Chapter 6

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Talk in a Community of Learners

ACT THREE

The old gray rat was quick to her door
and Frog was the dandy he was before.
"Charmed," said Rat and gave his consent.
Next you'll hear how the wedding went.

FROM *FROG WENT A-COURTING: A MUSICAL PLAY IN SIX ACTS* BY DOMINIC CATALANO

Dominic Catalano provides a familiar tale that may rekindle rich memories of an oral language performance from elementary school. A brilliant cast of characters, including Frog, Miss Mouse, Reverend Bug, and Madam Moth, and brief, easily memorized lines are accompanied with music to this familiar song. As the opening script continues, the listener learns that Miss Mole made the wedding gown from the finest silks in town. Miss Mouse then walked down the aisle to face Reverend Bug. As the sage continues, the marriage and aftermath of the wedding of Frog and Miss Mouse unfolds through delightful rhymed language.

The combination of music and drama readily lends itself to an enjoyable parent night performance. This short scripted book includes a chapter that emphasizes the importance of speaking, listening, oral language expression, and the value of talk in the classroom. Communication provides the key to establishing a community of learners who appreciate each other's unique personalities, voices, and talents as a natural support for mutual learning experiences.

Listening and speaking play mutually reinforcing roles in a literate classroom community of learners. Children and teachers who talk to each other about literature, writing, presentations, research, or performances are also likely to listen to each other as they share plans, emotions, ideas, and information. As a learning community redefines the classroom setting, the role of listening and speaking expands beyond the traditional dominant voice of the teacher. The voices of children speaking and being listened to play a vital role in the learning that takes place in a community setting. Talk goes on so implicitly in the classroom that its daily role and contribution to learning are often underestimated. Yet discourse supplies the language of teaching and learning that pervades the classroom (Cazden, 1988). The purpose of this chapter is to reawaken in teachers as well as students the value of talk in both formal language arts activities and in the natural social contexts of the classroom.

The value of listening and speaking in a classroom community is grounded in several beliefs (Lundsteen, 1971). The word "talk" will be used in this chapter to imply the mutual relationship between listening and speaking:

- *Talk* is the vehicle that creates a safe learning environment conducive to taking risks, thus building a learning community in the classroom.
- *Talk* implies ownership as students participate in curriculum planning and make choices involving their own learning.
- *Talk* is the vehicle for sharing language arts strategies that assist in learning, assessing, and revaluing the curriculum.
- *Talk* is the means through which students build on their ideas and the ideas of others, carrying students to higher level thinking and learning.
- *Talk* is the way students bring meaning to their world.

This refreshing view of talk in the classroom holds high regard for the ability of children to learn not only from the teacher but from each other. Education, for the most part, has come a long way from the days of equating student talk with a lack of classroom discipline. Talk is now valued as a means for students to learn from each other, an opportunity to share ideas about reading and writing, and also a way to assess and evaluate each other's work.

A community of learners requires support, negotiated guidelines, and clearly articulated expectations. If we want children to talk, we must give them something worthwhile to talk about. Literature circles, research project groups, discussions following read-alouds, brainstorming sessions, and peer writing conferences represent means for talk to facilitate learning in the classroom. Understanding the kinds of talk that are appropriate and constructive to learning is key to an effective learning community.

Objectives

- To provide a framework for the five types of listening and to introduces structured listening activities.

- To encourage read-alouds, interactive read-alouds, retellings, readers theatre, puppetry, storytelling, choral reading, and oral presentations as the focus of formal, structured listening and speaking lessons.
- To share informal structured "talk" configurations to explore the potential of talk in learning communities, both through formal structured listening and speaking activities and informally in structured conversational groups, and to foster an understanding of the "cycles of meaning" (Pierce & Gilles, 1993) that lead to authentic learning.

Listening: The Neglected Language Art

The Teacher Prep Web site will help you become a better teacher by linking you to classroom videos, student artifacts, teaching strategies, lesson plans, relevant education leadership articles, and practical information on licensing, creating a portfolio, implementing standards, and being successful in field experiences. Visit this resource at www.prenhall.com/teacherprep.

Listening has long been referred to as the "neglected" language art (Landry, 1969). Although teachers often assume listening ability is in place when children come to school, they soon discover the "art of listening" must be addressed through specific instruction and through an abundance of practical learning situations. Regardless of age or grade level, listening skills must be developed, nurtured, and practiced for a variety of receptive purposes. Because we spend 53% of our time in school, in the workplace, and at leisure in the act of listening (Hunsacker, 1989), it seems critical that more attention should be given to this neglected language art. Because listening is an integral part of instruction in all content areas, it seldom has a specific time or place in the classroom. Sometimes a broad approach to incorporating listening across the curriculum often undermines the fact that listening is a learned skill that requires directed practice within the context of all learning activities. Modeling good listening, providing specific listening instruction, and creating opportunities to practice effective listening appear critical to the acquisition and development of listening strategies within and beyond classroom boundaries (Brent & Anderson, 1993).

Listening for Different Purposes

Just like reading and writing, listening is a process that involves the use of cueing systems at three distinct levels: (a) the phonological level, (b) the syntactic level, and (c) the semantic level. The *phonological* level focuses on sound bundles, or phonemes. Discriminating between different sounds eventually turns individual sounds into words, words into sentences, and sentences into a total message. At the phonological level, the listener also focuses on the intonation patterns (high/low), the variations in stress (loud/soft), and the juncture between words and sentences. At the *syntactic* level, the listener must focus on the order, arrangement, and endings of words to detect meaning. At the *semantic* level the listener must understand how words relate to each other and the way ideas are connected in order to process meaningful thoughts. All three cueing systems contribute to the receiving, processing, and comprehending of a message.

Listening can effectively be categorized by the purpose that the listener assigns to the listening task (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996). Five purposes of listening requiring skills acquired through ongoing practice have been identified: (a) discriminative listening, (b) efferent listening, (c) aesthetic listening, (d) critical listening, and (e) therapeutic listening. Prior knowledge and a purpose for listening direct the task and focus the listener on the reason for listening, the formality or informality of the message, and what the listener will do with the message once it is received, processed, and evaluated.

Discriminative listening is a process that distinguishes among sounds while noting the nonverbal cues of the speaker. Such discrimination may be an auditory process in

which the listener recognizes sounds such as consonants, vowels, syllables, and rhyming words. The listener may also discriminate between the tone and pitch of the speaker in order to interpret the urgency and importance of the message. The listener also engages in visual discrimination, interpreting the body posture, eye contact, head movement, and facial expression of the speaker.

In the classroom setting, discriminative listening is practiced in the primary grades through phonemic awareness activities and listening to rhymed poetry. In the intermediate and middle level classroom, students learn about literary devices such as onomatopoeia, alliteration, similes, and metaphors to better understand the use of words in context. Students who are able to focus productively discriminate between the sounds, words, or images conveyed.

Efferent listening involves listening for information and comprehension. When focusing on their work, students should be able to recall the main idea as well as details and even to make inferences from the information. Oral directions, direct instruction, class presentations, and the listening that occurs in conjunction with audiotapes or videotapes require efferent listening. Lecture formats—not always the most effective instruction—often result in note-taking or filling in information on a graphic organizer in the intermediate- and middle-level classroom. The student takes away specific information, accesses it at another time, and learns information in the process.

Aesthetic listening is a process that involves relaxed attention for enjoyment, pleasure, and personal satisfaction reflecting the background experience, interest, and motivation of each listener. The dominant example in the elementary setting is the read-aloud in which children enjoy meeting new book characters, anticipating outcomes of challenging situations, and letting the momentum of the text carry them through each session. Aesthetic listening focuses on the power of language, the vivid choice of words, the flow of the sentences, and the detailed visualized images generated by well-written descriptions that carry students into the world of a book.

The elementary classroom also lends itself to aesthetic listening in a community setting through choral reading, readers theatre, poetry recitation, dramatic production, and storytelling. Listening for participation cues, for the satisfaction of rhyme and rhythm, and for the exciting ending to a well-told story also imply an aesthetic listening stance. Listening is an integral part of music, conveying messages through the lyrics of popular songs and Broadway musicals. The aesthetic listener may gradually develop an appreciation for dramatic readings, movies, theater, and musical performances. Such on going enjoyment of language through varied media provides pleasure beyond the classroom setting.

Critical listening requires the listener to make a judgment regarding a message based on personal values, morals, and beliefs. In everyday life, citizens are called upon to judge the content of political speeches, debates, news reports, and commercial advertising. Today's young people must critically judge the integrity of conflicting information, the varied points of view of their peers, and the validity of advertised products through the media.

Critical listening blends with critical thinking, one of the most valued skills of the workplace. Evaluating persuasive speeches in a classroom provides excellent practice for judgments made through analyzing, inferring, and evaluating. Learning to listen to the message of others forces us to broaden our own limited views of complex issues. As children grow to adulthood, the value of critical listening gives them the power to take control of the decisions they make in their own lives.

Therapeutic listening involves empathy—the ability to listen to the fears, joys, hopes, and traumatic experiences of others. In the community of learners in a classroom, listening and empathy might span a wide range of activities—from conflict resolution between peers to listening to a classmate who fears parental divorce or is experiencing the

emotion of losing a loved one. Teachers often set up group sessions for discussing class issues and problems. Often, however, this type of listening is done on a one-to-one basis. Children need to learn how to give full attention to their peers and to understand the role of eye contact and receptive body language. The teacher must value the importance of establishing a setting of comfort and trust, and how to respond in an empathetic, helpful manner. Drawing from personal experiences often provides the needed tools to follow careful, sympathetic listening with sound, experienced advice and feelings. Students who practice therapeutic listening skills at a young age will build string relationships throughout life.

Children's literature seems to provide a direct link for integrating listening skills into the existing curriculum. Teachers can build on a captive audience at read-aloud time to develop listening skills geared toward the five types of listening. Schmar (1999) suggests the following guidelines when choosing children's books to teach listening skills:

- Choose literature that best fits the precise purpose for listening—discriminative, efferent, aesthetic, critical, or therapeutic.
- Help students identify the purpose during an introduction to the read-aloud and model specific skills to be employed during the session.
- Pause and stop throughout the read-aloud to help students refocus on the listening purpose and to be certain appropriate listening skills are being applied.
- Return to the listening purpose following the read-aloud and discuss how using these skills helped students listen more effectively.

The Literature Cluster on page 162 matches picture and chapter book titles with the five purposes of listening. Students must be guided before, during, and after the read-aloud to make certain these listening purposes and related skills have taken hold and can be applied in real-world situations.

Listening and Speaking Activities

While listening and speaking occur naturally throughout the school day, formal, planned activities that address these language arts help focus on a critical area of language learning. By encouraging the art of reading aloud as well as the responses to a read-aloud—from interactive storybook reading, retellings, storytelling, choral reading to puppetry, readers theatre, dramatic performances, and oral presentations—teachers bring enduring lessons in listening and speaking into their learning communities. These activities require special literature-based selection, well-organized planning, and well-managed implementation in order to have their optimal impact on the listening and speaking of both performers and audience.

Reading Aloud

Teacher read-alouds in Grades K–8 are probably the most dominant formal listening lesson shared in classrooms. A teacher reads . . . children listen. But much planning goes on "behind the scenes" in making the read-aloud event in any classroom successful. Begin by considering the deeper purposes for reading aloud beyond the act of pure listening (Huck & Kiefer, 2004):

- To develop enjoyment and instill motivation for reading and writing
- To develop a sense of story (characters, setting, plot sequence, problem, resolution) and a sense of genre (poetry, narrative, information)
- To model and develop new vocabulary and language structures

Literature Cluster

LISTENING AND LITERATURE

Discriminative Listening

Clements, A. (1997). *Double trouble in Walla Walla*. New York: Millbrook Press.

Martin, Bill, Jr. (1999). *A beasty story*. Illus. by Steven Kellogg. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Showers, P. (1991). *The listening walk*. New York: HarperCollins.

Waddell, M. (2001). *Webster J. Duck*. Illus. by D. Parkins. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Wood, A. (1997). *Birdsong*. New York: Scholastic.

Comprehensive Listening

Aliki (1999). *William Shakespeare and the Globe*. New York: HarperCollins.

Banks, S. H. (1999). *Abraham's battle: A novel of Gettysburg*. New York: Atheneum.

Davies, N. (2001). *Bat loves the night*. Illus. by S. Fox-Davies. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Fleischman, P. (1999). *Westlandia*. Illus. by Kevin Hawkes. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Wick, W. (1997). *A drop of water*. New York: Scholastic.

Therapeutic Listening

Ernst, L. C. (1997). *Bubba and Trixie*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hopkinson, D. (1999). *A band of angels: A story inspired by the Jubilee Singers*. New York: Atheneum.

Palatini, M. (2001). *The Web Files*. Illus. by Richard Egielski. New York: Hyperion.

Polacco, P. (1998). *Thank you, Mr. Falker*. New York: Philomel.

Tillage, L. W. (1997). *Leon's story*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Critical Listening

Hesse, K. (2001). *Witness*. New York: Scholastic.

Mazer, H. (2001). *A boy at war: A novel of Pearl Harbor*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Medina, J. (1999). *My name is Jorge: On both sides of the river (Poems in English and Spanish)*. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong/Boyds Mills.

Mochizuki, K. (1997). *Passage to freedom*. New York: Lee & Low.

Myers, W. D. (1999). *At her majesty's request: An African princess in Victorian England*. New York: Scholastic.

Appreciative Listening

Esbensen, B. J. (1996). *Echoes for the eye: Poems to celebrate patterns in nature*. New York: HarperCollins.

Florian, D. (1999). *Winter eyes*. New York: Greenwillow.

King, M. L., Jr. (1997). *I have a dream*. Illus. by Coretta Scott King Award illustrators. New York: Scholastic.

Locker, T. (1997). *Water dance*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Myers, C. (1999). *Black cat*. New York: Scholastic.

- To model and learn about the forms and conventions of writing
- To share information about other times, places, and cultures

To meet these outcomes of reading aloud, time, care, and consideration must be given to the selected book, whether a picture book that will be read in a single session or a chapter book that will be read over a period of several days. A good read-aloud should be fast-paced, allowing children's listening interest to be captured as quickly as possible (Trelease, 1985). Clear, rounded characters make for easy identification. Crisp, easy-to-read dialogue helps maintain listener attention. Long, descriptive passages, while excel-

lent for older students, should be kept to a minimum in primary and intermediate grades. The selected book must be one about which the reader is enthusiastic—an all-time favorite, a revered classic, a recently discovered new title. Whatever the book, it is essential to find a perfect match between book and the audience. Linking selections to the personalities, ages, and interests of listeners creates a scenario for powerful reading and listening enjoyment. A good read-aloud should motivate students to want to read that book on their own or to read any book for the enjoyment it brings. The following considerations should be kept in mind when selecting the best read-aloud:

- Be judicious in your selections. Not every book in the school library makes a good read-aloud.
- Determine whether book sharing will be whole class, small group, or individual—a key factor that influences book selection.
- Select books that stretch imaginations, build on curricular interests, expose children to quality writing, and cause children to visualize the story.
- Read a variety of books across genres (poetry, biography, folk/fairy tales, nonfiction, multicultural) to capture the interests of all children over time.
- Select books through which you can communicate mood and meaning of characters and story through voice.
- Reread favorite books children have already listened to because they listen with "fresh ears" as they grow developmentally.

Although these guidelines initially seem long and cumbersome, they gradually become second nature and internalized in book selection. Remember that read-aloud time is limited and demands that the best books be shared with children. When choosing read-alouds across a variety of genres, remember to include nonfiction so that you broaden the reading interests of all children and develop tastes beyond fictional stories (Doiron, 1994).

Begin a read-aloud with a brief introduction of the author and illustrator, and link the book to others the children know. Ask them to predict what they think it will be about from the cover and title. Throughout the book, invite spontaneous comments, but do not let conversation detract from the flow of the text. After finishing the book, take time to let children share their personal connections, comments, and opinions. However, keep in mind that not all books have to be discussed or dissected to make them enjoyable read-alouds.

A list of "dos" implies a related list of "don'ts." Don't try to read aloud if you don't have sufficient time. Hurrying only detracts from the relaxed atmosphere that brings pleasure for both the reader and the listeners. Don't read too fast (the number one error for new teachers) because children's listening comprehension must follow the words and process the action in order for meaning making to occur. Slow the reading down to allow students the time to visualize characters and scenes and to savor words and creative use of language. Do not link the book with any negative experience or take away the class privilege of a read-aloud. Do not detract in any way from the major purpose of the read-aloud—to capture and create independent readers.

As you read aloud, determine the parameters for your students. In primary grades, children often sit close to the teacher and maintain eye contact with the book while not bothering other classmates. In intermediate and middle grades, students remain at their desks or tables and are often allowed to draw or work on homework. The teacher must decide how focused the listening aspect of the read-aloud should be. Setting rules, routines, and expectations early on in the school year establishes a pattern of participation and will provide a model for all subsequent read-alouds. Read-aloud time may become the most delightful time of the day for both students and teacher. Young children who ask their teacher

Literature Cluster

FIFTY QUALITY TITLES FOR READING ALOUD

Primary: Grades K–2

Cooney, Barbara (1982). *Miss Rumphius*. New York: Viking.

dePaola, Tomie (1975). *Strega Nona*. New York: Putnam.

Gag, Wanda (1928). *Millions of cats*. New York: Coward-McCann.

Henkes, Kevin (1991). *Chrysanthemum*. New York: Greenwillow.

Keats, Ezra Jack (1962). *The snowy day*. New York: Viking.

Lionni, Leo (1969). *Alexander and the wind-up mouse*. Pantheon.

Lobel, Arnold (1970). *Frog and Toad are friends*. New York: Harper & Row.

McCloskey, Robert (1941). *Make way for ducklings*. New York: Viking.

McCully, Emily Arnold (1992). *Mirette on the high wire*. New York: Putnam.

Polacco, Patricia (1990). *Thundercake*. New York: Philomel.

Rathman, Peggy (1995). *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. New York: Putnam.

Steig, William (1971). *Amos and Boris*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Steptoe, John (1987). *Mufaro's beautiful daughters: An African tale*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Taback, Simms (1997). *There was an old lady who swallowed a fly*. New York: Viking.

White, E. B. (1952). *Charlotte's web*. Illus. by Garth Williams. New York: Harper & Row.

Wood, Audrey (1984). *The napping house*. Illus. by Don Wood. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Yolen, Jane (1987). *Owl moon*. Illus. by John Schoenherr. New York: Philomel.

Intermediate: Grades 3–5

Bunting, Eve (1991). *Fly away home*. Illus. by Ronald Himler. Boston: Clarion.

Cooper, Floyd (1994). *Coming home: From the life of Langston Hughes*. New York: Philomel.

Dahl, Roald (1961). *James and the giant peach*. Illus. by Nancy E. Burkert. New York: Knopf.

DiCamillo, Kate (2000). *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Fleischman, Sid (1986). *The whipping boy*. Illus. by Peter Sis. New York: Greenwillow.

to "read it again" should be heeded as revisiting the book brings new perspectives and confidence to a reader (Martinez & Roser, 1985). Older readers begging for "just one more chapter" are also exhibiting be a natural response of engaged listeners. Do not underestimate the quality of the selected literature in the success of a read-aloud. The list of books in the Literature Cluster above, have proved to be particularly successful in read-alouds.

Oral Response to a Read-Aloud

Spontaneous responses to literature before, during, and following a read-aloud provide evidence of students' prior knowledge, ongoing comprehension, and literary understanding. Reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) underlies the premise that readers individually construct meaning as they transact with the text, while readers actually read themselves into the text (Bleich, 1978) as they personalize meaning and message. The construction of literary understanding in oral response to picture storybook read-alouds occurs in children as young as first and second grade (Sipe, 2000). Sipe suggests three basic literary impulses that spontaneously occurred during a study of 83 read-alouds to primary children:

Fox, Mem (1985). *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Illus. by Julie Vivas. New York: Kane Miller.

Gardiner, John (1980). *Stone fox*. Illus. by Marcia Sewall. New York: Crowell.

Greenfield, Eloise (1978). *Honey I love and other poems*. Illus. by Leo & Diane Dillon. New York: Crowell.

Hoffman, Mary (1991). *Amazing Grace*. Illus. by Caroline Binch. New York: Dial.

Lowry, Lois (1989). *Number the stars*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

MacLachlan, Patricia (1985). *Sarah, plain and tall*. New York: Harper & Row.

Martin, Bill, Jr. (1987). *Knots on a counting rope*. Illus. by Ted Rand. New York: Holt.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds (1991). *Shiloh*. New York: Atheneum.

Paterson, Katherine (1977). *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: Harper & Row.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis (1998). *Duke Ellington*. Illus. by Brian Pinkney. New York: Hyperion.

Ringgold, Faith (1991). *Tar beach*. New York: Crown.

Rylant, Cynthia (1982). *When I was young in the mountains*. Illus. by Diane Goode. New York: Dutton.

Taylor, Mildred (1995). *The well*. New York: Dial.

Van Allsburg, Chris (1985). *The polar express*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Wilder, Laura Ingalls (1953). *The little house in the big woods*. Illus. by Garth Williams. New York: Harper & Row.

Middle-Level: Grades 6–8

Avi (1990). *The true confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Orchard.

Blackwood, Gary (1998). *The Shakespeare stealer*. New York: Dutton.

Cushman, Karen (1994). *Catherine, called Birdy*. Boston: Clarion.

Fletcher, Susan (1998). *Shadow spinner*. New York: Atheneum.

Holt, Kimberly Willis (1998). *My Louisiana sky*. New York: Holt.

Lawrence, Iain (1998). *The wreckers*. New York: Delacorte.

Paterson, Katherine (1996). *Jip: His story*. New York: Lodestar.

Paulsen, Gary (1987). *Hatchet*. New York: Bradbury.

Peck, Richard (1999). *A long way from Chicago*. New York: Dial.

Sachar, Louis (1999). *Holes*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Staples, Suzanne Fisher (1989). *Shabanu: Daughter of the wind*. New York: Knopf.

Wisniewski, David (1997). *Golem*. Boston: Clarion.

- *Hermeneutic impulse:* Children are concerned with interpreting and understanding the story.
- *Personalizing impulse:* Children connect the story to themselves.
- *Aesthetic impulse:* Children are concerned with having the lived-through experience of the story or using it to express their own creativity.

Although children's spontaneous thoughts and reactions to read-aloud books constitute a highly valued oral response to literature, novice teachers can introduce a structured, open-ended approach to encourage similar thought and expand response offerings. The use of open-ended reader response prompts following a read-aloud event invites readers to focus, feel, connect, and relate literature. The power of the prompt lies in it challenging children to stretch their thinking without distorting their natural response to a book.

A response prompt is an open-ended question designed to encourage the listener (or reader) to respond following a read-aloud event. Unlike a traditional closed-end comprehension question, a response prompt has no predetermined answer. The response lies within each child and each response is expected to be unique. David Bleich (1978)

improvised three prompts which provide the basis for responding orally to any piece of literature at any level:

- What did you notice in the story? (hermeneutic)
- How did the story make you feel? (aesthetic)
- What does the story remind you of from your own life? (personalizing)

While these prompts at first seem quite simple, they actually open vistas of response to children that otherwise might be left unexplored. Kelly (1990) utilized these prompts with third graders over an entire school year and documented remarkable growth in quality, quantity, and depth of oral response. At first, children responded to the prompts following read-alouds, but gradually the prompts provided an independent reading framework. Initially, respondents seemed confused by the prompts because they differed from traditional comprehension questions. With teacher modeling and listener experience over time, these prompts became internalized by the students. Teachers no longer needed to state the prompts—they automatically became the framework for oral response.

As children grow in response to these three basic prompts, teachers may choose to pose other open-ended prompts to their students.

- What special meaning or message does the story have for you?
- What did you like or dislike about the story?
- What was the most important part of the story?
- What would it feel like to be [character's name]?
- Who have you known that was like [character's name]?
- What have you experienced that was like what [character's name] experienced?
- What do you think will happen to [character's name] in the future?
- What else do you have to say about what you just read?

Such prompts continue to invite individual oral response and encourage independent thought. While prompts add unique discussion following a read-aloud, they should not become a standard routine. A knowledgeable teacher familiar with literature will realize that a few, well-selected prompts lend themselves to a particular book, but a steady diet of the same prompts, day after day, can become as inhibiting as standard comprehension questions at the end of a basal reader story. Choose prompts wisely, ascertain their connectedness to the literature, and present the prompts effectively in a nonthreatening format.

Teachers can enhance oral response by providing a consistent environment in which book talk is valued (Hepler, 1991). Not only must children be given ample time to talk during formal oral sharing, but they must be provided time for informal responses as well. In a literacy-rich classroom, children talk about books when they arrive in the morning, when they get ready to go home, and the many times in between. Response should not be built into a drill-and-practice routine, but encouraged in a natural environment of acceptance of unique thoughts in response to the literature that is being read.

Book Talks

To assist readers in selecting quality literature for reading, teachers and students may engage in book talks—brief, enticing reviews of the story and content of a prospective reading choice. Teachers will often verbalize their own delight in a book in order to entice children into reading. Such listening and speaking activities can be modeled very effec-

tively through Lesson Plan 6.1, which features a student-initiated book talk activity. As children learn to create their own oral book talks, they make book choices and share reading recommendations with their peers.

LESSON PLAN 6.1

TITLE: Reading and Writing Book Talks

Grade Level: 3–5

Time Frame: Two days of 45–60 minutes per session

Standards

IRA/NCTE Standards: 5, 12

NETS for Students: 3, 4

Objectives

- Students will listen to audio recordings of book talks and understand the purpose and format of book talks.
- Students will write book talk manuscripts and record audio book talks.

Materials

- Computers with Internet access; headphones (optional)
- Computers with audio recording capability (including microphones) or tape recorders
- An assortment of *Reading Rainbow* books and videotapes

Motivation

- Read a *Reading Rainbow* book aloud and/or watch a *Reading Rainbow* TV/VHS segment. Discuss the purpose and goals of the *Reading Rainbow* series (available at pbskids.org/readingrainbow/).
- Explain to students that the Reading Rainbow Web site includes numerous audio recordings of book talks to get children excited about reading and to help readers select books they will enjoy.

Procedures

Day 1

- Working individually or in pairs, students listen to numerous book talks on the *Reading Rainbow* Web site. Discuss how the narrator gets the listener excited about a book.
- Read a picture book aloud to the class. Discuss what makes the book exciting and how students would entice others to read the book. As a class, write a short transcript for a book talk.

Day 2

- Working in pairs, students read picture books and write their own book talk transcript.
- Students record their book talks using tape recorders or computer technology. Consider videotaping the presentations.
- Students present to the class or to students in other classes.

Assessment

- Teacher evaluates the students' recordings based on lesson objectives.

Accommodation/Modification

- If Internet technology is unavailable, students can watch or listen to book talks included with each *Reading Rainbow* episode.

Visit the Meeting the Standards module in Chapter 6 of the Companion Website at www.prenhall.com/hancock to adapt this lesson to meet your state's standards.

Interactive Storybook Reading

Teachers differ in their read-aloud styles and in the amount of dialogue in which they engage their students during and after reading (Martinez & Teale, 1993). All children, but especially those who enter school with limited storybook reading experience, benefit from interactive read-alouds (Klesius & Griffith, 1996). As teachers read stories interactively in the early grades (K–2), they encourage children to listen accurately and to interact orally with the text, their peers, and their teacher during the read-aloud. During interactive reading, teachers pose questions that lead readers to make sense of text while eliciting personal response (Barrentine, 1996). (See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the concept of interactive storybook reading as a method of promoting early literacy.)

Phyllis Root's *One Duck Stuck,* well-suited for a light interactive read-aloud, is a story in rhyme, a counting book, and a tale of a swamp adventure. The bright, spirited illustrations by Jane Chapman immediately invite children into the story. The predictability of events and the repetition of phrases guide the interactive framework of the read-aloud. The story begins with a mention of the marsh and adds words like "sleepy" and "slimy" to add to the enjoyment of descriptive language. When "one duck gets stuck in the muck," the pattern set by the text quickly allows children to predict the numbers (ranging from 1 to 10) of various types of animals along with a repeated phrase. Teacher prompts can help children predict the next number of swamp creatures (Grades K–1) or the next kind of animals or insects (Grades 1–2) by drawing on knowledge of swamp critters or the sound the creatures will make. Children can join in on well-chosen alliterative language for each critter (*splish, splish—fish; clomp, clomp—moose*) and on a repeated phrase (*Help! Help! Who can help?*) that marks the turning of a page. Small groups can take the time to count the swamp inhabitants featured on each page. Words describing the marsh (*squishy, pricky, croaky, soggy, mossy*) can be discussed for vocabulary building. Predicting the final outcome means listening carefully to the text and observing the colorful illustrations throughout the read-aloud.

Not every read-aloud justifies an interactive approach, but the interactive read-aloud does consistently engage students with literature, reading, listening, and speaking throughout the read-aloud rather than retrospectively at its conclusion. The Literature Cluster on page 169 lists several books that invite oral language during an interactive listening and reading experience.

Story Retelling

For many years, reading followed by retelling has been utilized for assessing comprehension or as an instructional tool to facilitate reader understanding of the reading process (Morrow, 1986). More recently, retelling has become a device to invite oral language fol-

Literature Cluster

BOOKS FOR INTERACTIVE STORYBOOK READING

Peek, Merle (1985). *Mary wore her red dress and Henry wore his green sneakers*. Boston: Clarion.

Root, Phyllis (2001). *Rattletrap car*. Illus. by Jill Barton. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Rosen, Michael (1989). *We're going on a bear hunt*. Illus. by Helen Oxenbury. New York: McElderry.

Rounds, Glen (1990). *I know an old lady who swallowed a fly*. New York: Holiday House.

Taback, Simms (1997). *There was an old lady who swallowed a fly*. New York: Viking.

Van Laan, Nancy (1990). *Possum come a-knockin'*. Illus. by George Booth. New York: Knopf.

Westcott, Nadine (1987). *Peanut butter and jelly*. New York: Dutton.

Williams, Linda (1986). *The little old lady who was not afraid of anything*. Illus. by Megan Lloyd. New York: HarperCollins.

lowing a listening experience. Retellings provide a powerful departure from recall questions and with teacher encouragement can reflect personal meaning making. Retellings can personalize a book by drawing on a sense of story, personal experience, and feelings and reactions. Although retellings that involve younger children may be aided by visual representations, they still depend on sharp listening enhanced by the individual voice and style of the reader.

Morrow (1986) found that repeated retellings result in a positive effect on the future oral dictation of original stories as children improve their story sense and understanding of story elements. Providing an opportunity to express understanding in a nonthreatening way, retellings challenge children to state everything they remember in their own words without the fear of being wrong. They should be offered encouragement and praise for remembering details, mentioning story elements, and describing their personal reactions. Over time, retellings become richer as growth in listening, meaning making, and oral articulation becomes the ultimate outcome.

Teachers should be aware of the following elements in considering level of performance of retellings or in modeling their own retellings.

- Setting — Begins story with an introduction.
  Includes time and place of story.
- Characters — Names main character.
  Names some secondary characters.
- Problem — States the main problem in the story.
- Episodes — Recalls episodes or segments of the story.
  Sequences episodes properly.
- Solution — Identifies the solution to the problem.
  Provides story ending.

Certain types of stories lend themselves to retellings because of structure and repetition. *Bearsie Bear and the Surprise Sleepover Party* by Bernard Waber contains the perfect elements for successful retelling. Character names like Cowsie Cow and Moosie Moose are easily remembered. Repetitive scenes of knocks on the door and requests to stay overnight

form a pattern for the reteller. Repetitive dialogue (*Good night! Piggie Pie may sleep over*) also provides confidence for retellers. Remembering that Porkie Porcupine has a different fate than the rest of the visitors implies comprehension. The oral inflection of dialogue, the changing voices of characters, and the reaction to the story ending provide meaningful outlets for speaking skills. The use of retellings to improve listening and speaking also results in a deeper understanding of story elements when monitored over time.

Storytelling

Storytelling is the art of precisely retelling a story through expressive oral language and gestures to an attentive audience. A step above the previously mentioned story retelling, the typical storyteller may be the teacher or an invited guest. But the modeling of storytelling in language similar to that in the text easily motivates students to try to tell stories themselves. Storytelling helps children understand the oral tradition of literature while allowing the storyteller, unencumbered by a book, the freedom of gestures and actions to better involve listeners in the literary experience. However, the language of the storytelling attempts to stay as close to the written text as possible.

Selecting the right story for storytelling is a challenge. Folktales have several benefits that make them particularly appropriate for beginning storytelling. Look for a strong opening that brings listeners quickly into the fast-paced action and several colorful characters with whom the listener can identify. Select a plot that is not too complicated and creates a mood, whether humorous and lighthearted or serious and scary. Strong climaxes with satisfying endings are most welcome by children (Hamilton & Weiss, 1996).

Preparation for the storytelling is critical to its success:

- Read the story aloud several times to internalize the rhythm and style so it can be retold in a similar fashion.
- Consider the major actions or events of the story and conceptualize an outline to follow in telling the story.
- Develop a sense of the characters by envisioning the clothes they wear, their heights and sizes, unusual features, personality traits, speech, and mannerisms. Plan your verbal portrayal carefully so that your listeners will have a clear image.
- Draw a map of the setting with words so the listener can clearly imagine it.
- Locate repeated phrases and language patterns key to the story and incorporate them in the plan.
- Plan gestures that add to the story, and practice them in a mirror.
- Prepare an introduction and conclusion that sets the right mood, provides background information, or presents an interesting tangible artifact.
- Practice the story, being sure to note gestures, expression, intonation, and voice qualities you want to emphasize in your delivery.

The preparation is well worth the reception that a successful storytelling will receive. This special, rare treat warms students to the storyteller, the unique format, and the opportunity to be verbally drawn into a story. Set a mood for the storytelling (e.g., dim lights, lantern, shawl, rocking chair) and maintain full eye contact with the children during the presentation. Use a short step or movement or lean toward the children to indicate a change in scene, character, or action or to heighten suspense. After telling the story, pause briefly for the audience to absorb the impact of the story.

A book that lends itself to storytelling is Jan Wahl's *Tailypo,* a scary tale set in the bayou country of Louisiana. The storytelling strength of this book lies in the characters

(the old man, his dogs, the monster), in the setting (cabin in the marshy woods), and in the repeated phrases ("Tailypo, tailypo, all I want is my tailypo."). Introduce the story with the background of a bayou, and provide a few props to incite interest. Create a mood by darkening the room, donning a shawl, and using a table lamp for lighting. Planned gestures can include the "scritch-scratch, scritch-scratch" sound on the chalkboard, the loud and sudden calling for the dogs ("Hey! Hey!"), and the fall of the axe on Tailypo's tail. Children will spontaneously join in on the repeated phrase. The interesting ending will require a slight pause before applause. Sharing the original book and its illustrations and discussing the visual versus illustrated image of the monster make for an effective conclusion and a reading motivation.

Literature used for storytelling often belongs to the genre of traditional tales because of the oral tradition. Verna Aardema's *Anansi Does the Impossible* revisits the beloved trickster spider as he and his wife outsmart the Sky God and win back the folktales of their people. A storytelling of Steven Kellogg's contemporary version of *The Three Little Pigs* (who are named Percy, Pete, and Prudence) will prove successful with a group of young children who have just read the original version. "Open up, Pork Chop! Or I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll flatten this dump." A multicultural storytelling of Sylvia Rosa-Casanova's *Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice* becomes a feast as a simple pot of arroz con pollo (chicken and rice) becomes a feast as it makes its way up eight floors of an apartment building inhabited by people of all ethnicities. The sequence of events and the various ingredients add to a structural framework for storytelling. John Bierhorst's brief retellings in *Is My Friend at Home? Pueblo Fireside Tales* weaves the theme of friendship through seven interconnected stories originally told at Native American storytelling sessions. Many picture books share stories in a sequential structure, include strong dialogue, and contain excellent descriptions that can be savored and expressed through storytelling. The Literature Cluster on page 172 provides a list of picture books that lend themselves to sharing through storytelling, either by a teacher or, eventually, by students themselves.

Oral language development is fostered in young children through the use of a feltboard or storyboard for storytelling. *Stories in My Pocket* (Hamilton & Weiss, 1996) provides an extensive offering of tales children can tell. As children develop their own storytelling skills, several intermediate-level classmates may storytell different versions of a folktale, such as the many multicultural versions of Cinderella. *Here Comes the Storyteller* (Hayes, 1996) will assist teachers in learning the secrets of successful storytelling, in this case stories of the Southwest (many with Spanish language phrases). Accompanied by photographs of the storyteller, this book models effective gestures and appropriate facial expressions as well as providing great stories from which to select a favorite. Middle-level students may choose to investigate, locate, read, and storytell folktales from a single country they may be studying. At all levels, storytelling need not be confined to the voice of a teacher or an adult. Students of all ages, with assistance, guidelines, and structure can become a part of the oral tradition that shares a story through storytelling.

Choral Reading

A simple, but effective outlet for dramatic speaking exists through the performance medium of choral reading (McCauley & McCauley, 1992). Poetry is the genre that naturally lends itself to this oral sharing of language, expression, and rhythm through dramatic, humorous, or purely enjoyable readings. Young children have a natural affinity toward verse, rhyme, riddles, and songs, while older readers revel in well-chosen language, varied moods, and the succinctness of poetry.

Literature Cluster

BOOKS FOR STORYTELLING

Aylesworth, Jim (1999). *The full belly bowl*. Illus. by Wendy A. Halperin. New York: Atheneum.

Brown, Dee (1993). *Dee Brown's folktales of the Native American retold for our times*. New York: Holt. (See "The story of the bat.")

Charlip, Remy (1969). *What good luck! What bad luck!* New York: Scholastic.

Galdone, Paul (1984). *The gingerbread boy*. Boston: Clarion.

Ginsburg, Mirra (1979). *The twelve clever brothers and other fools: Folktales from Russia*. New York: Lippincott. (See "Eight Donkeys," "The clever fool.")

Hamilton, Virginia (1985). *The people could fly: African black folktales told by Virginia Hamilton*. New York: Knopf. (See "Better wait till Martin comes.")

Hamilton, Virginia (1997). *A ring of tricksters: Animal tales from America, the West Indies, and Africa*. Illus. by Barry Moser. New York: Scholastic.

Hodges, Margaret (1997). *The true tale of Johnny Appleseed*. Illus. by Kimberly Root. New York: Holiday House.

Kellogg, Steven (1986). *Pecos Bill*. New York: Morrow.

Kimmell, Eric A. (Reteller)(1996). *Onions and garlic: An old tale*. Illus. by Katya Arnold. New York: Holiday House.

Lobel, Arnold (1980). *Fables*. New York: Harper & Row. (See "The bad kangaroo," "The hen and the apple tree," "King Lion and the beetle.")

McCaughrean, Geraldine (1995). *The golden hoard: Myths and legends of the world*. Illus. by Bee Wiley. New York: McElderry.

McCaughrean, Geraldine (1996). *The silver treasure: Myths and legends of the world*. Illus. by Bee Wiley. New York: McElderry.

McCaughrean, Geraldine (1997). *The bronze caldron: Myths and legends of the world*. Illus. by Bee Wiley. New York: McElderry Books.

McCaughrean, Geraldine (1998). *The crystal pool: Myths and legends of the world*. Illus. by Bee Wiley. New York: McElderry.

McCaughrean, Geraldine (1999). *Roman myths*. Illus. by Emma C. Clark. New York: McElderry.

McDermott., Gerald (1975). *The stonecutter: A Japanese folktale*. New York: Viking.

Muten, Burleigh (1999). *Grandmothers' stories: Wise woman tales from many cultures*. Illus. by Sian Bailey. New York: Barefoot Books.

Nolan, Dennis (1997). *Androcles and the lion*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Phillip, Neil (Reteller) (1995). *The illustrated book of myths: Tales and legends of the world*. Illus. by Nilesh Mistry. New York: Dorling Kindersley.

Rockwell, Anne (1996). *The one-eyed monster and other stories from the Greek myths*. New York: Greenwillow.

Rosenthal, Paul (1998). *Yo, Aesop! Get a load of these fables*. Illus. by Marc Rosenthal. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Schwartz, Alvin (1985). *All of our noses are here and other noodle tales*. New York: Harper & Row. (See "All of our noses are here," "The best boy in the world," "Sam and Jane go camping," and "Sam's girlfriend.")

Schwartz, Alvin (1991). *Ghosts: Ghostly tales from folklore*. New York: HarperCollins. (See "A little green bottle," and "Susie.")

Schwartz, Alvin (1984). *More scary stories to tell in the dark*. New York: Harper & Row. (See "The bad news," "The bride," and "Cemetery soup.")

Schwartz, Alvin (1981). *Scary stories to tell in the dark*. New York: Harper & Row. (See "The Viper.")

Scieszka, Jon, & Smith, Lane (1992). *The stinky cheese man and other fairly stupid tales*. New York: Viking. (See "The other frog prince," "The princess and the bowling bowl," and "The stinky cheese man.")

Scieszka, Jon, & Smith, Lane (1998). *Squids will be squids: Fresh morals, beastly tales*. New York: Viking.

Seabrooke, Brenda (1995). *The swan's gift*. Illus. by Wenhai Ma. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Sierra, Judy (Reteller)(1996). *Nursery tales around the world*. Illus. by Stefano Vitale. New York: Clarion.

Slobodkina, Esphyr (1940). *Caps for sale*. New York: Scholastic.

Young, Ed (1992). *Seven blind mice*. New York: Philomel.

Choral reading can be delivered in several formats and can be orchestrated as individual performance or partner presentations, in small groups, or as an entire class. Stewig (1981) suggests the following choral reading formats:

- ***Echo reading:*** The leader reads each line and the group repeats it. This requires a simple, quiet poem where repetition breeds reflection. Try "Forest Scenes" from Constance Levy's *A Tree Place and Other Poems.* Or try "Night Garden," the title poem from Janet Wong's *Night Garden*. The resonance of the well-read lines brings these poems to life.
- ***Paired reading:*** Paired reading provides a side-by-side delivery format for poems meant to be read aloud as dual voices. This mode of choral reading became particularly popular through Paul Fleischman's books *I Am Phoenix* and *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices,* which invite side-by-side reading. Children learn to appreciate the sounds, feelings, joy, and magic of poetry through this planned vocal expression experience. Try "Whirligig Beetles" or "Book Lice" to enjoy the resounding magic of dual voices reading a single text. For a further challenge, Fleischman's *Big Talk: Poems for Four Voices* weaves spoken quartets into word music.
- ***Small group reading:*** The class divides into small groups and each group reads part of a poem. The repetition of "Can I, Can I Catch the Wind" from Pat Mora's *Confetti: Poems for Children* lends itself to this type of reading. Each group may attain ownership of a single line (or stanza) with all joining in on the first and last lines.
- ***Cumulative reading:*** One group or student reads the first line or stanza as others join in on additional lines or stanzas. An entire class presentation can emerge from Rebecca K. Dotlich's collection *Sweet Dreams of the Wild*. Each of 16 poems begins with a simple question that can be read by the whole group ("Hummingbird, hummingbird, where do you sleep?"). The answer to the question can be prepared by individual readers. The final line of each poem is the same and can be read by the entire group again. An opening and closing rhyme in this collection enclose this special blend of read-aloud poems that beg for choral performance.

The outcomes of choral reading in the classroom should include expression, intonation, voice quality, and articulation. Speaking skills can be practiced in the enjoyable context of poetry that is easy to locate, fun to arrange and rehearse, and enjoyable to present. The Literature Cluster on page 174 lists several poems that are ideal for these four types of choral reading.

Readers Theatre

An effective means to communicate the language of literature and the joy of reading is through readers theatre—a presentation of two or more persons who read from scripts and interpret a literary work in such a way that the audience senses characterization, setting, and action. While the primary purpose is reading aloud (as opposed to memorization, action, props, or costumes), the intent is for students to read expressively so that they paint an image of the events and actions in the minds of the audience (Bauer, 1987). The words typically come from literature, but the expressive response comes from inside the heart of the performers as they internalize both character and situation. A second-grade performance of Martin Waddell's *Owl Babies,* for example, yields concern, fear, and relief from a trio of baby owls as another owl leaves the nest to seek food for her growing family.

Although intended to benefit the reader through smoother oral fluency, increased sight vocabulary, and improved comprehension, readers theatre focuses on specific oral

Literature Cluster

CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY POETRY FOR CHORAL READING

Adolff, Arnold (1991). *In for winter, out for spring*. Illus. by Jerry Pinkney. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Begay, Shonto (1995). *Navajo: Visions and voices across the mesa*. New York: Scholastic.

Cullinan, Bernice E. (Ed.) (1996). *A jar of tiny stars: Poems by NCTE award-winning poets*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press and the National Council of Teachers of English.

de Regniers, Beatrice Schenk (Ed.) (1988). *Sing a song of popcorn*. Illus. by nine Caldecott Medal artists. New York: Scholastic.

Feelings, Tom (1993). *Soul looks back in wonder*. New York: Dial.

Florian, Douglas (1998). *Insectlopedia*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

George, Kristine O'Connell (1997). *The great frog race and other poems*. Illus. by Kate Kiesler. Boston: Clarion.

Greenfield, Eloise (1995). *Honey, I love*. Illus. by Jan Spivey Gilchrist. New York: HarperCollins.

Mora, Pat (1994). *The desert is my mother/El desierto es mi madre*. Illus. by Daniel Lechon. Houston, TX: Pinata Books.

O'Neill, Mary (1989/1961). *Hailstones and halibut bones*. Illus. by Leonard Weisgard. New York: Doubleday.

Prelutsky, Jack (1993). *The dragons are singing tonight*. Illus. by Peter Sis. New York: Greenwillow.

Prelutsky, Jack (1998). *A pizza the size of the sun*. Illus. by James Stevenson. New York: Greenwillow.

Silverstein, Shel (1974). *Where the sidewalk ends*. New York: Harper & Row.

Viorst, Judith (1982). *If I were in charge of the world and other worries: Poems for children and their parents*. Illus. by Lynne Cherry. New York: Atheneum.

Wong, Janet (1996). *A suitcase of seaweed and other poems*. New York: McElderry Books.

presentation outcomes as well (Laughlin & Latrobe, 1989). Expressiveness of oral reading and individual interpretation of text constitutes the core of this activity. Voice projection, appropriate inflection, accurate pronunciation, vocabulary extension, and language imagery become components of expression as the reader strives to share the emotion of the text. Personal interpretation results as the meaning derived from the text gives rise to the emotional effort behind the words (Wolf, 1993, 1994).

Aaron Shepard (1994) aptly defines readers theatre by what it is not—no memorizing, no props, no costumes, no sets. Yet he does suggest minimal equipment for readers theatre to add to its effectiveness: script binders, smocks, chairs, high stools, portable screens, and small props. Instead of constructing a set, the setting can be suggested by the location of the speakers and their movement and gestures. When action is described in the script, readers should act it out or suggest it through gestures. Common mime techniques to polish the performance include walking in place, climbing up or down stairs, lifting or pulling heavy objects, flying, or falling. Focus refers to where the readers are looking. Narrators use audience focus, but characters use on-stage focus by looking at the character to whom they are speaking. For opening polish, one reader should introduce the story with the title and author, then wait to begin until all players are frozen in place and the audience is quiet. For closing finesse, the last few words are spoken slowly and the readers freeze to break the action. They close their scripts, face the audience, and bow together.

Teacher-generated or adapted scripts provide an initial experience. A simple starting point might be Amy MacDonald's *Rachel Fister's Blister* or *Cousin Ruth's Tooth* (see Figure 6.1). These humorous stories follow the Fister family as they seek a solution to the latest family crisis. The efforts of relatives, neighbors, and friends move at a rapid pace to the solution of a wise queen. The text easily adapts into a whole class script with minimal roles for almost 20 students. The crisp, brief, and fast-paced text abounds with humorous characters and should be introduced as a read-aloud and savored several times prior to the readers theatre performance.

FIGURE 6.1
A readers theatre script.

Cousin Ruth's Tooth

Amy MacDonald
Illus. by Marjorie Priceman
Houghton Mifflin, 1996

Adapted for a Readers Theatre

MRS. FISTER: Rachel Fiste; get your sister!

NARRATOR: Mrs. Fister spread the word.

MRS. FISTER: Cousin Ruth has lost a tooth! O, careless youth! It's too absurd.

RACHEL: Never mind it! We shall find it!
We will search both low and high.

RUTH: Well . . . to tell the truth, I . . .

MRS. FISTER: Hush, now darling, don't you cry

MR. FISTER: Find your cousins,—several dozens—
Get your uncles and your aunts.

RACHEL: Bessi Matildni . . . Olgal Zeldai . . . Mary Lee and Uncle Lance!

MR. FISTER: Uncle Walter! Never falter.
Search the collar, check the roof.

MRS. FISTER: Norma Jean and Aunt Bodine
Go check the attic for the tooth.

BESS: Search the yard and search the garden.

UNCLE LANCE: Check the engine of the car.

MATILDA: Check the hatbox. Check the catbox.

OLGA: Look inside the VCR!

ZELDA: Faster! Harder! Check the larder.

MARY LEE: Check the pocket of your pants!

AUNT BEA: Harder! Faster! Qualle disaster!

NARRATOR: Said Aunt Bea, who'd been to France.

NARRATOR: Though they searched in ways most ruthless, after days they still were . . .

ALL: TOOTHLESS!

Consult the original book to continue text adaptation into Readers Theatre Script.

Tech TIP

Listening/Speaking: Talk in a Community of Learners

Students of all ages may create and write their own readers theatre scripts. Whether scripts are based on authentic literature or imaginary works, producing a digital video of their performance becomes an excellent way of encouraging communication while sharing their production with others. Apple's *imovie* or Microsoft's Windows *Movie Maker* are standard features on most computers. Such user-friendly software encourages students to capture audio and video to create their own productions without too much of a software learning curve. Helpful tutorials are available on the Web.

www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/getstarted/default.mspx
www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/

To look more closely at these materials and others related to "Listening and Speaking," visit the Companion Website at www.prenhall.com/hancock.

A Beautiful Feast for a Big King Cat by John Archambault and Bill Martin Jr. provides a highly scriptable text for readers theatre. A mischievous, bold mouse shielded by his protective mother challenges an arrogant cat. Mouse finds himself in the cat's clutches, but plays on the cat's ego to get released and return home safely. The varied characters provide for individual response through oral expression. Written entirely in rhymed text, the repeated lines lend the text to small group performance. Although a readers theatre script lists character names on the left-hand side of each page, it should retain the exact words as the original text.

Success in early ventures into readers theatre are built on selection of quality literature for creating scripts or readily available scripts. In creating scripts from literature, look for books (or chapters) that are short in length so they can be shared in their entirety. The books should have an emotional appeal and three or four main characters, and they should contain ample dialogue. The Tech Tip included here offers suggestions for extending the readers theatre experience through the use of technology and preserving the dramatic performance for presenting to home or other classroom audiences.

Older children are capable integrating writing into speaking by adapting picture books or book chapters into scripts themselves. Ann Turner's picture book, *Katie's Trunk,* takes little rewriting to attain script form about the Revolutionary War in an intermediate classroom. Narrator roles can be strategically built into the script as transitions between dialogue. The clever language and action of Sid Fleischman's *The Whipping Boy* provides several episodes for script adaptation. The Literature Cluster on page 177 lists several picture and chapter books that might be effectively adapted into readers theatre scripts.

While scripting, assignment of roles, rehearsal, and staging are important facets of readers theatre, its true success lies in the expressive nature of individuals speaking and reading fluently and adding interpretive expression to their voices. The freedom to express themselves through a character's words provides the dramatic flair that makes this such an enjoyable speaking activity.

A successful readers theatre results in a positive audience reaction, increased reading of the book that produced the script, and audience comments and suggestions for improvement. Readers theatre is an excellent way to introduce students to the world of dramatic performance. Once students have a general idea of how the process works, they

Literature Cluster

BOOKS THAT INVITE READERS THEATRE

Beatty, Patricia (1987). *Charley Skedaddle*. New York: Morrow.

Byars, Betsy (1988). *The burning questions of Bingo Brown*. New York: Viking.

Cleary, Beverly (1999). *Ramona's world*. Illus. by Alan Tiegreen. New York: Morrow Junior Books.

Cohen, Barbara (1983). *Molly's pilgrim*. Illus. by Michael J. Deraney. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Gardiner, John Reynolds (1980). *Stone Fox*. Illus. by Marcia Sewell. New York: Crowell.

Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald (2000). *Virgie goes to school with us boys*. Illus. by E. B. Lewis. New York: Simon & Schuster.

McBratney, Sam (1995). *Guess how much I love you*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

McKissack, Patricia (2000). *The honest to goodness truth*. Illus. by Giselle Potter. New York: Atheneum.

Schroeder, Alan (1995). *Carolina shout!* Illus. by Bernie Fuchs. New York: Dial.

Taylor, Mildred (1987). *The friendship*. Illus. by Max Ginsberg. New York: Dial.

Turner, Ann (1987). *Grasshopper summer*. New York: Macmillan.

Prepared Scripts and Suggestions for Script Development

Laughlin, Mildred K., Black, Peggy T., & Loberg, Margery K. (1991). *Social studies readers theatre for children: Script and script development*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Laughlin, Mildred K., & Latrobe, Kathy H. (1990). *Readers theatre for children: Scripts and script development*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

can take over much of the staging themselves and gain confidence in their level of professional performance.

Puppetry

Puppetry reflects dramatic improvisation in which children's voices, aided by the guise of a puppet, tell or retell stories, share information, or become a character in a improvised scenario. Puppetry requires minimal planning, spontaneous monologue or dialogue, and visual support for oral language.

Puppets must remain secondary to the oral language emphasis. A variety of puppet—finger puppets, box puppets, or shadow puppets—can be created by the children with gloves, sticks, or styrofoam balls. Puppets can take the form of masks, or they can be plush, soft, and cuddly (Flower & Fortney, 1983). However, the puppet should not be the outcome—oral language practice is the objective of puppetry.

There are several reasons why puppets are a successful speaking activity in the elementary classroom:

- Puppets provide a sense of security for the learner. Many children are shy, but when given a puppet, they find a voice within to project through the puppet.
- Puppets provide an opportunity for meaningful expression. Puppets serve as a natural tool for oral performance. They inspire oral language.
- Puppets give children the opportunity to retell or reinvent stories. Retelling provides evidence of comprehension, while switching roles and points of view provides a creative twist to known stories.

Planning and implementing puppetry is most effective when the puppet play links to quality literature. There are hundreds of books with animal characters that young children love to portray. Select books that have repetitive text to encourage comfortable participation. Consider books that will be visual and active when staged as a puppet performance as puppets come to life through movement. Be sure to select books that you and the students like. Familiar classic stories, rather than current popular books, make wonderful puppet plays. Paul Galdone's *The Little Red Hen,* for example, has repetitive text, lots of action, and a cast of animal characters that are familiar.

Stages for puppet productions do not need to be elaborate. Hand puppets can be shown through a sheet with cut holes. Puppets can appear from behind a cardboard box or a plywood theater. Placing a table on its side at a door or the front of a room can also create an effective stage. Because the emphasis is primarily on oral language, time is more effectively spent on oral language than creating props, puppets, or scenery. Working on voice projection, pronunciation, and confidence are more critical to a meaningful performance.

Keep the puppet production short since puppets have limited actions and voices can often be hard to hear. Children should improvise language rather than memorize it. While rehearsal can take place, flexibility of language is a key component during the puppet performance. Narrators should be used to move along the action, fill in the setting, or describe the passage of time. Darkening the room, introducing the players and parts, and having puppets take a curtain call all make for an enjoyable oral language experience.

Martin Waddell's *Farmer Duck* provides ample animal characters for a story reenactment. Envision a lazy farmer surrounded by a hardworking duck surrounded by a cast of a cow, hens, and a sheep. A read-aloud of the story with young children responding through puppet characters fulfills the goals of oral language enactment. Verna Aardema's *Traveling to Tondo: A Tale of the Nkundo of Zaire* is well-suited to the use of paper-plate masks or stick puppets as animal travelers en route to a wedding are delayed by a series of silly circumstances. Even Barry Moser's *The Three Little Pigs,* a traditional retelling of the familiar tale, keeps characters simple and actions sequential for a puppet performance.

Older students might turn puppetry into role playing with moderately structured dramatics in which they develop a story, create characters, or plan dialogue ahead of time. Or they can create a puppet play to share with younger children.

After reading John Winch's *The Old Man Who Loved to Sing,* fourth graders prepared a parallel script to present as a puppet play (Student Sample 6.1). They designed stick puppets to represent the animals of the Australian outback, the setting of the story. After studying the structure and morals of fables, sixth graders wrote their own fables and shared them using a stick puppet as a prop to illustrate the story (Student Sample 6.2). As with all credible speaking activities, puppet-play audiences simultaneously practice optimal listening skills as they make meaning from the puppet production.

Creative Drama and Play Performance

One of the fondest memories of elementary and middle school for many children is a treasured performance in a class or school play. While taking much time and preparation, dramatic performance is the ultimate reflection of speaking ability. Not only does it require practice, drama approaches perfection as a performance nears. Making language come alive through the reading of plays provides a masterful oral language performance (Manna, 1984).

Miniperformances (Morado, Koenig, & Wilson, 1999) involve primary students in performances based on literature, verbal interactions, and imagination. Action and dialogue are formalized into a written script with the guidance of a teacher. The script incorporates the children's retelling of the story in their own words. The script is typed in a large font

STUDENT SAMPLE 6.1
Fourth-grade puppet play.

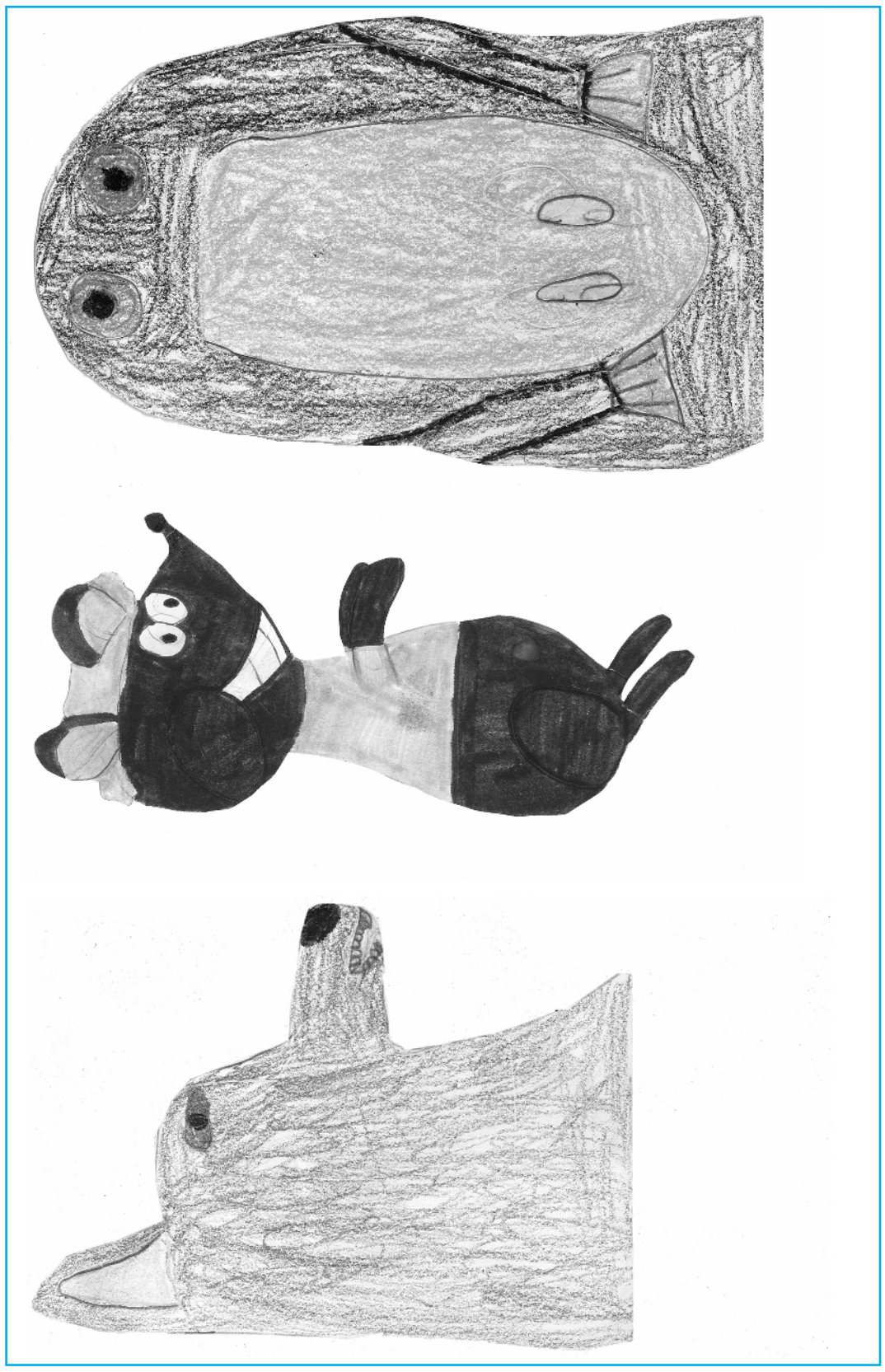
THE OLD MAN WHO LOVED TO SING: GROUP TWO

Old man: Ally
Narrator: Christine
Dingoes: Dylan and Stefan
Birds: Sean and Jessica
Koala: Brooke
Mice: Christine
Wombat: Robert
Kangaroo: Ally and Robert
Platypus: Robert
Possum: Dylan

NARRATOR: This is a story about an Old Man who loves to sing. Our story begins in Sydney, Australia.
OLD MAN: [Plays his gramophone.]
CITY: [Various city noises. Banging, honking, beeping, dinging, sirens.]
OLD MAN: I can't stand all the noise here! I'm moving to the outback.
NARRATOR: So he packs up his things and moves to the Outback.
OLD MAN: This is a nice quiet place to live. It's so quiet here that I can sing and build a cabin. [Begins to sing along with the gramophone.]
DINGOES: This music is squeaky!
BIRDS: What is that terrible noise?
KOALA: Can't a koala get any sleep around here?
MICE: There is so much noise we can't even sneak to the cheese!
WOMBAT: I can't dig underground because there is too much noise.
KANGAROO: We can't hop around with all this racket!
PLATYPUS: We can't lay eggs with all this racket!
NARRATOR: Time went by and eventually the animals began to like the music.
POSSUM: [Swinging by his tail] I actually like this music!

with speakers' parts in boldface and children's names as authors of the script. Movement, music, and drama interweave into this literacy activity through modalities often not emphasized in traditional instruction, therefore working effectively with primary at-risk students. The goal of miniperformances is for children to explore, internalize, and recreate story elements. Comprehension is emphasized over memorization. Figure 6.2 lists the sequential development of a miniperformance over 6 days. This adapted story reenactment for young children provides the opportunity for small scale productions with effective results both with language and personal self-esteem.

Gary Soto's *Navajo Boy: A Play* may rejuvenate an interest in play performance for older students. This lighthearted play about the mixed joy and sorrow of young love in a Mexican American community will spark the attention of middle-school students. While teachers find dramatic performances exhausting in terms of time, anxiety, and attention, plays create memorable moments in school life and often showcase students who otherwise may be lost in pencil and paper assessment. In addition, those who struggle with reading often warm to the performance of literature as it provides motivation and needed practice (McMaster, 1998).



STUDENT SAMPLE 6.2 Sixth-grade puppets.

FIGURE 6.2
Miniperformances at a glance.

Day 1

- Introduce and read the story.
- Generate a list of characters.
- Decide who will play which part, balancing integrity of the story with each child's role preference.

Day 2

- Review the story, clarifying unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Decide where in the performing space each part of the action will take place and a starting location for each character.
- As the teacher reads the story and serves as narrator, children take on their chosen role and follow the action.
- Students begin to help tell the story by reciting key repetitive lines.

Days 3 and 4: Producing the script

- Narrator reads story, and children now put into their own words what their characters will say. One teacher transcribes characters' dialogue as the action progresses.
- Songs, chants, and movements are added to personalize the story.
- At the end of Day 4, teachers produce a miniperformance script, with students' original words, to be distributed to the students for reading, studying, and practicing both at school and at home.

Day 5

- During the final rehearsal, emphasis is placed on speaking with loud, clear voices while facing where the audience will be.
- Rehearse opening and closing the performance: introducing the story to the audience, bowing at the end, and introducing the cast.

Day 6: Miniperformance day

- Gather performers 10 minutes before show time, getting them into costumes and applying face paint. Warm up and focus the group by rehearsing beginnings, endings, key sections, or songs.
- Present the miniperformance to a small audience of classmates, siblings, teachers, and parents.
- Present personalized copies of the original story book to cast, classroom, and school library.

Source: From Carolyn Morado, Rosalie J. Koenig, & Alice S. Wilson (1999). Miniperformances, many stars! Playing with stories. The Reading Teacher, 53 *(2), 116–123. Reprinted with permission of Carolyn Morado and the International Reading Association. All rights reserved.*

Dramatic performance provides a mode of response that involves quality speaking, internalization of character, and transmission of both words and emotions to a motivated audience.

Oral Reports and Presentations

The transmission of information from a speaker to an audience takes the form of an oral report or presentation in the intermediate and upper grades. Whether sharing the facts on a South American country, speaking in the guise of a biographical subject such as Lord

An oral report is guided and enhanced through visual representation.

Shackleton or Gertrude Ederle, or presenting a poster session on a science project, speaking becomes the focus of the presentation. Oral reports reflect language functions as they inform or persuade. To make oral reports effective teachers must model and explain their preparation. Too often, students merely copy information from a resource, thus changing the oral report into a reading exercise. The result is that students learn to dread speaking in front of a group rather than gaining confidence in sharing their own information. Tompkins (2005) suggests a six-step process for preparing information for an oral report:

- ***Choose a topic.*** While a teacher may suggest a broad topic (e.g., the human body, state reports, the Civil War), students focus in on a narrow topic which satisfies their interests (e.g., the skeletal system, Alaska, uniforms of the Confederacy). Graphic organizers provide a strong overview of individual topics in the classroom. Teachers might also suggest four to five questions that must be answered about each of the narrower topics.
- ***Gather and organize information.*** Students gather information using a variety of sources, including informational books, newspapers, Web sites, and encyclopedias. Students can also access nonprint resources such as filmstrips and videotapes, or they can conduct on-site interviews. When all the information is gathered, students must decide how it will most effectively be presented to their audience. The report must be interesting and well-organized to hold listener attention. Notes and information in abbreviated form should be transferred to notecards.
- ***Develop the report.*** Students review their gathered information and determine the structure that will best present the report in an interesting and well-organized format. Students can transfer notes to note cards, but only minimal key terms should be included.
- ***Create visual representations of information.*** Students can develop charts, diagrams, timelines, maps, or models. Visuals provide not only an interesting focus for the audience but a reminder to the speaker of information to be shared. Students can also use a scanner to share visuals through a PowerPoint presentation.

- ***Rehearse the presentation.*** Students choose an attention-getting fact to capture audience interest as the opening of the presentation. Reading note cards and reviewing information helps in preparation. Repeated practice builds delivery confidence and oral expression.
- ***Share the oral presentation.*** Rehearsing and ultimately sharing the report with the class brings report preparation to its final outcome. Teacher minilessons on speaking loudly, maintaining eye contact with the audience, staying on topic, briefly referring to notecards, and using visuals effectively provide high expectations for speakers. Starting with an interesting fact or artifact and speaking from personal interest and knowledge (rather than reading the report) can ensure greater success. The audience of listeners can learn the responsibilities of being attentive, listening to the speaker, asking questions, and providing meaningful feedback to the speaker.

Oral reports and presentations provide a first step for gaining confidence in speaking in front of a large group of peers. Oral language abilities are practiced and growing confidence makes this speaking and listening activity meaningful beyond the classroom.

Figure 6.3 presents a continuum of developmentally appropriate oral listening and speaking activities for the classroom. Such activities provide the variety and practice that student need to refine their listening skills and speaking strategies.

FIGURE 6.3
Developmental listening and speaking activities.

Listening Activities for Grades K–2

What's that sound?
I can make that sound!
What is it?
Naming activities
Repeat after me
Predicting outcomes
Following directions
Rhyming words
Recognizing sequences
Identifying consonant sounds

Speaking Activities for Grades K–2

Pantomime feelings, actions, short scenes
Simple storytelling
Introducing oneself
Introducing another person
Starting a conversation
Nonverbal behavior
Using emotional tone

Listening Activities for Grades 3–5

Reality/fantasy read-alouds
Critical thinking
Oral history guest speaker

Speaking Activities for Grades 3–5

Articulation
Extemporaneous speech
Persuasive speech
Interviewing
Group storytelling
Cultural heritage speech
Multicultural story interpretation

Listening and Speaking Activities for Grades 6–8

Oral history interview
Persuasive speech with outline
Job interviewing
Informative Speech
Impromptu Speech
Panel Discussion

Source: Activities adapted from suggestions by A. L. Chaney & T. L. Burk (1998). Teaching oral communication in Grades K–8. *Boston: Allyn & Bacon.*

Classroom Conversations: Informal Productive Talk

In teaching the language arts, opportunities abound for whole group and small group conversations built on informal productive talk. The oral expression of personal ideas, thoughts, and response provides an interactive learning tool in the classroom. All knowledge does not come from the teacher alone as children do learn from others through on-task, focused talk. Students talking and listening to one another provide authentic communication with a real audience and a real purpose. Whether working in a writing group, responding in a literature conversation, or focusing on a group research project, small group learning focuses on student-centered learning as an approach to teaching the language arts.

Research has shown that working in cooperative groups improves students' academic achievement, social skills, and self-esteem (Slavin, 1990). In teaching the language arts, opportunities exist for working and sharing in small groups. Several cooperative learning strategies (Baloche, 1998; Kagan, 1992) have been developed that apply to language arts learning. An example of the cooperative strategy is accompanied by a language arts connection.

- ***Jigsaw.*** Students may form reading teams as each student becomes an expert on a specific picture book by Patricia Polacco during an author study on this prolific author and illustrator. The following books might be assigned:

  Member A: *Betty Doll*

  Member B: *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother*

  Member C: *The Bee Tree*

  Member D: *Thundercake*

  Member E: *Thank you, Mr. Falker*

  All members of the same letter read and discuss together with other members assigned the same topic. When students return to their original teams, they share what they have learned about Polacco's life from their assigned book.
- ***Think—Pair—Share.*** Reading buddies can employ this cooperative learning strategy by reading an assigned trickster tale such as Gerald McDermott's *Zomo the Rabbit: A Trickster Tale from West Africa,* discussing it with a partner, and sharing the common elements of trickster tales with the entire class who have been assigned other similar tales.
- ***Pair Interviews.*** During the brainstorming stage of the writing process, students might bring a favorite object to school (e.g., stuffed animal, doll, seashell, insect) and interview a partner about it. Where did you get it? Why is it so special to you? How long have you had it? Why is it different than any other ____? Each partner then shares what he or she has learned with a small group or the whole class before the drafting stage.
- ***Cooperative projects.*** Students from a literature response group might agree to construct a mural of the main events in response to Christopher Paul Curtis's *Bud, Not Buddy.* While students are working toward a common goal, they must each make an identifiable contribution to the group task, such as prioritizing ten events, illustrating the scenarios, adding quotations to the mural, or sharing the mural orally with the class.

These provide just a few examples of how collaborative talk relates to the oral opportunities in the language arts classroom. Perhaps the literature conversation provides the most effective application of collaborative talk.

Literature Conversations

As children lean toward the early and advanced independent reading of literature, teachers strive to provide more experiences of reading wonderful books and talking about them with others. Small groups of children with similar reading interests read picture books, short chapter books, and full-length chapter books, discussing and responding to what they read. Literature conversations engage children in collaborative listening and speaking groups as interactive dialogue leads participants toward new perspectives on a book. Literature conversation groups are composed of four to six students who ideally, over time, build a dining room table style of conversation to response sessions (Atwell, 1987).

Owens (1995) suggested a sound rationale for utilizing literature conversations as a support framework for sharing oral response. Literature conversations improve oral response to books in several ways:

- Promote a love of literature and positive attitudes toward reading.
- Reflect a constructivist, child-centered model of literacy.
- Encourage extensive and intensive reading.
- Invite natural discussions that lead to higher level, critical thinking.
- Support a diverse response to literature.
- Foster interaction and collaboration.
- Encourage response to literature from multiple perspectives.
- Nurture private reflection and oral articulation of thoughts.

Many classroom-based studies highlight the potential of literature conversations to improve the ability to communicate personal thoughts about literature, to build critical listening and speaking skills, and to keep an open mind to new perspectives on a literary text (Eeds & Wells, 1989; Lehman & Scharer, 1996). Guidelines for organizing, managing, and facilitating literature conversations with young children (Chapter 5) and with intermediate and middle-level students (Chapter 7) will provide a detailed framework for this productive talk mode in the context of reading workshops in the classroom. When you revisit this topic in later chapters of the book, the impact of listening and speaking in a literature conversation will remind you of the power of classroom conversation in a community of learners.

Visit the Companion Website at www.prenhall.com/hancock and gauge your understanding of Chapter 6 concepts with the self-assessments.

Closing Thoughts

This chapter cast a spotlight on the lesser mentioned language arts of listening and speaking. Beginning with an opening focus on the "neglected" language art of listening, we have seen the importance of including formal instruction and practice in this neglected area. The varied types of listening match with literary texts that focus instruction on learning about all aspects of the art of listening.

The chapter focused on the many classic listening and speaking activities that provide memorable experiences through active listening engagement, speaking performance, and listening and speaking integration. It also showed how you can be energized by the prospect of planning and experiencing read-alouds, interactive reading, and story

retelling. The potential of readers theatre as a reading, writing, listening, speaking activity, as well as a performance mode was discussed. Puppetry was shown to combine visual representation by constructing puppets and listening and speaking to their words and stories. Choral reading was discussed as a means to achieving listening and speaking outcomes. Finally, oral presentations were shown to be comfortable and confidence-building experiences for students.

The last phase of the chapter addressed the importance of productive talk in the context of a community of learners. Collaborative learning groups in the language arts classroom provide a productive means of interactive learning through listening and speaking components. The potential of talk as a vehicle toward collaborative teaching and learning emerges clearly in this chapter, helping teachers to manage and facilitate small group activities within the classroom.

As you move on to other areas of language arts, keep listening and speaking close to your heart and your lesson delivery. While too many teachers assume that listening and speaking are already in place, they are surprised to discover that specific listening and speaking activities are needed to focus on the skills necessary for learning and sharing across the entire curriculum. With proper modeling and practice, students can succeed in both the receptive and the communicative realm of the listening and speaking domains of the language arts.

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