CHAPTER SEVEN

READING

Reading is interpreting text. The old-fashioned word "construing" reminds us that readers *construct* meaning. Though receptive, readers are not passive. They must "take together"—comprehend—all the cues, ranging from typographical layout to subtleties of phrasing, that render the author's content and intent. Every text is a skeleton to be filled out or a scaffolding to be filled in. Not everything meant can be said. Writers assume that readers will assume; that only within some shared understanding can they say something new. The reader's response depends on what she brings to the text, which extends out into her total experience with language, people, and nature. The same for the reader's motive.

INDIVIDUALIZED READING

The first issue of methodology is control. Who is controlling the selection of texts—the district, the school, the department, the teacher, or the reader? If it isn't the reader, there isn't much difference. Official goals for literacy imply that learning to read will get you a job, make you an informed participant in democracy, and increase your personal fulfillment. But it won't do any of these things unless your will drives it. Will and control go together. What happens to the mind of a child forced to read state-approved textbooks on the American heritage of liberty but not allowed to choose what she reads? How can she associate reading with personal fulfillment while being manipulated through a standardized program in which, moreover, many texts are concocted or excerpted just for "instruction." As for getting a job, by the time making money becomes real for her she may already be dropping out of the society that gave her too little sense of ownership to "buy into" it. Selecting texts as a way of directing youth backfires, because learning goals have to be set by learners, not officials—in a democracy at least.

People, including small children, fit reading into diverse personal patterns and schedules of seeking fulfillment. We read various sorts of discourse for various reasons at various stages of individual development. It's futile and mischievous to try to codify all this into one program for all. Just array the kinds of reading and help individuals make their way around in the repertory. Since you and the students both have to know what there is to choose from, Part Three takes up each of the major kinds of discourse in its own chapter. This is the here-is-

God's-plenty method. Watch students' patterns of choice and play to that, as parents do. Freely make suggestions based on what you perceive about them, but let them decide.

Learners pass through phases of being influenced by parents and other adults, peers and friends, and the broader culture or subculture. Often youngsters want to reread texts they already know—a normal and useful part of growth. Often too, reading certain texts fits into some writing or other sort of project or interest they're involved in. An individualized, interactive, and integrated classroom creates dense webs of social and substantive connections that will help students choose as they work out their needs and interests. Even just starting and stopping a text by their own learning schedule makes enormous difference. The power to choose what one reads makes for the best reading program you can have.

Structuring a reading program around concepts of either form or content interferes with individualized reading, which should be initiated as soon as children can read at all and preserved through the years at all costs. Nothing you or anyone else can cook up by way of units or sequence will teach reading so well as guided individual choice in an interactive setting. The real learning will occur as individuals and small groups make up their own sequences and thematic or formal units. Setting up reading material and reading activities according to the kinds of discourse treated in Part Three will ensure coverage of all types of reading including literary forms. Your structuring best comes in the form of organizing a classroom library and activity directions for reading and in conferring with individuals about choices of texts. If you predigest form and content for your students, you will rob them of their education by short-circuiting their thinking.

■ RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

This chapter deals with general processes for practicing reading which hold good for different types of discourse, including literature. But literature does merit special treatment, which it receives in some chapters of Part Three and in the chapters on improvisation and performing. Virtually everything we have to say in this chapter applies to literature as well as to other texts.

The tradition in secondary school of organizing literature around nationalities, periods, or themes works against individualization. Regional, American, and British literature are often mandatory and slated for certain years. We encourage schools to drop this misguided vestige of "cultural literacy." Students will read more of all literatures if they simply *read more*, as they unquestionably do when choosing their own texts. People who don't read don't read the classics. Furthermore, issues of ethnic bias inevitably arise, given a pluralistic school population. You can advise frankly when you feel a student's reading program is unbalanced. Tell her which literature she is ignorant of and suggest texts that will fill these holes and still fit her interests.

Even in a required course of, say, American literature the teacher often is free to select particular works, in which case you can display a lot of texts and let individuals form into groups around their choices. This approach actually acquaints all students with more texts, given an interactive classroom in which different working parties cross-fertilize each other. Trying to ensure that everybody knows the same modicum is an inferior educational strategy compared to letting everybody

know different things and then exchanging what they know. The latter, ironically, would accomplish better the goal of such courses—to sample and survey a literature.

Organizing literature by time and place doesn't do justice to the nature of literature, which is not mainly national or historical. Thematic organization preinterprets. By focusing readers at the outset on preselected frames of reference, both historical and thematic approaches meddle terribly with reader response. Such approaches have made too many students dislike both reading and literature. While taking control of texts away from readers, they also misrepresent literature, which affects people personally in the realm of feeling. It should not be blurred with expository writing but allowed to do what it uniquely does. It is a figurative, artful mode of discourse, an experience itself as well as a perception about experience, created not merely to be understood but to be undergone.

Some specialized literature courses are electives. But electives are just a poor substitute for individualized classrooms, where students can organize their own electives any time about anything and can start and stop them by more realistic schedules than the arbitrary semester. What would be interesting would be for groups or individuals to pursue a subject of interest *across* national or ethnic literatures. Though sometimes this will involve translations, English literature itself subdivides into Irish, Australian, West Indian, South African, and so on.

The historical and ethnic aspects of literature are indeed worthwhile in themselves and often illuminate the texts, like any other aspects of context. Students may very well want to explore these and should be helped when they do, or you can advise readers of a certain text that it will mean more if they get some background on it. The relations, in fact, between texts, authors, and their environments will naturally interest youngsters. But if background becomes foreground, it will filter the text so much as to prevent the reader from knowing what her native response would have been. It's far better education to let individuals and groups explore contexts by their own programs, like one thirteen-year-old girl who became so fascinated with French history after reading *The Three Musketeers* that she read an adult biography of Madame Pompadour and other works about the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Teachers and aides can serve as resources.

Presenting literature through concepts and terms of literary criticism poses a similar problem. For one thing, both literary history and literary criticism contain differing schools of thought, not to say at times vehement disagreement. Students should not be brought up in one or another camp, and surveying all the various factions takes time away from the literature itself. Even old Aristotelian concepts like plot, character, and theme risk stereotyping the way readers think of fiction and drama. The priority for students is to experience the literature itself. Parallel to choice of texts is the second issue of control—who decides interpretations.

The currents of literary theory flow around three poles—the author, the text, and the reader. Which is most authoritative for determining meaning? Factions differ over emphasis on one or the other or over the relations among them. These relations are so basic that if students are enabled to select and deal with texts in the ways recommended here, they will reinvent the schools of literary theory for themselves, which is how they should first know them. Literary history and critical theory can enhance response, but you would do best to bring these spontaneously into students' discussions, performances, or other reworkings of texts, when they can use such ideas to extend their initial responses. Terminology is unimportant.

The principle of plurality underlying these remarks—not one syllabus or framework but shifting alternatives—applies also to the purposes of reading. People read for diverse reasons and in diverse ways—casually to sift, studiedly to recall, raptly to become spellbound. The more schools open up the repertory of authentic discourse, the more apparent this becomes. Thus reader response is a factor of reader purpose and the kind of discourse. But response and purpose go back to choice.

THE MISCONCEPTION OF "READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS"

Whoever believes that incomprehension while reading constitutes a special learning case must then believe that "reading comprehension skills" exist and that these can be developed only through reading activities.

One result of this misconception is that many children spend a large amount of time plowing through various programs advertised to increase these so-called reading comprehension skills—"reading labs," "skill builders," "power builders," or "practice readers." Such programs consist mainly of short, motley reading passages, sequenced for difficulty, about which students are asked comprehension questions.

This is more a constant testing than it is a teaching method. See the critique of it in page 256 of *EVALUATING*. We can concede that the questions might "get a student to think more about what she reads," but we think that if the same student were choosing her own reading selections to fit her interests and other language projects she was engaged in she would be thinking about what she had read anyway. The questioning, in other words, is used as a substitute for intrinsic motivation. Certainly, as a reading follow-up it is of the weakest sort. What's needed for good comprehension are strong motivation before reading and strong intellectual stimulation afterward, neither of which this method affords. Many better ways exist, but—and here is the very painful rub—these other ways are not usually thought of as "reading instruction."

The problem comes down to a contradiction in terms about reading comprehension. On the one hand, the misconception stakes out a vast domain of learning with the word *comprehension*, but with the word *reading* it implies a very narrow methodology for it. This creates an impossible double bind that accounts for much of the difficulty schools have now teaching reading. Reading becomes construed to include general intellectual processes like inferring. Vocabulary building and concept formation are placed in its domain, even though neither of these has any exclusive connection with reading and can be effectively learned through talk. Subject-matter reading, as in science and social studies, is supposed to require additional "skills" that also fall under reading, when in fact what is difficult for the young reader are the vocabulary, the concepts, and the knowledge context, all of which can be learned without ever opening a book. There are educators who would have us recognize dozens of different reading skills; some even count a couple of hundred.

We question the whole concept of reading skills beyond those of visual processing. We see nothing wrong in defining reading broadly to include comprehension, since it figures there as elsewhere, so long as the means of *practicing* comprehension are correspondingly broadened. This means that most of the activities

recommended in Part Two and Part Three teach reading comprehension, as do many other activities in and out of school that develop thinking processes, knowledge structures, and general maturation. Just as interpretive processes extend well beyond reading, so must the methodology for exercising them.

CAUSES OF INCOMPREHENSION

First, some so-called comprehension problems may really be incorrectly diagnosed problems of word recognition, matters of emergent literacy as discussed in the last chapter. Many youngsters in the middle grades never, in fact, learned well enough how to associate print with speech and hence can't access sufficiently their oral knowledge to interpret the text. They have limped along in reading, understanding some things but missing the individual meanings of some words and the total meaning of some word sequences because they still can't recognize in print what they know orally. It's easy to confuse this case with the case of a student who recognizes words well but doesn't have some of the words in her vocabulary or has not grasped certain concepts yet, however they are worded, or has a general cognitive problem in putting facts together, or simply is not motivated to stick with the text.

Textual tests of comprehension will not reveal the difference. You have to remove visual processing as a factor and assess the problem orally. Read aloud to her and ask what she understood. Then if you suspect the problem is word recognition, ask her to sight-read some text to you. All literate adults sometimes read texts they do not comprehend—even when they know all the words orally—because of inadequate knowledge of the subject matter, failure to grasp certain concepts, cognitive difficulty in relating statements, or failure of the writer to make herself clear.

■ POOR MOTIVATION

Given good word recognition, what causes reading problems? A major cause may simply be lack of motive. Some students haven't yet become interested in language generally and in books in particular and do not see what they have to gain personally from either. This problem is clearly not going to be solved by "practice reading" with comprehension questions but rather by receiving and producing language in social activities—listening to oral or recorded reading, singing, asking questions and discussing with peers, dictating stories, playing word games, and doing dramatic activities. Only widespread involvement in language can solve the problem of poor motivation, and that involvement, as most teachers realize, must occur first outside the realm of silent reading. But you will never know whether motivation or something else is the problem unless you allow students to choose activities and texts. Patterns of choice, or even inability to choose, reveal the learner to you as you need to know her to help her.

It is when motivation is an issue that two aspects of the uniqueness of reading come to the fore. The visual processing of text peculiar to reading makes it a faster medium and a more solitary medium than talk. The speed is generally an advantage. Most adults who read extensively find great frustration in other modes of receiving information because they seem so slow. One has to receive video or

audio transmission at life rate. Reading, on the other hand, can go at the pace of thought. Students should have ample opportunity for scanning and browsing in a great number of texts so they can see the value of finding something they want in written form. Thus they can learn for themselves the economical nature of the process of reading.

The solitude of reading, however, will repel some youngsters as strongly as it draws others. Many low comprehension scores just reflect a dislike for immobilizing oneself with a book and giving up social exchange. For some youngsters being alone is virtually a punishment in itself; to be alone and *still* is too much. The whole of *PERFORMING TEXTS* is about how to read socially and move around at the same time.

There's no doubt that the skill of reading is enormously valuable in our culture—more so, in fact, than many students learn about in time to avoid incurring a reading problem. One job of schools is to array all the uses and pleasures of reading so that a learner can explore these to find reasons to make the effort to comprehend what's in books. *Display* the array and let students sample freely. Give them plenty of chances to find themselves in the repertory, their own points of entry into the realm of reading. Many students who seem unmotivated to read are just not interested in the limited fodder thrust on them or resent the thrusting itself.

Also, everyone has a different knowledge-making style, and to assert reading at the expense of these other modes of knowing mistreats the youngster who makes sense of the world largely in the nonverbal mode, by means of visual, rhythmical, kinesthetic, or other patterning, or the one who senses and intuits beyond language and thus is less verbal, or the one who can pick up information orally so economically that she has yet to find reading of value. Too often these types of youngsters (and these are merely illustrative types) are labeled as "learning disabled" or "slow readers" or "verbally retarded" and issued bad report cards.

Good teaching calls for figuring out a way to avoid downgrading a child's native modes of learning all while helping her extend her way of sensing and making sense of the world. We must recognize that for some learners reading will never be as significant or useful as their other modes of knowing. But we don't need to make this judgment, and in any case there's no way of knowing how much reading can mean to a student who is not free to explore it in her own way. For far too many children the process of reading is a testing ground for their worth, a source of anxiety, an activity imbued with grave moral judgment. Nothing damages the motivation to read so much as its negative association with testing.

■ LACK OF EXPERIENCE

Another major cause of reading problems is experiential and, by definition, cannot be removed except through other activities. This doesn't mean to imply that some people have experience and others do not. It's simply that a book may refer to things with which a given reader has no acquaintance. These things may be physical objects, concepts, ideas, or a whole knowledge framework. Because the problem never ceases to exist, it goes far beyond "reading readiness." A layman reading about black holes in a journal of astronomy will probably have trouble comprehending. Aldous Huxley once said that our education is far too verbal, and that much of the literature presented to young people is meaningless to them because they have not yet had the emotional experiences that are prerequisite for

understanding it. (Huxley was advocating more nonverbal education to the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library!)

Films and television can help enlarge experience and supply vocabulary. The practice of taking classes on field trips is well justified in this respect. Playing games with picture cards will also extend visual acquaintance with objects and living creatures. See *Labels and Captions* for more suggestions for using pictures to expand vocabulary. Emotional experience and point of view can be enlarged by playing roles in dramatic work. The small-group process advocated in this book provides considerable social experience and practice in oral comprehension. Thus schools can, to some extent, acquaint youngsters with the things that words and sentences refer to, but reading comprehension will always stand in some ratio to what an individual has done, heard, seen, and felt in her personal life—exactly as conversational comprehension does.

■ EGOCENTRICITY

All interpretation is subjective. Any reader, as we said, has to fill in words and phrases by her own lights, according to expectancy cues provided by salient letters, syntax, and the drift of the sense. But the problem reader may fail to see how her filling in does not square with meaning cues elsewhere in the text. Certain words or phrases have special power or private meaning for her; they trigger strong feelings or irrelevant associations that act as static to interfere with clear reception. These words or phrases arrest too much of her attention, causing her to ignore or slight other portions of the text, so that she gives a distorted reading, misconstruing statements or the relationships among statements. Or she may be too undeveloped intellectually to infer unstated connections the author is implying. But if all interpretation is subjective, who is to judge?

There are a couple of issues here. One is that the authority of the author must also be honored by trying in good faith to understand what she had in mind. If pure self-stimulation suffices, why read? The criterion for countering narcissism can be completeness. Does my interpretation take into account *all* the cues? Most fully appreciating literature depends on this, but more mundane texts also have to assume for clarity that the reader is not skewing the cues. Objectivity may be impossible, but readers can aspire to impartiality by becoming aware of their partialities. This awareness is the other issue.

One doesn't have to renounce partialities to recognize them. But readers ought to discover that their interpretation and assessment of a text may not be the only one. Since egocentricity consists of being unaware that any other interpretation is possible, the learner needs other points of view on the text, which is exactly what she will get in a small-group discussion with peers. When she finds out that others her age read the same text differently, her egocentricity is challenged, and she may even be helped to understand just how her subjective responses prevented her from seeing what others saw or made her obscure the significant with the insignificant. Once knowing others' interpretations or evaluations, she can of course stick to her own, but her thinking now encompasses their viewpoints so that she reads more richly next time, having then more to bring to bear on the text.

Such learning is much more powerful than being told by the teacher or the answer sheet that one was wrong, for in the latter case children tend to care only about being right, squaring with the authority, and often take a luck-of-the-draw

attitude—"Oh well, next time I'll guess better." In drama work, on the other hand, students enacting a story or poem have to deal specifically with problems of egocentricity because differences in understanding crop up in the enactment and have to be straightened out.

MEANS TO COMPREHENSION

The chief cause of incomprehension in learners for whom these preceding causes may not hold is a need of intellectual awakening and exercising. This covers a number of mental faculties that we will take up one at a time and for which we will indicate practices.

■ ATTENTION

The ability to attend closely to language sequences develops through concentrated, interactive discussions among a small group of peers and through dramatic enactments and improvisations. What each participant says herself depends on what her partners have just said. Unless she learns to attend, she has no basis for her own actions. This habit of interacting makes for responsive receivers and generates that attention to the words of others that is the indispensable basis of reading. Transferring this attentive concentration to the printed page occurs whenever students talk together about a text as described later in this chapter.

■ RECOLLECTION

Recalling depends on attention in the moment and on later efforts to retrieve the information acquired by attending. A common feature of topic-centered discussion is recalling what the group has said. Since recall is usually selective, it inevitably leads to the additional skill of summarizing. The writing process set forth in this book frequently consists of taking notes on ongoing events and basing later composition on these notes. The notes may be on the speech of others, when taking a turn as discussion scribe or when interviewing, or even on texts themselves when keeping a reading journal or taking notes for a project. Frequently a student tape-records and transcribes words. The general habit of deliberately storing and retrieving information—selectively noted—is thus established early and made integral to whatever experience is being registered.

As for recalling texts themselves, this occurs when enacting a piece of literature or when discussing, say, an expository selection. In order to act out a story or converse about a topic drawn from the reading, group members have to recall together the actions or facts. And, of course, performing short scripts requires actually memorizing the text (in which case the actor must try to comprehend it in order to perform it).

■ INFERENCE

Let's turn now to the general and major faculty of putting two and two together, reading between the lines—otherwise known as drawing inferences and conclu-

sions. From what an author says is true, one is supposed to assume that certain other things not said are also true. A reader forms an hypothesis about what the author means and confirms or modifies this hypothesis as she reads on. Inference supplies everything from implied conjunctions of time and causality to the syllogistic reasoning that if statements A and B are true, then a reasonable conclusion would be C. In other words, anything that teaches relating and reasoning will foster this aspect of comprehension.

Many activities in this book will develop inference, but dramatization is especially pertinent because it elaborates the text and thus brings out implications. Anything serving as a script—a story or poem or play—is bound to be incomplete. Even stage directions themselves do not by any means spell out everything. The actors must infer many of their positions, movements, expressions, and lines of dialogue, not to mention personality, feelings, character relationships, and thematic motifs. An important trait of drama, in fact, is that no guiding narrator or informant takes the spectator by the hand and explains for her the meaning of what she's seeing. And for the actor, the enacting of the text is one way of making explicit much of what is implicit.

In small-group discussion of texts, inferences are shared and justified by citing evidence from the text. But any good discussion, whether about a text or not, furthers inference. A listener has to infer the implications of what any oral speaker says as much as she does those of what a writer puts in a book—perhaps even more, because speech statements are less carefully worded and organized. All discussion constantly teaches this aspect of comprehension because interlocutors are making and checking inferences at every turn of their exchanges. The effect of discussion on reading has not yet been measured, however, because voluminous, regular, and experienced small-group discussion has not played a large enough role in the language arts curriculum to cinch our claim that reading comprehension will benefit far more from discussion than from a program of reading arbitrary excerpts and answering comprehension questions on them right afterwards.

In discussion, the *reasons* for misunderstanding come out. Comprehension can be explored at its very roots. In the case of inference, for example, no matter what the subject is, the process of building and canceling statements inevitably calls attention to the implications in statements and the relationships among them. In fact, a large part of discussion consists of testing the implications of statements. If the discussion, furthermore, is about a text the group has read, any disagreement not resolvable by pointing to a certain sentence in the text is almost certainly to be about inference. As the group collectively makes clear the implications, each individual learns how to do it by herself.

The small-group cross-commentary in a writing workshop permits writer and reader to approach inference-making from both points of view at once and thus to see how it is a factor of rhetoric—that is, of compositional decisions that determine what the reader deduces and to which the reader must become attuned. Thus the student-reader says what she understood the student-writer to mean so that when one of them makes unintended inferences they can pinpoint together exactly what makes and breaks reading comprehension.

A major issue in writing concerns how explicitly the writer should convey her ideas and how much she can assume that the reader will fill in. Judging this is no easy matter, for the writer has her own problems of egocentricity. The learner should, from the outset, be let in on this issue as both receiver and producer. How

much the writer has to lead her reader by making connections explicit and how much the reader should be expected to do these things on her own are central to an English curriculum. Comprehension must be approached simultaneously from both reader's and writer's viewpoints, in order to understand how misreading occurs and to realize that reader and writer share responsibility for preventing it. Thus writing is one of the main keys to reading comprehension, especially if it includes commentary by the learners on each other's papers.

The writer in a workshop can have the experience of being both understood and misunderstood in print. What did she leave out? What made her reader take a different direction from the one she was supposed to? The principle here is that when reader and writer can talk together they can reach a much profounder understanding of what the written word in fact is than when they deal only with accomplished texts. They get some insight into how both composition and comprehension hinge on the incompleteness of a text. The writer must set cues and the reader look for them. When you become aware of what you as writer are putting in and leaving out, playing up and playing down, you understand that you must, when reading, fill out the text by relating items in it according to the same cues that your own readers indicate you should put in your writing, such as orientation, transitions, contrast, emphasis, and subordination.

A pupil undergoing a reading skills program, on the other hand, would be justified in feeling that the writer is always right, for whenever the pupil misunderstands, it is always *her* fault. By implication, when it's the pupil's turn to be writer, she may feel that the reader can jolly well watch out for herself; any failure of communication is due to poor reading comprehension, not faulty writing.

■ INTERPRETATION

Here we're into the complex mental operation of putting together inferences and structural cues, and of noting tone, focus, and emphasis. It involves sensitivity to word choice, patterns, symmetry, and form. An enormous amount of what students miss or misinterpret when reading can be attributed to a kind of childish passivity, whereby printed words impose themselves with an authority that makes them seem either inevitable or arbitrary; the learner has no sense of the choices that have been made, whether these concern diction or sentence structure or overall organization. Through writing and discussion of writing she can become aware of how texts are created and therefore of how they may be interpreted. In order to interpret well, she must confront choice herself.

One inadequacy of trying to teach interpretation through the read-and-test practice passages lies in the fact that a finished text provides no sense of alternatives. Without a background of alternatives, there's no way to discriminate what the author did from what she might have done. This is why texts remain featureless to some students and hence difficult to interpret. The writing program presented in this book is based on compositional choices that range from the selection and shaping of raw subject matter to alternative ways of phrasing part of a sentence. As the learner works constantly on focus and emphasis in her own composing process, she becomes a more alert and perceptive interpreter of others' compositions.

Dramatizing and performing texts entail close interpretation in order to know what to render and how to render it. Players working up a performance must think

about and discuss many aspects of the text, and this experience pays off handsomely during silent reading. Students become attuned to tone and style by imitating characters and playing roles. The structural cues and patterns of texts encountered in silent reading can often be translated through drama into visual, auditory, and spatial equivalents.

As regards literary form and whole modes of discourse such as poetry, fiction, drama, essay, biography, reportage, research, and argumentation, this principle of learning to read by writing is pursued right to the very foundations of this program. Students produce all the modes of discourse that they receive. By learning these modes from the inside, so to speak, as practitioners, they know more intuitively how to read them. Diversified writing experience makes possible a truly informed evaluation of reading texts, because particular composition-comprehension issues peculiar to each kind of discourse are examined closely under the dual writer-reader approach of the writing workshop, where criteria for judging each kind are generated.

Reading is a vehicle for general development. Amid the anxiety about getting reading scores up, it will be hard for many teachers not to feel that discussing, improvising, performing, playing games, or working over each other's writing compete with "reading instruction" and must give way in priority to it. Shunting aside these other activities for these reasons may well be a fatal mistake. Skillful silent reading is dependent on wide experience, oral language facility, insight about human behavior and feelings, and mature thinking skills. The solitude of mature reading poses special difficulties for people of little confidence, low self-esteem, or habits of dependence. In this way reading adds emotional factors to the perceptual and intellectual. Furthermore, a reader cannot query or otherwise influence a writer as a listener can a speaker. A book seems nonnegotiable.

The following activities aim to overcome the problem of how to understand language when the author is absent. In addition, all of *Performing Texts* and much of the chapters on discussing, dramatics, and writing contain activities that directly develop discourse skills needed for reading.

LISTENING TO TEXTS

Long before they're able to decode or read aloud themselves children should hear good oral presentations of all kinds of literature that bring out the rhythm, music, imagery, and sound play of poetry and serve as a model of good speech articulation. Love of language is first fostered through the ear, not the eye, and from infancy onward children need to be fed good literature. Since young children or reluctant readers of any age are introduced to a very high proportion of their working vocabulary through oral rather than reading experience, listening to oral readings of literature is a very effective way to ease them into the vocabulary development that will make the reading process easier.

■ LIVE VOICE

Read large quantities of stories and poems to students, sometimes assembled as a whole class, sometimes in small groups. Before children can read much themselves, this practice is, of course, a necessity if their appetite for literature is to be

both nourished and satisfied. It also makes reading a common part of everyday life and shows many children of nonreading parents what books are all about and what pleasure and stimulus can be associated with them. It also puts you in a giving position. While receiving this gift, learners develop an urge to assume the teacher's power, to become able to do themselves what the teacher does. In this respect, you become a model to emulate.

Continuing to read to children who have learned how to read serves to show what good oral reading is like—how it re-creates a storyteller's voice, how it brings out moods and feelings and meanings, how it follows cues of punctuation and typography. Your interpretive readings prepare students to read to other people.

Call on parents, talented students, or other community people to help you. A local amateur or professional acting group often has people who would be pleased to come in and read to youngsters of any age. Find out if there are any artists-in-the-schools organizations in your state or community. Meeting a writer, learning something of her feelings about writing and literature, hearing her read, and discussing the world of words with her can exert a powerful effect on many youngsters, even cause a turning point in their attitude about books and language. A community reader of the students' ethnic or dialect group will ease identification with books. You may find a good local storyteller, librarian, folklorist, or talented parent who knows both how to read and how to tell oral stories. This program's emphasis on student performing should pay off in good readers who can regale classmates or younger students.

But teach yourself, too. Listen to good readers, live and recorded, and practice, perhaps listening to taped playback of yourself. You will learn a lot that you want your students to learn, about both literature and how to render it.

■ RECORDINGS

On page 59 of *Setting Up* we suggest putting together a classroom listening library of recordings of books. Two important reasons argue for supplementing live with recorded voice: (1) recordings can provide a far greater variety of dialects, styles, and voice types than, certainly, you alone, and probably more variety than you can muster even from a responsive community; and (2) recordings are available at any moment students want them and hence considerably reinforce individualization.

One of the most effective ways to help students who want to learn standard dialect is to provide recordings that pose a model of standard English for those who do not hear a great deal of it. Parents of these children most often want their children at least to become familiar with the standard form, and listening to recordings is one way to do this without disparaging the dialect of their heritage, "correcting their grammar," or boring them with dull usage exercises.

Standard-dialect speakers, on the other hand, should become familiar with other dialects—regional, ethnic, and national. Dialectical variation constitutes an important part of the rich heritage of the English language.

■ READING ALONG

A perfect transition between being read to and reading for oneself is to listen to a reading of a text while following that text with the eyes, as we described in the

last chapter. Recordings especially facilitate this practice in an individualized classroom. Although following a text while listening is a means of becoming literate, it's also appropriate long after a student can recognize words for herself.

Listening to a text read well helps students learn to read aloud better; it helps them "hear the voice behind the page" when reading silently. They can hear all aspects of print brought skillfully to life—letters, typography, paragraphing, punctuation marks, and line settings of poetry. Pronunciations of words rarely heard in common speech are sounded while the listener is looking at the words, enabling her to read those words aloud when encountered and also encouraging her to use those words in conversation without fear of mispronouncing them.

Modern technical texts can become accessible also despite unfamiliar terms, heavy loading of thought and information, and difficult sentence structures. Hearing Shakespeare can almost obviate the need for textual notes, for professional actors not only can give pronunciations of old words and proper names but can make clear the meaning of words that have changed sense and unravel difficult syntax caused by older grammar and poetic compression. This is in addition to bringing out the drift of whole speeches, the characterization of speakers, and the dramatic interplay among characters. Excellent discussion is often prompted by students' surprise that the voice they hear on a recording does not sound as they imagined it when reading silently.

Students can hear the tunes to songs so that they can sing them later on their own. All of the musicality and sound play of both song and poetry can be fully experienced only when heard. When heard while following the text, they demonstrate powerfully how much the reader must put into a text, how much *any* text is a script. Hearing good models of everything from clear articulation to artistic interpretation will point the way for students' own renderings.

We suggest read-along as a major solution to the classic problem of students in the middle grades whose word recognition does not equal their general comprehension. That is, they read no better than primary-school children, but their interests are much more mature. For years textbook writers have tried to cater to this very large segment of the school population by writing about drag racing and drug addiction in Dick-and-Jane language. Approached this way, the problem is insoluble, because mature content couched in immature language creates a ludicrous effect and does not fool such students, who still feel the childishness and all too often do not respond well. We suggest making available to them recordings of texts that have content and language befitting their life experience. Students who can't read anything but what is too immature drop out in large numbers between grades six and ten, or they linger in misery, accumulating lifelong feelings of inadequacy and resentment.

Listening while reading may be combined in several other useful ways:

- Listen to a text first, then read the text.
- Read out loud along with the live or recorded voice, alone or in a small group. Or sing along.
- Try reading silently a challenging text, then resort to listening-while-following if the going gets too rough, rather than giving up completely.
- Listen to some texts and read others silently when wishing to take in a lot of related material, like a collection of folk tales, but when reading all of them silently would tire.

- Read a text silently, then listen to the recording and compare inner rendering with the oral interpretation.
- Read a text silently, rehearse and record a reading of it, then play the recording from the classroom library and compare.
- Listen to the class recording and use that version as an aid in rehearsing your own performance of a text.
- As a small group, read a text silently, discuss it together, then play the recording and discuss both text and recording, and find out if hearing it changed the ideas gained from reading and discussing it.

READING ALOUD

There are two ways of reading aloud—sight-reading and rehearsed reading. By sight-reading we mean reading aloud a text one has not seen before. By rehearsed reading we mean working up a reading for others by practicing and then presenting it. Reading aloud allows the learner to socialize reading both for enjoyment and for the benefits of feedback. It externalizes silent reading and thus gives the learner a chance to get help. With this help she can improve both her silent reading and her oral interpretation for others.

Some teachers may fear, understandably, that reading aloud encourages the budding reader to continue the habit of subvocalizing that she established when first making the transition from speech to print. Since subvocalizing keeps silent reading speed down to speaking speed and prolongs an inner activity no longer needed, it does seem desirable not to encourage it. But the solution, we feel, is not to eliminate reading aloud, which would exclude oral interpretation, for one thing, but to increase time allowed in school for silent reading. The best course is to sponsor both silent reading and reading aloud, for each is both an end in itself and a means to the other. Besides, individuals have to be able to move from one to another as needed.

■ READING TO A COACH

How do you monitor and coach a student's silent reading? This can remain an issue into high school for students who don't or won't read, or, in any case, read poorly. Constant comprehension quizzing isn't the answer. Let a student read aloud to you from time to time while you follow the text with your eyes. An individualized, self-directing classroom is designed to permit just such one-to-one occasions.

How a reader sounds out a text reveals many things. It may well be the best means of perceiving what's going on in a learner's head as she reads alone. On the basis of these perceptions you can give pointers and counsel accurately about which methods and materials will help her most. If nothing else, the sessions show your interest in her personal growth in reading.

There's a tradition in elementary school, however, of dividing a class into three or so "reading groups" of different levels, within which each student reads aloud while the other members sit idle with the same book in their hands. This is very inefficient and actually only an unrealized effort at individualization. These old reading groups assume that all students in a group are reading the same thing at the same time and that they need direct instruction by the teacher to get meaning from the text. The division of the class into groups aims to make some allowance, in rate at least, for individual differences. But it doesn't go far enough

and ties down the teacher. A major reason for instituting self-direction is to free you to tutor.

While other students are doing various other activities, you can listen to readers one at a time, just a few a day perhaps. Coaching and monitoring can be just one of many things you do as you move among your students or as they come to you. You might simply move over to someone who's reading silently and ask her to read aloud to you some portion as yet unread of the selection she's starting or working on. Or you might tell the class you want everyone to bring something to read to you two or three times a week. If you think a selection isn't challenging enough to show what someone can do, pick another for her, but make sure that sessions include some reading aloud that allows the learner to feel her competence. A sight-reading passage can be repeated in a session until she reads it well enough to take some pride in her performance.

Sometimes students might read to you a text they want to read to classmates or to younger children or their parents; let them use you for rehearsal. Not everyone will need coaching and monitoring, but they may all want to read to you, especially if the sessions feel positive. For small children the spirit of it might be "Now *I'll* read to *you*."

Encourage students to work up readings of selections or passages to do before a small group, or, if they wish, before the whole class. They bring to you whatever they're working on and try it out on you so that when they perform it for classmates they can enjoy some success. Distinguish between this and sight-reading, though some of both might be done in the same session.

If a student reads laboriously, she doesn't suffer the embarrassment of her peers waiting her out and getting restive or contemptuous, and you don't have to worry about group management and trying to quell those who are getting bored. You're not now trying to do tutorial in a group. Let readers see you as a supporter who makes it possible for them to get competent and to feel good about themselves. The teacher who looms as only a negative judge is one who simply doesn't know how to be specifically helpful. So concentrate on noticing the kinds of difficulties a reader manifests and on showing her how to overcome them. This is the serious, learning part of the sessions, but the tone of them can be warm and playful, and by all means make the student aware of her strengths. When students are working on different sorts of reading matter, you can sincerely be a lot more interested in listening than when all are reading the same thing and you have heard it year after year.

A bonus to these tutoring sessions, which need not last sometimes more than three to five minutes, is that you're evaluating as you teach and will feel more directly in touch with the progress of individual students. Sight-reading reveals best the sort of things taken up below.

ANALYSIS OF ORAL READING

Try to become as expert as possible in interpreting your students' misreadings, in doing what Kenneth Goodman and his colleagues have called "miscue analysis." Become familiar with this practice.[1] All readers miscue somewhat and reshape the

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[1] See Kenneth Goodman, ed., *Miscue Analysis: Applications to Reading Instruction* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973).

text in their own way as they try to make sense of it. They omit some of it, add to it, alter it, and sometimes go back and change their first version. Miscuing should not be regarded as bad but rather as indicative. It can very usefully reveal to you the mental processes of a student so that you can help her more.

Since you want above all in these sessions to listen in on how a student reads when she reads silently, it's better not to interrupt or correct her but just to attend closely and tape if you can. Your eyes have to be following the text as she reads, of course. You could choose a text in advance, make a copy for yourself, and annotate it as you listen, if this degree of formalization doesn't inhibit the student. You might tape the reading and make notes later. You may want to think about her reading or replay the tape before talking with her about it. After you have distilled for yourself what some characteristics of it are and what they imply about a student's learning needs, then you can convey to her in some practical form what you think you perceived. You can coach at the end of the session or later on. Now you're looking for the student's deeper and general reading traits.

Our recommendations are a free adaptation of miscue analysis. As the student sight-reads a reasonably challenging text, note the following:

- Which elements of the text she ignores—certain word endings or other parts of words, whole words or phrases, or punctuation.
- Whether she replaces words and grammar with dialectical variations of these, that is, whether many of her miscues are really a fairly systematic translation, common for some children, between their dialect and standard dialect.
- Which kinds of miscues she corrects herself and whether they're important to the meaning or not.
- Whether she reverses sounds and words or otherwise rearranges elements.
- Which substitutions seem to constitute "reading into the text" subjective expectancies, preoccupations, stereotypes, and so on.
- Which sounds, words, or punctuation she inserts into the text.
- Whether her phrasing and intonation fit sense as well as syntax and punctuation.
- Which spellings she sounds out incorrectly, not because of dialectical variation but because of inadequate understanding of sound-spellings and spelling patterns.
- Whether she follows punctuation and capitalization and, if not, which kinds she ignores or misreads.

Remember that you're not keeping score; you want to spot patterns of miscuing that will apply to other readings. Why do you think the student is reversing or rearranging elements or inserting or substituting things? How close are the intonational contours to how she would speak the same sentences if they were her own? What do her self-corrections show? Of the three main kinds of cues—phonetic, grammatical, and semantic—which do you think she is following most? Least? Would her reading benefit from changing the ratio among these? Too much backtracking, for example, might mean she isn't using semantic or syntactic cues enough to foresee or recognize upcoming possibilities.

If problems still lie in word recognition, a student can't gain enough access to sentence structure and word meaning, which are locked, after all, in the reader's oral knowledge. She needs reinforcement of these graphic cues. For her you might counsel certain word-recognition games. Some, on the other hand, may be

so hung up on visual detail that they can't process larger units. They may need more of some of the activities in *BECOMING LITERATE*.

Consider other cues too, such as typographical layout, headings, illustrations, captions, paragraphing, and so on. Advise students to orient from overall organization downward to detail. It is heeding and relating *all* cues that makes the best reading. Certain specialized graphics such as maps, charts, graphs, tables, and codes become issues in some kinds of discourse, as in *LABELS AND CAPTIONS*.

COACHING

The coaching part consists of reflecting a reading back to a student so that the reader can see how to adjust it. This may concern the general goal of becoming a competent reader or the more specific goal of performing when reading aloud to others. It's for the first that you draw especially on the miscue analysis, but of course this overlaps with expressive rendering. "Oral interpretation" is, after all, *interpretation* and concerns both ease of word recognition, which mustn't distract the reader, and unconscious altering of the text as the reader assigns meaning to it. she's interpreting letters and punctuation at the same time as word meanings and overall sense.

Let the reader know if she's reading too softly or indistinctly, failing to follow punctuation, or misunderstanding the sound value of certain spellings. If the reading is very halting, try to determine if the reader is puzzling out (1) word recognition, (2) the meanings of individual words, (3) the sentence structures, (4) the coordination of these three, or (5) the main continuity of meaning. Say what you think will help that particular individual in the light of what else you know about her as a person and about her literacy development.

If she reads inexpressively, merely telling her "put more expression into it" is not very helpful and may even lead to contrived vocalizing. It's better to ask her what she thinks is the feeling under the lines, or the mood of the story situation, then to ask her to "make me feel that" or to "bring it to life the way you do when you're talking." In the "read-to-me" spirit convey the idea that you like to be entertained just as much she does. But expressiveness best comes from example. Encourage readers to listen to live or recorded readings by more skilled performers. Suggest vocalizing a passage different ways and choosing the best one to render the text. Demonstrate variations yourself from the text at hand, but let the reader choose which is most appropriate. See *PERFORMING TEXTS* for more on rehearsing texts.

Aides should share this coaching role, which you can all improve if you meet occasionally and troubleshoot together. Tapes of miscue and coaching sessions can be extremely valuable for this, and these meetings ought to become part of any regular inservice program. Talk about both the student's reading and the teacher's responses.

■ READING TO CLASSMATES

Classmates can not only serve as audience but can also coach each other to some extent.

PARTNER READING

Partner reading is taking turns sight-reading aloud to each other in a group of two to four that has chosen to read a text together. Partners may have a copy each of

the same text or may pass one book around. The activity teaches more if all have a copy to follow while others read. The purpose is to allow weak or dependent readers to read collectively while socializing and to pool their skills to read a text that any one of them alone might not have enough knowledge, courage, or motivation to get through. More accomplished readers can choose to do this too but more as a way of working into the casting and rehearsal of a reading performance such as described in *PERFORMING TEXTS*.

Partners help each other with word recognition, pronunciation, and comprehension problems while enjoying the social interaction. Activity directions explain that they should let each other know matter-of-factly when they think the reader has made a mistake. If they're not sure, they should ask or consult a dictionary. It's usually the case that if one mispronounces or asks what a word means or leaves a sentence hanging because she doesn't understand it well enough to read it properly, one of the others can fill in. If not, they still have more resources for formulating a question or otherwise getting help than if reading alone.

Part of the point is not even to help each other but to read collectively for the sharing of responses. Asides are more than welcome. Excellent discussion, in fact, often follows from casual comments interjected into the reading. Members compare interpretations or predictions, swap observations or tales prompted by the text, and generally enrich each other's comprehension at the same time that they become more aware of their own reactions to the text. This is how students come to value personal responses to reading. This is also the genesis of literary criticism.

Sometimes members play with different styles or voices with which to read. Books of jokes, rhymes, riddles, limericks, or fables lend themselves to easy role-playing because they contain short dialogues and caricatures. Playing with voicing leads naturally into cross-commentary that becomes more helpful the more coaching they have got individually from you. Another possibility is to decide to read all together in unison, which is a good step toward choral reading (see page 184). All these variations and perhaps others can be suggested in activity directions for partner reading.

Groups can form by choosing themselves or by your suggestion, but either way it seems most natural that members won't spread very much in ability, for the activity assumes more or less equal contributions, and if a member reads much better than the others she should choose or be steered to an activity such as the following.

READING FOR AN AUDIENCE

A student works up a reading to present to another individual, a small group, or the class. The idea is definitely to entertain and be entertained, so both reading and listening are well motivated. Part of your role may be to help the reader choose a selection and a length that will go over well after she has rehearsed on her own and with you. This is an activity that has to be voluntary, but once some students read to others, the more timid may eventually be drawn to do so also, especially with a little encouragement from you and the reassurance of help as they rehearse. Experience doing unison reading for others, or taking part in choral reading, will also bolster courage.

A modest way for a student to begin is to read to just one other person—to a coach first, if she wants, then to someone at home perhaps, or a younger child in a lower grade, or a classmate not as advanced. A student reading "below grade level" anyway can not only save face but gain self-esteem reading to someone

less skilled than herself. Increasing the size of the audience generally requires more confidence. An easy way to do this is to start with a collective reading group such as just described above. Members can agree each to rehearse a selection for the others and present it in turn with the others on the same day or a sequence of days. The selections can be individually chosen or assigned by the group from some collection they're reading together for some reason such as a project requiring that they all know the same selections. In addition to acquainting all members with all selections, taking turns reading has the extra advantage of sustaining student interest across a large number of texts.

READING SILENTLY

Listening to others read, listening while following the text, sight-reading to a coach or with partners, rehearsing and reading aloud for an audience—all these reinforce each other and prepare simultaneously for both performance activities and more independent silent reading. When students go off and read, there's nothing you the teacher (or anyone else, for that matter) can do for the reader. That is the plain and most important truth about silent reading. The reader is on her own. And it's a good thing. If the reader engages in the other activities of the last chapter and this, she will also teach herself when reading alone.

But many teachers don't fully believe or trust this. Only if the silent reading is followed by a comprehension test do they feel all right: after all, this way they can know what went on in that head during that silence, can weigh it and feel that it had a purpose. But to let a student read something she chose, to take no part in the act, never know what went on—well, that seems just too spooky. The feeling is unnecessary. For one thing, you can be sure that if you have done your part by stocking the room with plenty of good reading matter of all sorts, helping the reader find what interests her, coaching her if she needs it, setting up the many possible partner activities, something good will happen during that silent reading. While alone with her text, the reader will increase her proficiency in visual processing and comprehension, because the very act of reading teaches itself as it is exercised.

So arrange with confidence for students to curl up and pore over a book alone. Until they're clearly doing this out of school, make plenty of room for it in school by counseling individuals to do it if they're not. The practice in elementary and middle school of setting aside time for everybody, including adult staff, to do "sustained silent reading" dramatizes the neglected need for it but becomes unnecessary when built into daily classroom functioning.

Some silent reading will be done as part of a group or individual project for which activity directions stipulate follow-ups. Or, if cross-referenced to activity cards, books themselves may route readers to follow-ups. Reading will develop best when set in a web of other activities leading into and out of it, because these will make most sense of it. Interwoven activities carry silent reading along in their momentum. Many of these will be social activities that offset the solitude and create a balanced interplay of inner and outer life.

But silent reading should not always be followed up. The sharing of what one has read is important, but so is solitary rumination. If students are always made to feel that reading in the classroom is preparation for something else, they may not perceive reading as a valued end itself—a way to pursue interests and entertain and develop yourself.

■ READING JOURNALS

A student reading silently needs a way to *register* her responses—bring them to awareness—equivalent to uttering responses in collective reading. Annotating the margins of a text would be the most direct way, but most often the text is not the student's own. Occasionally, however, students can photocopy a short text so as to leave unusually wide margins for annotating. Suggest sometimes that a group silently reading a text in common do this and bring their annotations to the ensuing discussion. Or individuals could do this for a one-to-one conference with you.

Annotations link responses directly to words, phrases, or passages that prompted them. Encourage students to underline, circle, draw arrows, or invent other graphics to single out and relate these citations to each other and to the marginal remarks. Make clear that they may jot down anything that comes to mind while reading that text—memories, images, feelings, observations, all sorts of associations. These may not have anything to do with *explaining* or *evaluating* the text, though they might, if desired at some point, be used for that. Annotations are a record of a reading experience for later reference in discussion or other follow-up.

Since making copies is cumbersome, especially for longer texts, each individual might do marginal annotations just enough times to accustom her to making notes on her reading responses; from then on she can keep them as a journal. In whichever form, these notes provide material for talking and writing. It's impossible to stipulate an age for reading journals, because its rightness depends on many factors of temperament and development. Suggest it for certain students who seem most likely to take to the idea. Annotation should lead easily into journals and establish the idea of registering responses immediately and relating them specifically to certain parts of the text.

Readers will probably not always jot entries into journals *during* reading, but perhaps the close textual focus of marginal annotation will carry over into journal entries made after the fact. For some people, stopping to write notes might interfere with reading involvement. Even summary remarks entered soon after reading will serve the purpose well. Students can discuss when and how to make entries.

Some readers find a double-entry journal useful. On one half of a journal page they note what occurs to them about a text and leave the other half for a later response to the response. They may ask the teacher or someone else to write on this blank half what occurs to them about the original entry. This can become a very valued and valuable dialogue about reading experience.[2] If you are writing the second entry, you might make all sorts of personal observations, sometimes in the form of questions, that you think will enrich, encourage, and enlighten the reader. This can be a fine way of counseling by staying in close touch with a student's reading experience. Or the reader herself might make the second entry at a more removed moment, perhaps after reading something else during the interim. This gives her a chance to think again about a text or her response to it in another frame of mind.

Readers bring their journals to conferences or group discussions and refer to them while sharing. They can also mine them for writing ideas, which are often

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[2] See the periodical about dialogue journals of all sorts, *Dialogue*, edited by Jana Staton, Joy Kreeft Peyton, and Shelley Gutstein, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

triggered by reading. The habit of attending closely to what one thinks and feels while reading, and of relating these responses to specific places in the text, is exactly what can make members of a writing workshop valuable to each other. But practical uses aside, keeping a reading journal simply raises awareness of what's going on within. Most readers of any age respond much more to a text than they realize but lose track of themselves and can't recover their responses. This means they lose material about themselves that has value in itself and that provides wherewithal to parlay their reading into continuities of thought and creativity.

GROUP READING ACTIVITIES

A lot of reading choices will, in fact, be group decisions, as with other language activities. An individual chooses to throw in her lot with others to get the pleasure and practical benefits of partnership and group collaboration. Your role is to help students know each other's interests—who's doing what—and to help them take advantage of these human resources.

A classic question repeatedly arises about whether students should be grouped by ability for reading (usually determined by "reading" test scores, perhaps combined with teacher judgment). If reading is interwoven with other activities and put on an individualized basis, the question hardly makes sense. If students are choosing their reading matter according to personal interests, as influenced by your counseling and by interaction with classmates, then the groups in which they read will be formed automatically on the basis of reading compatibility. They want to do the same thing at the same time—pursue a type of reading like mystery stories or memoirs or a subject such as horses or slavery or a theme such as getting lost or gaining self-control. Compatibility of intent is a better principle than homogeneity based on test scores.

Ability will probably range enough within this common interest so members can learn from each other but not so much that they can't settle on the same title and purpose. Better readers can tolerate weaker readers if the weaker ones don't force them to read something beneath them, as in fact happens necessarily when everyone in a class reads the same thing. The expectation of support from the stronger members encourages the weaker to take on a selection that would daunt them alone. Tolerance varies of course a great deal among youngsters, but the longer experience they have with small-group process, the more easily you'll be able to help them achieve the balance of similarity and difference that they will learn from the most. Interweaving reading with other activities helps grouping more than you might imagine if you haven't experienced the effects of it, because individuals will choose each other for a group according to abilities in activities other than reading, such as a skill in drawing or a knowledge of baseball, that will be useful to a project and make tolerating someone's weaker reading worth the effort.

■ EXCHANGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Solo reading can benefit from the diversity of the classroom population. Students should have ways of exchanging tips on titles and perhaps lending the reading materials themselves if they own them and if their family consents. An area of the chalkboard can be reserved to write titles one liked and wants to pass on. Work

out a system for indicating how the title can be obtained. Another way to share suggestions for reading is to have each student who has finished a good book put a card with the title and author on one side and the reader's name on the other in a "book bank"—a box or envelope on the bulletin board. Other readers can look through it for ideas and query each other for further information. Young children may draw pictures of each book on their cards; older students may write a brief statement telling why they recommend the book. Some students may prefer to record their recommendations on a tape for other readers to listen to. The important thing is that this activity be perceived as a sharing of good ideas, not a "book report" for the teacher.

Another way is for individuals to follow activity directions to meet as a group and bring with them a book or selection they want to recommend to others. Each displays and tells about her book and perhaps reads aloud a passage from it to sample the flavor. They invite questions. Often these help the speaker to think more about the selection. But it's important that these groups generally not have you present, because peer candidness and ease are what will make them work. Try to make the classroom a mental and physical central exchange for reading possibilities.

■ WHOLE-CLASS PROJECTS

Nothing in this curriculum prevents a whole class from pursuing a single broad subject or theme so long as within the framework there is opportunity for student choice of activities. Some projects that call for collaboration of subgroups can be worked out by the whole class, including satisfactory roles for subgroups and individuals.

If a whole class occasionally reads the same piece of literature, such as a novel or play, small-group process may still be employed. Each group can take a part of the text and work out a rehearsed reading of some sort, an improvisation, a dramatization, a panel discussion, or a translation into another medium to share with the rest of the class. For instance, if most of the class members are reading Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," one group may read "Pyramus and Thisbe," another may read the script of "West Side Story," and then all see the film versions and make comparisons. Let students generate themes. It often happens, for example, that one group gets hot on something and either draws the interest of classmates or calls upon classmates to help them enlarge their project. The original working party may want to find out more about a subject than their number permits and try to interest others in a division of labor so that different groups research different sources. Keep an eye out for such situations, and bring the possibility of the project before the whole class.

■ COMPILING ANTHOLOGIES

Using other books as models, a group can put together a collection of any type of writing that interests them—jokes, riddles, brain teasers, advertisements, photos of signs and other outdoor writing, letters, poems, stories, and so on. Although ultimately this can become an individual activity—and personal poetry collections have great significance for many adolescents—it fits a group well because members can sift different sources and pool favorites and brainstorm ways of collecting and organizing.

Like dramatizing, performing, and other types of transforming of texts, anthologizing gets students to think a lot about what they have read and to share these ideas with classmates. They have to develop some criteria, implicit or explicit, on which to base their selection. How do they define the type they're trying to collect—proverbs, for example? Which riddles are better than others? (Both of these types, by the way, are often based on a metaphor.) What kind of letters? Or suppose the anthology is to cut across forms and center on a theme? What's the theme and how many ways can they find it written about? Or it could contain short stories about animals. Shall the stories be truth or fiction? Realism or fantasy? How do ghost stories and murder mysteries differ? Fantasy and science fiction?

Shall the order and juxtaposition of selections have any significance? What's the purpose of the anthology? Should that be explained in a preface? What about writing transitions between selections? These questions of organization can be considered along with the physical matters of whether selections can be compiled by copying or by listing and citing sources. The motive is to pass on to others what one likes.

■ DISCUSSING READING

Discussion of a text students have read has traditionally been led by the teacher. As we noted in *TALKING AND LISTENING*, this is seldom a true discussion, and, besides, despite the intentions of both the teacher and the class, it's usually perceived to be a check on the student's reading. True discussions of texts are explorations and honest conversations. These can begin with partners as soon as children read aloud. Without a teacher present, they will share naturally with one another whatever responses they may have as they read. Spontaneous comments then are the basis of partner discussions. Asking a classmate for help in understanding some point in a text should become a natural habit in the classroom. Comparing reactions and understandings with a partner often starts a good discussion because each can refer to the text in hand to support her reading of it.

In addition to activities like partner reading that invite discussion and to others that entail discussion—straightening out written game directions, rehearsing a script together, commenting on partners' writing, sifting information for a project—there should be activity directions for getting together after reading a selection just in order to discuss it. When a group of learners has finished reading a selection, they may come together to raise questions about things they know they didn't grasp, something they want to know more about, or issues in the selection they want to talk about. Activity directions say to write these down and bring them to the group. Make clear that factual questions are not to be of the quiz-kid type but ones to which discussants really don't know the answer. They may share opinions or feelings about what they've read and compare their interpretations. This comparing is of vast importance, for it allows the reader to discover that her reaction or interpretation may not be the only one justified by the text.

Older students who have each read the same text and have each written down a few questions on slips of paper may first spend a few minutes extracting subjects from the lists, noting overlaps and other connections among them before they begin their discussion. Several other procedures are possible, such as select-

ing only one issue from the slips, or taking several issues in order, or framing a single topic so as to include several points raised on the lists, or answering small factual questions first and then passing on to larger interpretive matters. Often, it will happen that the sorting itself will launch talk, and procedure will sometimes take care of itself. Basically, this process could be simply a specialized version of small-group discussion, for which reading selections supply the topics.

The topics must come from the students' curiosity, puzzlement, or interest. We believe that these discussions should essentially just extend reading responses into conversation. You could take part in some of these as recommended in *TALKING AND LISTENING*, but take care that your presence doesn't cause some students to try to hide their incomprehension or, indeed, to show off for you their remarkable understanding. Students should feel that their candid questions and acknowledged confusion won't be used against them by adults or ridiculed by peers. You can help set a tone not only of collaborating on comprehension problems but also of just wanting to know how different people respond to the same text.

Such a group is, of course, ideal for sharing entries in the reading journals. The habit of keeping the journals will improve discussion enormously when students meet to talk about a text they've agreed to read silently in common. They extract or paraphrase ideas from these reading records and then respond to each other's responses. Once students are familiar and fluent with it, there is no more powerful way to enrich understanding of texts and increase the range of reader response. It will do more for the study of literature than any other activity you can sponsor. Students experienced with this sort of discussion and confident enough not to be intimidated by you will value your participation and be able to learn much from your responses to their responses. But you have to play honestly to what they say, not exploit the occasion to make certain academic points you already have in mind. Be sure to share any uncertainties of your own about the meaning of a text.

■ GRADUAL REVELATION OF A TEXT

A very effective way to provoke good discussion of a text is for the group to agree to stop reading the selection at one or more points and talk about what they think will happen next or how the piece will end. If you know the selection, you may suggest one or two stopping points, or the group may ask a student who has read it to do this. An option is for group members to write individually or collectively their version of the rest of the selection. They compare and discuss their individual versions, then finish the text and discuss again, or they discuss their ideas while writing a collective version and compare it with the text.

Very short selections like poems, jokes, riddles, limericks, and fables can be written out piecemeal or revealed piecemeal on an overhead projector so that halts are made at provocative junctures. Group members might take turns selecting and revealing a text. When something appears incomplete before us, we tend to anticipate the rest and to complete it ourselves, especially if we know something of the form it should have. This mimics of course the basic process of reading itself, which proceeds by confirming or modifying hypotheses about the message of the text. The skill of the presenter is to pick the right stopping points. To make the activity clear and appealing, you might demonstrate it once to the class or an interested group. We will demonstrate here with a haiku.

The game is simple and enjoyable and makes students think about a great many things. In order to complete the poem, one uses all cues—the sense, the image or action, the syntax of the suspended sentence, the rhyme and meter, and basic rhetorical devices like symmetry and parallelism, contrast and reversal. One asks herself what, given the poem so far, would complete all these things and provide a fitting climax. And yet the presenter asks no question, analytical or critical, especially no question to which she knows the answer. She asks for a creative act, and that act entails a lot of intuitive analysis.

Suppose the haiku begins:

The falling leaves

Without saying so to herself, a reader looks for a predicate denoting any act appropriate for leaves, but the obvious one, *fall* is already in the participle. So she looks for another. Spin? Rattle? But what tense? If she's familiar with haiku, she will probably put the predicate in the present. But other things could follow here besides the predicate. An appositive? A relative clause? (She doesn't have to know these terms in order to look for them.) The absence of a comma after *leaves* may cue her to the unlikelihood of either of these two. By now the group has volunteered a number of lines and made judgments about which would be best. The presenter reveals the next line:

The falling leaves
fall and pile up; the rain

It was *fall* after all! Perhaps our student perceives a connection between that repetition and the second predicate *pile up*. And again now she has before her a subject without a predicate. But she also has an image of autumn, a piling action, and a semicolon. Perhaps she's already getting a feeling of balance from the semicolon and the fact that the second clause is starting off just like the first. In thinking of an action for rain, she'll consider the season and mood, the sentence pattern, and perhaps the likelihood of more repetition. A clever student may say "the rain rains" and then think of a rhyme word for *leaves*: "the rain rains and grieves." But she senses that the meter is too heavy (too many stresses) and adds a word to lighten it: "the rain rains down and grieves."

This thinking can go on out loud and benefit from other students' ideas. All the presenter has to do is ask which version they think completes the poem best; reasons are given for preferences, and new tries are made on the basis of these reasons. Whatever lines they arrive at, they've done some imaginative thinking and entered into the poem. They will appreciate the particular sense of climax and closure that the poet created, and understand better on their own what she was trying to do in the whole poem. It is surprise, half-divined, that delights.

The falling leaves
fall and pile up; the rain
beats on the rain.[3]

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[3] From *Introduction to Haiku*, copyright © 1958 by Harold G. Henderson. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

The gathering perception may be of a very different pattern from this one, but always it's a multiple perception—of language, things, and feelings—for the words move with the movement of sensibility.

TRANSFORMING TEXTS

To transform a text is to take the essence of what it expresses and transfer it to another form of writing or to another medium altogether. Dramatizing and performing are transformations of text, discussed in their respective chapters. Transformations make fine follow-ups to reading. They can motivate reading in the first place, then use reading to launch other worthwhile activities. They deepen comprehension by bringing students back to the text to rework it, often with partners, and secondarily, they permit you to evaluate comprehension, because they externalize students' understanding of what they read.

■ STORYTELLING

Any tale that a learner has read can be shared with others by telling the events over again in her own way, paraphrasing. Imaginative and individual re-creation of the story, not fidelity to the written version, is what the best storytellers throughout history have always presented, and students should be encouraged to do no less. For most elementary-school children, hearing a story told makes them more, not less, likely to read the story later for themselves (just as seeing the movie makes adolescents want to read the book). Thus the process benefits both the teller and the listener.

■ TRANSPOSING TO OTHER GENRES

A prose fable can be rewritten as a poem, an anecdote as a script, a story as a series of letters, a biography as an autobiography, a diary as a memoir, or a mystery story as a film script. In changing a selection to another genre, readers are confronted with the limitations and possibilities of a different point of view, an altered scope, and a new ratio of scene to summary. Dealing with the text as writers now, they have to reconsider it very differently and hence understand it in new ways. For other examples of transposition, see page 213, where it is treated as a writing assignment.

■ TRANSLATING TO OTHER MEDIA

Of course, rewriting prose or poetry as a script automatically shifts the medium from book to stage, radio, film, or television. Converting a short story to an audio script for radio or taping teaches a lot, for one has to render everything by sound alone. What does one do with author narration? With important visual features? What makes one author's fiction easier than another's to transpose into sound alone?

Students with some training in music or dance might undertake to make a musical play of a story or to choreograph a story. Reading a brief text to the accompaniment of music or movement makes a modest beginning. This can be

followed by conversion of a text to a musical script in which material is changed and some words chosen to set to music. Action might be stylized by means of the vocabulary of dance movement. Some whole texts, like Samuel Beckett's *Act Without Words*, might be pantomimed or danced.

ILLUSTRATING

Teachers have long known how much children enjoy drawing pictures to illustrate stories they've heard, read, or written. Because nonverbal experience precedes verbal, very young readers find transferring words back into a more familiar nonverbal mode a very gratifying accomplishment. This valuable process should not be confined to the primary years, however. All through school, students need ample opportunity to extend their experience of text by re-creating it in a nonverbal mode. Since true comprehension means capturing for yourself the quality of the author's sense of life, whenever this profound understanding comes, it effects a new synthesis of the elements within the reader. Often this new synthesis cannot be easily expressed verbally. Students should be encouraged to draw what they sense after a significant experience with literature. How much of some haiku can be caught by a drawing or photo? Which aspects *cannot* be illustrated? Suggest posting text with illustration for others to contemplate.

A single drawing may be used to represent a selection that a student wants to recommend to others, as she talks about the selection. Or she may make a diorama of a scene inside a box used as mini-stage. A series of drawings of key scenes, settings, or characters could be presented on a projector or monitor while reading from or describing the selection. Students might mount a series of captioned photos on a bulletin board, or make them into a book. Photos might be made of people pantomiming actions and of settings like those in a story, and this series could be presented as a slide show.

FILMING

Students can do a film or video version of a story or poem or play. Shooting without sound, one student scripted and filmed e. e. cummings's "balloon man," aiming to evoke with the camera the vision and feelings of the poem. Videotaping with camcorders makes dialogue possible and opens up considerably the range of adaptable material.

Even elementary-level students in some schools have made animated films by taking one frame at a time with a plunger attachment to a movie camera as felt, cloth, or paper cutouts of characters were inched about patiently into the story actions. Another way is to shoot frames of different cutouts of a character in successively different positions, which produces a more realistic effect of action. Dolls or clay figures and so on may be used in the same way. See "Media Alternatives" on page 334 for more possibilities.

■ IMITATING TEXTS

One of the best ways to appreciate the qualities of the literature you read is to write in that same mode. For example, a person who has tried her hand at writing reportage or sonnets is likely to read either with greater enjoyment and perception. Writing in any genre can enhance a learner's sensitivity to that form and thus

provide a stimulus to reading it. See Part Three for specific suggestions for reading and writing activities in various kinds of discourse. There we have treated reading and writing together to emphasize that learners should write in the same forms they read.

One kind of imitating always popular with youngsters is parody. They can retell familiar nursery rhymes in dialect or make over old legends with modern caricatures. To make fun of or have fun with a style or content, you have to get to know it well. Older students might want to try parodying a particular author or work. "Story in Disguise" is a game of retelling a well-known story to see if classmates recognize it. Parodying and retelling can be either improvised or written.

MATERIALS

Books are not the only reading matter. The shrewd teacher takes advantage of the many other forms of print and writing in addition to putting together the fullest possible classroom library.

■ WRITING IN THE ENVIRONMENT

The classroom itself should be a display of reading matter—on bulletin boards, chalkboards, walls, and mobiles. For children who are still working on word recognition, tagboard labels beside each object provide another link between thing and word. Photographs or posters can have captions; learning centers need labels and lists of directions posted. Bulletin boards should be repositories for student-produced writing for others to read (see *LABELS AND CAPTIONS*).

The environment out of school that most youngsters live in is plastered with words already—street signs, advertisements, store signs, markings, and directions. These can be photographed or copied and displayed in the classroom to help make the tie between streets and books. Many students will in fact enjoy making books of environmental writing for themselves and as primers for literacy beginners.

■ TEACHER'S HANDBOOKS

Keep handy a large, varied anthology or two from which you can pluck any kind of poetry or prose that seems right to read aloud or hand over to students.

Much of the first matter that's read to young children or that they read themselves should be poetry. The three Rs of poetry—rhyme, rhythm, and repetition—teach children a lot about individual words and patterns of words, and they do so in delightful and memorable ways.

■ CLASSROOM LIBRARY

On page 59 we described a classroom library based on individualization rather than class sets. The chapters of Part Three, "Kinds of Discourse," set forth all the kinds of reading matter that should be stocked in the classroom and that, indeed, are produced and read in our culture.

■ PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION

1. Materials should be chosen for the quality of their writing only, not for any pedagogical paraphernalia or thematic development.
2. Materials should represent as wide a range of types of reading as *any* students in the growth stage of your students might conceivably want to read if known to them—literary, utilitarian, and scientific. Naturally, the exact types of reading material will differ somewhat at each of the four main stages of development see (page 57), but a classroom of any year should represent all ten kinds of discourse in some forms.
3. The range of difficulty should be very broad, fitting the reality of the classroom, not some fancied "typical" third or tenth grader. This not only allows for individual differences in reading skill but also facilitates the rereading of favorite selections or books or of reading "below level" as well as seeking challenges over the horizon.
4. The materials should represent a maximum variety of formats, from highly illustrated picture books and comic books to tightly printed, adult-looking texts. The ideal is a tradebook rather than textbook look—diversity in type styles and sizes, styles of illustration, trim size, and general format. Graphics should vary a lot within one book sometimes and certainly across books, mixing color with black-and-white, painting and line drawing with photos and collages and cutouts. The idea is not merely to appeal to everyone but to demonstrate graphic creativity and its relation to reading material. This is part of a multimedia curriculum, and older students do not outgrow art!
5. Try to get books that each contain only one kind of reading matter—riddles or reportage or science fiction—because such a physical breakdown facilitates tremendously a self-directing, individualized, small-group system that cross-references books to activity cards and other interrelated materials. Readers can be helped to focus on the genre and define what it is by seeing instances of it all in one book. The different genres will not need to be defined by the teacher or rote-learned by the students as information because those who read enough instances of a specific form, such as legends, will evolve their own definition of it and refine it as they try their hand at producing their own legends, looking back at the models when necessary.
6. Informational, social studies, and science books should be authentic and up-to-date and do justice to their subjects.
7. The preferences and reactions of the learners must play an important part in the selection of materials.

In keeping with the concept of a library, obtain in general only one copy of each title. The more you go from single to multiple copies the more you move away from individualized to standardized reading. If multiple copies of one title are obtained, to accommodate group reading, five or six copies is enough. If the whole class decides for some reason to read a selection in common, this can be done a group at a time. For class singing or choral reading, copy the text on the chalkboard, project it, or photocopy it. (You or a leader may want to move a pointer, to synchronize.) Sometimes a group rehearsing a play script may need more than six copies if the cast is large and all are on stage at once. But for these few occasions it's definitely not

worth buying whole-class sets of books, because if you do you won't be able to afford the variety of titles required by any individualized reading program.

The reference list below indicates the kinds of reading matter we recommend. Ideally each would constitute a separate book or so. The levels indicated are the four growth stages outlined on page 57. Actually, most kinds of writing hold good over a much longer growth range than one level, and many hold good for every age, but we suggest some shuffling and redesignating as students mature. Fiction, for example, can be broken down at first more by content—animal stories, mystery, sports, adventure—and later more by form—fictional autobiography and fictional memoir, fictional diary, and so on. But science fiction remains such all the way through. As a general principle, reading types become more finely discriminated, like the following point-of-view breakdown of fiction and the breakdown of poems into at least a few particular forms. Limericks, ballads, haiku, and sonnets deserve special focus, we believe, because they relate well to writing and exemplify some basic features of poetic form. Isolating other poetic forms could also be useful.

The breakdown of fiction by point of view in the secondary years certainly is no necessity. But it's the only breakdown by form that is basic and entails no preinterpretation by you or editors. It calls attention to fictional technique without a word being said, and it parallels the breakdown of nonfiction, which is significant, since fiction simulates documents. Autobiographies, memoirs, biographies, chronicles, letters, and diaries correspond, moreover, to library divisions, another worthwhile consideration. *Points of View: An Anthology of Short Stories* and *Points of Departure: An Anthology of Nonfiction* array for high school or college these point-of-view fictional techniques in parallel with their documentary counterparts.[4]

■ BOOK TYPES

LEVEL ONE

rhymes
poems
songs
game songs
game directions
jump-rope jingles
animal encyclopedia
folk and fairy tales
riddles
rebuses
animal dictionary
comics
how-to-make directions
signs
animal stories
scary tales
nature stories
modern stories
jokes
tongue twisters
captioned photos

LEVEL TWO

poems
story poems
songs
limericks

[4] Available in paperback from Penguin USA/New American Library, Mentor series.

adventure stories
animal stories (true)
animal stories (fiction)
sports stories
mystery stories
fanciful stories
science fiction
true stories (autobiography, biography, etc.)
information
science encyclopedia
game directions
directions for how to do and make
charts and graphs
maps
signs
humorous stories
dictionaires
recipes
jump-rope jingles
tongue twisters
jokes and puns
insults
riddles
rebuses
codes
brain teasers
proverbs
fables
folk talks
legends
myths
plays (all media)
comics
captioned photos

LEVELS THREE AND FOUR

diaries
fictional diaries
letters
fictional letters
autobiography
fictional autobiography
memoir
fictional memoir
biography
fictional biography
chronicle
fictional chronicle
charts and graphs
maps
advertisements
dictionaries
information
eyewitness reportage
third-person reportage
essays of reflection
essays of generalization
transcripts
theater scripts
radio scripts
film and TV scripts
adventure stories
sports stories
mystery stories
science fiction
humorous stories
jokes
limericks
comics
riddles
brainteasers
codes
signs
captioned photos
Readers Theater scripts
dialogues and monologues
proverbs
fables
legends
myths
parables
epigrams and sayings
songs
ballads
narrative poetry
lyric poetry
haiku
sonnets

For Level Four the main difference is an increase in the amount of research reported in reportage books, an increase in the number of more philosophical and theoretical essays, and the addition perhaps of a whole book of sonnets. For Level Four you could drop codes, limericks, comics, riddles, captioned photos, ads, and jokes, but the fact is that all of those can be very sophisticated. Unless very hard pressed, stock any reasonable possibilities when in doubt.

This progression, in fact, is really an accumulation, and dropping is hardly an issue. By adolescence, Level Three students should be offered all the types of reading matter; throughout secondary school, the changes occur in the maturity of form and content within these types rather than in the introduction of new types, except perhaps for rarer poetic forms, which can be encountered in mixed-poetry anthologies. Note that Level Three includes both content categories like adventure or sports and point-of-view categories like diary fiction and biographical fiction, so that students may search and learn either way. For fuller definition and detail about these types, consult appropriate chapters in Part Three, "Kinds of Discourse."

Note that the types are not sequenced. For one thing, no one knows what a proper sequence might be for all students, and many kinds of reading matter are equally mature. Let students find their own level, but if you feel someone is merely afraid to advance, then suggest something more mature that you think the person would enjoy, or steer her into a group that would involve her in more mature reading. This is tricky; don't push too hard. If you're patient, most students will get bored reading easy stuff and will be influenced by those already reading more mature works. That's one reason you want the class heterogeneous and interactive. When material is not sequenced, no stigma attaches to reading easier books, and the weaker reader can build up self-esteem and, again, move on.

It's not necessary for you to have read all the books or other reading matter in the classroom. In fact, if you limit their choices to what you have read, you'll jam up the whole program. It's obvious, however, that the more familiar you are with types and titles of reading material, the more able you will be to suggest what a youngster may read next. If an individual or a group is hot on fish, suggest ways they can track fish across fables, a science encyclopedia, animal fiction and true stories, poems, songs, and so on. You and they can make a whole impromptu curriculum out of fish that will help them see how the same subject is treated differently across different modes and genres.

CROSS-REFERENCING

Cross-referencing books is extremely handy not only to point out interesting connections among books but also to build in more self-directing structure to help students make decisions about what to do next. Cross-referencing consists of writing or printing into a book some optional routings, usually several choices, of where to go next: "See *Parables* or *Proverbs*," or "Now try the activity card 'Voice Chorus' or 'Make a Slide Tape.'" Emblazon conspicuously and show students where cross-referencing is. Use your own system, of course, if the materials have not been made this way.

Cross-referencing can route students to another book that is related (fables to parables) or to another that is a step up in difficulty (comics to humorous stories) and to a couple of follow-up activities appropriate to that book (acting out a story for fables or performing a text for transcripts). If you route specifically very

often—to one selection in a book—you'll be programming; the possibilities are various enough without resorting to that. Students should understand that if they have a strong idea of where to turn next when finishing a book or selection, then they can skip the cross-referenced routing, but if not, they can try one or several of the options. As they discover connections among materials, they can contribute their own cross references.

A small team of teachers can best work out and build into their materials a cross-referencing system by pooling ideas and knowledge about the books they can get. Some continuity from teacher to teacher would help everyone. Several teachers might have their students share several classroom libraries organized the same way and perhaps cross-referenced from one room to another, for greater choice. Doing this work once will make daily life far easier.

FURTHER READING

It will be extremely helpful to have for each type of reading matter a list of some more titles of that same type available to the students, so that if they want to read more science fiction, say, than you have stocked in the classroom, they can consult this Further Reading List to know what other titles they might try to buy, borrow, or check out of another library. Ideally, a Further Reading List would appear at the end of each book, but you and the students might make and post the lists in a notebook or on a wall. Such lists should contain periodicals and reference books also: if an adolescent reads a lot of factual material on nature, she should know not only about magazines like *Natural History* but about the various readers' periodical indexes to science and nature magazines.

■ SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

No classroom library, even if rather well heeled, is likely to suffice for a truly individualized curriculum. No school can afford to stock its classrooms with enough books if the reading program really takes fire. It's possible that the excessive control built into traditional reading and literature series is unwittingly designed so students don't read beyond the school's financial resources. Youngsters who really get the reading habit and who start asking many questions may very well exhaust the whole classroom library or at least those portions of it pertaining to their interests. They are ready to venture to a school or community library.

Welcome this development and make the transition to the library as smooth and gratifying as possible. This is not done by elaborate and often defeating "library units" in which children are taught everything from the Dewey decimal system to the number of holdings in the library. Children don't need to learn how to become librarians; rather, they need to feel competent and comfortable as library users. A heavy load of information about how to do research—in the abstract—is seldom anything but a burden. A friendly librarian who takes seriously a young learner's question about, for example, where penguins keep their eggs warm, can show her how to use the index of the children's encyclopedias or browse through the books on animals and birds on the science shelves. If she still has trouble, the librarian can hand her a book to scan for her answer. By meeting the learner where she is, the librarian gives her one successful experience in finding out what she wants to know; on this, she can build further research tasks.

Later, when she's bursting with another unanswered question, she can be shown the subject guide to the card catalogue or the adult encyclopedias.

■ ACTIVITY CARDS AND DIRECTIONS

A major type of reading material for both the beginning and intermediate reader is the list of directions for an activity. Lists should be short, relatively simple, well-illustrated, if possible, and action-oriented. They provide reading matter of high interest, for they show students how to do things they want to do and how to utilize the environment. Many youngsters who for some reason are not ready to read much in booklets may read a considerable number of directions just in order to know how to do the activities. The carrying out of directions is a natural check on reading comprehension. Since it's usually done in the company of partners, learners can check each other's reading. This reading material is by nature expository writing and therefore accustoms learners to comprehending this utilitarian type of discourse. It also provides a model for direction-writing.

Whenever you find yourself giving oral directions, you should ask if these would not better be written and either posted or filed where students who need them could read them. Whenever learners prefer to ask you rather than read for themselves, you should send the learners back to the written material to find out what they need to know. If you set up a pattern of answering their questions, they become all the more dependent on you, and you will have a classroom of students waiting impatiently for you to help them. Individualized process will thus get hopelessly clogged.

With beginning readers, of course, you will often have to read directions with the youngsters at first, moving your finger over the words as they watch. Once they've heard and seen a certain set of directions read to them, and once they have some knowledge of the activity itself, they will have some excellent aids to help them reread the directions for themselves later in the activity or on another occasion:

1. Since most of the activities call for partners or groups, learners can pool their knowledge and their deductive powers to figure out the words.
2. Illustrations help them remember the important actions.
3. Many of the same words recur frequently in all sets of directions.
4. Often the activity itself makes clear what certain words have to be and hence gives high payoffs to deduction.

Because activity directions encourage multiple cuing and are used constantly, they constitute a major portion of the reading program.

■ OTHER STUDENTS' WRITING

Students following the curriculum in this book will pour forth an abundance of writing. They'll be reading each other's productions constantly. This reading material has several advantages over printed texts: it's naturally controlled for maturity of content and expression, vocabulary, and sentence structure, and it's of interest because it's peer-written. It allows learners to talk to the authors and thus recognize the tentative nature of any writing. They can begin to discriminate tex-

tual features by seeing the texts change and thus become aware of these features in a book. In other words, the locally written texts of classmates not only provide additional reading material having a special social interest but also bring reading down from the remote perfection of the printed page into the everyday realm of works in progress.

Some student writings will be in unfinished form as groups or individuals meet to exchange first drafts for reactions and commentary. Some of these will be printed and distributed for voluntary reading, or projected before the class. Some of the writing will end in booklet form, thus joining the commercially published materials in the classroom library. The student-produced books are a kind of homemade version of the library because students write the kinds of matter that they read, that is, all the kinds of discourse arrayed in Part Three. Youngsters will read generously in each mode of writing because doing so is entailed in group process. Surely, the quantity and variety of student writing constitutes a formidable reading program. Student-produced material won't replace the vitally needed, rich input from the maturer culture, with its greater resources of language and experience, but it will virtually double each pupil's reading practice. It builds a bridge from her local world to that cultural legacy she meets in published books.

REMEDIAL READING

Prevention is always the best remedy. The concept of "remedial" reading arises out of ineffectual programs that overcontrol the learning processes and thus leave a wide wake of casualties. Remedial reading shouldn't be necessary, certainly not in the sense of special classes, programs, and teachers. The supposed need for these just means that commercial packages and managerial systems can't identify and accommodate the personal and social nature of language. Individualized, small-group processes make remediation unnecessary for the simple reason that by their flexible and pluralistic nature they keep up with each individual and give her what she needs when she needs it. They don't let problems go so far that crisis intervention seems the only answer.

If you look at successful remedial programs you'll find that they give students what they should have had in the first place—the activities recommended in this book. The first thing they do is create separate small classes or subgroups of a class that permit a teacher to work more closely with individuals—read to them, read back and forth with them like partners, talk while they read, choose texts appealing to them in particular, scribe for them, and monitor and coach them one-to-one. To increase the human resources, they also set up collective reading with partners and buddy them up with tutor aides, often volunteers. They surround them with diverse material resources in addition to books—manipulable and multisensory materials, games, charts, and perhaps some attractive sound-spelling presentation, among which they route individuals according to need.

When "remedial" programs work, they work because they de-institutionalize the institution. Their secret is not a trade secret. It's a human truth made to look like a secret by the imposition of commercial and bureaucratic artifacts. Like good alternative schools, they begin by decentralizing decision-making and resources so that the right learner can come together with the right resources at the right time. They abandon managerial systems and in fact set about offsetting the cumulative negative effects of such systems. "Remediation" should be so well

built into daily processes that no extraordinary, belated circumstances for it are ever required. That's exactly what we've aimed to do.

If, however, you teach in the middle or upper grades and inherit students who read poorly or not at all, they can become good readers through the practices described in this and preceding chapters. These include ways for you to analyze, monitor, and coach individual reading performance and ways for students to learn word recognition and comprehension. Such learners do not have to be segregated into special classes, because your classroom can provide everything "remedial" classes do. If one or more teachers in your school specialize in remedial work, they can come into mainstream classrooms, tutor poor readers there, and help organize other aides as well. Mainstreaming problem learners avoids stigmatizing and lets them benefit from all the advantages of heterogeneity.

TEACHING LITERATURE

One teaches literature by setting up the learning processes we've been outlining here, not by explaining texts to students or by extracting answers from them in class "discussions." Since these processes exercise the construing of texts, alone and with partners, they all teach literature. But as we said, comprehension is not everything with literature, because it exists to be undergone as well as understood. This makes performing and transforming of texts especially important. Besides experiencing the literary work more existentially through these activities, students do close textual reading because performing and transforming texts *entail* it. Too many literary texts have died during classroom vivisections. Analysis for its own sake, with no other motive, presupposes a prior sophisticated involvement with literature that few students have—not at least until they have first done analysis less directly and more functionally, as a means to another end.

The following are all ways of learning literature. Some have already been treated above; some we will describe below.

1. Partners take turns sight-reading aloud to each other, remarking on the text along the way.
2. Partners dramatize a text or perform it after rehearsing it.
3. Students listen to and watch performances of texts.
4. Students extend or transform a text by creative writing.
5. Members of a small group discuss without the teacher a text they've read separately.
6. Students take notes of their responses while reading alone.
7. The teacher leads discussion of a text by questioning students and parlaying the responses.
8. The teacher lectures to students about a literary work.
9. Students write essays about literary works of their choice.
10. Students write in the literary forms they read in.

Some of these activities will obviously work better if preceded by others. Activities 7, 8, and 9 are downright dangerous without plentiful experience with the others first. Some may be done by either small groups or individuals but would best be done first with partners. Only the last four have not been described yet.

■ TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

Usually this presupposes that a whole class has read the same work, and usually the teacher has in mind an interpretation or appreciation of the text that she wants students to have before they leave the room. So it could prevent both personal choice and personal response. But you can lead discussion in a subgroup that has read a text of their choice, and you can play to students' responses instead of imposing your own or those of literary critics and historians. You can question, but your questions can invite them to say what they thought and felt about characters or events or passages. Follow these up with particular questions about their responses to your open-ended questions, such as, "Were you surprised, then, when she suddenly decided to take a vacation?" to help a reader fit together her responses to different acts by the same character. You might ask if others in the group had a similar reaction. Your *kind* of questioning can serve as a model for group members to explore what they constructed from the text and how this affected them.

■ LECTURING

Wrongly used, as it often is, lecturing can be fatal to the independence of student thought, especially if done frequently or to the exclusion of the other activities. Also, it too usually presupposes that a class is reading a text in common, and most often the lecture situates it in some historical or thematic framework. Actually, furnishing factual background could help and interest students if they're already involved in the text for reasons of their own. A subgroup might ask a teacher to do this for them as or after they read a text they've chosen. But fitting a work into Romanticism gives it an interpretive spin that only the most independent-minded readers can recover from and make good use of.

If the lecture constructs an interpretation by pulling together a lot of specific textual cues, it may demonstrate just how much a thoughtful, experienced reader can get out of or see in a literary work. This can be a way of letting students benefit from your literary expertise. But if you do this, give it as a free gift, we advise. Go ahead and do a number on it—make it a good show—but offer it just as your own appreciation of the work, and don't hold the students responsible for it. If done in this spirit, students may really enjoy it and be inspired to emulate your example—the best way to pass on what you know. If the text is short, you might read it to them or pass out copies for them to read first. Or pick a text they already know. Let them ask you questions after the lecture and discuss your interpretation.

A very thought-provoking possibility is to interpret a work from the viewpoints of several critical schools—say, feminist, Marxist, "new criticism," structural, and deconstructionist. Try to avoid technical terms, and contrast the differing positions in common language.

Invite students to work up their own analysis of text or appreciation of a work, voluntarily, and present it to the class.

■ STUDENT ESSAYS

Putting together some kind of a talk on a text, followed by discussion, would ease students into writing about literary works, which for most of them can be a for-

bidding and unwelcome activity. Everything depends on how it is built up to and whether volition is built into it. Writing about texts is difficult even for well-educated adults and requires unusual motivation. It works best with people who have come to love literature and to register their responses to it. Ideas come easily if one is accustomed to reacting honestly and spontaneously and to acknowledging what one feels and thinks. We suggest not forcing students to write about texts but making the possibility attractive by keeping it closely tied to pleasurable sharing of reading experience. If they choose a text that they feel they have interesting ideas about, if they do an oral draft first with a nonthreatening audience, and if more confident or older students show the way, then you may be surprised at who volunteers.

REVIEWS

No one has to think of this as formal literary criticism, which has, after all, a different context, but emulating book reviewers can make writing about books seem familiar. Reviews abound in magazines and newspapers, and seem functional, since they aim to steer other readers toward or away from certain books. Reviews may contain background information, comparison with similar works, story summary, stylistic analysis, and interpretation of meaning, the material for which comes essentially from thought associations one has while reading or while reflecting on the text afterward. Some of the best criticism and appreciation is done just as a form of personal essay about some reading experience, like Thomas DeQuincey's "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*." Indeed, reviewing can parlay personal-experience essays about books into more formal analysis or interpretation.

■ WRITING IN LITERARY FORMS

Students who have tried their hand at writing fiction, poems, and scripts have an inside track on understanding what professional authors do with those forms. Participating in writing workshops focused on them may constitute the best possible literary education, because not only are learners role-playing the poet, playwright, or short story writer, they are reading drafts of similar efforts by partners. Being part of the creation of these texts as both author and audience sensitizes them to many issues of craftsmanship that increase enjoyment and perception manifold.[5]

In the next chapter we take up another way of responding to texts—performing them. In the final part of the book, on kinds of discourse, we treat developmental reading as an expanding repertory of kinds of reading matter. This expansion occurs in two general ways—by reading more across the abstracter reaches of the spectrum and by differentiating more discriminatingly among the types of texts already familiar. But like other human development, the development of reading takes an individual course with each person.

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[5] For elaboration of these ten activities see "Ways of Teaching Literature," in James Moffett, *Coming on Center* 2nd ed. (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1988).