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EFFECTS OF READING STYLES
ON
AFRICAN-AMERICAN PRESCHOOLERS OF DISADVANTAGE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

by
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December, 2000

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of two styles of storybook reading within the storybook reading event (SBRE) upon African-American preschoolers of disadvantage (AAP-D). One style, performance-oriented, was thought to be closer to cultural frameworks familiar for this population. This style was contrasted with the interactive style familiar to children of middle-class. Each style was utilized with two groups of five children (ten children per condition) across three storybooks, which were each read six times. Pre- and posttesting were used to determine changes in language (semantic and discourse ability, as measured by retelling), literacy, and world knowledge. A control group of five children received only pretesting and posttesting and no storybook reading. Weekly probes further examined retelling changes and response to comprehension questions with each book, and amount of engagement within the storybook reading event.

Analysis of variance was employed in this quantitative study. Subjects ranged in age from 3 years, 9 months to 4 years, 9 months. Pretest-posttest measures of literacy knowledge and world knowledge indicated reliably greater gains by the groups receiving storybook reading as compared to the control group. Differences approached significance for story retelling between experimental and control groups. Means for the interactive condition were slightly higher than for performance-oriented on all measures, but both conditions resulted in improvements in retelling, literacy, and world knowledge. These results suggest

that even short-term experiences with book reading are beneficial to a range of language and literacy skills for AAP-D children.

Weekly probes of retelling, comprehension, and focused engagement suggested that SBRE benefit in these areas may be affected by the structure and contents of chosen books as well as the style of engagement. Important implications of this study are that both styles of reading appear to offer benefits to AAP-D, and that style use may need to be individualized to the age, stage, and book experience of children.

INTRODUCTION

Storybook reading (SBR) has long been used as a beneficial activity for young children in preschool programs. Benefits to children from the storybook reading event can include increased levels of language (syntax, semantics, and narrative discourse), emergent literacy (knowledge about books and print, as well as phonemic awareness), and general learning (increase in world knowledge). Books are often read by adults to groups of children who are primarily listeners in the activity. Recent research, however, in mother-child storybook reading (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Goodzitt, Raitan, & Perlmetter, 1988; Kirchner, 1991; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994) suggests that when reading is conducted individually, the storybook reading event (SBRE) is more interactive, with opportunities to focus the child's attention on elements of oral (spoken) and written (print) language. As a result, models of interactive storybook reading among teachers and groups of children have been examined for parallels in learning.

While books are common in many families, not all children have exposure to individual interactive storybook reading in their homes. Parents of such children in this country are frequently disadvantaged (from a low socioeconomic status), and many are African-American. Many often use oral storytelling as the primary mode of sharing narratives (Hart & Risley, 1995; Snow, 1983; Heath, 1982b). The style of this story sharing is not interactive but rather an animated, monologic performance of story events with voices, dialogue, and dramatic enactments.

Certain researchers (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994) have described a similar style of storybook reading which they term “performance-oriented.” Because it utilizes a familiar oral style of storytelling and adds visual input (pictures and print), performance-oriented storytelling might enable at-risk children to make an easier transition to demands of literacy once they begin school.

The purpose of this study was to compare effects of two storybook reading (SBR) styles, interactive and performance-oriented, on communicative competence expressed during storybook reading events for African-American preschool children from disadvantaged homes (AAP-D). Communicative competence within this event includes ability to express increasing levels of world knowledge, print knowledge, and narrative knowledge. Therefore, this study measures changes in these three areas (learning, literacy, and narrative) as a result of repeated readings of three selected storybooks, utilizing two diverse reading styles. Learning and literacy changes are measured through comparison of gain scores for world knowledge and emergent literacy. Narrative differences are measured through children’s re-telling of stories read to them and scored for semantic (quality of ideas expressed) and discourse (complexity and organization of plot) gains, using the Situational-Discourse-Semantic Model (SDS), developed by Norris and Hoffman (1993a). A control group, who received only pre- and posttesting and no storybook reading, was used to demonstrate that gains among treatment groups occurred from storybook reading and were not results of effects of time. Reliable differences in gains between the two treatment styles (i.e., interactive and performance-oriented)

would indicate that one style provides greater opportunity for more productive storybook reading events (SBREs) with this age and culture group.

Storybook Reading and Language Development

Developmentally, preschool-age children between 3 and 4 years are in a period of rapid language acquisition. Steps in this development have been shown to occur in a predictive sequence at approximately the same age range for most typically developing children. Brown (1973) described this sequence of development according to stages that begin with two-word combinations at age 2 (Stage I) and progress through acquisition and correct use of grammatical morphemes and complex syntactic structures at Stages V to V+. Children in this study were in the age range characteristic of Brown's Stages IV through V+. Snow (1983) and others (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Wells, 1986) have reported that storybook reading events provide a developmentally appropriate, pleasant, and facilitative context for expansion and refinement of specific language abilities. Repeated exposure, combination of print and pictures, and supportive adult focus can facilitate improved syntax, semantics, and narrative organization.

SBR and Syntax Development

Syntactic changes during Brown's (1973) Stage IV, that generally occur in children between 3 and 3½ years, include ability to talk in sentences of 3 to 7 words, use of auxiliary verbs (sometimes incorrectly), emergent embedding of simple phrases, and combining two clauses. Articles (the, a) and pronouns, though included more in talk, are not always correctly expressed. Appropriate use of

morphemes that express negation and tense is difficult but emerging, and refinement in wh-question construction is ongoing during this period. Storybook reading, with its repetition, exposure to language that is more formal and grammatical, and frequent opportunities to focus children's attention on, and to practice specific syntactic constructions or morphologic details, can be an advantageous context for affecting refinement in syntactic expression and understanding. For example, adults can focus on the embedding of prepositional phrases or correct pronoun use through application of a scaffold (adult support system) such as break-downs (i.e., reducing complex sentences to short component clauses) and build-ups (i.e., restating the ideas in complex form) (Owens, 1996) as in "Bill found the ball under the chair. Under the chair. He found the ball. He found it under the chair.

During Brown's (1973) Stage V, preschoolers between 3½ and 4 years are beginning to demonstrate ability to sequence and relate information through expression of both compound (combining coordinate or two separate clauses) and complex (embedding a subordinate clause within a main or primary clause) sentences. Articles and pronouns are more frequently used correctly and begin to serve as cohesive ties for establishing reference during more extended discourse. Stage V children increase use of appropriate verb tense choices (both regular and irregular) and are apt to produce interrogative constructions and contractions that are more like adult targets. Storybook experiences are particularly valuable to these children, as adults can easily help them focus on relational aspects of an event and

how to express it with syntactic clarity. For example, many children in Stage V (and V+) have difficulty beginning to utilize conjunctions that are causative (because, so) or temporal (when). Such children persist for an extended period in creating complex constructions that are related through use of simple additive conjunctions, such as and. During storyreading, adults can prompt with or provide words that emphasize the correct relationship (“because...; And then-n...”) and help children understand and learn to meaningfully express such relationships.

SBR and Semantic Development

The preschool period is one of rapid growth in the area of semantics, or use of words to express meaning for people, objects, and events. Children in the 3 to 5 year range (Brown's 1973 Stages IV, V, and V+) demonstrate a significant increase in a wide variety of vocabulary types. Words that are relational (i.e., describe or provide added information about substantive words, or nouns) show a dramatic increase, while the rate of noun growth continues strong. Carey (1978) estimated that children between 18 months and 5 years may learn as many as five new words daily. Interest in words that describe perceptual characteristics of people and objects results in acquisition of more specific quantitative (tall, one) and qualitative (soft, deep) concepts during Stage IV. Additionally, participation in sociodramatic play events in which various adult roles are enacted enables development of such early metalinguistic words as *know* and *think* (Norris, 1998a).

During Stage V, children's perceptual development results in early simple categorization of items with similar properties (animals, vehicles). Preschoolers are

better able to integrate acquired world knowledge with observation of new events and begin to use their semantic abilities to express simple inferences about future events. Therefore, preschoolers use more words in more complex constructions to express their thoughts. Storybook reading can enable adults to discuss unfamiliar or unusual words with preschool children, using relationships between the children's lives and textual events (text-to-life connections) to bring meaning to the words (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Holdaway, 1979). Similarly, adults can help children focus on specific aspects of pictured objects, people, and events, helping them learn to use such cues to describe, interpret and relate character actions (Blank, Berlin & Rose, 1978). Extending story events into home or classroom activities that elaborate and clarify specific vocabulary further develops oral expression (Glazer, 1989; Jalongo, 1988; Morrow, 1989).

SBR and Narrative Development

Cognitively, preschoolers are increasingly able to decontextualize language. For example, children in Stage IV talk about events personally experienced and can utilize present, visual information and combined world knowledge to make (sometimes incorrect) predictions of future happenings. They can sequence events within a story, though most may not be able to understand or express temporal or causal relationships between events. Applebee (1978) described the typical organizational structures of narratives produced by most children in this stage as *sequences*, events linked by some story focus or theme; and *primitive temporal narratives*, accounts or recounts in which there is some temporal order to the

events expressed. Children in Stage V can tell about storied events in a manner in which some causality to character actions may be inferred. Applebee (1978) calls such accounts *focused temporal or causal chains*, while they are described by others as *reactive sequences* (Norris & Hoffman, 1993a; Stein & Glenn, 1979). These latter forms of preschool discourse provide more information about the setting of the story (who, what, and where), but usually include little information about the actual story plot (i.e., problem and plan to resolve it).

Regular opportunity to participate in storybook reading events enables adults to use printed words and pictured events to aid children to see, hear, and understand actions of a story and the motivations, plans, and emotional responses of its characters, gradually helping them create a *script* for how to tell a story. Repeated opportunity to hear the same story several times helps children understand the account at a semantically higher and more abstract level (Martinez & Roser, 1985).

Building a Scaffold: The Facilitating Adult

Research examining supportive behaviors utilized by adults to help young children become effective communicators has provided specific strategies and techniques for facilitating more and better “talk” (Bruner, 1978; Dore, 1979; Snow, 1972, 1983, 1984; Snow & Goldfield, 1981). Supportive adults utilize daily caregiving routines or set up developmentally appropriate and meaningful activities that provide children with interactive and participatory roles (McLean, Snyder-McLean, Sack & Decker, 1982; Norris & Hoffman, 1990). Adults then provide and

encourage a communicative opportunity which, when taken by the child, is responded to supportively, using a variety of techniques in assisting children to learn more precise and effective ways to communicate messages. Techniques within this collaborative process, which has become known as *scaffolding* (Bruner, 1978; Ninio & Bruner, 1978) include specific strategies that call children's attention to a specific object, action or event and help them map the appropriate word on the seen item. This match of world and word knowledge is then expatiated, or moved into new contexts, to prevent conceptual understanding from being limited to a single, concrete contextual construct. For example, children are guided to learn that a cup, as container, can hold a variety of liquids and be used by a variety of people. Other scaffolding strategies expand children's utterances to more adult-like models, while refining phonologic, syntactic, morphologic, and semantic inaccuracies. For example, the child who describes Barney's partaking of breakfast as "d'ink cup" is responded to with "Yes, Barney is drinking from his cup." Another strategy type extends the discourse topic by adding new ideas and therefore more to talk about. The same child talking about Barney's cup can be guided to see or talk about what liquid Barney is drinking, fullness or emptiness of the cup, or need to pour more juice into the cup.

These scaffolds: concept focus, expatiation, expansion, and extension, are particularly effective during interactive storybook reading events. Klesius and Griffith (1996) listed sixteen different benefits that can occur during such experiences. Benefits for children include expanded information about family and

community life, increased vocabulary, exposure to variety of oral and written language patterns, improved listening and comprehension skills, refined oral turn-taking, understanding that happenings to other people and creatures can be interesting, and understanding of correct social and linguistic behaviors that accompany book use. In addition, children begin to incorporate scaffolding strategies into their own repertoire (Vygotsky, in Rieber & Carton, 1987). They learn to focus adult attention on unknown words or information (what's that mean?), to request clarification of a message (huh?, what he say?), and to seek assistance in interpretation of present events or inference/prediction about future events (why he do that?)

Storybook Reading and Literacy Development

As the result of a series of studies in the past two decades, the concept of emergent literacy has become an important topic in educational and linguistic literature (Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui, 1998; Teale, 1986; van Kleeck, 1990). These studies, which have examined children as young as infants and toddlers as they are exposed to and develop literacy concepts, have included scientific and ethnographic examinations and home and preschool settings. Researchers have found that children are exposed to print in the environment at a very early age. By the time they are toddlers, most children recognize and “read” (identify and associate with real items) common signs (STOP), labels (Rice Krispies), and logos (the McDonald’s golden arches) (Goodman, 1986; McGee, Richgels & Charlesworth, 1986). When children are also exposed to adults reading print for

various purposes, such as gathering news or information, seeking procedural sequences (such as cooking recipes), or for pleasure and connection, youngsters learn that print is multifunctional and meaningful (Heath, 1983; Teale, 1986). Children gradually begin to use metalinguistic terms to describe literacy activities (reading and drawing) in which they participate. During school age years, children begin to talk meaningfully about print symbols and processes of creating and utilizing written words.

Patterns of Reading

Children benefit further in literacy development when parents read developmentally appropriate storybooks to them regularly, repetitively, and interactively. For example, Sulzby (1985, 1994) observed a developmental pattern during the period of “emergent literacy.” A gradual progression of changing behaviors and concepts is noted, as children independently interact with and attempt to “read” books. The process begins with picture-governed attempts in which children progress from expressing simple label descriptions of single people and objects to more story-like accounts based on pictures and remembered reading experiences with favorite books. Sulzby (1985) describes children as then moving into use of print to add meaning to their picture and memory-based accounts. Eventually, and through several substages, children are able to independently read printed sentences with meaning and enthusiasm, easily and automatically decoding individual words. Dramatic intonation patterns, adult comments on specific actions or relationships, and love for books that have been conveyed by book-

loving and supportive adults are heard within vivid oral pre-print readings of young children.

Print Awareness

Other types of print awareness that develop as a result of repeated storybook participation during the period of emergent literacy include an awareness of print hierarchy (McCormick & Mason, 1986) and the taxonomy of children's written products (Sulzby, 1986). Growing awareness of print begins with contextualized observation of printed words. For example, children will recognize the word STOP only when printed on a red sign along a roadway and Cheerios only on a box of cereal. From these experiences, children begin to attend more to the form of words, and slowly begin to identify repeated words in predictable storybook text ("That says blow!!"). They may also notice letters that form words, particularly letters that begin their names and other frequently encountered words. Eventually, children coordinate forms with functions of print, recognizing that changing letters can actually change words and message meaning.

Early attempts of children to reproduce printed forms to which they have been exposed begin with writing that looks more like simplistic drawing (Sulzby, 1986). Scribbles occur next, then letter-like forms, as children attempt to more closely approximate adult writing to which they have been exposed. Some well-learned word-forms may be added to these scribbles; for example, most children first learn to print their own name. Increased familiarity with letters and their sound correspondence leads to use of invented spelling (lv u = love you).

Children gradually learn more conventional spelling as they read more books independently. Read (1971, 1975) further elaborated Sulzby's (1986) early writing taxonomy with an examination of differing types of invented spelling by emergent writers.

Phonemic Awareness

Another benefit that occurs as a result of extensive storybook reading experiences is phonemic (or phonological) awareness (Stanovich, 1987, 1991; Van Kleeck, 1994). Noted to be an important factor in the effortless acquisition of reading ability, phonemic awareness may be defined as the ability to consciously understand that the stream of speech may be broken into sound segments, such as words, syllables, and phonemes (Adams, 1990; Gilbertson & Bramlett, 1998; Vellutino, 1991). Phonemic awareness also involves ability to manipulate phonemic segments, through demonstration of specific early skills. Separating words into syllables and phonemes is one such skill (Bruce, 1964; Liberman, 1973; Liberman, Cooper, Shankweiler & Studdert-Kennedy, 1967; Rosner & Simon, 1971). Research, particularly that of Liberman, Shankweiler, Fischer and Carter (1974), has suggested that this ability follows development of a concept of wordness, or understanding that specific meaning units (words that stand for real world items) occur within the stream of speech. Further segmentation develops between age four (preschool) and six (end of first grade), with syllable segmentation developing earlier and with less difficulty than phoneme segmentation. Another component of phonemic awareness is the ability to perceive alliteration and rhyming in words,

also known as nursery rhyme knowledge (Bradley & Bryant, 1983; MacLean, Bryant & Bradley, 1987). This ability to perceive sameness and difference in the beginnings (onsets) and endings (rimes) of words, and phonemic awareness in general, has been found to have a strong relationship to becoming a “good” reader (Adams, 1990; Catts, 1991).

The final and most complex set of skills encompassed under the heading of phonemic awareness involves the ability to manipulate phonemic segments. Phonemic manipulation tasks include: being able to group words together because of common sounds (“cow and cat start with a C”); separate a words into component phonemes (“Pa is p-ah”); or to add, blend, delete, or move around phonemes in words (“In is inside the word pin!”) (Ball & Blachman, 1988, 1991; Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Byrne & Fielding-Barnesly, 1991). These final skills, which kindergartners are considered able to learn, are probably not acquired without reading-directed instruction (Adams, 1990). However, two more basic phoneme awareness tasks, knowledge of rhyming words and syllable segmentation, are believed by Adams and others (Van Kleeck, 1994) to be easily developed by children through repeated experiences with storybooks, nursery rhymes, word games, and other childhood experiences.

Adult Facilitation For Literacy

Teachers and parents who frequently read aloud to children generally ensure increased love of and knowledge about books and print. Martinez and Teale (1988) reported that children read to daily are three times more likely to choose book-

reading as a free-time activity and to choose familiar storybooks. Adult interaction during storybook reading may include strategies such as a) making comments about the print (Holdaway, 1979). The teacher/adult may point to a printed word and then to its pictured representation, saying “this (the word mud) is talking about this yucky, wet dirt – this mud!”; b) providing exposure to a variety of types of storybooks (Van Kleeck, 1994). Besides books that tell simple stories and expand children’s narrative (organized discourse) skills and world knowledge, alphabet books (A is for Apple), nursery rhyme books (Mother Goose), and predictable books with patterned phrases (Three Little Pigs) familiarize children with sounds in words and develop phonemic awareness; and c) repeatedly reading the same book (Dickinson, 1989; Martinez & Roser, 1985). Repeated visual and auditory exposure to the language of storybooks allows children the leisure and adult support to learn how to use books (start at the front of book, read from left to right, etc.); make printed word-picture connections (i.e., attach meaning to printed words); and attend to the flow of the language and its various segments (sentences, words, syllables, phonemes).

Cultural Differences in Literacy Experiences

Not all emergent literacy studies have focused on experiences of American white middle-class children (Cazden, 1983; Heath, 1983; Snow & Goldfield, 1981; Westby, 1994). Researchers determined that differences in culture, ethnicity, and advantage (socioeconomic level or class) are likely to impact child development of literacy (reading, writing, and expansion of language and learning) (Scott & Rogers,

1996). Kaderavek and Sulzby (1998) reviewed parent-child book-reading interaction studies. These include examination of practices in low-income, working class, and middle-class African-American, Euro-American, and Hispanic-American families in the United States (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; McClain & Stahl, 1995; Snow, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1987, 1989), as well as in other countries, such as the Netherlands (Bus & van IJzendoorn, 1995) and New Zealand (Phillips & McNaughton, 1990). Differences have been reported in exposure to artifacts of literacy in the home (letters, lists, magazines/newspapers, and books); frequency of adult functional use of written materials in the home; styles of narrative production (i.e., oral vs. literate styles of storytelling) (Chafe, 1982; Gee, 1989); genre types (Heath, 1986a); and adult-child frequency and kinds of sustained discourse, including storybook sharing events. Disadvantaged (low SES) children, in particular, are exposed to fewer literacy experiences in the home, and are likely to view little reading or writing beyond list-making. Read to less often, children of disadvantage are unlikely to have interactive and scaffolding techniques (such as labeling pictured objects and events, asking/answering questions, and text-to-life relationships) provided to them (Heath, 1982b; Hoffman & Norris, 1994).

African-American children of disadvantage are frequently described as being socialized in a predominantly oral culture (Baugh, 1983; Hester, 1996; Ogbu, 1987). Within this type of upbringing, oral, rather than literate language styles predominate. Such a style involves communicatively sharing an event with an audience who has some prior knowledge and includes use of dramatic shifts in voice, pitch, and

gestures to convey meaning. A literate language style, contrastively, includes features similar to written language. Meaning is conveyed in less dramatic and contextualized manner and through use of vocabulary and syntactic forms that enable cohesion of expressed thought (Olson, 1977; Tannen, 1982; Westby, 1985). A number of features which appear to efficiently prepare children for academic experiences upon entry into elementary school are seldom found in oral storytelling experiences more frequent in African-American disadvantaged families. For example, oral storytelling does not include the same story grammars (story script components, such as setting, problem, attempt to resolve, etc.) found in many storybooks. Oral storytelling also lacks the benefit of simultaneously exposing children to both oral and written language forms that middle-class children enjoy from storybook reading. Therefore, oral-tradition culture children do not come to school knowledgeable about and comfortable with books and printed language. Finally, oral storytelling is more monologic and performance-oriented than interactive, joint meaning-construction events that middle-class children benefit from during storybook reading experiences with adults. These early differences in cultural background exposure to literacy result in a different vocabulary level, comprehension skills, and orientation to and academic readiness for the language and literacy expectations of forthcoming elementary school.

Styles in Oral Storytelling

A wealth of information is available concerning textual differences in sharing of narratives, or storytelling (Tannen, 1982; Westby, 1994). This

information is often described along a continuum of features (i.e., syntax, semantics, cohesion, narrative structure) which distinguish narratives that are more oral from those termed literate (Hester, 1996). However, events of oral story-sharing are included within several ways of interacting that can also be classified along a continuum. These storytelling styles range from totally interactive (more dialogic, with joint opportunity to comment on story events or concepts and a more relaxed manner) to totally performance-oriented (dramatic and monologic, with minimal discussion of story events or concepts). Storytelling style is often associated with cultural and/or class differences (Heath, 1983; Heath & Thomas, 1984; Ninio, 1980; Teale, 1986). Stylistic studies have focused on patterns of reading behavior (both in the home and the classroom) that may offer specific benefits to children (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Flood, 1977; Morrow, 1988; Roser & Martinez, 1985). Though this research is ongoing and advantages of stylistic differences are not clearly established (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989), there is evidence that differential benefits may be derived from variance in adult style.

Interactive Styles and Possible Benefits

In general, interactive storybook reading is theoretically Vygotskian in nature; that is, the story meaning is mediated for children by adults (Vygotsky, 1962). Children are first assisted to relate to pictures and text of storybooks, then to integrate events and gradually construct understanding of the story as a whole. Eventually interactive reading procedures used to support children's participation become internalized, and children learn to function independently in their use of

storybooks. Teale (1984) called initial meaning-negotiation interactions *interpsychological*, and the later, internalized and independent functioning *intrapsychological*.

Morrow (1988) summarized adult interactive behaviors that qualitatively benefit children during storybook reading. These include: questioning; giving/extending information; dialogic scaffolding; focusing on specific vocabulary; directing discussions; offering positive feedback; clarifying, restating or recasting child contributions; sharing personal and evaluative reactions to textual events; and relating textual events to life experiences. A number of researchers (Bloome, 1985; Heath, 1982; Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Taylor, 1986) found that parents tend to change their interactive strategies according to the child's knowledge base, responsiveness, or familiarity with specific stories. Procedures have been detailed for teachers to use during interactive storybook reading events by Mason, Peterman, Powell and Kerr (1989). These procedures, organized as pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading strategies, focus on involving children in discussing, elaborating, and evaluating items of focus.

Interactive storybook reading procedures have most commonly been associated with the white and middle-class culture (Heath, 1983; Wells, 1985). Two early studies describing parental reading styles and probable child benefits were those of Flood (1977) and Ninio and Bruner (1978). Ninio and Bruner described early scaffolding processes (attention-getting dialogue, questions, labeling/scaffolding, feedback) that prepare infants and toddlers to respond

successfully during interactive reading. Their study concluded that children's movement toward labeling is facilitated more by joint participation in a ritualized routine than by verbal imitation. Flood, in examining prekindergarten children, reported that children seemed to improve school readiness when parent-child story readings had included preparatory questions that readied the child for the story, verbal discussions that related text events to child experiences, post-story evaluative questions, and positive reinforcement of appropriate child responses/comments.

Interactive storybook procedures or roles used at school and possible benefits have also been described in greater depth. Cochran-Smith (1984) discussed two procedures for negotiating text meaning: life-to-text interpretations, which use existing child knowledge to make sense of text information or events, and text-to-life explanations, which help children use book information to expand understanding of their own experiences. Roser and Martinez (1985) reported that adults play three roles that benefit children in different ways during story interactions. These are a) co-respondents, who initiate discussions, relate and recount story and life experiences and involve children in sharing of experiences; b) informers/monitors, who explain and elaborate events, monitoring child understanding; and c) directors, who assume leadership in making inferences or evaluations. Used correctly, these roles gradually shift between adults and children.

Several studies found that interactive procedures during storybook reading improved vocabulary, literacy growth, and story comprehension in preschool

children (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Elley, 1989; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992). Other benefits reported in the literature from active discussion of stories include: better story recall (Morrow, 1984) and improvement in syntactic, or sentence-level language skills (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1995; Karweit, 1989).

Performance-oriented Style and Possible Benefits

Performance-oriented is a story-telling technique that has been contrasted to interactive styles by Dickinson and colleagues (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994). Whereas interactive readings include a significant amount of meaning-building discussion during the story, the performance-oriented style “treats the story as an aesthetic experience that is disrupted only minimally by talk” (Dickinson & Smith, p. 105). Dickinson and Keebler used Hymes’ (1974) guidelines to study speech events in their analysis of storybook reading styles of three teachers. Considering the storybook reading as a “literacy event” (Heath & Thomas, 1984), Dickinson and Keebler analytically considered such factors as purpose, key (or manner), interactive norms, message form (or expressive aspects) and message content (relevant discussion). Their description of performance-oriented storybook reading included careful stage-setting in preparation for expectation of focus and attentiveness on the part of the audience, as the reading teacher’s purpose is to help children “construct imaginary worlds” and “be enchanted by the magic of books” (p. 364). Child comments are generally ignored during performance-oriented reading, though the teacher using this style provides a brief follow-up discussion that attempts to link world experiences of the listening

group to the story. This teacher additionally utilizes such meaning-making techniques as modifying words or texts more to children's level of understanding, referencing students to story pictures, or providing brief analytical or evaluative comments. On the whole, though, the entire story is presented as a dramatic performance, with the teacher's expression of various character voices and modulating of volume, voice quality, and pace to accentuate character feeling and story tone and heighten drama. Additionally, words are emphasized and lengthened for impact and emphasis.

Dickinson and Smith (1994) examined three styles earlier described by Dickinson and Keebler (1989), performance-oriented and two types of interactive styles, for both holistic benefits, such as later literacy growth, and utterance-level benefits, such as vocabulary growth. Performance-oriented teachers, in the latter analyses, included before and after-story discussions in literacy event, though the story itself is performed in entirety. Pre-story discussions were often evaluative or preparatory summaries that encouraged children to focus on specific characters or events, make predictions or personal connections, or think about specific vocabulary. Post-story discussions briefly reviewed story events, or linked the story to child experiences, thus reinforcing story recall and comprehension and eliciting child evaluative responses.

Dickinson and Smith (1994) reported that performance-oriented storybook reading approaches benefitted children as well or better than interactive approaches in terms of vocabulary development and story comprehension, as long

as before and/or after discussions are provided. They also noted that post-story discussions appear to be the most helpful. The style of storybook reading resulting in greater acquisition of world knowledge, or more enhanced love of literature, was unclear from their study. Also not determined was which style resulted in greater print awareness (knowledge of books, orthographic and phonemic awareness).

Though Dickinson and colleagues (1989, 1994) did not associate performance-oriented storybook reading style with a particular culture, many of its characteristics are remarkably similar to oral styles of relating stories, a style that is described as common to African-American and disadvantaged cultures (Baugh, 1983; Erickson, 1984; Ogbu, 1987). Adding storybooks, with their pictures and print, to a style that further enables meaning-making from expressive gestures and changes in voice and prosody, could possibly provide added benefits in learning and language to young disadvantaged African-American children. This study, therefore, is designed to compare storybook reading styles for benefits to young children who are likely to have been enculturated in a particular narrative style.

Theoretical models of learning must be examined to determine why variables, such as styles of storybook reading to children, should be manipulated to determine amount, degree, and kinds of learning benefits in young children. Models of language acquisition and development are included in these theories.

Nature versus Nurture

Language learning requires the ability to acquire language (nature) as well as continuous and meaningful exposure to the language of a particular cultural

environment (nurture). Children must be born with an intact neurological system that gradually matures, enabling both precise examination of specific sensory input and more organized, cohesive, and rational use of this information. The innate capacity of a child's central nervous system to recognize and internalize environmental patterns (or, learn) cannot develop adequately, however, without appropriate and consistent exposure to patterns or routines of social interaction and language use (Nelson, 1996). Parents facilitate their child's linguistic, social, and cognitive development in two primary ways. First, parents modify their input to an appropriate level, from which their child might benefit. Secondly, they provide scaffolds, or assistive actions, that allow their child to be active and increasingly more competent participants during interactive routines.

Models that attempt to explain acquisition of language must be consistent with principles of nature and nurture. To be useful, such models must provide some insight into how this learning takes place.

Neurological Basis of Language

The human neurological system, consisting of the central nervous system (brain, spinal cord, and associated sensory organs) and the peripheral nervous system (nerves that conduct sensory and motor information to the brain from senses and muscles and responsive information from brain to muscles) matures rapidly during infant-preschool years. Though it is generally accepted that language acquisition and development is closely correlated with brain maturation and growing specialization of its hemispheres, it is as yet unknown whether this

relationship has to do with growth and extended interconnections of neural structures or with development of specific cognitive abilities (Haynes, 1998; Owens, 1996).

Adult ability to think cohesively and to express thoughts in an organized, reasoning manner involves functioning of the brain as a whole. However, at birth, the infant lacks necessary neurological organization or maturity to enable such volitional and expressive functioning. As a result of the writings of Lenneberg (1967) and others, some knowledge is available about developments in the human neurological system during infant-preschool years that have a probable supportive relationship to acquisition and expansion of language ability. Important changes that occur involve increased brain weight, neuronal growth and interconnecting, increase in myelination of system neurons, and hemispheric specialization.

More than 80 % of adult brain weight has been achieved by the time a child has reached two years of age, with 90% completed by age five (Owens, 1996). This increase in weight is thought to be the result of increased myelination (growth of insulating neuronal sheaths that enable swift transmission of information) and growing interconnection of cells. Myelination is progressive, with pathway sheathing that facilitates more gross and basic (primary) motor and sensory functioning to be completed before those that allow more complex and refined mental (association-type) and motor operations. This latter myelination, not complete until puberty, is believed to be dependent on adequate stimulation (nurture) to develop optimally (Selnes & Whitaker, 1977).

Though the number of neuronal cells does not increase substantially, the increase in numbers of communicating processes (axons and dendrites) results in a densely connected webbing. Like higher myelination, factors such as sensory deprivation and malnutrition can limit adequate dendritic growth and interconnecting (Maxwell, 1984). Increased organization of cortical pathways also appears to be dependent on chemical changes in the brain (Lenneberg, 1967). Particularly between birth and age two, increases have been noted in several chemicals (cholesterol, cerebrosides, lipids, and phosphatides) that may facilitate language development. These chemicals may work by allowing better neuronal information processing and conceptual development, thus aiding acquisition of language.

Generally speaking, the two hemispheres of the brain are believed to specialize, or process different kinds of information more efficiently. The left hemisphere appears to be the “specialist” at processing information that is segmental, analytic, and time-dependent. Processing of such characteristics includes attaching meaning to words within the stream of speech. The right hemisphere is believed to manage nonsegmental, holistic, gestalt, and time-independent stimuli, which would include music and the melody, or intonation, of speech. There are several theories as to when lateralization, or specialization of the hemispheres occurs (Owens, 1996). The theory of progressive hemispheric specialization has developed because brain-injured young children, but not adults, are often able to regain near normal language and cognition following neurological insults. It has been suggested that the young brain is capable of shifts in function

to other cortical areas, resulting in a theory of youthful brain plasticity (Springer & Deutsch, 1985). A contrasting view, resulting from electrophysiological infant studies, suggests that the child may be born fully lateralized (Kinsbourne, in Haynes, 1998). A third and reconciling view posits that significant lateralization is accomplished by birth (nature) and is later reinforced and expanded by environmental experiences, or nurture (Geschwind & Galaburda, as cited in Owens, 1996). In more than two-thirds of the human population, the left hemisphere appears to be dominant for most language processing.

In summary, development of abilities during the preschool years (birth to 5 years) appears to be closely correlated with the growth and maturation of the human brain and appears to be related to both the natural presence of existing structures and the effect of nurturing experiences. Therefore, skills such as verbal imitation near 12 to 18 months may be due to myelination and neuronal interconnecting of cortical, auditory and motor areas, as well as regularly provided adult verbal routines. Similarly, a five-year-old's ability to express meaningful contingent information in short sentences during discourse may result from increased maturation and specialization of cortical hemispheres, progressive myelination and neuronal interconnections of the brain's association tracts, and increased experiences with different types of vocabulary and verbal discourse.

Language and Cognitive Constructivism

The manner in which children construct and expand a representation of reality is the focus of theorists known as cognitive constructivists. Their theory is largely

based on the work of epistemologist Jean Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958). Piaget believed that both nature and nurture were implicated in acquisition of knowledge, in that children are born with systems that allow their active perception and engagement with world. This engagement, Piaget's view of nurture, enables children to incorporate experiences in an on-going manner that results in constant reconstruction of their environmental understanding. Piaget called the changing mental structures *schemata*. Outwardly, schemata could be seen as gradually more organized behavior; for example, reaching for a desired object will mature into intentional, communicative pointing. Inwardly, early schemata are growing mental networks of information that have been gained from sensory input and motor exploration.

Constructivist processes are initiated by disequilibrium, a disturbance that invalidates or conflicts with present structures, or ways of thinking. Seeking equilibrium, or new understanding and resolution, the child actively applies sensory, motor, and integrative energy and exploration to the problem (Shulman, 1998). Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958) called the modified, changing behavior *adaptation*, in that the child's functioning ability increased as a result. Two manners of modifying schemata were described by Piaget: assimilation, which involved incorporating new information into existing schema; and accommodation, which involved reorganization and modification of old schemas into broader, more integrated structures.

Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958) described stages of constructivist growth. The preschool period includes two of these stages: sensorimotor, the sensory and

motor exploration of the foundational first two years of life; and preoperational, the period from 2 to approximately 7 years during which children develop concepts about their physical world. During the first period, children communicatively move from simply crying, to using a simple vocabulary much like a tool influencing others to meet their needs. Children in the preoperational period expand their vocabularies and uses of language to socially interact and to learn (Witt, 1998). Language, to Piaget, is simply one of several semiotics, or indicators of cognitive ability and growth, relative to the researcher's primary area of interest.

Language and Environmental Influences - Interactionism

Interactionist theory is a more holistic model of language acquisition, concerned with what Friel-Patti (1994) refers to as "complementary interaction between innate capacities and environmental forces" (p. 376). Interactions between all areas of learning, including social, cognitive, linguistic, sensory, and motor are studied in this theoretical model. Varied interactionist theories have considered how children frame, or organize acquired information for ease of retrieval and use. Such theories include Mandler's (1984) two-part schema system of scenes (spatially organized structures) and events (temporally-organized experiences), Nelson's (1985, 1986) developmental stages for learning and language changes within routine events, and Schank and Abel's (1977) script development, (learning of action sequences appropriate to a given context).

A primary focus of interactionist theory involves reciprocity of social and communicative interaction that exists between parents and their young children.

Bruner (1967) was one of the first to describe language development as a transactional process during which parents talk to their infants about people, objects, and actions within present, on-going routines. In so doing, parents simplify their social and language input to a level from which their children can benefit. In the first year of life, parents may use a variety of techniques (presenting objects at optimal viewing level, demonstrating an object's use, coordinating body movement, facial expression and verbal stress) to highlight specific words in the speech stream and connect them to referenced event elements. In later preschool years, parents use communication strategies that assist their children to become more and more active and effective discourse participants. Bruner (1967, 1978) called these strategies scaffolds, because these parental social and linguistic techniques build communication supports and allow access to areas needing particular attention. Like those scaffolds that ring a construction project, such supports exist only until incomplete or imperfect areas are refined and can function independently, and are then dismantled. Verbal scaffolds, such as models, repetitions and expansions, serve to focus both adult and child on the same topic or word and provide the child a participatory role.

Another important factor within the social mediation aspect of interactionist theory is Vygotsky's (1962) zone of proximal development. This term refers to the range between mastered skills already independently performed by children and the upper range in which they can maintain participation and acquire added information, when provided adult verbal guidance and assistance. Vygotsky

believed children first require the mediating, task-shaping language of adults to perform in this higher zone and then internalize adult words and procedures for their own use. The upper developmental zone then becomes the lower, independent stage, where children are able to perform without adult support. Adults then scaffold the children's new, higher level of the zone. Dynamic assessment (knowledge of changing abilities) of children is considered an important element of successful social mediation.

Interactionist theory is concerned both with the maturing cognitive organization of differing kinds of information, and with supportive interactions by adults that enable growth in children's language and learning. Thus, both natural structures and nurturing experiences are a focus, with emphasis on interaction of all elements.

An Integrated Perspective: Connectionism

A model of language acquisition illustrating a current attempt to integrate multiple perspectives offered by previously discussed theories may be found in a class of intelligence theories known as connectionism. The term itself is descriptive of its primary premises: processing is not step-by-step or serial, but rather simultaneous and parallel, and learning occurs because of repeated associations of various types of information (MacWhinney, 1991). Several researchers have applied connectionist theory to learning of various aspects of language by connectionist computers. Included among these computer simulations are MacWhinney's (1987, 1991) investigations of syntactic processing and noun phrase determiners,

McClelland and Elman's (1986) phonologic processing study, and Rumelhart and McClelland's (1987) past tense verb learning application. Early results of these simulations appear promising for learning of linguistic features.

Within connectionist models, the basic structure is the unit or node, which is distributed throughout the connectionist network. Various units handle processing for specific elements, such as visual and auditory features. Repeated experiences between or across units result in a phenomenon known as weighting, as specific units gradually develop a configuration (or connectivity pattern). The configuration results from various features of information being associated. The stronger the weighting, the more easily activated are experience-related units, until a kind of neural-like architecture develops which corresponds to the mental representation of a concept. When association or activations rarely occur, connection weighting declines, and connections become inhibited or not easily accessed. Language learning, within this system, results from repeated activation of related units and resultant formation of stable patterns of language elements, or concepts (Norris, 1998). Knowledge, brought to a conscious level within connectionist theory, is therefore not retrieved, *in toto*, from a single location in the brain. Rather, stimulation of a unit causes parallel and distributed activation of a variety of units with associated information simultaneously united to create meaningful thought.

Adjustments in connectionist systems occur through relationship of three classes of processing units: input, output, and hidden. Sensory input units process

forward varying information received from outside the system, such as visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic. Output systems forward responsive signals outside the system and return feedback as to the accuracy of the response back into the system. Receiving information from both input and output units are internal hidden units, which continually react and adjust the system to allow for more accurate responses through output units. Adjustments in this connectionist system and resultant weighting among units allows for assembling information that forms a concept, and learning occurs.

In many ways, connectionist theory offers consistency with the neurological model of language learning. In both theories, if a specific “system” or set of units were damaged, general disruptions in cognitive-linguistic functioning would be expected. The interconnectedness of the brain and its neurological functioning has been well documented (Penfield & Roberts, 1966). Furthermore, computers (artificial intelligence systems) work on the swift and precise ability to interconnect various bits of information. Additionally, the central nervous system is known to associate various types of information through neural activation to create conscious thought, with retrieval of information being easier (more automatic) when it has been frequently accessed. Like neurologic theory, connectionism requires both an intact system (nature) and exposure to data or stimuli (nurture). In both theories, patterns are gradually generated by exposure to data related in specific ways (as, the perception that “ed” is associated primarily with action words and indicates a past time period), and these patterns can be easily activated by exposure to some

element associated with a given pattern. Whether data are linguistic or nonlinguistic in each theory, if the weighting or frequent associative exposure has developed, processing results in the appropriate accessed thought or linguistic information (Norris, 1998).

Style of input, within connectionist theory, should have an impact on both comprehension and linguistic expression within a communicative event. Within storybook reading events, the two styles to be contrasted in this study may illustrate potential effects. One might expect that children encultuated in an oral style of storytelling could benefit more from the SBRE paralinguistic features, such as facial expressions and vocal stress, of the performance-oriented style, with resulting understanding of character moods and motivations becoming a strength. This could result from easier activation of weighted nodes utilizing these features. Therefore, recognition of “surprise” would most likely be derived from perception of the reader’s widened eyes, abrupt postural change and vocal expression of “Oh-h-h!”. Conversely, such a child might attend better to adult verbal description of pictured activity in a storybook during an interactive reading. The child might gradually relate the reader’s use of the word “surprise” to the referenced facial expression of the pictured main character and causative events. Therefore, weighting of units processing these relationships could result in more efficient language and literacy learning in such areas as vocabulary meaning and story relationships.

Dickinson and colleagues (1989, 1994) noted that different styles of storybook reading apparently affect children in differing ways, including the way

they approach textual events (passive or active engagement), how they understand the story, and how well they understand particular concepts and vocabulary. Because there appear to be continuing gaps in conclusive findings about stylistic effects, in particular on specific cultural groups, results of this study could be helpful to professionals, such as speech-language pathologists and teachers, who utilize storybook reading in treatment or education.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed storybook reading as an important context for developing language and literacy; the influence of culturally diverse literacy experiences on language, literacy, and learning; differences between two storybook reading styles; and theories that have developed to explain acquisition of language competence. The following chapter will provide a review of the literature about early language and literacy differences in African-American preschoolers from disadvantaged homes, studies that have examined parental and school efforts to provide literacy-based interactions, and stylistic differences during storybook reading events and their possible benefits.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research has shown that, for a variety of social and economic reasons, language and early literacy differences exist between children from middle and low socioeconomic groups that result in school disadvantage for the children from low SES groups (Blake, 1994; Farran, 1982; Hart & Risley, 1995; Heath, 1983, 1986a; Mount-Weitz, 1996; Ward, 1982). In particular, a large percentage of African-American children are raised in poverty-level or working class families (Hart & Risley). Decreasing the linguistic gap through preschool enrichment programs, such as Head Start, can help to improve academic readiness and prepare African-American children of disadvantage (AAP-D) for the discourse style and language demands they will encounter in elementary schools. Because narrative experience has been shown to be an important, rich context for both language and literacy development, as well as acquisition of general knowledge, learning for AAP-D within storybook reading events (SBREs) will be explored in this study.

However, it is unclear how best to present information within a storybook reading event. One possibility is to teach using an interactive style, typical of middle class book-reading routines. In this approach, children are exposed to the type of interactive pattern of question/answer and discussion that is prevalent in most classrooms. AAP-D would be assisted to explore and discuss not only story content, but also narrative structure, related world knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical forms, discourse and interactive classroom patterns. A second possibility is to present information using a performance-oriented style of

storybook reading, which is consistent with the existing narrative scripts and interaction patterns of many AAP-D. Research has shown that children learn best when presented information is consistent with the child's existing scripts and structures for both discourse style and interactional patterns used to tell stories (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983; Westby, 1999). In this case, story understanding, language learning and acquisition of related world knowledge might occur more effectively and rapidly when information is presented in a familiar format that is consistent with cultural expectations.

To explore this controversy, language abilities of AAP-D will be examined, with differences from middle-class children noted. AAP-D narrative abilities, both in style of presentation and narrative structure, will then be presented, with differences from mainstream children being emphasized. Diversity of early literacy experiences and resultant literacy abilities will be reviewed. Storybook reading as a context for language and emergent literacy development will be explored, through an overview of current knowledge of structure and outcome differences in storybook reading styles, with emphasis on interactive compared to performative. The chapter will end with resulting questions addressed in this study.

Language Differences

Language differences in abilities of children from low-SES homes have been noted in the literature. In particular, African-American children from low-SES homes have been noted to lag somewhat behind abilities of other groups, such as Hispanic and Anglo-American, in the development of language abilities (Tomblin

et al., 1997; Whitehurst, 1997). Studies of language abilities of AAP-D have examined semantics (with some emphasis on vocabulary), phonology, morphosyntax, pragmatics, metalinguistics, and discourse, with emphasis on narrative structures (Battle, 1996; Blake, 1994; Hart & Risley, 1995; Heath, 1983; Seymour & Seymour, 1981; Stockman, 1986). Each of these language abilities will be discussed in relationship to their impact on early literacy development.

AAP-D Vocabulary and Semantic Abilities

Of language differences that are noted in African-American preschoolers, particularly those from economically disadvantaged homes, a restricted vocabulary is a key factor in inhibiting their ability to participate meaningfully in elementary educational programming. Mount-Weitz (1996) cited Perfetti's (1985) contention that vocabulary must have both breadth (a range according to number of words) and depth (a range of meanings for each individual word known) to be effective in later literacy and general academic learning. Limited early experiences with both language and the environment can negatively affect the development of both the vocabulary depth and breadth with which disadvantaged children enter school.

A longitudinal study by Hart and Risley (1995) reported highly significant differences in early language experiences of children from groups representing three socioeconomic status levels: professional, working class, and welfare. For more than two years, these researchers tracked 42 families with children ranging in age from 10 to 36 months. African-American children were represented in: one of the 13 professional families, 10 of the 23 working class families, and all six of

the welfare families. Among language experiences examined were quantity (number of words heard), content (type of word experiences), and quality (supportive features of parental expressive behavior).

In terms of quantity, Hart and Risley (1995) reported that welfare parents averaged speaking only 616 words per hour to their children, in contrast to the 1,251 of working class parents, and 2,153 by professional parents. The investigators extrapolated these data to suggest that the average welfare child, by age 4, could experience 13 million fewer words than the average working class child, a gap hard to close by well-meaning educators. Furthermore, analysis of content in this study revealed that children of professional parents heard significantly more different words and sentences (nouns, modifiers, past-tense verbs, auxiliary fronted yes-no questions, questions of all kinds, and declarative sentences) than children of welfare parents.

Quality features of adult language to the children included: language diversity (different nouns and different modifiers), feedback tone (affirmatives, or approving, supportive talk, versus prohibitives, or disapproving talk), symbolic emphasis (use of sentences representing present, past, and future times), guidance style (wording of imperatives, declaratives, and questions so that prompting encouraged and supported child verbal or action attempts), and responsiveness (initiating and responding behavior during discourse that provided encouragement within the child's range of understanding). Hart and Risley (1995) contrasted the affirming versus prohibiting language heard by children from the three groups and

found what they termed “striking” differences. Children from professional families heard more than six times as many affirmatives as prohibitions per hour (35 to 5); working class children heard significantly fewer affirmatives (12) and more prohibitions (7); and children from welfare families heard only five affirmatives and as many as 11 prohibitions.

Hart and Risley (1995) found that the number and diversity of language experiences at home, coupled with the quality language features examined, strongly predicted children’s vocabulary growth and use, as well as IQ, at age three and later, in third grade. Additionally, they found that language diversity was more related to child vocabulary use, whereas feedback tone was more related to vocabulary growth and general learning as indicated by IQ performance. After reviewing a number of factors that might be causally related to the quantity and quality of home language experience (race, gender, birth order, parent education and vocation), Hart and Risley concluded that socioeconomic status was the single factor that made the most overwhelming difference.

Mount-Weitz (1996) expressed the belief that many questions remain in our understanding about vocabulary development of African-American children. Several studies besides Hart and Risley (1995) have reported differences in caretaker-child interactional patterns that could result in decreased vocabulary acquisition (Farran, 1982; Heath, 1983,1986b; Ward, 1982). Still others (Snow, 1982; Washington & Craig, 1992) have noted the negative impact of poverty on both vocabulary and general world knowledge. These latter researchers

hypothesized that, along with hearing less talk directed to them, the impoverished environments of low-income African-American children (both urban and rural) result in less material to play with, explore, and talk about. Fazio, Naremore, and Connell (1996) reported that in addition to inadequate finances creating "at-risk" linguistic environments for poverty children, unstable living conditions, inadequate nutrition and medical care contribute to reduced language and learning. Van Keulen, Toliver Weddington, and Delose (1998) state that low-income and lower levels of parental education were frequent factors when non-majority or African-American children were diagnosed as communicatively impaired.

Several studies which have examined performance of African-American children on standardized tests of vocabulary or basic concepts have resulted in a finding that this group of children achieve significantly lower scores than white, mainstream children when poverty is a factor (Fazio, Naremore & Connell, 1996; Kresheck & Nicolosi, 1973; Tomblin et al., 1997; Washington & Craig, 1992, 1999). Attempts have been made to determine if differences in vocabulary were culturally related, or an artifact of test bias.

A commonly-used vocabulary test, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Dunn, 1959; Dunn & Dunn, 1981, 1997) has been the subject of investigation as to its appropriateness for use with African-American children in its original form and subsequent two revisions. Two studies (Adler & Birdsong, 1983; Kresheck & Nicolosi, 1973) suggested the original PPVT (Dunn, 1959), which had been normed on 4,012 white children in the Nashville, Tennessee area, might be racially biased.

They found that, even when matched by socioeconomic environment (lower middle-class), age, and grade level, African-American children scored significantly lower than white children.

Revision of the PPVT (Dunn & Dunn, 1981) based the ethnic and SES makeup of the normative sample on the United States census data. However, because reported test reliability for minority children was lower than for other populations, Washington and Craig (1992) conducted a study to see if the test was appropriate for use with African-American children who spoke Black English. These researchers administered the test to 105 low-income, urban, African-American preschool and kindergarten children (ages 4 years, 5 months to 6 years, 3 months) who had been judged by a certified speech-language pathologist to be speakers of Black English. Results indicated that the revision had failed to remove the racial or economic bias, as more than 91 % of the study children scored below the mean, with 65 % scoring more than one standard deviation below. Because certain test items were missed by more than 50% of subjects (11-preschool; 5-kindergarten), Washington and Craig formulated a scoring adjustment crediting these items. However, the performance distribution changed very little, with 86% continuing to score below test mean. While concluding with the recommendation that the test was not appropriate for diagnosing language disorder in African-American preschool and kindergarten children from low-income families, the investigators conceded that this segment of this ethnic group “perhaps do have some deficiencies as a result of an impoverished environment” (p. 331, Washington & Craig, 1992).

Attempts to improve the reliability and validity of the next revision of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III) (Dunn & Dunn, 1997) focused on an item analysis of responses by African-American, Hispanic, and Native American children. This resulted in the elimination of 75 “biased” items. Education level as indicated by socioeconomic status, gender, SES, and race were appropriately represented according to the current census estimates. Washington and Craig (1999) administered the PPVT-III to 59 low-SES African-American preschoolers (47 to 57 months). All but four of the children were found to be in the normal range on the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC) (Kaufman & Kaufman, 1983), a cognitive test of nonverbal concept formation; these four were considered developmentally atypical and receiving special education services.

Washington and Craig (1999) found a mean standard score of 91 for the 55 typical children and 78 for the four atypical children. This score for the typical children was within normal range but below the test mean. The performance spread was similar additionally to the standardization distribution, and no item adjustments were necessary. The investigators concluded the test was appropriate for use with at-risk African-American children; the low normal score probably appropriately represented effects of stresses in disadvantaged families. Also noted in this study was that caregiver education influenced the child’s performance more than family income.

Studies of AAP-D Language Test Performance

Studies examining the language abilities of AAP-D subjects typically use standardized tests as measures of language. It has been suggested that cultural,

economic and linguistic differences in this population render validity of these measures questionable. However, even when efforts have been made to reduce test bias or to score tests in a manner that compensates for these factors, AAP-D children continue to score poorly relative to their peers. Vocabulary and semantic deficits were found to be involved in the poor performance of African-American children in other studies examining use of specific tests with this ethnic group. Beal (1987, cited in Mount-Weitz, 1996) reported that vocabulary deficits accounted for the “relatively” poor performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills of African-American children in Denver, Colorado. Below national norm scores were not only found on the vocabulary subtest but on subtests including subject area vocabulary. Tomblin et al. (1997) included African-American children in their epidemiological study for prevalence of specific language impairments (SLI) in kindergarten children, along with three other minority groups. Recognizing the Test of Language Development-2:Primary (TOLD-2P) (Newcomer & Hammill, 1988) was culturally biased, the authors used alternative scoring rules for children speaking African-American English. More than one-fourth (26.2%) of the children in their study failed the screening. Though the prevalence of SLI was near 7-8% in other minority populations, the Tomblin researchers estimated prevalence in African-American kindergarten children as between 11 and 12%. This higher prevalence was attributed in part to lower levels of parent education and income.

Rhyner, Kelly, Brantley, and Krueger (1999) investigated use of two screenings tests, the Bankson Language Test-2 (Bankson, 1990) and the Structured

Photographic Expressive Language Test-Preschool (SPELT-P) (Werner & Kresheck, 1983) with 99 low-SES African-American kindergarten children. These researchers used a dialect-free scoring system to adapt for differences in Black-English speakers. Even with the adapted scoring, a high percentage of children failed to pass either test. For example, nearly 58% of the 4 ½ to 5 year group failed to pass the dialect-free screening of the BLT-2S and 81% of 5-5 ½ year olds failed the SPELT-P. The authors noted that 90 to 98% of the children in their study were from low-SES families, and this accounted significantly for the large representation of minority children among those for whom a comprehensive language assessment was indicated. When Rhyner and colleagues followed screening with teacher interviews, 10 to 25% in each of the four age groups from 4 to 5.11 were referred for further assessment. Of these 26 children, 22 (84.6%) qualified for language intervention, a finding that more than one-fifth of the original children in the study did indeed exhibit language deficits requiring intervention. This finding adds to data concluding that depressed language abilities are found at a higher rate among African-American children of poverty, and that sensitive screening procedures for these children are not presently available.

Language comprehension is dependent upon both semantic understanding and integration of world knowledge. Two studies by Haynes and colleagues (1995, 1998) investigated performance of both African-American and Caucasian children from lower socioeconomic levels (all Head Start students in the rural South) on the Preschool Language Assessment Instrument (Blank, Berlin, & Rose, 1978). This

instrument looks at preschoolers' ability to answer questions at increasing levels of abstraction and decontextualization, tapping in to their breadth and depth of word knowledge. These studies were undertaken because the test authors had readily admitted that it was not possible to separate class and race when delineating research groups during construction of the PLAI. Middle-class children had scored significantly higher than lower-SES children on all four test levels (I. matching perception, II. selective analysis of perception, III. reordering perception, and IV. reasoning beyond perception). However, the middle-class group was more than 80% Caucasian, and the lower-class group almost 80% African-American. Haynes, Haak, Moran, Rice, and Johnson (1995) chose 70 rural Alabama Head Start children to study performance on the PLAI. The performance of both Caucasian and African-American children (both socio-economically lower range groups) in the Haynes and colleagues' study was significantly below the performance of the urban, middle-class northern children in the study of Blank and colleagues. However, Haynes and his associates found that the African-American children performed significantly lower than the Caucasian children, particularly in responses to the higher-level PLAI questions (Levels III and IV).

A follow-up study by Fagundes, Haynes, Haak and Moran (1998) examined the performance of 24 lower-income Georgia preschoolers (12 African-American and 12 Caucasian) on the PLAI, with two conditions of administration. One administration followed manual directions and involved teacher-child interactions about a topic at different levels of abstraction (from matching perception to

reasoning beyond perception). Line drawings contextualized many of the questions. In the modified administration, the same questions were posed within the context of activities organized by various themes (such as toys and after-school home routines) and during typical classroom activities (story, art, snacks). The African-American children performed significantly higher in the thematic administration of the PLAI on the two higher level question groups (reordering perception and reasoning beyond perception), while there was little difference in performance during the thematic administration by the Caucasian group.

Fagundes, Haynes and colleagues (1998) believe this finding substantiates the suggestion by Taylor and Payne (1983) that a formal testing situation might create a "situational bias" for African-American lower-income children who have limited experience with formal interrogation. However, on this test, as on others, lower-income African-American language ability, in this case language comprehension, was found to be lower than that of middle-class mainstream children, even under conditions of thematic and contextualized administration.

Studies of Language Subsystem Development in AAP-D

Battle (1996), Mount-Weitz (1996), and Terrell, Battle, and Grantham (1998) have reviewed the literature regarding differences that might exist in acquisition capacity of African-American children. The rate of language acquisition appears to be very similar across different cultures. Studies of phonological development indicate African-American children acquire their sound system similarly to children speaking Standard American English (SAE) until around 4 or 5 years (Haynes &

Moran, 1989; Seymour & Seymour, 1981; Vaughn-Cooke, 1986). Stockman's (1996) review of a number of developmental phonology studies found that, though African-American's phonological articulation patterns differ according to age, social class and geographic region, that most 3-year-olds use similar word-initial consonants to SAE speakers of the same age. Stockman (1996) also claims that in late preschool, phonologic features that characterize African-American English, or AAE, including final consonant deletion, final cluster reduction, unstressed syllable deletion, and substitutions such as [f] for /θ/) begin to be contrastive features. Differentiating AAE speakers from SAE speakers can be accomplished, as AAP-D move from preschool to kindergarten age, through noting of these contrastive features.

Studies of morphosyntactic development (Blake, 1994; Stockman, 1986; Stockman & Vaughn-Cooke, 1986) in African-American children also indicate similar development to SAE-speaking children up to the age of three. Mean length of utterance development is like that of middle-class children with both groups producing one and two-word utterances by 18 months, and developing morphological features such as plural, possessive, past-tense, and third-person singular at similar rates and time frames. Additionally, African-American children learn to use multi-word constructions in both declarative and question forms by age three, and elaborated, embedded, and negative sentences by four. Stockman (1986) and Washington and Craig (1994) report that social class differences become more obvious after age four, and contrastive morphosyntactic features of

AAE (use of habitual be and deletion of the copula, for example) begin to be commonly observed.

With regards to semantics, such studies as Blake (1994) and Stockman and Vaughn-Cooke (1986) have found that African-American toddlers from working-class families code the same semantic categories (such as existence, locative action and state, negation and possession) as middle-class white children. However, differences in semantic content were found in the two groups. Mount-Weitz (1996) noted that African-American toddlers express more social-personal functions (language to satisfy personal needs) than referential (naming) speech. In other words, these youngsters express more requests, possession, and social expression than European-American children from similar SES class. Also, though working-class African-American children acquired more nominals and action words in the second year, their acquisition and expression of modifiers developed later. The use of mental state words (know, think, feel, pretend) were found to be used less by African-American children at preschool than by white peers. However, mental state words were occasionally used in these children's homes, according to Hall, Nagy and Linn (1987).

Both Battle (1996) and Mount-Weitz (1996) attributed differences in semantic expression to home differences in terms of interactional language use between adults and children. In the home, adult caretakers of AAP-D express more directive language, seldom expand and extend the child's initiations, do not generally consider small children as meaningful conversationalists, and may use

a lexicon that diverges from that of the middle-class community but expresses in content a common cultural heritage (Smitherman, 1977). In general, semantic studies indicate verbal abilities (most generally assessed through level of vocabulary development) in young African-American children frequently differ in content and use from that valued by educational institutions. As indicated in Hart and Risley (1995), this is particularly apparent in African-American preschoolers from low-income homes. Such children adequately use their vocabulary for social interactions but lack the type of lexicon needed to meet demands of early school grades.

Pragmatic similarities and differences are also evidenced between white middle-class and African-American preschoolers. Toddlers learning AAE use language to express the same pragmatic functions (informative, requestive, regulative, imaginative, affective, participative, and attentive) as SAE-speaking children, according to Terrell and colleagues (1998). Other research (Hart & Risley, 1995; Mount-Weitz, 1996) suggests that patterns of frequency across pragmatic categories do, however, exist, particularly in toddlers from low-income African-American homes. Terrell et al. cited Davis and colleagues (1992-1993) in reporting that pragmatic function continues to extend and refine throughout AAP-D preschool years.

Narrative Development in AAP-D

An important area of investigation involves development of narrative ability. Ability in this area of organized discourse is tied to both language and literacy

development. Bishop and Edmunds (1987) found that ability to recall a short story is an excellent predictor or measure of current language development. Additionally, oral narrative performance (the ability to tell a story that makes sense to a listener) and narrative comprehension are believed to be important indicators of literacy potential (Dickinson & McCabe, 1991; Dickinson & Snow, 1987; Feagans, 1982; Michaels, 1981). Interest in narrative development in young children has expanded greatly in the last three decades (Applebee, 1978; Labov & Waletsky, 1967; Stein & Glenn, 1979). While these earlier researchers were more focused on structural elements of narratives and their gradual acquisition by children, investigators in the 1980s began to examine variability in children's narratives, under the headings of genre (accounts, recounts, eventcasts, and stories), style of presentation (along the oral to literate continuum), and discourse organization, themes, and strategies (Gee, 1985; Heath, 1982b, 1986a; Kernan, 1977; Michaels, 1981; Nichols, 1989). It should be noted that a majority of these studies have focused on children of kindergarten age and older.

Four genre of narrative have been described by Heath (1986a). Eventcasts are a verbal detailing of ongoing or future activities. Recounts are speakers' descriptions of a past event in which they participated (usually along with the person who asks for the recount, as, "tell them about..."). Accounts are given to share experiences with listeners who are unaware of the event. Lastly, stories are fictionalized accounts of imaginary individuals attempting to solve a problem or attain a goal (Hester, 1996; Westby, 1994). Heath, during her ethnographic study

of three cultural communities in the Carolina Piedmont area, found that African-American preschool children from working class families received extremely infrequent, if any, experiences with genres of recounts, eventcasts and oral-imaginary or storybook-read stories. However, giving accounts was a more common activity that emerged during playful activities with adults or older relatives. Preschoolers quickly learned to use exaggerated events, colorful sound effects and gestures, and alliterative or rhyming word play to engage their audience. However, they began school with little knowledge of mainstream story structure and the genres of recounting and giving eventcasts.

Cultural style of expression of narratives along an oral to literate continuum has been the subject of several studies in the past two decades (Collins, 1985; Gee, 1989; Michaels, 1981; Nichols, 1989; Westby, 1985). They examined narratives of African-American children. Because both African-American and lower socioeconomic groups have been predominately described as oral cultures in the sociolinguistic literature (Baugh, 1983; Erickson, 1984; Goodwin, 1990; Smitherman, 1977; Westby, 1994), the expectation was that narratives of children in these cultural groups would most likely reflect an oral style. Oral language style is talk-like, with meaning being more implied (than directly expressed) through using prosodic and paralinguistic techniques, slang and sound-patterns, vivid gestures, and facial expressions. Meaning-making is based on contextualization and shared knowledge of co-interlocutors. Literate style is more print-like, with meaning expressed thematically and specifically, using a variety of lexical,

syntactic, and cohesive forms to enable coherence. Use of literate styles of expression is largely dependent upon experience with the decontextualized language of books (Dickinson & McCabe, 1991; Westby, 1985).

Michaels' (1981) observations of kindergarten sharing-time narratives contrasted personal experience narratives of African-American and white kindergartners. Her analysis of these accounts in terms of cohesion, topic, and syntax resulted in the conclusion that African-American children's narratives were more oral-like, with ideas emerging from one statement to the next and linked in a "topic-associating style." Contrastively, narratives of white children were more consistently "literate," producing ideas that continued to be developed around the initial central theme or topic. Michaels called these "topic-centered." Michaels, whose findings were supported by other studies (Collins, 1985; Gee, 1985; Michaels & Collins, 1984), described the topic-associating style as linked by anecdotal association rather than recurrent topic descriptions. Meaning is easily inferred by listeners of a similar oral cultural background, but such narratives violate mainstream teachers' sense of story and appear incoherent and meaningless.

Nichols (1989) studied stories told in fourth-grade classrooms by white and African-American children. Her analyses examined narrative-audience interaction, thematic development, and cohesive strategies. Like Michaels (1981), Nichols found that African-American children's narratives were of a style more topic-associated, relying on immediacy, audience involvement and entertainment to

sense-make, whereas white children's narratives were topic-focused, used specific vocabulary and described relations between story characters more explicitly. Nichols concluded that narrative differences were the result of cultural traditions and experiences with story-telling.

In the last decade, several studies have disputed the belief that African-American children's narrative skills are restricted to the topic associative style. Earlier studies had primarily been ethnographic investigations that described routinely-used language structures, rather than a range of structures that children might be able to use. A few recent studies have used specific narrative task requirements to investigate potential narrative ability.

Hicks (1991) required both white and African-American kindergarten and first-grade students to watch a silent film and then produce three narrative types about what they saw: an eventcast, news report, and story. Hicks found that both African-American and white children were able to express a wide range of organizational, lexical, thematic and prosodic features, and to vary their use according to the genre. Hyon and Sulzby (1992) also looked at stories of African-American kindergarten students as told to a familiar interviewer. Analyzing stories for features of topic-association or topic-centered accounts, the researchers found that 16 of 48 children told topic-centered stories, with 28 producing stories that were topic-associated. These studies suggested African-American children are not consistently restricted to a topic-associating narrative style as had been indicated in earlier studies.

In her literature review on narratives of young African-American children, Hester (1996) used samples from her 1994 dissertation study on narrative style of fourth-grade African-American children to illustrate code switching and style shifting. She agreed that these children vary grammatical features (i.e., code switch) and change presentation features from more oral-like to more literate (i.e., style shift) as a result of narrative task requirements. Hester further concluded that: a) code switching appears to be facilitated by educational experiences, as children perceive differences in their communication and that of the school environment; and b) the degree to which code switching and style shifting relate and/or interact is not known and probably differs among children. Gee (1989) cautions that care must be taken when attempting to develop flexible narrative style expression. Gee described an African-American eleven-year-old style-shifting in telling a story to an adult. The girl decreased oral expressive techniques (expressive lines and links, sound effects and gestures) but did not increase mainstream style elements, rendering her account less interpretable to the listener. Styles should be contrasted as to how messages are communicated, rather than how ineffective aspects might be, according to Gee.

Discourse structure, themes, and strategies of young disadvantaged African-American children have been discussed by Gee (1991), Heath (1982b, 1986a, 1986b), and Sutton-Smith (1986). Heath (1982b) noted, in her discussion of Trackton children that AAP-D as young as two or four begin to tell stories “about things in their lives, events they see and hear, and situations in which they have

been involved." (p. 67). The stories lack typical mainstream beginnings and endings ("Once upon a time"), as the children have not been exposed to such formula. Heath notes that only occasionally do the Trackton children include devices of introduction or orientation. She described the children as simply plunging into their accounts, which are told with poetic feeling, visual imagery, and sound play. Heath's Trackton children learn early that entertaining personal accounts are highly rewarded and valued.

Gee (1991) comments on the "performance" aspect of narratives of lower socioeconomic African-American children. Using a story told by a seven-year-old girl about her grandmother and cakes, Gee discusses strategies of repetition, syntactic parallelism, and varied use of sound patterns (both alliterative and intonational) the child uses to "perform" her narrative. The aim of such a narrative-sharing, according to Gee, is to involve the audience poetically rather than inform them prosaically.

Sutton-Smith's (1986) titles the prosodic performances of children under three as "verse stories" rather than "plot stories." He contrasts such accounts by middle-class children and working-class African-American children, concluding that verse stories of the latter are more personally themed, though both groups of children tend to focus on disequilibrating events and make use of rhythmic movement of sounds, words, and intonation.

Smitherman (1977) has summarized characteristics of the oral communicative discourse style of the African-American culture, which he describes

as highly respectful of oral skills. One communicative device used to tell stories or give accounts is called marking. This strategy involves adopting the words, voice, and mannerisms of those described in the account to create a performance impact on listeners. Smitherman also described the call-response interactive patterns that frequently exist between the narrator/speaker and listeners, listing five categories of this pattern, their functions, and examples. The overall general function of such patterns is verbal engagement, as listeners attempt to support speakers/narrators in both their word, story, or image choices and communicative efforts. Campbell (1994) and Smitherman postulate that topic-associated narrative styles are used more by working-class children, whose story-telling roots are more oral. Topic-associated narratives derive from cultural story-telling traditions in which narrative sequencing diverges from temporal and causal linkages to add related (associative) episodes and rhetorical comments, though always returning to the topic.

In summary, narrative findings on African-American children suggests strongly that, though variation may exist in children's capabilities, many African-American preschoolers from disadvantaged homes enter elementary school with diverse abilities and experiences in this discourse area. These differences are found in style, genre, structure, themes, and strategies.

Research Conclusions in AAP-D Language Differences

Perhaps the most thorough review and conclusions of language differences in children from low-income families may be found in a recent chapter by Whitehurst (1997), in which he states that depressed language performance, in all

subsystem areas, of poverty children is clearly attributable to environmental deprivation rather than biological impairments. Reviewing the literature on the language and literacy environments of low-SES children, which generally included large numbers of African-American children, Whitehurst found that poverty-background children consistently exhibited ability that was around one standard deviation below norms. Areas examined in the Whitehurst studies included semantics (vocabulary), syntax, narrative ability, and metalinguistic ability. Syntax was the only area found not to be one standard deviation below the norm, but performance in this area was in the lower limits of normal (standard score of 90).

Whitehurst (1997) reviewed two of his studies (Payne, Whitehurst & Angell, 1994; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1982) that were designed to examine the effects of improved literacy environment on language performance. He concluded that approximately 12 to 18% of variance in semantic abilities of disadvantaged 5 year olds can be attributed to home literacy practices, such as availability of books, frequency of shared book reading, and trips made to the library. Also noted in the Whitehurst studies was the impact of such variables as adult feedback. Whitehurst expressed the belief that improvement in literacy environment in the home and/or preschool during the developmental period can result in improvement in several language areas: semantics, metalinguistics, and syntax. AAP-D narrative development, though not explicitly examined in the Whitehurst studies, is another area in which lack of experiences with books has resulted in developmental differences.

Literacy Differences

Emergent literacy, a term coined in the 1980's by Teale and Sulzby (1986), refers to the developmental process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes about print and books that occurs between infancy and the time when children can independently read and write. Encompassed in this term are knowledge about conventions of printed symbols and text structures, purposes and functions (uses) of print, and phonological awareness (Gunn, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1998). Emergent literacy research has examined the relationship between literacy experiences during preschool years and later school success in literacy areas: reading, writing, and spelling. Numerous studies (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Mason & Allen, 1986) have determined that the amount and quality of facilitative experiences with adults and literacy artifacts (books, other print media, marking implements, and paper) during preschool years is positively correlated with school potential in literate learning. Demographically speaking, children "at risk" for difficulty learning to read and write upon school entry "tend to grow up in low income or culturally different homes in which single or alternative parents may or may not have the time, interest, knowledge, skills, or funds to provide the supportive and expected world and book experiences." (Cox, 1994; p. 241).

In their review of studies of literacy acquisition related to the awareness and knowledge of print, Gunn, Simmons, and Kameenui (1998) summarized two broad strands of evidence: a) Socioeconomic status and culture may be too general as factors to relate to poor reading achievement. More qualitative and quantitative

factors, usually closely tied to these over-arching contexts include: parental attitude toward education, parental aspirations for the child, conversations in the home, reading material in the home, and cultural social and communicative activities.

b) The act of storybook reading to children, as well as the nature of the encompassed adult-child interactions, shapes children's knowledge about, strategies for, and attitudes toward reading.

Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) reviewed over 30 years of studies examining the relationship between parent-preschooler home reading experiences and subsequent language and literacy development. Studies examined and subjected to a meta-analysis for correlation were those that measured preschool oral language ability, literacy skills upon school entry, and primary literacy achievement scores (reading, writing, and spelling). The two researchers concluded that an association exists between joint book reading and later achievement but that it is relatively modest and varied according to preschooler differences in demographics, attitudes, and skills. Another meta-analysis a year later (Bus, Van IJzendoorn & Pelligrini, 1995) provided somewhat of a challenge to the Scarborough and Dobrich conclusions. Bus and colleagues examined a larger body of research and applied a quantitative analysis to relate parent-preschooler book-reading (and its frequency in the home) to language growth, emergent literacy, and reading achievement. Their analysis concluded that joint book reading explained 8% of the variance in outcome measures, with the overall effect size of .59 being fairly strong. The effect size was largest for language ability ($D = 0.67$) and was

.58 for emergent literacy and .55 for reading skills. The Bus et al. group noted the effect was not dependent upon SES and tends to become smaller as children learn to read on their own. Bus and colleagues summarized that parental book reading to children is as important a predictor of reading achievement as is phonemic awareness and may be especially important as a home preschool practice in low-SES families as it can make the transition into school easier.

Dickinson (1995) views teaching parents and teachers to read effectively to preschoolers of different cultural and class backgrounds as a most important “bridge to literacy” (p. 1). Storybook reading, according to Dickinson, is beneficial in many ways. The act promotes an interactive process of constructing meaning, provides opportunity for rich dyadic talk and decreasing parental demands, and can nurture emotional closeness through joint participation in a pleasant activity.

Home Literacy Experiences

In her contrastive study of the language and literacy events and practices in three Piedmont communities, Heath (1982a, 1982b) found significant differences between each group. Practices of the working class black community appeared to be particularly incongruent with language routines and literacy expectations of mainstream teachers in elementary classrooms. Within home literacy events in which interactional language is integral, Heath (1982b) found different “ways of talking.” With Trackton, the African-American working class community, she found there were no regular bedtimes or routines, no books or manipulative toys. Children were seldom talked to or considered conversational partners, nor did

parents consider themselves tutors for the children. Of talk directed to the children (Heath, 1982a), 75% consisted of imperatives, 5% statements, and 10% exclamations and questions. No what-explanations were asked of the children, and questions tended to ask for functional information ("what you want?") or comparisons ("what that like?"). Children, though not read to, heard many stories told among adults and learned to value and respect storytelling; in fact, they became motivated to develop entertaining, floor-dominating story-telling skills. Because teachers later found the children unable to answer labeling, descriptive or reasoning questions, Heath advised them to query low-income African-American children with questions that related new information to the children's home environment and experiences: "Have you ever ___?"; "What's that like?".

Heath later wrote of her experience, via correspondence, with an African-American unemployed high school dropout and mother of two as the young woman learned to use storybooks with her toddler (Heath & Thomas, 1984). Over a period of several months, possessing two children's books (a alphabet book and The Gingerbread Man), the young woman developed some interactional strategies for focusing her toddler son's attention on storybooks. None of the interactional routines as described by the 1978 Ninio and Bruner article (focus, label request, response, feedback) were used initially, as "T" mostly used directive attempts to direct her son's momentary attention (e.g., "Look at ___.", "Say ___.") to book pictures. After several months, during which she was supported by Heath's suggestions, T had learned several scaffolding and socialization strategies with her

son: when and where to read to him and how to hold him and the book, how to focus his attention through “attentional vocatives” (Ninio & Bruner, 1978), provide turn opportunities, and make topic comments. T also provided her son with literacy artifacts (crayons and paper) and taught her entire household how to talk to children with simplified language while focusing on labeling objects and pictures. Her son scribbled with crayons, pretended to “read” to his baby brother, and looked at and carried his books around proudly. Heath’s account documents that such literacy activities are unfamiliar cultural events in many low-income homes. Similar documentation is found in Ward’s (1982) account of rural low-income African-American families in south Louisiana.

Snow (1983) outlined important parental characteristics which support both language and literacy development and listed home factors that may account for the reading disparity between middle and low-SES families. Parent-child interactive characteristics which support language acquisition and facilitate early reading and writing development are semantic contingency (providing expansions and extensions to children’s comments and answers to their questions), scaffolding (simplifying language and supporting focus on important elements), and use of routines (various learning formats, with book reading being the most beneficial). Snow feels that lack of access to literacy materials in the home is not a sufficient explanation for depressed reading performance in low-SES homes. Other factors beneficial to school success which may be absent included a history of recounting (being asked to tell about a shared experience), support in sticking to a topic

(semantic contingency), and most importantly, experience with decontextualized questioning. This latter skill, which enables children to bring to mind objects and events not present and answer questions about distant, past, or imagined events, is felt by Snow to be a key factor in elementary language and literacy success.

Snow's (1983) conclusions were supported by Teale (1986) as a result of a naturalistic study of the extent and nature of the literacy experiences of 24 low-income San Diego families, eight of whom were African-American. Teale observed the families for 3-18 months, while the children were around 2 ½ to 3 ½ years of age, looking at different participant structures (child observed, or was involved in, literacy event) and activity domains (daily living routines, entertainment, school-related, work, religion, interpersonal, informational networks, literacy for literacy sake, and storybook reading). Teale concluded that while all the low-income children had some literacy experience prior to school years, the focus of the literacy activity was most frequently related to organizing family lives rather than literacy for literacy sake. He found much variation in children's observation of or interaction with literacy and found very little storybook reading. With the exception of three children read to 4-5 times weekly in a low-income Anglo home, children in the African-American and Hispanic home were observed altogether to participate only three times in storybook reading during 70 hours of observation. Teale, like Snow, feels that storybook reading is probably the best way to help children become literate as it provides experience with decontextualized language and familiarizes children with characteristics of print and books. This conclusion was

also supported by others, including Rush (1999) and Dickinson and Tabor (1991). Teale noted further that the few reading parents in his study read to children in ways that were qualitatively very different.

A number of important studies have been completed by Dickinson and colleagues, during the longitudinal Massachusetts Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development. In one, an observational study of low-income families that focused on beneficial settings for literacy development, storybook reading and mealtimes were found to be perhaps the most important contexts for interactive learning (Beals, DeTemple, & Dickinson, 1995). These investigators followed 84 low-SES children from three years of age through early school years, with one group being tracked at home and the other at school. Interactions with parents and teachers were taped at ages 3 and 4, and children were tested at age 5 for literacy development and print-related knowledge. Mothers also completed questionnaires about their home environment and practices. Mothers who reported the highest literacy environment and expected highest degree of education for their children tended to produce the most non-immediate (decontextualized, including narrative and explanatory) talk to them. The amount of narrative talk at mealtimes at age 4 was associated with higher vocabulary and better listening comprehension at age 5. The amount of non-immediate talk during storybook reading at age 3 was correlated with both knowledge of books and print and story comprehension and production. Specific content of talk was determined to be more important than the amount of talk. Beals et al. concluded that talk which extends children beyond the here and

now (present context) has an important bearing on print skills, receptive vocabulary and storytelling. Decontextualized talk “encourages children to use language to think deeply about issues and talk about print.” (Beals et al., pp. 36-37).

Several other studies (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Bus & van IJzendoorn, 1995; Haynes & Saunders, 1998; Lonigan et al., 1999, McLellan & Roberts, 1998) have examined characteristics of storybook reading events among low-income parents, some of which were African-American. Bus and van IJzendoorn (1995) examined attachment between mother and child during reading. These researchers propose that appropriate attachment involves both trust on the part of the child, resulting in adequate curiosity and exploration, and adequate instructional behavior on the part of the parent. Three groups of mothers, two of which were low SES and divided according to how frequently they read to their child, were compared. Their children’s attachment security was measured, following a brief separation from mothers. Researchers then observed the dyads in a storybook reading event. Infrequently reading mothers produced less book-related communication and more irrelevant and disciplinary interactions. Less experienced children needed more help and support with the book-reading process, and mothers did not appear to know how to engage them. They noted there appeared to be a developmental model of interactive reading, which began with picture labeling and comments, gradual adding of some text-reading to picture discussion over time, and eventually reading the text and providing inferential discussions.

Lonigan et al. (1999) were interested in the relationship between emergent literacy skills and behavioral difficulties and inadequate social competence (behaviors associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) in their study of preschoolers from low and middle-income backgrounds. Examining the emergent literacy skills (oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge) of 44 middle-class and 41 low-income (Head Start) 4-year-olds, Lonigan and colleagues found that inattention was related to emergent literacy performance in both groups. However, with the middle-class group, lower scores in emergent literacy areas were found when composite problems with inattention, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and rule violations were present. With low-income children behavioral difficulties tended to be associated more with low nonverbal intelligence quotient. These researchers expressed the belief that SES is more predictive of reading difficulties than ethnicity and propose that preschoolers should be assessed for both ADHD and emergent literacy precursors.

In two studies by Haynes and colleagues, joint book-reading strategies of African-American and white mother-toddler dyads were studied (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Haynes & Saunders, 1998). Anderson-Yockel and Haynes video-recorded ten white and ten African-American working-class mother-toddler dyads and examined them for cultural interactional differences, as well as effects of book familiarity on literacy event behavior, especially questioning. Two books, the child's favorite home book and Bridwell's (1989) "Where's Clifford?", a simple book with repetitive, predictable language, were read. Findings were that African-American low-SES mothers asked significantly less WH (approximately 4 to 18) and yes-no

(approximately 6 to 13) questions than white mothers of the same class. The African-American mothers tended to express more labels and more attentional vocatives. As an obvious result, African-American preschoolers answered significantly fewer questions. African-American mothers also reported reading to their children less than white mothers.

Haynes and Saunders (1998) later replicated this same study, with the exception of using middle-class white and African-American mother-toddler dyads. Parents in the replication study made more than twice the income in their professional roles and had more collegiate education than parents of the original study. Class differences were obvious between the two studies, with no questioning differences noted between the two middle-class groups, but with white mothers labeling more in this study. African-American children of middle-class, though asked more questions, frequently did not respond to them. In both groups, children initiated and commented more to the familiar book. Haynes' later study suggests that middle-class African-American mothers may be more aware of the importance of literacy experiences and questioning as teaching tools.

The final study, presented at the 1998 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention (McLellan & Roberts, 1998) examined 45 southern African-American mother-child dyads, more than half below the poverty level and with limited maternal education beyond high school. Besides examining interaction strategies of the dyads during storybook reading, groups were examined for age-related changes (2 to 3; 3 to 4) in interactional strategies. McLellan and Roberts found the

mothers tended to dominate verbal interactions (talking more and asking more questions than children), though children became more active participants as they grew older. Low levels of language (labeling and description) and literacy (book concepts) were the most frequent interactions. High language (links to world, prediction/inferences) was less frequently used, and high literacy (letter/word-related and sound-related strategies) were very rarely heard. However, increases in these more advanced language and literacy areas did occur during the 3 to 4-year child range. A positive finding was that mothers tended to support child participation through confirmation rather than negative feedback.

In summary, storybook reading is seldom a common literacy event in low-income homes. When it is present, the most frequent types of interaction during SBREs (storybook reading events) in the African-American and/or low-SES homes tends to include attentional or directive vocatives, labeling and description. Infrequently seen during SBREs are non-immediate (decontextualized) talk, print-related talk, WH and yes-no questioning, text-to-life linkages, and talk with high cognitive content (inferences and predictions). Infrequently reading mothers tend to spend more time managing their children's behavior, and low-SES children with lower nonverbal IQs tend to have more difficulty focusing attention upon the storybook process.

Home Intervention Efforts for Literacy

A number of interventions have been attempted to either improve the home literacy environment or insure exposure to storybook reading of low-income and/or African-American children (Edwards, 1989, 1995; Hess, 1999; McCormick &

Mason, 1986, 1989; Segel, 1995). Several studies of Illinois rural and urban low-income children were made by McCormick and Mason (1986,1989). These investigators, who developed a hierarchy of print learning through which children pass (contextualized recognition of forms, more attention to letter-sound relationships, recognition of letter patterns as signifying words), used this hierarchy as part of their study assessment processes. They determined from a questionnaire (to university parents, working class parents and public aide parents) and print knowledge testing of beginning kindergarten children that Illinois rural and low-SES children were entering school with limited book, word, and letter knowledge. They later reviewed first grade records of 15 of the 19 public aide children. Sixty percent of the low-income children were in remedial reading. McCormick and Mason (1986) expressed the concern that if children enter first grade reading at the bottom of their class, their reading proficiency tended to remain limited.

Based on their findings, McCormick and Mason (1986, 1989) developed a series of little books with pictures and repeated simple words (one phrase per page) which they used in two studies. In one, with working-class children, the books were used in a meaning-based school approach in Head Start and sent home with the children, while another school group focused on emphasis of letter names and sounds. The meaning-based group improved in “reading” and print knowledge, and parents became engaged in facilitating the process. In the other McCormick and Mason study (1986, 1989), Head Start teachers received the little books and demonstrations for their use. Additionally, packets of the little books

were given to low and middle-income parents during spring screening for kindergarten. The more involved of two Head Start groups of teachers (one group was minimally compliant in the study) had a most beneficial result, with positive effects in story reading, word reading, and spelling by the end of first grade that were reliable, and were persistent. Over time, four of the children of this study, all from low-income homes, were tracked. Two were from a control group and two from the intervention group. By the end of first grade, the intervention two had made literacy gains significantly above the control group.

Examining the work of McCormick and Mason (1986, 1989), Edwards (1995), an African-American researcher, expressed concerns that lower-income parents (especially those of African-American heritage) are not aware that sharing books with their children may be "the most powerful and significant predictor of school achievement" (Edwards, 1991, p. 211). She believed these parents do not know how to read to their children in ways supportive of language and literacy development (1989, 1995). Edwards directed several studies, two of which will be reviewed here, to help parents learn SBRE techniques to prepare their children for school.

In an early Edwards study (1989), the investigator worked with five lower-SES African-American mothers in north Louisiana once a month for nine months, attempting to teach them to read effectively to their preschool children. All were single mothers of Head Start children who had never before read to their children, and only two had completed high school. In this effort, Edwards provided mothers with Mason and McCormick's (1986) little books, 15 commercial picture

storybooks (usually predictable pattern books), and ten wordless picture books. Parents selected the from which books they wished to read, received prior coaching, and were videotaped and critiqued as they interacted with their children. A checklist by Resnick et al. (1987) was used to structure and track progress in learning attention-maintaining strategies, responding to child comments, appropriate questioning and discussing about text, print awareness and text-to-life talk, and retelling strategies. Only three of the five parents completed the entire nine-month training. One, who had limited reading ability, dropped out after the second session. Another “poor-reading mother” dropped out after six sessions but managed to read all the little books of McCormick and Mason to her children and learned several interactional strategies: questioning about and describing pictures, making comments and linking text to child life. All three remaining parents participated the entire eight weeks, learned from five to 19 scaffolds, and began to share their learning with other Head Start mothers. The most successful mother was the best reader and the most interested in helping her child. However, she had difficulty at first because she expected too much of her daughter. Edwards concluded from this study that it was a “harsh reality” that many lower-SES mothers themselves have trouble reading. She believes such mothers may need to use wordless picture books at first and focus on encouraging picture talk before proceeding to storybooks with limited print.

Edwards (1995) later was recruited to a small south Louisiana town to help develop a program involving both parents and teachers in improving the literacy skills

of incoming disadvantaged children to their elementary school. The resultant Parents as Partners Reading Program involved several components. Edwards taught teachers a course in parent involvement and family literacy. She and the teachers collaborated on development of tapes in which teachers modeled storybook reading strategies. Of the two sets of tapes, one utilized the Resnick et al. checklist (1987) and modeled skills in body and book management and language interaction and affect. The other modeled the interactive reading cycle discussed by Ninio and Bruner (1978). These tapes, which described and modeled one skill at a time, were later critiqued by both teachers and parents. In the parent component of the study, 25 low-SES mothers (18 African-American) of kindergarten and first grade children received six to seven weeks of assistance during three different phases: coaching - introduction to the storybook event as an interactive routine in which they needed to adjust their input to the child's level of understanding; peer modeling - viewing and critiquing of teacher videotapes and sharing with other mothers information about each book and positive reinforcement; and parent-child interaction – videotaping of parents as they attempted to master specific SBRE strategies with their children. Edwards felt that the significant success of this program was largely due to the structured, collaborative approach, videotaping of all phases, and use of parent response sheets and parent learning log (a "fill-in-the-blank" log kept by parents).

In another intervention effort (Segel, 1995), plans were made to combat the fact that books were not easily available to poverty level children. In the first year of the study, packets of four free picture-books and a pamphlet of storybook reading tips

were distributed to parents. Efforts were also made to talk to parents waiting to see doctors and encourage both home SBREs and visiting of libraries. In a survey six months later, findings were that home reading time had increased 22% (47 to 69%), and the time spent by children with books had increased 35% (21 to 56%). Library use did not increase, however. Therefore, during the second year of the study, the free packet was modified to three books and a coupon to be redeemed for the fourth book at the library. Support for such families at the library was also provided. At the end of five years, all families receiving the literacy packet at child age one were studied and compared to a control group. The study consisted of parent completion of a questionnaire, child testing of literacy tasks, observation of dyadic reading at school and teacher questionnaire. Results indicated that 61% of the intervention group was in the top third of the grade in reading ability, and 65% were in the top third in language ability, compared to 46% and 42% respectively of the control group. Additionally, parents who received books provided more literacy experiences and more reading materials to their children than the control group. Contributing to the success of this group was that the distributed books (both concept and storybooks) had little text, predictable elements and featured African-American characteristics when families were African-American. A recent innovation of the Segel study has been to tutor non-reading parents and provide library-supported modeling of dyadic reading for children, with funded bus tickets for participants.

Hess (1999) studied three low-income single parents of high-risk toddlers (12-18 months) in Indiana. Finding mothers who engaged in only physical play and

directive interactions, this researcher taught them how to engage their children in symbolic play and talk about pictures in storybooks. Findings were that responsiveness and quality of talk to the toddlers improved, and parents learned to name and describe objects and actions for their children during both play and SBREs. The research was based on the belief that language acquisition in the first year of life is a strong predictor of later academic achievement.

Snow (1995) reviewed intervention projects involving book reading and concluded that studies have shown that less advantaged parents want to know how to read to their children. Teaching them to view the event as a social activity, to talk about books effectively with their children and to provide repetitive and stable storybook contexts were described by Snow as most important for helping all children adequately develop language, literacy, and learning, and especially those of disadvantage.

School Intervention Efforts for Literacy

A number of research projects (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1995; Cox, 1994; Dickinson, 1989; Hoffman & Norris, 1994; Karweit, 1995; O'Leary et al., 1998; Sulzby, Branz & Buhle, 1993) involving storybook reading with low-income preschoolers and kindergarten-age children in their classroom setting have been completed in the last decade. All have contributed to the determination of classroom practices that result in improved language and literacy ability during literacy events.

Dickinson (1989) described changes that occurred as the result of implementation of a "shared reading" program in a Massachusetts Head Start over

a nine-month period. The program served urban African-American children and children of Indian, Haitian, and Hispanic immigrants in a half-day program. The teacher and her Hispanic assistant initially expressed the belief that their Head Start program's primary goal was socialization, teaching the children to follow a consistent routine and be responsible in completion of simple tasks. Morning groups focused on a story, singing songs, and brief discussion of a current topic. Though a reading/writing center was available, little use of it was made or encouraged. The children were taught more through visual demonstrations than verbal scaffolding.

Dickinson (1989) reviewed changes that occurred in this Head Start program as a result of implementation of Holdaway's (1979) Shared Reading Experience by Massachusetts (1986) state-funded Literacy/Curriculum Connections Project. Several components of this project enabled a more literacy-based approach in the Head Start program. First, the class received new teaching materials, including Big Books (large-sized books with predictable texts: rhymes and refrains), and many small copies of the same books, and listening center materials with tapes of some of the books. Secondly, teachers received training for reading the books and leading songs written in large print. Children were encouraged to chime in with reading, especially of predictable phrases. Teachers were taught to extend the theme of the books into developmental area activities (art, manipulative, motor). Finally, a book lending program was instituted to encourage children to read at home.

Dickinson (1989) visited the program nine times. He conducted teacher interviews in the fall, spring, and summer, videotaped four teacher reading sessions and informally observed and spoke to teachers the remaining times. He determined both classroom gains and losses as a result of the program. Losses resulted from the shift away from discussion-oriented reading to choral reading. Prior to the program, children frequently initiated comments or questions about books, and some text-to-life connections were made. At the end of the year, the children's engagement and enjoyment with books, both at school and home, had increased. However, the lack of book-related discussions, combined with frequent chiming of predictable language, provided few opportunities for language expansion. Follow-up activities were not treated as forums to continue to discuss the books. Benefits were that children were more engaged with literacy: listening in the listening centers, interested in drawing, interested in telling stories, and enjoying taking books home to share with families.

Dickinson (1989) derived several instructional implications for teachers of low-income and second language children from his study. These include:

- 1) Read throughout the day.
- 2) Read with much animation the same story repeatedly.
- 3) Provide discussion either during or prior to and after the story.
- 4) Make text-to-life connections about in- and out-of-school experiences.
- 5) Respond to child questions.
- 6) Use varied types of texts: informational, poetry, classics, fantasy.

- 7) Extend writing activities.
- 8) Extend book/theme-related discussion to extension activities and mealtime talk.
- 9) Provide parental encouragement and storyreading involvement along with book loans.

Arnold and Whitehurst (1995) discussed two studies involving low-income children and use of dialogic reading procedures. These procedures encourage child participation during SBREs, provision of parental feedback (expansions, models, clarifications), and progressive change in the balance of the parent-child dialogue, as the child becomes a more competent participant. The investigators expressed the belief that this beneficial form of interactive reading can have quite a significant impact on high-risk children's language skills, ultimately benefitting their literacy ability. They sought to improve language skills through literacy activities as a result of the findings in two studies. These were Pikulski and Tobin's (1989) conclusion that kindergarten receptive language predicts end of first grade reading ability, and Wells' (1985) connecting frequency of storybook reading at age three to reading comprehension at age ten.

In one study at a Mexican public day-care program, Valdez-Menchaca and Whitehurst (1992) compared storybook reading effects between one group who received ten minutes daily of one-on-one dialogic reading for six weeks and a control group who participated in manipulative activities. Significant changes occurred in language ability in the dialogic group on several tests: 29 point improvement on the

Verbal Expression subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability (Kirk, McCarthy, & Kirk, 1968), seven language quotient points on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (Dunn & Dunn, 1981), and eight language quotient points of Gardner's (1981) Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test.

In a second study, Arnold and Whitehurst (1995) compared effects of a similar study in a low-SES day care in the United States. However, three groups were contrasted: one involved teachers providing dialogic reading to groups of three or four children around 42 months in age; in another children were read to by both parents at home and teachers at school, and the third group engaged in manipulative activities. Post-tested similarly to the prior study, significant effects were found for both reading groups. The group read to by teachers and parents scored best on two language tests, the EOWPVT and the ITPA verbal subtest.

Benefits in literacy knowledge, phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and pre-writing between two programs serving African-American preschoolers were contrasted by O'Leary and colleagues (1998). A university preschool had a child-directed approach in which children were allowed to select activities from centers and a Head Start program combined child-directed centers with teacher-directed tasks for "readiness" skills. Assessment of the two groups in the three literacy areas found the Head Start children out-performed the university preschoolers in all areas except nursery rhyme production under phonological awareness. The investigators concluded a balance between teacher and child-directed activities may best support pre-literacy development.

Metacognitive ability, in particular use of regulatory speech (speech meant to control and direct one's own behavior) in both at-risk (21) and not-at-risk (13) preschoolers was the concern of a study by Cox (1994). Twenty-nine percent of the study children were from minority cultures. Cox noted that the at-risk children had average language ability, according to developmental testing. Both groups exhibited the same range of Emergent Reading Categories on Sulzby's (1985) checklist: no story to written-like pretend readings. Greater distribution of book interaction levels and more at lowest levels on Sulzby's checklist was found for the at-risk group. Cox collected regulatory speech during a language experience task, in which preschoolers (4 and 5-year-olds) were invited to help revise and edit the text which they had dictated for the researcher to write. Four types of regulatory speech were gathered. These included general reference to their own internal processes ("thinking, thinking!"); explicit regulation related to literacy and/or context ("Just say, 'pirates came.'"); speech directing scribe to record items to help audience better understand ("Put in pad instead of thing."); and some metalinguistic talk ("That's a long word!").

Cox (1994) found notable quantitative and qualitative differences between the high-risk and not-at-risk groups in revision efforts. The smaller not-at-risk group (13 middle-class children) produced 63 metacognitive and editorial comments, whereas the larger at-risk group (21 low-income children) produced only 50 comments. Only 20% of at-risk children's utterances were concerned with adding content to aide audience understanding. General planning was noted in

only 12% of their utterances. Cox found further that the lower the reading level on Sulzby's (1985) checklist, the lower the amount of regulatory speech (and meaningful editing) in the high-risk children. Conclusions from Cox were that high-risk children need opportunities to participate in the reading-writing process and to learn to consider an audience during editing attempts (assistance developing regulatory speech). They also could benefit from opportunity to hear readings from diverse texts and participate in their interpretation. Three factors that need to be developed and extended in these children are world knowledge, text knowledge, and metacognitive ability.

Changes in emergent literacy of low-SES African-American children was the particular focus during the first two years of a five-year Michigan longitudinal study by Sulzby, Branz, and Buhle (1993). The school district involved in the research was in the midst of changing from a skill-based to a literacy-based curriculum. Three types of kindergarten classrooms (at five elementary schools) were observed: traditional classrooms with basal readers, emergent literacy classrooms with computers, and emergent literacy classrooms without computers. Sixty-four percent of kindergartners were African-American, with 44% being overage for grade. Researchers visited each classroom in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year, compiling visit notes that gave important details of each observation. Teachers were encouraged to read repeatedly to the children and to provide free time for reading, giving children easy access to books and invitations to read. Children were assessed through audiotaping their oral stories and being

encouraged to write a story “their own way” and to re-read it to the researchers. Stories were graded according to Sulzby’s (1985) checklist for children’s transition into conventional reading.

Findings in the Sulzby and colleagues’ study (1993) were that low-SES African-American kindergartners all read emergently and were easily classified by the Sulzby (1985) checklist. Though many refused to read and write at first, claiming inability, refusals were easily overcome. All showed similar patterns as other groups of children. All children were behind middle-class children in phonemic awareness, and their invented spelling was a more sensitive indicator of their development of this skill than segmentation or blending activities. Access to literacy led to children demonstrating “active engagement” in both emergent reading activity and higher level discussions about their reading. Computer composition behavior began to be demonstrated by children from the day such activity was first modeled to them. Sulzby et al. concluded that low-SES African-American children can benefit from principles and techniques of emergent literacy in order to develop a love and understanding of books, as well as reading ability.

At-risk, low-SES kindergarten children in the urban South were studied by Hoffman and Norris (1994). Twenty African-American children with low skills in both language and literacy (as documented on the Test of Early Reading Ability-2 [TERA-2], Reid, Hresko, & Hammill, 1989; and semantics subtest of Test of Language Development-2 Primary, Newcomer & Hammill, 1988) were study subjects. Ten students were in an alphabet-based curriculum and ten in a whole-

language curriculum. Teachers and speech-language pathologists collaborated to determine goals, plans, and materials for the year-long study. Both curricula were structured by a theme. The alphabetic curriculum featured “letter of the week” themes. The whole-language design utilized narrative-centered themes in which a book with predictable texts was explored for two weeks, while all classroom activities explored larger themes related to book actions (i.e., “Community and Society”). Both types of programming featured storybook reading events, manipulative experiences and language use times. The whole language storybook exploration and related extension activities were structured by movement on Norris and Hoffman’s (1993) Situational-Discourse-Semantic Model, with scaffolding provided to assist children to progress to higher levels of semantic and discourse ability, while extending ability with decontextualized talk.

The children were post-tested in May on the TERA-2 (Reid, Hresko, & Hammill, 1989), in three reading areas: Meaning, Alphabet, and book/Print Conventions. Higher gains by the whole language group were attained in all areas, but only gains related to Meaning were found to be statistically significant. However, meaning is an area traditionally weak for low-SES African-American children, who frequently have trouble with decontextualized and abstract talk. Hoffman and Norris (1994) concluded this study supports the use of whole language procedures and teaching strategies with disadvantaged African-American children.

These studies of storybook use in schools have supported use of a number of emergent literacy and language practices: repeated readings of the same

storybook, provision of discussion either during or before and after the story, encouragement for children to independently explore storybooks, support for children to “write” about their readings and to edit (with adult support) their productions, provision of extension activities and text-to-life connections, and time for both teacher-supported and child-directed activities. Most importantly, support for adult scaffolding to enable child participation in more decontextualized and abstract discussions was noted.

Style in Storybook Reading Events

Storybook reading events (SBREs) have been studied over the past two decades for characteristics that benefit children’s language and literacy development (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1995; Dickinson, Zhibang & Wenchao, 1995; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). Dickinson and colleagues (1995) have noted that love of books, a salient feature in becoming literate, can be either nourished or undermined during SBREs. These researchers state that the hallmark of a successful SBRE is “the excitement and intensity of engagement on the part of the children and teacher and the dramatic quality of reading itself” (Dickinson et al., 1995, p. 212). Storybook reading styles have been examined as to patterns of language and interaction between adult and child, with the quality, quantity, and varied content of text-related talk being examined. Style has to do with selection of a register, or variation of language expression because of the situation or speech event. Individuals choose to express themselves in certain registers (along a continuum of more to less formal) because of their perception of requirements of a particular

situation or event, their knowledge of topics to be discussed, or their purpose within the event (Owens, 1996).

Early researchers determined patterns of interaction of beneficial practices related to SBREs. Bullock (1975) in an English educational report, noted that emotional content of the event is most important and urged repeated readings of children's favorite stories. Martinez and Roser (1985) later supported the repetition recommendation with the finding that repeated readings enable children to get a true sense of connected story, to clarify unclear story events and motivations, and to internalize the meaning of new words. Durkin (1972) also supported repeated reading episodes, noting the good verbal interaction between adult and child enables learning to answer questions and to acquire print-related knowledge. Ninio and Bruner (1978), who described the reading cycle that occurs in parent-toddler dyads (attentional vocative, question, label, feedback) noted the central element in the mastery of early labeling is mastery of the reciprocity of dialogue rules during the mother-child exchange. Swift (1970), in his work with poverty mothers, determined that training mothers to elaborate ideas for children, make connections between story and child lives, and have children retell stories could actually benefit the children's cognitive growth.

Snow and colleagues (Goldfield & Snow, 1984; Snow, Nathan & Perlman, 1985; Snow & Ninio, 1986) investigated important factors related to child growth during SBREs, changes in parental control over SBRE interactions, and dimensions of match between maternal reading style and child book engagement. In what they

called a “microprocess examination” of parent-child SBREs, Goldfield and Snow discussed changes in storybook interaction and resultant child benefits, as children progress through the preschool years. During the *labeling* stage, several parental strategies used after 17 months were connected to later outcomes. Parents who queried “where’s that?” for nonverbal, indicative information (pointing to pictured objects and actions) tended to support development of large receptive vocabulary; parents who asked “what’s that?” to elicit naming supported productive vocabulary development; but parents who simply pointed and labeled tended to produce more passive child story participants and imitative vocabulary. During the stage Goldfield and Snow termed *building event structures* (between ages 2 ½ and 3 ½), children were supported to move from answering “what’s that?” to “what’s happening?” and “why?” questions. Children also learned new kinds of lexical items and syntactic forms and increased their world knowledge while talking about pictured events. As children grew older, their participation in SBREs led to them *developing connections between books and world events* (through expanded discussions and text-life talk) and learning mechanics of reading (print to sound, words to meaning, left-right line and page sequencing), through parental orientation to conventions of books and print.

Snow and Ninio (1986) noted that though there were many similarities between the SBREs of middle and low-SES parental readers that low-SES, relatively uneducated mothers were not sensitive to changes in children’s storybook participation as they grew older and more competent and did not engage them in

higher language levels. They discussed “contracts of literacy” that such parents need to learn in order to effectively support their children’s book learning. Parents learn, for example, that SBREs involve face to book (literate) rather than face to face (oral) engagement but do constitute joint engagement. Children must be guided to talk about pictures, which represent objects, actions, and events. Parents must scaffold or support children in learning that book events are sequential and depict a fiction world.

Snow, Nathan, and Perlman (1985) reported that maternal style is particularly important in helping children attain benefits from books. These researchers videotaped SBREs between mothers and toddlers weekly for about six months. Their investigation of style involved examining the degree parents dominate SBREs by introducing topics and the manner in which they initiated information units (information comment, directing attention, or questioning). Snow and colleagues found that all but one mother gradually ceded some degree of control of the event to the child. Distinct differences in preferred manner of presenting information were noted. Two children matched their mothers in such strategies. However, in general, children tended to initiate information by directing attention, while mothers tended to question or provide information. These researchers found that children could incorporate particularly interesting or salient information into retelling attempts after only one exposure to the item.

Flood (1977) examined style of parental storybook reading to preschoolers for its relationship to prereading ability. He studied 36 families in the San Francisco

area, representing four ethnic groups and three SES levels. Parents were videotaped reading to children, and children were tested in five re-reading areas (alphabet recognition, whole word recognition, vocabulary, visual discrimination and recognition of geometric shapes). Fourteen qualitative components of reading dyads were analyzed and related to the single prereading score. Four items were found to be significantly correlated with prereading ability and two more approached significance and were considered important. These were: total number of words spoken by the child, number of questions answered by child, number of questions asked by child, warm-up preparatory questions by parents, post-story evaluative questions by parents and positive reinforcement by parents. In sum, several aspects of parental storybook reading style were identified as qualitatively the most beneficial. These were preparatory sets that stimulated child interest in book content, interactional story-telling that allowed/encouraged active child participation, reinforcement and expansion of child participatory efforts, and post-story discussions that helped children integrate and evaluate story content and themes by relating them to their own experience.

Roser and Martinez (1985) studied roles that adults take during SBREs in assisting children to make sense of text. They observed storytimes of central Texas preschoolers (3 ½ to 5) both at home and school. They found similar patterns in adult-child talk both at home and school, though teachers tended to question more than parents. In this study, children tended to respond to books more like the adults who read to them than like other child participants in a SBRE. For example,

if the adult tended to talk more about pictures or to ask more frequently about word meaning, the children also adopted these interests and strategies. Roser and Martinez analyzed adult styles of interactions according to the function of their talk. Three styles or “roles” were identified. Within *co-responder* roles, adults established topics for discussion, described important information in pictures, recounted important story parts, expressed reactions to text, and invited children to evaluate. The role characterized as *informer/monitor* included adults who regularly checked children’s present comprehension of story events and attempted to both explain and clarify various aspects of the story while broadening childrens’ world knowledge by providing related information. Within the third role, *directors* introduced and concluded stories and managed story discussions.

Roser and Martinez (1985) expressed the conclusion that co-responder and informer/monitors elicited “richest” verbal discussions from children. Beneficial strategies of co-responders were: modeling types of appropriate responses and processes to be used in mature text interactions. The investigators felt that the informer/monitors helped children learn how to use background and world knowledge to make text sense, therefore modeling the process of inferencing. Roser and Martinez’ conclusions are largely supported by Teale and Sulzby (1987) who note that the nature of SBREs (and they define this as quality and quantity of being read to) has most significant effects on children’s knowledge about books and their content, as well as their strategies for book interactions and attitudes toward reading.

Two studies by Teale and Martinez (Martinez & Teale, 1993; Teale & Martinez, 1986) examined kindergarten teacher style during SBREs. Both studies were conducted as part of a project during which the investigators assisted San Antonio, Texas teachers to make a curriculum shift to incorporate emergent literacy approaches in kindergarten classrooms. Having observed differences in SBRE purpose and interactional patterns, Teale and Martinez (1986) initiated an exploratory study to ascertain if distinctly different storybook reading styles could be determined. Two kindergarten teachers were taped and observed as they read the same storybook. Tapings were transcribed and analyzed. Analysts examined message form (question, comment, response), strategy (focus, confirm, extend, clarify), information focus (literal, inferential, background etc.), and story aspect focus (setting, attempt, consequences, theme, etc.).

On a surface level, both teachers read according to Trelease's (1982) read-aloud handbook; they previewed the book, attempted to prepare children for listening, read with expression, encouraged child responses, and allowed for post-story discussion. Though both teachers paused for during-story discussions and focused on similar issues (defining words, predicting), their global reading style differences reflected their own characterization of their reading aims for the children. M, the reader termed *literary* desired to highlight the story and elicit emotional response to it; she also placed stress on rhythm, sentence patterns, and vocabulary. Observation revealed she did indeed emphasize the story theme and moral. B, called the *thinking skills* reader, aimed to teach the children strategies for comprehending text, predicting, and

evaluating story actions. Analysis of B supported that her purpose was reflected in the style of her presentation. She posed many inferential questions, more overall than M, before and during the text. She provided limited after-story discussion, but she supported inferencing with pertinent text during story discussions. B also engaged more children in contributing verbally to SBRE talk. Teale and Martinez (1986) recommended from this study that teachers should be aware of SBRE objectives and adapt their style to accommodate them or develop a repertoire of styles to be employed to accomplish different objectives.

A later study during the same Texas implementation of emergent literacy practices project examined the reading styles of six kindergarten teachers (Martinez & Teale, 1993). Subjects chosen all were experienced teachers who were knowledgeable about emergent literacy practices. All followed Trelease (1982) reading methods and read to their class on a daily basis. Three teachers were audiotaped and videotaped, and three were only audiotaped, as they read to their classes once a week for four weeks. Researchers observed and took contextual notes to later expand the transcribed tapes. Teachers read four stories, all considered to be age appropriate, quality literature with a discernable plot, according to Stein and Glenn (1979) story grammar framework. Data were analyzed for SBRE style, considering focus of teacher talk, type of information emphasized during discussions, and teacher instructional strategies.

All teachers were found to have styles that were distinctive and consistent across books. Three had clearly dominant roles during SBREs, and the other three

allowed/encouraged more child initiations to achieve more interactional SBREs. In terms of focus, all teachers placed more emphasis on setting and initiating event, attempt, and consequence, while giving less attention to character, story map, internal response and reaction. In other words, more focus was given by all to story action than to internal processes of characters. Under type of information emphasized, all six teachers highlighted inferences about text action most. Of seven instructional strategies identified, only one teacher utilized the entire range but she utilized two strategies most consistently (review and recapitulation).

Characteristic content of the six teachers' SBREs were:

- H- This teacher consistently treated story as interrelated events and provided systematic reviews of events. Children gained a good understanding of explicit story information.
- B- Her emphasis on inferential questioning was based on her desire to develop students' reasoning skills. This is the *thinking-skills* reader from the previous exploratory study (Teale & Martinez, 1986).
- M- The *literary reader* from the earlier study emphasized story theme and after-story discussions. M reworded difficult questions to make answers obvious, often forming yes/no questions from why/how questions.
- K- This teacher placed a large emphasis on definition and prediction of words, only occasionally focusing on important story facts.
- L- Story extensions were common for highlighting story information in this class. During SBRE, L frequently used informing and eliciting strategies.

C- Not competent at guiding discussions, this teacher emphasized information explicit in pictures most often.

Martinez and Teale concluded that because SBREs were an important means of helping children to learn how to benefit from books, that the consistent style of teachers may result in children's internalizing their modeled ways of approaching stories. Different teachers and styles could result in students learning multiple ways of learning from text. These researchers recommended that later SBRE style research investigate effects that various styles have on both comprehension and literacy development. Martinez and Teale also recommend identifying particular features of SBRE styles and examining their relationship to specific literacy areas.

Dickinson and colleagues (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994) have used a more sociolinguistic approach in their investigations of style in storybook reading events. Using Hymes' (1974) ideas for analyzing speech events and Irvine's (1979) analysis of formality, Dickinson and Keebler examined a university day care where three teachers regularly read to students. The 22 children ranged in age from 42 to 50 months and were about equally divided between children of working-class, student, and professional (middle-class) representation. Teachers were taped as they read both familiar and unfamiliar storybooks and were also interviewed as to their SBRE aims. Dickinson and Keebler sought to determine if consistencies in SBRE reading and discussing existed regardless of type, length, and familiarity of book. The researchers determined two types of interactive approaches and one approach termed "performance-oriented" existed.

One interactive style was more text-focused with the emphasis being to encourage children to participate in discovering and understanding what events were occurring in the story. During-story discussions frequently broke the mood of the story to focus on informational issues, and children made minimal response, seeming reluctant to shift away from the plot movement. Follow-up discussions provided summarization for comprehension. The mood was business-like, and little use of paralinguistics were noted. The other interactive style was more conversationally oriented, with defining of vocabulary being this teacher's primary intent. Most discussion occurred during book-reading, and this teacher was most responsive to child comments. A small amount of paralinguistics were used, mostly to convey story excitement. Minimal follow-up discussion was provided, but the emphasis was on connecting text and life experiences. Dickinson and Keebler (1989) reported that children responded to this teacher's interest in their participation and made many comments about pictures, story events, and life-to-text connections. Dickinson and Keebler compare their conversational interactive teacher to Teale and Martinez' (1986) *thinking skills* teacher, and the text-focused interactive teacher to the *literary reader* of that study. Neither of these teachers spent much time on preparatory prior-to-reading discussions, whereas Teale and Martinez' teachers did.

Lastly, the teacher Dickinson and Keebler (1989) termed performance-oriented was depicted as constructing a formal and dramatic performance for her young listeners. The stage was set prior to the reading for a monologic presentation. Significant use was made of gestures, intonation, and voice changes to enable both

plot-line and story emotive reactions to be explicit for children. Follow-up discussions emphasized text-life linkages for children and did not clarify storylines or story issues.

Dickinson and Keebler (1989) determined that each SBRE was an entirely different literacy event with resultant differences in effect on children. They concluded that paralinguistics and performatory efforts of the non-interactive teacher may facilitate childrens' growing understanding of story moods and character motivations. In contrast, interactive styles provide opportunities for teachers to clarify plot issues and word meanings. The researchers cited Britton's (1970) approach-to-text discussion, noting that the interactive SBRES may promote analytic approaches to text, whereas performance-oriented SBREs may promote more passive and spectator stances.

A later study by Dickinson and Smith (1994) was part of the longitudinal Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development. This study traced the development of extended discourse abilities (including oral and written discourse and reading comprehension) and print-specific knowledge in 84 low-income children between three and ten years of age. The study is similar in scope and purpose to that of Wells (1986) in England. Building on the earlier descriptive style study by Dickinson and Keebler (1989), this research aimed to continue to identify storybook reading styles while determining if such ways of reading to children around age four have language and literacy development effects that are detectable a year later, during kindergarten programming.

Children in the Dickinson and Smith (1994) study were four-year-olds in Head Start or like subsidized programs. One-third were African-American, and the remainder were white (62%) and Hispanic (4%). Data were derived from transcriptions of videotaped SBREs, with supporting notes from classroom observations, and teacher interviews. Target children completed a battery of language and literacy tests during kindergarten (including a picture vocabulary test and probe questions involving recall and inferencing following a storybook reading). Talk before, during, and after SBREs was coded as informational request/response, cognitively challenging talk (prediction, definition, clarification, text-life linkages), lower cognitive demand talk (labeling, direct recall), and management interactions (attention, organization, and feedback).

Dickinson and Smith (1994) found three distinct approaches to story reading: co-constructive, didactic, and performance-oriented. The co-constructive approach, similar to a mesh of the two interactive teachers in the Dickinson and Keebler (1989) study, included high amounts of talk during the story, but little discussion before and after. Talk was analytic and cognitively challenging and included some metalinguistic discussion. Limited talk at any time was characteristic of the teacher with the didactic SBRE style. Existing talk sought to organize and focus students to listen, recall immediate facts, or chime in to reading of predictable phrases. Children occasionally integrated spontaneous story comments. During the performance-oriented presentation, talk was reserved for before and after story, with a dramatic performance of the story in between. The

extended book introduction was evaluative in nature, and end-of story discussion reconstructed the story and made text-to-life connections.

When children were tested on vocabulary and story comprehension one year later, post hoc comparisons found that children who had been in the performance-oriented class performed significantly better in vocabulary than the didactic group. No group was significantly better than the other on story comprehension. Further analysis revealed that a single interactional variable, the proportion of prompted and responsive analysis, prediction, and vocabulary utterances had a strong effect for vocabulary and was also predictive on the story comprehension task.

Dickinson and Smith (1994) compared their co-constructive teacher to teacher approaches described by Cochran-Smith (1984) and to at least three of the teachers described by Martinez and Teale (1993). Their didactic teacher was felt to be similar to at least one of the Martinez and Teale teachers, as was the performance-oriented teacher. These investigators concluded that between three and six SBRE styles could be identified, depending upon what was analyzed during comparisons. They suggest that utterance-level descriptions may be more reliable than holistic approaches in providing more stable descriptions of how teachers both read and discuss, as style-shifting occurs within SBREs. Although Dickinson and Smith felt that variation in book reading has lasting and differential effects on growth of language and literacy skills, they suggested that encouragement of analytic discussions of books may be more important than adhering to a particular style. Such talk helps children form a strong conceptual base, provides teachers

opportunities to make meaning clear, and gives children opportunities to be frequently exposed to and process word meaning. Analytic talk also promotes metalinguistic and metacognitive thinking and use of cognitive state words, such as *know*, *think*, and *remember*. Growth of vocabulary and better comprehension are linked. Dickinson and Smith (1994) also expressed the belief that chiming, a component of low cognitive verbal interaction, is encouraged by the use of predictable storybooks, which often have limited vocabulary and minimal plots.

As implications of their study, Dickinson and Smith (1994) recommended that style-shifting may be an optimal method of achieving specific child benefit during SBREs. They conclude that it is not necessary to break into a story for talk, as long as discussion is provided before and after stories. Because lower vocabulary is associated with didactic approaches and predictable books, repeated use of such books are not recommended. Dickinson and Smith recommend that further study of SBREs is needed to determine effects of genre, illustration type, and size of books, and the relationship between adult style, reading strategies, and child age. Naturalistic study was recommended as the best approach to examination of SBREs.

In a 1995 study, Dickinson, Zhibang, and Wenchao discussed the relationship of SBRE style with teacher skill ("pedagogical sophistication") and classroom features (age and size of group, proficiency with English). Reviewing the literature on the different "stances" readers and listeners take towards books and stories (Britton, 1970; Dickinson & Keebler, 1989; Langer, 1990; and Rosenblatt,

1978), Dickinson and colleagues posit that children learn to assume these stances through experiences with the varied reading approaches of their preschool teachers. One such stance, called *aesthetic* by Rosenblatt (1978) and *participant role* by Britton (1970), allows more observational and evaluative approaches to text events. Dickinson and colleagues sought to determine if teachers could completely engage children's imaginative focus and extend their intellectual interest (through interactive questions and discussion) simultaneously during SBREs. In brief, the primary question to be addressed was whether SBREs should include both story performance and interactive talk. Other questions were concerned with the degree of association between reading style and both teacher instructional ability and classroom features.

Dickinson, Zhibang, and Wenchoao (1995) observed, for approximately two years, 66 3-year-old and 74 4-year-old low-income children in Head Start and other subsidized preschools, approximately one-third of whom were African-American. Seventy-two percent of mothers had high school or less education, and slightly less than half were receiving welfare. During once-per-year visits, teachers were videotaped reading a self-chosen storybook to a large group. Such tapings were transcribed to examine features of cognitive language interaction as well as engaging presentation and resultant child interest. The researchers also determined teacher instructional values through teacher interview, administration of Harms and Clifford's (1980) Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (social development score), and observing classroom features.

SBREs were coded for child involvement (attention, participation), teacher focus (on story, child initiations, fostering child involvement), teacher management of child behavior, dramatic reading quality (variations in pitch, tone, face and gestural expression), effective reference of pictures, and end-of-story discussions (questioning, involving children). Group size and book familiarity were also examined. Utterance-level codes determined amounts of talk that were non-present (analytic or metalinguistic) or organizational (management of child focus). Teacher pedagogical orientation was measured as to teacher ability to facilitate emotional development and literacy sensitivity, as well as provision of print-rich curriculum.

Study findings suggested that organizational talk tended to occur with greater frequency prior to and less frequently during effective readings. Effective readings were also associated with more nonpresent talk. Teacher ability was positively associated with quality of book reading. Classroom variables that were significant in child engagement were age (4 year olds engaged in more nonpresent talk than 3 year olds during large group SBREs), limited English proficiency (teachers of LEP children engaged in less nonpresent talk, particularly with younger children), and book familiarity (three-year-olds talked more about familiar books; 4-year-olds talked less).

Though one of Dickinson's previous studies (Dickinson & Smith, 1994) indicated more effective reading approaches included less talk during stories and more at story end, such a pattern was not common in this research. Dickinson et al. (1995) found that "good teachers" in this study managed to establish childrens'

focus at story beginning. Most teachers tended to keep 3-year-olds primarily as participants, perhaps because they were less skilled at managing the behavioral focus of younger and/or less English proficient children. These researchers note that teachers may need to learn two skills: engaging SBRE style (dramatic reading ability), and how and when to manage stimulating, beneficial discussions. Dickinson, Zhibang, and Wenchao (1995) determined that teachers vary in their management, reading, and discussion-leading skills during SBREs, with their approaches clearly modified by their instructional training and beliefs, child age, and classroom factors. They recommend further research be accomplished via teacher questionnaires regarding teacher beliefs, practices, and style consistency during SBREs.

Summary

Findings in this literature review suggest that African-American preschoolers of disadvantage (AAP-D) can indeed gain language and literacy benefit from early and appropriate storybook reading experiences (SBREs). Low-SES children (and a large number of African-American children fall into this category) tend to have restricted lexicons and literacy experiences, though this may vary to some degree according to parental education and amount of academic guidance afforded their children. Storybook reading events have been determined to be an important early factor, both at home and school, for development of language and discourse skills (especially decontextualized talk), literacy knowledge (print and book-related knowledge), and general world knowledge. The nature and quality of adult-child

interactions (i.e., style and content) is affected by adult skill with books and knowledge of children's needs and interests. The characteristics of these interactions can strongly impact children's interactional strategies during SBREs, attitudes toward books and reading, and ability to take knowledge from texts. Therefore, storybook reading style, involving patterns of interaction and the quality, quantity, and positioning of text-related talk during an SBRE, is a meaningful area of study, particularly when applied to a specific cultural group such as AAP-D.

This study compared changes in communicative competence that occurred for a specific cultural group, African-American preschoolers from disadvantaged homes (AAP-D), as a result of two different styles of storybook reading. Review of the literature has established that communicative benefits during preschool storybook reading events (SBREs) include improved language and discourse ability, knowledge about books and print (literacy knowledge), and general world knowledge. Therefore, three primary questions focusing on these factors were addressed in this study.

- (1) Will higher levels of semantic and narrative performance be attained by AAP-D as a result of either interactive or performance-oriented styles of storybook reading?
- (2) Will increases in the literacy knowledge of AAP-D result from either interactive or performance-oriented storybook reading styles?
- (3) Will extension of general world knowledge related to the contents and themes of three specific storybooks result for AAP-D from either interactive or performance-oriented storybook reading styles?

Additional qualitative analyses will examine differences in child engagement and the relationship of number of readings to increases in story comprehension and re-telling levels (narrative structure and organization) during the two types of SBREs.

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to compare effects of two storybook reading styles on African-American preschoolers from disadvantaged (low socioeconomic strata) homes. Three variables: story retelling ability, general or world knowledge, and literacy concepts, were examined for change as a result of the storybook reading event (SBRE). Contrasted reading styles were adapted from Dickinson and Keebler (1989), who termed them interactive and performance-oriented. Study participants included disadvantaged African-American children who were chronologically between 3;9 years and 4;9 years and with language ages within 11 months of their chronological age (3;1 years - 5;5 years), as determined by screening criteria.

Twenty-five children participated in the study. Five subjects served as the control group and received pretesting and posttesting but no treatment. Ten subjects were read to using a performance-oriented style (i.e., the performance group), and ten an interactive style (i.e., the interactive group), creating two levels of the independent variable, treatment. Three storybooks were read six times each, over a six week period. A different storybook was used for obtaining pretest and posttest information to determine effects on three dependent variables: general or world knowledge, literacy concepts, and retelling complexity. Analysis of variance (SPSS, 1992) was used to evaluate differences across the three groups.

In addition, weekly probes were obtained on retelling ability, answering of comprehension questions, and attention/engagement. Conclusions were drawn

about each group's changes across time. This chapter discusses selection of participating children, screening criteria, quantitative pretest and posttest procedures, qualitative probe measures, SBRE styles and procedures, and analysis.

Subjects

Subjects were preschoolers enrolled in their first educational experience in a Head Start program. All subjects were African-American, disadvantaged, and within normal range in hearing and language ability. Treatment subjects were chosen from a Head Start Center (two classrooms with a total population of 47 students) housed in a single elementary school in a large urban school district in Louisiana. Control subjects were participants at a second Head Start site and were selected from a list of 44 students who met subject selection criteria.

Ninety-five percent of the children at these Head Start Centers were African-American, and 100% were considered disadvantaged. Fifty-five percent of the center children at the treatment site were eligible for participation based on age. In this study, a four-year-old is defined as a child between the ages of 3;9 and 4;9 years. This range was chosen due to Head Start criteria for the age of children served. Children must be three years of age by October 1 to enter the program, and these centers serve children from three to five years. As a result, to have enough children available for the study in each site at that point in the school year (i.e., March), it was necessary to define the age of four as 3;9 to 4;9 years. In addition, many developmental tests define a young child's age with similar limits.

Children in the four-year age range were chosen because most are embarking upon the following developmental stages, which are basic to a coherent understanding of simple stories. Four-year-olds are moving beyond just additive juxtaposition of information, as they are beginning to develop temporal awareness and so have a sense of the sequence in which actions may occur. Also developing in this age group is a rather basic, physical (as opposed to psychological) sense of causality, preparing them to grapple with the effects of one character's actions upon another, or causative reactions within stories (Nelson, 1986). Another important development in this age group is their growing ability to think, talk, and understand language that is more removed from the "here and now," to decontextualize (Bates & MacWhinney, 1979).

Another reason for selection of this age group is that studies have focused on SBRE effects on development of vocabulary and story comprehension (Dickinson & Smith, 1994) and literacy concepts in preschoolers (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989), but there is less known about development and facilitation of narrative skills (telling and retelling of stories) in this age and ethnocultural group. Yet, a number of researchers have found early narrative development to be predictive of later literacy achievement (Feagans & Short, 1984; Michaels, 1981).

Subject Selection

The twenty treatment subjects were selected from a single Head Start program in a large, urban Louisiana parish. This program enrolled 26 children in the correct age range with no known developmental delays or disabilities. Control

subjects were five children selected from a second Head Start site. Teachers at neither site read to students using styles to be assessed in this study.

Letters were sent to parents of all eligible subjects, and all 26 parents granted permission for their children to participate. These letters included an invitation to participate in the study and informed consent forms to be read, signed, and returned. Children with parental permission were placed in the pool of potential treatment subjects and participated in formal screening procedures assessing hearing and language abilities. The letter of consent may be found in Appendix A.

All subjects returning consent forms were screened for eligibility for inclusion in the study. Eligible subjects exhibited normal hearing acuity, and language abilities that were within at least the lower limits of normal. The researcher was assisted during administration of hearing and language screenings by a master's level speech-language pathologist (CCC-SLP), who is a clinical supervisor in the Department of Communication Disorders, part of Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center's School of Allied Health Professions. This SLP had over 10 years of experience both in administering and supervising administration of these procedures. The screening yielded 20 children who passed all screening tests and subsequently were accepted as treatment subjects. Control subjects were selected from those passing identical screening tests administered by their staff of licensed SLPs. Of the 44 who met the criteria, five were randomly selected for inclusion in the control condition.

Hearing Screening

All potential subjects were screened to assure that hearing acuity was within normal limits. Because focused listening was an important requisite of this study, adequate hearing was essential. Pure-tone hearing screenings with earphones were conducted, as recommended by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, at 20 dB, in the speech frequencies (500, 1000, 2000, and 4000 Hz; ANSI, 1969). A lack of response at any frequency in either ear constituted failure, and appropriate management was instituted. However, a failure of a hearing screening twice over a one-week interval resulted in elimination from the study. Of the 26 subjects in the potential treatment pool, two failed hearing screenings on two separate occasions and were rejected from study participation.

Language Screening

The Preschool Language Scale-3 (PLS-3; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 1992) was used to assure that all participating subjects exhibited essentially normal language development. The PLS-3 is an individually administered norm-referenced language development test that has been standardized on a national sample of over 1,900 children throughout the United States. It is normed to measure language acquisition in children from 12 months to 6;11 years. The internal consistency reliability coefficients for the total language scale on the PLS-3 range from .94 to .89, for ages from 3;6 to 4;11 years. The test-retest stability coefficient for the total language age is .94.

A broad range of receptive and expressive language skills is measured by the PLS-3. For children functioning from 3 years to 5 years of age (those of interest in this

study), this test focuses on development of syntax, morphology, vocabulary, concept development, and integrative thinking skills (such as classification or word definitions). Tasks in the PLS-3 are ordered to evaluate children's sequential developmental growth in language acquisition. Scores are obtained on Auditory Comprehension, Expressive Communication, and Total Language. All of these scores are converted to standard scores, which are then converted to a Language Age Equivalent (LAE). This LAE was used for screening purposes. Also, means of each randomized group's LAEs were used for the ANOVA to ensure equivalence of groups in this study.

Children functioning more than eleven months below or above their chronological expectancy in language ability were not included in the study. Twenty-one students met language development criteria (as well as passing hearing screenings) for participation in the treatment portion of the study. Chronologically, their ages ranged from 3;9 years to 4;6 years. Language age equivalent (LAE) range extended from 3;1 years to 4;2 years. Nine children's language ability was depressed between one and six months below chronological age expectations. Seven of the children exhibited LAEs between six and eleven months less than chronological ages (CA). The remaining four children had LAEs one-two months above CAs. The five subjects utilized as controls exhibited an LAE range between three months higher than CA expectation to ten months lower (see Table 3.1).

Assignment to Groups

All children who met these criteria were assigned to either the performance-oriented or the interactive conditions. Assignment to the two conditions was

random, with stratification for gender and chronological age to achieve group equivalence.

Analyses of variance on the language age scores obtained from the PLS-3 was used to ensure that procedures of randomization resulted in equal groups. The results of the analyses showed there were no significant differences between the two treatment groups on language age: $F (1-10) = 0.2695, p < .61$. The two groups of ten were further subdivided into four groups of five children each. Two groups (with five children in each) received the performance-oriented style of reading, while the other two received an interactive style.

Procedures

Six weeks of storybook reading were completed either under a performance-oriented condition or an interactive reading condition using a series of illustrated big books. Comparisons were made for the amount of world knowledge acquired related to story events, acquisition of literacy concepts, and quality of story retelling at pretest and posttest. Additional information on story engagement and comprehension was obtained using weekly probes.

Instruction

The performance-oriented group received highly dramatic readings, in entirety, of three illustrated, large-sized books, followed by text-to-life discussions, over the six-week period. The interactive group was engaged in interactive, collaborative narrative elaboration of the story procedures, using the same books, for the same time frame. (See Appendix B for General Procedures and Specific

Table 3.1
Comparison of Subjects in the Performance-oriented, Interactive, and Control Groups For Gender, Chronological Age, Language Age on the PLS-3, and CA/LA Difference.

<u>Performance-Oriented</u>				
<u>Subject/Group</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>LA</u>	<u>CA/LA Difference</u>
P1	F	52	41	-11
P2	F	46	48	+2
P3	M	51	42	-9
P4	M	45	42	-3
P5	F	45	41	-4
P6	F	50	42	-8
P7	M	50	49	-1
P8	M	52	47	-5
P9	M	53	46	-7
P10	F	<u>48</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>+1</u>
Means		49.20	44.70	-4.5
<u>Interactive</u>				
I1	M	53	50	-3
I2	M	47	48	+1
I3	M	50	42	-8
I4	F	45	37	-8
I5	F	48	49	+1
I6	M	50	46	-4
I7	F	49	46	-3
I8	F	52	47	-5
I9	M	54	50	-4
I10	M	<u>51</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>-10</u>
Means		49.9	45.6	-4.3
<u>Control</u>				
C1	F	49	43	-6
C2	M	50	44	-6
C3	M	51	54	+3
C4	F	59	49	-10
C5	M	<u>57</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>-8</u>
Means		53.2	47.8	-5.4

Plans for Interactive and Performance-oriented Reading Styles.) Each book was read six times. SBRE sessions for each reading style were counterbalanced across time periods to assure that each group received the same number of sessions in the morning and afternoon. Treatment Schedules may be found in Table 3.2.

To assure equal conditions on factors other than the style, such as general enthusiasm or response to queries, the center director was asked to randomly observe SBREs. She was provided six copies of a checklist containing descriptions of activities children might be engaged in during each SBRE style. She was asked to view three each SBRE style-groups and to rate both the performance and the

Table 3.2
Treatment Schedules for Performance-oriented Groups (P1 and P2) and Interactive Groups (I1 and I2).

			Story 1					
			Week 1			Week 2		
	M	W	F	M	W	F		
9:00-9:30	P1	P1	P1	P2	P2	P2		
9:30-10:00	I1	I1	I1	I2	I2	I2		
1:00-1:30	P2	P2	P2	P1	P1	P1		
1:30-2:00	I2	I2	I2	I1	I1	I1		
			Story 2					
			Week 3			Week 4		
	M	W	F	M	W	F		
9:00-9:30	P2	P2	P2	P1	P1	P1		
9:30-10:00	I2	I2	I2	I1	I1	I1		
1:00-1:30	P1	P1	P1	P2	P2	P2		
1:30-2:00	I1	I1	I1	I2	I2	I2		
			Story 3					
			Week 5			Week 6		
	M	W	F	M	W	F		
9:00-9:30	P2	P2	P2	P1	P1	P1		
9:30-10:00	I2	I2	I2	I1	I1	I1		
1:00-1:30	P1	P1	P1	P2	P2	P2		
1:30-2:00	I1	I1	I1	I2	I2	I2		

proficiency of the researcher and the level of participation of the children. The observational checklist may be found in Appendix C.

The observational checklist utilized a Likert scale, with a "1" equaling "much worse than average" and a "5" signifying "much better than average." Mean scores obtained by the researcher for each of the eight general behaviors relevant to her efforts were:

	<u>Performance-oriented</u>	<u>Interactive</u>
Reader Enthusiasm	5.0	5.0
Student Engagement	4.7	4.7
Student Enjoyment	4.4	4.4
Child Benefit	4.4	4.7
Concept Clarification	5.0	5.0
Response to Child Queries	5.0	5.0
Appropriate Activities	5.0	5.0
Appropriate Participation	5.0	5.0

In addition, all descriptors for each specific reading style were checked by the Center Director, indicating 100% compliance in providing storybook stylistic characteristics at the appropriate time. However, characteristics: "referencing child to picture action" and "referencing child to print" were included only under performance-oriented characteristics but was checked by the rater for both styles. This may indicate that these are appropriate storybook reading activities, no matter

what the style, and should be included under both styles as appropriate characteristic descriptors.

Performance-Oriented Reading Styles

The performance-oriented style of reading stories focuses on creating a mood and a sense of story. The researcher staged the SBRE as if a play were to be presented, expecting quiet, attention, and no interruptions from the children. The story was “performed” by the researcher, who exhibited different character voices, used varied voice volume, pitch, and quality, and produced exaggerated face and body expressions.

The complete story was enacted during each SBRE, with no direct acknowledgments of interruptions from children during the story. The researcher gesturally referred children to both pictured events and print forms, but did not verbally comment on them. At the story’s end, the researcher selected a key story aspect and attempted to provide discussion that linked objects, actions, and events within the story, to life experiences of the children (i.e., a text-to-life discussion). Further procedures for performance-oriented SBREs, along with description of guidelines and themes for each follow-up discussion, may be found in Appendix B.

Interactive Reading Style

Narrative elaboration procedures of Norris and Hoffman (1993a, 1995) were selected for use as the interactive style of this study. These procedures encompassed goals of the two types of interactive teachers in Dickinson and Keebler’s (1989) study. An understanding of the story and its linkages, resulting

in a gradual elaboration and expansion of the storyline, or narrative, was the goal of the “text-focused” interactive teacher. The “conversational” interactive teacher aimed at obtaining a grasp of meaning for difficult concepts and selected or unusual events and aspects of the text, resulting in extension of semantic understanding. Norris and Hoffman (1993a, 1995) procedures facilitate both semantic and discourse development.

The researcher acted as an “adult facilitator” (Norris & Hoffman, 1995; Roser & Martinez, 1985) who engaged in the following roles during the interactive SBRE:

1. assisting children to explore all aspects and topics of the story;
2. clarifying children’s understanding of difficult vocabulary, abstract concepts and states;
3. gradually expanding the children’s ability to establish relationships within the story, and to expand their understanding of the structure of “story”;
4. responding to children’s meaning-making contributions by assisting them to repair inadequate communication efforts, and providing feedback that assisted in expanded and extended appropriate communication; and
5. gradually assisting the child to see relationships between print and pictures, resulting in an understanding of the forms (letters, numbers, words, sentences) and function of print (to enable reading of

information and stories) and an understanding that oral language is used to “talk” about language (metalanguage).

Scaffolding

A variety of scaffolds (i.e., support and assistance, Bruner, 1978) were used to help children take progressively more active and appropriate turns in meaning-building during SBREs. These scaffolds were chosen to support children’s understanding and production of communications at the highest level of their “zone of proximal development,” a level Vygotsky (1962) noted could not be verbally nor cognitively reached by children without help of adults. Specific scaffolds used within interactive SBREs for the three stories in this study are described and illustrated in Appendix D.

SBRE Books

Three “big” books (i.e., 2' X 1 ½ foot replication of the storybook) at the emergent reader level of the Storybox Series (The Wright Group, 1990) were used during the SBREs for both conditions. The “big book” size of these storybooks was utilized to enable all five children in each group to easily view both pictures and printed words. Each book was read on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday over a two week period, for a total of six exposures to the book. The book Who Will Be My Mother? (Cowley, 1983) was read during the first two-week period, followed by The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990) during the middle sessions, and The Grumpy Elephant (Cowley, 1990) for the last two-week period. Another book from the same series, Mrs. Wishy-Washy (Cowley, 1980) was used for pretest and posttest assessments.

Each of the books presented a story organized as an Abbreviated Structure along the Discourse Context (Norris & Hoffman, 1993b; Stein & Glenn, 1979). The stories all establish a setting and characters who set goals and then experience consequences of their attempts to meet these goals. The pictures and print maintain a close relationship (Golden, 1990), so that information relative to pictures and text present overlapping content. The text is predictable from pictures and from parallel episodes, such as a series of animals who each jump in the mud and are then given a bath. These characteristics assist young children to make picture-governed attempts (Sulzby, 1985) at telling the story, and encourage more complex and evaluative discussions.

Themes and events presented in the stories are familiar to young children (e.g., family, farm, friendships, actions, and moods), but also present novel situations (e.g., loss of a mother, living on the moon, cheering up an elephant) that can be used to extend and elaborate the children's world and event knowledge (Mandler, 1984). Elaboration and interpretation of the stories can include reference to new situations presented within the stories, making text-to-life connections, and expanding and extending ideas initiated by the children. For example, in The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990), children seldom notice how physically exhausted at story's end the little jigaree is from his attempts to keep up with his longed-for friend, who has contraptions such as skates and helicopters to help him get around. As this key factor in the story is not noted in the printed text, it must be verbally referenced (interactive readings) or physically enacted (performance-oriented readings),

several times, before preschoolers comprehend the causative and temporal effects of this story element.

Repeated readings of the same storybook over a two-week period were conducted to enable children to develop familiarity required for a change from literal understanding to a more elaborated, evaluative interpretation (Morrow, 1985; Martinez & Roser, 1985). Performance-oriented groups had the entire book read to them at each of the sessions, with follow-up discussions designed to make text-to-life connections for the children. The interactive group had one-third of the book read to and discussed with them during the first session, with an additional third added and explored during each subsequent SBRE, culminating in adult-children exploration of the entire story during the third SBRE. During each of the three remaining sessions, the whole story was read and examined in a co-constructive, collaborative manner, with adult scaffolding directed toward facilitating story linkages, semantic and situational understanding.

Pretest/Posttest Assessment

Three measures were administered at pretest and posttest to assess effects of two SBRE conditions. First, measurement of concepts and world knowledge related to topics and themes of SBRE books was administered to determine if either condition was more facilitative to learning factual information. Secondly, measurement of emergent literacy abilities was administered to determine if either condition was more beneficial to learning information related to form and content of print information. Thirdly, a story retelling task was administered to ascertain

whether either condition was more facilitative to developing an internal structure for narrative discourse, and to recalling semantically more abstract ideas from the story. All three measurements were individually administered.

World Knowledge Test

The World Knowledge Test (WKT) is a researcher-compiled list of 40 questions designed to assess knowledge considered necessary for basic understanding of the four storybooks (including the pretest-posttest story) used in the study. Eighteen questions are accompanied by simple color photographs from the language-based developmental curriculum TOTAL-Revised (Witt & Morgan, 1992) to provide contextual support for the information requested. Twenty-two questions do not provide picture support. Questions require both basic information such as the name and some simple descriptive associations (e.g., "What does a sheep say?" and "Who lives on a farm?") and more elaborated, organized knowledge requiring some development of scripts and frames (e.g., "What is a friend?"; "What can a volcano do?"). Though questions vary in complexity, their formation avoids strict use of the framework (Blank, Rose, & Berlin, 1978) used to structure the weekly probe comprehension questions (label, description, interpretation, inference) to preclude a contamination effect. Of the 40 questions, 25 are considered difficult enough that their answers can earn two points, and 14 are considered simple enough that their answers result in one point. One question, which requires labeling of six pictures, can earn either one or two points, depending on the number of labels given.

Thirty questions involve concepts or information about which the majority of three to four-year old children have some knowledge. These same questions are framed in forms comprehended by most children in this age range (Parnell & Amerman, 1983). Examples are: "Which picture shows a family?" and "Is a sheep covered with wool or feathers?" Ten questions would be considered difficult for most three and four-year-olds, especially those who lacked a variety of environmental and literacy experiences. The difficulty of these more advanced questions lies in understanding of advanced vocabulary or concepts (orphan, grumpy, volcano), ability to express method (how to get clean), ability to define ("what is a friend?"), and ability to compare (tell difference between pet and wild animal). These latter abilities are more commonly achieved by children in the five to seven year range (Brigance, 1991; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 1992). A total of 66 points may be earned on this test.

The WKT was field-tested in an exploratory study during summer therapy with two groups (with two children in each group) diagnosed with mild to moderate language delays. These children's chronological ages ranged from 3;8 to 4;6 years, and their language ages ranged from 2;4 to 3;6 years. These subjects participated in four SBREs for each of three stories, over a six week period. Change from pretest to posttest on the WKT ranged from 7 to 26 points. Therefore, this test was considered capable of measuring change in world knowledge for children of this chronological and language age range. Reliability was further determined through administration of this test to 10 normal students of the same age range and

ethnocultural group. Head Start students at the secondary site were utilized. An internal consistency measure was used to ascertain reliability with the 10 normal subjects. A split-half reliability coefficient was obtained, yielding a reliability of .8994.

Difficulty levels of ten of the questions (one-fourth) had been modified prior to the final reliability measure, as the field test suggested that their form, though not their content, was beyond capabilities of most three to five-year-olds. Thus, a question like: "What is a helmet?" was modified to "What is something you can put on to protect your head?" However, ten difficult questions were retained to eliminate a ceiling effect. Children in each SBRE group were exposed to information assessed in the WKT, so that all subjects had opportunities to acquire relevant world knowledge and potentially increase posttest scores. The WKT questions and answers may be found in Appendix E.

At pretest and posttest, a total raw score for each child was obtained. These scores were added for each group to obtain a group mean on "world knowledge." Changes in world knowledge of the interactive and performance-oriented groups were determined through analysis of variance and the subsequent post hoc analyses.

Test of Acquisition of Literacy Concepts (TALC)

The Test of Acquisition of Literacy Concepts (TALC) is an assessment designed by the researcher to evaluate an individual child's orientation to storybooks. The TALC was administered as a pretest and posttest measure. Mrs.

Wishy-Washy (Cowley, 1980) was used to assess this storybook orientation. This text was not read to the children prior to administration of the TALC, as the story itself was not relevant to the questions asked. Pictures and print of this storybook were, however, used as a reference to answering questions of the TALC.

Questions on the TALC focus on orientation to the storybook and its proper use (“What do you do with a book?”; “Where is the beginning of the story?”) and to the forms and functions of the book’s print (“Where does it tell the title of this story?”; “Where is the writing on this page?”). Three of the print knowledge questions are metalinguistic in nature; that is, they require talk about the forms of print. Though these questions require knowledge of concepts of letters and words, responses from the child are required at the lowest semantic level: indication, or pointing to the appropriate print form. Examples are: “Can you find another word like this?” (Requiring simple matching), and “Show me a word (from a choice of six: ‘Oh, lovely mud!’ said the cow.”) that is talking about something in this picture.” There are 14 questions, with 16 points possible because two of the questions are each worth two points.

Two standardized tests were used to suggest items for this assessment. These are the Test of Early Reading Ability-Second Edition (TERA-2), Reid, Hresko, & Hammill, 1989), which was designed to be used with children ages 3;0 to 9;11, and the Concepts About Print, Sand (Clay, 1972), designed for youngsters 5;0 to 7;3. Based on standardizations of these two tests, similar items on the TALC are considered appropriate for youngsters in the three through six year range. Validity

of these items is documented in technical data published in test manuals of the aforementioned standardized test.

Because the TALC was developed during the summer exploratory study, pretest data are unavailable for the pilot study. However, it was administered at the conclusion of the pilot study with the four language-impaired preschoolers. Scores ranged from two to nine points. The child earning only two points was the one with the lowest language age, (2;4 years) according to the PLS-3. Remaining children earned from six to nine points. This information suggests that the TALC is capable of measuring differing levels of knowledge about storybooks and print forms and function for children in this age range. This test also was administered to 10 Head Start students, and a test-retest coefficient measure of results was computed to ensure reliability. Reliability results were .8844, confirming measurement aims of this assessment. The TALC may be found in Appendix F.

Like the WKT, the TALC was used to obtain a total raw score of literacy knowledge and conventions from each child at pretest and posttest. Scores achieved by children in each group were totaled to derive group means. Literacy changes for each SBRE style-group and controls were determined through use of these means for the ANOVA and post hoc analyses.

Story Retelling Procedures

At both pretest and posttest, the big book Mrs. Wishy-Washy (Cowley, 1990) was read to subjects individually. Children were then immediately provided an opportunity to retell the story. A traditional style of story-telling was utilized for

these assessments. This approach is characterized by reading the story in its entirety, with brief pauses to refer children to important information in pictures, and to answer any questions initiated by the children.

The following rules structured viewing storybook pictures and retell attempts:

1. The researcher handed the closed book to the child and said: "Can you tell me this story?"
2. No assistance was given initially to the child.
3. If the subject paused for a long period or appeared to lose interest, the researcher provided a prompt. The prompt did not provide any information but rather redirected the subject back to the task by acknowledgment, reinstruction, or request for more information ("Yes, that's right. Tell me more."); ("Go ahead."); ("Look at the picture and tell the story."); or ("Can you tell me anything else about this story?")
4. The researcher did not interrupt or ask questions until the subject gave evidence of being finished.

Story retellings were audiorecorded using a small cassette recorder placed near the child. Transcriptions were made of the stories, including adult and child utterances. Transcriptions were verbatim, including pauses, false starts, fillers, linguistic nonfluencies, and articulation errors. Ten percent of retellings (five of 50 stories) were transcribed by a second listener to establish reliability of the researcher's transcriptions. Correlation coefficients for the five pairs of transcriptions were: .95, .92, .86, .92, and .90.

Each subject's utterances were divided into C-units (communication units) for purposes of transcription and analysis. C-units have been used to analyze spoken language (Loban, 1976). Use of C-units allows the analysis of single words and phrases, common in spoken language, especially that of preschool-age children. A problem with use of C-units has been that utterances containing independent clauses conjoined by conjunctions are broken into separate units for analysis (Reed, 1994). However, analysis of transcripts with the SDS (Norris & Hoffman, 1993a) is not dependent on utterance length but on meaning (semantic) complexity of individual utterances and on discourse organization or overall coherence of the entire re-telling. Therefore, C-units contextualized to the pictured situational events of this study's stories are considered appropriate for semantic and discourse analysis. Conventions of transcription are listed in Table 3.3.

Semantic Context

Story retellings were scored according to criteria adapted from the Situational-Discourse-Semantic Model (SDS) (Norris & Hoffman, 1993a). The scoring protocol for the Semantic Context may be found in Appendix G. Only those sentences produced by the child that fit the Situational Context of the task were scored. These included sentences that referred to picture or story-related events, and thus were contextualized to pictures (i.e., a contextualized-symbolic level within the Situational Context). Any sentences produced during retelling that did not fit the Situational Context, including regulatory comments ("Are we done yet?"), requests for information ("What's that called?"), and irrelevant or

Table 3.3

Transcription Conventions Used to Analyze Retellings of Stories at Pretest and Posttest and During Weekly Probes.

.	End of thought/utterance and falling intonation
,	End of clause, but more to come in complete expression
?	End of questioning utterance and rising intonation
!	Exclamatory utterances and intonation
..	Brief pause (1-3 seconds)
...	Longer pause
....	Ellipsis (omitted words in quoted utterance)
CAPS	Spoken with noticeable loudness
<u>Wait a minute!</u>	Underlining indicates vocal stress or emphasis
Oh: No:::	Colons indicate elongated speech
'At's 'is?	Apostrophes indicate missing speech sounds
Uh, ah-h, mmm-m	Continuers, mazes, fillers
Pt	Lip smacking
Ha-Ha	Laughing

tangentially related events (“My friend has a pig and she washed it.”), were not scored.

The Semantic Context of the SDS Model was used to assess expression of reference in the retelling. Within this model, meaning reference ranges along a continuum from nonverbal indications (points, gestures), through metalinguistic comments regarding the test. Each C-unit was evaluated for its overall level of

reference and placed at a level along the Semantic continuum. Semantic point values were assigned along a scale from 1 to 7 according to the criteria indicated below. Level examples are drawn from Cowley's (1980) Mrs. Wishy-Washy.

Semantic levels of the SDS Model, with examples, include the following:

Level 1 **Indication** - largely non-language, gestural communication, such as
(1 point) pointing, used to share reference.

Example: Child points to pictured mud when asked: "what is the cow doing?"

Level 2 **Labeling** – provides a name for an observable object or person in
(2 points) the picture.

Example: Child points to pictured cow and says: "A cow!" or "That's a cow."

Level 3 **Description** – provides object-action relationship or object
(3 points) characteristics (part, color, size, etc.)

Example: Child makes descriptive comments about picture: "Pig roll. He a
pink pig."

Level 4 **Interpretation** – personal experience used to interpret pictured
(4 points) cues, in terms of state, quality, goal, changes.

Example: Child looks at picture of Mrs. Wishy-Washy with her hands on her
hips and says: "Mrs. Wishy-Washy's mad. She don't like dirty!"

Level 5 **Inference** – world and event knowledge used to predict or infer
(5 points) beyond what is seen in picture.

Example: Child looks at picture of animals watching Mrs. Wishy-Washy go
back in house after washing animals and says: "She's gone. They
gonna go jump back in that mud now. THAT'S what THEY like!"

Level 6 **Evaluation** – uses own opinions and beliefs to personally evaluate
(6 points) situations.

Example: Child comments at end of reading of Mrs. Wishy-Washy: “My Mama’d whup me if I got dirty again. They better stay clean!”

Level 7 **Metalanguage** – can talk meaningfully about forms and functions
(7 points) of storybook print.

Example: “This word (points to pig) is talking about him (points to pictured pig). It starts with ‘p’ like my name does.”

Discourse Context

Story retellings were scored according to the continuum of organization within the Discourse Context of the SDS Model, and the discourse protocol for such scoring is located in Appendix H. C-units as they function together as a coherent whole to form a story were the unit of analysis. Levels of discourse range from “collections” (simple associations with no structure and frequent topic changes) to “interactive structure: (providing multiple topics, storylines, or points of view within a well-integrated, coherent framework). Discourse point values were assigned along a scale from 1 to 8 according to the following criteria, with examples being drawn from Cowley’s (1983) Who Will be My Mother?. Discourse levels based on the SDS Model and examples are:

Level 1 **Collections** – Free association of descriptive or referential
(1 point) comments; organizational structure is lacking.

Example: “It’s a cow – no – a bull. I see a house. And a baby lamb.”

Level 2	Descriptive List – Primary theme or topic centers description of events; no temporal or causal order.
(2 points)	
Example:	“There come the lamb. He see a bull. They be talkin’.”
Level 3	Ordered Sequence – Events are told in order of occurrence, but order can be changed. Setting, action, and result are clear.
(3 points)	
Example:	“The baby lamb saw a bull. He said: ‘Will you be my mother?’ But the bull say ‘no’, too.”
Level 4	Reactive Sequence – Setting, problem, action, and result are evident, as each event causes next event to occur.
(4 points)	
Example:	“He squeezed through the bushes. There was a BIG BULL! he walked up to him and asked him to be his mother, but the bull wouldn’t do it. He say he not no sheep. He couldn’t feed him.”
Level 5	Abbreviated Structure – Causal and temporal links are evident, and, though close to a complete structure (narrative with all elements of story grammars), no purpose or moral can be determined. Has initiating event, attempts to resolve the problem, reactions, and/or consequences.
(5 points)	
Example:	“The little lamb was lonely and sad and hungry and his mama was dead. He needed a mother. When he got to the other side of the bushes, there was a bull – a big, scary one. But he still asked him to be his mama. The bull said: ‘I’m a man, I can’t be your mama!’ Then he ran away.”

Few subjects in this study were expected to produce retelling accounts that could be categorized beyond "abbreviated structure," assigned a value of "5." All storybooks used in this study are written at this level, and this is a form of narrative structure commonly produced by children at four-to-five years of age (e.g., approximately half of all narratives produced at this age) (Applebee, 1978). Decisions about ambiguous accounts were made by the researcher and two judges. Twenty percent of all retellings were rescored by each of two judges, both experienced speech-language pathologists (CCC-SLP) to assure the reliability of the assigned value.

Retelling Score

The single discourse score and semantic mean score were totaled to obtain an overall retelling score for each child. Because semantic mean scores were used, involving scoring of multiple C-units (a range of 17 to 41), rounding off mean scores often resulted in mean differences of as much as .2, when individual scores were essentially the same. Therefore, 100% semantic reliability was set at within + or - .3 for mean differences in the ten student's retelling scores. Judge A's semantic difference was .10, and Judge B's, .14, earning a reliability of 1.00 each. Comparison between group means for performance-oriented and interactive conditions obtained at pretest and posttest was included in the ANOVA analyses of group differences.

Interscorer Reliability

To insure reliability of scores on the three pretest-posttest measures, two additional scorers were trained in use of each assessment measure, with particular

attention given to the SDS Model (Norris & Hoffman, 1993). During training, each scorer was required to score jointly with the researcher, two of each measure: the WKT, TALC, and semantic and discourse sections of the SDS Model. These scorers were then asked to independently score one of each measure, with researcher feedback provided to them. Finally, 10 (or 20%) of the 50 pretests and posttests for each measure were randomly selected to be scored by the trained scorers. Reliability coefficients were then calculated for each completed measure and each judge to obtain the interscorer reliabilities. These reliabilities, between the researcher and each judge for each pretest-posttest measure, were:

<u>WKT</u>	1.00	1.00
<u>TALC</u>	.99	1.00
<u>SDS</u> Overall Retelling	1.00	.90
<u>SDS</u> Semantic Level	1.00	1.00
<u>SDS</u> Discourse Level	1.00	.80

SBRE Probes

Three measures were administered each Friday across the six weeks of intervention to assess effects of two SBRE conditions on subject participation and learning associated with book readings. First, a retelling of the story read that day was elicited to determine whether repeated readings of the same storybook are more facilitative under either condition to developing an internal structure for narrative discourse, and to recalling semantically more abstract ideas from the story. Secondly, a measurement of attention and engagement was administered to

determine if either condition resulted in greater on-task time or active-learning behaviors. Thirdly, story comprehension questions were asked at four different levels along the Semantic Context continuum to ascertain whether either condition was more facilitative to understanding concepts and events presented in the story.

Friday probes sampled effects of repeated readings. Since each book was read three times per week, for two consecutive weeks, three of the probes represented the third reading of a story (i.e., probe weeks 1, 3, and 5), and three of the probes represented the sixth reading of a story (i.e., probe weeks 2, 4, and 6). The attention/engagement analysis was conducted on videorecordings of the Friday SBRE; taped in their entirety. These data were collected from the small groups to which subjects were assigned. Story retellings and comprehension questions were individually administered.

Because probing five children individually required physical and temporal distance between the finish of the story and the probe, the order of probing was alternated between subjects across the six weeks of treatment. Subjects whose probes were administered early in the rotation one week would receive the probe later in the rotation on the following week, and so forth according to the following schedule:

Child	Week of SBRE Probe					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	1st	5th	3rd	2nd	4th	2nd
B	5th	1st	4th	3rd	2nd	5th
C	3rd	4th	2nd	5th	1st	3rd
D	2nd	3rd	1st	4th	5th	1st
E	4th	2nd	5th	1st	3rd	4th

A research assistant (a Centenary College education senior) occupied the four children awaiting their turn for the probe in a separate but adjacent area of the center. The typical time range between the finish of the story and the last child's probe was 45 to 50 minutes.

Story Retelling Procedures

Each subject was asked to retell the story read during that day's SBRE. Children were not reread the story, but each page (from cover to concluding picture of the story) was viewed consecutively. All other procedures for eliciting, scoring, and establishing reliability of the retellings were the same as those described for pretest/posttest story retelling.

Reliability obtained for weekly transcription results ranged from .79 to .99, and for scoring, from .88 to 1.00, as profiled, along with other probe data, in Table 3.4.

Results of the weekly retellings were plotted across time for each SBRE condition. Visual inspection was used to determine if either condition produced an advantage for retelling stories that had been read repeatedly.

Attention/Engagement Procedure

Each Friday across the six weeks of intervention, SBREs for all four groups were videotaped in their entirety. A wide angle lens was used to assure that all five subjects were in view throughout the session. Each subject's behaviors were analyzed using a time sampling procedure. At the end of every two-minute interval, each child's level of engagement was rated. Ratings were assigned according to the criteria described on the Attention/Engagement Scale (see Appendix I).

The Attention/Engagement Scale was developed by the researcher, who adapted material from McWilliams and Bailey (1992). According to McWilliams and Bailey (1992), a high correlation exists between the level of engagement exhibited by children in a learning situation, and positive developmental outcomes. The two researchers define engagement as the actual amount of time spent in active interaction with and manipulation of the environment. Engagement includes focused and sustained looking and listening (coordinated auditory-visual attention), manipulation of important related learning materials, and verbal interaction between participating adults and the student. Attention and engagement are crucial factors in benefitting from the oral and literate aspects of communication during an SBRE.

The Attention/Engagement Scale was used to rate each child's level of interest and participation during each SBRE. Children were rated according to the following criteria:

nonengagement – short to nonexistent attention given to SBRE;

nonverbal engagement – visual attending that is sustained and focused;

active engagement – visual and verbal interaction with SBRE activities.

Percentages of time each treatment group averaged at each engagement level were calculated. These percentages were then compared for each SBRE condition. Total percentages of the weekly attention/engagement probes were then plotted across time. Visual inspection was used to determine if either condition produced an advantage as a result.

SBRE groups from the 24 videotaped (6 Fridays × 4 groups) were viewed by the researcher and two other raters. These three raters simultaneously used the

Attention/Engagement Grid to rate levels of engagement for five children in one of four SBRE groups for each Friday. Groups were randomly selected and assigned to the two judges. Interrater reliability coefficients obtained may be found with other probe data in Table 3.4.

SBRE Comprehension Question Procedures

Comprehension questions were used to assess changes in understanding of selected concepts and specific content of the text over the course of the six-week intervention period. Following each Friday's SBRE, four comprehension questions were asked. Children in both SBRE conditions were asked the same questions. One question from each of increasing decontextualization and semantic organization levels, as defined by Blank, Berlin, and Rose (1978) was generated for each probe. (See Appendix J for the questions used during each Friday comprehension probe.). Point values of one to four were assigned to the four levels of questions. Levels of response require the child to:

Match Perception – provide a label (1 pt.);

Selectively Analyze Perception – describe (2 pts.);

Reorder Perception – make an interpretation (3 pts.); and

Reason Beyond Perception – infer or predict (4 pts.).

The mean level of comprehension for each subject across a session was calculated, and group means derived for each SBRE condition. Visual inspection was used to determine if either condition produced an advantage for improvement of comprehension of story content during repeated readings of stories. In order to maintain appropriate scoring reliability, 24 each (or 20%) of the 120 transcribed

comprehension probes were randomly selected for scoring by scorers trained in this procedure. These were completed weekly, with each scorer determining the score for four randomly selected transcripts. Reliability obtained from the two judges are summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Reliability for Weekly Probe Data, Including Retelling Transcriptions and Scoring Coefficients, Attention Grid Scoring Coefficients, and Comprehension Question Scoring Coefficients.

Transcription – Weekly Retellings											
<u>Week 1</u>		<u>Week 2</u>		<u>Week 3</u>		<u>Week 4</u>		<u>Week 5</u>		<u>Week 6</u>	
P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I
.90	.99	.95	.96	.91	.92	.83	.89	.79	.90	.86	.93
<u>SDS Scoring Coefficients – Weekly Retellings</u>											
<u>Week 1</u>		<u>Week 2</u>		<u>Week 3</u>		<u>Week 4</u>		<u>Week 5</u>		<u>Week 6</u>	
A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
.88	1.00	.88	1.00	1.00	.88	.88	1.00	.88	1.00	.88	1.00
<u>Scoring Coefficients – Attention/Engagement Grid</u>											
<u>Week 1</u>		<u>Week 2</u>		<u>Week 3</u>		<u>Week 4</u>		<u>Week 5</u>		<u>Week 6</u>	
A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
.97	1.00	.95	1.00	.96	.96	1.00	1.00	.97	.97	1.00	1.00
<u>Scoring Coefficients – Weekly Comprehension Questions</u>											
<u>Week 1</u>		<u>Week 2</u>		<u>Week 3</u>		<u>Week 4</u>		<u>Week 5</u>		<u>Week 6</u>	
A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1.00	1.00	.94	.94	1.00	1.00	.94	.94	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Analyses

Pretestings and posttestings comprised the quantitative analysis of the study, and measured changes in three dependent variables: world knowledge, literacy knowledge, and changes in narrative complexity (e. g., semantic and discourse ability during story retellings).

Three measures of responsiveness to the SBREs were used to compare changes in levels of participation and learning that resulted from the two treatment conditions. These measures included attention/engagement, comprehension of text, and retelling, and were obtained in the form of weekly probes.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if 4 year old children who were African-American Preschoolers of Disadvantage (AAP-D) would benefit more from storybook reading presented in an Interactive Style or in the Performance-oriented Style, which might provide a more familiar narrative framework. Experimental groups received six weeks of storybook reading, with repeated readings of the same book occurring three times weekly for two weeks for a total of 3 books read 6 times each. Each experimental group received either the Interactive Style or the Performance-Oriented Style during these readings. An additional control group did not participate in the storybook readings but was administered the pretest-posttest battery. The battery consisted of a measure of story retelling, knowledge of book-reading or literacy concepts, and a test of world knowledge related to the themes of the books.

Weekly probes also were elicited from children in the two experimental groups. Subjects retold the story from that week's book reading and answered 4 factual questions at increasing levels of difficulty from the story. In addition, subjects were rated for the level of engagement exhibited during the storybook reading taken at 2 minute intervals throughout a fifteen minute segment of the activity.

Analysis of Pretest-Posttest Results

Pretest and posttest measures were compared for experimental and control group conditions for story retelling, literacy concepts, and world knowledge. Each

measure was subjected to an Analysis of Variance to determine if experimental groups made significant gains compared to a control condition, and if either performance-oriented or interactive storybook reading styles elicited greater change in these behaviors.

Story Retelling

Story Retelling was comprised of a recounting of a story from the pictures immediately after it had been read to the child. Retelling was scored for the level of the overall plot or discourse structure, ranging from 1 to 5, and for abstractness of ideas expressed or semantic level, ranging from 1 to 7, for a total possible score of 12. Scores for individual subjects by group are presented in Table 4.1. Examination of group means revealed that the control group made essentially no change between pretest and posttest, while both experimental groups increased performance from pretest to posttest for the story retelling measure.

Gain scores were a composite of both semantic and discourse changes. At pretest, semantic scores for both groups of children were low, with book-related comments that were primarily labels of pictured objects or simple descriptions of actions. Mean scores were derived by adding the total number of points awarded and dividing this by the total number of sentences. Six of the children in the performance oriented group and four in the interactive group only provided labels with a few descriptions, receiving mean scores ranging from 2.05 to 2.41 (performance oriented), and 2.17 to 2.47 (interactive). Primary use of descriptions occurred with two children in the performance oriented group (3.06 and 3.36), and

with one child in the interactive group (3.08). The remaining children scored between these groups, receiving mean scores of 2.53 and 2.89.

Table 4.1

Pretest and Posttest Measures for Story Retelling between Performance-Oriented Style, Interactive Style and Control Group Conditions.

Story Retelling (12 points possible)						
	Performance-Oriented Style		Interactive Style		Control Group	
	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>
1	3.05	5.45	3.17	5.75	5.04	5.04
2	4.89	5.59	5.56	6.85	6.90	7.00
3	3.53	5.82	3.33	5.70	5.65	5.82
4	6.36	5.76	4.47	5.14	5.96	6.91
5	3.18	5.87	4.84	7.04	6.83	6.73
6	3.20	5.79	6.60	6.08		
7	4.41	5.82	3.19	5.70		
8	3.23	7.22	6.08	7.12		
9	4.76	7.08	3.76	5.50		
10	6.06	5.64	4.61	5.87		
Mean	4.267	6.004	4.561	6.075	6.076	6.30
SD	1.2323	.6181	1.2258	.6878	.7931	.8463

At posttest seven of the ten children in the performance-oriented group showed gains in the semantic score, with all but one child showing means reflecting primarily descriptions with few labels. Similarly, nine of the ten children

in the interactive group showed gains, with only one child continuing to use primarily labels to retell the story.

The composite retelling score also reflected the narrative discourse level. Eight of ten children in the performance-oriented group increased their score. At pretest, five told their stories as only loose collections of facts, three gave descriptive lists of events, and two organized events as a temporal sequence. At posttest, only one produced a descriptive list (reflecting an increased score), seven recounted the story as a temporal sequence (two whom reflected no change from pretest), and two produced causally connected reactive sequences. Similarly, eight of ten children in the interactive condition increased their discourse score. At pretest, five told stories as loose collections, two organized by descriptive lists, two produced ordered sequences, and one included causality. At posttest, only one produced a descriptive list, while six organized retellings as an ordered sequence and three produced reactive sequences that included causality.

Control group ranges were similar at pretest (2.65 to 3.04 semantically, and descriptive lists to reactive sequences in discourse). At posttest, semantic scores declined for some subjects (ranging from 2.65 to 2.82). No increases were seen in discourse scores, with one subject showing a decline. The composite for semantic and discourse scores was used to compare performance of subjects across groups.

To determine whether results represented reliable differences between the three groups, a one-way analyses of variance was conducted to compare the gain scores from pretest to posttest for the three subject groups. Table 4.2 summarizes

results of this analysis. Results of the ANOVA found no differences between groups for a significance level set at $p < .05$ ($F = 3.1432$; $p = .0630$). While both experimental groups told longer stories and/or included more abstract information as shown in the gain scores of 1.74 for performance-oriented and 1.51 for interactive compared to the control group gain of .22, these differences were not reliably greater. Performance-oriented and interactive styles also did not differ from each other, with both conditions producing similar changes.

Table 4.2
Results of one-way ANOVA Comparing Treatment Conditions and Pretest-Posttest Gains in Story Retelling.

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	2	8.1055	4.0527	3.1432	.0630
Within Groups	22	28.3658	1.2894		
Total	24	36.4712			

Literacy Concepts

Literacy concepts were assessed using a 14 question measure of print concepts including knowledge about book conventions and use, print-to-picture relationship, and knowledge about print, termed the Test of Literacy Concepts (TALC). The book used in the retelling also was used to elicit responses for the TALC. Scores for individual subjects by group are presented in Table 4.3. Examination of group means revealed that the control group made essentially no

change between pretest and posttest, while experimental groups increased performance from pretest to posttest for the literacy concept measure.

Table 4.3

Pretest and Posttest Measures for Literacy Concepts measured by the TALC between Performance-Oriented Style, Interactive Style and Control Group Conditions.

Literacy Concepts (16 points possible)							
Performance-Oriented Style			Interactive Style		Control Group		
	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>	
1	3	7	3	8	6	5	
2	4	9	4	11	6	7	
3	2	7	5	10	7	7	
4	5	6	4	10	8	5	
5	4	7	8	12	6	8	
6	7	8	5	7			
7	4	7	10	11			
8	5	12	3	10			
9	6	9	5	10			
10	7	10	3	7			
Mean	4.7	8.2	5.0	9.6	6.6	6.4	
SD	1.6364	1.8135	2.31	1.7127	.8944	1.3416	

The TALC included seven questions about book use and conventions and seven concerning print knowledge. Two of the book-related questions could earn

two points. Both were decontextualized questions and included requests to predict what the story was about and to relate the function of an author. None of the children in either group could answer these questions at the two point level at pretest. However, three performance-oriented group children each could answer one of the two-point questions; for a total of 6 of 20 (for a group of ten) being attained. In the interactive group at posttest, four children could give a more descriptive prediction of story content and six could relate an author's function, for a total of 10 of 20 points being gained for the decontextualized literacy responses.

At pretest, performance-oriented children typically knew the answers to between zero to three of the questions about print and between two and five of the book-related questions, for a group total of 11 print points of 70 possible (for the group of ten) and 36 book points of 90 possible. At posttest for this group, print range scores were two to four, for a group gain up to 33 total points. Book points ranged from three to seven for a total of 59 of 90 possible for this group. The performance-oriented group demonstrated literacy knowledge of about half (47%) of the print-related and two-thirds (65.5%) of the book-related questions at posttest.

Interactive literacy knowledge was slightly higher but similar. Interactive children demonstrated a range of zero-four for print-related questions, for a group total of 10 of the 70 points being earned at pretest. Of book-related questions, 44 of 90 possible points was earned by this group, with individual scores ranging from three to six. Posttest scores were: for print knowledge, a group total of 38 of 70

points and individual range from three-five and for book knowledge, a group total of 59 of 90 possible points and individual range from four to seven. At posttest, the interactive group learned slightly more than half the print knowledge points (54%) and two-thirds (65.5%) of the book-related points.

Control group children demonstrated a minimal gain in print knowledge (from six to nine of 50 points attainable by the group of five), and decreased by one point (24 to 23) in book knowledge from pre- to posttest. Repeated readings under both SBRE conditions resulted in literacy gain benefits for children from pretest to posttest, whereas the control group failed to demonstrate substantial change.

To determine if these results represented reliable differences between the three groups, a one-way analyses of variance was conducted to compare the gain scores from pretest to posttest for the three subject groups. Table 4.4 summarizes the results of this analysis. Results of the ANOVA found reliable differences between groups for a significance level set at $p < .05$ ($F = 10.8100$; $p = .0005$). Both experimental groups showed gains ranging from 3.50 for performance-oriented to 4.60 for interactive, while the control group showed a decrease in performance by -.20. To determine where the significant differences occurred, the Tukey-HSD test was used. This analysis revealed that both reading conditions resulted in significantly greater gains in literacy concepts than did the control group that received no storybook reading treatment. The performance-oriented and interactive styles did not differ reliably from each other, with both conditions producing similar changes.

Table 4.4
Results of one-way ANOVA Comparing Treatment Conditions and Pretest-Posttest Gains in Literacy Concepts.

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	2	112.3000	56.1500	12.6438	.0002
Within Groups	22	97.7000	4.4409	10.81	.0005
Total	24	210.0000			

World Knowledge

World knowledge was assessed using a researcher-developed list of 40 questions that measured knowledge of the themes and concepts necessary for basic understanding of storybooks used in the study. Contents of three study storybooks and the storybook used for pretest and posttest were included among questions of the World Knowledge Test (WKT). A total of 66 points was attainable on this test. Scores for individual subjects by group are presented in Table 4.5. Examination of group means revealed that the control group made essentially no change between pretest and posttest, while both experimental groups increased performance from pretest to posttest for the world knowledge measure.

World knowledge questions were based on information extracted from the storybook and extended into real life. This information was organized under a variety of themes, which were elaborated during story discussions. Such themes included family, the farm and farm animals, cleanliness, friendship, space travel, the moon, vehicles, games, jungle animals, and emotional concepts. The largest

Table 4.5

Pretest and Posttest Measures for World Knowledge measured by the WKT between Performance-Oriented Style, Interactive Style and Control Group Conditions.

World Knowledge (66 points possible)						
	Performance-Oriented Style		Interactive Style		Control Group	
	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Posttest</u>
1	18.	44	22	45	16	22
2	28	45	22	57	35	22
3	26	38	33	38	35	40
4	27	46	22	42	37	39
5	21	30	23	49	29	33
6	22	31	22	61		
7	29	59	28	47		
8	27	57	22	54		
9	32	51	42	58		
10	19	53	25	44		
Mean	24.9	45.4	26.1	49.5	30.40	31.20
SD	4.6296	10.0576	6.6575	7.6485	8.5907	8.8148

number of questions (13) were asked about the farm and farm animals. Five questions were asked about two themes each: family, and the moon. Four questions each were posed about vehicles, jungle animals, and emotional concepts, two each about cleanliness and space travel, and one each about friends and

games. World knowledge showed some increase in all themes except games for both groups. The one question about use of skates was answered correctly at both pretest and posttest. The majority of the children in the performance-oriented group demonstrated gain in all other themes except for space travel, and the majority of interactive children gained in all themes but cleanliness.

Another interest of world knowledge was gain in ability to answer decontextualized, as well as contextualized questions. The WKT consisted of 18 questions contextualized by reference to pictures and 22 questions which had no visual reference and required the child to decontextualize, or create mental pictures from the spoken words. Performance-oriented children demonstrated a group gain of 63 points (74 to 137, with a range per child of 2 to 13) from pretest to posttest on decontextualized question response. Response gain for contextualized questions was 55 (79 to 134, with a range of 2 to 15). The ratio of improvement was very similar, when considering the difference in number of each type of question. For interactive group children, decontextualized response gain was 77 (80 to 157, with a range of 1 to 15), and contextualized gain was 58 (81-139, with a range of two to nine). Controls, as a group, demonstrated essentially no gain in total points on decontextualized questions, with the range being from a decrease of four points to a gain of two points from pretest to posttest. On contextualized questions, controls posted a total gain of six points, with a range from a decrease of three points to an increase of three points. Only three children in the control group made limited improvement, and two children showed a decrease from pretest to posttest. Both

study groups demonstrated notable improvement in response to decontextualized questions. The ability to answer questions posed about non-present topics is cited by numerous researchers as being most important in achieving academic success (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Goldfield & Snow, 1984; Hoffman & Norris, 1994).

To determine if these results represented reliable differences between the three groups, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted to compare gain scores from pretest to posttest for the three subject groups. Table 4.6 summarizes the results of this analysis. Results of the ANOVA found reliable differences between groups for a significance level set at $p < .05$ ($F = 10.6265$; $p = .0006$). Both experimental groups showed gains ranging from 20.5 for performance-oriented to 23.4 for interactive, compared to the control group gain of .80. To determine where significant differences occurred, the Tukey-HSD test was used. This analysis revealed that both reading conditions resulted in significantly greater gains in world knowledge than did the control group that received no storybook reading treatment. The performance-oriented and interactive styles did not differ reliably from each other, with both conditions producing similar changes.

Table 4.6
Results of one-way ANOVA Comparing Treatment Conditions and Pretest-Posttest Gains in World Knowledge

Source	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	2	1831.3400	915.6700	10.6265	.0006
Within Groups	22	1895.7000	86.1682		
Total	24	3727.0400			

Summary

ANOVA demonstrated that both performance-oriented and interactive storybook reading styles resulted in reliably greater gains in literacy concepts and world knowledge compared to a control condition. Differences between experimental and control conditions approached significance for story retelling. No significant differences were found on any measure between the two book reading styles during this six-week period, although means for the interactive condition were slightly higher for all measures. Results suggest that even brief, short-term experiences with book reading are beneficial to a range of language and literacy skills for African-American preschoolers of disadvantage.

Analysis of Weekly Probe Information

Subjects in the two storybook reading conditions were administered three measures of performance at the end of each week. Since the same book was read for two weeks, probes at the end of weeks 1, 3, and 5 represented completion of three readings while weeks 2, 4, and 6 represented six readings. Therefore, data were available to compare performance for early readings of each book with later readings of the same book. The three measures included story retelling, conducted similarly to the pretest-posttest procedure but with the weekly book, response to four comprehension questions that ranged in difficulty from providing a simple fact from the story, to generating an inference about the story, and engagement during the storybook reading. Engagement was measured by coding whether the child exhibited visual attention, verbal participation, or nonparticipation at two minute intervals throughout 15 minutes of storybook reading.

Story Retelling

Three stories were retold during the six-week study. The story Who Will Be My Mother? (Cowley, 1983) was retold at the end of weeks 1 and 2, The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990) at the end of weeks 3 and 4, and Grumpy Elephant (Cowley, 1990) at the end of weeks 5 and 6. Figure 4.1 shows the number of points, from a possible score of 12, awarded for each retelling.

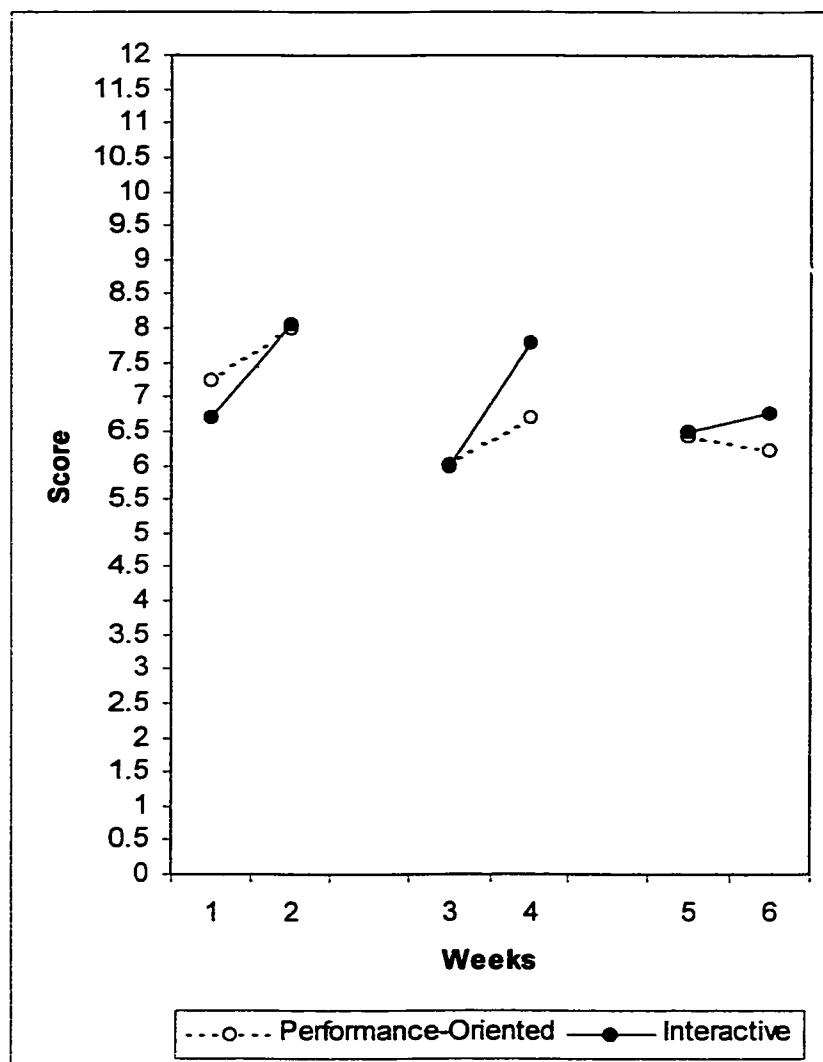


Figure 4.1. Retelling Gains, Weeks 1-6

The graphic display shows that for all three books, points awarded for discourse complexity and abstraction of ideas was greater at the end of the second week compared to the first. Thus, reading of all three books showed a positive effect of repeated readings of the same story across time. The display also demonstrates that after the first week (i.e., following three readings) retellings were similar for performance-oriented and interactive reading styles for two of the books (i.e., The Jigaree [Cowley, 1990] and Grumpy Elephant [Cowley, 1990]). However, for these two books retellings at the end of the second week (i.e., following six readings) was greater under the interactive condition, and similar for the third book which initially showed an advantage for the performance-oriented condition. These trends revealed a pattern of greater benefit from repeated readings under the interactive reading condition.

Finally, an effect for books was observed. Grumpy Elephant (Cowley, 1990) showed the least change from week 1 to 2, and lowest retelling scores of all of the books following the second week of reading. The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990), which initially posted the lowest scores for retelling of all of the books at the end of week 1 resulted in scores in the highest range by week 2, but only for the interactive group. The performance-oriented group made only slight gains. The best performance at the end of week 1 and 2 for both groups was obtained for the first book read, Who Will Be My Mother? (Cowley, 1983). This story, about farm animals and families, may have represented the most familiar characters and theme for the AAP-D children.

Comprehension Changes

A set of four comprehension questions, requiring increasing levels of response and scoring (labeling - 1 point, description - 2 points, interpretation - 3 points, and inference - 4 points; for a total of 10 possible points) was asked at the end of each week's readings. Questions after the sixth reading, though based on the same pattern of increasing demand, were structured to be somewhat more difficult than the question set after the third reading. Figure 4.2 shows the number of points awarded at the end of the third reading and at the end of the sixth reading for each book.

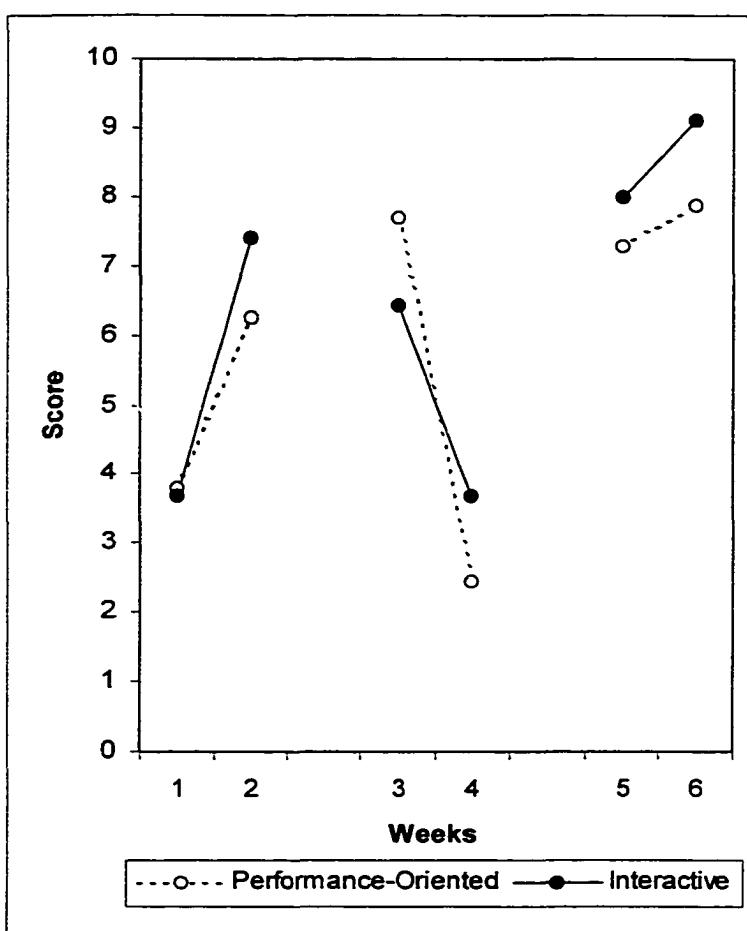


Figure 4.2. Comprehension Changes Weeks 1-6

The display reveals that, for both interactive and performance-oriented reading conditions, comprehension of text-related questions was improved from the end of the third reading to the end of the sixth reading for two of the three books: Who Will Be My Mother? (Cowley, 1983) and The Grumpy Elephant (Cowley, 1990). Comprehension actually decreased under both reading conditions for the book, The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990). This decrease could be because second week questions were more difficult. Conversely, the drop could have resulted from AAP-D confusion, as the actual storyline of this book is told in the pictures, while a rhyming set of predictable phrases descriptively lists various actions of characters in the text. In the other storybooks, text and pictures were more congruent.

Comprehension improved more under interactive reading conditions than under performance-oriented conditions. After the third reading of the first book, mean scores were low (3.80 - performance-oriented, and 3.70 - interactive), indicating a mean ability to answer questions slightly above the descriptive level. By the end of the sixth reading for this book (Who Will Be My Mother?; Cowley, 1983), comprehension had jumped to 6.25 for the performance-oriented story and 7.40 for the interactive group. This score suggests that some children in each group, with more in the interactive group, could answer questions at higher levels of reasoning and decontextualization. At the end of the third reading for the second book (The Jigaree), comprehension was at similar levels to the end of the sixth reading for the first book. The performance-oriented group had a mean

score of 7.70, while the interactive group score was 6.44. At the end of the sixth reading for The Jigaree, comprehension showed a sharp decline (-5.25) for the performance-oriented group, and a lesser decline for the interactive group (-2.74). This suggests that both groups were answering some questions at higher reasoning levels at the end of three readings, but were only able to answer labeling and descriptive questions at the end of six readings. Comprehension responses for the third book started at an advanced level, with third reading questions garnering mean scores of 7.30 for the performance-oriented group and 8.00 for the interactive group. At the end of the sixth reading, the performance-oriented gain was minimal (+ .58, up to 7.88), while the interactive gain was somewhat more substantial (1.11, up to 9.11). For both groups, comprehension began stronger and continued to improve, but interactive group comprehension both began and ended at slightly higher levels.

These end-of-study results may suggest a cumulative change over time in dealing with more reasoning questions after repeated exposure to text-related storylines and concepts. Again, the fact that the first book change in comprehension was the most notable may be related to its more familiar milieu (farm and animals), as opposed to the less familiar themes and settings of the other two books (moon and space, jungle animals). Gains were more decisive under interactive conditions for two books, and the decrease noted for one book was less under the interactive condition.

Engagement Changes

Weekly probes of engagement were accomplished to determine if either reading style resulted in more visual and/or verbal engagement for AAP-D, as these interactive stances are essential for learning and language benefit to occur. The third and sixth reading for each book and group were video and audiotaped, and three judges rated short segments selected every two minutes for 15 minutes. Each child (five each in two interactive and two performance-oriented groups) was coded as being non-engaged, visually engaged, or verbally engaged. Two groups and a total of 10 children composed a reading style, whose engagement levels were calculated and percentages of engagement derived. Some percentages are rounded off, resulting in slightly more or less than a total of 100%.

The interactive SBRE style includes child participation and discussion both during and after readings, while performance-oriented styles encourage listening stance during reading and interactive discussion following the story. Therefore, degrees of visual and verbal engagement would be expected to be dissimilar under the two reading conditions. Visual display of changes in engagement are presented in Figure 4.3

The display shows that non-engagement was observed the least during the third and sixth reading of the first book for both groups. Engagement for the interactive group was higher during both probes, with 97% of children in this group engaged during the third reading (67% visually and 30% verbally) and 99% during the sixth reading. Engagement for the performance-oriented group was at

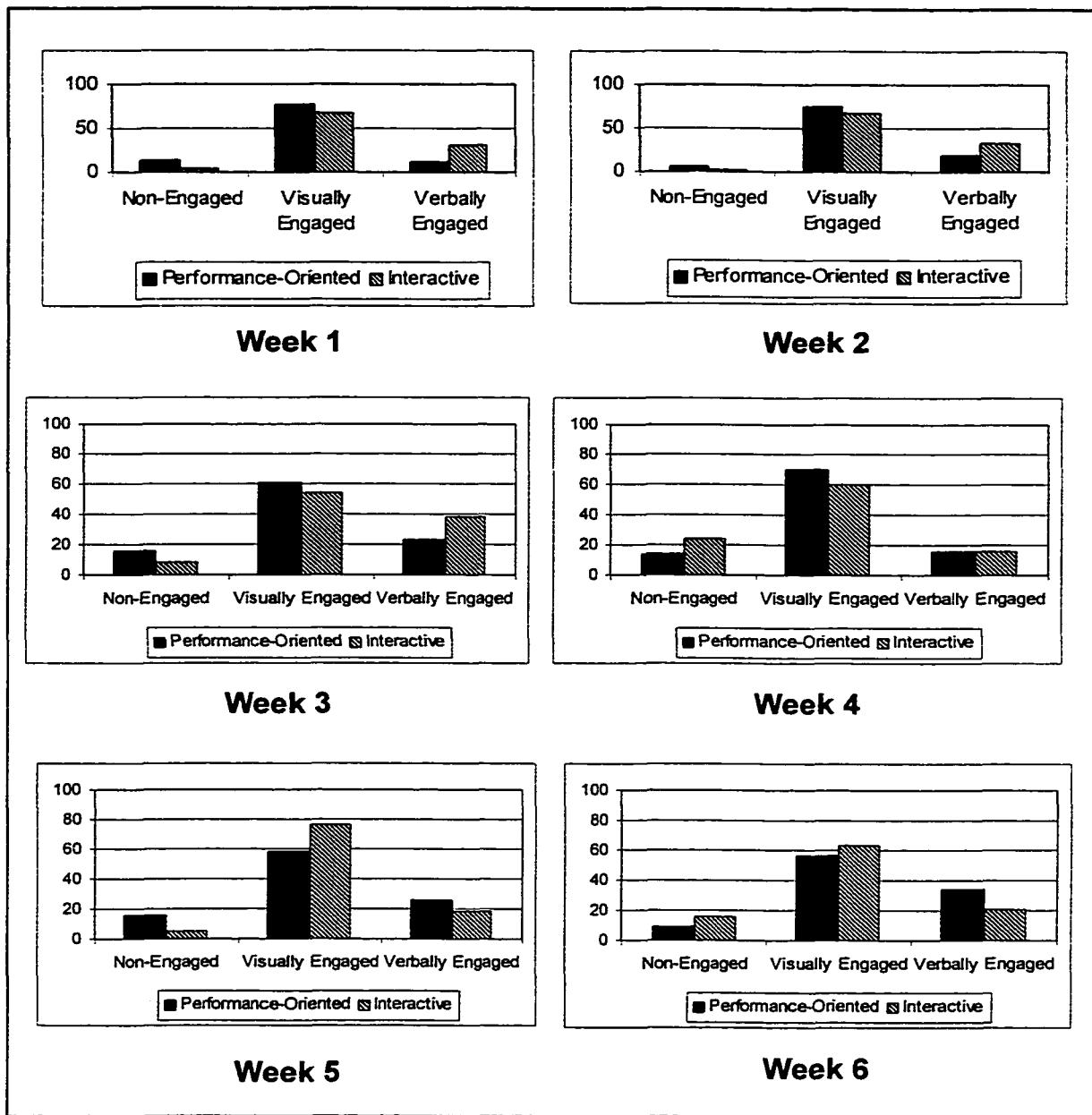


Figure 4.3. Percentages of SBRE Engagement

87% at the third reading (76% visually and 11% verbally) and 95% at the sixth reading (75% visually and 20% verbally). Non-engagement decreased for this group by 8%. Differences in the degree of verbal engagement could be explained by the difference in children's opportunity to talk under the two conditions.

Non-engagement during the third and sixth readings of the second book decreased slightly for the performance-oriented group and increased notably for the interactive group. While overall engagement increased (84% to 86%) for the performance-oriented group, verbal engagement decreased from 23% to 16% from the third to sixth reading. Verbal engagement also decreased quite notably for the interactive group (38% to 16%) from the third to sixth reading, though visual engagement increased slightly (54% to 60%), for a total engagement change of 92% to 76%.

During the third and sixth readings of the third book, non-engagement decreased (16%-9%) for the performance-oriented group, with visual engagement decreasing from 59% to 57%, and verbal engagement increasing from 26% to 34%. Non-engagement increased for the interactive group from 5% to 16%; visual engagement decreased from 77% to 63 %, and verbal engagement increased slightly from 18% to 21%.

In summary, engagement was high and correlated well with style of interaction during readings of the first book. However, for the final two books, overall rates of engagement increased for performance-oriented groups, and decreased for interactive groups. This may reflect the possibility that, as children became more accustomed to the routine of each SBRE style, the need for consistent focus to an increasingly familiar story decreased. Another possible explanation is that interactive SBREs provide ample opportunity to scaffold and clarify understanding throughout and after the story. Therefore, understanding of story

events and information may be attained earlier by this group, resulting in less need for consistent attending. During performance-oriented SBREs, discussion is deferred to story completion, and children may feel the need to attend and focus somewhat more consistently. Additionally, AAP-D children may be more attracted to the possibly more familiar and dramatic manner of presentation of performance-oriented storybook readings. The decrease in engagement by the interactive group, during the second and third book, may be correlated to the more limited gains in re-telling of the third story, and to the decrease in response to comprehension questions on the second book from probe to probe.. This explanation, however, would fail to explain the decrease in response to the comprehension questions by the performance-oriented group.

Summary

Changes between the third and sixth reading of each book were determined for each condition and each variable. For re-telling and world knowledge, each group attained positive increases, with these exceptions: a slight decrease in re-telling for the performance-oriented group on the third book and a significant decrease in response to world knowledge questions for both reading styles of the third book from third reading probe to sixth reading probe. A decrease in engagement between third and sixth readings for the second and third books was noted in the interactive group.

The decrease in re-telling for story three was very slight (-.19) but could be accounted for both by the unfamiliar theme and milieu (jungle animals) and by

more limited opportunity to clarify the complex reactive sequences and emotional changes in this story for performance-oriented AAP-D. Second probe questions for story two were more distanced and abstract at each level in terms of vocabulary and reasoning demands, and this could account for the decrease in response to comprehension questions by both groups. Another explanation could be the fact that pictures of this story tended to elaborate plot meaning much more than the story words, which were simply a rhythmical descriptive list of actions of the two main characters. Many AAP-D became very caught up in chiming the repeated action phrases of this book and were distracted from its contents.

Decrease in interactive group engagement between the third and sixth readings for the second and third group was not excessive; engagement appeared to be maintained more than 75 to 80% of the SBREs, enough to allow children to benefit from the experience. Within clinical experience, children of this age sometimes momentarily disengage, and then re-engage in the on-going story event.

Probes did reveal that children's development of language, literacy, and world knowledge, and their ability to focus meaningfully and stay engaged during SBREs may be affected by the structure and contents of the books, as well as style of interaction. Interpretation of changes determined as a result of the contrasting SBRE styles will be discussed in the following chapter.

DISCUSSION

This study contrasted the use of two styles of storybook reading for language and literacy related benefits to African-American preschoolers from disadvantaged homes (AAP-D). One style, termed interactive because it involves on-going discussion of story events as they are related, is typically utilized during book reading for middle-class preschoolers. Many disadvantaged children, particularly those from AAP-D homes, enter school having never experienced interactive story reading. The contrasting style has been called performance-oriented by Dickinson and colleagues (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994) because of its dramatic manner of presentation and deferring of discussion until the story's narration is completed. This latter style is believed to be similar in nature to the narrative and interactional experiences of many AAP-D.

The study examined three variables at pretest and, following six weeks of intervention, at posttest. The three variables were story retelling, literacy knowledge, and general world knowledge. In addition, weekly probes were administered to examine changes in story retelling, comprehension, and engagement during reading of the books used in intervention (i.e., the third and sixth reading of each story).

Results of this study will be discussed according to each of the questions of the study. Findings and their relationship to earlier style-related studies will be presented, as well as educational implications, future research areas, and study limitations.

Changes in Story Retelling

The first question of this study asked whether higher levels of semantic and narrative discourse performance would be attained by AAP-D as a result of either interactive or performance oriented styles of reading. This question was measured using story retelling of the same book read and retold at pretest, and then six weeks later at posttest. In addition, weekly probes were used to elicit retellings of stories read that week during intervention sessions. For both pretest-posttest and probe retellings, a total score comprised of changes in semantic and discourse ability were obtained through use of levels designated by the Situational-Discourse-Semantic Model (SDS) (Norris & Hoffman, 1993a).

Pretest/Posttest Changes in Retelling

Results indicated that interactive and performance-oriented groups showed gains in retelling compared to a control group. These gains approached but did not reach a level of significance ($p = .06$). Gain scores for the interactive and performance-oriented styles were similar, with a slight advantage to the interactive style. Results suggest that both types of storybook reading styles were equally beneficial, and that the possibly more familiar performance-oriented style did not hold special advantages for the AAP-D group. This outcome supported Dickinson and Smith's (1994) conclusion that repeated readings of the same book, with opportunity for discussion either during the storybook reading or following it, was a key factor in improving children's understanding of story events.

The fact that changes in story retelling ability were emerging is encouraging. Children only heard the story twice, once at pretest and once at posttest, separated by a six-week interval. Control subjects were not able to include more complex ideas or more complete narrative structure following the two exposures to the story. However, it should be noted that control group's pretest scores were higher than either experimental group's posttest scores, and there may have been a ceiling effect for this group. Controls came from another Head Start center and were slightly older than the subjects in the experimental groups. Both groups of experimental subjects did show gains, indicating that they were beginning to retain and express more information and to include more elements of narrative structure from stories they had been read. This benefit was demonstrated even though no discussion of story events took place either during or following the storybook reading. This finding suggests that the children were independently interpreting more from story events, and imposing greater narrative organization on actions within the story.

This finding was supported by changes in scores for individual subjects from pretest to posttest. Children in the two treatment groups and the control group retold stories by either labeling objects in the picture or describing simple actions at pretest. This remained the storytelling method for control subjects at posttest. In contrast, treatment groups posttested in retellings by using semantic levels of action descriptions or higher levels, with some providing metalinguistic comments (i.e., the highest level scored).

Changes also were observed in narrative organization. Children in treatment and control conditions organized information at levels of ordered temporal sequences or less (i.e., descriptive lists or collections) at pretest. The control group did not change in this ability at posttest. In contrast, treatment conditions resulted in retellings that were higher in discourse structure. Nine of the performance-oriented children improved, with two including temporal and causal links (i.e., reactive sequence) but none including plans (i.e., abbreviated structure). Eight of the interactive subjects improved, with three retellings at the level of reactive sequence but none at the level of an abbreviated structure.

Changes in Weekly Probes of Retelling

During intervention, probes were taken at the end of each week. Stories used in intervention were retold by children and analyzed for semantic and discourse levels used in retelling. Since the same books were read for two weeks, these retellings occurred following three readings of the book (probe 1) and six readings (probe 2) for each of three books (i.e., a total of six probes).

Following the first probe for each book (i.e., three readings), mean semantic scores for all children in both groups were above 2.5, indicating that retellings were primarily descriptions and interpretations for all subjects, with limited low level responses such as labeling. The performance oriented group included slightly more descriptions and interpretations than did the interactive group, as reflected by higher scores following the first probe. The opposite result was obtained at the second probe, or following the sixth reading of the story. For the first two books,

higher semantic scores were obtained for the interactive group, while scores were essentially the same for the third book. In the second probe, higher semantic levels were observed for both groups, including metalanguage or talk about the print and print concepts.

For the performance-oriented group, the story was read without stopping for discussion or comment with readings ranging from three to eight minutes. Following the reading, a short text-to-life discussion (lasting from approximately 4 to 11 minutes) was conducted. During this time the main themes of the story were explored using games, discussion, and manipulative objects. These explorations included farm animals and their fur, homes, and habits; families and their structure and caregiving habits; jungle animals, emotions, and cultural games; and space travel and the solar system. These discussions were effective in increasing background knowledge for the story as reflected by the semantic scores following 3 readings and discussions. However, benefits did not continue during the second week, or the fourth through sixth readings. The range of semantic scores was lower for this group following the sixth reading compared to the third reading.

In the interactive condition, only one-third of the story was read during each session of week 1, with interactive discussion occurring both throughout and following the story. During the second week, the entire story was read each day. Interactive readings ranged from 7 to 17 minutes, and post-story discussions ranged from one and one-half to eight minutes. Interactive SBREs tended to last from one

and one-half to five minutes longer than performance-oriented, providing more time for discussion. The same themes were used as in the performance oriented condition, but topics were integrated with the story. That is, as the story was being read, the thematic topics were linked to characters and events in the book. Activities or discussions that followed the book were relatively brief, including only information that was not covered during storybook reading. In this case, subjects in the interactive group scored slightly lower in semantic levels compared to the performance oriented group following the first week, but slightly higher following the second week. Unlike the performance-oriented group, which read the entire story three times prior to the first week probe, the interactive group read and explored one-third of the story during the first reading, added another third during the second reading, and read and discussed the entire book for the first time just prior to the first week probe. Therefore, the interactive group had not experienced the entire story as many times as the performance-oriented group at probe one. The interactive group continued to make gains across readings during the second week, reflecting more intensive opportunity to discuss and explore information in greater depth as the entire story was reread three times.

Following the first probe of the first book (i.e., three readings of Who Will Be My Mother), 80% of performance oriented group subjects included both temporal and causal links in their narrative discourse, while only 50% of subjects in the interactive group included causal links. By the second probe, or after the sixth reading, 50% of performance-oriented subjects included plans to solve the

problem in their retellings (i.e., abbreviated structures), while 70% of the interactive group achieved this level. Once again, the animated performance style helped the children grasp elements of the story earlier, but the interactive discussion allowed for more children to understand and recall the subtleties of the story following six repeated readings.

For this book, 11 out of 20 children in the two groups were able to retell the story at the same level as the story was written (i.e., abbreviated structure), including temporal and causal links and a plan to solve the problem. This story included the most familiar themes (farm animals and family). It was also the story read at the beginning of the study, when the storybook reading event was most novel.

An obvious book effect was found for discourse. Who Will Be My Mother is a story where the refrain is an integral part of the plot of the story (i.e., the orphaned lamb asks each animal on the farm "Will you be my mother?"). The refrain enabled children to better understand the problem encountered by the lamb and the plan to solve the problem. Children in the interactive group improved their retelling ability from 50% with both temporal and causal links the first week to 90% with these connections at the second week's retelling. Performance-oriented children had 8 of the group's 10 children provide both temporal and causal links during the first retelling, and all of the 8 children present at the second probe included both temporal and causal links.

In contrast, the refrain from the second story, The Jigaree, appeared to distract or interfere with the plot of the story. Following the first week, 70% of the

children in the performance oriented group retold the story with temporal links, while in the interactive group 50% of the children used temporal links and 10% included a causal link. Following the second probe, 80% of the interactive group included causal links, while only 40% of the performance-oriented group included causal links and 40% had temporal links only. The refrain, "Jigarees here, Jigarees there, Jigarees __ everywhere" did not promote the plot, but rather focused on cadence and rhyme. More subjects from the interactive group were able to establish elements of planning and causality because of the greater opportunity to discuss what the Jigaree was doing and why. At the end of this book, only five of 20 children in the two groups were able to retell the story at the same level as the story was written, including temporal and causal links and a plan. This story featured the least familiar themes, and included the refrain that was not an integral part of the plot.

For the third story, Grumpy Elephant, only 30% of the performance oriented and 20% of the interactive group included both temporal and causal links following three storybook readings. This story had the most complicated characters and emotional reactions of the three books, and this was apparently difficult for children to initially grasp. By the second probe, only 20% of performance oriented subjects told the story with causal links, while 50% of interactive groups were at this level. Once again, the greater opportunity to discuss the plot in the interactive condition provided children more time and greater depth of plot exploration, enabling more subjects to construct the plot at higher levels of complexity.

For this story, none of 20 children in the two groups were able to retell the story at the same level as the story was written. They included both temporal and causal links, but not the plan. The plot of the story was dependent on understanding the problem and the plan (i.e., the jungle animals sang, danced, and drummed in order to cheer up the grumpy elephant), but this concept was not fully understood or incorporated into stories told by the children.

Summary

The majority of children under both reading style conditions demonstrated positive changes in semantic and discourse levels, compared to minimal changes in the control group. Though these gains did not achieve statistical significance, these trends, along with probe results, do suggest that there was carry-over from both styles of reading to post-test story retellings for most children. Factors that enabled understanding of story linkages and abstract concepts during intervention were internalized enough for most children to generalize to a less familiar story. This finding suggests that repeated readings are beneficial for AAP-D. Martinez and Roser (1985), who reported on a single home case study of a father reading repeatedly to his daughter and on a preschool class who had six stories read to them three times each, had noted that at least three readings appear to be necessary for children to deeply process and comprehend story relationships. Though these researchers reported neither the culture or class of the children they studied, their findings and those of others (Bullock, 1975; Durkin, 1972; Dickinson, 1989) support the many benefits of repeated readings in preschool age children. This study further supports such benefits.

Further, while greater effects were seen for the probes than for the pretest/posttest retellings, all but two of the subjects did tell more complex stories at posttest. While plots of the probe stories were discussed during intervention, greater complexity of storytelling at posttest was acquired spontaneously. This suggests that schemes and structures for storytelling were being acquired and generalized to new stories without need for direct instruction.

Changes in Literacy Knowledge

The second question of this study asked whether increases in literacy knowledge of AAP-D result from either interactive or performance-oriented storybook reading styles. This question was addressed using a 14 question measure of print concepts, termed the Test of Literacy Concepts (TALC), administered pretest and posttest.

Results indicated that both interactive and performance-oriented groups showed significant gains in literacy knowledge compared to the control group. The interactive group made greater gains than the performance-oriented group, but these differences did not reach a level of significance. Results indicate that both styles of storybook reading do result in incidental learning about book conventions such as reading left-to-right and top-to-bottom, print-to-picture relationships, and knowledge about print such as pointing to words and letters, matching printed words, or finding words that begin with the same letter.

Gains in literacy knowledge noted under each reading condition in this study were not unexpected, as orientation to book conventions and print were provided

to performance-oriented and interactive groups by the investigator. Validity was verified through a rating on the Observational Checklist completed by the Head Start Center Director. Under both reading conditions, 100% compliance was checked on the item "reader references child to print, such as title and author, and sweeps hand left to right under print during story."

A larger increase in knowledge about book use as compared to knowledge about print function was noted. Each group at posttest was able to answer about half of the print-related questions (interactive members - 54% and performance-oriented - 47%) and two-thirds (65.5% each) of book-related questions. These findings are also not surprising. Young children are first attracted to storybooks by their colorful pictures, and, in fact, first attempt to construct meaning of book contents by focusing on pictures. Sulzby's (1985) hierarchy for progression of literacy knowledge begins with the children's focus on pictured characters and actions. Children in this study were in the second semester of their first educational experience. However, prior to the study, though the children had participated in school storybook reading, none of children had experienced SBREs conducted using literacy techniques such as those described by Trelease (1982). Trelease recommended a number of literacy practices for familiarizing children with all parts of books, such as beginning and ending, and the cover, with printed title and author, and a picture which suggested story content. Therefore, more book than print knowledge would be predictable, as the likelihood of limited home experiences with print and little school orientation to print in storybooks would result in more restricted print knowledge.

Martinez and Teale (1993) had noted that knowledgeable teachers tend to utilize emergent literacy practices, including orientation to print, as described in the Trelease (1982) read-aloud handbook. Such behavior was discussed by Dickinson, Zhibang, and Wenchao (1995) as a characteristic of pedagogical sophistication, knowledge of how to read to children in a manner that would benefit gains in literacy.

The fact that literacy knowledge gains were significantly better for both study groups than for the control group at posttest, carrying over to a more traditional and didactic reading event, supports use of emergent literacy techniques across repeated readings. These pedagogical activities are beneficial in preparing children to better utilize books for learning, including moving toward increased print awareness needed to learn to read independently.

Changes in World Knowledge

The third question of this study asked whether extension of world knowledge related to content and themes of four specific storybooks (including the pretest-posttest story) result for AAP-D from either interactive or performance-oriented storybook reading styles. Measurement of this question was accomplished using a 40-question assessment administered at pretest and posttest. In addition, weekly probes asked four comprehension questions about the events, concepts, and themes in each story. These questions were organized at increasing levels of complexity, as described on the Semantic Continuum of the SDS Model (Norris & Hoffman, 1993a).



Pretest-Posttest Changes in World Knowledge

From pretest to posttest, performance-oriented and interactive groups demonstrated significant gains in world knowledge, as compared to no change by the control group. Though world knowledge gains were statistically similar, the interactive group demonstrated a slightly better mean gain score (23.45 of 66 possible points) than the performance-oriented group (20.5). These findings tend to support the contention of Flood (1977) concerning three of the four aspects of storybook reading style which he named as most beneficial to children. These aspects included interactional storytelling that encourages child participation, reinforcement and expansion of child participatory efforts, and post-story discussions that help children integrate and evaluate story content and themes by relating them to their own experiences. All of these are found throughout interactive SBREs, with only the post-story discussions being an integral part of performance-oriented readings. Dickinson and Smith (1994) have stated that the most important element in storybook reading is the opportunity for supported discussion and expressed the belief that it may not matter whether such discussion is positioned before, throughout, and/or following the story. The fact that both experimental groups demonstrated significant gain in world knowledge supports Dickinson and Smith's statement. However, the slight difference between groups could reflect somewhat more time devoted to discussion of specific themes, unfamiliar vocabulary words, and story events, extending children's existing frameworks and adding new ones.

Themes chosen for elaboration during discussions included a range of topics from those familiar to children (family, farm animals, vehicles, and games) to those that were unfamiliar (space travel, emotional concepts, and jungle animals). Performance on the world knowledge test resulted in gains for both groups in all theme areas but two (one theme for each group). Because an unequal number of questions was asked about various themes, limited assumptions may be made about theme choice and discussion. However, a greater degree of repetition and concretization may be needed for children to demonstrate meaningful gain in knowledge in theme areas to which they bring limited frameworks and background knowledge. Additionally, some themes may be above the cognitive age of preschoolers, and this fact alone may deter them from increasing their world knowledge when exposed to them.

More than half (22 of 40) of the questions on the World Knowledge Test provided no contextualization to children for answering them. While the control group posted no gains on answering decontextualized questions, experimental groups did achieve gains in this area. The 10 interactive participants demonstrated a gain of 77 total points on response to decontextualized questions, while the performance-oriented group's gain was 63 points. Gain response to contextualized questions was more similar between experimental groups: 58 points for interactive and 55 points for performance-oriented.

A number of researchers have emphasized the importance of using SBREs for developing children's ability with decontextualized talk (Beals, DeTemple &

Dickinson, 1995; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Goldfield & Snow, 1984; Hoffman & Norris, 1994; Snow, 1983; and Teale, 1986). Dickinson and colleagues (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Dickinson, Zhibang, & Wenchao, 1995) posit that such talk develops children's ability to map words onto non-immediate events, to learn metacognitive and abstract concepts, and to organize information to answer more cognitively-loaded questions. Exposure to and experience answering decontextualized questions was believed by Heath (1982a) to be particularly important in interactions with children whose child-rearing experiences had provided limited opportunity to learn how to respond to them. AAP-D frequently have experienced language acquisition and development environments that provided reduced opportunity with questions, according to Heath.

Weekly Probes of Comprehension

Gains in world knowledge were also examined through weekly probes that examined children's ability to answer questions that progressed from low levels of semantic complexity (labeling and description) to higher levels requiring use of increasing amounts of world knowledge and abstraction (interpretation and inference). Comprehension was measured after the third and sixth reading of each book. Third reading questions were less difficult at each level than sixth reading questions, reflecting more in-depth discussions across more SBREs. Results suggested a strong relationship between familiarity of the theme and the child's increase in question-answer response complexity. For example, the first book focused on farm animals and family, relatively familiar topics for children. Gains

in comprehension were noted as children in both groups improved from answering few questions above the descriptive level to answering many at the interpretive and inferential level.

Congruence of words and pictures for supporting understanding of plot events was also found to be a factor in enabling children to answer questions at higher reasoning levels. A sharp drop in comprehension was noted during the second story, in which words presented a descriptive list of actions by the characters, while the picture depicted diverse agendas between the two characters. For example, the print simply detailed the boy rhythmically stating his viewing of the jigaree imitating his own, various actions. However, pictures displayed a small creature becoming increasingly tired in his efforts to play with and make friends with the boy. Not until the creature collapses does the boy realize the reality of the situation in the pictures. Pictured events were repeatedly discussed in attempts to assist children to understand the problem and resolution that comprised the plot. However, a sharp decline for the performance-oriented group and a lesser decline for the interactive group was noted in comprehension, with reasoning responses dropping significantly.

The difficulty understanding the story when the text did not directly support the pictures is particularly notable, as a characteristic of children enculturated in an oral storytelling tradition is thought to be acquisition of the ability to interpret meaning using characters' facial and body expressions (Heath, 1986a). Results of this story seem to suggest that careful adult support is needed for African-American

children of disadvantage to learn to transfer their experiences with use of the immediate and visual body language of story-tellers to understand a story to the understanding of facial and body language that is depicted in pictures.

For the final book, the good comprehension at both the third reading and sixth reading may indicate a cumulative ability across time to deal with cognitively more difficult questions. Despite unfamiliarity of the themes (jungle animals and emotional concepts), children in both groups posted performances at third reading that included many responses to higher two levels of questions, and demonstrated continued gains at sixth reading probes. Only eight children were present in the performance-oriented group and nine in the interactive at this final probe. The mean scores of each group (7.88 – performance-oriented, and 9.11 – interactive) indicate excellent response to the interpretive and inferential questions for this story. Across several stories and themes, repeated exposure and scaffolded support to respond to more abstract and complex questions resulted in improved comprehension for experimental groups in this study.

Engagement and Group Benefits

A cumulative effect across the time of the three SBREs was detectable in examining the relationship between engagement and group benefits. By the third story, participants under each condition demonstrated benefit for comprehension and retelling after both probes. Additionally, there was an effect for books in terms of comprehension benefits and degree of engagement, with the problematic second book resulting in somewhat reduced engagement for both groups and decreased comprehension at the second probe.

During probes for Book 1, the degree of engagement for both groups began well and increased, with third reading probes resulting in approximately 87% engagement for performance-oriented and 97% for interactive participants and sixth reading probes at 95 % and 99 % respectively. Despite differences in structure of the SBREs (i.e., performance-oriented SBREs consisted of approximately three minutes of storyreading and 10-11 minutes of post-story discussion, in comparison to 9-11 minutes of interactive reading and five-six minutes of follow-up discussion for interactive members), both groups, at both probes, were engaged, either visually or verbally, for the majority of the reading event. It is not surprising that both groups demonstrated positive changes in both retelling ability and in answering comprehension questions. Themes of the story were familiar, but the structure and procedures of each SBRE were new and different to AAP-D. These facts may both have contributed to the degree of engagement and the similar benefits demonstrated by the two groups. Though retelling and comprehension were slightly better for the interactive group, this group received one-two minutes more of discussion and had slightly higher levels of engagement, so this outcome might be expected.

Probes for Book 2 resulted in a different configuration of engagement and benefits. Engagement at Probe 1 was good, with interactive participants engaged 92% and performance-oriented children at 84 % during the third reading and first probe. While the performance-oriented group showed a small increase (to 86%), the interactive group's engagement declined to 76%. However, both groups posted

increases in retelling. Though groups began at similar points on the semantic and discourse continuum, the interactive group's gains were slightly higher at the third reading probe. However, comprehension abilities were not benefitted by six readings as opposed to three for this book. Though both groups demonstrated comprehension, even answering some of the higher more cognitively oriented questions at the first probe and third reading for this second book, both displayed a decline in comprehension at the second probe and sixth reading.

Decline for the performance-oriented group was almost twice as much as that of the interactive group. In this book, themes were unfamiliar, and the text and pictures incongruent. Perhaps, because the discussion did not occur until after the story was read for performance-oriented groups, attention was maintained and even extended slightly as the children struggled to comprehend both text events and foreign and abstract themes (moon, space travel, emotional concepts). Conversely, so much time was spent on themes and events that continued to be difficult, the interactive group's interest and engagement dropped. It should also be noted that an increasing tendency to chime the predictable and rather long refrain was a prominent factor during SBREs for Book 2. As chiming, which is essentially a call-and-response interaction, is a learning strategy much used in Head Start and an interactional feature of the cultural milieu of AAP-D, this is not unexpected.

Dickinson and colleagues (Dickinson, 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994) had noted and commented on this phenomenon, finding chiming inhibitory to

extending language benefits through adult supported discussion. In summary, engagement was sufficient for improving retelling ability, demonstrating that the children's understanding of the plot organization was increasing. However, the foreign themes and the somewhat complex causative linkages proved too difficult for children's comprehension to improve beyond a certain point.

At Book 3 probes, the cumulative result of language and literacy interventions began to be noted. Though engagement increased slightly for performance-oriented children (84 to 91 %) and decreased somewhat (95 to 84 %) for interactive children, benefit was noted both at Probe 1 (third reading) and Probe 2 (sixth reading) for retelling and comprehension. Experimental groups started at higher levels in retelling at the first probe, with a minimal decrease being determined for performance-oriented, and slight increase for interactive children. Group comprehension started high, with each group answering higher reasoning questions, and ended even higher for each. Despite a story with themes (jungle, emotional concepts, music) that were less familiar than those of the first story and more familiar than those of the second, both groups extended their world knowledge and narrative organization, as illustrated by improved ability, at both probes, in retelling of the story and answering related comprehension questions.

Engagement, whether it is visual or verbal, of more than 75 %, appears to be sufficient to allow children to demonstrate positive gains in their understanding of story events and themes and ability to express them. Only in the second story, with its advanced themes and picture-print mismatching, did engagement of AAP-D

decline to as little as 76% (in the interactive group). Despite this decline, increased retelling ability was achieved by both experimental groups. Though a decline in comprehension was noted in both groups, second probe questions were more difficult and were being posed about themes that were advanced for this age group. Careful attention to book themes should apparently be an important criteria for selection for an SBRE.

Performance-oriented readings resulted in continued increase in engagement across all three books. Whether this is because AAP-D enjoyed the familiar and dramatic performance of the entire story, and then were interested in the follow-up elaborative text-to-life discussion is an area that continues to require study. Interactive readings, after the first story and novel SBRE, resulted in engagement decreases from third to sixth reading. This could be because follow-up discussions were not needed after the prolonged interactive discussions during the SBRE, resulting in children losing some degree of interest. Conversely, the less familiar SBRE, lacking constraints and listening requirements with which the children were familiar in their classrooms, resulted in deteriorating control and focus for some of the children in the interactive group. However, adequate interest was maintained to benefit from prolonged and interactive discussions.

Educational Implications of the Study

Results of this investigation provide evidence that both performance-oriented and interactive reading events can provide benefits in language, literacy, and world knowledge for African-American preschoolers from disadvantaged homes.

Interactive SBREs appear to provide the same benefits to AAP-D as they do to middle-class mainstream children. Increased knowledge about books and print (emergent literacy), general world knowledge (expanded frameworks for specific thematic information), and narrative ability (extended semantic expression and discourse structure understanding, as reflected in more coherent retellings) can result for this population through interactive SBREs. This storybook reading approach provides on-the-spot clarification and elaboration of poorly understood events and words, and continues to expand book themes with post-story discussions and activities. This is an important finding, as many theorists believe that special approaches may be needed to teach children from diverse classes and cultures. Smith, 1988; Bowman, 1992; Gersten & George, 1990; Warren-Leubecker & Carter, 1988).

Performance-oriented storybook reading events, accompanied by opportunity for discussions post-story reading, do appear to benefit children from a more oral storytelling tradition by providing somewhat familiar frameworks for meaning-making. This point could have been defended more successfully, if the study had included a performance-oriented reading condition in which no discussion was included. Successful SBRE discussions should involve scaffolded support to understand story pictures, in order to extend the emerging ability of AAP-D to utilize this more distanced but still visual manner of meaning-making. Text-to-life connections should focus on attempts to extend the understanding of storylines (i.e., clarifying unclear events, motivations, and causal relationships) and word

meanings as used within the story (Bus & van IJzendoorn, 1995; Martinez & Roser, 1985). As suggested by Dickinson & Smith (1994), discussions could be provided both prior to the story (preparing children to listen and look for specific happenings) and following the story (extending themes and plot by connecting story events to the children's lives).

It is also possible (and an apt subject for future investigations) that it may be beneficial for adults to style-shift or vary their SBRE content and style according to their knowledge of children's ages, stages, and abilities. It may be appropriate for early readings to be more interactive in order to firmly establish children's knowledge of background themes and story event connections. Once such basic tenets of comprehension are established, utilization of performance-oriented techniques and reading of the entire story could benefit children and help them develop a love of stories. Goldfield and Snow (1984) have reported that SBRE interactional patterns change developmentally, in terms of degree of adult support for child understanding and increase in child participatory talk. They described three stages of SBRE interaction during which children progressed from being encouraged to label pictured objects, through understanding sequenced events, to expanding their understanding of connections between books and world events.

Dickinson, Zhibang, and Wenchoao (1995) have noted that teachers vary in style of reading and discussion techniques according to their perception of the maturity (age and stage) and book experience of their children. Further, Dickinson and Smith (1994) suggested that style-shifting can individualize child benefit during

SBREs. AAP-D, who are between the ages of 3 and 5, frequently lack experience with books and with interaction patterns characteristic of adult support during readings. Awareness of style, as well as developmental changes in interactional patterns, can benefit educators and therapists serving this population. Style-shifting between performance-oriented techniques (dramatic acting out of character parts, taking of voices, stressing words, while pointing to relevant pictures) and interactive procedures (on-line comments that clarify words and events, pausing to answer child questions) may be the optimal approach in SBREs for AAP-D. Disadvantaged children, as well as mainstream, middle-class children, are likely to exhibit varying ranges of experience and ability and can profit from the familiar face-to-face performance and the adult scaffolding for understanding of pictured events and textual content.

In each reading condition and variable of this investigation, there was a range of benefit. Therefore, the suggestions of Dickinson and colleagues that style-shifting techniques by knowledgeable educators and therapists can be most profitable are well worth considering. Developmental and experiential knowledge of children should determine purposes (goals) of storybook reading and the degree of adherence to one or more particular styles during SBREs for AAP-D. Experienced teachers and therapists should utilize cultural frameworks, such as dramatic oral storytelling techniques, in their storytelling repertoire. They should also provide the initial interactive contextualization (labeling and describing pictures) needed for expanding children's ability to understand events that are decontextualized. Such

interactive scaffolding, along with text-to-life discussions, provided in repeated fashion, enable children to gradually learn to understand temporal and causal relationships and to answer decontextualized questions.

Careful selection of storybooks, as suggested by Dickinson and Smith (1994) has been suggested in this investigation. Teachers and therapists may wish to first select themes and topics involving relatively familiar frameworks. Less familiar themes and topics may be chosen after children are familiar with SBRE procedures and expectations. Printed words and pictured events should be congruent for promotion of storyline understanding. Though attractive and rhythmically appealing refrains and predictable phrases are reported to promote phonemic awareness, such phrases (if not an intimate part of the story) can apparently inhibit comprehension of plot lines. AAP-D, who may be culturally drawn to joining in (chiming) and repeating these phrases in well-known call-and-response patterns, may be particularly susceptible to distraction from story focus during storybook reading of predictable books. Varying the type of book and not regularly utilizing predictable books may be a profitable practice for those serving this preschool population.

AAP-D, like other preschoolers reported in Martinez and Roser (1985), also seem to require at least three readings of a story before developing an understanding of connection between story events. This study supports the premise that six readings further extends understanding of storyline relationships, as well as comprehension of unfamiliar words. Further, the study suggests that three SBRE

segments of several repeated readings, with differing books, are effective in assisting children to gain ultimate benefit from the SBRE procedural patterns. Also suggested was the inference that preschooler engagement varies during SBREs, tending to be affected by specific style and book factors. Engagement for more than 75% of the time was shown to result in child gain in comprehension and retelling skills. Engagement increases were noted slightly more during performance-oriented SBRES than interactive. Further study is needed to determine if this information is significant.

In summary, both performance-oriented and interactive storybook reading styles can benefit African-American preschoolers of disadvantage in semantic and discourse understanding, extension of book and print knowledge, and in expanding their frameworks of general knowledge. Style-shifting to attain these benefits for AAP-D, according to children's stage and experience, has been recommended in other studies and should be compared to specific SBRE styles in future studies.

Selection of books for AAP-D should be carefully accomplished, with SBRE goals in mind for specific groups of children. Familiarity of themes and topics and congruence of text and pictures are important selection criteria. Repeated readings aid children, with benefits beginning to become obvious after three readings and continuing to increase at the sixth reading. Careful planning of SBREs, including use of knowledge of cultural experiences and abilities, can result in educational profit for preschool children of disadvantage.

Limitations of the Study

Findings of this study suggest that both performance-oriented and interactive styles can benefit AAP-D across repeated SBREs. Gains were achieved at posttest above pretest levels for both experimental groups but not for the control group, and gains were noted across the third and sixth readings of each book, though book selection did appear to be a factor. However, limitations to this investigation restrict generalization of results.

The greatest limitation of the study is the small sample size, as it does not allow for generalization to all African-American children of disadvantage. AAP-D in this study were from the southern United States and were enculturated in an urban setting. Replication of this study with northern and rural AAP-D would be necessary to support conclusions of this investigation.

Another limitation is one of design. Although equivalent-length SBRES could be very difficult to achieve, differences in amount of time devoted to two SBRE styles may have affected results to some degree. Though there was no significant difference between benefits gained by performance-oriented and interactive SBRE styles, small advantages often posted by the interactive group may have been the result of the small difference in time (interactive SBREs tended to last one-three minutes longer than performance-oriented SBREs). Attempting to maintain near-equivalent times (with less than one minute difference) could have had some impact on results.

Book selection may also have limited the results of this study. More careful selection of books, in terms of choosing themes and topics for which children had

at least a narrow framework, and selecting only stories in which printed words referenced pictured events more exactly, could have resulted in across-book similarities of findings for the two reading conditions.

Results of the study could have been affected by the investigator's degree of proficiency with two different storybook reading styles. Attempts to control for this factor were made through random observations and ratings by center personnel, and examination of videotaped probes. Ratings suggest an excellent degree of style adherence. However, it can be very difficult to maintain one given style of story presentation and interaction, in the face of varying child needs during storybook reading events. Achieving a cleanly organized pattern of interaction may not have always been achieved in this study, and this could have affected findings. Additionally, this study was accomplished by one investigator. Replication of the study by others will be necessary to determine if similar results are attainable, ruling out the factor of individual skill or presentation style.

Because this study involved only children from 3 years, 9 months to 4 years, 9 months, results can be generalized only for this age group of AAP-D. Replication with older and/or younger age level children will be necessary to confirm the generalization of these results for all AAP-D between 3 and 5 years.

Future Research

This investigation's results suggest several potential areas warranting future research. Because, other than Dickinson's (Dickinson & Keebler, 1989; Dickinson & Smith, 1994) sociolinguistic investigations, there are no other known studies

investigating benefits of storybook reading style for preschoolers, replications of this study are necessary to validate its findings. Replications should attempt to exact more control of SBRE time, and book and theme selection. Inclusion of a style-shifting reading condition could expand and clarify present findings and implications. Replications with children primarily at age 3 and age 5 are also needed, as are studies with rural and northern-tier African-American children. Additionally, a variation of this study might be accomplished with other oral-tradition children of disadvantage, such as those from Native American families.

Studies providing more carefully managed examination of engagement are needed. Particular emphasis may need to be placed on the study of engagement during listening only conditions versus engagement during interactive discussions. Whether children's language and world knowledge shows greater gain with more verbal participation, versus visual engagement only, has not been clearly determined in this or other studies.

Lastly, an interesting related study might examine predictable versus non-predictable books to determine if benefits are equivalent for preschoolers. If such a study could be accomplished, another area examined for gain should be phonological awareness, as experience with rhyme (as typically found in predictable books) is known to facilitate phonological development. Another study examining book effects that could be productive for speech-language pathologists and educators could involve contrasting the various benefits of reading expository and narrative children's texts.

This study adds to the literature (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Goldfield & Snow, 1984; Gunn, Simmons, & Kaneenui, 1998) that suggests SBREs are very important in early development of vocabulary, discourse skills, literacy knowledge, and world knowledge. Additionally, this investigation suggests that children enculturated through a more contextualized communication and narrative model are responsive to SBRE styles that incorporate aspects of such interactive patterns. Integrating aspects of Piagetian constructivism and Vygotskian interactionism, these two storybook reading styles offer the neurologically maturing preschooler supported opportunities to mentally connect old information with new and contextualized information with decontextualized. Schemas can be extended, and linguistic ability expanded to more abstract, distanced, and elaborated levels. Storybook reading events should continue to be a fruitful area for investigation, as theorists strive to provide communication and education specialists with beneficial ways to expand children's skills while respecting their cultural experiences.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Consent Form

Title: Effects of Reading Styles on African-American Preschoolers

Invitation to Participate:

Your child is invited to participate in a research project to determine the most beneficial style of reading storybooks to preschool children on African-American heritage.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research project is to determine what kind of storybook reading procedures best develop language and learning abilities in young children of one specific cultural background.

Explanation of Procedures:

As part of your child's preschool program at Head Start, he or she will participate in storybook reading and related discussion activities three times weekly for six weeks (six times for each of three storybooks). These sessions will be used to improved abilities to: develop specific vocabulary, improve reasoning skills, increase interest and pleasure in hearing stories, make connections between story and real-life experiences, and improve ability to derive meaning from the combination of print and pictures.

Readings will be provided by a certified educational consultant completing dissertation requirements for doctorate in communication disorders (speech-language pathology).

Following the study, gained information about ways of reading that benefit the children will be taught to you as parent in three short sessions.

One reading session a week, for each group of children, will be video-recorded.

The recordings will be used for analyzing and comparing reading styles for benefit

to children. Parts of some of the videotaped sessions may be used as training material in a university classroom.

One standardized language test and a hearing screening will be used as criteria to determine your child's eligibility for this study. Changes in your child's abilities in: general knowledge, print knowledge, and ability to re-tell a story will also be measured, before and after the study.

Potential Risks and Benefits

This project does not involve any risk to your child. The reading styles have already been demonstrated to provide enjoyment and benefit to children.

Assurance of Confidentiality

The standardization test information and any other information about your child will be treated confidentially. Your child's test scores will be released only to you. Any reference to your child in professional reports or on educational video tape will be by number reference and not by name.

Withdrawal from the Study

Participation in the program is voluntary. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue his participation at any time.

Offer to Answer Questions

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the principal researcher listed below. If you are willing to allow your child to participate, please sign and return this form. Thank you for your interest in this program.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to allow your child to participate. Your signature indicates that, having read the information provided

**on these pages, you have decided to permit your child to participate. A copy of
this consent form will be given to you.**

Name of Child: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Principal Researcher: Beth Witt

Beth Witt, Doctoral Student
949-3492

APPENDIX B
GENERAL PROCEDURES AND SPECIFIC PLANS
FOR
INTERACTIVE AND PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED READING STYLES

SLP SBRE Guidelines

Performance-oriented SBRE

I. Preparation for SBRE

- A. Set consistent, formal tone and manner.

Request quiet and attentiveness.

Instruct children to look at pictures and listen to story.

Be pleasant but firm, building excitement for story.

- B. Keep seating arrangements consistent.

Each child sits in same place within his space each time.

Child instructed to remain seated.

Seat so as not to crowd other children.

- C. Reduce distractions.

Read in quiet area.

Focus attention on book.

Do not begin until children are quiet and attentive.

II. The Performance (SBRE)

- A. Read story in entirety, following text, deviating only to substitute synonyms for more difficult words.

- B. Use paralinguistics to “perform” the story.

Use special voices for narrator in story or to mark each character’s talk.

Vary pitch, pace, and volume to convey feelings (sad), personal qualities (wise), and images (dripping wet).

Use facial expression and body/gestural movement to heighten drama, emphasize words.

Drop pitch and speak more conversationally when interpreting clarifying statements not in text.

- C. Re-direct “antsy” children’s attention by leaning slightly toward them, telling story directly to them (with eye gaze and touch) and focus their attention on action in picture.
- D. Do not break into story to answer child questions but may produce brief clarification as part of tale.

(SLP: “Oh, lovely Mud!” said the cow.

Child: “What he doing?”

SLP: “JUM-M-MPING in the mud! Oh, LOVELY mud!”)

III. Follow-up Discussion

- A. Provide brief summary statement about story.
 - B. Attempt to briefly connect one aspect of story with child’s life.
- (SLP: Mrs. Wishy-Washy likes things to be clean. The animals liked to be dirty.

I LIKE being clean and taking baths.)

Wait for child response, looking expectantly at group.

- C. Engage children in brief (around five or ten minutes) discussion of single story aspect related to event.

SLP SBRE Guidelines

Interactive SBRE

I. Preparation for SBRE

A. Set manner of preparations as informal and semi-business-like.

- Have children gather around SLP and book. Encourage to get comfortable.
- Encourage children to ask questions and talk with SLP about book.
- Explain what will be discussed/read each day.

(SLP: Today we have a brand new book. Let's look at the front cover and think about what it's about!)

(SLP [another day]: Yesterday we learned the title and author of our new book and who it is about. Now let's talk about them again — and THEN we'll see what HAPPENED in this story!)

II. The SBRE - Interactive Procedures.

A. All efforts by children are refined, clarified, and re-stated/expanded.

*See Scaffolding Techniques and Examples.

- Reference children between printed word in text and object/action in picture.

(SLP: THIS tells you what kind of animal this is. It is a _____.)

- Probe and clarify to ensure each child understands what is happening.

(SLP: LOOK at Mrs. Wishy-Washy's face! She doesn't look happy; she looks _____.)

- Push meaning into words and phrases; point to pictures to ensure understanding of words and events.

(SLP: A-a-away went the cow! They ALL left to [point to picture of all the animals jumping in the mud.]).

- Emphasize causal and temporal words to help children understand linkages within the story.

(SLP: And then-n-n _____?

So they could _____?)

- Engage children in problem-solving rather than focusing on teaching a skill.

(See above example).

- Use cloze procedures, having children first fill in with book's predictable words.

(SLP: Wishy-washy! Wishy-_____.)

- Reduce complexity for weak children, while encouraging/scaffolding for higher level reasoning and language use for stronger children.

(SLP to strong child: Look at her face; what could she be thinking?

(SLP to weak child: She's frowning! See her hand on her hip. She looks very, very MAD! She doesn't like those animals to be so _____!)

- Involve quiet child gradually, starting with gestural responses and increasing to verbal.

- Keep “antsy” child involved by using as “helper” in holding concrete materials related to text or to point out events in picture for others.
 - Use related concrete materials, other pictures, or particular objects in book picture, as well as modeling a behavior to help children understand new words, solve misunderstandings.
- B. Proceed with story gradually over first three readings; story should be completed by third reading. Readings 4-6 focus on collaborative re-tellings.
- * Appropriate scaffolding procedures will be used in every session to encourage child sense-making.

SBRE Session 1 - Discussion of cover: title, author, illustrator, what is seen in picture.

Prediction about story content from picture viewing.

Run hand under print and read words, relating children to pictures for first few pages.

Discuss to clarify setting: where takes place, who story is about.

SBRE Session 2 - Re-discuss and collaboratively re-read what has been covered. Check for comprehension.

Use cloze procedures and re-stating/expanding to encourage understanding and participation.

Continue far enough in story to determine problem or complication.

SBRE Session 3 - Use same collaborative re-reading approach as in Session 2.

Complete story, solving problem or complication.

Encourage/scaffold for comprehension or evaluative comments.

SBRE Sessions 4-6 - Children are scaffolded (cloze, expansions, elaborations, and picture references, constituent questions, cues with causal and temporal conjunctions) to help SLP re-tell story. Whole story is collaboratively re-read!

III. Follow-Up Discussion

- A. Help children make connections with story events by expanding their comments, relating story events to their experiences, and using their experience to clarify understanding of story sequences.
- B. Clarify words, events, or evaluations through relating to child's own experiences.
- C. Talk about words in story that may have been unfamiliar.
- D. Help children to see underlying words that may be implicit in the story.

Text-to-Life Discussion Themes for Performance-Oriented

SBRE Styles

- I. Who Will Be My Mother? (Cowley, 1983)
 - A. Reading 1 - Animals. (Discussion Level-Labeling and Description).
 1. Introduction: "There are many animals in this story. Have you ever seen any of these animals?"
 2. Show and discuss: TOTAL animal photographs; storybook pictured animals; samples of fur, feathers, and wool.
 3. Provide children a chance to talk about, look at, and touch: pictured sheep, bull, horse, rabbit, and chicken; and their coverings: fur, feathers, and wool.
 - B. Reading 2 - Family. (Discussion Level-Labeling and Description).
 1. Introduction: "The little lamb lost his mother. He was all alone and had no family. YOU have a family. Let's talk about who is in our families."
 2. Show and discuss: Flexible toy African-American family and TOTAL Family member photographs.
 3. Provide children a chance to talk about their: parents, siblings, and other family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins).
 - C. Reading 3 - Caregiving. (Discussion Level-Labeling, Description, and Interpretation).

1. Introduction: “The little lamb needed someone to take care of him. What does that mean? Let’s talk about who takes care of you and what they do.”
 2. Show and discuss: TOTAL pictures of children eating, sleeping, bathing, dressing, and playing.
 3. Help children to brain-storm (with picture cues): that parents’ care involves feeding children, keeping them clean and warm, and giving them a place to live and sleep; that parents’ love involves hugging children and keeping them safe from harm.
- D. Reading 4 - Orphan. (Discussion Level-Labeling, Description, Interpretation, and Inference.)
1. Introduction: “The little lamb had no mother. That makes him an orphan. Orphans have no parents or anyone to care for them. Sometimes orphans find new parents. They are “adopted” and taken to live with a new family. Do you know anyone who has gone to live with a new family? Let’s talk about that.”
 2. Show and discuss: TOTAL photographs of house, family, clothes, and toys.
 3. Help children to talk about what it would be like to have a new family and live in a new house and neighborhood.

E. Reading 5 - Size and Age. (Discussion Level- Description, Interpretation)

1. Introduction: "Some of the animals in this story were big and some were little. Some are old and some were young. Let's pick them out. Tell me about who is the biggest (then oldest) in your family."
2. Show and discuss: storybook pictures of animals; photographs showing animal mothers and their babies; and old/young people.
3. Help children, after they have identified which are little/big and old/young to talk about how they know someone is old or young.

F. Reading 6 - Happy and Sad. (Discussion Level-Description, Interpretation, Inference).

1. Introduction: "At the beginning of the story, the little lamb is very sad and worried. How can you tell that? Let's talk about what makes us sad."
(Later) "At the end of the story the lamb is very happy? What happened to make him happy? What makes you happy?"
2. Show and discuss: storybook pictures of lamb at beginning and end of story.

3. Help children to understand other words that mean sad (unhappy, worried, afraid) and happy (content, satisfied, joyful).

II. The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990).

- A. Reading 1 - Spaceboy and Jigaree. (Discussion Levels- Label, Description, Interpretation/Comparison).

1. Introduction: "Have you ever seen a boy or an animal that looked like this?" What Does this jigaree look like? What is the boy wearing/doing?"
2. Show and discuss: storybook pictures of spaceboy and jigaree; Fisher-Price spaceman toy; and toy farm animals and dinosaur for comparison.
3. Help children note that these characters live far away and don't look like any boy or animal they may have seen. Get them involved in comparing real animals with imaginary jigaree.

- B. Reading 2 - Actions in Story. (Discussion Levels - Label, Description, and interpretation).

1. Introduction: "The boy and the jigaree did a lot of things in this story. Have you ever done any of these things? Tell me about them."

2. Show and discuss: pictured actions in storybook, tambourine, toy boat, bicycle, skates, toy helicopter, and rope.
 3. Help children relate the objects to actions, and note that the jigaree is not doing things that same way the boy is.
- C. Reading 3 - Space and Solar System. (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, and Interpretation.)
 1. Introduction: "The boy and his family live on the moon. Have you ever looked up in the sky and seen the moon? Is it far away or close? How do you think you could get there? What else have you seen in the sky?"
 2. Show and discuss: pictures of moon, stars, sun, and space travel from expository texts.
 3. Help children note: time when moon and stars may be seen as opposed to when sun can be seen and physical characteristics of moon.
- D. Reading 4 - Travel and Transportation. (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, and Interpretation).
 1. Introduction: "The boy and his family had to travel a long way on a rocket ship to get to the moon. Have you ever been on a long trip? What kind of vehicles have you ridden?"
 2. Show and discuss: Pictures/toys of rocket, boat, helicopter, truck, car and bus.

3. Help children discuss the various means of transportation.

E. Reading 5 - Playing Games. (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, Inference, Evaluation).

1. Introduction: "The boy thought the jigaree was playing games with him. Maybe he thought they were playing 'Follow the Leader' because the jigaree followed him everywhere. Let's talk about games."

2. Show football, volleyball, checkerboard, and cards and discuss different kinds of games.

3. Help children brainstorm other kinds of games and how to play them.

F. Reading 6 - Being Friends. (Discussion Levels: Description, Interpretation, Inference)

1. Introduction: "The jigaree wanted to be the boy's friend. Do you have a friend? Tell me about your friends. What do friends do?"

2. Show and discuss: Picture of boy taking jigaree home; pictures of children playing together.

3. Help children build a definition of friend and talk about how to be a friend.

III. Grumpy Elephant (Cowley, 1990)

A. Reading 1 - Jungle Animals. (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, Interpretation).

1. Introduction: “the animals in this book are not animals you could keep at home and play with. They are not pets. These are animals that live in a jungle. Sometimes they live in a zoo. Do you know what a jungle is? Have you ever been to a zoo?”
2. Show and discuss: toy jungle animals, expository text about jungle and zoo.
3. Help children talk about jungle animals and their habitat.

B. Reading 2 - Description of Animals. (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, Interpretation).

1. Introduction: “Do these animals look different from other animals you know, like a dog? Let’s look at what makes them different.”
2. Show and discuss toy jungle animals, storybook pictures of animals, expository text on jungle animals.
3. Help children discuss the different attributes of jungle animals; help them differentiate between pets and wild animals.

C. Reading 3 - Music. (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, Interpretation.)

1. Introduction: “Two of the animals tried to make the elephant happy by making music. Do you like music? Let’s talk about music and how to make it.”
2. Show and discuss: drum, tambourine, horn, keyboard, songboard.
3. Help children talk about instruments and how they sound and to tell about personal experiences with music.

D. Reading 4 - Being Grumpy (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, Interpretation, Inference).

1. Introduction: “The elephant was very grumpy. Have you ever been grumpy?”
2. Show and discuss: the storybook elephant’s face; demonstrate face and body expression for grumpy.
3. Help children learn synonyms for the word grumpy and discuss how happy is the opposite of grumpy.

E. Reading 5 - Helping. (Discussion Levels: Label, Description, Interpretation, Inference).

1. Introduction: “the animals tried to help the elephant to feel better and stop being grumpy. Have you ever tried to help somebody? Tell me about it?”
2. Show and discuss community helper pictures.

3. Help children to discuss their experiences helping and with community helpers.

F. Reading 6 -- Fun and Laughter. (Discussion Levels. Label, Description, Interpretation, Inference)

1. Introduction: "The elephant stopped being grumpy when he saw something funny and began to laugh. Tell me what is funny to you -- what makes you laugh?"
2. Help children practice laughing. Show and discuss things that are silly (like putting a hat on your foot) and how you can make people laugh.
3. Encourage children to try to make each other laugh.

Elaboration Guidelines for Interactive SBREs

III. Who Will Be My Mother? (Cowley, 1983)

- A. Reading 1 – Picture-governed Discussion of Cover Page through Page 5.
 1. Left to right manual referencing of print for title, author, and storyline.
 2. Discussion from Label through Interpretation (Semantic Continuum- SDS Model)
 3. Reading and picture discussion of pages 2-5; make sure children understand problem: lamb has no mother to care for him.
 4. Discussion of farms and farm animals after story.
- B. Reading 2 - Review and Extend Story through Page 11.
 1. Review and collaboratively scaffold for re-reading to page 5. Provide each child a chance to contribute as check for individual intervention needed.
 2. Sum up story so that children understand the cause of the problem (Mother Sheep is dead.) and intentionality of lamb (to find another mother) and other story characters (why it would be hard for them to parent lamb).
 3. Read and collaboratively discuss pages 6-11; continue to emphasize linkages (causality and intentionality).

4. Discussion of families and their characteristics after story.
- C. Reading 3 - Review and extend story through end (page 16).
 1. Review and scaffold individual re-reading efforts through page 11.
 2. Read/discuss pictures on pages 12-16. Sum up story so that children clearly see problem, attempts to resolve it, and results/reactions.
 3. Help children brain-storm why the boy could be a good caregiver to the lamb.
 4. Discuss what caring and loving somebody means.
- D. Reading 4 - Collaborative Re-readings of Story
 1. Assist children to fill in blanks to re-tell story: use cloze, binary choice, and temporal/causal prompts.
 2. Intersperse checks for comprehension of constituent story parts: characters, setting, action.
 3. Discuss words **orphan** and **adopted** and their applicability in story.
- E. Reading 5 - Scaffolded Re-retellings and Elaboration
 1. Focus attention on children notably at lower semantic and discourse levels.
 2. Provide stronger children a chance to re-tell big chunks of story, as model for weaker children.

3. Intersperse checks for interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.

4. Discuss animals in terms of size and age.

F. Readings 6 - Collaborative Re-tellings

1. Assist children to re-tell the story words in unison.

2. Probe for understanding of key story elements.

3. Discuss sad/happy and synonyms: scared, worried, upset, lonely, content, proud, pleased, etc.

II. The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990)

A. Reading 1 – Picture-governed Discussion of Cover Page Through Page 3.

1. Referencing of print for title, author, illustrator.

2. Discussion from label through interpretation of cover through inside cover: characters, setting, actions, facial expressions and probable feelings.

3. Reading and picture discussion of pages 2 and 3; what is the problem; what does jigaree want and what does boy think?

4. Discussion - what/who do boy and jigaree look like?

B. Reading 2 - Review and Extend Story Through Page 11.

1. Review and collaboratively scaffold to re-tell and re-discuss through page 3.

2. Read and discuss pictures through page 11. Sum up story as to cause, time, and intentions of each character.
 3. Discuss experiences with pogosticks, skates, bicycles and unicycles.
- C. Reading 3 - Review and Extend Story to End.
1. Review and scaffold to re-tell/re-discuss through page 11.
 2. Read and discuss pictures to page 16 (end). Help children sum up story, clearly stating problem: mismatch of intentions of boy and jigaree and final resolution.
 3. Discuss space, moon, and sun.
- D. Reading 4 - Collaborative Re-tellings
1. Assist children to re-tell story, providing much scaffolding to weaker students.
 2. Check for understanding of setting and motivations.
 3. Discuss various ways to travel: on earth and in space.
- E. Reading 5 - Collaborative Review and Re-tellings.
1. Assist individual children to re-tell sections of story; alternate weaker and stronger children.
 2. Probe and scaffold to make sure children see how exhausted jigaree became in trying to keep up with boy; point out when boy realizes and then wants to help.
 3. Discuss friends and characteristics.

F. Reading 6 - Collaborative Review and Summation.

1. Assist children to re-tell story words in unison.
2. Check for comprehension of each story element, particularly problem and resolution.
3. Discuss games friends can play together.

III. Grumpy Elephant (Cowley, 1990)

A. Reading 1 - Picture-governed Discussion of Cover Page, Inside Cover, and Pages 2 and 3.

1. Reference children to print for title, author, and illustrator.
Have children noticed the author is the same for all three stories?
2. Discuss cover and inside cover up through an inferential and predictive level: what might happen.
3. Read and discuss pictures through page 3. Help children recognize the problem and its effect on other animals.
4. Discuss jungle and who lives there. (Have children seen Lion King or Jungle Book movies? Show toys and storybooks about these.)

B. Reading 2 - Review and Extend Story Through Page 11.

1. Review and collaboratively scaffold participation for picture discussion and text words on pages 2 and 3.

2. Read/discuss pictures on pages 4-11. Help children see animals' concern for elephant and attempts to resolve problem: to make him happy.
 3. Discuss how each animal is different: body parts, sounds they make, and actions.
- C. Reading 3 - Review and Extend Story to End
1. Review and collaboratively scaffold participation for retellings and picture discussion through page 11.
 2. Help children note elephant's reaction to animals' attempt to help him.
 3. Read and discuss remainder of story. Help children see the humor of animals' unintended pratfalls.
 4. Discuss difference between noise and music; provide examples of each.
- D. Reading 4 - Collaborative Re-Tellings.
1. Scaffold individual children to re-tell parts of story.
 2. Check for comprehension of changing states of animals.
 3. Discuss what it is like to be grumpy; obtain expressions of personal experiences with grumpy.
- E. Reading 5 - Collaborative Review and Re-tellings.
1. Scaffold re-tellings.
 2. Check for comprehension of various story elements.

3. Discuss children's experiences with helping at home and in the community.

F. Reading 6 - Collaborative Re-tellings and Summation.

1. Scaffold re-tellings.
2. Check for comprehension of cause-effect relationships in story.
3. Discuss funny: what it means and what is funny.

APPENDIX C
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Observation Checklist

Date of Observation _____

Time of Observation _____

I. Type of Reading Style Is: Interactive _____

Performance-Oriented _____

(Please check appropriate descriptors)

- Tone of reading is dramatic.
 - Children listen formally; seldom interrupt reader.
 - Reader takes "voices" of specific characters.
 - Reader references child to action in pictures.
 - Reader references child to print, such as title, author, and sweeps hand left to right under print during reading.
 - Children participate in discussion at story's end.
 - End of story discussion connects story aspect to child's experiences.
 - Children's comments indicate increasing understanding of story events or difficult concepts.
- Children appear to enjoy:
- dramatic reading
 - text-to-life discussion
 - Tone of reading is informal and response to children's comments.
 - Reader focuses on exploring only a few pages at a time.
 - Children are assisted to re-tell the story, with reader adding to and expanding what is said.

- Reader provides clarification to unclear child comments.
- Children are assisted to make connections between events in stories through prompting with causal (because ?) and temporal (and then ?) words.
- Children are referenced between print and pictures in developing understanding of story.
 - Individual children are given attention to:
 - improve understanding of specific vocabulary, concepts, or events.
 - improve and extend their communicative efforts.
 - Children's verbal participation indicates increasing understanding of story events and difficult concepts.

II. Circle the number on the Likert scale that provides the closest description of your observation.

5 = Much better than average

4 = Above average

3 = Average

2 = Low Average

1 = Much worse than average

1. The reader is enthusiastic in her efforts.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The children are engaged in the story.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Most of the children appear to be enjoying the activity.

1 2 3 4 5

4. The activity appears to benefit most of the children.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Difficult concepts are clarified for individual children.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The reader answers important child questions.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The reader provides: appropriate scaffolds to interactive participants, or appropriate text-to-life discussions for performance-oriented participants.

1 2 3 4 5

8. The reader encourages child participation: at all times during interactive reading; during follow-up discussions during performance-oriented reading.

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX D

SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUES AND EXAMPLES FOR INTERACTIVE SBRES

Scaffolding Techniques for Interactive SBREs

- * Examples are drawn from narrative elaboration during a collaborative (SLP and child) re-reading of The Jigabee (Cowley, 1990).
 - Regularly provide child opportunity to communicate within SBRE.
 - Respond to child's nonverbal or verbal communication as to supposed meaning.
 - If message is unclear as to meaning (breakdown in communication), provide child support to clarify:

Negate

Request clarification

Recast

Provide two (binary) choices

Provide clarification

Cloze

Expectant pause

Gestural cue

Phonemic cue

Constituent question

Comprehension question

- If message is clear and concise, elaborate (add to it):

Expand

Expartiate

Extend

Preparatory Set

- If child has grasped and expressed a primary concept, provide an opportunity to express relationships and/or tie up loose ends.

Relational Term Cue

Recast

Summarization Questions

Scaffolding examples are, as follows:

SLP: And the boy rides off in the boat. There comes the _____.

(Cloze- leaves a space for child to fill.)

Child: Jigaree. He in water.

SLP: Yes, he IS in the water. Is he riding or swimming?

(Affirms appropriate contribution and expands syntax and expatiates [adds other elements] through binary choice question [giving child easy opportunity to contribute while still problem-solving].)

Child: 'Fim'n.

SLP: Is he 'fim'n or SWIMMING?

(Provides phonological contrast through binary choice.)

Child: He s'imming.

SLP: Yes, the jigaree is swimming. He is trying to keep up with the boy.

(Affirms closer approximation. Provides expanded syntax and extends story line.)

Child: He see 'dat digaree.

SLP: Who sees the JIGaree?

(Request for message clarification: through constituent question while providing tonal emphasis for phonological error contrast.)

Child: The boy. The boy see him s'im. He s'im ev'ywhere.

SLP: The boy thinks the jigaree swims everywhere, but he's really swimming after the boy. He's swimming after the boy because he wants _____.

(Extension, and relational cue to prompt child to see causative linkage in action.)

Child: So he can see him too!

SLP: He doesn't just want to SEE him. Why does the jigaree keep following the boy? Because he wants to be his _____.

(Comprehension question with relational cue and cloze.)

Child: I dunno. Why?

SLP: Does he follow him BECAUSE he likes him and wants to play with him?

(Binary choice)

Child: Yeah! He smile at him. He want to p'ay, too.

SLP: He wants to play with him. He likes the boy. The jigaree wants to be the boy's FRIEND.

(Summarization)

Child: His f'iend?

SLP: Yes. The jigaree wants to be the boy's friend. Now tell me about this page again, and tell me who looks so tired.

(Summarization, Preparatory Set)

APPENDIX E
WORLD KNOWLEDGE TEST

World Knowledge Test

1. Which picture shows a family?	1	X
2. What do mothers do to take care of children?	2	
3. A mother is a parent. Who is another parent?	2	
4. What is a name for someone without a mama or daddy?	2	
5. Show me the lamb.	1	X
6. Is a sheep covered with fur or feathers?	1	X
7. What does a sheep say?	1	X
8. Who lives on a farm?	2	
9. How do you get clean?	2	
10. What do you look like when you're not clean?	2	
11. How do you look when you're happy?	2	
12. Name these animals (show: horse, cow, duck, pig, rabbit, chicken)	3 = 1	X
	6 = 2	
13. Which ones are covered with fur?	1	X
14. Which ones have a beak?	1	X
15. Which ones have two legs?	1	X
16. Which ones have four legs?	1	X
17. Tell me what a cow says? A pig?	1	X
18. Which is the largest animal?	1	X
19. Which ones are small?	1	X
20. What is a friend?	2	

21. What is the difference between a pet and a wild animal?	2	
22. Who is older: a child or a parent?	2	X
23. What is something you can put on to protect your head? (helmet)	2	
24. Where is the moon?	2	X
25. When can we see the moon?	2	
26. How could you get to the moon from here?	2	
27. What do you have to wear to live on the moon?	2	
28. Which is nearer to you: home or the moon?	2	
29. What is the difference between a bicycle and a tricycle?	1	X
30. What can you use to ride on water?	2	
31. What can you drive on a highway?	2	
32. What can you fly in?	2	
33. Do you wear skates on your hands or feet?	2	
34. Which picture shows someone who feels grumpy?	1	X
35. What does it mean to feel grumpy?	2	
36. When something is funny, you _____.	2	
37. What can a volcano do?	2	
38. Where do elephants and monkeys live?	2	
39. What animal is gray: elephant, or giraffe?	1	X
40. Which animal has a trunk? A long neck?	2	X

X = Show pictures to focus attention, provide context, and aid response.

Answers to World Knowledge Test, about Big Books Who Will Be My Mother?, The Jigaree, and Grumpy Elephant

1. Of TOTAL photographs showing an adult woman (mother) and a group composed of man and woman with children, child chooses the latter.
2. Any answer involving care and nurture of children: feed us, bathe us, buy us clothes/toys, hug us, take care of us when we are sick.
3. A father (daddy).
4. An orphan.
5. When shown pictures of adult sheep and a lamb, child points to the smaller animal.
6. Wool.
7. Baaa-a-a or Maa-a-a.
8. Animals, farmers.
9. You take a bath; you wash yourself (with soap and water).
10. You're dirty; you have dirt/mud all over you.
11. You're smiling/laughing; you have a smile on your face. You have a happy face
IS NOT SPECIFIC ENOUGH.
12. Correctly names and points correctly to three or six of animals shown.
13. Horse, cow, rabbit; pig is not required but is accepted.
14. Duck, chicken.
15. Duck and chicken.
16. Horse, cow, rabbit, pig.

17. Moo-o. Oink-k-oink-k.
18. Either horse or cow is acceptable.
19. Duck, chicken, and rabbit.
20. Someone who plays with you; someone you like; someone who gives you things and/or helps you.
21. A pet is an animal you can keep at home and play with. Wild animals are dangerous and might hurt you; you can't play with them.
22. A parent.
23. A helmet.
24. Up high, in the sky; above us.
25. At night; when it is dark; when we see the stars.
26. Ride a rocket ship; ride the space shuttle; fly though space.
27. A spacesuit so you can breathe.
28. Home.
29. A bicycle has two wheels and a tricycle has three.
30. A boat/ship.
31. A car/truck.
32. An airplane/helicopter/rocket.
33. Your feet.
34. Points to the correct picture of two: one showing someone smiling and one showing someone looking upset.
35. You're in a bad mood/not happy/ mad and sad.

36. Laugh.
37. It can blow up and throw out fire and smoke.
38. In the jungle/ the zoo.
39. An elephant.
40. An elephant has a trunk; a giraffe has a long neck.

APPENDIX F

TEST OF ACQUISITION OF LITERACY CONCEPTS

Testing Acquisition of Literacy Concepts (TALC)

1. What is this? (book, storybook) 1
2. What can you do with a book? (look at pictures, read it, hear story) 1
3. Where is the beginning of this story? (turns to first page) 1
4. Where does it tell the name (title) of this story?
(shows title words on cover) 1
5. What do you think this story is about? 1 or 2
(at least looks at cover and points, providing some label – “lady,” etc.)
(looks through several pages – makes connection between action word and label – “lady washing,” “animals getting dirty”)
6. Is there a place that tells you who wrote this story? 1
(points to words by [name])
7. What does an author do? (writes a story) 2
8. Where is the end (last page) of this story? (turns to last page and points) 1
9. Where is the writing on this page? 1
10. Can you find another word like this?
(adult point to in - child turns page and finds and points to another in) 1
11. Show me a word beginning with the letter S. 1
(if misses, try letter C - child points to said or cow)
12. Show me the top of this page. (points to it) 1
13. Which way do you read? (sweeps hand from left to right) 1

14. Show me a word (points to text) that is talking about something in 1
this picture. (Adult points to picture) (child points to animal or mud – word
and then to picture.)

APPENDIX G
SEMANTIC CONTEXT CHECKLIST - SDS MODEL

Semantic Context

Describe the Quality of Ideas Responded to across Communicative Turns

The Information is:	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiential [learned through world or sensory experience]	<input type="checkbox"/> Erudite [learned through academic or scientific exploration]
Rate the Child's Responses along a Scale of 0 through 5 where:		5 = almost always appropriate 1 = almost never appropriate 0 = not observed
Child Answers or Responds to Ideas that are:		Child Produces Ideas that are:
<input type="checkbox"/> Metalanguage [letters, sounds, rhymes, word concepts]		<input type="checkbox"/> Metalanguage _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluative [judgements, evaluations, significance]		<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluative _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Inferential [meaning beyond what is stated or suggested]		<input type="checkbox"/> Inferential _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive [meaning suggested, not explicitly stated]		<input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Descriptive [describe qualities, scenes, properties]		<input type="checkbox"/> Descriptive _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Labeling [name whole objects, parts within whole].		<input type="checkbox"/> Labeling _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Indicating [nonverbal communication, gestures]		<input type="checkbox"/> Indicating _____

APPENDIX H
DISCOURSE CONTEXT - SDS MODEL

Discourse Context

Describe One Representative Topic of Discussion

The Discourse Participation

is Characterized by:

- Child Produces Monologue
- Child Leads Dialogue
- Child and other Equal Participants
- Child Prompted, Answers Questions
- Child Primary Listens

The Duration of the Topic Was:

- Brief [1-10 utterances]
- Short [11-40 utterances]
- Long [41-100 utterances]

The Discourse Mode Is:

- Oral Written Both

The Discourse Type Is:

- Expressive (express personal feelings, chatter)
- Transactional (give information or instructions)
- Poetic (recount or reflect through narration, poetry, or other literate form)

The Discourse Organization Is:

- Interactive (overlapping topics)
- Complex (series of topics)
- Complete (includes a moral)
- Abbreviated (includes a goal)
- Reactive (includes a cause)
- Ordered (temporal sequence)
- Descriptive (lists facts, ideas)
- Collection (free association)

APPENDIX I
ATTENTION/ENGAGEMENT GRID

ATTENTION / ENGAGEMENT GRID

		Non-Engage ment	Non-Verbal Engage ment	Active Engage ment				Non-Engage ment	Non-Verbal Engage ment	Active Engage ment			
NAME:		#	0	1	2	T	NAME:		#	0	1	2	T
		1						1					
		2						2					
		3						3					
		4						4					
		5						5					
		6						6					
		7						7					
		1						1					
		2						2					
		3						3					
		4						4					
		5						5					
		6						6					
		7						7					
		1						1					
		2						2					
		3						3					
		4						4					
		5						5					
		6						6					
		7						7					

0 = Attention to SBRE nonexistent

1 = Nonverbal engagement

2 = Child appears focused on event and is verbally participating

APPENDIX J
WEEKLY PROBE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Weekly Probe Comprehension Questions

Week One – Who Will Be My Mother? (Cowley, 1983)

Level I: Matching Perception (Labeling)

What is this animal? (Point to either bull or rabbit.)

Level II: Selective Analysis of Perception (Description) Which animals have fur? (Show pictures of horse, bull, bunny, and chicken.)

Level III: Reasoning beyond Perception (Inference)

Why do you think the boy decided to be the little lamb's mother?

Week Two – Who Will Be My Mother?

Level I: Matching Perception (Labeling)

What is this body part called?

(Point to either chicken's beak or bull's horns.)

Level II: Selective Analysis of Perception (Description)

Which two animals are big?

(Show pictures of horse, bull, rabbit, and chicken.)

Level III: Reordering Perception (Interpretation)

Who is the oldest: the mother or the baby?

Level IV: Reasoning Beyond Perception (Inference)

What happened to make the little lamb happy again?

Week Three – The Jigaree (Cowley, 1990)

Level I: Matching Perception (Labeling)

What is this creature called? (Point to jigaree.)

- Level II: Selective Analysis of Perception (Description)
Tell me two things the boy and the jigaree did? (If child gives just one, may request “tell me one more thing.” Answers include: jumped, danced, swam, skated, rode, climbed, and flew.)
- Level III: Reordering Perception (Interpretation)
Which is farther away: your house or the moon?
(Show cover with boy playing on moon surface.)
- Level IV: Reasoning Beyond perception (Inference)
What do you think the jigaree is trying to do?

Week Four – The Jigaree

- Level I: Matching Perception (Labeling)
What is this? (Point to boy’s spacesuit.)
- Level II: Selective Analysis of Perception (Description)
What is a way to travel in the sky?
(Fly in rocket, plane, or helicopter).
- Level III: Reordering Perception (Interpretation)
Do you think the boy was having fun? How do you know?
(Yes. He’s smiling [or laughing]).
- Level IV: Reasoning Beyond Perception (Inferencing)
Why do you think the jigaree was so tired and sad?

Week Five – Grumpy Elephant (Cowley, 1990)

- Level I: Matching Perception (Labeling)
What is this place? (Point to jungle trees; answer is jungle.)

- Level II: Selective Analysis of Perception (Description)
Which animal has a trunk and big ears?
- Level III: Reordering Perception (interpretation)
How can you make music? (Sing, play [name of any instrument])
- Level IV: Reasoning Beyond Perception (Inferencing)
Why did the animal say: “Poor old elephant?”
- Week Six – Grumpy Elephant
- Level I: Matching Perception (Labeling)
What is this body part? (Point to parrot’s wings.)
- Level II: Selective Analysis of Perception (Description)
Which animal played the drum?
- Level III: Reordering Perception (Interpretation)
Did all the music make the elephant feel better?
- Level IV: Reasoning Beyond Perception (Inferencing)
What made the elephant laugh and feel better?

VITA

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Mrs. Witt has written and published several language and developmental packages to benefit developmentally delayed children. She has also written one chapter in a communication development text and several articles in newsletters and published programs. She has presented in 12 states and two Canadian provinces.

Mrs. Witt received her undergraduate degree in English and journalism in 1963 at Mississippi State University for Women. Her master's degree in special education was completed at Louisiana Tech University in 1979.

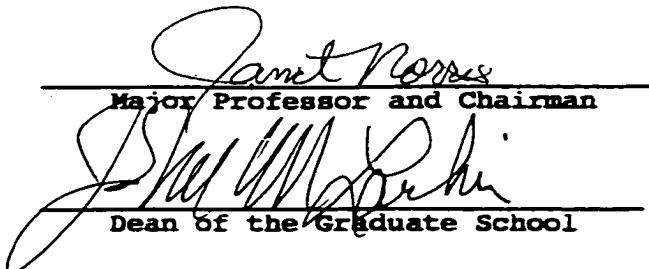
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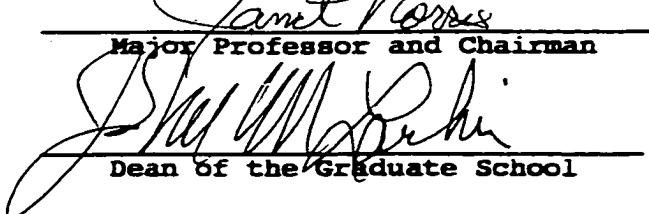
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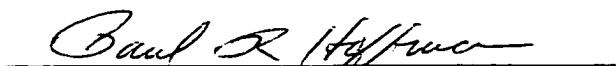
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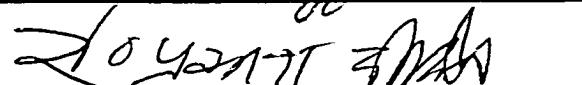


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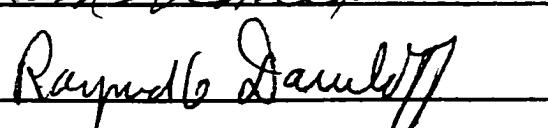












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