonyms. The site for this study was a classroom of third and fourth graders in an ethnically diverse urban setting. Their school records and classroom behaviors revealed that most children had few opportunities to engage in analytical text interpretation through either class discussion or performance. Throughout their primary school experiences many had been pulled out and tracked into school-labeled remedial classrooms that placed a strong emphasis on basic skills. However, their teacher, Natasha, whose elementary teacher training included an emphasis on work with special children, was eager to see the interpretive processes of her students broadened.

Natasha's classroom was somewhat unusual because of federal requirements for Resource Specialist Program (RSP) designated children. As a certified RSP teacher, Natasha was expected to follow federal guidelines for children who had tested significantly below grade level in two or more content areas. Although her school's restructuring was designed to provide heterogeneous ability classrooms, Natasha had an above average number of special program children. Of the 17 children in her class, 11 had been retained at some point in their primary school career, 7 qualified for Chapter 1 help, 6 had confidential files located at the district guidance center, and 4 were fully qualified for RSP programs, although an additional 4 had been tested for RSP status at some time in their school careers.

The children's profiles with information on ethnicity, predominant home language, and parents present at home, as well as special programs and retention information appear in Table 1.

The class profile provided is only the barest outline of the children, but the facts here are representative of the information found in the students' permanent school records, which also include positive teacher comments of encouragement and insight as well as worries about

Table 1 Class profile

Name	Ethnic affiliation	Language of the home	Parents at home	Special programs	Year retained
Tomás	Latino	English	Mom	—	K
Stella	Caucasian	English	Both	—	2
Bart	Caucasian	English	Both	RSP	1
Jewel	African American	English	Both	Ch1	K
Henry	Caucasian	English	Both	Ch1, RSP	—
Catalina	Latina	Spanish	Mom	ESL, SP, LD	1
Elena	Latina/Filipina	English	Both	TI	1
Renu	Indian	Hindi/English	Mom	Ch1	—
Bobby	Caucasian	English	Both	CGF, Ch1, RSP	1
Saúl	Latino	Spanish/English	Mom	ESL, Ch1	—
Manuel	Latino	Spanish/English	Both	CGF, ESL, SP, LEP	—
Greg	Caucasian	English	Both	CGF, RSP	—
Mickey	Caucasian	English	Both	CGF, Ch1, TI, RSP	K
Tyrone	Filipino	Tagalog/English	Mom	RSP, ESL	1
Dan	Caucasian	English	Mom	CGF	—
Ravi	Indian	Hindi/English	Both	ESL, CGF, RSP, SP, Ch1	K
Maia	African American	English/Spanish	Mom	RSP	2

Note. ESL = English as a second language; LEP = limited English proficient; SP = speech & language; LD = learning disability; CGF = confidential guidance folder; Ch1 = Chapter 1; TI = Title I; RSP = resource specialist program

continued absenteeism, social problems, and academic difficulties.

My own relationship with the school began in 1986 in connection with a university research and teacher training project. During this time I worked with both the teachers and the principal, providing instruction in reading techniques and following selected teachers' translations of the strategies into classroom practice. After leaving the project in 1989, I maintained my connections with the school and was invited to conduct several workshops for teachers on children's literature, writing instruction, and multicultural education. The work from 1986 through 1989 was unrelated to the present study. However, in a workshop I conducted during the 1989/90 school year, I met Natasha for the first time.

In a discussion of the capacity of literature to help children reflect on their own world, Natasha told a story of her own classroom's experience with literature. She explained that many of the children in her class were foster children and were often shuffled around from home to home. Some of them had been in four and five foster homes by the time they reached her class. She said that the children were reticent to talk about their experiences until she read them *The Pinballs* (Byars, 1977), the story of neglected children placed in a foster home. One child in the story describes their state as being "just like pinballs. Somebody put in a dime and punched a button and out we come, ready or not, and settled in the same groove" (p. 29).

Natasha spoke passionately of her children's resonance with the story in the discussion that followed. She was convinced that opening up literary worlds for children who had been labeled as nonreaders was critical to their school experience. But she also stated that she didn't know how to make the connection between children and books on a daily basis—she characterized herself as also being stuck in a groove, between what she wanted to accomplish and what she felt were the constraints of having so many struggling readers. When I talked with her about my work in children's theatre, she became intrigued with its potential for drawing children into literature.

In the beginning of the following year Natasha and I decided to introduce classroom theatre to her new class. She was especially pleased with the match between the drama possibilities I described and her particular group of children. She explained that her children were already creating their own plays, which they performed for the class, but their plays never centered on literature. Instead, the children performed improvisations on horror movies and rock songs (see Wolf, 1994). While she glowingly described their energetic performances, she admitted that the children had a tendency to "get a little wild" and worried about the subject matter that routinely included scenes of death and carnage.

Thus, she was eager to work with the theatre director and me, and her only stipulation was that there be a culminating performance by the children for the school in order to "give something back to the community" (9/28/90; all dated quotes are from transcripts of audio-

taped conversations and classroom interactions). Throughout the study, she was quite open to my presence in the classroom. She wrote a letter of support to convince parents to let their children participate in the project, rearranged the class schedule on days when I needed to interview children, and sacrificed lunch hours to plan upcoming classroom theatre sessions and answer my questions. She was equally supportive of the theatre director, granting him the authority to lead the class and encouraging the children to take advantage of his expertise and enthusiasm.

Bill, the theatre director who led the 10 classroom theatre sessions, was an actor and had been a high school drama teacher for 22 years. During the study, he began each classroom theatre session with a vocal and physical warm-up, followed by story analysis and script writing, performance, and evaluation. Following Natasha's advice, Bill began with excerpts from the basal reader, using stories that the children had already read in class. Each week he came with a prepared excerpt from the textbook—a script that the children could follow.

But Bill quickly found ways for the children to rewrite the scripts, either by changing the gender of the characters, adding creative episodes, or writing new endings for the script. From this supportive beginning, he placed increasing emphasis on the children's decision-making roles, ultimately inviting them to select their own texts and prepare their own scripts.

My own role as a participant observer was also critical to the study, though the weight on participation and observation shifted depending on the day's events. During the classroom theatre sessions I was more of a participant. Though I was a former classroom teacher as well as a researcher who had studied drama, my understandings were no match to Bill's expertise so my participation was best characterized by following Bill's lead in his classroom theatre direction and the children in their imaginative ideas for interpretation. I volunteered my opinions and told stories that stemmed from my own experience, but I was still a learner with numerous questions and comments on the life of the classroom.

On the other hand, my role as an observer was strongest during Natasha's reading instruction. Throughout the entire year, when Natasha led the class in reading I sat at one of the desks with the children and observed, monitoring my audio equipment and taking field notes. Though the 10 classroom theatre sessions were brief in the context of an entire school year, they were quite influential. Thus, I wanted to observe both the consistencies and changes in Natasha's instruction and the children's responses as they learned more and more about classroom theatre. This role was more typical of the kind of stance that Dyson (1997) took when

she observed children, describing herself as "regularly present, unobtrusive, quiet, and too 'busy' to help children with their work, but never too busy to smile, acknowledge their presence, and say 'hi'" (p. 25).

As I watched, worked, and played in the classroom, I tried to shift perspective—to move from researcher and educator to take on the role of child, teacher, director, actor, and artist. Through the many voices I have tried to articulate here, my own voice was subdued, but not quiet. In the theatre of the classroom, I was both researcher and actor, for as Bruner (1986) explained:

Acting appears to be very much like doing ethnography, in that actors cannot just "become" characters, for if they were to forget themselves completely they could no longer act. The actor, then, must be half in and half out, a predicament characterized so well by Thoreau. Ethnographers, too, must be deeply enough involved in the culture to understand it, but uninvolved to the point where they can communicate effectively to their colleagues. Both acting and ethnography are reflexive in the attention given to the self in the en-act-ment. (p. 29)

Procedure

Data collection. I collected data for this study twice each week throughout a full academic year, integrating participant observation with audio- and videotape recording, supplemented by site documents (e.g., school records) as well as several informal interviews with all study participants. I observed and recorded the children during Natasha's regular reading instruction and the 10 classroom theatre sessions led by Bill.

In the fall I observed Natasha's reading instruction to establish an understanding of what existed in the class prior to the introduction of classroom theatre. Beginning in October I read stories to the children once a week. During these half-hour reading sessions the children, Natasha, and I briefly discussed the stories as well as ideas for possible enactment.

Bill's classroom theatre sessions began in December and extended through mid-April. He began with introductory activities in classroom theatre and culminated in a final performance of trade book texts selected, interpreted, and enacted by the children for parents and peers. During the preparations for the performance, I conducted formal interviews with all of the children regarding their interpretations of character and scene. After the performance, I also conducted formal interviews with teams of players—reviewing the performance videotape with the children and asking them to analyze their interpretive decisions. In addition, I visited the classroom to observe and to note possible carry-over or continuation activities from classroom theatre as com-

pliments to round robin reading.

Throughout my data collection, the children were less subjects than participants. They volunteered to stay in at recess to discuss classroom events, kept reflective journals of their thoughts, helped me operate the tape recorder and video camera, collected artifacts, and asked for updates on how my research was coming along. They tried to help me sort out the difficulties of getting as much data as possible:

Henry: Now, since you said...you just set the camera on a group and try to pick up stuff, and you can't always hear 'em, how 'bout if you like, set it on one person, you put the tape recorder in the same place, and you also write it down? Then you'll get it all.

Shelby: What a neat idea. I usually carry the tape recorder with me wherever I go, so that...my field notes will match what the tape recorder says. But I worry that while I'm working with one group [in classroom theatre], I'm missing what the other groups are doing. And I'm just trying to pick up as much as I can.

Bobby: It's really good to have three—like your field notes, and the camera, and the tape recorder, 'cause if the tape and the tape recorder get smashed, then you won't have that, but you still have the camera and the book.

Shelby: That's right. Um, that's why...a researcher has a tendency to try to back themselves up in every way that they can. And we're backed up not only by my field notes, the tape recorder, and the camera, but by your journal entries...[and] the small interviews that I conduct at recess sometimes, like if you remember Manuel, the day you and Bart, and...

Jewel: And me, Maia, and Bobby.

Shelby: And Jewel and Maia talked to me about classroom theater. There was a day when some of the girls stayed in. So there are so many...sources of data, that, when I put it all together, I have a pretty good picture.

Jewel: It comes into a good story.

Shelby: Ya. It comes into a story. (3/15/91)

The children were keenly interested in potential research problems and were willing to brainstorm alternative solutions with me. Their willingness to help me through interviews, journal writing, and technical assistance showed their positive attitudes not only for the classroom theatre activities, but for the research in general.

Data analysis. Jewel's comment that the research in which she was a part would eventually culminate in a "good story" aligns with what Denzin (1994) called "the art of interpretation."

In telling a story, the author attempts to weave a text that re-creates for the reader the real world that was studied. Subjects, including their actions, experiences, words, intentions, and meanings, are then anchored inside this world as the author presents experience-near, experience-distant, local, and scientific theories of it. (p. 507)

The use of the word *story*, however, does not equate research writing with fiction. Instead, the word reminds the reader that "all texts are biased productions" that can "always be told (inscribed) in different ways...[and that] the interpretive criteria that an author employs may be questioned, and the logic of the text that is assembled may be called into doubt" (p. 507).

One way to hold doubt at bay is to delineate the analytic decision rules, to show the reader how the story was constructed. This methodological middle ground is an attempt to answer Schwandt's (1994) "deceptively simple" question: "What is an adequate warrant for a subjectively mediated account of intersubjective meaning?" (p. 130). Thus, this section provides the warrant for the presentation of this story.

My analysis began with a summarization of classroom field notes, immersion in audio- and videotaped data, and preliminary identification of potential patterns, followed by selective transcription of the audiotapes. A key concept in data analysis, and certainly in my own decision rules, is selectivity. No researcher, no matter how open, enters the field without some theoretical and analytical frames for interpretation. In the case of field notes alone, selectivity is often equated with bias, and the researcher must beware of the "problem of premature typification" (Erickson, 1986, p. 144).

Making decisions too quickly on what counts as data and where it fits in the overall pattern can often result in a narrow or distorted vision of the field. The use of machine recording, however, helps to counteract premature selectivity, allowing the researcher to review recorded events again and again, and explore events in depth (especially when trying to match linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic communicative elements).

Selectivity is an ongoing process. When the researcher accumulates extended and repetitive reams of field notes and reels of tape, Heath (1989) suggested selective transcription—making careful, grounded decisions on what and how much to transcribe. This approach makes sense with the additional intensity of microanalysis. The research literature is rich with extensive analyses of short splices of life (e.g., Sacks's 1974 analysis of a joke and McDermott, Gospodinoff, & Aron's 1978 dissection of 11 minutes of a reading group, highlighted by a "fine grained analysis of one three-second

strip of behavior" [p. 246] of the students' nonverbal positionings).

In this study, I began with quite lengthy transcriptions: Out of a 90-minute audiotape I would transcribe at least 80 minutes (eliminating such things as announcements over the public address system, discussions of after school activities, and transitions between activities), which would amount to an average of 45 pages of transcript. As the study progressed, however, I became more selective: Out of a 90-minute audiotape, my written transcriptions averaged 20 pages. With 75 hours of audiotape at the end of the study, I wrote and received small grants to support the assistance of two graduate students in linguistics to aid me with the transcriptions.

Before turning the tapes over to my assistants, however, they had to be carefully prepared. I reviewed each tape once again, using the original summarizations of the specific taped activity, adding further synopses of conversations that I chose not to transcribe as well as providing additional contextual clues from my field notes. Then I noted each request for transcription with the tape counter number and opening and closing remark. For example, a typical request was "Please transcribe from 217 'We need a gold tooth, fox suit...' to 243 'It's time, so we have to stop.'" Long sections of requested transcriptions included specific advice on what to listen for and note:

Please transcribe from 355 "Who wants to be the narrator to start this story? Renu, since you..." through Side A (you don't have to transcribe Stella's whispered reading but please note that it is going on) on to Side B (reset counter to 000) up to 150 "Saúl, Henry, and Greg you need to be back in your seats, please." (There is a section in the beginning of Side B of Stella's whispered reading in which she is trying on different intonations. Transcribe that and try to indicate the tone and the words emphasized.)

After my assistants completed a tape transcription, I listened to each tape again to check for accuracy and to fill in the names of the children whose voices I well recognized but were difficult for my assistants to identify.

Through an ongoing review of my field notes as well as repeated audio- and videotape immersion in the data, I began to sort out analytic categories. With my initial focus on the classroom theatre sessions themselves, my analysis centered on children's personal and collaborative problem solving in text interpretation, their abilities to shift perspective into that of actor and character, as well as their expression of interpretation through nonverbal means.

An analysis of the children's language proved critical, focusing not just on the amount but on the nature of the children's talk. Did their talk display connections be-

tween life and text? Did they ask, not just answer, questions? Did their intonation change to capture the meaning of the subtext? Dramatization of text interpretation is often revealed in language that is heavily embedded in hypotheticals, replete with pronoun shifts that show the ability to adopt the perspective of others, and marked by complex questions between players.

Of equal importance was the analysis of the children's movement and affective expression. In what ways did movement express an understanding of text? Dramatization involves physical action that can be both expansive and subtle and may be found in gesture, facial expression, and use of props.

Still, the categories above could not adequately cover what happened when my lens shifted from Bill and the classroom theatre sessions to their influence over Natasha and her children's daily reading events, especially those focused on comprehension and decoding. In his discussion of Clifford Geertz's ideas, Schwandt (1994) explained, "Geertz understands theory (interpretation) to be always grounded and local, not speculative and abstract. He explains that 'theoretical formulations hover so low over the interpretations they govern that they don't make much sense or hold much interest apart from them'" (Geertz cited in Schwandt, 1994, p. 123).

Thus, I began to look at the following categories of analysis: (a) features of language and action that marked *instructional strategies* (e.g., teacher talk, text selection, and specific strategies); (b) features that marked the *orchestration of resources* (e.g., reading to turn pages versus reading for meaning, the emphasis on expression and movement, as well as teacher's wait time and its impact on momentum); and (c) the features that marked *attitudes about reading* (e.g., entity and incremental attitudes on the part of children, teachers, and parents as well as the children's perceptions of round robin reading and classroom theatre). The Appendix summarizes these categories with illustrative examples.

Erickson (1986) explained that as researchers scan their data, they string together patterns of evidence, connecting field note comments to site documents to audiotape transcripts as well as to the research literature that can help provide an explanation of the patterns themselves. For example, early in the study the children made it clear that their attitudes about reading were poor. Several talked with me openly about their dislike of reading, and they made disparaging comments and illustrations about reading in their journals. Natasha, too, talked with me about the children's low self-esteem in reading and explained that part of her instructional technique was to protect her children from difficult reading tasks.

While I had strong evidence of these patterns in my field notes, transcripts, artifacts of children's writing, and videotapes of Natasha teaching, I needed a stronger theoretical explanation of what was occurring. Because Natasha was not following the theoretical models offered by reader response researchers, I needed to turn to other sources.

I found much help in the work of Dweck and Bempechat (1983) and their theories of intelligence. Without the influence of their work, I might have dismissed Natasha's round robin instruction as misguided at best and shocking at worst. By looking at the evidence through the lens of what Dweck and Bempechat described as an incremental model of children's intelligence, I was able to see things more clearly from Natasha's point of view. While I didn't agree with all of her choices, particularly in the beginning of the year, I was able to come to a less biased description of her actions and motivations. In addition, this shift in theoretical support allowed me to more carefully search my data for subtle changes over time—in Natasha's task and talk structures (Hiebert & Fisher, 1991) as well as in the children's responses to such shifts.

The final phase in analysis is the interpretive written description, what Erickson (1986) termed analytic narrative, general description, and interpretive commentary. Analytic narrative is an image of life, a story told, a picture taken, but it is not life itself. Here, each narrative vignette is a reflection of the life in Natasha's class. Erickson reminded us that each vignette has a didactic and rhetorical purpose—each tries to set the story in its analytical context and do so with enough persuasion to warrant the claims made. In addition, general descriptions provide evidence that the narrative vignettes told are typical examples from the total corpus of the data.

In this study, I attempted to substantiate each claim through multiple analogous examples, building an argument through examples across participants. Interpretive commentary frames each narrative vignette or transcript excerpt, providing both context for the scene to come and analysis of its meaning and fit within the entire pattern.

A part of the interpretive commentary in this particular article is the use of literature. Here, I use quotes from *The People Could Fly* (Hamilton, 1985) to create an overarching image that encapsulates both moment and mood. This choice not only demonstrates what can be done with quality trade book literature but emphasizes the images of restriction and flight in the children's initial and changing views of reading.

Richardson (1994) believed that too often research writing is boring because it is considered a "mopping up activity at the end of a research project" rather than a "*method of inquiry*, a way of finding out about yourself

and your topic" (p. 516, emphasis in the original). She advocated that researchers do more experimental writing in order to "deploy literary devices to re-create lived experience and evoke emotional responses" (p. 512).

All metaphors are designed to quicken the life of the ordinary into fresh images of understanding. It's a risk, and certainly a manipulation, but if the idea of children struggling in classrooms is left to ordinary language, they may be too easy to overlook. Thus, the image of flying that arcs from slavery to freedom in Hamilton's tale and from the plight of nonreaders to the flight of reading in this article is a conscious attempt to move the reader toward engagement with this particular story.

Results

Before classroom theatre—the prevalence of doubt

In the theatre doubt and belief are balanced in the establishment of character, in the creation of a scene, and in the interpretation of a tale. As children learn to act and act to learn, they enter the world of the imagination, but their interpretations heavily depend on real world constraints. They learn to simultaneously doubt and believe, doubting that which might make their interpretation unbelievable, and believing in their interpretation strongly enough to eradicate doubt. But when the Janus-face of doubt and belief is applied to attitudes toward reading, the balance can be lost; for children with difficulties in reading, the weight often pulls attitudes toward self-doubt.

At the onset of the study I asked Natasha if I could read the children a story once a week. Our purposes were threefold: (a) to introduce the children to various multicultural trade books, (b) to model reading with dramatic expression, and (c) to provide opportunities for literary discussion. The first book I read to the class was Hamilton's (1985) collection of African American folk tales, *The People Could Fly*, and I read the title story from which the opening quote of this article is taken. Before beginning, I asked the children about their conceptions of freedom and slavery:

- Shelby: I want to ask you what the word *freedom* means.
 Jewel: It means that you can do what you want.
 Stella: That you could buy anything you want.
 Dan: Peace.
 Henry: It means you can go places without having to give up your seat in the bus.
 Shelby: You bet. Now let's take the idea that Henry's got about giving up seats on the bus and let's flip things around. What does slavery mean?
 Bobby: It means like you have to break rocks.

- Stella: You get whipped and have to do all the work. You can't play.
- Jewel: It means you have to do what somebody else tell you to do. You can't do the thing that you want to do.
- Shelby: Okay, now before you told me that freedom meant that you could do what you wanted to do and now you're telling me that slavery means you can't do what you want to do. Are they kind of like opposites?
- Chorus: YA!
- Shelby: Uh-huh. Greg, you have a comment?
- Greg: You have to do what your mom and dad says?
- Shelby: Oh, sure, that's [laughs] a slavery of some kind.... Ya, Dan?
- Dan: Listen to your teacher and elders.
- Shelby: Is that slavery do you think? A little bit?
- Stella: No. A lot!
- Shelby: A lot?! [Natasha and I both laugh]
- Chorus: Ya. A LOT! (10/12/90)

In some ways, many of the children's perceptions of slavery matched their perceptions of school. School is where children listen, where they cannot do what they want to do, where play is rare, and adults assume dominant positions. Although their analogy is an exaggeration—indeed, Natasha and I both laughed, albeit somewhat uncomfortably—subtle truth lay hidden in the children's hyperbole, and they were adamant in their vociferous restatement of opinion.

But what are the factors that encourage an analogy of schooling to slavery? What are the constraints that form the image? For most of the children in Natasha's classroom three factors emerged as major constraints: (a) general boredom with the instructional strategies in reading, (b) hesitancy about their abilities to orchestrate reading resources, and (c) defensive attitudes about their role as readers.

Safety as an instructional strategy. At the beginning of the year, Natasha led her children in round robin reading (you read a page, I'll read a page instruction). She did not separate her class of 17 children into ability groups but provided whole-class instruction—while one child read, the 16 other children followed along in their readers or distracted themselves with other activities. Natasha explained that round robin reading encouraged "solidarity rather than segregation." As a group the children designated for her class had been given every label the school system had (e.g., ESL, RSP), and their school records emphasized both academic and emotional problems. Ordinarily these were the children that were pulled out for reading instruction but, with the restructuring of

Bayside School, pull-out classes were eliminated, and Natasha, a teacher with an RSP credential and experience in working with emotionally disturbed children, was ostensibly given a regular, heterogeneous class.

Still, the class mix became less heterogeneous when the dual realities of federal regulations and teacher expectations came together to form Natasha's class list. Federal requirements for RSP students include specialized instruction by an RSP-credentialed teacher—a resource teacher specially trained to "work with an individual or with small groups of students who have learning or behavior problems" (Shafritz, Koeppe, & Soper, 1988, p. 398).

Thus RSP-designated children in third and fourth grade automatically went to Natasha. The rest of her class was formed from teacher nominations, and, as teachers came together to form class lists for the following year, Natasha often got the children who were considered behavior problems. Though she fought hard for a more heterogeneous class, a schoolwide expectation for the low level of her children combined with high confidence in Natasha's ability to handle problem children ensured homogeneity instead. Of the fourth graders placed in her predominantly third-grade class to balance the low level, several had been retained, and two were described by Natasha as the "lowest" children in her class.

As a younger teacher in training at the university, Natasha had pictured herself running a multitude of active groups, but as she laughingly explained, "[I was] thinking that kids are always going to be great, independent workers and that they're going to be really quiet while I work with this [particular] group" (11/7/90). The school-wise, labeled, and potentially disruptive children who came to her class did not meet her idealistic criteria. Although the children were in third and fourth grade, Natasha found that the majority of her children scored on a second-grade reading level, and she ultimately decided to take them through the second-grade basal again.

So, even though for some of the kids it might be repetitious in that they even remember some of the stories... when I have them reading aloud and when I ask them comprehension questions I discover that I haven't picked an inappropriate level.... Even though [for] a couple of my fourth graders...oral reading ability is above second grade, their comprehension is not! So, I'm kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place. It's a little frustrating because I have a fear that I'm gonna not serve some of the higher functioning kids because they're able to be pushed, and yet there's a bigger fear which is that I'm gonna leave some of the kids just in the dust. Because I have a small class and because they're not real strong independent workers, at this point, I'm taking them all together in the second grade. It's not that they've been complaining, but

I can tell that for some of them they wish that they could be reading...more sophisticated things. (11/7/90)

Natasha added to the sophistication with trade books from the district's core curriculum—a grade-level-appropriate list of trade books selected by district teachers and kept in multiple-copy sets in the district office—as well as the trade book sets that accompanied her basal. She read these books to the children, occasionally inviting them to read text pages in round robin fashion.

A teacher with dramatic flair, Natasha often taught seated on a tall stool at the front of the room, using exaggerated facial expressions and gestures to elaborate her points. More often, she leapt off the stool and moved about the room, addressing the children personally, pantomiming aspects of her story, and inviting them to add opinions and relate their own experiences. Natasha's stories were a magnet for the children's attention, revealed by their focused-eye gaze and a lack of distracting activity. Children staring out the window turned to watch her; children fiddling with pencils held pencils poised in mid-air and leaned toward Natasha and her story.

The attention paid to Natasha's stories was in marked contrast, however, to time periods when the children were focused on orally reading text. The time it took a child to negotiate a page of text often ensured lack of attention from the other children. When Natasha read, with varying intonation and character voices, they listened, but when their peers read, many found other things to do. Natasha's request for children to follow in their texts was generally unheeded.

Another point of disinterest and confusion was displayed in the questions that Natasha asked—comprehension questions whose answers could only be found in the text itself. In reading a story about a boy who carves a duck (Bulla, 1979), Natasha organized the class into teams and gave points to children who could find and read the exact answers. Three examples follow.

Natasha: Who can tell me, on page 92, where did this story take place?

Bart: [Calling out] My mom was born in Tennessee!

Natasha: Sh! I'm gonna divide the room in half and if you answer correctly you will get a point. What state in the United States of America did this story take place?

Mickey: Tennessee.

Natasha: Find the sentence where the word *Tennessee* is and read me the sentence.

...

Natasha: When Jeff asked, "What are you going to make?" What did Daniel say? Look for the quotation marks.

Tomás: [Looking further up on the page] "I have to think."

Natasha: N:::::o.

Manuel: Wait and see.

Natasha: N:::::o.

Henry: [Reading the correct passage] "You'll see."

Natasha: Nice finding!

...

Natasha: On page 99, "Where are the wood carvings," asked Daniel." What did Jeff answer?

Bart: He said they were...

Natasha: No. No. No. No. No. What does the BOOK say? This is an important skill that you must learn. You must be able to find things in your book. (11/2/90)

In the search for the verbatim answer, Bart's yelled-out comment about where his mother was born (which also answered the question) was hushed, as were Bart and Manuel's later attempts to paraphrase answers. From a closer look at the teacher's manual, however, it becomes apparent that finding accurate answers is an important skill that children must learn.

Although the manual (Durr et al., *Houghton Mifflin Literary Readers*, 1989) specifically says "Have children summarize the story by asking them to retell it in their own words" (p. 65), the instructional support section (designed for less prepared children) offers specific advice for how those words will take shape, asking questions and then providing correct answers in parentheses. Of the 10 questions for this story in the instructional support section of the teacher's manual, only two begin "Do you think..." and "Why do you think..." and the parenthetical answer explains that "Answers will vary" (p. 248). While discussion is encouraged, the underlying force is on the singularity of response.

Natasha also had specific reasons for directing the children's attention narrowly on the text.

Just staying on task is an issue with some of these kids... Even if I were to read a story to them and ask them comprehension questions, they would guess. They wouldn't go back to their book, they wouldn't find it, because [pause] I don't know. Maybe they think they can't do it or it's too overwhelming. There's too many words. So I try to make games out of it. Like: "On this page there is something that says..." Anything that kind of gets their interest in a different way I find works a little better. (11/7/90)

The underlying message in Natasha's statement is a match to that of the basal questions—answers in the text are on a higher plane than personal reflection. Book knowledge is more important than personal knowledge. Although the basal consistently reiterates the importance of discussion and making predictions, the guided reading questions offered contradictory evidence: Correct answers are provided for teachers to test students' knowledge. Yet, this focus did not spread throughout Natasha's instruction, for she also often asked children to express their own opinions and tell their own stories. Her concentration on the book as the main source of knowledge in this case, and in others, was on the very real pressure of the end-of-the-year standardized tests.

Natasha often worried about the overwhelming nature of reading for her students. As she attempted to get their interest and help them stay on task, she made games of comprehension, providing a sense of fun and competition for some children as they scanned their pages for the answer and waved their hands frantically in the air. But for others it provided only frustration.

Natasha: On page 95, Team B, find the sentence that tells you when is the fair.

Bart: [Spotting the word *winter* on page 95] Winter!

Natasha: No. Saúl?

Bart: [Slamming his book shut] I give up.

Saúl: In the spring.

Natasha: Can you read the sentence? [When Saúl cannot find the sentence] I'll give you a half a point for that. [Both Saúl and Bart groan]

[To ease possible frustrations, Natasha narrowed the possibility for failure]

Natasha: This is for Catalina.

Bart: Catalina! [Scowling at Catalina] You can't do anything!

Natasha: This is a very hard question and I'm giving it to Catalina 'cause I know she can handle it. [She explained that all the people were laughing at the duck and they said, "That duck is so...." She wrote on the board: That Duck is so ____]

Catalina: Funny!

Natasha: Right! [She filled in the word *funny* in the blank]

Natasha's motivation for decreasing the risk of failure was an admirable one, and the format she used was the very sort the children would be expected to know in standardized tests, but it is unlikely that anyone, least of all Catalina, had any illusion that the question was a difficult one.

Still, preserving the illusion and taking the pressure off were key points of Natasha's reading program. She

tried to create a place where students felt successful, which often included simple, structured tasks. When introducing a story, she consistently read the story aloud to orient them. When the children read, she shadowed them closely and filled in words when they hesitated. Her children had a history of failure, and she tried to rewrite that history into a positive experience:

I try to do things that they haven't done so that they don't have an attitude about it. Because...by the third grade...if they're having problems with something, they build an emotional reaction to it that only gets stronger and stronger as the problem doesn't resolve. If I even say we're gonna do reading, I'll hear groans. And it isn't that they don't want to hear the story or that once they're reading they don't enjoy it, it's just that it's always been a problem. They don't feel good about themselves. It's a self-esteem issue. And because of that...I just basically try to be encouraging and take pressure off, not make it a high-performance kind of task, not demand that everything they do be evaluated, have a general feeling of a nonjudgmental tone and no put-downs, and make sure that when things are done there's a lot of praise and support for that. (11/7/90)

Natasha was very supportive of her students. She was proud of their accomplishments, praised them often and sincerely, and was an advocate for them both in the teacher's room and on the playground, but a large part of this pride was protection.

She knew they were labeled—many were directly called slow and low by teachers in the teacher's room and other children on the playground—and in response Natasha tried to encircle them with safe, structured activities. She did story analysis with charts and graphs. She had her children discuss the setting, characters, and feelings of stories. As she explained, "Sometimes we do it all orally. Sometimes I write things down. And sometimes I act...I do whatever I can to get them to do it" (12/13/90).

But it was Natasha who made most of the effort. Like many of her students, Natasha's instruction seemed linked to the theory of limited intelligence she held for her children. Although she scoffed at their labels, she also frequently used them to explain the difficulties individual children suffered. As a result, in her instruction she often shielded her children from challenging tasks. She carefully orchestrated assignments and questions with narrow bands for failure—yes/no answers, fill-in-the-blank questions, and either/or options. Natasha's effort translated into a relatively safe environment, but when her students left her class they were still faced with the reality of what they didn't know and what they could not do.

Wrestling through the words. The orchestration of reading resources (e.g., content knowledge, letter-sound

relationships) has been analogized to a juggler's performance, keeping all the balls in the air (Bussis et al., 1985). Yet, when a child cannot call on multiple resources or keep them in balance, the performance is less than effective. Few of Natasha's children read with comprehension or fluency. The image of a wrestler comes to mind rather than the image of a juggler with balls flying in rhythmic perfection. The children struggled with reading; they tried to pin the words to the page, but the words won.

Since most of the children's major resource was Natasha, there was even more difficulty when she was not available. Early in the year, Natasha decided to have the children read in pairs. Most partners read the story *A Thousand Pails of Water* (Roy, 1978) with numerous miscues. Dan and Tomás read together, and Dan kept asking "Where are we?" When they turned to a long page of text, Dan suggested, "How 'bout you stop at the period and I'll stop at the next period?" Tomás agreed, but they missed several periods and ended up alternating paragraphs. Their reading follows, with words in quotes indicating words read and blank lines those skipped.

Tomás	Dan	Text
"Yukio raced to the water's ____." What's that word?		"Yukio raced to the water's edge."
	"Was the tide combing in or g____ out? In, the ____ by the was the ____ fish or from ____ here with a new wave."	"Was the tide coming in or going out? In, he decided, by the way the little fingers of foam climbed higher with each
Tomás stopped Dan at this point and said, "Hey, wait a minute. That's 'new wave.'"		
"The sun was hot on Yukio's back as he stopped looking at the whale."		"The sun was hot on Yukio's back as he stood looking at the whale."
	"Yukio finded his platter wish water and they it or the ____ here."	Yukio filled his pail with water and threw it over the great head."

Natasha announced that when they were finished they could go on to the next story in the book. Tomás and Dan checked to see how many pages they still had to

go. "God, we got four more!" Tomás exclaimed. (10/19/90)

Tomás read fluently with only two difficulties. The first was a word he didn't understand, *edge*, but when he received no help, he let Dan go on with his turn. The second was a miscue of the word *stood*, which he read as *stopped*. His miscue showed evidence of letter-sound knowledge; his interpretation began with the *st* blend and ended with the letter *d*—as did the word in print. Equally important was that the word Tomás read made sense in the sentence. True, it distorted the meaning of the text, indicating that the character of Yukio stopped looking at the whale instead of continuing his gaze, but the choice that Tomás made was still a credible possibility.

Dan also showed some use of letter-sound knowledge. His miscues consistently began with the sound of the word in the text, and several ended with the matching letter (e.g., *from* for *foam*). Although Tomás tried to help Dan ("Hey, wait a minute. That's 'new wave.'"), sense making rarely appeared in Dan's reading. Nothing in the sentence "Yukio finded his platter wish water and they it or the ____ here" called Dan to stop, nor did he make use of the illustration that showed Yukio pouring water from his pail over the whale's head. He was focusing on getting through the text, not making meaning from it.

For Dan and for many of the children in his class, reading was perceived only as painful decoding, which eliminated other possibilities such as illustration or common sense. Their view of the labor of decoding was indicated when they assessed the number of pages remaining, and Tomás exclaimed, "God, we got four more!"

When Natasha guided the children's reading, she corrected miscues immediately, supplying missing words and redirecting those that were off course. Children who had trouble waited for her to fill in the blanks, while those who read more fluently took on Natasha's role as well. In the following passage, Dan attempted to read a section of *Gregory the Terrible Eater* (Sharmat, 1980) during whole-class instruction, while Stella played a secondary role of support.

Dan:	"Gregory is a [pause]"
Stella:	'terrible'
Natasha:	'terrible'
Dan:	'terrible eater,' said Mother Goat. [pause]"
Stella:	"We've"
Natasha:	"We've offered"
Dan:	"We've offered him the—the best—shoes, boxes, lunch [miscue for "magazines"]"
Natasha:	'magazines'

- Dan: 'magazines, tin cans, coats, pants. But all he wants are [pause]'
- Natasha: 'fruits'
- Stella: 'fruits'
- Dan: 'fruits, vegetables, eggs, fish, oranges [pause]'
- Stella: 'juice'
- Natasha: 'orange juice'
- Dan: 'orange juice, and [pause] other'
- Stella: 'horrible'
- Natasha: 'horrible'
- Dan: 'horrible'
- Stella: 'things'
- Dan: 'things.' (11/9/90)

Dan's reading replicated the kind of shadowing offered to struggling readers in Natasha's instruction. As he read, he only paused once to take on the challenge of the word himself. At every other pause, Natasha or Stella, who was a fairly fluent reader, supplied the word, with Stella whispering her help from across the room.

While children expected and accepted Natasha's help, they often resented that offered by their more capable peers. On the same day, Mickey read a page of text consisting of a total of 69 words. Of this amount Natasha supplied 18 words, while Greg, who sat at Mickey's table, supplied 10 before Mickey stopped him:

- Mickey: "They [pause]"
- Natasha: "piled"
- Mickey: "piled everything in fr—"
- Natasha: "in front"
- Mickey: "front of—of Gregory's sand—sandbox. When Gregory came home for supper [pause] he said,"
- Greg: "he said"
- Mickey: Be quiet, Greg! [Referring to Greg's continual coaxing.]
- Natasha: It's really annoying, Greg. He can do it. He can do it by himself.

Natasha's message placed Mickey in somewhat of a double-bind. If he believed that he could do it by himself, then he should have refused Natasha's help as well. But as the reading continued, he read only three words before Natasha supplied him with the next four.

Thus the children's orchestration of reading processes was often highly dependent on the help of their teacher. Those who read more fluently, who could self-correct their own miscues with only a brief pause, were less dependent. But for the others, reading was less an orchestration than a cacophony of many voices suggesting, nudging, and helping to move their oral reading

of the text through the pages. Just turning pages became the key feat for many in Natasha's room.

I hate reading! In light of the instructional strategies offered and the difficult orchestration of reading processes as well as their history of school failure, the majority of Natasha's students had no love for reading. "Reading's what flunked me!" many of the children told me when I asked about their relationship to books. Early in the year I asked them to write how they felt about reading in their reflective journals. Nine of the 13 children in class that day responded in the negative:

- I hate reading. Why? It is uncool (Bart, 12/13/90).
- Reading I hate, Math I hate, solsholstutys (social studies) I relly hate, Sinins (science) I hate, sort of riting. Reading gets me mixed up all the time. I only like when some one reads to me (Greg).
- I don't like to read because it is boring (Henry).
- I don't like to read because it is hard for me. Some of the stoy's are ok because my mom hellps me and so is wrihting but reading is hard (Elena).
- I am a bad reading because the way I read is not good because I can't sound it out and I keep try but it doesn't work (Ravi, accompanied by a portrait of himself crying).

In Tyrone's journal entry, two Bart Simpson-like characters face one another, their hair in spikes. Their words emerge in bubbles from tight grimaces (see Figure 1).

The children's comments reveal the laborious nature of reading—it is "hard," and no matter how they try "it doesn't work." They take on defensive tones saying how "uncool" it is to read, and how much they "hate" the entire process. Their drawings suggest just how "bad" reading can be—tears spill down their cheeks and figures glare at one another as they tersely discuss their dislike.

These children's reading attitudes followed the limited model of intelligence as they considered ways to look smart by being cool to avoid the challenge of reading. As Natasha explained to Bill in their first meeting: "They're nervous about reading. That's why they're in my class. They don't feel happy when they read.... And their behaviors reflect that" (12/13/90).

Four children, however, expressed some positive feelings about reading, stating their reading preferences and expressive choices:

- I like coomick books because they are acksin packt and groosum (action packed and gruesome) (Bobby).
- I like reading because you get to change your voice. It also hellps to understand what you are saying. It also hellps for you to talk loud so people no (know) what you are saying. there are lots of ways to read some ways are qu (quiet) or loud and ther are lots of other ways to read. can you read long ones? "I can"! (Stella).

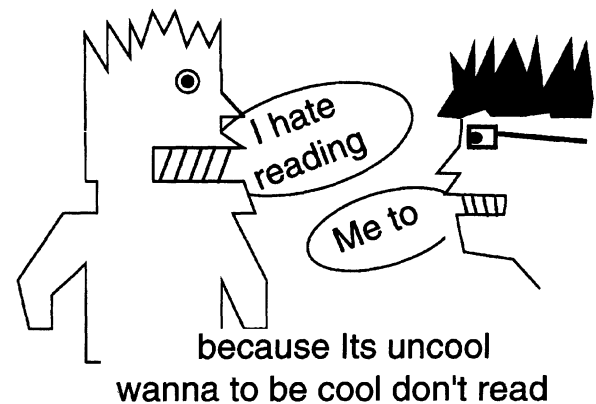
- I Like Reading I am Smarter than my cusuin. She is in 5th grade and she don't now (know) that (Renu).
- I like to read some times because some times I don't no the words and some are hard for me to read then I get inbarst (embarrassed) and then people strat to larth (start to laugh) at me. I like to antate (act) out books because its bater (better) it is fun to antat out book. I thank (think) I read good but sometimes I mas (mess) up a lot but then I just do it agnd (again) just like on my bike when I flul (fall) I have to get back up thats the same way with my reading I mas up but I do it agnd (again) but I stel like to read because you lern (learn) and in some ways it can be fun (Jewel).

For these children reading held some positive allure. It allowed access to the action-packed comics popular among the boys, and it assured ascendancy over fifth-grade relatives. For Stella, reading long words with expression was a masterful feat. However, Jewel's entry expresses dual feelings about reading. Reading is analogized to falling off a bicycle—a reader may be embarrassed and others may laugh, but you just “have to get back up.” Her analysis is akin to a more expansive theory of intelligence, and she was one of the few children who placed less emphasis on skill than effort. Both Stella and Jewel's mothers read to them often, and when I asked Jewel about her bicycle analogy she replied, “My mama told me that” (12/13/90).

Although the majority of the children expressed a general dislike of reading, they enjoyed being read to. When Natasha or I read, they sat close, asking to see certain pictures again, discussing the plot, and making comments on characters. They were eager for opportunities to enact text as well. When I finished reading *The People Could Fly* (Hamilton, 1985), I passed out short passages from the text and asked volunteers to play the parts of the cruel overseer and enslaved Toby who set his people free. Several children eagerly took turns reading the lines. Before Stella's turn began, I asked the children to judge the merits of one kind of interpretation:

- Shelby: Now, listen to me read it in just the regular way. “‘Seize the old man,’ cried the overseer. ‘I heard him say the magic words. Seize him.’” [I read with a steady beat with little intonation] Is that the way he said that?
- Stella: No.
- Shelby: Who has an idea for the way that he said it. Stella?
- Stella: “‘SEIZE the old man,’ cried the overseer. ‘I heard him say the magic wo:rd.s. SEIZE him.’”
- Shelby: Oh, did you hear what Stella did with that word *seize*?
- Chorus: [several children nodded]

Figure 1 I hate reading (Tyrone, 12/13/90)



- Natasha: Very good!
- Shelby: SEIZE him!
- Chorus: [several children giggled]
- Shelby: Who else wants to try it?
- Natasha: Gave me chills.
- Shelby: [I repeated the sentence in a monotone.] Now what was the difference between what I did and what Stella did? Ya, Jewel?
- Jewel: You said it just—just reading it. She said it like...
- Stella: Acting! (10/12/90)

Pronouncing words in a monotone was the children's characterization for *reading*, while expressive intonation choices were in the domain of *acting*. Reading was boring, hard, and uncool, while acting was fun and, above all—cool. This dichotomy was to hold for the next few months, but as the next section shows, they were soon to find out that acting was reading too.

During classroom theatre—belief in ascendancy

The young woman lifted one foot on the air. Then the other. She flew clumsily at first, with the child now held tightly in her arms. Then she felt the magic, the African mystery. Say she rose just as free as a bird. As light as a feather.

The Overseer rode after her, hollerin. Sarah flew over the fences. She flew over the woods. Tall trees could not snag her. Nor could the Overseer. She flew like an eagle now, until she was gone from sight. No one dared speak about it. Couldn't believe it. But it was, because they that was there saw that it was. (Hamilton, 1985, p. 169. Reprinted by permission.)

Altering reading from cautious and clumsy word-by-word decoding to the smooth flight of fluent interpretation is a course set hopefully by teachers and children alike. For the beginner, reading is a mysterious process that holds many secrets. In school these secrets are often revealed bit by bit, from consonant sounds, to vowels, to words, to sentences, to meaning. But meaning is rarely a secret at all. Most children, no matter what their difficulties with decoding, recognize that meaning is the ultimate goal. Their worry, and that of their teachers, is how to get there.

In this section I follow the instruction, orchestration, and attitudes of Natasha and her children as they participated in classroom theatre. This time period reflects an expansion of interpretation, as they negotiated and took on new roles, called on alternative resources in art and drama, and moved from their relatively clumsy beginnings into smoother flight.

Shifts in the instructional scene. Soon after I read the children *The People Could Fly* (Hamilton, 1985), with its brief lesson on the differences between reading in a monotone and reading with expression, Natasha began to make subtle shifts in her instruction. She introduced the idea of the narrator as storyteller and carefully explained the use of quotation marks to help students separate the talk of characters from that of the narrator. She explained that she wanted to prepare the children for Bill's arrival, and stressed that since they would not be reading an entire page, but rather shifting between characters, following in the text was critical.

The emphasis on roles, rather than pages, was accompanied by another important change in Natasha's instruction. In the beginning of the year, Natasha read stories either in sections or in their entirety, and then asked alternating children to read whole pages. Although she continued to orient the children by first reading large chunks of text, by mid-November she cast the children into roles that spread across two to three pages and then repeated the same pages with another cast of children. Rather than reject this repetition, the children seemed to welcome it. They volunteered for roles and were able to follow more easily in their texts as their familiarity with the story increased with each rereading.

Another important shift in Natasha's instruction came with a new emphasis on expression. In the early part of the year, there was no mention of the possibilities in oral interpretation. The focus was on getting the words read. In mid-November, however, she began to ask not only "What did the characters say?" but "How would the characters say it?"

Natasha: Gregory, in your case, really nice expression. Now Greg didn't read it...like he was just a regular human being. He read it with a lot of expression I noticed and that...really made it interesting to us.

Henry: Like when he did...the Doctor.

Natasha: He changed his voice.

Henry: He changed his voice into an old man.

Natasha: Okay. Now there are some words that I don't think you understand. I'm gonna call on new characters but I want to explain a couple words first.... What does it mean when somebody says [switches to disgusted tone], "That's reVOLting?" Henry?

Henry: It means that's something gro::ss.

Natasha: Gro::ss. That's revolting. That's disgusting. That's gross. So would you say it like that "That's revolting" [with even intonation] or would you say—how would you say it?

Henry: I would say "That's reVO::Lting!" [look of disgust]

Natasha: Yeah, that's disgusting. You know, when you say something disgusting, you don't say [in a soft even voice] "That's very disgusting" unless you're trying to be silly. You go [facial expression of disgust] "Eoo, that's disGU::ST—That's reVO::Lting!" (11/16/90)

In her discussion of the word *revolting*, Natasha delineated the difference between a monotone and the more vibrant expression the word called to mind. She modeled an emphasis on the second syllable—reVOLting—but then called for Henry's interpretation. Henry added an elongated vowel—reVO::Lting—which Natasha then mimicked along with his facial expression. When she called for a second reading with a new cast, she challenged them to "put in a lot of expression...but really to make it sound like a story—like you're telling some first graders who are listening to you for the first time" (11/16/90). From mid-November on, Natasha rarely reverted to whole-page reading, and her focus was increasingly on the interpretation of character through expressive intonation.

When Bill, the classroom theatre director, arrived he invited Natasha's children into the world of the theatre. He introduced them to specialized vocabulary, which he set off from the flow of his talk, focusing attention on *ation* words—*cooperation*, *interpretation*, *imagination*—and other technical terms to equip them with ways of talking about their experiences. Whether introducing vocabulary or emphasizing theatre rules, Bill continually linked the children in Natasha's class to actors in the theatre. At the end of the one performance Bill said, "You know what I appreciated most about you? You had

some problems in the middle, but you picked it up and you kept going all the way through to the end. That's a very important thing for actors to learn how to do" (2/1/91). Bill emphasized that in the theatre, the play cannot fall apart or drift off into another scene, which might happen in the day-to-day play life of children when they are called home to dinner or change the focus. The play, once chosen, must be completed.

Although actors are required to stay with the words of a script, Bill explained that there were many points at which individual or group decisions could be made to alter the shape of the piece. Bill saw actors as active agents in a decision-making process, for often notations for the script as to entrances, exits, and physical movements were not explicit. An important theatre rule was to communicate one's character by both showing and telling.

For example, in setting up an exercise in which the children were to play animals in a zoo thinking their "thoughts aloud," Bill explained, "Because when you're an actor you have to show your audience who and what you are and you also have to use your voice to tell them who and what you are" (2/1/91).

Telling the audience your name was against the rules of the zoo exercise; the children could not simply announce "I'm a bear," but instead had to show their audience their ursine qualities. Bill explained that actors do not give away the game but reveal their character through gesture, facial expression, and voice. Thus, Bill invited the children into the world of the theatre by continually casting them into the role of expert and actor.

Real actors speak with their own technical vocabulary and continually make decisions for how a play will unfold. They may use a prompter to help them through difficult parts, but first they must rely on themselves. They practice and practice and keep going even through difficulties. They show as well as tell the audience who they are and what their motivations are by moving and speaking in character.

With the onset of Bill's instruction in classroom theatre, the pendulum of Natasha's reading instruction continued to swing toward interpretation, with further emphasis on the *how* rather than the *what* of words. Bill emphasized identifying and circling words in the children's scripts that needed extra weight either with choices in voice or body. Natasha elaborated on this by emphasizing text signals that were already in place—words in italics or capital letters—explaining that these were hints for interpretive expression. Bill also placed strong emphasis on character analysis, and Natasha began to do the same. When the class read the story of "Birthdays" (adapted from Himler & Himler, 1974), Natasha provided an analysis of the Mole's character:

Natasha: [Calling Mickey by his character name] Mole? "Yes, you did."

Mickey: [Reading with no expression] "Yes, you did."

Natasha: Okay, now, are you going to say it like that, Mickey? Are you going to say, "Yes, you did." [with monotone]

Chorus: [Laughter]

Natasha: Now, don't forget you're the mole.... You are very homely. You live by yourself and really people don't come to visit you. It's your birthday and most of the time people don't even remember. This time, you got a present. Of course, it wasn't an intentional present, but you did. So you're feeling—in your heart you're really happy. Okay? Your friend Little Owl remembered your birthday. Okay? It's kind of a special event. (1/18/91)

To move Mickey away from typical classroom roles to that of the character, Natasha shifted between his real name and his character name. When she introduced the question she called him Mickey, but as she cast him further in the role, she addressed the character. Natasha's use of "you" and "your" indicated Mickey the Mole, not Mickey the boy. She gave him explicit advice by summarizing the story and supplying extratextual information regarding Mole's feelings.

Although these changes represented a substantial shift in Natasha's reading instruction, when the children finished the second-grade basal at the end of February and Natasha introduced the third-grade reader, she worried that the more difficult vocabulary and esoteric subject matter would discourage her students. The first story in the basal, "The White Stallion" (Shub, 1982), was about a frontier family and was full of new vocabulary such as *Conestoga wagons*, *stallion*, and *mare*. As she passed out the new readers she tried to anticipate her students' concerns:

Natasha: Now you guys.... This book is much harder than the blue book. This is a higher level than the blue book. So, if you have problems reading, I don't want you to feel bad. But we're going to struggle through it together, okay? And I will help you with all the words. Some of you are gonna read it no problem, and some of you are gonna find it really much harder. Don't worry about it. Let's just struggle together. Now when I'm reading you need to follow....

Ravi: What about if you go too fast?

Natasha: I will try to help you in every way. But hold your finger where we are so you can follow with me. I'll try not to read too fast. (2/27/91)

Anticipating her students' concerns, Natasha explained that reading was a "struggle" and that this particular book would be "much harder." Although she suggested that some children would have "no problem," the message was that most children would have many problems. The contrast between Natasha's caution about the struggle the children would face and her gentle reminder not to worry seem at odds with each other, yet her statement was well intentioned. The stories in this book were complex with more demanding vocabulary. To assist them, and in light of Ravi's worried question, Natasha promised that she would slow down and help them in every way.

Partly because of this new challenge, Natasha again focused on getting the words read. She did not assign roles, and she later explained that she had made this choice because the story had little dialogue. The children did not read whole pages but alternated paragraphs with Natasha, who read at a slow pace and stopped the children often to explain problematic vocabulary:

Natasha: "Conestoga wagons they were called. Gretchen and her family were in the last wagon. Mother and Father sat on the driver's seat. The children were inside with the household goods. Bedding, blankets, pots and pans, a table, chairs, and a dresser took up most of the space. There was not much room left for Trudy, John, Billy, and Gretchen. Gretchen was the youngest." Maia?

Maia: "Behind the [pause] wagon w— [pause] walked Anna, their old [long pause]"

Natasha: "Their old [pause] mare."

Maia: "Mare."

Natasha: What's a mare, you guys? Their old mare walked behind the wagon.

Greg: He's the one in uh, in charge of the cities?

Stella: In charge of the cities. [laughs]

Bobby: An old horse.

Henry: An older slave.

Natasha: It's- who- it's like a pony, but it's a horse. But what kind of a horse is a mare? If a stallion is a male horse, what's a mare?

Stella: A girl.

Natasha: A female horse.... When you live in a city, you don't know about these things.

Rather than define *mare*, Natasha set the word in context, repeating the line and letting the children reflect on possible meanings. In the illustration there was nothing following the last wagon, so the children's answers came from phonological or contextual clues. Greg thought the word was *mayor*, relying on the similarity of sounds, but Stella laughingly discounted this. Bobby thought that a

mare must be an old horse while Henry, considering the time and placement of the figure, thought it was a slave. By the time Natasha supplied the answer, several children had had the opportunity to call on a variety of knowledge sources to state their answers.

By this point of the year, Natasha had also increased her wait time before she provided the word. Maia was able to pause briefly twice before the long pause at *mare*. Even though Natasha eventually supplied the word, she first repeated the words preceding mare and then paused herself, providing Maia a chance to decode the word. Yet, this pattern of increased wait time was dependent on Natasha's perception of the word's complexity. She waited for words she felt the children knew, but was quick to supply the word if she thought they did not know it:

Bart: "Children were sent off [for] firewood [pause] for firewood and for water from the river. And— The woman [women]"

Natasha: "Prepared."

Bart: "prepared food. It was not unti- until- until?"

Natasha: Mhm.

Bart: "until the axle had br- be- been fixed and they were ready to eat that Gretchen"? Whatever. "Grr-"

Natasha: Oh, no that's right! "Gretchen." (2/27/91)

At the beginning of the year, Natasha supplied the word for any hesitation in the children's reading. Now she waited, and children were allowed to unlock some words on their own, which gave them the opportunity to self-correct (e.g., when Bart corrected "off firewood" to "for firewood"). Even when there was hesitancy, with a questioning lilt asking if the decoding was correct, Natasha supplied an affirmation of their choice, rather than simply offering the word.

In addition to allowing children to take on the challenge of their own decoding (at least of more common words), when the children were hesitant over words, Natasha began to ask them questions that called on their background knowledge or reminded them of earlier discussions:

Elena: "In the distance they could see the wild [pause] horses. The horses [pause]"

Natasha: How do horses move?

Greg: "Galloped."

Natasha: They galloped.

Elena: "galloped" [pause]

Natasha: "Swiftly."

Elena: "swiftly and, in minutes, were out of sight. 'Look at Anna,' John said. The old [pause]"

Natasha: What's a female horse called?

Elena: "mare stood- stood [pause]"

Natasha: "Rigid."

In asking about *galloped*, Natasha offered the children an opportunity to call on their knowledge of horses. Although these were city kids, almost all knew some of the vocabulary of horses, particularly within the genre of cowboy movie talk. With the word *mare*, Natasha's question called Elena to think back to an earlier class discussion of the word. Thus, she encouraged the children to use their own background knowledge or classroom conversations, rather than totally relying on the teacher as the main source for understanding.

Another change in Natasha's instruction was an increase in asking children to express their thoughts in their own words. Although she still occasionally challenged them to find specific sentences in the text, this was balanced by increasing opportunities to paraphrase as well as to offer their own opinions on what happened in a story. In addition to asking children for verbal explanations, Natasha encouraged them to express their understandings nonverbally as well:

Natasha: "Rigid." What does that mean, Elena, when a horse is standing rigid? Does it mean that it's hanging out and—[Natasha swung her body loosely, her arms floating gently through the air] What does standing rigid mean? If you were standing rigid, what would that look like? Henry, what would it look like?

Henry: Like you're—

Natasha: Stand up. Stand rigid. [Henry leapt to his feet and stood at attention, his shoulders set and his arms hanging stiffly at his side.] Very good. Rigid means stiff. So the horse, which has been following in back, when the mustangs went by, have you ever seen like—dogs will do that. When they sense other animals and they see— [She imitated a dog sensing danger, freezing in her position] they stand rigid. That means real stiff and still.

In the beginning of the year, Natasha had encouraged children to stay in their seats and explain with words. Now she not only expected but also directed them to get out of their seats and *show, not just tell*, their understandings. This advice was a strong match to the emphasis Bill often placed on the physical demonstration of meaning.

Although Natasha continued to erect a protective scaffold for the children's learning, she was beginning to offer some opportunities to make and learn from mistakes. Through increased wait time, context-related questions, opportunities to express thoughts, and nonverbal

interpretation, Natasha encouraged the children to broaden their reading resources. Although she was still ready to run ahead of the children in their reading to hand off any word they might need, during the period of classroom theatre she began to encourage the children to discover words on their own.

Expanding resources. In the last quarter of the 20th century, a dominant metaphor in education has been scaffolding (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1987; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). This metaphor comes with many problems because teachers and children have different intentions and varying ways of fulfilling these intentions. Interpretations of scaffolding often stress an imbalance in equity, with one person as expert (teacher) and another as learner (student). This relationship suggests a unidirectional flow of knowledge from expert to learner and seems to eclipse alternative possibilities (Dyson, 1997). If instead the flow of knowledge becomes multidirectional, sources outside of teacher and text, such as drawing, acting, and personal experience, are validated. When children are not solely dependent on their teacher to lead the way, they find resources in themselves and in their peers.

In Bill's classroom theatre instruction he placed great emphasis on the children's expertise. He had ideas, but most often his suggestions called for the students to get help from their peers. Through this process of distributed expertise, the children developed individual reputations based on their talents and interests.

Bobby was known as an effective director, who could see a scene in his mind's eye and lay out a coherent plan for action. Maia became a stage manager, helping others with their lines, adjusting costumes, and making suggestions for makeup. Jewel used her expertise in African American dialect to help Catalina through the grammatical constructions of her role. Greg helped others with their sets and designed the program for the final performance. And Henry's ability to take on unique accents set a tone that others admired and imitated.

The emphasis on oral expression moved into the children's reading classes, and they began to experiment with interpretation, calling on life experience to aid them. In the transcript below, several children took on roles from *The Great Hamster Hunt* (Blegvad, 1969). Bart played the narrator, Greg the father, Stella the mother, and Henry was their son, Nicolas. Manuel played the part of Nicolas's friend Tony, the proud owner of a hamster that Nicolas wished he had.

	Transcript	Text
Bart:	"Nicholas wanted a hamster. Mother said no to that."	"Nicholas wanted a hamster. Mother said no to that."

Henry: 'But TO:NY has a hamster' [in a whining tone]
 Natasha: Good.
 Bart: "Nicholas said."
 Stella: 'Oh.'

Natasha: 'O::h?' [modeling a "Now what?" attitude on the mother's part with raised eyebrow]
 Bart: "said Mother."
 Stella: 'Then go next door and look at his.'

Greg: 'I don't think you—I I don't think your mother likes little furry creatures.'
 Bart: "Father um—remarked"
 Natasha: "remarked"
 Henry: 'Well, Tony's mother doesn't either'
 Bart: "Nicholas told him."
 Henry: 'And THEY have one.' [pleading]
 Natasha: Good.
 Bart: "Mother sighed."
 Stella: [Emits a long sigh]
 Stella: 'Then—then Tony's mother is just nicer than I am [with resignation]'
 Bart: "she added."
 Stella: 'Right?'
 Natasha: Nicholas?
 Stella: [whispering lines to Henry] 'I guess so.'
 Henry: 'I guess so.'
 Bart: "said Nicholas sadly. One day Tony came to the door."
 Manuel: 'Where—[we're] Where—'
 Natasha: 'We're going'
 Manuel: 'We're going away for a week'
 Bart: "he said to Nicholas mother Nicholas— Nicholas's mother."
 Manuel: 'Do you think Nicholas would take care of my ham—hamster for me if I asked him [pause] nicely?'

'But Tony has a hamster,' Nicholas said.
 'Oh?' said Mother. 'Then go next door and look at his.'

'I don't think your mother likes little furry creatures,' Father remarked.

'Well, Tony's mother doesn't either,' Nicholas told him. 'And they have one.'

Mother sighed. 'Then Tony's mother is just nicer than I am,' she added. 'Right?'

'I guess so,' said Nicholas sadly.
 One day Tony came to the door.

'We're going away for a week,' he said to Nicholas's mother. Do you think Nicholas would take care of my hamster for me if I asked him nicely?'

Bart: "Nicholas jumped up from his chair."
 Henry: 'You don't have to ask me nicely'
 Bart: "he sh— he shouted."
 Henry: 'The answer is YES!'
 Natasha: Very good. I like your expression, Henry.
 Really nice job. (2/14/91)

Complimented for his expression, Henry adopted the wheedling tone of a child who wants something. He emphasized italicized words and those followed by exclamation marks, using his knowledge of letter style and punctuation. He also called on life experience, for when I asked him about his choice he explained, "That's what I sound like when I want stuff from my mom."

Stella, too, drew on life experience when she took on the generalized tone of a mother who is faced with the prospect of an unwanted pet. Her voice was tired and filled with resignation, her sigh long and heartfelt. The only point at which Stella read in a monotone was with the reading of her one-word first line, "Oh?" Natasha quickly modeled an alternative, that of a mother who can see what's coming, and Stella followed her lead, adding weariness to the interpretation.

As narrator, Bart had less opportunity for characterization, but he called on his knowledge of narrator talk as he decoded "remarked," a typical alternative for "said." He unlocked the word before Natasha could supply it. He also used his knowledge of grammatical structure, knowing that the words "Nicholas mother" did not make sense, and after some effort decoded the possessive. Although Stella still had a hard time suppressing the urge to supply words to peers, Natasha showed increased wait time; again, she stressed the *how* of words rather than the *what*.

In the classroom theatre sessions, the children entered the how of interpretation through negotiation and multiple symbolic systems. For example, in preparing their scripts for the final performance, Bobby and Henry worked together to link scenes of *Tikki Tikki Tembo* (Mosel, 1968) into one coherent performance. The story is about two boys who take turns falling into a local well, when their mother is busy washing her clothes at the river.

Bobby: Tikki tikki tembo.... See what I think we should do is—when Henry falls in the well we should probably do something like—a little pool of water. So when he comes out he really looks like he did fall in the well.

Henry: No. No. How 'bout...we can just have a cup of water down there and when we do it I can

- throw up a cup of water and it will squirt out and... it'll look like I fell in. Okay?
- Bobby: Okay.
- Henry: And we're gonna need, let's see.... I want to do where it says [showing the illustrations from the book while he talks] "Don't play—" We followed the mom and she was washing her things and...we'll have like a river—a table that's set up—we'll have like a river over it.
- Bobby: Like fake water.
- Henry: Ya, and she'll be washing her clothes in there and we'll have like...
- Bobby: And she tells us, "Don't PLAY BY THE WELL!"
- Henry: And then Chang falls in and then we can just cut the rest of that [the script] down and just put—"and then two days later right after"—No! [Adding an alternative line] The boys didn't go by the well for a long time and after the Chinese festival the boys went and played by the well and [reading] "Tikki tikki tembo-no sa rembo-chari bari ruchi-pip peri pembo fell in the well." (3/6/91)

In extended textual conversations, the book was a narrative prop in which children created narratives within and around the text (Heath, Branscombe, & Thomas, 1986). Henry and Bobby told stories about how the scene could be effectively portrayed, orchestrating their understandings of the text, their ability to paraphrase or cite lines, and their imaginative interpretations. The boys' talk was that of a conditional world—a world of "how 'bout"—and also a world of planning, which cast them into the future with suggestions that began "we can just" and "we'll have."

The books from which the children selected their scenes ultimately proved to be props for many activities. All the children used their books to prepare shopping lists of needed items—costumes and set design materials that they wanted to buy as well as things they could bring from home. They used their books as they designed their sets imitating the style of an African hut, creating a red brick well, or concocting a layer cake. They used their books as focal points for preparing their scripts, arguing their points of view, and creating possible scenarios.

As the time for the final performance drew near, Greg volunteered to illustrate the program. The children voted to place the words "Room 21 Proudly Presents Classroom Theatre" on the front cover and to list the books and activities on the inside. Greg flipped through the stack of books with scenes to be performed and after sketching out several possibilities, decided on a bookworm theme. He drew a bookworm reading on the cov-

er, and inside he drew an illustration for each scene and classroom theatre activity. His bookworm appeared in a variety of costumes—sporting a top hat for the character of the Wind in *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (McKissack, 1988) and clutching a large Novocain needle for the dentist in *Dr. De Soto* (Steig, 1982).

Greg's illustrations blended multiple resources—the words and illustrations in text combined with his media-related, classroom, and personal experiences. For example, the bookworm for the physical warm-up activity wore a Ninja headband, an idea Greg got from his passion for Ninja Turtles, and Greg recalled his own visits to the dentist when drawing the Novocain needle for *Dr. De Soto*. Greg's drawings also captured the plot actions of different characters such as when he drew lines to indicate the motion of Tikki tikki tembo falling into the well.

As the children talked about, drew, and played out their scenes, orchestrating multiple resources across symbolic systems, their reading became more fluent. The texts they selected were not designed to match specific reading levels and held a wide array of challenging vocabulary and grammatical constructions unique to story language or, in some cases, to particular dialects.

Catalina, for example, had to learn new vocabulary for her role in *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (McKissack, 1988), but she also had to master some features of Ebonics. Catalina spoke Spanish at home and standard English at school, and she was confused by some of the constructions. Over time and with the help of her two fellow players (both African American girls) who explained that it was a "real way of talkin' too," she mastered most of the language.

The following three transcripts show Catalina's growing fluency in the first lines of her script. The first transcript is from classroom theatre session 7, which was the first time the girls practiced their performance script. The second is a week later during session 8. The final transcript occurs a month later when the girls performed their scene for a school audience during session 10. In the transcripts, Catalina's miscues are followed by bracketed words to indicate the actual text:

Catalina: "At dusk a- [the] n— [pause]"

Maia: "neighbors"

Catalina: "neighbors from the R—"

Maia: "Ridge"

Catalina: "R—"

Jewel: "Ridge"

Catalina: "Ridge started to gather [gathering] at the school house, everybody dressed in their Sunday best." [pause] Um—"Somebody drew a big square in the middle of the floor, and the" um—"and the cakewalk [pause]"

Natasha: "jubilee"

Catalina: "jubilee began. First thing, Or—"

Maia: "Orlinda"

Catalina: What? "Orlinda came [come] come seddling
[pause] sliding [siding] up to Mirandy, asking...."
(3/8/91)

...
Catalina: "At dusk the neighbors from the [pause] Ridge
started gathering at the school house, [pause] at
the school house, everybody dressed in their
Sunday best. Somebody drew a—a big square in
the middle of the floor, and the cakewalk jubilee
began. First thing, Orlinda came [come] siding
up to Mirandy, asking...." (3/15/91)

...
Catalina: "At dusk the neighbors from the Ridge started
gathering at the school house, everybody
dressed in their Sunday best. Somebody drew
a big square in the middle of the floor, and the
cakewalk jubilee began. First thing, Orlinda
came [come] come [10-second pause] First thing,
Orlinda came [come] siding up to Mirandy, ask-
ing...." (4/19/91)

Catalina's initial reading showed the hesitancy that accompanies new vocabulary and grammatical constructions. After the children selected the text and scene, Bill prepared a typewritten script and went over the language. Several words were difficult for Catalina, but she showed a phonetic orientation as she tried to unlock the words with their beginning consonants: *n* for *neighbors* and *R* for *Ridge*. Her pause for *jubilee* was promptly filled by Natasha.

The grammatical construction of the words *come siding* were the most difficult both for the nonstandard use of *come* and the unusual word *siding*. Catalina tried to replace the construction with standard English and phonetically attacked the second word in two near-accurate attempts; her second attempt not only was a closer phonetic match but made grammatical sense in the context.

A week later, Catalina practiced the script twice with her group before the girls performed for their class. This reading was much smoother. She had no trouble with the vocabulary and read with only a few brief pauses, stopping once to repeat the phrase "at the schoolhouse," seeming to reorient herself. Her miscue on *come* matched her earlier hesitancy with the grammar.

A month later, the girls performed their scene for the school (a time lapse due to spring break and conflicts in Bill's schedule). During the intervening time they had one formal classroom theatre dress rehearsal (Session 9) and one informal rehearsal with Natasha and me. Over

spring break, the children took home their scripts, and Catalina said she had practiced. She was nervous for her performance and clutched my hand for assurance before her cue, but when the time came she read her text with assurance until she came to the word *come*. Here she made a miscue, self-corrected, and then paused for a full 10 seconds looking scared, before reading the line again with the miscue. Yet, even with the pressure of the large audience, Catalina read more fluently than in the past. In reading her lines the first time, Catalina took a total of 50 seconds, the second reading took 35 seconds, and the final reading, even with its lengthy 10-second pause, took a total of 25 seconds. Her final reading was not rushed but moved at a smooth pace.

Catalina's effort is only one of the many examples of the children's improvement in reading over time. Beginning readers are increasingly concerned with momentum, and when they discover familiar phrases in text they speed up. Even in her first reading, filled with many uncertainties, Catalina distinctly increased her pace as she read the phrases "dressed in their Sunday best" and "in the middle of the floor." Her final reading, notwithstanding the glitch caused by a grammatical conflict, was marked by accuracy and appropriate momentum.

While it may seem obvious that children's fluency would increase with practice, there was little opportunity for the children to immerse themselves in a story prior to classroom theatre. The emphasis was on turning pages and moving to the next story. Practice was seen as reading many of the same words in different contexts and often translated into skill-and-drill activities. Yet, in classroom theatre, the children in Natasha's class were enthusiastic about their practice. As they geared up for the final performance, several children met after school hours to practice in their play groups, and others ran their lines with their parents.

During the period of classroom theatre, text orchestration took on new meaning for the children in Natasha's classroom, for they were less dependent on an adult scaffold than on an integration of multiple and often individual resources. For example, Maia's and Jewel's sound knowledge of Ebonics allowed them to demonstrate both grammar and accent to help Catalina through her lines. The children's text-based discussions on creating scenes, designing sets, and selecting costumes centered their talk on text interpretation. Opportunities to draw, design, and enact texts allowed their interpretations to benefit from multiple symbolic systems, and their reading moved beyond rather clumsy beginnings. Through the interplay of talk, personal experience, drawing, and acting, they gained linguistic and physical wingspread, ultimately moving into smoother flight.

I feel fine about reading. During the months of the first few classroom theatre sessions the children held to the original dichotomy that separated reading and acting. Although they consistently read stories from their basal text in roles during this period, they felt that acting did not begin until they were allowed out of their seats. One story, *Say Hello, Vanessa* (Sharmat, 1979), particularly intrigued them, and several children asked Natasha's permission to perform it for the class, which she readily granted. When I asked them how they constructed their performance, they explained:

- Jewel: We just read it.
- Maia: Well, we read out the lines that we were supposed to do and then we acted them out.
- Shelby: Now, what's the difference to you guys between reading the lines out loud and acting them out?
- Bart: Acting is funner.
- Maia: YA!
- Shelby: It's funner. How come?
- Jewel: Better than re:ading.... 'Cause reading is boring. You just go "La la la la la" [humming in a monotone, scanning an imaginary page with her eyes]
- Shelby: La la la la la. [laughs] Do you agree with her, Bart? [He nods] How come?
- Bart: I flunked because of reading, that's why.
- Shelby: O:::h. [General laughter from the kids]
- Maia: Ya, that's why he's back in third grade.
- Bart: Reading is a devil worship.
- Shelby: Is a devil worship? [laughs] You're kidding!
- Bart: It's Satan.
- Maia: I flunked too.
- Bart: It's Satan.
- Shelby: Reading is Satan. But acting is okay?
- Chorus: Ya!
- Maia: It's fun.
- Jewel: I know. It's fun and you get to move ARO::UND.
- Bart: I know! [said in affirmation of Jewel's comment]
- Jewel: And talk. TALK!
- Bart: And you can be...different. You see, like I'm Craig Badger—[the character he plays] anyway, I can act like him. I don't have to act like my own self.
- Shelby: Oh. Well, what does that mean when you act like someone different?
- Bart: It's funner. Like you get to learn how THEY act. (1/31/91)

Reading was "boring" typified by Jewel's monotone hum, while acting offered opportunities to have fun, to

"move ARO::UND" and to "TALK." In Bart's view Satan symbolized reading and "flunked" him, while acting released him to be somebody other than himself.

Over time most children came to realize that reading was an important part of acting, and as they were increasingly allowed to move and to talk, their attitudes about reading began to shift. Nowhere is the shift more obvious than in the children's reflective writing. The following excerpts were taken after their final performances for the school. Natasha asked them to write about their performance with a particular emphasis on how they felt about reading. Fourteen out of the 16 children expressed positive feelings about themselves as readers.

- I felt proud of myself in front [of] people. I liked having my mom here. My mom said good work. My reading was improving. (Stella, 4/22/91)
- I felt osum (awesome). I felt cool. Good job. I felt cool about reading. I thought it was cool. Everything. I don't hate aney thing. (Bobby)
- I felt brity (pretty) good about my mom being here because she likes to see me doing plays and stuf like that. I like to read a lot because you can lern things from books. I like the way I did my reading because I think I am a good reader. (Jewel)
- I liked dowing (doing) the play. I didn't deslike anything. (Henry)
- I feel reading is fair and I like Readers Theater...I would like to do this again. Why! Because I like to act plays. (Maia)
- I feeled like happy. (Ravi)
- I feel so good. I feel so neet. I feel cool. I lik the best was plays. (Saúl)
- I feel good doing classroom theater. I feel fine about reading. (Tyrone)

Many of the children's comments reflect a reversal from the feelings they had shared at the beginning of the year. Now they felt "proud," "fine," "cool," "neet" (neat), and "osum" (awesome). The word *boring*, so prevalent in their earlier discussions, was not mentioned. The words *bate* and *deslike* (dislike) appear only in reference to *not* hating or disliking anything.

Two of the children, however, still expressed negative feelings. Tomás wrote "I felt stopet (stupid)" in reference to being embarrassed in front of the large audience, and Bart wrote: "Very dum it's I don't like reading." Interestingly enough, these two boys had performed a scene from *Dr. De Soto* (Steig, 1982), which was the most well-received play by the student audience. Both also told me in a later interview that they wanted to do more classroom theatre.

The audience response was very confirming. They laughed and cheered, and one room sent a thank-you

booklet with multiple illustrations from favorite scenes and positive comments. On the cover of the book, their teacher wrote the words: "Thank you, Room 21. We love Classroom Theater. You are all stars!" Each child in her room sent their individual praise. For example, one child wrote, "I enjoyed seeing you ghy. you were GREAT! (this was accompanied by a drawing of the audience murmuring "Wow!" "Neat!" and "Ha. Ha.>")."

Relatives too were very supportive. Grandmothers, parents, cousins, and siblings attended the show; over two thirds of the children had a family member in the audience. They stayed after to hug and congratulate the performers. Many parents complimented Natasha and Bill. Jewel's mother told me that classroom theatre made a "big difference" in her daughter's attitude about reading. Bobby's mother said that her son was now considering a "career in the theatre."

After classroom theatre—wanting to believe against the current of doubt

There was a great outcry. The bent backs straighted up. Old and young who were called slaves and could fly joined hands...They rose on the air...Way above the plantation, way over the slavery land. Say they flew away to Free-dom.

...So they say. The Overseer told it. The one called Master said it was a lie, a trick of the light. The Driver kept his mouth shut. (Hamilton, 1985, pp. 171–172. Reprinted by permission.)

The weeks that followed the children's performance were rewarding in many ways but discouraging in others. The spotlight on success shone brightly for a few days but then began to fade. When I showed play groups the video of their performance, some fondly reminisced about their day in the limelight and asked to see their video repeated. As Greg and Bobby watched their video, Greg said, "They're laughin' [laughs]. See, they didn't stop laughin'." and Bobby suggested, "We should be going into comedy!" I asked the boys about their mothers' reactions.

Bobby: My mom really liked it. She kept on bragging on about it. And she was like "You shoulda been"—my dad's name is Bob and she was like "Bob, you shoulda been there. It was so funny. Oh, it was so good. Oh, I loved it. Oh, DA, DA, DA, DA, DA, DA"

Shelby: How did that make you feel?

Bobby: I was like "Gee whiz, Mom, it was only like a comedy act."

Greg: Do you know what my mom did?...You know the program? Well, she took it home and then

she started showing the next-door neighbors, my dad, friends in San Francisco!

Shelby: Do you think it was because of...the fact that you illustrated it?

Greg: Ya, that was the only reason why they showed it. [She called] EVERY ONE of her friends in Cedar City. She...called my grandmom! (5/5/91)

The news for many of the children was positive. They could read. Catalina's mother was "proud," Saúl's brother said he "did good," and Tomás's mother told him "Great job!"

The teacher down the hall, who taught the children science, began to call on them to read. As Catalina explained: "Last time, she didn't choose us that much. Now she chooses us a lot of times...because she didn't know we were good readers. Now that she's seen our classroom theatre—now she chooses us" (5/7/91).

Natasha gave the following explanation:

Well, I think [the teacher] was really impressed because she has a lot of these kids in the afternoon and—[pause] You know, I have a group of third graders who really don't want to do anything and so she probably carries the weight and reads to them and does everything—gives everything to them.... I think that maybe in the beginning [she] might have asked them to read things and they couldn't. I mean Bart was almost a nonreader when he came in here.... So now I think she sees that they can actually handle stuff, and it's made her expectations go up. (5/7/91)

For many children shifting the weight from the teacher to their own shoulders actually lightened their load.

A central issue for some children was respect. They had carefully constructed their performance invitation, inviting children who were their age or younger. They felt that if they messed up the younger children wouldn't know the difference, but the older children would tease them. After the performance, some children found respect in surprising quarters:

Catalina: Well, [classroom theatre] didn't change just my reading, it changed my life.

Shelby: How?

Catalina: Because, first I thought reading was a drag, and...it's like—Oh, my God, just reading. Now I think reading is more important.... When my cousin said that if he saw me on TV with the [performance] video tape, he might even, like, respect me more. My 17-year-old cousin, Roberto. I'm like, "You're crazy. You gotta respect me, I'm bigger than you."

Shelby: [laughs] But now he respects you 'cause of your reading?

Catalina: Almost everybody can respect me more.
(5/7/91)

For other children the glow of their experience faded quickly. Saúl and Mickey now “hated” their performance, and when I asked Saúl about reading he replied, “I still feel stupid.” Tyrone and Ravi told me they didn’t think classroom theatre made a difference in their reading. Tyrone said, “I read worse than before.... Because I used to read better” (5/5/91). Yet, he too had noticed the difference in the science teacher and wanted a copy of the videotape for his mom.

In her reading instruction, Natasha continued to extend her wait time before supplying the children with words. She also assigned them roles and encouraged vocal expression. When she read to the children she read with panache, changing her voice for different characters. But with the demands of the end-of-the-year activities and the rush to finish the third-grade basal, the time for extended classroom theatre projects was over. A few weeks before the end of school I assembled a small group of children to discuss their reading progress since the final performance.

Shelby: How have you been reading?

Bart: Dumbly.

Greg: We don’t like the books we read.

Maia: The reading books.

Shelby: Why don’t you like them?

Bart: They’re retarded.

Maia: The stories. They’re weird!

Shelby: Have you guys been doing any kind of classroom theatre?

Chorus: NO! (5/23/91)

The children talked about a play that they were trying to organize from a basal story, *Harald and the Giant Knight* (Carrick, 1982). Natasha gave them time to build a castle and think about a possible performance, but this had to fit into the schedule of the end-of-the-year test battery.

Bobby: We decided to take [the story] and change it around a whole lot.

Shelby: Have you written the script?

Bobby: No, we’re still thinking on the script.

Shelby: That’s real critical. Do you have time to be able to think about the script?

Bart: No. All we do is read, read, read, read until we drop and die.

Chorus: [Laughter]

Stella: We don’t want to read, read, read, read these stupid books.

Maia: But, Greg can’t take over ‘cause...it was our idea to make the castle and he was in Ms. Hoover’s testing.

Greg: Everytime we always ask [Natasha] if we can do the plays she says...

Maia: “No, go sit down. Sh!”

Greg: She says, “After the spelling test.”

Bart: “After your reading.”

Greg: “Tomorrow, tomorrow we’ll do it” and then she says, “No, we cannot do it today!”

Stella: “Maybe a week. Maybe next year.” (5/23/91)

The children’s dependency over the shift from acting to “read, read, read, read” was perhaps exaggerated, for Natasha had explained to me many times that her students often stressed the negative over the positive. They also had little sympathy for the kind of pressures a teacher might face at the end of the year. Natasha had already devoted an extensive amount of time to classroom theatre, which easily could have resulted in a need to move on with her basal program.

All the children had things to say about the differences between reading in class and classroom theatre, but when Stella spoke the others stopped and nodded in agreement.

Shelby: What do you think are the differences, if there are any, between the stories that you read in your reader and the stories that we read for classroom theatre?

Maia: The classroom theatre ones are better.

Stella: ‘Cause we’re IN ‘em.... We get to be in them and everything. We get to practice. We don’t just read one story and go on to the next and the next and the next.

Shelby: By spending more time on the stories, what do you think happens to the way you think about that story?

Stella: You get to know it more. You read it and you read it, and you start to feel like you’re in it already. (5/23/91)

Stella’s comments capture what many children had articulated throughout the year. Even though reading was part of acting, it was a different kind of reading—one that called for immersion in the text, not a glance at the surface. For Stella and the other children nodding in agreement, practice was not repetitive or boring, but allowed them to become a part of the text—to get inside.

Tomás, who a few weeks earlier had said he felt stupid in the performance, noted that in classroom theatre there were “longer things to read.... If you’re reading a book the teacher only picks you once and you don’t

read that long...[but in classroom theatre] you get to read a lot." (5/7/91)

Many of the children believed in their flight of reading and successful performance, while others began to doubt. Maybe, as the opening quote to this section indicates, it was just a trick of the light. Certainly, as they returned to their classroom reading, they all realized it was a passing phenomenon. The very important changes that continued to be a part of Natasha's instruction were too subtle for the children to notice. They only knew that if indeed they had ever taken flight, now they were back on the ground.

Discussion

The slaves who could not fly told about the people who could fly to their children. When they were free. When they sat close before the fire in the free land, they told it. They did so love firelight and Free-dom, and tellin.

They say that the children of the ones who could not fly told their children. And now, me, I have told it to you. (Hamilton, 1985, p. 172. Reprinted by permission.)

Learning to read is a remarkable event in the life of a young child. Many of the adults who surround children read with ease, and in these commercial times it is hard to imagine a child living in a world without words. Still, reading is often the great divider. Those who cannot read are made to feel less than adequate, and in U.S. classrooms children who read poorly are often labeled, pulled out, and offered piecemeal and slowed-down instruction.

The children in Natasha's classroom did not have to live with all of the injuries done to those with reading difficulties. Natasha was a bright and energetic teacher, who cared deeply for her children. But by the time they came to her classroom, their years of schooling made it clear that being called special was not necessarily good. They were well aware of their own perceived inadequacies, and, when they looked around for something to blame, they uniformly blamed reading.

Natasha's beginning-of-the-year instructional strategies were a reflection of her training with special children that emphasized careful guidance and narrow frames for talk. Her children had a history of failure, and in rewriting this history she constructed a protective scaffold that she hoped would ensure success—though its effect was often just the opposite. Natasha herself taught within an overarching scaffold of packaged programs and testing.

Caught between a rock and a hard place, each time Natasha tried to move out of traditional frames, rejecting what she called "meaningless" workbooks and phonics drill, inviting her children to tell their stories and

dramatically telling her own, she felt the constraints of a system that placed emphasis on children's mastery of language skills often highlighted in fill-in-the-blank talk.

In such an atmosphere, the orchestration of reading resources narrows. Children have little opportunity to attack a word, discuss possibilities, or enact interpretations, and their attitudes reflect the results of a reading process that is primarily teacher-dependent.

Within classroom theatre, however, resources expanded to include increased opportunities for peer discussion, resulting in an interplay of ideas and opinions as Natasha's children negotiated, argued, confirmed, or challenged one another's interpretations. The text became a prop for multiple narratives—a resource, not the sole source. In the midst of such talk, the children called on background knowledge, blending their understandings into others. They became decision-makers and experts as they interpreted the words and did not simply turn the pages.

Through increased opportunities for practice, the children not only got inside the text but improved their accuracy and momentum. Moving beyond talk, they expanded the resources available for the orchestration of reading, sketching out their ideas for sets, creatively applying makeup, and physically moving into the character and scene through gesture, eye gaze, and stance.

Before this article concludes, however, it's important to talk about some of the limitations of the study. First I need to respond to the necessary and often goading question that appears in any research: "So what?" This has a particular ring in a study that had, in many ways, the best of all worlds: a talented and hard-working teacher, a dynamic director, 17 children eager to change their school experience, and a researcher equipped with ample energy and experience to help shape the study.

The fact that Bill was a talented artist-in-residence with over 20 years of experience would make many teachers wonder how they could manage such a program on their own. The small class size alone would cause many to be skeptical. More important, the study did not address what might happen to struggling readers in different grade levels. As turned off as the children were to school, they had not completely shut the door. I wonder if adolescents with 5 to 6 more years of similar schooling would be as amenable to trying out a dramatic curriculum.

In addition, the study was supported by a small grant to purchase books as well as inexpensive set and costume materials—purchases that would ordinarily come out of a teacher's pocket if they were made at all. Thus, the positive features of the study cause questions about the resources provided, about replicability, and, even more seriously, about what happens after the major

players move on. In an interview I conducted with a focus group of children in the year following the study, Maia, Jewel, Stella, Bobby, Bart, and Max told me that they were not involved in any kind of dramatic activity. They had new teachers, but they were back to the old routine of round robin reading.

Yet, this study, though not experimental in design in the traditional sense, was akin to what Brown (1992) called a *design experiment*: “a design scientist [in education]...attempt[s] to engineer innovative educational environments and simultaneously conducts experimental study of those innovations” (p. 141). Design experiments evolve over time as the voices of community members contribute to the study’s growth. Rather than attempt to isolate or eliminate different variables, design scientists try to orchestrate and account for the multiple variables that push and pull on one another in complex ways.

In thinking about design experiments in terms of her own work, Brown noted that the positive features of reciprocal teaching have often been dismissed as *merely* the results of a Hawthorne effect, which suggests that *any* innovative experiment will bring about change. Yet, in reviewing the original Hawthorne research, she suggested that secondary sources have built an exaggerated myth around the results.

Received wisdom tells us that in an experiment conducted at the Hawthorne plant of Western Electric in the 1920s, psychologists examined the working conditions of plant workers doing repetitive tasks. The major finding quoted in secondary sources is that irrespective of what one does to improve or degrade conditions, productivity goes up.... The standard interpretation of these findings is that the mere presence of a research team will lead to enhanced performance because of the motivational effect of the attention received by the “subjects.” (p. 163)

Brown found that secondary-source claims oversimplified what was in reality a complex phenomenon in which workers’ productivity was linked to their perceptions of management’s effort to make positive change. In her research on reciprocal teaching, Brown claimed to deliberately search for a Hawthorne effect—a search for “improved cognitive productivity under the control of the learners...with a theoretical rationale for why things work” (p. 167).

In the present study, my own search for a Hawthorne effect centers on the shifts in instruction, orchestration, and attitudes as the participants constructed a classroom theatre and met together to discuss, argue, interpret, and enact written text. The events of the study were carefully and collaboratively planned and tracked, resulting in a complexity that is more of a reflection of life than what we normally perceive of as an experiment.

Although a comparison between round robin reading with classroom theatre could be likened to comparing apples and oranges, and thus bring on comments of “No wonder!”, round robin reading was not a part of the intervention. Round robin reading was what Natasha and her children *did* prior to the onset of classroom theatre.

Still, the focus here is not on the inefficacy of reading instruction already much maligned in the research literature (e.g., Cox & Zarrillo, 1997), but on how a smart teacher who was still fairly attached to such a program began to reshape her reading instruction and what happened when her children were given license to express themselves in multiple ways through the work of a long-term project.

Thus, the children’s words and work provide an insider’s view of theory into practice. Children, who were ordinarily viewed as at risk for school failure, who hated reading, and who had been held apart, achieved success, read, and came together to reach out and show their talents and display their thoughts to their community.

Through classroom theatre, the children in this study entered into an extended relationship with written text. They took on the roles of actor, character, and reader developing their initial ideas through a process of negotiation into concrete decisions for a final performance. This is how the iterative and reiterative collaborative process of accomplishing the transfer of texts into action functions in the real world, but it is not always the case in school.

The children’s plans and performances were not an artificial exercise, but a project of authentic action portrayed in a series of highly instrumental symbolic systems. By having extended opportunities to think, talk, move, draw, plan, and perform, the children in this study connected not only with the reading texts at hand but with a range of multiple texts that are a part of making meaning in the world.

Natasha and her children began the year within a narrow frame for interpretation, which opened up during the period of classroom theatre and then narrowed once again, though not to its original shape, after the final performance. Natasha made a strong commitment to classroom theatre—she shifted her schedule, wrote letters to parents, and participated in all classroom theatre activities. And after the final performance was over, when the costumes were folded and put away, the sets dismantled, and Bill had said his good-byes, the echoes of classroom theatre could still be heard in Natasha’s instruction through increased wait time, the assignment of roles, and in her encouragement of vocal as well as physical expression. In our last formal interview, Natasha commented as follows:

I think that they have much more confidence now and they're not so afraid of making mistakes. And I can't say that their reading has changed that much. I can't. Or even that their comprehension has changed, at least not in any visible way. But, I think their confidence has and I think that they're motivated to explore that realm of reading. Whereas, it wasn't open to them before. Reading was only: You open a book and you struggle with the words and you have a test, or you don't know what it's saying, or it's moving all over the page. Now, they see a story and they think, "Oh, well maybe we can act this out. Or maybe we can do this or maybe we can...." And actually even before [classroom theatre]...they were kind of a performance-oriented group. But they never wanted to take the words from the books. They just wanted to take the ideas and then make up their own.

But, now I think they'd be more open to actually exploring the words. And that's important because that's what they're going to have to do. They're going to have to take written stuff and deal with it. So if they can deal with it in a positive way like they did with this performance, I think it, hopefully, will have an impact in the long run. It has had a short-term impact. It's hard to say how it's going to carry, but—Hey! They had a good experience reading. For some of them it was their very FIRST good experience reading. So you know that's going to make a difference. It has to. (5/7/91)

While the experience of classroom theatre was an extremely positive one, it was not enough to ensure the elimination of all reading difficulties, and the reasons for this, I believe, are best explained by the fact that the intervention was substantially grounded in theories of reader response with a strong emphasis on alternative modes of expression.

This is not to discount these theories; indeed, they *account* for much of what occurred within the classroom theatre itself. But it is to say that classroom theatre did not, and perhaps could not, address all the needs of the children. These needs are well articulated by Pearson (1996).

In reading, the enabling features of instruction—phonics skills, word analysis strategies, vocabulary knowledge, and explicit comprehension strategies—have been de-emphasized in favor of reader response to literature.... The presumption, as near as I can tell, is that through meaningful encounters with the great ideas of good literature, all those skills that we used to regard as prerequisite to independence in reading will emerge and develop quite naturally, without arduous effort on the part of teachers, thus allowing students to read new texts on their own. (pp. 259–260)

Pearson went on to explain that "we have all but accepted the premise that skills, e.g., phonics, grammar, text conventions, and structural elements, are better *caught*

in the act of reading and writing genuine texts for authentic purposes than *taught* directly and explicitly by teachers" (p. 266, emphasis in the original). Yet, this cannot be the case. Reading is a complex process that calls on the orchestration of multiple skills, including a much needed mastery of phonetic and lexical information, which plays only a minor role in classroom theatre.

Thus, the design experiment of classroom theatre gave the children a feel for the flight of reading, but I worry that it did not take them far enough in the construction of their own wings. I wonder how much more effective this work would have been if, just as Bill was able to model elements of classroom theatre, I had modeled the teaching of phonics and comprehension strategies. What if my conversations with Natasha had included direct talk about how strategy instruction did not have to be skill and drill, but could arise in mini-lessons within the theatrical and literary context?

Perhaps my methodological choice of participation in classroom theatre and observation during reading instruction sent a message that classroom theatre could do it all. Still, I take heart in Natasha's characterization of the classroom theatre as many of the children's "very FIRST good experience reading." To engage children willingly and enthusiastically in strategy instruction, a teacher has to display not only the flight plan, but a feel for the exhilarating nature of the experience.

Classroom theatre did provide the children with the sense of what it means to be literate (Heath, 1991). It was an experience that commanded respect and resulted in pride, one that broadened the available resources for the orchestration of reading and changed attitudes from doubt to belief, if only for a short time. In their flight, the children achieved linguistic and physical wingspread, soaring through the world of reading and seeing its possibilities. Interpretations expanded to include negotiated and extended discussion enfolding personal experience, art, voice, and gesture as the children learned to shift perspectives, not only to see themselves as characters or as actors but to see themselves as *readers*.

It was perhaps a brief flight, but the children and their teacher saw it, and felt it, and knew that it was. And as they looked back on their experience, recalling unique events and reminiscing about their success, they talked about the freedom that reading can bring, if only for a moment in their lives, and they did so love the "telling."

REFERENCES

- ALLINGTON, R.L. (1991). Children who find learning to read difficult: School responses to diversity. In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 237–252). New York: Teachers College Press.
- BAKHTIN, M.M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

- BEACH, R., & HYND, S. (1991). Research on response to literature. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume II* (pp. 453–489). New York: Longman.
- BROWN, A.L. (1992). Design experiments: Theoretical and methodological challenges in evaluating complex interventions in classroom settings. *The Journal of Learning Sciences*, 2, 141–178.
- BRUNER, E.M. (1986). Experience and its expressions. In V.W. Turner & E.M. Bruner (Eds.), *The anthropology of experience* (pp. 3–30). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- BUSSIS, A.M., CHITTENDEN, E.A., AMAREL, M., & KLAUSNER, E. (1985). *Inquiry into meaning: An investigation of learning to read*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- CAZDEN, C. (1988). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- CHALL, J.S., JACOBS, V.A., & BALDWIN, L.E. (1990). *The reading crisis: Why poor children fall behind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- CLAY, M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- COMMEYRAS, M., & SUMNER, G. (1995). *Questions children want to discuss about literature: What teachers and students learned in a second grade classroom* (NRRC Reading Research Rep. No. 47). Athens, GA: University of Georgia and University of Maryland, National Reading Research Center.
- COX, C., & ZARRILLO, J. (1993). *Teaching reading with children's literature*. New York: Macmillan.
- DANEMAN, M. (1991). Individual differences in reading skills. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume II* (pp. 512–538). New York: Longman.
- DENZIN, N. (1994). The art and politics of interpretation. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 500–515). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- DURR, W.K., PIKULSKI, J.J., BEAN, R.M., COOPER, J.D., GLASER, N.A., GREENLAW, M.J., SCHOEPHOERSTER, H., ALSIN, M.L., AU, K., BARRERA, R.B., BRZEINSKI, J.E., BUNYAN, R.P., COMAS, J.C., ESTRADA, F.X., HILLERICH, R.L., JOHNSON, T.G., MASON, P.A., & RENZULLI, J.S. (Program authors). (1989). *Houghton Mifflin Literary Readers: Books 2 and 3*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- DWECK, C.S., & BEMPECHAT, J. (1983). Children's theories of intelligence: Consequences for learning. In S.G. Paris, G.M. Olson, & H.W. Stevenson (Eds.), *Learning and motivation in the classroom* (pp. 239–256). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- DYSON, A.H. (1997). *Writing superheroes: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- EEDS, M., & WELLS, D. (1989). Grand conversations: An exploration of meaning construction in literature study groups. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 23, 4–29.
- EHRI, L.C. (1991). Development of the ability to read words. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume II* (pp. 383–417). New York: Longman.
- ENCISO, P., & EDMISTON, B. (1997). Drama and response to literature: Reading the story, re-reading "the Truth." In N. Karolides (Ed.), *Reader response in elementary classrooms: Quest and discovery* (pp. 69–94). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- ERICKSON, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 119–161). New York: Macmillan.
- HEATH, S.B. (1978). *Teacher talk: Language in the classroom*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- HEATH, S.B. (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. *Language in Society*, 11, 49–76.
- HEATH, S.B. (1989). *Ethnography of communication course syllabus*. Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.
- HEATH, S.B. (1991). The sense of being literate: Historical and cross-cultural features. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume II* (pp. 3–25). New York: Longman.
- HEATH, S.B., & BRANSCOMBE, A. (WITH THOMAS, C.). (1986). The book as narrative prop. In B.B. Schieffelin & P. Gilmore (Eds.), *The acquisition of literacy: Ethnographic perspective* (pp. 16–34). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- HIEBERT, E.H., & FISHER, C.W. (1991). Task and talk structures that foster literacy. In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 141–156). New York: Teachers College Press.
- JUEL, C. (1991). Beginning reading. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume II* (pp. 759–788). New York: Longman.
- MCDERMOTT, R., GOSPODINOFF, K., & ARON, J. (1978). Criteria for an ethnographically adequate description of activities and their contexts. *Semiotica*, 24, 245–275.
- O'NEILL, C. (1994). Drama in education. In A.C. Purves (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of English studies and language arts* (pp. 405–409). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- PEARSON, P.D. (1996). Reclaiming the center. In M.F. Graves, P. Van Den Brock, & B.M. Taylor (Eds.), *The first R: Every child's right to read*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- PEARSON, P.D., & FIELDING, L. (1991). Comprehension instruction. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume II* (pp. 815–860). New York: Longman.
- RAPHAEL, T.E., & HIEBERT, E.H. (1996). *Creating an integrated approach to literacy instruction*. Ft. Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.
- RICHARDSON, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 516–529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- ROBERTSON, M.E. (1990). "True wizardry": *Readers theatre in the classroom*. Rozelle, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.
- ROBINSON, H.A., FARAONE, V., HITTLEMAN, D.R., & UNRUH, E. (1990). *Reading comprehension instruction 1783–1987: A review of trends and research*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- ROEHLER, L.R., & DUFFY, G.G. (1991). Teachers' instructional actions. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Volume II* (pp. 861–883). New York: Longman.
- ROGOFF, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ROSENBLATT, L. (1991). Literary theory. In J. Flood, J.M. Jensen, D. Lapp, & J.R. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (pp. 57–62). New York: Macmillan.
- SACKS, H. (1974). An analysis of the course of a joke's telling. In R. Bauman & J. Sherzer (Eds.), *Explorations in the ethnography of speaking* (pp. 337–353). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- SCHWANDT, T. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 118–137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- SHAFRITZ, J.M., KOEPPE, R.P., & SOPER, E.W. (1988). *The Facts On File dictionary of education*. New York: Facts On File.
- SHEPARD, L.A. (1991). Negative policies for dealing with diversity: When does assessment and diagnosis turn into sorting and segregation? In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 279–298). New York: Teachers College Press.
- SLOYER, S. (1982). *Readers theatre: Story dramatization in the classroom*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- SMITH, J.K. (1997). The stories educational researchers tell about themselves. *Educational Researcher*, 26, 4–11.

STANISLAVSKI, C. (1961). *Creating a role*. New York: Theatre Arts Books.

STEIN, N.L., & GLENN C.G. (1979). An analysis of story comprehension in elementary school children. In R.O. Freedle (Ed.), *New directions in discourse processing: Vol. II. Advances in discourse processes* (pp. 53–120). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

VYGOTSKY, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

VYGOTSKY, L.S. (1987). Thinking and speech. In R.W. Rieber & A.S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky, Volume 1: Problems of general psychology* (pp. 39–285). New York: Plenum Press.

WELLS, G. (1993). Reevaluating the IRF sequence: A proposal for the articulation of theories of activity and discourse for the analysis of teaching and learning in the classroom. *Linguistics and Education*, 5, 1–38.

WINEGARDEN, A. (1978). *The value of readers theatre: Claims, programs, and research* (Rep. No. CS502818). Nebraska. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 182 793)

WOLF, S.A. (1993). What's in a name? Labels and literacy in readers theatre. *The Reading Teacher*, 46, 540–545.

WOLF, S.A. (1994). Learning to act/acting to learn: Children as actors, characters, and critics in classroom theatre. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28, 7–44.

WOLF, S.A. (1995). Language in and around the dramatic curriculum. *The Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 27, 117–137.

WOLF, S.A., EDMISTON, B., & ENCISO, P. (1997). Drama worlds: Places of the heart, head, voice, and hand in dramatic interpretation. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, & S.B. Heath (Eds.), *A handbook for literacy educators: Research on teaching the communicative and visual arts* (pp. 474–487). New York: Macmillan.

WOLF, S.A., & HEATH, S.B. (1992). *The braid of literature: Children's worlds of reading*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

WOLF, S.A., MIERAS, E.L., & CAREY, A.A. (1996). What's after

"What's that?": Preservice teachers learning to ask literary questions. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 28, 459–497.

WOOD, D., BRUNER, J., & ROSS, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem-solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17, 89–100.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS CITED IN TEXT

BLEGVAD, L. (1969). *The great hamster hunt*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

BULLA, C.R. (1979). *Daniel's duck*. New York: Harper & Row.

BYARS, B. (1977). *The pinballs*. New York: Harper & Row.

CARRICK, D. (1982). *Harald and the giant knight*. Boston, MA: Clarion.

HAMILTON, V. (1985). *The people could fly: American black folktales*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

HIMLER, R., & HIMLER, A. (1974). Birthdays. In *Little Owl, keeper of the trees* (pp. 43–64). New York: Harper & Row.

MCKISSACK, P.C. (1988). *Mirandy and Brother Wind*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

MOSEL, A. (1968). *Tikki tikki tembo*. New York: Scholastic.

ROY, R. (1978). *A thousand pails of water*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

SHARMAT, M.W. (1979). *Say hello, Vanessa*. New York: Holiday House.

SHARMAT, M. (1980). *Gregory the terrible eater*. New York: Four Winds Press, Macmillan.

SHUB, E. (1982). *The white stallion*. New York: Greenwillow.

STEIG, W. (1982). *Dr. De Soto*. New York: Scholastic.

Received April 3, 1997

Final revision received August 4, 1997

Accepted September 25, 1997

APPENDIX

Analytic categories for features of language and action that marked instructional strategies, orchestration of resources, and attitudes.

Features of language and action that marked instructional strategies

1. *Teacher talk with an emphasis on comprehension*:
“On page 92, where did this story take place?”
2. *Teacher talk with an emphasis on interpretation*:
“Okay, now, are you going to say it like that, Mickey? Don't forget you're the mole.... You are very homely.”
3. *Text selection*: “Because they're not real strong independent workers...I'm taking them all together in the second grade [basal again].”
4. *Strategies that protect children*: “This is a very hard question and I'm giving it to Catalina 'cause I know she can handle it.”
5. *Strategies that encourage risk taking*: “Because when you're an actor you have to use your voice to tell [the audience] who and what you are.”
6. *Strategies that reveal scheduling realities*:
Bart: All we do is read, read, read, read until we drop and die.
Maia: But, Greg can't take over 'cause...it was our idea... and he was in Ms. Hoover's testing.
11. *Teacher's wait time*:
Bart: “prepared food. It was not unti- until- until?”
Natasha: Mhm.
Bart: “until the axle had br- be- been fixed and they were ready to eat that Gretchen?”
Whatever.
Natasha: Oh, no that's right!
12. *Momentum*: “At dusk the neighbors from the Ridge started gathering at the school house....” In three timed readings, Catalina moved from 50 to 25 seconds total for her passage.

Features of language and action that marked orchestration of resources

7. *Reading to turn pages*: Tomás and Dan checked to see how many pages they still had to go. “God, we got four more!” Tomás exclaimed.
 8. *Reading for meaning*: “And then Chang falls in, and then we can just cut the rest of that [the script] down and just put—‘and then two days later right after.’”
 9. *Emphasis on expression*: “That's revolting.... So would you say it like that—‘That's revolting’ [even intonation] or—how would you say it?...‘that's reVO::Lting!’”
 10. *Emphasis on movement*: “If you were standing rigid, what would that look like? Henry, what would it look like?...Stand up. Stand rigid.”
 13. *Children's entity orientations*: “I am a bad reading because the way I read is not good....”
 14. *Children's incremental attitudes*: “I read good but sometimes I mess up a lot but then I just do it again just like on my bike when I fall I have to get back up....”
 15. *Children's perceptions of the two kinds of reading*: “‘Cause [in classroom theatre stories] we're IN 'em. We get to practice. We don't just read one story and go on to the next and the next and the next.”
 16. *Teacher's entity orientation*: “I just basically try to be encouraging and take pressure off....”
 17. *Teacher's incremental attitudes*: “Hey, they had a good experience reading. For some of them it was their very FIRST good experience reading. So you know that's going to make a difference. It has to.”
 18. *Shift in parents' and teachers' attitudes*: “Last time, she didn't choose us that much...because she didn't know we were good readers. Now that she's seen our classroom theatre—now she chooses us.”
-