

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE  
ON THE TEACHING OF READING

Bette Bosma  
Kathryn Blok

Professors of Education, Emeritae  
Calvin College  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

A CALVIN COLLEGE MONOGRAPH, 1992  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Editorial Introduction	3
Preface	4
Introduction to the Teaching of Reading	5
What is Reading	5
Reading: Communication Process	5
Reading: Developmental Process	7
Reading: A Strategic Process	11
Goals: Why am I Teaching Reading	13
American Historical Perspective	13
Goals of Christian Teachers	15
The Learner: To Whom Am I Teaching Reading	19
The Conceptual Framework	20
Models of Reading	20
Definition of Reading	23
Six Minimal Components of a Reading Program	25
Teacher Reading Aloud	26
Guided Reading	28
Responding to Literature	29
Independent Reading	31
Strategy Instruction	32
Content Area Reading Instruction	35
Summary: A Christian Perspective on the Teaching of Reading	37
Appendix A - Story Mapping	38
Appendix B - Another Look at Round Robin Reading	41
Appendix C - Teaching Word Recognition as a Thinking Process	45
References	47

## Editorial Introduction

This publication is one in a series of monographs emanating from Calvin College, a series that began in 1963. During all of those years, Donald Oppewal, professor education, who initiated the series with his *Roots of the Calvinistic day school movement*, has nurtured the project by serving as editor. Donald Oppewal, as of the spring of 1992, has retired from active service at Calvin and the editorial mantle has fallen to his colleague Peter DeBoer.

Each of the products in the series has examined an aspect of educational theory and practice, usually from a Reformed and Calvinistic perspective. Each has been designed to be used in teacher education classes as a supplement to other texts, or used more broadly as encouragement for veteran teachers or school board members to think biblically and sensitively about Christian education in the schools in which they are involved.

This monograph is so-authored by professors Kathryn Blok and Bette Bosma, both now retired from the faculty of Calvin College and specifically from the Education Department where for many years they taught reading courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Each earned her Ph.D. degree from Michigan State University in the 1980's. Both have been active, in classroom research and professional organizations such as the International Reading Association and the National Council of the Teachers of English, and in conducting teacher workshops throughout the United States and Canada. Further, Dr. Bosma is the author of *Fairy tales, fables, legends, and myths: Using folk literature in the classroom* (1987), published by Teachers College Press and now in its second edition. Kathryn and Bette for many years took pleasure in teaching together and exchanging ideas; they have equally enjoyed collaborating on this project.

In the publication Blok and Bosma attempt to provide a Christian perspective on a complex matter: teaching young persons to read. Toward reading they adopt a large, whole, broad point of view, stressing the making of meaning rather than the mere skill of identifying words, syllables, and sounds. Toward the teaching of reading they recommend not quick fixes and rules of thumb -- though the monograph is pregnant with practices -- but theory, well informed decisions, and wisdom.

Peter P. DeBoer  
Calvin College  
Summer, 1992

Other monographs in the series are these:

*Roots of the Calvinistic day school movement*, Donald Oppewal, 1963

*Contrasting Christian approaches to teaching literature*, Merle Meeter and Stanley Wiersma, 1970

*Contrasting Christian approaches to teaching science*, Russell Maatman and Gerald Bakker, 1971

*Christian education through religious studies*, Dennis Hoekstra and Arnold DeGraaf, (reprinted in 1985)

*Shifts in curricular theory for Christian education*, Peter P. DeBoer, 1983

*Biblical knowing and teaching*, Donald Oppewal, 1985

*Conflicting Christian conception of truth: Implications for the curriculum*, Tony Vanden Ende, 1986

*Curriculum: Implication in three Christian schools*, Harro W. Van Brummelen, 1989

## PREFACE

This monograph is written for prospective and practicing Christian teachers to provide a framework for the teaching of reading, and to facilitate their interpretation, understanding, and evaluation of textbooks used in undergraduate and graduate reading courses. The ability to read is an achievement that affects life in every dimension. The reading process is complex, and guiding the learner to engage in the act of reading is an awesome teaching responsibility. Not only is reading a complex topic, but the teaching of it has become a compelling educational and political issue. Therefore there is a tendency in teachers and textbooks to focus on techniques rather than on the reading process, hoping for the quick fix rather than a deliberate long-term plan.

We maintain that one cannot become an accountable teacher of reading without thinking and learning about print and about how a person interacts with print. In teaching reading, our purpose is not to train the child to master the skill of identifying words or syllables, but rather to construct meaning from print. For readers to make sense of written language, they must use affective and social attributes as well as cognitive abilities. Written language is to be understood within the larger context of the communication arts: in the interaction of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

This monograph is not a practical manual telling teachers what to teach, or how to teach, tomorrow. Our intention is to stimulate thinking about practices that are consistent with the theories presented here and interpreted from a Christian perspective, so that teachers will make well-informed decisions concerning how they will teach reading.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHING OF READING

Since the early colonial period, reading in the United States has been recognized as first among the “3 R's”. Research studies, professional journals, and educational conferences have focused much attention on the best way to teach reading. Basals and other instructional materials have been developed to provide teachers in the United States and Canada with the most effective teaching practices. Indeed, during the early 1970's the term “teacher-proof” was frequently used to describe some of the material and some teacher manuals provided verbatim scripts, suggesting that all children would learn to read if teachers followed prescribed procedures.

The eleventh affirmation in *12 affirmations: Reformed Christian schooling for the 21st century* (Vryhof et al., 1989) addresses the teachers' role. It states:

The Christian school curriculum is not ‘teacher-proof.’ Rather, it recognizes that the teachers are professionals who have learned the science of teaching and who continually upgrade their knowledge and their ability to diagnose student needs and prescribe the appropriate learning solutions. Christian school teachers are also artists who use intangibles -- such as imagination, ‘feel,’ intuition, and drama -- to capture the attention of students in such a way that they learn. (p. 76)

This affirmation is particularly applicable to the teaching of reading. Teachers must be decision-makers rather than manual-followers and the decisions teachers make about HOW to teach reading (programs, materials, methods, strategies) must be considered in the light of how teachers answer the questions “WHAT is reading?” “WHY am I teaching reading?” and “TO WHOM am I teaching reading?” Only with that emphasis on reading instruction can we enable and equip children who are growing in the image of God to live constructive Christian lives in the twenty-first century.

### What Is Reading?

In the early 1900's Edmund Huey wrote: “to completely analyze what we do when we read would almost be the acme of a psychologist's achievement, for it would be to describe very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind” (p. 6). For the past twenty-five years cognitive psychologists, looking at how children learn, have observed this same complexity. Any discussion of the reading process must take into consideration not only the relation of reading to the other language arts but also the findings of cognitive and developmental psychologists. These findings emphasize that reading should be viewed as a communication process, a developmental process, and a strategic process.

### Reading: A Communication Process

The nature of the reading process cannot be considered apart from its relation to all of language. Language is one of God's greatest gifts to humans, given for the purpose of sharing ideas with others. Without leaving our chairs we can go to all parts of the world. We can make

plans for the future. We can meditate on the wonders of creation. But without the gift of language we'd be limited in the ways we can share these ideas. Words help us let others know what we are feeling, how much we care for them, or how our hearts are filled with awe and wonder and gratitude to God for all He has given to us.

The interaction of thought and language is apparent in early language acquisition. Vygotsky (1962) affirmed that children are first dependent on others for the language of their thoughts. By the time they enter school, they have internalized speech which becomes more elaborate as they are increasingly introduced to communication with others. The richer the language they hear, the richer their thinking can become. Children should be given opportunities to express their thoughts aloud. Acknowledgment of this interaction affects the planning of a reading program that will encourage this development when thinkers become readers and writers. The act of reading and writing helps clarify thought processes.

For sharing to take place there must be a sender and a receiver of communication and a means for this sharing to take place. This means is the miracle of language which permits persons in distant places and persons yet unborn to know what we are thinking. Language, like a diamond, has many facets -- one of which is reading. To understand the nature of the reading process we must examine it in the context of all the aspects of communication: writing, speaking, listening, drama, art, and even body language.

The reader as a receiver of a message is not simply pronouncing (decoding) the words on the printed page but is actively seeking the message sent by the author. Just as the listener to a spoken message must attend to the tones of the speaker's voice, the pitches, pauses, inflections and body gestures, so too the reader must attend to all the signals used by the writer sending the message. These signals include not only the conventions of punctuation, but also the author's organization, the arrangement of print on the page, the use of introductions, headings and subheadings, summaries and the words which signal the organization of ideas (e.g., comparison/contrast, chronological sequence, cause/effect, etc.).

The work of schema theorists in the past two decades (such as Anderson et al., 1977; Rumelhart, 1981) has increased our awareness of another factor which must be considered when reading is viewed as a communication process. Schemata are defined as the building blocks of cognition or the fundamental elements upon which all information is processed, accompanied by feelings (Rumelhart 1981). The message sent by the writer reflects the writer's background knowledge, experiences, and world and life view. The reader filters this message through his/her own background knowledge, experiences, and world and life view. The degree to which the reader comprehends the message is related to the degree to which the reader's schemata match that of the writer.

A simplistic view of schema theory compares the mind to a set of pigeon holes for filing information. Each time a person has an experience or receives information this input is filed away in the mind. Then, when the reader encounters a message, the brain does a computer search for related information. The amount of matching information will influence the degree to which the reader comprehends the message. For example, reading the words "golden arches" will

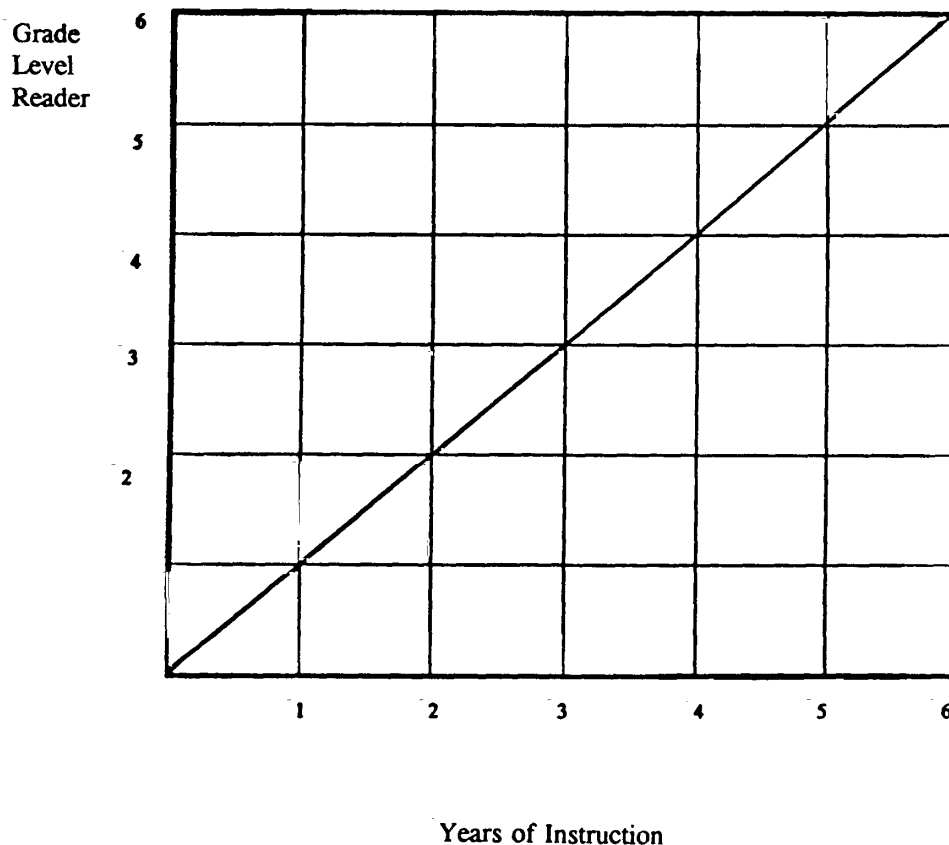
trigger for many readers the concept of fast food, french fries, drive-in or self-service and a very simple table service -- all of which have been filed away in the mind through previous experiences. However, a visitor from a third-world country who has not had such an experience will probably think only of the literal meaning of golden and arches.

Since reading is a communication process, reading instruction must include much more than teaching the skills of decoding. The reading program must make the learner aware of the need to actively search for the author's intended message and the strategies needed to do this.

## Reading: A Developmental Process

Nila Banton Smith (1965), the outstanding historian of reading instruction, notes that between 1840 and 1860 a number of publishers marketed a series of readers in which each volume was deliberately prepared for each school grade. She states that a graded series of basal readers was a natural development of the new graded school system.

This emphasis on graded readers in a graded school system resulted in expecting (and measuring) reading progress by the calendar (see Figure 1. 1).



**Figure 1.1 Anticipated Reading Progress**

At the end of the one year of reading instruction the average learner was expected to have completed all the reading materials for the first grade and be ready to start the second school year with the graded materials designed for second grade. A problem reader was defined as one whose reading achievement level was one or more years below grade level.

It seems surprising that Christian schools in general accepted this same view of reading achievement. While Christian teachers taught that God's greatness in creation was revealed in the uniqueness of individual snowflakes and the great variation of colors in the autumn woods, they did not seem to see that God's greatness was also revealed in the uniqueness of their pupils and in their rates and styles of learning.

Studies in the fields of child development and of reading are providing evidence which is changing the reading program from one based on grades to one which recognizes the developmental nature of the child.

The developmental reading program has been described in various ways by a number of leaders in the field of reading instruction. Robert Karlin (1971) describes a developmental reading program as one focused on the learner in which instruction is both continuous (instruction in every grade) and has continuity (skills are taught in a sequence). It differs from earlier reading programs in that it does more than give lip service to the naturalness of individual differences and recognized that it is unrealistic to expect all children to achieve equal mastery of all skill and to proceed through the skill sequence at the same rate. A developmental reading program is not determined by the materials nor by the administrative structure. It is to be built on the learner.

Lawrence Carillo (1976), in explaining the developmental philosophy, states: "Reading progress is not dictated by the calendar but by what has gone before in the life and education of pupils.... Instruction begins at each learner's current stage and leads onward at whatever rate is possible. Reading must be taught as a process, not as a subject" (pp. 3-4). His model of reading stages is that of a cone which has no point, suggesting that readers continue their growth throughout life. Carillo names five developmental stages of reading acquisition: readiness, initial reading, rapid development, wide reading, and refinement. He emphasizes that there is no uniformity of progress through these stages and believes that the best reading programs will produce increased variability in reading achievement at any grade level.

In explaining these stages, Carillo makes the interesting observation that the "process of learning to read starts from the moment of conception. Maturation and learning from experience contribute to the development of this process" (p. 5). This is an opinion supported by Bette Bosma who tells her elementary education students that a parent probably wouldn't be reading to the child in the hospital, but should certainly begin reading to the infant no later than on the ride home.

A detailed theory of stages of reading development has been proposed by Jeanne Chall (1983), Harvard University School of Education. Because Chall is a noted researcher in the field of reading, teachers should have knowledge of her theory. However, the Christian teachers



should recognize that Chall's theory addresses only intellectual growth and does not take into account the creative and decisional abilities of the learner. Some of the major hypotheses on which Chall based her theory are these:

1. Individuals progress through the stages by interacting with their environment -- the home, the school, larger community, and culture.
2. Readers do "different" things in relation to printed matter at each successive stage.
3. The stages are characterized by the extent to which prior knowledge is needed to read and understand the material.

Chall's six stages, along with her approximations of age and grade for each stage are:

**Stage 0.** Prereading: Birth to Age 6 (or Pseudoreading)

In this period children who live in a literate culture accumulate a fund of knowledge about letters, words, and books. They learn that words can begin with the same sound, can rhyme, or can be broken into parts. They know that reading goes from front to back in a book and from top to bottom on a page. They begin to recognize the relation of the illustrations to the story and often can retell a story by using the pictures. At this stage the print has minimal effect on the child's "reading" but the skills and knowledge acquired are substantially related to success in reading at Grade 1.

**Stage 1.** Initial Reading, or Decoding, Stage: Grades 1-2, Ages 6-7.

Chall interprets this stage as one in which the readers are temporarily glued to print with instruction focused on the details of the reading process. Children at this stage learn letter names, discover that a spoken word is made up of a finite number of sounds, and begin to associate letters with parts of spoken words. Children are taught to use the graphophonemic, syntactic, and semantic cues of which they became aware in stage 0. Stage I prepares them for the work of stage 2. Chall states, "They have to know enough about the print in order to leave the print" (p. 19).

Christian teachers who view reading as one aspect of the God-given gift of language, a gift given for the purpose of communication, will not limit their instruction at this stage to recognizing and sounding out words. They will recognize phonics instruction as a necessary, but not sufficient component of reading instruction, and will have as their top priorities the process of constructing meaning and the enjoyment and appreciation of reading.

**Stage 2.** Confirmation, Fluency, Ungluing from Print: Grades 2-3, Ages 7-8

The readers are not gaining new information, but confirming what is already known to them. In stage 2, the children are learning to use their decoding skills and the redundancies of their language. At this stage they need the opportunity for reading many familiar books. This immersion in print is necessary if they are to become unglued from print. Now they must acquire

confidence and fluency with print to prepare them for the difficulty in the next stage -- the acquisition of ideas from print.

### **Stage 3. Reading for Learning the New: A First Step Grades 4-8, Ages 9-13**

The reader's task changes from mastering print to mastering ideas. From this stage on the reader must use reading to "learn the new -- new knowledge, information, thoughts and experiences" (Chall, 1983, p. 20). The learner's schemata play an important role at this stage. The reader must bring to the print not only knowledge and experiences related to the subject but also knowledge about the reading process -- "how to find information in a paragraph, chapter or book" (p. 23). The teacher's task, then, includes either activating schemata or compensating for deficient schemata in both the areas of content and process.

### **Stage 4. Multiple Viewpoints High School, Ages 14-18**

In stage 4 reading the learner continues to learn how to learn from reading but now must deal with layers of facts and concepts added on to those acquired in stage 3 reading. Through formal education (assignments in various texts and reference sources), through reading of more mature fiction and free reading of various newspapers and periodicals, the learner learns to deal with more than one set of facts, various theories and multiple viewpoints. Critical reading abilities are more fully developed here than in stage 3 reading.

### **Stage 5. Construction and Reconstruction -- A World View: College, Age 18 and Above**

Chall considers this stage essentially constructive. "From reading what others say, the reader constructs knowledge for himself or herself" (p. 22). However, Chall's use of the term "constructive" differs from its use in this text and in our definition of reading. From the very first introduction to reading we believe that the learner must be involved in constructing meaning. Even a prereader interprets a message based on his/her experiences and background knowledge. We view the entire reading process, not just the reading activity at a given stage, as a constructive process. We would label this stage as "refinement" in which the learner is polishing all the strategies used in the process of constructing meaning from the text.

Stage 5 is the most mature stage in Chall's theory of reading as stage-development. She theorizes that reading at this stage is highly qualitative with the reader using printed material selectively, starting at any point in a book or article and reading in the degree of detail and completeness necessary for one's purpose. While Chall does not believe that all who have some college education reach this stage, she considers it a possibility that more sensitive and systematic instruction would bring many more to this highest stage.

Chall's theory emphasizes not only the developmental nature of each stage but also the need for different teaching strategies at each. In addition, since she believes that both environmental and biological factors influence reading development, she postulates that the

effects of biological handicaps on reading progress can be lessened with both appropriate instruction and stimulation from home, school, and community.

Chall's stage theory can be helpful in planning instruction because it helps explain the inner developing self of the learner and reminds us to see the child as a person in his or her own right. However, it falls short of recognizing the nature of the reading process as a gift of God to be used in the work God has called people to do. Nor does Chall's stage theory take into account the "unique endowments for thinking, for choosing, for creating" (Beverluis, 1971) which God has given to humans as His image bearers. For example, in stage three, her description of the reader's task could be interpreted as mastering sounds, not meanings.

While the last word has not been written on reading as a developmental process, the research that has been done is bringing about some changes in the elementary school reading program. Publishers have changed the labels on basal readers from "grade" to "level" while the accompanying teacher manuals note that any given reader can be used at more than one level depending on the achievement of the individual reader.

Teachers who understand the developmental nature of the reading process no longer ask, "Is the child ready to learn what I plan to teach?" Instead they ask, "What is the child ready to learn that I should teach?" In addition, if a child experiences repeated failures the teacher will ask, "Have I contributed to this failure by not meeting this learner's instructional needs? How can I change my teaching behavior to provide this learner with daily success experiences?" Such an attitude is especially a requirement of Christian teachers who recognize their responsibility to help learners reach their God-given potential.

## Reading: A Strategic Process

Throughout the last half century a debate has raged in the United States as to whether reading instruction should be dominated by a phonics or meaning emphasis.

As early as 1908 the noted American psychologist, Edmund Huey, advocated the meaning approach. Huey did not consider it necessary that children pronounce all words accurately; his concern was that the learner should obtain meaning. He wrote, "If he grasps approximately, the total meaning of the sentence in which the new word stands, he has read the sentence." He believed that even if children substituted a few of their own words for words on the page, the reading was "real" if it expressed meaning. He continued:

The shock that such a statement will give to many a practical teacher of reading is but an accurate measure of the hold that a false ideal has taken of us, viz, that to read is to say just what is upon the page, instead of to **think**, each in his own way, the meaning that the page suggests. (p. 349)

One of the strongest advocates of the code emphasis was Rudolph Flesch, author of *Why Johnny can't read* (1955). His writing, addressed to parents as well as teachers, presented reading

as exclusively a matter of word recognition. In an article published in *Family Circle* magazine as late as 1979 he continued to advocate this approach. He stated,

Learning to read is like learning to drive a car. You take lessons and master the mechanics of driving and the rules of the road. When you're ready, you can drive anywhere. Phonics-first works the same way. A child learns the **mechanics** of reading and when he's through, he can read anything. (p. 43)

The phonics emphasis did indeed enable many children to pronounce words accurately but often the concern with meaning was overlooked. It was not unusual for children taught with a phonics-first approach to read fluently, at sight, observing all punctuation and using proper inflection, but be unable to state the passage in their own words or to answer the simplest, literal level questions related to the passage content.

Reading materials which were based on phonics seemed to view the learner as a computer to be programmed. Children were drilled in word recognition skills and assigned countless numbers of worksheets designed to bring them to mastery level in a variety of decoding skills. Much of the learning was rote learning and many children completed worksheets by randomly circling answers or filling in blanks without giving much thought to the learning activity.

A limitation of the decoding emphasis was that often children defined reading as pronouncing words. An illustration of this is given in a study by DeFord (1982), who interviewed children to gain an insight into how children viewed the reading process. Laura's teacher stated that obtaining meaning was an important goal of her curriculum. However, in response to a question asking what the child would do if she came to something she didn't know when she was reading, the child replied that she would sound out the first two letters or try to see another word if it had three syllables. Laura identified the reader in the class as the one who always tried the first two letters. When asked what she would do to become a better reader she indicated she would study the vowel rules and phonics because "that's mostly reading." In answer to the question as to how she would help a person who was having difficulty reading she replied she would tell them to try the first two letters and if that didn't help she would "pray that God will help them find the word" (p. 592).

Although the emphasis on phonics-first is still found in many classrooms, the research findings of the metacognitive theorists (Brown, 1985; Palinscar, 1984) are supporting the move towards teaching reading as a strategic process rather than mastery of a set of skills. Metacognition is a term which refers to knowing how one knows: understanding and controlling the functions of the mind. In reference to the reading process the metacognitive theorists suggest that the learner should be able to analyze the reading task and select the cognitive strategies appropriate to the task. The teacher's task, then, is to make the learner aware of all the strategies involved in constructing meaning from print. Rather than master the mechanics of reading, students learn to monitor their comprehension of a passage and to select an appropriate strategy to overcome a problem in either decoding or in processing the information.

The concept of reading as a strategic process is strongly supported by the work of the Christian philosopher, Henry Beversluis (1971), in his description of the intellectual growth which he believes should be one of the major outcomes of Christian teaching and learning. While his writing pertains to the curriculum in general rather than reading specifically, his major thoughts can be applied directly to reading instruction.

Beversluis views people, the image bearers of God, as unique not only in the task to which God has called them but also as unique in the endowments God has given them for thinking, choosing and creating. While he recognizes that the learner must master a large body of facts, he states:

But intellectual growth requires much more than facts. It requires all that psychologists mean by cognition, comprehension, memory, divergence, discovery, judging, evaluation. It includes understanding things in relationships.... It includes thinking, understanding problems, forming hypotheses, drawing conclusions, testing conclusions. It includes imagining, enquiring, exploring, analyzing, probing for meaning and comprehension. (p. 52)

Given this explanation of intellectual growth the Christian teacher can make direct application of this concept to teaching and learning how to read. All of the elements Beversluis lists as components of intellectual growth can be taught to learners to provide them with a variety of strategies for constructing meaning from text. Instead of prescribing a given procedure or assigning a task which must be completed using a given procedure, the teacher can make the learner aware of a variety of strategies to use in information-processing of text and can help the learner take control of these strategies, selecting the one most appropriate to the task and the learner's style of learning.

## Goals: Why Am I Teaching Reading?

A historical look at the goals for teaching reading in America reflects the influence of everchanging religious, economic, and political ideals in the country. Nila Banton Smith (1965) divided the progression into eight evolving periods. The changing aims strongly affected both the content and the methods of reading instruction. In setting the goals for Christian teachers of the twentieth century, a look at the historical goals helps set a perspective from which to view our goal setting decisions.

## American Historical Perspective

The earliest period of American reading instruction (1607-1776) is identified by Smith as the period of **Religious Emphasis**. Religious motives encompassed the lives of the early settlers and were reflected in a 1647 law passed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which required every township with a number of 50 householders to teach all children to write and read because

It being one chief point of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures ... that learning might not be buried in the grave of our fathers in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors. (Smith, p. 13)

From 1776 -1840 a **Nationalistic -- Moralistic Emphasis** was central. Reading content was now expected to purify the American language and to develop national loyalties. High moral ideals were demanded for building good citizenship in the country rather than for religious reasons. The act of reading was equated with oral reading, with emphasis upon careful pronunciation and elocution. This period gradually evolved into emphasis upon **Education for Intelligent Citizenship** (1840 - 1880) under the leadership of Horace Mann. Expressive oral reading was still a primary goal, but other goals were added: to acquire knowledge, to improve intellectual powers, to refine taste, and to strengthen moral and religious sentiments.

The next three periods showed swings in emphases. The years 1880-1910 was a period labeled **Reading as a Cultural Asset**, with a primary goal of developing interest and appreciation for reading literature as a lifelong activity. Emphasis upon **Scientific Investigation** in the period from 1910-1925 produced an overarching aim of teaching silent reading and the thought-getting process. The period that followed, **Expansion and Application of Research** (1925-1935), produced three aims, stated in the Twenty-Fourth Yearbook (1925) and summarized here:

1. to extend the experiences of boys and girls, to stimulate their thinking powers, and to elevate their tastes (p.9).
2. to develop strong motives and permanent interests in reading.
3. to develop attitudes, habits, and skills essential to various types of reading (p. 12).

The influence of the period of **International Conflict** (1935-1950) renewed the desire that reading contribute to democratic living. The discovery that many soldiers could not read led to the goal of supplying systematic, comprehensive reading instruction. The post-war era from 1950 to 1965 was the period of **Expanding Knowledge and Technological Revolution**. The goals now were influenced by an explosion of knowledge which required the ability to read well and with discrimination. Emphasis was placed on teaching reading in the content fields and improving reading for sociological and national reasons.

The 70s was declared the decade of the "Right to Read" in America and the goal was that by the end of the decade all adults would be functionally literate. Title I government programs came into being and Federal money was poured into education. Much of it was spent on a variety of hastily prepared materials, reading machines, and new attractive basal reading programs. Educators emphasized the individual in reading instruction and a great flurry of activity ensued to personalize instruction to meet individual needs. However, little time or money was spent on understanding how people learned to read or on preparing teachers.

More recently, researchers have been probing into how children learn (Rumelhart, 1985; Goodman 1987; most widely accepted current view of the reading act.

## Goals of Christian Teachers

While both the Christian teacher and the secular teacher may use the same materials for reading instruction, the goals of the Christian teacher are not related to the religious, economic, and political ideals in the nation, but are based on the relation of the teacher and learner to God.

Nelle Vander Ark (1981) speaking specifically about the writing and speaking facets of language states:

... One's language is a gift of God and, therefore, one must attempt to treasure it and polish it. A representative of God and a messenger of God's truth and beauty may not be slovenly and cannot afford to be anything but attractive in the use of language.

This same awareness of the reading aspect of language as a gift of God is the basis for the Christian teacher's goals for the teaching of reading. The Christian teacher has a duty to become well informed about the nature of the reading process and teaching procedures so that learners develop, to the best of their ability, the power to construct communication from the printed word.

Beverluis (1971) in relating learning goals to the image of God, holds that teachers must ask two types of questions in formulating their goals for instruction:

... empirical, which can be answered by observing man, and theological, which cannot be answered in the same way. The empirical questions are: Who is man? What is he like? What are his needs? The theological questions are: Why is man here? What is it that God wants for him and of him?

.... Christian education must accept the **wholeness** of young persons and choose learning goals that will mature them as young persons (p. 48).

As formulated by Beverluis (1971), the major learning goals of a Christian school should be the intellectual, moral and creative growth of the learner. Accepting these goals requires that from the earliest grades on, teachers will progressively guide young persons through intellectual understanding and insight to **know**; through moral awareness and commitment to **choose**; and through creative self-acceptance and freedom to **participate** in the life appropriate to a Christian human being (p. 50).

Given Beverluis's perspective on learning, we see the goals for reading instruction as:

1. Helping the learner achieve a level of functional literacy which will enable the learner perform tasks necessary for daily life (e.g., filling out application forms; evaluating advertisements; reading maps and signs; following directions for the use of specific tools and operations used in given occupations).
2. Equipping young persons to use reading as a tool for learning and exploring creation.
3. Developing appreciation for literature and the desire to read.

4. Creating an awareness of how reading and reading materials can be used to strengthen personal worship, help us live in social relationships as God would have us, and assist us in doing the world's work as God would have us.

Although these goals can be isolated for discussion they can not be isolated for instruction. Beversluis's comment about the major learning goals of a Christian school is equally applicable to the specific goals for reading instruction.

Of course, distinguishing these learning goals conceptually does not imply parts or compartments within learners. The wholeness of persons forbids this and requires instead that teachers assume that these and other kinds of learnings will be interacting and simultaneous all along the way. (p. 50)

### Achievement of Functional Literacy

We live in a world of print, some of which may be ignored, but much of which is necessary for survival in our culture. Street signs, telephone directories, advertisements, product labels, want ads, appliance manuals, travel guides, recipe books, plane and train schedules are but a few of the printed materials which demand our attention daily.

God's people, as His image bearers, are called to do His work in the world. Even the simplest task a person must perform in response to the cultural mandate (Genesis 1:28) requires no less than the current level of functional literacy, the minimal reading ability necessary to function in today's world. Helping each learner achieve this reading ability level must be a minimal goal of the Christian teacher.

Bringing the learner to the level of functional literacy will necessitate both instruction in the process of reading and provision of materials which the average person encounters in today's world. However, integrated with this instruction for intellectual growth must also be concern for moral growth. When teaching the process of completing forms one must also be concerned with integrity in providing required information, and instruction in reading and writing advertisements must also include a discussion of truth in advertising.

### Ability to Use Reading as a Tool for Learning

"Children still have much to learn about reading even when they can decode words with a fair degree of facility and can understand simple, well written stories" (Anderson et al., 1985, p. 61).

Before 1970 basal readers, the most commonly used materials for reading instruction, contained a high percentage of narrative materials. Many children who read very fluently in these materials began to experience reading problems in the middle grades when they began reading texts in the various disciplines. For some time the opinion was widely held that the problem could be overcome if the reading achievement level of the learner could be matched to the difficulty level of the text. Many leaders in the field of reading (e.g., Fry, 1968) developed



formulae for judging the difficulty level of text books. For the most part, the readability formulae considered only sentence length and word length, overlooking problems in external and internal organization of the texts.

Harold Herber (1970) was one of the first reading authorities to recognize that the learners needed special instruction to handle the demands of content area reading. His text, *Teaching reading in content areas*, gave teachers specific suggestions for making learners aware of, and helping them to cope with, the reading demands of textbooks. The research work of metacognitive theorists increased our awareness that students must learn how to learn and that teachers must show students how textbooks differ from narrative materials and how to use a variety of strategies to construct meaning from content area texts.

Teaching students how to learn from printed material is a prime responsibility of a Christian teacher. Under the cultural mandate, “the first task of mankind to which God’s grace has restored us as Christians is to glorify God in all our creatureliness, and therefore to understand creation...” (Holmes, 1975, p. 31). This belief is endorsed by Vryhof et al. (1989) in their ninth affirmation: “The curriculum in the Christian school reflects the diversity, complexity, and richness of God’s world. As a ‘community of scholars,’ they examine different ages, cultures, geographical areas, beliefs, and lifestyles” (p. 63). To become involved in such an exploration of creation and culture requires a high degree of sophistication in learning from print. Training can bring students to the level of functional literacy but education is necessary to equip them to function at higher levels.

Holmes (1975) makes a very clear distinction between training and education.

Training, in contrast to education, develops skills and techniques for handling given materials and facts and situations. Education admittedly includes some training in the earlier stages of learning. But the educated man shows independence and creativity of mind to fashion new skills and techniques, new patterns of thought. He has acquired research ability, the power to gather, sift and manipulate new facts and materials, and to handle altogether novel situations. The educated Christian exercises critical judgment and manifests the ability to interpret and to evaluate information, particularly in the light of the Christian revelation. In a word, if he is to act creatively and to speak with cogency and clarity to the minds of his fellows, the educated Christian must be at home in the world of ideas and men. (p. 15)

It is the educated person, rather than the trained one, that the Christian teacher seeks to develop in the reading program.

### Develop Appreciation for Literature and the Desire to Read

According to historian Nila Banton Smith (1965), appreciation of literature first became a goal of reading instruction during the early 1880s, a period when reading was viewed as a cultural asset. It was an era in which democracy was assured, no major wars were impending and

the population was enjoying a prosperous economy. The nation now had the leisure and peace of mind to turn to cultural pursuits in music, art, and literature.

.... It is true that some literature had been included in upper-grade readers previous to this time, but it was designed to serve as a vehicle for elocutionary or drill exercises and not to promote literary appreciation and interest. It was not until the beginning of (this) period that one finds well-defined aims, methods and materials all directed toward the goal of developing permanent interest in literature. (pp. 115-116)

Today, developing interest in reading and an appreciation of literature are stated goals of every reading program. College texts designed for language arts and reading methods courses propound at great length the values of including literature in the reading program. (e.g., Petty, Petty and Becking, 1981; Hennings, 1989; Bums, Roe, and Ross, 1988). These values are expressed both in terms of intellectual growth and personal relationships. While the principal value of literature is the pleasure and enjoyment it brings to the reader, wide reading in a variety of genre will enlarge and extend the child's world, increase vocabulary, build and extend concepts, and help the child gain a greater appreciation of the beauty and power of language. Books aid the child in becoming a more complete person, help children to understand themselves and others, and develop an awareness of, and empathy for, those who are different from themselves.

While the Christian teacher recognizes these same values, the Christian teacher has a much higher reason for promoting an appreciation of literature and a desire to read. In their excellent book, *Literature through the eyes of faith*, Susan Gallagher and Roger Lundin (1989) state:

In reading a worthwhile book, we may explore the mysteries and interpret the meaning of the world in which God placed us. There are indeed other ways to go about gaining an understanding of oneself, God, and the world. But works of literature afford a special chance to enter into conversation with the great characters and interpreters of the human drama. In large measure, we read in order to learn the truth, which we may encounter in the pages of a book in powerful convincing ways. (p. 15)

Gladys Hunt (1989) makes an eloquent statement about the value of books which should encourage every Christian teacher to make literature appreciation a top priority in the goals of the reading program:

A good book is a magic gateway into a wider world of wonder, beauty, delight, and adventure. Books are experiences that make us grow, that add something to our inner stature. ... Take all the words available in the human vocabulary and read them from the dictionary, and you have only a list of words. But with the creativity and imagination God has given human beings, let these words flow together in the right order and they give wings to the spirit. Every child ought to know the pleasure of words so well chosen that they awaken sensibility, great emotions, and understanding of truth. This is the magic of

words -- a touch of the supernatural, communication which ministers to the spirit, a gift of God. (p. 14)

### Ability to Use Reading as an Aid to Worship

While all teachers have the goals of helping children (1) achieve functional literacy, (2) use reading as a tool for learning and (3) develop an appreciation of literature, only the Christian teacher in the Christian school has the special privilege of setting the goal of helping children use reading as a tool for worship.

Part of the legacy Christian families give to their children is the desire to read the Bible and sing songs of praise. Beginning readers who have participated in worship accept freely the unusual print requirements of songs and the two columns in most Bibles. This behavior is part of their emerging literacy and contributes to a positive attitude towards learning to read.

When reading is taught as an aid to worship (and service) the reading of Scripture will not be centered on story details and theological concepts but on personal application. Discussion will focus on such questions as: Why is this passage included in scripture? Is there a lesson for me to learn, a caution, a special promise, a direction for my life? If I accept this, what difference will it make in my life style, my work habits, my relationships with others? As the students are instructed in the use of scriptural cross-references, commentaries and concordances, the focus will not be on the mechanics of use but on the message of sin, salvation, and service.

### The Learner: To Whom Am I Teaching Reading?

“When we teach young people, all of us operate with a model of man ... a picture of man which colors our attitudes toward our self, toward the young people we serve, and toward the dynamic interrelations between us” (Sweetman, 1971, p. 7). Our view of the learner and our model of the person will influence decisions we make relating to methods, materials and approaches to teaching reading.

Smith (1965) reported that interests of the learner were first considered in 1889 with the publication of Miss Pollard’s Synthetic Method. “This method marked the turning point from the teaching of reading largely from the adult point of view to a procedure that made use of the child’s interest” (p. 133). However, recognition of the diversity of the learners and the importance of adjusting instruction to meet individual needs began with the birth of the scientific movement in education in 1910. “With the administration of the newly developed tests, a very great fundamental truth became apparent with a violent impact -- the realization that there were wide individual differences in the reading achievement of children, in the same grade and in the same classroom” (p. 194).

The diversity of the learners is now a major topic in all reading methods texts. Concern for individual differences is discussed not only in terms of interests and achievement but in terms of abilities, backgrounds and experiences, and modes of learning. An example of this range of

diversity is found in Vacca et al. (1991) who describe the physically handicapped, the gifted reader, the learning disabled, the linguistically diverse and the bilingual learners.

The Christian teacher, in response to the question “To whom am I teaching reading?” will answer first of all, “To an image bearer of God.” Each of the goals in this monograph has been articulated with this view of the learner. The Christian teacher will focus on the wholeness of the learner and on the learner’s intellectual, moral and creative growth. All instruction should recognize the learner as “a knowing, choosing, acting person” (Beverluis, 1971, p. 38). In addition, the teacher will respect the dignity and worth of each child. “The slow-learning, the late-blooming, or the practical-minded young Christian is not a second-class citizen ... to be fed a low-grade educational diet” (Beverluis, 1971, p. 43).

The roles of both the learner and the teacher in the reading program, as in all education, are shaped by the belief that both are created in the image of God.

In preparing to teach, we cannot only be concerned with viewing the child Christianly, but also must acknowledge ourselves. To be a person created in God’s image means to be able to make decisions, to set goals, and to move in the direction of those goals. It includes a responsibility to exercise self-determination and self-direction rather than assume a robotlike acceptance of what one reads in professional literature or observes in existing classroom practices. In a curricular area as problematic as the teaching of reading, it is important that in preparing to become a teacher, one accepts the decisional nature of Christ’s image within oneself.

The view of person as the image of God is the overriding factor which should influence every decision and permeate every relationship within the classroom. Kuitert (1972) explains the concept of image bearer powerfully when he states that an image bearer is not to be viewed as a still-life picture but as a reflection of God in concrete actions. This belief influences the way we select teaching materials, prepare and present lessons, and evaluate pupil performance. It will challenge us to use all the means available for professional growth: professional journals, membership in professional organizations, attendance at professional conferences, and enrollment in continuing education programs. The Christian teacher will always ask, “Is this how Jesus would prepare and teach if this were His classroom? Is my response to each individual shaped by a keen awareness that each is an image bearer of God regardless of level of achievement, personality traits, or classroom behavior ?”

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to plan methods and materials for teaching reading, teachers consider their own interpretation of the nature of reading as described in the first part of the monograph. The framework for this consideration involves accepting a model of reading and a workable definition.

### Models of Reading

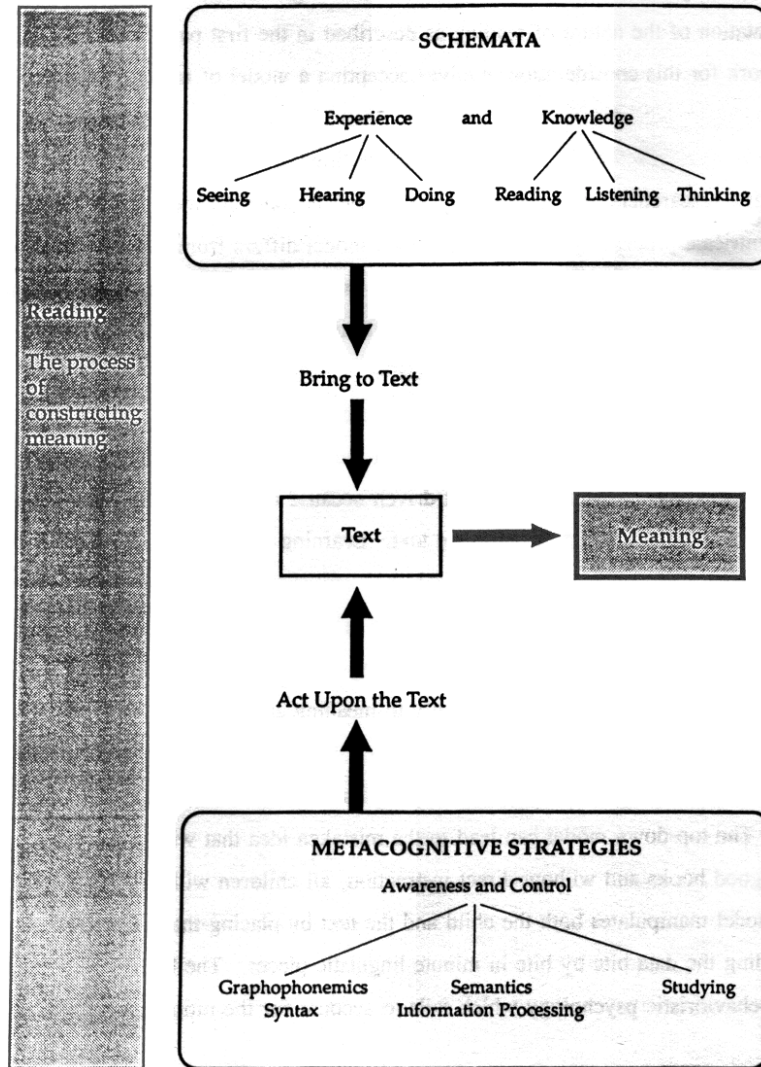
Reading researchers and educational psychologists construct models of reading to explain the intricate processing of language. Each model differs from the others along a continuum from emphasis on concept processing to emphasis on data processing. From this has come the descriptive terms, **top-down** and **bottom-up**, designating the opposite ends of the conceptual framework.

Top-down models of reading emphasize the non-visual aspects of constructing meaning. Prior knowledge and the expectations of the reader are prime factors in information processing. Reading is concept-driven because the ideas in the mind of the reader are the source of making sense of the text. Learning to read proceeds from whole to part (Smith, 1988; Goodman, 1976).

Bottom-up models of reading emphasize the visual aspects of decoding print. They proceed from part to whole, moving from identifying letters to sounds to spelling patterns, to words, to phrases, to sentences, and eventually to meaning as found in longer discourse (Lagerbe & Samuels, 1976; Gough, 1976).

Neither extreme address the scope of the complex nature of reading or the nature of the learner. The top-down model can lead to the mistaken idea that with enough time and exposure to good books and without direct instruction, all children will learn to read. The bottom-up model manipulates both the child and the text by placing the learner in a passive role and feeding the data bite by bite in minute linguistic pieces. The bottom-up model has its basis in behavioristic psychology which fails to account for the rational and creative nature of the child.

An interactive model of reading recognizes the complexity of the process and the reader. Reading includes both concept and data processing. We propose a model of reading which acknowledges both aspects. The interactive model depicted in Figure 2 begins with



**Figure 2. An interactive model of the reading process. Blok/Bosma**

the premise that reading is the process of constructing meaning. The readers bring to the text their schemata, or mental representation, of experience gained through their senses and knowledge received from thinking, speaking, listening, reading, writing, and interacting with others. The reader acts upon the text with metacognitive awareness and control. The process of coping with print uses semantic, syntactic, and graphophomemic cues. These cues begin to develop before formal instruction, and are enhanced through direct teaching and meaningful practice. An independent reader exercises conscious control of information processing and study strategies. Both of these elements, what the reader brings to the text and how the reader acts upon the text, are crucial in interpreting new texts. Vgotsky's description of learning can be applied to this reading model:

Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. (1978, p. 90)

In reading instruction, learning is awakened most effectively if the learners are aware of themselves as readers and of the strategies they are using. Developing this metacognition, or self-knowledge, is an important part of learning to read and should be taught along with the strategy.

We recognize that even this model has a major flaw because it does not account for creativity with which God has endowed us or for the ability of the mind to make cognitive leaps in the process of constructing meaning.

The ability to read critically is implied when reading is defined as constructing meaning, but the importance of teaching critical reading warrants a closer look at this aspect of reading. The results of the National Assessment of Reading and Literature, a standardized test given throughout the United States in 1990, show that 13 and 17-year-olds lack experience in applying problem solving strategies and critical thinking skills. Critical thinking has been defined by a committee of The National Council of Teachers of English (Bosma, 1987) as a process which stresses an attitude of suspended judgment, incorporates logical inquiry and problem solving, and leads to an evaluative decision or action.

The relationship of language and thinking places teaching critical thinking within the language arts curriculum. This particularly concerns the Christian teacher who is guiding children to read God's word with discernment, to relate Christianly with fellow human beings, and to fulfil the mandate given in Genesis 1:28 to care for and preserve the world.

How and when the teacher elects to teach critical reading will depend on which model of reading is accepted. If one embraces the bottom up model, critical reading is delayed until all the mechanics of reading are mastered. If one embraces either the top down or interactive reading model, teaching critical reading begins with emerging literacy and continues to be refined as the reader's reasoning ability grows.

## Definition of Reading

Before the **Scientific Investigation Period** of reading instruction (1910), reading was synonymous with pronouncing words, or as Leavitt stated in his rules for learning, "reading is talking from a book" (Smith 1965, p. 73). The scientific movement in education increased attention in all areas toward the thought-gathering process. In recent years the national call for improving school instruction has led State Departments of Education and the affiliates of the International Reading Association to define more explicitly the complex process of reading. The desired outcome is that methods and materials for the teaching of reading will be selected in terms of the definition.

A committee from the Michigan Reading Association and the State Department of Education in Michigan in 1983 produced a definition that emphasizes the interactive nature of reading. It said that reading is "the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation." The phrase "constructing meaning" emphasizes that the reader is in charge. Meaning is not gleaned, or extracted, from the text but is actively created in the mind of the reader. This interprets reading as a creative act, with the learner being an active participant, not a passive receiver.

A dynamic interaction implies excitement. The readers construct meaning through powerful factors that are within the child, within the text, and within the environment. This variable, adaptive process of communication is dependent not only upon the knowledge and skill of the author but on the knowledge and skill of the reader as well.

The first interactive component of the definition is the reader's "existing knowledge." Meaning is the basis of reading rather than the end product. It is the prior knowledge that is stored in the brain that enables readers to make sense of the visual images they see. That knowledge is made up of two parts: the information or experiences we already have, and the organization we have formed within our minds to make sense out of those experiences and bits of knowledge. This cognitive structure, or organization of knowledge, is each person's individual working model of one's theory of the world. The interpreting and structuring of the information taps all the inner resources of the reader. The way the child is taught to read makes a big difference here. Some methods help the acquisition of new strategies and information fit comfortably into existing knowledge. Other methods present new information in such isolation that the connection between the new and the old becomes puzzling and difficult for the child to assimilate.

The role of existing knowledge is an important factor to consider when determining one's approach to beginning reading. All aspects of language acquisition influence the introduction to reading, and the term **emerging literacy** acknowledges the interaction of language arts components more completely than the term from the 70s, **reading readiness**. Emerging literacy is the process of becoming literate from birth and being capable of learning what it means to be a user of written language before entering school (Vacca, 1991, p. 98). Literacy involves the concurrent and interrelated development of oral language (speaking and listening), reading, and writing.

Using the expression "information suggested by the written language" reinforces the premise that the interpretation of the words as they are presented by the writer depends on the reader's schema. Print is not talk written down. Literary language is different from spoken language. Readers must get all the cues from the print with no help from body language, facial expressions, or intonation. Instead, they now use cues of prediction and conventions of writing as well as being able to go back and reread until the meaning becomes clear.



The "context of the reading situation" triggers the skilled reader to use a specific set of strategies. A reader scanning the telephone book for a friend's phone number uses strategies different from the one looking in the yellow pages for a television repairman. The newspaper reader activates different strategies for constructing meaning from an editorial than from television schedules. The purpose for reading is central to this definition not only because one always reads for a purpose but also because the purpose dictates when, how, and where the text is understood. Reading STOP on a sign while driving down the highway activates a different response from reading the word in a story.

The context of the reading situation can be extended to include the learning environment in which the learner is taught to read. Christian teachers consider Christ's transforming power when they plan an environment for learning. A transformational environment is a place where learners manipulate ideas without undue concern for whether their opinions are right or wrong. It is an atmosphere in which they interact with each other in a manner that encourages reformulation, reconstruction, and changes. For example, oral reading scenarios where the reader is quickly corrected by classmates, or words are provided, can cause the less able reader to feel inadequate and unsure of his/her abilities. In contrast, a learner who is allowed to practice with a partner before reading in front of a group possesses a sense of accomplishment and acceptance. The dignity that we feel as children of God gives a nobility to our work, as well as a guide to the way we treat our pupils. Since communication lies at the heart of the reading act, social relations are very important. The goals of a transformational environment are to generate the following attributes within the learner:

1. A sense of confidence in their ability to learn to read.
2. A pleasure in gaining knowledge and ideas through print.
3. Comfortable use of strategies for self-generated questions, predictions, and evaluation of one's own level of progress in learning.
4. The skill and attitudes necessary to participate with responsibility in cooperative groups.

## SIX MINIMAL COMPONENTS OF A READING PROGRAM

For many years reading programs have been largely dominated by basal readers with extensive teacher manuals which seemed to make the reading program "teacher proof." All skills are arranged in a sequence, a script is provided for introducing each story, and a large variety of skill lessons is provided for each story. The reading program can be planned by dividing the number of stories into the number of days in the school year. Christian teachers, who recognize the complexity of the reading process and the diversity of the learners in each classroom, are not followers of a manual but are decision makers who tailor their reading programs to the unique needs, interests, and learning styles of the individual learners. The teacher uses curriculum guides and manuals as resources, but designs the reading program to reflect personal beliefs about the nature of the reading process, their view of the learner, and goals for teaching reading.

A goal-directed, decision making teacher will fit methods and materials into a carefully planned reading program. This program should include a minimum of six components: teacher

reading aloud, guided reading, responding to literature, independent reading, strategy instruction, and content area reading instruction. All six components are part of daily planning. One component does not precede another, but each holds a distinctive place in the reading program. These components are described here with implications for a Christian teacher.

## Teacher Reading Aloud

Reading aloud to children of all ages is extremely important for developing a love of reading. Listening to stories being read, children hear the beauty and richness of God's gift of literary language. The inflections, expression, and fluency of the teacher's reading set an example of effective communication.

The best way to nurture a lifelong interest in reading is for the child to see the teacher enjoying a good book and hearing the teacher read in an expressive, entertaining style. Jim Trelease (1989), who travels across the United States encouraging parents to read to children, writes,

Reading aloud to children awakens their sleeping imaginations and improves their deteriorating language skills. When this is done in school, it improves the atmosphere of the classroom. When it is done at home, it improves the quality of family life. But wherever it is done, the overwhelming result is that it improves children's attitudes toward books and reading. (1985, p. xii)

Reading aloud is an essential part of the reading program, both for emerging literacy and for continuous, enriching literary experiences. The United States report of the Commission on Reading, *Becoming a nation of readers* (1985), states that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (p. 6).

Children who enter school having been read to regularly in their early years are well on their way to learning to read. Since many children come to school without this experience, the kindergarten and first grade teacher are especially aware of the importance of devoting adequate time for listening to literary language and story patterns. Young children learn concepts of print that are essential to beginning reading (Clay, 1982). They become familiar with the patterns of narration and predictable story structure. Authors follow a story structure and this structure helps the beginning reader use the syntax of the sentence and anticipation of the story flow to read the print. The readers' concept of story structure is part of their deep language acquisition and supplies them with a means of predicting, which assists in word recognition as well as with understanding the syntax and content of the story (Applebee, 1978). Kindergartners and first graders quickly recognize the rhyming pattern in *Chicken soup with rice* by Maurice Sendak, and then note the different but equally distinctive pattern in the cumulative tale retold by Audrey Wood, *The napping house*.

Older children learn new vocabulary and enlarge their schema for more complex narrative. Warwick Elley (1989) concluded from his experimental studies with seven and

eight-year-old children that children increase their vocabulary by listening to stories read to them. A research study by Carol Chomsky (1972) on the effect of independent reading and listening to reading by the teacher showed that listening to stories with difficult vocabulary and complex syntax contributed to development of reading vocabulary, comprehension, and language use.

When stories are read aloud, the listener is constructing meaning from the printed message. Interaction takes place when the reader and listeners together respond to what the author has written. The teacher offers a reading model which the child can carry over into independent silent reading time and use for creative oral expression.

If the read aloud time is to become an important component of developing literacy, teachers must plan carefully. They will select books for literary quality, age appropriateness, and interest. Teachers will learn as much as possible about good children's literature and about the interests of the children at their particular grade level.

Mary Steenwyk, first grade teacher at Calvin Christian School, in Wyoming, Michigan, plans her daily reading lessons around a book she reads aloud. She begins with a familiar poem or chant and reviews what the beginners already know about how to read. Then she reads a book she has carefully chosen which she will reread each day that week, along with related books. She reported to me that "the whole class participates in an activity based on the main book. At the beginning of the year, we make daily use of sentence strips and pictures for language development so that after they have heard the story, they can see the print I have read."

Second grade teacher, Marjorie Cooper, at Immanuel Christian School in Oshawa, Ontario wrote in an unpublished graduate class paper:

Generally I choose books that complement a featured author or a theme of study. At other times I just choose a great story. Sometimes the book is used to teach or reinforce story structure through story mapping... To increase the literacy level of the children I'm stressing author and genre consciousness and in my selection of read aloud books I can ensure that all the children are exposed to all genres.

Gary Warners, sixth grade teacher at Potter's House Christian School, selects books to read aloud first by considering the theme. He likes to read books that will develop cultural awareness, offer cross-cultural interactions, or show characters who stand up for what they believe is right. Secondly, he looks for characters who appear real and whom his students can relate to as people they could meet in real life. Lastly, he wants adventure in the book with enough action to keep himself and the listeners interested.

"I never read books that I don't like," says Gary, "and we really get into the book. We talk about it before, during and after the reading. We listen to different kids predict what will happen or what they think should happen. Then we stop during reading, just enough to be sure the

listeners are tuned in to what goes on, but not so much that they tune out." His students will often compare the books they are reading with ones he has already read to them.

## Guided Reading

The purpose of guided reading is to assist readers in constructing meaning in the reading situation so that they will be able to read independently with confidence and enjoyment. It also allows the teacher, when guiding, to assess whether or not the learners are applying strategies taught and using background knowledge in the reading act.

Although it is possible to model reading as a thinking process with an entire class, it is difficult to monitor the understanding of such a large group. Therefore, teachers schedule small group sessions in which they guide the readers through an active thinking process. Planning should ensure that before, during, and after reading, interactions are taking place. Before reading, questions direct readers to ask what they already know about the text and what they expect to find out by reading. During reading, the teacher guides towards reader-generated questions which ask if the pupils' expectations are being fulfilled or if they are understanding the text. After reading, discussion should address the outcomes of the reading.

Questions based on narrative reading should be directed toward the unfolding of the story, the author's purpose, the characters' reactions to events of the story, or the reader's reflections on what had been read. Expository reading is considered in the section on "Content area reading." The rest of this section addresses guiding narrative reading during reading instruction time.

Specific guided reading strategies can be used (see Bosma 1991; Hennings 1989; Vacca 1991). The Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) uses a predict, read, prove model and provides before, during, and after reading guidance. Frank Smith (1988) states, "Prediction is the basis of meaning identification, and all children who can understand the spoken language of their environment must be experts at prediction" (p. 160). If we raise prediction to a level of consciousness, we provide readers with a real purpose for reading (i.e. will my prediction match what the author will say?) In guided reading sessions, teachers can model the predict, read, prove sequence until the children can use it comfortably on their own.

Story mapping is a strategy that directs the reader's attention to the structure of the story. At a very young age, children begin developing a sense of story which grows from listening to stories to telling, reading, and writing stories. The children's concept of story will vary in degree, but it is generally subconscious knowledge. Guiding learners to use and refine their story sense will help them construct meaning from the story organization and will greatly increase story comprehension. Presenting the map framework before reading sets a purpose and prepares the reader to consider the way the author is unfolding the story. The chart, or map, shows the relationships of the major parts of the story. Fitting the story map to the story should be modeled in a guided reading situation until the readers are ready to map on their own. The actual writing on the map comes after the reading. Story mapping becomes a metacognitive strategy rather than

an imposed exercise if the reader is aware of how and why it is used. See Appendix A for a model of a map for a problem-centered story. Other types of stories, such as cumulative tales or circular stories, require a map pattern that fits their unique structure.

Story mapping should not replace experiencing the feelings or the pleasure of the story. Spontaneous response either orally or in writing is an important part of literature response, and some teacher-guided sessions can help prepare the reader to respond more freely.

Questioning strategies are effective in guiding interaction between the reader and the text, if the questions are phrased to initiate thinking and problem-solving. The Directed Reading Activity (DRA) prescribed in the teacher editions of basal readers published before the late 1980s breaks the story into incomplete sections (like every page) and primarily asks for literal level, detail-seeking answers. Criticism of this practice has resulted in more thoughtful questions in basals published after 1987. Some of the DRAs are divided into before, during, and after reading ideas. The major problem in these manuals is that more suggestions are given than the stories merit. Teachers can use the basal manual with discretion by carefully selecting questions that fit their purpose for teaching.

A common misuse of the reading period is a practice called "round-robin oral reading." In this scenario, children read aloud in rote fashion with no guidance from the teacher. No attention is given to the message, but often the teacher or the other children correct the oral reading errors the child makes. If the child has not read the story silently before this session, the experience is even more meaningless and can be demeaning if the child is not a good reader. Christian teachers, who otherwise carefully match their teaching to their view of the child, often fall into this habitual practice. This practice is a vestige from the time when success in reading was measured by one's ability to parrot the print with no thought as to the meaning of the reading. Whenever children are asked to read orally, the reading should be recognized as a means of communication which requires a listening audience, not one bent on providing correction. Practice in oral reading in order to communicate with expression and meaning can be done with a helpful partner. See Appendix B for a dialogue concerning oral reading.

Oral Bible reading is an important component of worship and young readers should be taught how to read texts with thought for the content rather than as a struggle to pronounce words correctly. Therefore, guidance in understanding the text should take place before teacher modeling, repeated reading, choral reading, or practicing with a partner are used to provide fluency. Kathryn Blok remembers a time when as a first grade teacher she taught the Lord's Prayer by rote memory. Kent read and recited it beautifully with the group. Then at lunchtime he prayed, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our dentist."

## Responding to Literature

Jesus told stories. Throughout his ministry he met people at a personal level and taught about life with stories from their own experiences. He did not analyze, dissect, or offer three possible choices for the main idea. He left the listeners to interpret the meaning which was not

literally apparent, but implicit in the words he spoke. He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15).

Response to reading is both personal and social. Each reader brings to the text unique prior experiences and feelings. Rosenblatt (1978) theorizes that readers read "aesthetically," actively creating meaning based on what they bring to the text and what the author is saying. Aesthetic response to reading involves attitudes, emotions, sensations, intuition, and memories -- attributes of thought itself.

In addition, readers respond socially within the context of the reading situation. Just as children interact with others to learn language, so they learn how to interpret written text through interaction with other readers. If reading is taking place in a community of peers it is the teacher's role to develop a nurturing environment in the classroom so that children can express their thoughts without fear of ridicule or sense of failure.

Response to literature can take several forms: oral discussion, creative drama, and written responses. It takes place before reading, during reading, or after reading. Mrs. Cooper at Oshawa, Ontario reported on her expectations in this area:

1. The readers write regularly in learning logs and in reading response logs.
2. During book-sharing sessions, the children are encouraged to make comparisons with other books, ideas, themes, etc., and to evaluate the literature. For example, the group reading Bill Peet books sensed his respect for ecology by comparing his books and they were able to identify biblical principles in his stories.
3. Four groups, who have read books from different authors, presented their books to the class with original filmstrips (drawing scenes on transparencies and projecting them with the overhead projector), puppet plays, drama, or plasticene models.

Beth Vander Kolk, first grade teacher at Potter's House Christian School, emphasizes language encounters frequently with her beginning readers. For example, she read *Each peach, pear, plum* by Janet Ahlberg in the form of a big book, following the words with her hand to help with left to right sequence. She solicited responses from the children as to where the characters were hidden. The next day she read the book again and encouraged the students to chant the phrases they knew. They talked about the characters and made a chart of various possibilities that fit the characters. On the third day, the children joined in chanting all the repetitive phrases. They reviewed the chart and together built an original story based on Ahlberg's style. This became a class book.

During the study of a novel, fifth graders in Sharon VanKalker's room at Byron Center Christian responded to their daily reading by writing in their journals, or by sharing with their group what they had written the previous day. Mrs. VanKalker would meet with the groups periodically and model sharing and writing strategies. The groups were reading *Number the stars*, *Devil's arithmetic*, or *Snow treasure*, all books about World War II. When the books were finished, they wrote their own drama based on one or two chapters. The groups voted on which

chapters to use, and Mrs. VanKalker reported a high level of excitement and effort throughout the group activity. The three dramas were effectively performed for other classes.

## Independent Reading

The cello player, the runner, the swimmer, the gourmet cook, all practice incessantly to develop their talents. Does the reader? Not in the classroom, according to research studied by Galda and Cullinan (1990). They concluded that reading widely from real books makes fluent readers, but the amount of time spent reading independently in school was slight compared to the amount of time completing worksheets. Research by Allington (1984) found that good readers were allowed more silent reading time than poor readers in both Grades 1 and 5. In the second semester of Grade 1, poor readers read orally about 90 percent of the time, while good readers were reported to spend only 40 percent of their lessons reading aloud. By Grade 5, good reader groups spent less than 20 percent of their time reading orally while the poor reader groups read aloud in over half of their lessons. At the same time, children spend up to 70 percent of the time allocated for reading completing workbook pages and skill sheets (Anderson 1985). *Becoming a nation of readers* reports: "In the course of a school year, it would not be uncommon for a child in the elementary grades to bring home 1,000 workbook pages and skill sheets completed during reading period" (p. 74).

Uninterrupted reading is necessary for two reasons. As indicated by the research cited, independent reading is necessary to develop fluency so that the child is comfortable with the reading process. For this reason, the developing reader needs much individual reading time in order to strengthen the use of the previously taught strategies.

The second reason is to help all children become lifelong readers. This requires making time available to read self-selected books and magazines. This type of personal reading time is given different acronyms by teachers and classes such as Drop Everything And Read (DEAR), or Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR). To extend the readers' basis for appreciating good stories, teachers may require balancing the reading choices among the different genre of literature such as historical fiction, fantasy, realistic fiction, folktales, informational (non-fiction) books, and poetry.

Patricia Westveer, fourth grade teacher in a Jenison, Michigan, public school, plans both kinds of independent reading daily. Twice a year the whole class reads a novel together, but most of the time children choose from several books. Sometimes she has a random selection of books, but usually the books fit a current unit of study. The five children who choose the same book become a group. After reading independently, they meet for about ten minutes to discuss one element of the story or how they have used a strategy that was taught. Sometimes they write a question to ask their group. For personal reading, Mrs. Westveer varies the amount of time spent at Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), depending on the amount of individual reading they have done that day in the assigned book. Uninterrupted personal reading occurs daily and, in a notebook by the book shelf, the readers record the name of the book or magazine and the number of pages they read each day. She has added an element of accountability by recording the total pages read each marking period on the report card.

In her master's degree project, Christian School teacher Joani VanderStelt (1990) describes the way she makes independent reading, or book browsing, part of a kindergartner's day:

In my kindergarten curriculum, sharing books is a vital part of each day. A well designed library center is the heart of my independent reading program. It is filled with inviting books and posters and is a hubbub of activity. Many of the books in the library center belong to me, others belong to our classroom, and still others are changed each month by checking books out at the public library. Each day children are encouraged and some are required to spend time in the library corner. A special place is provided for those who might want a cozy, private spot. Space is also given for those who might want to share their favorite story with a friend. A listening center is part of the library corner, with soft pillows and a headphone set, where children are excited about listening to a story on tape. A new story is introduced each week in the listening center. Sometimes this is a story shared in read-aloud, other times it is a favorite class story. A checkout system is part of the library center. This gives children the opportunity to take books home to share with parents or siblings. Many children take advantage of this opportunity and parents enjoy having new books to share at home. The library in our classroom is a place that my students have grown to love. It is an essential part of our classroom. (p. 29)

## Strategy Instruction

The ultimate goal of all reading instruction is to develop readers who not only can read but want to read. The reading program components of reading aloud to children and having them respond to literature are designed to introduce children to the nature of the reading process and to arouse in them an interest in and a desire for independent reading. Through this in-depth exposure to books and reading, a number of children devise their own strategies for constructing meaning from print. However, for the majority of learners, the teacher must serve as an enabler, teaching them a wide range of word recognition, vocabulary development, and information processing strategies which will empower the learners to construct meaning. Strategy instruction, therefore, is an important component of the reading program.

The term **strategy instruction** came into popular usage during the decade of the 80s. Prior to this time most professional literature used the term **skill teaching**. A popular text (Duffy & Sherman, 1977) listed 218 reading skills, 150 of which were labeled "word identification" and 68 as "comprehension." Basal publishers provided teachers with scope and sequence charts listing reading skills and a suggested sequence for teaching them. Teachers drilled children in the mechanics of reading, tested frequently, and kept records of which learner reached mastery level in the various skills. As research studies provide more information about the nature of the reading process and related metacognitive activities, skill instruction is changing to strategy instruction (Holdaway, 1979). The difference between strategy and skill instruction lies in the locus of control. In skill instruction, the teacher is in control and the learner is passive. Strategy instruction implies an active learner with the teacher showing how a skill fits into the whole schema of reading. Rather than drilling the learners in the mechanics (skills) of reading, teachers



encourage children to monitor their comprehension and provide metacognitive activities which make the learners aware of reading strategies, from which they may select when they encounter difficulty in any aspect of the process of constructing meaning.

The role of the teacher as an enabler in strategy instruction is of crucial importance. Far too often teachers follow the Triple-A (assume, assign, assess) Model in which they assume the learners know and use the strategies needed to perform a reading task (e.g., can attack a complicated-looking word; can determine the main idea of a paragraph; can distinguish between fact and opinion.) They then assign selections which require the use of these strategies and end by assessing how well the learners completed the assignment using the assumed strategies. The number of workbooks and worksheets available to teachers suggests that becoming an effective reader can be accomplished through endless drill. The Christian teacher ought to reject this behavioristic, mechanical presentation of reading strategies and instead structure instruction to recognize the unique endowments God has given people for thinking.

While phonetic and structural analysis are frequently taught in a synthetic mode, they can be developed through a thinking process. The learner can be presented words which contain a similar sound, be led to discover the similar sound, aided in noting similar letters in these words and guided to formulate a generalization for associating the sound with a symbol. (See model lesson in Appendix C.) In addition, the learner is led to discover a variety of ways to identify or predict an unfamiliar word, with emphasis on meaning. These include the use of context clues, semantics, and structural analysis as well as phonics. The learner becomes active in acquiring a variety of strategies for unlocking unfamiliar words and selecting appropriate strategies to use in the reading situation.

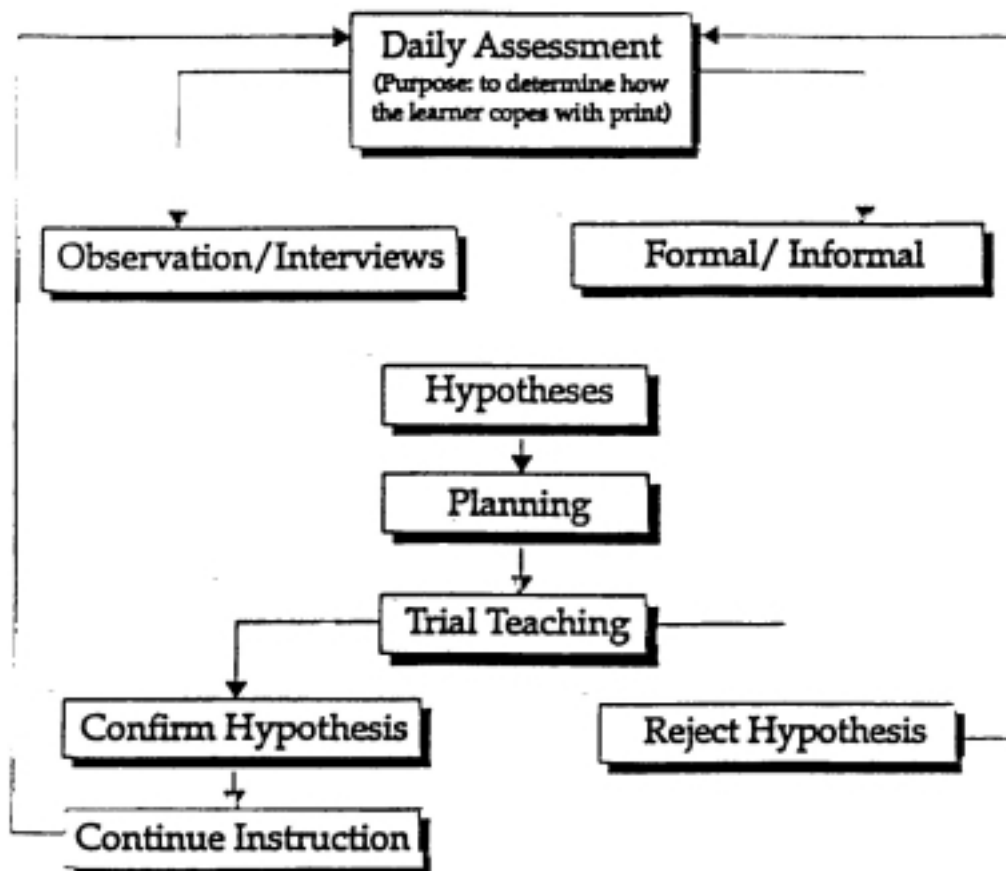
In a similar fashion, the learner can be given metacognitive experiences to develop a repertoire of strategies for comprehension and information processing. In guided reading the teacher uses a variety of teaching strategies to stimulate thinking about and responding to a passage; the teacher must also encourage the learner to use similar strategies when reading independently. Learners must be led to monitor comprehension by asking, "Does this make sense as I read it?" They become familiar with using strategies such as KWL (Asking What do I know? What do I want to learn? What did I learn?) and Question-Answer Relationship (Is the answer right there? Must I think and search? Will it be in my head?) Consult current reading textbooks such as Vacca (1991), Bums & Roe (1988), Gillett & Temple (1991), Weaver (1988), and journals such as *The Reading Teacher* and *Language Arts* for a wide variety of strategies that readers should acquire in the process of constructing meaning.

With the new emphasis on strategy instruction, the procedure for grouping readers is also changing. Traditionally teachers have divided classes into three or more reading groups formed on the basis of reading achievement levels. These groups met both for the guided reading of the basal lesson and for the skill instruction which followed the basal selection. Once formed, the composition of these groups tended to remain stable for a semester or school year.

Flexible grouping is now the norm for strategy instruction. The teacher must continually observe learner response to instruction, both in strategy and guided reading lessons, to determine

which learners are using a newly taught strategy, and which ones need additional instruction. Learners with common needs can come together for strategy lessons. The process of grouping for strategy instruction is illustrated in Figure 3. Teachers observe how the learners respond to the text. When necessary, the teacher supplements daily observations with informal interviews or with informal or formal assessment instruments. Based on these assessments the teacher formulates a hypothesis as to which strategies the learner is using and which strategies should be taught. The teacher who recognizes the complexity of the reading process and the wholeness of the learner will be challenged to discard skill lessons which minimize thinking. Such teachers will devise instructional procedures which lead the learners to view reading as a process of constructing meaning and will equip them with a variety of strategies from which to select as they cope with print.

### Sequence of Teaching Behaviors



As Bruinsma (1990) states, "Literacy teachers, as responsible professionals, take control of their own teaching and reject methods and materials that treat them as mere technicians" (p. 113).

## Content Area Reading Instruction

"Even my good readers are having difficulty with this social studies text!"

Such expressions of frustration on the part of teachers suggest a very limited definition of "reading" as well as a faulty assumption that "the processes involved in reading and comprehending context textbooks are identical to those utilized in reading from basal readers in elementary school" (Readance et al., 1985, p. 5).

Two statements in the Michigan Department of Education definition of reading provide insight into why supposedly "good readers" have difficulty with constructing meaning from a content area text.

First of all, "the reader's existing knowledge" is an important factor in comprehension of textbooks. If the learner has a very limited schema for the topic of the text, the mismatch between the reader's existing knowledge and that of the author of the text will seriously limit the degree to which the reader can comprehend the text.

In addition, "the context of the reading situation" can also cause problems. The dramatic contrasts between the style and format of basals and content textbooks make it unlikely that a reader who performs at a high level of competency in a basal will achieve that same level in a content area text. Burns et al. (1988) give a very detailed account of these differences. While basals have carefully controlled vocabularies and planned repetition of key words, content area texts present many new terms and concepts very rapidly with little repetition. Specialized vocabulary is a key feature of textbooks in contrast to basals which contain little technical vocabulary. There is a major difference in the illustrations in texts and basals. While illustrations in basals are primarily for interest value, the graphic aids in texts are designed to clarify concepts and must be studied carefully.

Burns et al. (1988) also find a major difference in style. They state,

Large portions of basal readers are written in a narrative style that describes the actions of people in particular situations. They do not present the density of ideas typical of content textbooks, which are generally written in an expository (explanatory) style, with facts presented in concentrated form. Students must give attention to every sentence in the content books, for nearly every one will carry important information that they must acquire before they can understand later passages. This is rarely true of basal readers, for each selection is generally a discrete entity. (p. 394)

Learners in a literature-based reading program will not experience the same type of difficulties as learners in a basal reading program. However, the approach to reading narrative material differs drastically from that used with expository material. Therefore, teachers in a literature-based program must be equally concerned with teaching strategies for processing information in a textbook.

One of the most helpful strategies readers should use is to preview the text to locate all the aids to comprehension (preface, chapter titles and subtitles, table of contents, glossary, and visual aids), to read the introduction to the chapter, and then the final summary to determine the author's purpose for writing and the major concepts presented in each chapter. The next step is to set purposes for reading by turning headings and sub-headers into questions. The reader may find it helpful to map the chapter in order to determine the relationship of ideas or to keep a learning log of new ideas. A careful study of visual aids will prepare the learner for new vocabulary and concepts. Given this preparation for reading the chapter, readers will have triggered existing schemata, determined what they already know and still need to know, and can now adjust their rate of reading, reading rapidly over the known and slowing down or rereading when they encounter the unfamiliar.

Because many learners have no schema for either the content of textbooks or for the process for constructing meaning from them, content area reading instruction is a major component of the reading program. For information on teaching the strategies described here, as well as many others, see current texts on content area reading such as Vacca & Vacca (1989) and Readance (1985).

All teachers, for pragmatic reasons, should insure that learners are given instruction necessary to meet the demand of reading content textbooks. Christian teachers, recognizing the contribution that learning from texts can make to intellectual growth, cannot ignore the responsibility of teaching students the process of learning from texts. Beversluis (1971), after explaining that "intellectual growth has to do with man's capacity to know, to know and understand what things are like, to know and understand the truth about things, ultimately to know God in so far as man can know him" continues with the statement, "Stressing intellectual growth...and recognizing that such growth must be fostered for the sake of moral and creative response to God within life, the Christian school should give close attention to the educational skill and disciplines that foster such growth" (p. 52).

## SUMMARY:

### A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE TEACHING READING

This monograph is written for the purpose of presenting theories concerning the reading process that will evoke thoughtful deliberation by prospective and practicing teachers. Any decision relating to **how** to teach reading must be considered in the light of the teacher's answer to the three questions: What is reading, Why am I teaching reading? and To whom am I teaching reading? The six minimal components offer a framework for developing a literate environment within which the chosen programs, materials, methods, and strategies can fit. Marilyn Adams (1990) in her comprehensive study of research on beginning research states that the integration of all the components make a reading program effective. She asserts that it is not the simple inclusion of the various components, but rather "it is the way in which its pieces are fitted together to complement and support one another, always with full consideration of the needs and progress of the young readers with whom it will be used" (p. 423).

All consideration of the reading process must be made within the context of the language arts, recognizing that thinking, speaking, listening, and writing are integral to developing reading proficiency. Writing and reading are intrinsically linked and are continually enforcing one another in their development. To do justice to the interweaving roles of speaking, listening, writing, and reading this manuscript would have to be a volume rather than a monograph. In offering examples of various aspects of reading, the other elements of language arts have been included to show that they are present in all facets of the reading program. These examples are given to show that the ideas presented here are workable.

However, the practical application of theory to the classroom is not the subject of this monograph. Instead, this monograph provides a framework intended to engage educators in intelligent discussion. Such discussion will be most useful if educators are acquainted with current textbooks that offer methods of teaching strategies and explanations of programs and materials, professional journal articles, which address specific language and psychology research related to the classroom, and research reports such as those found in the References.

## APPENDIX A -- STORY MAPPING

**STORY MAPS:** A means of developing comprehension of story using the child's sense of story. Maps can be used at the guided reading level, as an independent means of recognizing story structure, or as an organizational pattern for story writing.

### Single map structure

Setting                      Where

                                    When

Characters                Who

Problem

    Action 1

    Action 2

    Action 3

            (continues for number of episodes found in story)

Resolution (problem solved or alternate accepted)

### A. Teacher use: Story maps for guided reading

Before teaching children how to use the story structure to advance comprehension of the story, the teacher must become proficient at mapping stories. This device becomes a useful tool for generating questions about the story at literal, inferential and evaluative levels. Questions following a story map will aid in helping the reader organize and integrate text content. Avoid questions that simply test recall or focus on assessing literal meaning. The creation should consider the overall concept of story, rather than isolated items in a story.

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Read the story
2. Fill in the map. Note the number of episodes will vary from story to story.
3. Generate questions from the sequence of story, such as "What is the problem?" "What happened next?" "Why?" "When did you realize the problem was being solved?" Include "what if" questions.
4. Decide which questions should be asked **before** the story is read, and which should be asked **after** reading.

Note: Purpose-setting (pre-reading) questions should be questions that persist as long as possible. E.G. asking (1) What is the problem? can be answered as soon as that identifying part is read. Asking (2) How does Mary solve the problem? will last throughout the story. Questions 2 should be asked before reading; question 1, after. It is important to always return to answer the prereading questions, or they become rhetorical.

### **B. Pupil use: Helping children recognize story structure**

Children can be guided to develop story maps on their own. First, the teacher must be proficient at making maps. After using maps as a basis for questioning, the teacher can model for the children how the map was prepared.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Select a story with a simple structure for first mapping.
2. Teacher models, filling out the map while involving pupils for answering questions about setting and characters. When time or place is not stated explicitly, children become involved in inferential thinking.
3. Continue with teacher guiding and group discussing how to state the problem, actions or episodes, and resolution.
4. Large papers with basic map structure can be given to small groups who have read the same story. After a **number** of teacher led experiences the group can map the story without teacher assistance.
5. After adequate practice, individuals can be given map outlines to fill in with a visible reference (sample completed map) displayed in view.

### **C. Pupil use: Organizing for story writing**

This framework helps the writer organize his/her thoughts. Often there is not enough time in a writing period to complete a story. The filled in map can serve as an aid for finishing the story at a later time.

Reproduce on full size sheet for individual pupil use.

Reproduce on large newsprint for model group use.

**STORY MAP**

WHEN

ACTION 1.

SETTING

WHERE

ACTION 2.

CHARACTER - WHO

ACTION 3.

ACTION 4.

PROBLEM:

RESOLUTION



## APPENDIX B-ANOTHER LOOK AT ROUND ROBIN READING

Round robin oral reading is a term used to describe the practice of having one child read orally while others follow along in their books. Although this is a very common practice and one that you may encounter in many classrooms, before you use this technique we would challenge you to ask: "Why am I spending this time in this activity?"

A number of answer might be given to this question. However, each answer can lead to another question. Let us look at some of the answers and the questions posed by these answers.

<b>POINT</b>	<b>COUNTERPOINT</b>
1. "Children enjoy reading orally"	1. Granted, but is round robin oral reading the best use of your teaching time? Are there better ways to provide pleasurable oral reading activities for your pupils? For example, could children work in pairs, reading to each other, while you use this time to teach individual pupils who have special needs?
2. "I use oral reading to diagnose"	2. A legitimate use of oral reading, but, if you really use oral reading to diagnose, do you need to do it every day? Do other pupils have to listen to this diagnostic procedure? What happens to the self image of the poor reader when peers sit in the poor reader when peers sit in on this diagnosis? If you are indeed using oral reading as a diagnostic instrument, do you use a record keeping system so that you plan instruction on the basis of this diagnosis?
3. "Children need practice in oral reading."	3. Is round robin reading the best possible way to provide this practice session?

### **What is Reading?**

If reading is a communication process, then oral reading should be used as a way of communicating and would require a true audience situation. If one child reads orally while others have their books open, is there true communication between the reader and the audience? If so, do you teach these skills by having pupils take turns reading orally, or should you be teaching specific oral reading competencies?

### **Goals of Reading**

One of the reasons for teaching reading is to lead children to use reading as a recreational activity. To reach this goal, you should provide a variety of experiences which lead the child to

enjoy reading. Is the round robin experience making reading an enjoyable experience for the capable reader who must wait for a learner who laboriously stumbles through the passage assigned him? While the nonfluent reader will usually insist on having a turn to read orally (perhaps because he has a need to be recognized or to feel part of the group), is this the most enjoyable reading experience you can plan for him?

### **View of the Learner**

If you see learners as image bearers of God who need to learn to love themselves as part of learning to love their neighbors, can you justify an activity which may contribute to a low self-image? Are you really helping them by putting them in a position in which they may be embarrassed by repeatedly failing in front of his peers? Is there any other way to use oral reading to enable the poor reader to have a success experience and be part of the group?

The ideas which follow should start you thinking of some alternatives to round robin reading. Some, frankly, are compromises you can use when you are placed in a situation in which round robin reading is traditionally used. Others are suggestions for teaching skills required in effective oral reading.

1. Set purposes for reading and then have students read silently. After silent reading of the selection, go back to the purpose setting questions and have pupils respond by reading the phrase, sentence, or paragraph which gave clues to the answer. Do not follow with round robin oral reading of the entire selection. If you still feel compelled to do this, divide the group into teams and have them read orally to each other while you use this time to give direct instruction to special needs pupils.

2. Set purposes for reading a given page. While one pupil reads orally, have others follow along in their books to find the answers to these purpose setting questions. When the reader completes the page, call upon others to answer the questions and to support their response by reading the sentences which support that response. This is dangerously close to round robin oral reading but at least should encourage the reader to view reading as thinking rather than as pronouncing words.

3. At the end of a unit, let small groups select a story to read to the class adding whatever sound effects and/or props they choose. During the time usually allotted to oral reading, permit one or more groups to practice. When a group feels ready for a presentation, have all other listen with books closed.

The challenge to you is to determine how much time you usually spend in oral reading, to review your objectives for oral reading, and then examine your teaching behavior to determine if you are making the best use of that time in relation to your goals for oral reading.

### **What Can I do, If I Don't do Round Robin Reading**

1. After silent reading of a passage or a story, ask pupil to read orally that part (sentence, paragraph, conversation) which
  - 1.1 Verifies a prediction
  - 1.2 Supports the mood set in the story (ex. read the part that tells how Tom felt or that made the night seem scary)
  - 1.3 Supplies the answer to a directed question about the content
  - 1.4 Shows how the speaker would sound (i.e., demonstrate inflection and intonation of a conversation)
2. Partner reading. Share favorite stories aloud.
3. Read plays, with each pupil taking a part. Pupils can rewrite stories into play form for rereading. These should be practiced silently before being read orally.
4. In groups, plan and write together an experience story. Let pupils copy it to take home and read to their parents.
5. Share children's independent reading. Plan a time for a child to read a small portion he has chosen (and has read silently) to the group. Direct the child to choose an exciting or humorous or favorite part. This works best in small groups.
6. One child acts out a part of the story silently. The other children find that part of the story and one reads it aloud.
7. Dramatize the story with puppets which can be made simply with paper bags or socks.
8. Simulate a radio play with sound effects and the children taking parts as narrator and characters. Read silently before performing.
9. Encourage children to share stories they write in class and read the stories to the group. Reserve and label an "author's chair."
10. Read poetry and some short narratives together as choral readings. The teacher should model the reading first, with the children following silently.
11. After proper practice, allow the child to read an interesting story on a cassette tape for other children to listen to at the listening center.
12. Ask individuals to read necessary announcements: roll call, money collection schedules, bulletins from the office, etc.



## APPENDIX C-TEACHING WORD RECOGNITION AS A THINKING PROCESS

**Objective:** to discover the common elements in spoken and written words; to associate the common element in the spoken word with the appropriate graphemes in the written word; to apply this knowledge in attacking new words.

Procedure: The learner will

- |                                     |     |  |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
| Auditory                            | 1.  | <b>listen</b> for the common element in spoken words.  |
| Awareness                           | 2.  | <b>state</b> in which position he heard the common element (initial, medial, final).   |
| Visual                              | 3.  | <b>look</b> for the common element in written words.   |
| Awareness                           | 4.  | <b>underline</b> the common elements in written words.   |
| Auditory                            | 5.  | <b>listen</b> to three words to determine which one does not contain the common element.   |
| Discrimination                      | 6.  | <b>state</b> which word does not belong and explain why.   |
| Visual                              | 7.  | <b>look</b> at three words to determine which one does not contain the common element.   |
| Discrimination                      | 8.  | <b>underline</b> the common element in two words, cross out the word which does not belong in the set, and explain why it does not belong.   |
| Association<br>sound with<br>symbol | 9.  | <b>respond</b> to teacher question (a)"When you see the letter or or group of letters), what sound will you expect?"<br>b)"When you hear this sound in a word, which letters will you expect to find in the word?" |
| Generalization                      |     |  |
| Application                         | 10. | <b>pronounce</b> a known word written by the teacher.  |
| of sound with<br>symbol             | 11. | <b>watch</b> as the teacher replaces part of the word with the new element.  |
| Correspondence                      | 12. | <b>underline</b> the new element.  |
|                                     | 13. | <b>pronounce</b> the new word.   |

### **Theoretical Base\***

#### 1. Psychological

- a. requires active participation of the learner.
- b. capitalizes on learner curiosity.
- c. tends to enhance understanding and retention because of a problem solving approach.

#### 2. Theological

- a. recognizes that man is created to be an active agent rather than a passive receiver.
- b. respects the concept of the linguistic priesthood of each believer.
- c. honors the principles of the cultural mandate-that man is to shape, order, and arrange his world.

\*From: "The Discovery Method in Language Arts: A Defense" by Donald Oppewal, *Christian Educators Journal*, May, 1969.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, M. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Allington, R. L. (1984). Oral reading. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research*. (pp. 829-864). New York: Longman.
- Anderson, R. C., Spiro, R.J. & Anderson, M. C. (1977). *Schemata as scaffolding for the representation of meaning in connected discourse*. Tech. Rep. no. 24. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 136-236.
- Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A. & Wilkinson, A.I.G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.
- Applebee, A. (1978). *The child's concept of story*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Beverluis, H. (1971). *Christian philosophy of education*. Grand Rapids: National Union of Christian Schools.
- Bosma, B. (1991). *Fairytales, fables, legends, and myths: Using folk literature in the classroom* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bosma, B. (1987, November). *The nature of critical thinking: Its base and boundary*. Paper presented at the National Council of Teachers of English Conference, Los Angeles, CA.
- Brown, A. L. (1985). Metacognition: The development of selective attention strategies for learning from texts. In H.S. Singer & R.B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (2nd ed., pp. 501-526). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Bruinsma, R. W. (1990). *Language arts in Christian schools*. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Schools International.
- Burns, P. C., Roe, B. D., & Ross, E. P. (1988). *Teaching reading in today's elementary school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Carillo, L. W. (1976). *Teaching reading: A handbook*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Chall, J. S. (1983). *Stages of reading development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Chomsky, C. (1972). Stages in language development and reading exposure. *Harvard Educational Review*, 42(1), 1-33.
- Clay, M. (1982). *Reading: The patterning of complex behavior*. New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books.
- DeFord, D. & Harste, J. (1982). Child language research and curriculum. *Language Arts*, 59(6), 590-600.
- Duffy, G. & Sherman, G. (1977). *Systematic reading instruction* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.
- Elley, W. B. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 22(2), 174-188.
- Flesch, R. (1955). *Why Johnny can't read*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Flesch, R. (1979). Why Johnny still can't read. *Family Circle*, p. 43.
- Fry, E. B. (1968). A readability form that saves time. *Journal of Reading*, 2, 513-516, 575-578.
- Galda, L. & Cullinan, B. (1990). Literature for literacy: What research says about the benefits of using trade books in the classroom. In J. Flood, J. Jensen, D. Lap & J. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (pp. 397-410). New York: Macmillan.
- Gallagher, S. & Lundin, R. (1989). *Literature through the eyes of faith*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Gillet, J. & Temple, C. (1991). *Understanding reading problems: Assessment and instruction* (3rd ed.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Goodman, K.S. (1976). Behind the eye: What happens in reading. In H. Singer & R.B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (2nd ed., pp. 259-272). Newark, Del: International Reading Association.
- Goodman, K, Smith E.B., Meredith, R. & Goodman, Y. (1987). *Language and thinking in school: A whole language curriculum*. New York: Richard C. Owen.
- Gough, P. (1976). One second of reading. In H. Singer & R.B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, (2nd ed., pp. 509-535). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Harste, J. C. (1989). *New policy guidelines for reading: Connecting research and practice*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.



- Hermings, D. G. (1989). *Communication in action: Teaching the language arts* (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Herber, H. (1970). *Teaching reading in content areas*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Hoekema, A. A. (1986). *Created in God's image*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Holmes, A. F. (1975). *The idea of a Christian college*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Huey, E. B. (1968). *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*. New York: Macmillan, 1908; reprinted Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hunt, G. (1989). *Honey for a child's heart* (3rd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Karlin, R. (1971). *Teaching elementary reading: Principles and strategies*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Kuitert, H. M. (1972). *Signals from the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S.J. (1976). Toward a theory of automatic processing in reading. In H. Singer & R. B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, (2nd ed., pp. 689-718). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Palincsar, A., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1, 117-175.
- Petty, W. T., Petty, D. C. and Becking, M. E. *Experiences in language: Tools and techniques for language arts methods* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1981.
- Readance, J., Bean, T. W., and Baldwin, R. S. (1985). *Content area reading: An integrated approach*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem*. Carbondale, III: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rumelhart, D. E. (1985). Toward an interactive model of reading. In H. S. Singer & R. B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 722-750). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Smith, F. (1988). *Understanding reading* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Smith, N.B. (1965). *American reading instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

- Sweetman, L. (1971, May). Models of man: Their classroom consequences. *Christian Educator's Journal*, pp. 7-9.
- The Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. (1925). Bloomington, IL: Public School Pub. Co.
- Vacca, R., & Vacca, J. (1989). *Content area reading* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
- Vacca, J. L., Vacca, R. T. & Gove, M. K. (1991). *Reading and learning to read* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co.
- VanderArk, N. (1981, Summer). The agony and ecstasy of my teaching. *Newsletter*. Reformed Bible College.
- VanderStelt, J. (1990). *Emerging literacy: A new perspective for teaching kindergarten*. Unpublished master's thesis, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Vryhof, S., Brouwer, J., Ulstein, S. and Vander Ark, D. (1989). *12 affirmations: Reformed Christian schooling for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, and E. Souberman, (Eds., and Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge: MIT Press and Wiley. (Originally published in Russian in 1934)
- Weaver, Constance. (1988). *Reading process and practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.