

Breaking Barriers to Literacy: Creating a Story Hour that Contributes to Reading Comprehension, Tolerance, and Multicultural Experiences

Eleanor B. Howe

Librarian

Pine-Richland School District

USA

Reading aloud to children is not only a very pleasurable experience but also an academic enrichment activity that helps equalize opportunities for all students by increasing their exposure to language, culture, and literature through a variety of vicarious experiences. After reviewing relevant professional literature, this paper presents a generic lesson plan that can increase children's listening and reading comprehension skills and thereby help break down the barriers between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Public librarians, school librarians, teachers, and parents can use the recommended read-aloud strategies to help all children increase their linguistic and social skills as well as their cultural awareness.

Reading aloud to children is a usually a very pleasurable experience for both the reader and the listener. It can also be an academic enrichment activity that helps equalize opportunities for all students by increasing the listeners' exposure to language, culture, and literature through a variety of vicarious experiences. If reading aloud can increase children's listening and reading comprehension skills, story hour can also help break down the barriers between advantaged and disadvantaged children, wherever they might be, by helping disadvantaged children increase their linguistic as well as social skills.

After a brief review of the relevant research, this paper will focus on practical recommendations for improving children's listening and social skills during story hour in the public library, school library, or at home. I have drawn these recommendations from the conclusions of research and the professional literature as well as my own experience reading aloud to elementary school children in kindergarten, grade one, and grade four.

Research on Reading Aloud and the Development of Language Arts Skills

Over the years researchers have repeatedly concluded that reading aloud correlates with children's success in school (Smolkin, Conlon, & Yaden, 1988; Strickland, Morrow, Feitelson, & Iraqi, 1990) and that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p.33). Reading aloud had the additional benefit of creating "a pleasure connection between the child and print." (Trelease, 1995, p.46)

The professional literature and texts in the field of reading and reading instruction also support the interrelation of listening and reading skills. Several studies have concluded that reading aloud and instruction in listening skills can enhance both listening comprehension and the enjoyment of literature (Boodt, 1984; Brownell, 1986; Choate & Rakes, 1987; Friedman, 1986; Hanks, 1988; Howe, 2000; Lundsteen, 1971; Pearson & Fielding, 1982; Ringler & Weber, 1984; Simpson, 1986; Smith, 1963; Walcutt, Lamport & McCracken, 1974; and Warren & Fitzgerald, 1997).

Literacy research documents the benefits of reading aloud on:

- vocabulary
- general linguistic ability
- concepts of print and books
- sense of story structure and genre
- world knowledge,
- reading comprehension, and
- positive attitudes towards books and reading

(Burns & Roe, 1976; Cooter, 1991; Dennis & Walter, 1995; Elley, 1989; Fitzgerald, 1989; Howe, 2000; LeLoup & Stone, 1991; Meyer, Stahl, Linn, & Wardrop, 1994, 1994; Morrow, 1989; Rosenhouse, Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1997; Strickland et al., 1990; Trelease, 1995; Warren & Fitzgerald, 1997). The general conclusion is that reading aloud develops listening comprehension and language skills that children then utilize when reading by themselves.

This research and the practice of reading aloud are consistent with Vygotsky's theory of literacy as developing in social contexts with modeling and guidance by adults (Morrow, 1989; Rosenhouse et al., 1997). Story hour aloud is definitely a social activity in which adults can model appropriate language and social behavior, present a variety of literary experiences, and guide comprehension. The research and Vygotsky's theory are also consistent with the testimony of many authors around the world and from all social backgrounds that their parents read aloud to them frequently when they were children and that they thereby gained a love of story and an ability with language.

Because of these findings, schools have encouraged parents and teachers to read aloud to their children every day, and articles in journals for librarians promote reading aloud in the library (Burns & Flowers, 1997; Cart, 1996; Freeman, 1992; Guardia, 1995; Hilchey-Chandler, 1997; Kids & reading, 1996; LeLoup & Stone, 1991; Mazzoco, 1993; Trelease, 1995; Wells, 1993; Wiley, 1996; and Wilson & Brown, 1999). It would be difficult to escape the conclusion from all the evidence that a program of reading aloud to students of all backgrounds would tend to equalize the language skills of all students, including those from language-deprived or second-language homes.

A read-aloud program will be of greatest benefit to disadvantaged children if it begins before they enter school and continues at least through ages ten or eleven because listening comprehension is greater than reading comprehension until children are in grades five or six (Pearson & Fielding, 1982). Reading aloud therefore offers pre-teen children an important venue for content learning as well as social, linguistic, cultural, and literary learning. These benefits may even extend to secondary school students. A teacher recently told me that students in a high school summer English course enjoyed being read to and became quite engaged in the story. The K-12 Junior Great Books program, moreover, begins its consideration of each literary selection by reading it aloud; students then read it silently before participating in the shared inquiry discussion (Great Books Foundation, 1999).

There are, however, two important considerations with regard to the correlation between reading aloud and language arts skills. One is how the story is read aloud: is it just read aloud or is it read effectively? The second is the selection of stories to be read: are they quality literature or are they excerpts from a basal reader? Both of these factors have an important impact on the development of language arts skills in listeners.

With regard to reading aloud effectively, one study (Hoffman, Roser, and Farest, 1988) found that many teachers tended merely to read aloud and employed few techniques to improve student involvement and comprehension. After training in seven read-aloud strategies, these teachers incorporated many of these strategies into their story hour with the result that the average time for story hour increased from 10 to 23 minutes. The researchers noted evidence of a greater level of student engagement and participation when these techniques were used, but unfortunately they did not explore whether there was also enhanced learning (Hoffman, Roser, Farest). It is generally accepted, however, that greater student involvement and participation does lead to greater learning.

With regard to story selection, readers should choose stories that offer both something familiar and something new for students to learn in curricular content, linguistic and social skills, and cultural experiences. Stories with character development and differentiation, interesting settings, enjoyable language, and an engaging plot line offer the opportunity for listeners to become familiar with story structure and meaning. Discussion can stimulate and reinforce the

comprehension of these literary elements as well as vocabulary, content, and main ideas. The stories selected for inclusion in the Junior Great Books program also offer opportunities for interpretation (Great Books Foundation, 1999).

Strategies for Reading Aloud Effectively

There are several read-aloud strategies that librarians, teachers, and parents can use to increase not only the enjoyment of all listeners but also their listening and reading comprehension, social skills, tolerance, and multicultural experiences. The following recommendations flow from my own research project, from the professional literature and practicing librarians, and from my experience reading aloud in the school library.

1. Ensure That Story Hour is an Enjoyable and Literary Experience

Revisit and keep always in mind that the goals of story hour at home or in the school or public library are to develop

- a love of reading and literature,
- an appreciation for language, and
- a positive feeling for the library (Hilchey-Chandler, 1997).

Select age-appropriate quality literature that both the reader and children will enjoy. Exposure to quality literature helps develop general linguistic abilities as well as literary appreciation. Elements of enjoyment can come from the topic, theme, writing style, rhyme, characters, plot, setting, illustrations, and humor. Develop lists of titles that illustrate each of these literary elements as well as the variety of cultural genres such as fables, folktales, and legends. Children also love familiarity.

Reading several stories from a series they like or rereading a favorite story brings the enjoyment of revisiting a pleasurable experience and may also improve comprehension (Rosenhouse et al., 1997).

2. Create an Environment That Promotes Active Listening

Research has documented the importance of the reader's personality and the ambiance of the room in helping children feel comfortable and engaged. The reader should convey personal warmth with eye contact, a positive expression on the face, a relaxed and open body posture, attractive attire, and positive words (Brownell, 1986). A stimulating but warm and comfortable physical environment enhances both listening comprehension and participation (Brownell, 1986; Burns & Flowers, 1997; Freeman, 1992). Removing visual and aural distractions will help demonstrate that the activity is important and keep listeners focused on the story (Brownell).

A structure and rules for story hour help children listen, learn, and practice appropriate social behavior. The reader should model desirable social behavior and set clear expectations for the children's behavior before, during, and after the story. It is important for the reader to treat each listener with dignity and to model polite language and consideration for all listeners (Callison, 1999). Basic courtesy expected of the children includes listening to others (no speaking while another speaks), raising a hand before speaking, and making only positive comments about others' opinions. The Junior Great Books shared inquiry discussion method builds on this approach with its own specific guidelines (Great Books Foundation, 1999).

3. Develop an Age-appropriate Topic for Each Story Hour

A topic for each story hour provides coherence to the whole program and unity to the individual session that may include a variety of genres. Topics can focus on

- the school curriculum,
- personal and social skills,
- multicultural experiences, and
- literary elements.

Selecting stories related to topics students are studying in the classroom reinforces learning in school and offers the reader an opportunity for collaboration with teachers. Social topics may focus on desirable behaviors such as respect, responsibility, courtesy, honesty, kindness, and tolerance. Multicultural topics may also include a variety of local and international cultural celebrations and folktales. Literary topics may include stories that emphasize a character, others that emphasize setting, and still others that emphasize plot and conflict. Select some stories or fables that are noted for their theme. Even young listeners can discuss social values and behavior, character, plot, setting, or theme after listening to a story.

4. Pre-read Every Selection Before Reading It Aloud

This enables the reader to decide how to introduce and read the story aloud, which literary, cultural, social, and/or curricular elements to emphasize, and which post-listening activities are most relevant (Burns & Flowers, 1997; Cooter, 1991).

5. Use a Generic Lesson Plan That Enhances Listening and Comprehension

Research provides some general recommendations about which techniques readers can use before, during, and after reading aloud (Howe, 2000; Rosenhouse et al., 1997). What appears to be significant for listening comprehension during story hour are

- expressive reading that encourages attention to and interaction with the material (Morrow, 1989; Scollon, 1988) and;
- activities that encourage interest, review, and analysis (Howe; Morrow; Rosenhouse et al.).

Merely reading aloud may or may not be effective in developing language skills (Morrow; Strickland et al., 1990; Warren & Fitzgerald, 1997).

The following generic lesson plan of story hour activities is based on a lesson plan developed for a research project on the contribution of listening comprehension skills to reading comprehension skills (Howe, 2000). It includes Brownell's (1986) recommendations for improving listening and thinking skills with the HURIER model (Hearing, Understanding, Remembering, Interpreting, Evaluating, and Responding). It uses indirect teaching techniques that encourage the attention, interaction, and review that are essential to both listening and reading comprehension. The lesson plan model is also consistent with the pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities used by children who are expert readers (Callison, 1999). Those who read stories aloud can adopt and model some of these same activities for listeners in order to enhance their comprehension.

a. Pre-listening Activities

Get the students' attention and get rid of distractions (Brownell, 1986; Burns & Flowers, 1997; Freeman, 1992). Then stimulate their interest by

- ✓ referring to previous stories, personal experiences, or knowledge,
- ✓ generating curiosity about the current topic or title, or
- ✓ setting a purpose (Callison, 1999; Rosenhouse et al., 1997).

These activities get children's attention and activate the prior knowledge and interest necessary for comprehension.

b. During-listening Activities

Always present the story in ways that sustain attention and enhance listening comprehension:

- ✓ maintain eye contact,
- ✓ read with expression,
- ✓ infer and model prosody, and
- ✓ define new or unusual words as you read them (Brownell, 1986; Callison, 1999; Cooter, 1991; Elley, 1989; Freeman, 1992; Rosenhouse et al., 1997).

Optional activities include

- making summaries or predictions at key points (Cooter, 1991; Hoffman, Roser, & Farest, 1988);
- encouraging students to visualize by giving them the time and purpose to close their eyes (Brownell, 1986);
- providing a few props that represent characters, themes, plot, or setting (Cooter, 1991; Wilson & Brown, 1999); or;
- encouraging students to participate in repetitive story language (Freeman, 1992; Tompkins & McGee, 1989; Wilson & Brown, 1999).

Pre-reading the story will help you select those optional activities most appropriate for each title. While these activities keep children attentive and develop their linguistic abilities, it is important not to let the number or duration of such activities break the continuity or enjoyment of the story. At least one experienced pre-school story reader prefers not to allow any interruptions to the story itself (Mazzoco, 1993), and the omission of illustrations and props may have a positive effect on children's imaginations (Strickland et al., 1990).

c. Post-listening Activities

These include a discussion of the story and an age-appropriate related creative activity. When posing a question, be sure to allow adequate wait-time so that most students have time to complete their thoughts before calling on one (McKay, 1988). Enhance comprehension by asking the children to

- ✓ summarize or retell the story (Brownell; Dennis & Walter, 1995; Morrow, 1989; Paris, Wasik, & Van der Westhuizen; Rosenhouse et al.; Schmitt);
- ✓ consider literary elements and structure such as character, plot, setting, style, and mood (Gordon, 1989; Nelson-Herber & Johnson, 1989; Schmitt, 1988);
- ✓ identify the topic and main idea (Brownell, 1986; Callison, 1999; Duffelmeyer & Duffelmeyer, 1987; Paris, Wasik, & Van der Westhuizen, 1988; Rosenhouse et al., 1997; Warren & Fitzgerald, 1997); or
- ✓ interpret a character's actions, feelings, or motivations (Great Books Foundation, 1999).

The Junior Great Books program and its recommended discussion methods distinguish between questions that are

- factual (those with a definitive answer in the text),
- interpretive (those with answers that are text-based but with more than one possible answer), and
- speculative (those with answers that are not text-based).

While all types of questions can be asked, the program's shared inquiry discussion focuses on interpretive questions and a structure in which the leader can only ask, not answer, questions (Great Books Foundation, 1999). Such discussions encourage participation and develop higher order thinking skills in listeners and readers. They may also increase social knowledge and skills since many interpretive questions involve an explanation of a character's behavior, feelings, or motivation. The shared inquiry method can be used with age-appropriate readings for children from kindergarten to grade 12 (Great Books Foundation, 1999).

The goal of these post-listening discussions is to develop a sense of story structure, main idea, and interpretation through a brief review. One discussion topic may be enough for each story, especially with primary students, and sometimes they may be omitted so as to avoid over-analyzing (Guardia, 1995; Nelson-Herber & Johnston). Although analytical discussion facilitates comprehension, story hour should remain fun and not become an obvious lesson (Freeman, 1992).

A post-listening creative activity related to the story encourages personal expression and improves the retention of what is heard (Brownell, 1986). The educational benefits of artistic activities include the development of eye-hand coordination and small motor skills, following directions, and using geometric shapes. Written creative activities enhance the understanding of literary elements and reinforce skills in vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. Provide a variety of creative activities that encourage different types of talents—manipulative, musical, linguistic, and artistic.

You may also want to have the children create a long-term project that they work on at various times throughout the year. In kindergarten, for example, children can create their own ABC book, with one letter as the topic of a story hour

and of a page in the book. In first grade they can create a book of the months or seasons. After listening to a story related to the current season or month, they may draw a picture of what a character did during that time of year or their own favorite seasonal activities. Including annual holidays and celebrations in the book will increase multicultural awareness.

The challenge for the reader is to select an age-appropriate number and type of these pre-, during-, and post-listening activities that are most relevant for each title, for the particular students, and for improving cultural awareness and listening comprehension by increasing vocabulary, identifying the main idea, and understanding the organization and literary aspects of the story. This offers an opportunity for readers to be creative and to collaborate with teachers on the selection of these activities.

The use of different pre-, during-, and post-listening activities provides variety within a consistent structure that enhances listening comprehension. The goal for story hour is the introduction or reinforcement of listening skills with a few questions rather than direct instruction (Gordon, 1989; Nelson-Herber & Johnston, 1989).

6. Enjoy the Stories, the Experience of Reading Aloud, and Being With Children

The reader's enthusiasm for literature, creative activities, and children is contagious!

Conclusions

One way of achieving our goal of breaking down the barriers between advantaged and disadvantaged students is for librarians to offer programs that help all students to develop cultural awareness and proficiency in language and social skills. Story hour provides an opportunity to offer children many positive linguistic, literary, cultural, and social experiences. Children can learn social skills and respect for others while listening to and discussing stories if there are clear expectations for their behavior and a good role model. The stories selected for reading can contribute to tolerance and multicultural experiences if they include those titles that increase children's exposure to their own and other cultures with respect for the differences between people. The professional literature does support the correlation between listening and reading comprehension skills.

In order to contribute to all children's learning and enjoyment during story hour, readers should employ effective indirect teaching strategies. The preceding recommendations are based on teaching and learning strategies that improve listening and reading comprehension, and they are consistent with what researchers and theorists have learned about listening comprehension, reading comprehension, pedagogy, and cognitive development. They also offer an opportunity for public and school librarians to collaborate with teachers to improve student learning and enjoyment of story hour.

Although readers who use the generic lesson plan for story hour may not see the resulting enhanced listening skills documented by research, they may nonetheless feel assured that they have contributed to the increased linguistic ability, listening and reading comprehension skills, literary and cultural appreciation, and cognitive and social development of their students—all while the children think they are just listening to a story!

References

- Anderson, R.C., Hiebert, E.H., Scott, J.A., & Wilkinson, I.A.G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission on Reading*. Washington, DC: The National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education.
- Boodt, G.M. (1984). Critical listeners become critical readers in remedial reading class. *The Reading Teacher*, 31, 390-394.
- Brownell, J. (1986). *Building active listening skills*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Burns, M.M., & Flowers, A.A. (1997). Have book bag, will travel: A practical guide to reading aloud. *The Horn Book*, 73, 182-89.

- Burns, P.C., & Roe, B.D. (1976). *Teaching reading in today's elementary schools*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Callison, D. (1999). Key words in instruction: Content literacy. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, 16(3), 38-39ff.
- Cart, M (1996). Carte blanche: The paradigms, they are a-shifftin'. *Booklist*, 92, 805.
- Choate, J.S., & Rakes, T.A. (1987). The Structured Listening Activity: A model for improving listening comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 41, 194-200.
- Cooter, R.B. (1991). Storytelling in the language arts classroom. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 30(2), 71-76.
- Dennis, G., & Walter, E. (1995). The effects of repeated read-alouds on story comprehension as assessed through story retellings. *Reading Improvement*, 32(3), 140-153.
- Duffelmeyer, F.A., & Duffelmeyer, B.B. (1987). Main idea questions on informal reading inventories. *The Reading Teacher*, 41, 162-165.
- Elley, W.B. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 24(2), 174-187.
- Fitzgerald, J. (1989). Research on stories: Implications for teachers. In K.D. Muth (Ed.), *Children's comprehension of text: Research into practice* (pp. 2-36). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Freeman, J. (1992). Reading aloud: A few tricks of the trade. *School Library Journal*, 38 (July), 26-29.
- Friedman, P.G. (1986). *Listening processes: Attention, understanding, evaluation*. Washington, DC: NEA Professional Library.
- Great Books Foundation. *An Introduction to Shared Inquiry: A Handbook for Junior Great Books Leaders* (4th ed.). Chicago: The Great Books Foundation, 1999.
- Guardia, F. (1995). Other voices: Teenagers who don't read. *Bookbird*, 33 (3-4), 47-48.
- Gordon, C.J. (1989). Teaching narrative text structure: A process approach to reading and writing. In K.D. Muth (Ed.), *Children's comprehension of text* (pp. 79-102). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Hanks, W.E. (1988). Critical listening promotes understanding of TV news. *Journalism Educator*, 42, 13-15.
- Hilchey-Chandler, D. (1997). Don't cling to crafts! *School Library Journal*, 43 (February), 45.
- Hoffman, J.V., Roser, N.L., & Farest, C. (1988). Literature-sharing strategies in classrooms serving students from economically disadvantaged and language different home environments. In J.E. Readance & R.S. Baldwin (Eds.), *Dialogues in literacy research: Thirty-seventh yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 331-337). Chicago: National Reading Conference, Inc.
- Howe, E.B. (2000). The Relationship Between Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension: Implications for Reading Aloud and Learning. In Howe, Ed. *Developing Information Literacy - Key to the Future: Papers Presented at the Fourth International Forum on Research in School Librarianship and Proceedings of the Conference*. Seattle, WA: International Association of School Librarianship: pp. 57-73.
- Kids and reading: Reading aloud to children. *Emergency Librarian*, 23 (May-June 1996), 67-68.
- LeLoup, D., & Stone, E. (1991). Classroom connections: Collaborating with the library media specialist on reading aloud. *Indiana Media Journal*, 14 (Fall), 11-14.

- Lundsteen, S.W. (1971). *Listening: Its impact on reading and the other language arts*. Urbana: NCTE/ERIC.
- Mazzoco, M. (1993). *The magic of reading aloud*. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, 6 (Spring), 312-314.
- McKay, M.J. (1988). Extended wait-time and its effect on the listening comprehension of kindergarten students. In J.E. Readance & R.S. Baldwin (Eds.), *Dialogues in literacy research: Thirty-seventh yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp.225-233). Chicago: National Reading Conference, Inc.
- Meyer, L.A., Stahl, S.A., Linn, R.L., & Wardrop, J.L. (1994). Effects of reading storybooks aloud to children. *Journal of Educational Research*, 88 (2), 69-85.
- Morrow, L.M. (1989). Using story retelling as a story structure. In K.D. Muth (Ed.), *Children's comprehension of text: Research into practice* (pp. 37-58). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Nelson-Herber, J., & Johnston, C.S. (1989). Questions and concerns about teaching narrative and expository text. In K.D. Muth (Ed.), *Children's comprehension of text: Research into practice* (pp. 263-280). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Paris, S.B., Wasik, B.A., & Van der Westhuizen, G. (1988). Meta-cognition: A review of research on metacognition and reading. In J.E. Readance & R.S. Baldwin (Eds.), *Dialogues in literacy research: Thirty-seventh yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 143-166). Chicago: National Reading Conference, Inc.
- Pearson, P.D., & Fielding, L. (1982). Research update: Listening comprehension. *Language Arts*, 59, 617-629.
- Ringler, L.H., & Weber, C.K. (1984). *A language-thinking approach to reading: Diagnosis and teaching*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Rosenhouse, J., Feitelson, D., Kita, B., & Goldstein, Z. (1997). Interactive reading aloud to Israeli first graders: Its contribution to literacy development. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 32 (2), 168-183.
- Schmitt, M.C. (1988). The effects of an elaborated directed reading activity on the metacomprehension skills of third graders. In J.E. Readance & R.S. Baldwin (Eds.), *Dialogues in literacy research: Thirty-seventh yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 167-181). Chicago: National Reading Conference, Inc.
- Scollon, R. (1988). Storytelling, reading, and the micropolitics of literacy. In J.E. Readance & R.S. Baldwin (Eds.), *Dialogues in literacy research: Thirty-seventh yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 15-33). Chicago: National Reading Conference, Inc.
- Simpson, M.K. (1986). A teacher's gift: Oral reading and the reading response journal. *Journal of Reading*, 30, 45-50.
- Smith, N. (1963). *Reading instruction for today's children*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Smolkin, L.B., Conlon, A., & Yaden, D.B. (1988). Print salient illustrations in children's picture books: The emergence of written language awareness. In J.E. Readance & R.S. Baldwin (Eds.), *Dialogues in literacy research: Thirty-seventh yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 59-68). Chicago: National Reading Conference, Inc.
- Strickland, D.S., Morrow, L.M., Feitelson, D., & Iraqi, J. (1990). Storybook reading: A bridge to literary language. *The Reading Teacher*, 44(3), 264-265.
- Tompkins, G.E., & McGee, L.M. (1989). Teaching repetition as a story structure. In K.D. Muth (Ed.), *Children's comprehension of text: Research into practice* (pp. 59-78). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Trelease, J. (1995). Reading aloud for reading readiness. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, 9 (Fall), 43-53.

Walcutt, C.C., Lamport, J., & McCracken, G. (1974). *Teaching reading: A phonetic/linguistic approach to developmental reading*. New York: Macmillan.

Warren, L., & Fitzgerald, J. (1997). Helping parents to read expository literature to their children: Promoting main-idea and detail understanding. *Reading Research and Instruction, 36*(4), 341-360.

Wells, R. (1993). "The most important twenty minutes of your day!": Promoting reading aloud to children. *The Horn Book, 69*, 307-310.

Wiley, N. (1996). Back to reading: AASL initiative emphasizes reading. *Kentucky Libraries, 60* (Spring), 3-7.

Wilson, P.P., & Brown, S. (1999). Creating story aprons for library and classroom use as visual aids for reading aloud. *School Library Media Activities Monthly, 16*(3), 26-28.

Biographical Note

Eleanor B. Howe, Co-Chair of the Library Department at the Pine-Richland School District in the greater Pittsburgh USA area, has presented sessions and published articles at the local, state, national, and international levels. She has also taught at Clarion University and is currently Chair of the IASL Research Special Interest Group. After earning the M.S.L.S. and M.Ed. degrees, she has served as librarian from grades kindergarten to 12 in public and private schools and has taught in both libraries and computer laboratories. Her major interest lies in developing library programs that contribute to student learning.