CLOZE READING STRATEGIES WITH ELEMENTARY PUPILS AS INFORMANTS

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CLOZE READING STRATEGIES WITH ELEMENTARY
PUPILS AS INFORMANTS

by

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this report is to challenge some cloze
reading instructional assumptions through: (1) reviewing cloze
procedure instructional literature; (2) reporting a six-week
study and practical cloze reading instructional experiences
with elementary-grade pupils over the past eight years; and
recording effects of using these pupils as informants to their
instructional needs. (Cloze procedure is a word-deletion tech-
nique in which readers predict deleted words from the remaining
context and their prior knowledge). The pupils act as infor-
mants by demonstrating that they do not need practice with
cloze procedure exercises to develop cloze reading strategies.
(Cloze reading strategies are incorporated when readers pretend
that unfamiliar text is deleted and predict something which
makes sense). These pupils further demonstrate that they do
not need detailed directions for developing cloze reading
strategies. These strategies motivate resourceful independent
reading through putting learners in control of their reading.

Strategy instruction, learning environment, and teacher
education are three practical implications discussed. This
report suggests the need for further research in: (1) cloze
reading strategies without prior cloze procedure exercises;
(2) cloze procedure studies which deal with comprehension;

(ii)

(3) cloze instruction in the context of all literacy learning; and (4) using learners as informants through ethnography. Through ethnographic procedures teachers and researchers can constantly examine and change instructional assumptions when necessary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purposes

The cloze procedure is being increasingly used in reading instruction. It is a word-deletion technique in which readers predict the deleted words from the remaining context and their prior experiences. Since Taylor (1953) first employed it as a readability measure with an every-fifth-word deletion pattern, there have been offered many different deletion patterns for instructional purposes. One of the most successful has been that of Holdaway (1979, 1980, 1983) who uses oral cloze to induce prediction by covering parts of very predictable stories with a mask and having a whole class of children predict what comes next. While this is a very collaborative and supportive learning experience, his masking technique keeps him in control of the deletions.

The present writer attempted to give elementary-grade pupils more control of their learning to read by having them make their own deletions through cloze reading strategies. Cloze reading strategies are predicting strategies which readers create in their minds to deal with unfamiliar text. Readers pretend that unfamiliar text is deleted in order to retain story structure while they predict something which makes sense.

Not every word has to be predicted because text irrelevant for the reader may be eliminated. Over the past eight years, these elementary pupils have acted as informants to the present writer by demonstrating that there was still too much control imposed by the assumption that these children needed directions for their prediction strategies.

This assumption constituted setting up constraints which interfered with the task of providing the best environment conducive to effective individual predicting strategies in which readers were in control. Professionals have the right and responsibility to make assumptions. But they also need to be constantly putting the assumptions underlying their beliefs to test. Because beliefs greatly affect instruction, the stand researchers and teachers take makes a major difference to learners. The major purpose of this report is to challenge some existing cloze reading instructional assumptions through using elementary-grade pupils as informants of their learning needs. It is hoped that this report will demonstrate to teachers and researchers the need to proceed from theory which is itself open to change.

The research and practical instruction reported here began with the following assumptions:

1. Variation of the cloze procedure to cloze reading strategies should prove to be a potential instructional technique for

helping readers cope with the unknown words obstacle.

2. Pupils in elementary school can through appropriate directions and discussion develop cloze reading strategies which will: (a) provide insight into the reading process; (b) encourage use of their own resources; and (c) encourage independence in directing and controlling their own learning to read.

3. Cloze reading strategies should prove especially useful to readers who: (a) overuse their knowledge of sound-symbol cues; (b) have good conceptual, experiential and language knowledge but poor knowledge of sound-symbol cues; (c) avoid reading independently; (d) always seek help with unknown words; and/or (e) omit all unknown words.

To confirm or disconfirm these assumptions, the questions to be answered were:

1. Do elementary-grade pupils need detailed directions for cloze procedure exercises and cloze reading strategies in order to develop predicting strategies in which they maintain control of their own learning to read?

2. What is the best learning environment conducive for inviting readers to use effective individual predicting strategies?

3. What cloze reading instructional assumptions should be abandoned, and what do cloze reading strategies appear to do for encouraging independent resourceful reading?

In order to answer the above questions, this report will:

1. Review literature on the cloze procedure for instructional purposes.

2. Report both quantitative and qualitative evidence from a six-week study with nine selected third-grade girls who were exposed to cloze procedure and cloze reading strategies instruction.

3. Report practical cloze reading strategies instruction over the past eight years with pupils in two different elementary schools.

All instances of cloze, not just those convenient to new assumptions, will be reported. By reporting all that has been found out about cloze, it is hoped that researchers and teachers will see the present writer's evolving theory of cloze reading instruction. Chapter five will:

1. Suggest some practical instructional implications that arise as a result of the findings of this report; and

2. Draw some conclusions and make some suggestions for future research.

Views on Reading

There will always be different views and methods of reading. The only time there appeared to be a sole method of

reading instruction was in the seventeenth century with the "ancient classical method of having the child start with a mastery of letters then of syllables and finally of words and sentences" (Mathews, 1966, p. 27). Mathews further noted that prior to 1840 Keagy was a minority forerunner of emphasis on thinking, prior knowledge and meaning which the current progressive consensus emphasizes. Keagy interpreted Pestalozzi (1827) who viewed education as the development from within the learner rather than as adult imposition and control from without. Huey (1908) and Thorndike (1917) suggested that children direct and control their learning to read through being read to and their own independent reading of stories. Three-quarters of a century later, Goodman and Burke (1980), Smith (1971-1983) and others are advocating similar views.

Up to the 1960s, stimulus-response views of reading (Holmes, 1953) which saw the reader as passive, prevailed. These models, (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974; Gough, 1972, in Singer and Ruddell, 1976) which have been termed "bottom-up" by Rumelhart (1977) and "outside-in" by Smith (1983), have been driven by low-level stimulus analysis starting with the graphophonemic (sound-symbol) system and usually leaving no avenue open for higher-level analysis. While these models are still evident, within the past quarter century the study of reading as a hypotheses-testing

process (Goodman, 1976; Smith, 1971-1983; and others) has domi-
nated research. These processes deny graphophonemic system as
the entry point to processing; semantic (meaning), syntactic
(structure) and graphophonemic processing are going on simul-
taneously. Higher level analysis interacts with and directs
low-level analysis by beginning in the minds of readers with
hypotheses about the meaning of the text. The learner is central
rather than passive; meaning is dependent on the schemas which
the reader assimilates from prior knowledge.

Recently, interactive compensatory reading models (Rumel-
hart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980) have attempted to overcome
weaknesses of both stimulus-response and hypotheses testing
views. Stanovich (1980) has suggested that while semantic
processes can constrain lower-level alternatives, they them-
selves can be constrained by low-level analysis. That is,
nonfluent readers have the ability to compensate for gaps in
present knowledge and weakness in certain skill areas by using
any knowledge and skill which is suited to the task. However,
Smith (1983) has suggested that "until interactive approaches
break free of their dependence on outside-in experimentation
and enrich their theoretical foundations with respect to com-
prehension, expectation that they might have productive
implications for classroom practice or instructional development
would seem to be premature" (p. 68).

Goodman (1976, 1984) in a recent update of his interactional reading model with his concept of dual texts, seems to assume that semantic structures can be identified in the text or in the reader. Harste and Stephens (1984) have suggested that Rosenblatt's (1978) concept of the reader's contribution in a two-way transactional relationship with the text is a better explanation of what is going on during the reading process. They further suggest that for understanding this transaction we need to focus reading and writing instruction on meaning generation and not meaning maintenance (convention, correctness, etc.). In focusing on this meaning generation, they suggest that readers' hypotheses have to come from somewhere. They use the term "abduction" to explain how readers abduce hypotheses by attempting to comprehend unfamiliar through what is already comprehensible. "Abduction involves going from things to ideas, not in the incremental fashion of inductive logic, but rather in the sense of analogy. It involves seeing an unknown (what is currently happening) as analogous to a known" (p. 9).

Harste, Burke and Woodward (1981, 1983) have found that children, informants in their literacy research, are constantly helping them understand this meaning generation. They have renewed interest in research on reading instruction in which learners act as informants for teachers and researchers. Vacca

and Vacca (1983) pointed out that the preoccupation with understanding the reading process over the last quarter century has caused researchers to de-value research on reading instruction. Harste, Burke and Woodward's instructional research is concerned with finding out what strategies are most useful in the attainment of literacy rather than proving the superiority of instructional approaches. In relation to reading, they are not concerned with debating order of semantic, syntactic and graphophonemic cue systems because they view cue systems as operating in a single gestalt which signs meaning. Learners are not seen as passive or central, but part of the total social context in which each object (not just print) has potential to sign meaning. All literacy learning takes place through the desire to obtain meaning in various social context. Reading is a sociopsycholinguistic process in which readers construct the meaning of messages through orchestration of pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues in a single gestalt or sign.

The above definition of reading has paved the way for looking at cloze reading strategies in relation to less fluent readers. The final section of this chapter will develop a rationale for cloze reading instruction with less fluent readers.

Rationale

Harste et al. (1983) have concluded that children who
encounter unknown words and do not continue reading do this
because they are trying to use what they have been taught about
sounding out words. Many children no longer expect print to
make sense because of over exposure to isolated skills instruc-
tion which has been devoid of interest and meaning. Teachers
need to free themselves from the constraints of prescribed
programs and to base instructional practices on sound theory
and process-oriented research. It is only then that they will
be free to find out what strategies are most useful to readers.

These strategies may surface when less fluent readers are
immersed in whole language in a variety of social contexts.
By "whole language" is meant reading, writing, listening and
speaking activities. Much knowledge about reading and writing
is gained from listening, about writing from reading, and about
reading from writing. There should be many opportunities for
collaboration so that "their use of negotiation gives them not
only a keep-going strategy, but allows them to cope with dif-
ficult language situations by moving such situations to a
level which makes sense" (Harste et al., 1981). This process
is also evident in speaking, listening and writing. Listeners
often compulsively fill in words in their heads for speakers

who are slow or hesitant. Writers often leave spaces blank
and come back to them later when something registers which
makes sense. Reading is to a large extent a composing process
similar to writing. Readers are not creating the whole text
as in writing but are engaged in cognitive self-correcting
strategies. Readers who are looking for meaning predict what
is coming next. The readers' knowledge interacts to confirm
or disconfirm predictions in shaping the information and mean-
ing. However, often elementary graders do not allow this
knowledge to interact because they have been conditioned to
sound out words.

Tovey (1976), by asking thirty children (five each from
grades one to six) questions about what they do when they
encounter unknown words, found that ninety-three percent
sounded them out. The present writer had similar findings
with a class of twenty-nine third-grade girls in response to
the following question: "What is reading?" Only thirteen
percent indicated that reading had anything to do with obtain-
ing meaning by giving responses similar to the following:
"Reading is when people read; like reading words that make
sense all together." Responses to the question "When you are
reading, what do you do when you come to a word you don't
know?" further suggested that many children sound out words.

Ninety-three percent said that they would sound out the unknown word but did not indicate whether they would check to see if it make sense. In response to the question "What do you do if you find that after you have figured out a certain word it does not make sense in the story?", only fourteen percent indicated that they would read over the story to try and fit in another word which made sense.

Smith (1971) has said that the reliance on sounding out "will involve the reader in so much delay that his short term memory will be over loaded and he will lose the sense of what he is reading" (p. 171). Goodman (1976), Goodman and Burke (1980), Newman (1982), Harste et al. (1983), Smith (1983) and Holdaway (1984) have demonstrated that less fluent readers do not need to be placing such constraints on memory. They have demonstrated that less fluent readers are capable of prediction from context. Children learning to read can do this because they are usually speakers and listeners who expect to get meaning. They have sufficient conceptual, experiential and language knowledge to use cue systems in given print-context to sign meaning. However, they can use these resources only when presented with whole language. Nevertheless, they are often presented with isolated bits of language (letters, words, etc.) which are so abstract that they are meaningless

or could mean anything. Language has to be presented in its
natural context (stories, trade books, etc.) to make meanings
clear so that children can assess it and build schemata while
reading.

Schema theory (Anderson and others, 1976; Adams and Collins,
1977; and Monteith, 1979) provides a framework for this pre-
diction. Monteith has suggested that an important contribution
of schema theory to reading instruction is that it has renewed
interest in reading as a process that includes processing of
overall meaning "simultaneously at all levels of analysis"
(p. 370). Munch (1979), in using schema theory as a framework
for cloze procedure, found that least proficient readers were
more influenced by familiarity of topic than by writing style.
This suggests that these readers may have been to some extent
engaged in a composing process based on their prior knowledge.
Cloze reading strategies enable readers to deal with unknown
words while putting ideas together in a cohesive way through
composing and linking. Schema theorists join cognition and
perception and move readers into complex cognitive thinking
processes governing meaning which "involves the filling in of
necessary 'default values' or 'slots' based on background
information in order that what was perceived made sense"
(Harste et al., 1983, p. 76). The blanks which readers create

in their heads are like slots. Schema theory had demonstrated that the filling-in of these slots or blanks is not random.

Cloze reading strategies enable readers to make predictions, not guesses, by simultaneously and interrelatedly utilizing all linguistic cue systems and their perceptual and cognitive processing strategies. Schema theorists do not tie cognition so closely to motivation and developmental stages as does Piaget (1959). They see prior knowledge as crucial to explaining the differences in related thinking as more a matter of content than of process. This is part of the rationale on which Harste et. al. (1983) base the fact that when children are learning to read they are not engaged in a pseudo-adult reading process but in the real process. While children cannot be expected to have so much prior knowledge as adults, they can use cloze reading strategies when presented with materials in a social context which is predictable in relation to their prior knowledge.

Too often, less fluent readers are not exposed to materials or environments conducive to risk-taking and predicting. Currently, materials are being published which claim to be whole language approaches to reading instruction, but many are just a variation of the traditional skills instruction. Thurlow, Graden and Ysseldyke (1984) found that 35 second-grade students

from 10 different elementary schools who were observed during their scheduled reading periods (120 minutes) spent only ten to twelve minutes engaged in oral and silent reading. It would appear that much time is still spent on skills instruction, for Smith (1975) found that in the average hour of reading instruction, children spent about four minutes actually reading. Cloze reading strategies involve children in much actual reading.

It is promising that some educators, such as Atwell and Rhodes (1984) are beginning to alter the traditional skills lessons with strategy instruction. They have demonstrated how strategy lessons, such as cloze reading strategies, should help teachers and children enjoy the unexpected in their rereading, rethinking and reconsidering. Just as cloze reading strategies encourage rethinking and self-correcting, it is hoped that this report will demonstrate the rethinking and self-correcting which the present writer has done on cloze reading instructional assumptions over the past eight years. The final chapter of this report will present suggestions for developing an instructional environment in which readers maintain control of their predicting strategies while learning to read.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since Taylor (1953) introduced the cloze procedure (named after the gestalt concept of closure), it has been widely used in tests and measurements. It has been used for measuring readability; comprehension; semantic awareness and memory; syntactic, associational and expressional fluency; language facility; intelligence; dynamics of thinking; concept development; creativity; and possibly other aspects of language behavior and thought. At present, it is estimated that there are over one thousand papers available on some aspect of the cloze procedure. It is only recently that its potential as an instructional technique has been widely recognized. This review will focus on instructional applications of the cloze procedure.

Rankin (1959) first suggested its instructional use for developing sensitivity to context by varying the original every-fifth-word deletion pattern. When used in tests and measurements, blanks are of a standard length and readers must fill in the exact words from the original passages. For instructional purposes, there have been many variations (Thomas, 1978; Quillin, 1978; Silkly, 1979; and Holdaway, 1979, 1980, 1983) of deletion patterns. Whatever variation is used, cloze

procedure exercises disrupt language patterns and have the receiver of the message predict the deleted words or any words which are suitable in the grammatical structure and make sense in the context of the passage. Rankin's major recommendation was the development of cloze exercises for individual remediation in subject matter areas.

Jongsma (1971) reviewed ten cloze teaching studies and found that only Bloomer (1962), Martin (1968) and Kingston and Weaver (1970) had found a significant difference in reading ability in favor of the cloze procedure. However, the other seven studies involved no real teaching. Schneyer (1965) attributed his insignificant results to the fact that there was just practice doing cloze exercises. He suggested that reasons for the closures be verbalized. Martin attributed his significant results to the fact that he had followed Schneyer's suggestion by following each exercise with teacher-directed discussion. Bloomer (1962) found that college students found cloze exercises very motivating, but suggested that one should be at junior high level in terms of word recognition in order to use the cloze procedure. However, Kingston and Weaver (1970) have demonstrated that first-graders could perform cloze exercises and find them highly motivating. Kingston and Weaver's study was the first study using children in the primary grades

and using real teaching over a reasonable period of time (grade one year). They combined the cloze procedure with a language experience approach (LEA) to beginning reading instruction with culturally-disadvantaged first graders. Jongsma suggested that with more actual teaching and better research techniques further results should be more encouraging.

McKenna and Robinson (1980) indicated that subsequent instructional studies appear to have avoided many of the short-comings of the studies reviewed by Jongsma. They also reviewed the use of the cloze procedure in relation to: comprehension and readability; statistical and constructional issues; the psychology of cloze; contextual phenomena; foreign language applications; and cloze and maze. Besides Jongsma, they reviewed: Bloomer (1962); Bortnick and Lopardo (1973); Bort- nick and Lopardo (1976); Guice (1969); Gomberg (1976); Gove (1975); Grant (1979); Kennedy (1974); Kennedy and Weener (1973); Radice (1978); Rynders (1971); and Thomas (1978). Only studies by Guice (1969) and Rynders (1971) reported insignificant results; both studies attempted to improve comprehension. In their review of the comprehension and readability studies, most of the comprehension studies claimed that the cloze pro- cedure was a useful measure of comprehension.

However, Harste and Burke (in Newman, 1983) have pointed out that cloze procedure, which focuses on surface structure,

may not be a very useful measure of comprehension. There is no proof that readers' control of authors' lexicons is related to control of deep structures and semantic meanings. With cloze reading strategies, readers are in control of deep structures and semantic meanings because they don't have to predict every unknown word. The problem with the cloze procedure is that it does not duplicate the reading process because readers are encouraged to focus on surface structures by filling in gaps which they have not created. Harste and Burke (in Newman, 1983) have speculated that readers, given cloze passages with every-fifth-word deleted, would be able to get authors' meanings without completing the cloze passages. They have further suggested that if used without completing all gaps, "the cloze may actually prove to be an effective instructional strategy that does much to encourage a dynamic interaction between reader and text" (p. 47). Cloze reading strategies do this because readers are not expected to fill in all gaps (unfamiliar text) but are expected to construct meaning.

Gomberg (1976) has suggested the cloze procedure as an excellent classroom technique for encouraging readers to seek meaning and has included a number of suggestions for use of the cloze procedure in the classroom. Radice (1978) also has suggested the cloze procedure as a valuable teaching tool and has

offered useful suggestions for implementation in the classroom.
Kennedy and Weener (1973) have concluded that the cloze pro-
cedure deserves serious consideration for remedial instruction
after working with below-average third graders. They found
the visual format most effective. Milam (1979) had partly
attributed his insignificant results to the fact that oral
cloze may not be the best means to focus the reader's attention
on contextual clues. With individuals, most research has
favored the visual format.

Holdaway (1979, 1980, 1983) has effectively used the
visual and oral format in combination to induce prediction and
to encourage group dynamic interaction with an author. For
example, he has had very predictable stories on the overhead
projection and used a mask to expose just a bit at a time
while encouraging a whole class of children to predict what
comes next. Holdaway has found such strategies most useful
because they take the pressure off the individual, for in a
group, children are often more willing to take risks in their
prediction. It is gratifying that Holdaway (1984) has recog-
nized that "considerable research and exploration is required
in the use of cloze procedure to achieve learning objectives"
(p. 26). It is hoped that this report will contribute to that
research by suggesting some productive instructional implica-
tions in respect to use of cloze reading strategies.

In order to get some direction for the practical applica-
tion of the cloze procedure in the classroom, the present
writer has used mainly the suggestions of Bortnick and Lopardo
(1973, 1976), Schell (1974), and Kennedy (1974). Gove (1975),
Pikulski (1976), Blachowiz (1977), Blanc (1977), Miller (ed.,
1977), Hopkins (1977), Goodman and Burke (1980), and Buchanan
(1980) have also provided ideas. Kennedy (1974) found that
cloze training helped first graders to focus more on the con-
ceptual aspect of reading. Gove (1975) successfully used the
cloze procedure in a first grade classroom to focus "beginning
readers' attention on important aspects of reading that are
often overlooked in beginning reading programs - the use of
syntactic and semantic information to comprehend print" (p. 38).
Balyeat and Norman (1975) have also suggested that cloze pas-
sages can be used effectively with children in grades one to
six.

Weaver, G. C. (1979) has reported the following advantages
of the cloze procedure: (1) can use present instructional
materials, (2) requires a language like that used in the actual
reading process, (3) focuses attention on strategies that can
be applied in independent reading, (4) easy to construct, (5)
involve students in active learning experiences, and (6) are
usually enjoyable for students. She also reported that more

and more teachers are finding valuable instructional uses of the cloze procedure. The practical experiences of all the above writers have suggested that the cloze procedure is a useful instructional device.

While Grant's (1976) review of cloze studies prior to 1976 found only two studies with positive results for instructional use of the cloze procedure, she concluded that the cloze procedure was most effective when there was discussion of responses, variations of deletion patterns, acceptance of synonyms, and teachers working actively with students. She further suggested that the cloze procedure may be most effective for remedial instruction. Pessah (1975) found that reading achievement scores improved when the cloze procedure was used in remedial reading instruction in community college classes. Pessah has said: "Motivation is quite high because students feel challenged and know that if they search the paragraph rigorously they can find the answer" (p. 12).

Deck (1977) indicated that third graders could work with cloze tasks and that they could use contextual redundancy to reduce uncertainty. However, Streib (1976077) has suggested that one cannot assume that when no words are deleted (i.e. actual reading situation), the child will utilize the same cues when he is forced to guess. She further pointed out that the

relationship between performance on a cloze task and use of context in actual reading situations has not been explored. From a most recent review of the cloze procedure as an instructional technique, it seems that cloze reading strategies are still an unexplored area (Grant, 1979). However, Grant indicates that the literature has suggested the efficacy of the use of the cloze procedure for teaching children to use context clues effectively.

Maxwell (1978) found that college freshmen who were exposed to cloze passages after reading unmutilated passages improved reading more than subjects in other treatments. Possibly, this helped them get a more "close-up-view of what is occurring at particular points in a language passage" (Weaver, 1965, p. 131). Stansell (1978) has recommended cloze techniques for helping students develop mature reading strategies. While the researchers in Weaver (1978) have concluded that empirical evidence has supported subskills instruction over holistic, they do agree that cloze exercises may help students develop a better awareness of contextual cues and grammatical patterns. They have concluded that very little research has been done on how to teach students to complete cloze passages.

Gunn (1979) has demonstrated the transactive nature of the cloze procedure for developing in readers a conscious

awareness of processing strategies. She emphasizes reading as a thinking task in which setting purposes is crucial to efficient reading. Anderson (1979) has answered frequently-asked questions about the cloze procedure. He has shown how it taps meaning derived from text. Rakes and McWilliams (1979) have further facilitated classroom use of the cloze procedure. McKenna (1979) has suggested that context can be used inferentially to predict deleted words with the cloze procedure. Bailey (1979) has discussed the use of cloze procedure and group prediction for developing literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension. Kaminsky (1979) has presented strengths and weaknesses of the cloze procedure for helping children learning to read. A major strength is that readers gain insight in processing language by using context and recognizing the interrelationships of language and hopefully better understanding what they are reading. A major weakness which she has suggested is that beginning readers are poorly judged by use of cloze. (This seems to tie to what schema theorists have said about prior knowledge).

Hoffman (1979) has suggested, by the use of cumulative cloze (a single target word is deleted from a passage and replaced by the same nonsense word every time), that poor readers may be unable to maintain a schema over longer units

of discourse. He found that elementary grade poor readers
(e.g. grades three to seven) often abandoned a correct response
once it had been identified. Both Kaminsky's major weakness
and Hoffman's (1979) finding may be related to level of diffi-
culty of materials. Most research has not given the approxi-
mate reading levels of materials used. Cunningham (1979) has
suggested that cloze passages be at the independent level
(i.e. easy) with deletion of every twentieth word. He has
further suggested that it may be best to begin with words
which begin with consonant or consonant clusters (e.g. blends,
digraphs) and blank out the rest with a grease pencil so that
readers have initial consonants and length of word for addi-
tional clues. His idea seems most worthwhile, because initial
consonants are the easiest sound-symbol relationships to teach
and this may be the only additional clue children will need
along with context. Cloze reading strategies enable children
to do this, because if they can not predict unknown words,
they are encouraged to focus on sound-symbol features of the
unknown words. With cloze reading strategies they even have
the whole shape of words as clues.

Yellin (1979) has investigated two instructional strategies
for reading comprehension using cloze procedure. Milam (1979)
has attempted to determine whether training with the cloze

procedure would be an effective means of improving reading comprehension in third graders, all of whom are reading below grade level. While some of these have had positive results, such as Yellin (1979) and Sampson, Valmont and Allen (1982), and negative results such as Milam (1979) or both positive and negative such as Beil (1981), the cloze procedure seems to have been highly recommended for improving comprehension. However, as indicated earlier (Harste and Burke in Newman, 1983), cloze procedure may not be a very useful measure of comprehension. Cloze reading strategies encourage readers to get the author's meaning without filling in all the gaps in the surface structure while they still get semantic meanings.

Sampson et. al. (1982) also examined the effectiveness of instructional cloze in strengthening vocabulary and in encouraging divergent production of third-grade students. Because of the lack of empirical research utilizing children below fourth grade, through a pilot study they decided to use an every-tenth-word deletion pattern because it proved easier than an every-fifth-word deletion pattern for third-grade students. While the purpose of their discussion of exercises was "to heighten students' awareness of the range of vocabulary items that could satisfy the semantic and syntactic constraints imposed by the surrounding context of each cloze blank" (p. 397)

they did not deal with the actual feedback and discussion. (None of the empirical studies seem to deal with the qualitative data which could be obtained from using the pupils as informants through the information they supply in these discussions). Since they found no significant gains in vocabulary development, they suggested that the children increased facility in seeing how words and propositions fit together to make sense rather than increase their vocabulary. By using children as informants, it is hoped that the present writer will come to understand the strategies which children use to make sense of what they are reading.

Both Quattrini (1980) and Schoenfeld (1980) have recently presented instructional uses of the cloze procedure. Like Cunningham (1979), Schoenfeld (1980) has suggested that cloze passages be at children's independent reading level. Legenza and Elijah (1979) have suggested that detailed analysis of cloze error patterns could be useful in placing students in appropriate reading levels such as independent, instructional and frustration. However, again caution should be exercised here. Harste and Burke (in Newman, 1983) have pointed out that cloze procedure focuses too much on surface structure and thus may not indicate readers' control of deep structures and semantic meanings. Wells and Beil (1980) and Thomas (1980)

support the importance of prior knowledge for completing cloze tasks. Dwyer (1980) has recommended the cloze procedure, frequently with modifications, for helping children read more competently.

Ellington (1981) has demonstrated how the cloze procedure can be implemented in three phases: presentation and preparation; preview and completion; and follow-up. He has also included other suggestions for its use. Marino (1981) has suggested the following five criteria for assisting teachers in choosing and/or making cloze passages: (1) completing of cloze passages should require reading of more than one sentence; (2) the deleted words should be predictable; (3) deleted words should be related to the instructional purposes; (4) if multiple choice options are provided, they should include attractive distractors; and (5) the content of cloze materials should be worth reading. Marino has also emphasized the interactive nature of reading and the importance of relevance because most research does not deal much with selection of cloze materials. While the cloze procedure has not empirically proven its validity as an instructional technique, it remains useful for instructional purposes.

Most empirical studies have (1) involved very little actual instruction; (2) reported very little about the learning

environments and selection of materials; and (3) have not given enough detail about deletion patterns. However, empirical research has suggested that: (1) the cloze procedure can be used with elementary graders; (2) instruction should involve discussion of responses; (3) the cloze procedure may be useful for readers who fail to see reading as a unitary act; and (4) the cloze procedure is highly motivating. Neither empirical or practical applications have reported just one implementation of cloze reading strategies. However, the practical applications have greatly assisted the writer in dealing with cloze reading strategies by highlighting the strengths of the cloze procedure, then to attempt to overcome its weaknesses.

Besides the strengths of the cloze procedure which have been already mentioned, with the variation of the cloze procedure to cloze reading strategies are added potential strengths: (1) excellent classroom technique for encouraging children to seek meaning; (2) leads to increased independence when one can overcome the unknown-words obstacle; (3) helps teachers better understand reading behaviors; (4) children can test themselves to see how much graphic information they need; and (5) it makes it possible to use challenging predictable literature, particularly when working with a group.

The major weaknesses of past cloze research which this report will attempt to overcome are:

1. The claim that cloze procedure improves comprehension. To some extent, the present writer will attempt to use cloze reading strategies in the manner suggested by Harste and Burke (in Newman, 1983). Because readers will be encouraged to get meaning without filling in all gaps (unfamiliar text), cloze reading strategies should encourage much transaction between the reader and the text. Children will be engaged in much time actually reading to develop strategies for controlling deep structures and semantic meanings.

2. Most past research has relied on quantitative empirical research. This has caused researchers to be distracted from: (a) using children as informants; (b) reporting details on pupil-teacher discussion; (c) attempting to find out about transactions between the reader and the text; and (d) reporting on learning environments and materials conducive to predicting and risk-taking. Although this research began with an empirical study, the present writer began to rely more and more on naturalistic procedures (Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984) because of the information obtained from much discussion with elementary pupils. The elementary pupils became the research and curricular informants. While this report has

not strictly conformed to procedures for ethnographic research, it is an initial attempt to bring together experimental and ethnographic traditions. "An ethnographic perspective assumes that all aspects of the context of situation, including the researcher, are an integral part of the process and hence an integral part of the phenomena one is attempting to study" (Harste et al., 1984a, p. 89).

3. The cloze procedure also seems to be poorly named, especially when one looks at the way gestalt psychologists viewed closure. Cloze is more a language search process (Tuinman, 1972) than the mere completion of a perceptual task. Holdaway (1980) suggests that "predicting" is a better name. This is why the present writer has decided to attempt to answer question two in chapter one - What is the best learning environment conducive toward inviting readers to use individual predicting strategies?

In relation to the other questions and assumptions noted in the first chapter, this review suggests that cloze reading strategies have the potential to prove to be an effective instructional strategy for helping readers deal with unfamiliar text. This appears especially possible when one looks at what Harste and Burke have said (in Newman, 1983). It also seems that elementary pupils will be able to use these cloze strategies.

However, the practical applications which were mentioned in
this review have all suggested giving elementary pupils direc-
tions for cloze experiencs. That is why the present writer
started out by giving children directions. The next two
chapters will help answer the question whether such directions
are necessary. The final chapter will deal with the question
mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph. It will
suggest learning environment and materials conducive to effec-
tive predicting strategies in transactions between readers
and text.

CHAPTER III

STUDY WITH THIRD-GRADE PUPILS

The major purpose of this chapter is to report a six-week study which was done in 1976. The small sample and short duration of this study is a major limitation in drawing conclusions from the quantitative data. However, the qualitative data from discussions with the children assisted the present writer in the practical applications of cloze reading strategies which will be reported in the next chapter. Instructional procedures and comments from children will be reported in detail, because past research has been very vague about the actual instruction. While the instructional procedures would be different if the study were done now, the original study will be reported in detail because it demonstrates the present writer's evolving theory of cloze reading instruction.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were nine third-grade girls from a class in an elementary school in the city of St. John's, Newfoundland. The class was selected because their teacher was interested in having someone work with these children to improve their reading. The teacher selected the children from her own observations and

scores on Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, First Edition, Level
C, Form 1 (1965). All nine children had been taught reading
by a subskills approach from the Nelson (McInnes et. al., 1972)
program since they had begun school. A control group was
selected by giving the whole class Primary II, Form X of the
Stanford Reading Achievement Test (1966). Nine girls who were
closest in reading levels to the experimental group were
selected as the control. The control group were reading
approximately one grade level above the experimental group.

Materials

Instructional cloze materials. Instructional materials
used in the study consisted of twenty instructional cloze pro-
cedure passages. (Thirteen of these passages are in Appendix
A). The other seven (every-tenth-word deletion) are the first
seven selections in Chillers and Thrillers (Hurwood in Claro,
1974). Ten of the twenty cloze procedure passages were pre-
pared by deleting every-fifth-word from the children's own
written stories. (These are the last ten passages in Appendix
A). The materials for the actual reading situations in which
they were encouraged to use cloze reading strategies came from
their Nelson (McInnes et. al., 1972) basal program and the
Ginn (Lackenbauer et. al., 1970) basal program. (The passage
from Nelson (McInnes et. al., 1972) which was used in the first

actual reading situation is in Appendix A). The classroom
teacher helped select the materials and reported that they were
of an appropriate reading level for the children. Because the
first passage was the predictable story "The Little Pot"
(Rockwell, 1975), every-fifth-word deletion pattern was used;
it was also used with the children's own stories. The second
set of passages (Chapman, 1976, p. T2, pp. 10-11) involved verb
deletions because from discussion with the children verb dele-
tions seemed to be causing some difficulty.

Instruments. Primary II, Form X and Form W respectively
of Stanford Reading Achievement Test were used as pretests and
posttests. Sign tests and t-tests were done on the paragraph
meaning section of these tests to determine if there was any
significant difference between pre-and post-scores for the
experimental and the control group.

Percentage of unknown words which experimental subjects
were able to determine in actual reading situations was cal-
culated by dividing the words determined by the unknown words
in each passage.

The passage (Appendix A) used in the first actual reading
situation was chosen because it was a passage which the children
were soon expected to read as part of their basal program. The
other passages the children chose themselves from an appropriate

level (chosen by teacher) of the Ginn (Lackenbauer et. al., 1970) basal because their teacher did not want them using the basal which they would be using throughout the school year.

Procedure

Instructional time was controlled for both the control and experimental group. The control group received regular instruction from their basal program in a group of twenty, while the experimental group were involved in cloze activities for one hour each day from Monday to Friday.

The study spanned a six-week period during May and June. The pretest was conducted the week prior to this and the post-test was conducted the Monday after the six-week period.

Control group activities. The control group activities consisted of regular reading instruction, mostly from the Nelson (McInnes et. al., 1972) basal, provided by their class-room teacher. This instruction dealt with comprehension, phonics activities, independent reading, listening, speaking, writing and the other usual activities outlined in basals.

Experimental treatment. Since past research did not give enough detail about instructional cloze activities, the procedures for the experimental subjects will be presented in detail. Because the actual procedures were quite lengthy, they are only presented in outline form here.

A. Introduction of the cloze procedure.

   1. Encouraged interest in cloze tasks.

      a. asked them if they like puzzles
      b. had discussion of how they enjoyed puzzles
      c. told them they were going to try a different kind of puzzle in which they fill in words that are missing in a story

   2. Gave the children opportunity to experience success.

      a. used the children's story "The Little Pot" (Appendix A) which had every-fifth-word deleted - this contained a good deal of repetition and thus was highly redundant

   3. Had them silently read through "The Little Pot."

      a. fostered the habit of reading up to each blank and beyond for clues
      b. emphasized that whenever they do exercises like this they should always read the whole story before attempting to fill in the missing words

   4. Had the passage with blanks read aloud by the children in order to clear up any difficulties which they had with words not deleted.

   5. Had each child go back and reread the passage silently, filling in words which made sense.

      a. pointed out that they did not need to have the same answers because any words which made sense would be accepted
      b. told them they would be asked afterwards to give reasons for their choices
      c. told them they would decide through discussion which answers would be accepted
      d. reminded them to keep going back and ahead to search for clues
      e. instructed them to read the whole story when they finished to see if their choices made sense

   6. Comparison of cloze passages from "The Little Pot" with original unmutilated passage.

      a. focused discussion on whether meaning was affected by the acceptance of certain responses

      b. repeatedly had the children point out the clues which helped them decide on their choices

7. From the results of 1 to 6 above, some instructional needs of the children were noted.

      a. The discussion of "The Little Pot" indicated that the children were not making sufficient use of punctuation as a cue for helping them decide on choices and get the overall meaning of the passage.

      b. The function of the period, question mark, comma, explanation mark and quotation marks was discussed and through dramatization these were related to what ways similar things were conveyed in speech.

      c. Since the children also had some difficulty with verb deletions, the next two passages had selected verbs deleted.

B. Following similar procedures to those outlined in A with the two verb deletion passages, 7 of every-tenth-word deletion passages (Hurwood in Claro, 1974, pp. 6-27), and 10 of every-fifth-word deletion passages which used the children's own written stories (see Appendix A) were used.

1. The first verb deletion passage, "The Joke" (Chapman, 1976, p. T2), was done orally together with instructor-directed discussion.

2. Had the children follow the procedure in A (1 to 6) with the passage "Downhill Run" (Chapman, 1976, pp. 10-11).

3. Gradually decreased directions so that children worked more independently on future cloze passages, but always had discussion of responses.

4. Always reminded the children of the purpose for doing each passage before they began.

      a. Used the rest of the words in the story to help choose words which made sense in the blanks.

      b. Indicated that by pretending unknown words are blanks they can do the same thing when they are reading stories with no words missing.

C. While still working with cloze passages, the examiner gave the children opportunities to apply cloze strategies in actual reading situations (cloze reading strategies).

1. While waiting to be shown how to apply the cloze strategies in actual reading situations, the children composed their own stories which were later used as cloze passages (one child composed two stories).

2. Directions for helping each child individually apply this strategy to first actual reading situation:

    a. Selected part of the story "Pierre Pidgeon," story in basal which they had not yet read (Appendix A)
    b. Told each child that although she should always read something over silently before reading it orally, there was a special reason for asking her to read part of this story orally - needed to help her find the words she did not know
    c. Pointed out to her that this would show her how to use what she had been learning when she came to words she did not know while reading on her own
    d. Read the first three paragraphs of the story to her
    e. Had her underline each word she did not know as she read the next part
    f. Had her read silently the first three paragraphs and the part she had read orally and told her to pretend the underlined words were blanks
    g. Had her choose suitable words for the pretend blanks from the sense of the story
    h. Had her reread orally and discuss the unknown words which she had determined independently
    i. If she could not get all the unknown words by using cloze reading strategies, she was encouraged to discuss whether they were relevant to the meaning of the story and/or to pay more attention to the visual features of the underlined word (e.g., possibly the initial consonant was the only extra clue needed)

3. Further applications of cloze reading strategies while still working on cloze passages:

    a. After completing each of the future cloze passages, each child waited for the whole group to complete their passages before discussion of responses.

b. While waiting, each child was engaged in <u>actual</u> <u>reading</u> situations using stories from the Ginn (Lackenbauer, 1970) Program, a basal which they were not using in class.

c. For each story, as well as using the procedures <u>in</u> <u>2 above</u>, each child was examined on the word list in the back of the reader before reading a story and after discussion of how they could better determine unknown words in context.

d. The percentage of unknown words which each child was able to determine independently from context was computed.

D. Questioned each child to see what she thought about the usefulness of cloze reading instruction.

Results

Quantitative Data

The experimental subjects were able to get most of the relevant unknown words in the first actual reading situation, and eight of them were able to get most of the words in succeeding actual reading situations (see Tables 1 and 2).

There were significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores for the experimental subjects and no significant differences for the control group on the paragraph meaning section of the Stanford Reading Achievement Test (see Table 3). The differences in scores for the experimental group were significant for both sign tests and t-tests at the .05 level. One of the greatest gains in paragraph meaning was by one of the poorer readers. Experimental subject C went from a grade score

TABLE 1

Words which each subject underlined as unknown (U) when first reading the 179-word passage from the story "Pierre Pidgeon" in Treats and Treasures Book Two of the Nelson Reading Program (pp. 332-33) and from these words, the words which each subject was able to determine in the actual reading situation (*)

Words	Subjects								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
dogart			U*						
deal	U*								
patience	U	U*	U	U*	U*	U*	U*		U*
grew			U						
tired	U*								
shelves		U*	U*	U*			U*		U*
canned			U*	U					
tackle	U*		U*						
tourists	U			U*	U*	U	U	U*	U*
souvenirs	U*	U*		U*	U*	U*	U*		U*
shelf	U*	U*							
nicest	U*								
TOTAL U	8	4	6	5	3	3	4	1	4
TOTAL U*	6	4	4	4	3	2	3	1	4
Percentage	75	100	67	80	100	67	75	100	100

TABLE 2

Unknown words from word lists at the end of each story which each experimental
subject was able to determine by actually reading the stories in the Ginn Readers

	Subjects								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Stories Read	2	2	5	4	11	9	4	7	
Total Words in Lists	20	20	57	57	169	117	57	96	
Unknown Words	16	10	29	16	27	7	11	8	
Unknown Words Determined	8	7	25	16	19	6	9	7	
Percentage	50	70	86	100	70	86	82	88	

TABLE 3

Comparisons of the experimental and control groups on the pre and post SRAT

Subjects	Experimental Word Meaning			Control Word Meaning			Experimental Paragraph Meaning			Control Paragraph Meaning			Experimental Word Study Skills			Control Word Study Skills		
	Pre	Post	Gain or Loss	Pre	Post	Gain or Loss	Pre	Post	Gain or Loss	Pre	Post	Gain or Loss	Pre	Post	Gain or Loss	Pre	Post	Gain or Loss
A	2.7	2.5	-.2	4.0	4.4	+.4	2.6	2.7	+.1	4.2	4.4	+.2	2.8	1.9	-.9	4.5	4.7	+.2
B	3.5	3.0	-.5	3.3	3.5	+.2	2.4	2.7	+.3	4.1	3.9	-.2	2.7	2.3	-.4	4.5	4.8	+.3
C	2.9	2.9	0	3.8	3.6	-.2	2.1	3.2	+1.1	3.3	3.4	+.1	2.2	1.9	-.3	5.2	5.6	+.4
D	3.2	2.8	-.4	4.2	4.0	-.2	3.2	3.4	+.2	4.4	4.1	-.3	2.7	2.6	-.1	6.5	5.8	-.7
E	3.8	3.8	0	3.5	4.7	+1.2	3.4	4.6	+1.2	3.9	3.9	0	6.3	5.8	-.5	4.0	3.4	-.6
F	4.2	3.8	-.4	4.4	4.4	0	3.2	3.2	0	4.3	4.0	-.3	6.5	4.7	-1.8	6.7	5.2	-1.5
G	3.5	3.5	0	3.7	4.0	+.3	3.0	3.1	+.1	4.3	4.3	0	4.2	3.7	-.5	6.3	6.3	0
H	3.3	3.8	+.5	4.7	5.1	+.4	4.3	3.8	-.5	4.1	4.6	+.5	7.0	6.0	-1.0	6.5	5.8	-.7
I	3.7	4.2	+.5	3.7	4.2	+.5	3.9	4.6	+.7	3.7	4.8	+1.1	5.8	3.9	-1.9	4.2	5.4	+.8
X	3.4	3.4	0	3.9	4.2	+.3	3.1	3.5	+.4	4.0	4.2	+.2	4.5	3.6	-.9	5.4	5.2	-.2

of 2.1 to 3.2. This child also had one of the greatest gains in word study skills. Experimental subject H, who had the highest word study skills score, was the only experimental subject who had a loss rather than a gain on paragraph meaning.

The qualitative data which will be presented next should help with the later discussion of the above quantitative data - especially in relation to experimental subjects C and H.

Qualitative Data

Since discussions of cloze procedure and cloze reading strategies actives were quite lengthy, only major comments which relate to what the children thought about cloze reading instruction will be reported here. From the following comments it seems that they may have benefited more from cloze reading strategies than cloze procedure:

Subject A. I can get words without anyone telling me.

Subject B. I can tell when reading is getting harder. Now I use more things to get the sense of the story.

Subject C. I go down in my bedroom and read. I cross out a word I don't know and then go back to it.

Subject D. I know now I can do it if I try.

Subject E. I can read better. First when I read I always got mixed up where I was and all that and now I can tell where I am better.

Subject F. It helps me think more about what I'm reading.

Subject G. I learn more words by going back and forth, and know what the meanings of words are.

Subject H. I don't know if I have got better at my reading.

Subject I. It's easier because if you don't know a word it's better to underline it and go back and think what it is. It gives more practice reading.

While most comments suggest that these children may have gotten an increased understanding of the reading process and have begun to become more independent in using their own resources, subjects A, C and G may be focusing too much on words. The comments of subjects C and H will be related to their quantitative data in the discussion which follows.

Discussion of Results

The results will be discussed in relation to the assumptions and questions which were posed in Chapter One. Also,

because the experimental group have acted as informants, discussion will focus on how they changed during the study.

While eight of the subjects were able to determine 70 percent or more of the unknown words from the lists in the context of the stories, it is not definite that they were using their cloze reading strategies. Streib (1976-77) suggested that children may not make use of contextual redundancy when they are in actual reading situations with no words deleted. However, Goodman (1965) had findings similar to those reported here. He studied the effects of context on recognition to determine the causes of repetitions in oral reading.

Each of 100 children from grades one to three read orally a list of words taken from a story comparable to his reading level. The child then read the story itself. Reading errors in both situations were counted and compared. Goodman found that third grade pupils recognized in the story all but 18 percent of the words missed in the list. Goodman found that pupils from grades one to three became increasingly efficient in using cue systems outside the word itself - almost everyone served as an attempt to correct previous errors.

Because of the fact there was not another group matched in reading level with the experimental group who used the same stories and word lists without prior exposure to cloze reading

strategies, it is not possible to draw major conclusions. However, they do suggest that new vocabulary for a story should not be taught before pupils have read the story.

Although subject A only got 50 percent of the words in the second two stories (see Table 2) which she read, this was good for her because she had been experiencing extreme difficulties in the past and was now pleased that she could get some words on her own. Subject C had also had had a fair degree of difficulty in the past and subject G had more difficulty than some of the other subjects. The comments of all three children suggest they may have been too concerned with getting all the words. This is possibly because of the step-by-step task analysis type instructional procedures which were used. In the future, it is important that the instructional environment be set up such that children won't get the false assumption that they need to get all the words. Subjects A and G were also usually not very verbal in past group discussions. However, the interaction with all the children was very good. These children, who had seldom asked questions, asked questions and enjoyed all discussions. The fact that subject C was able to get 86 percent of the words in the five stories which she read suggest that it may be due to her increased practice reading. She commented that she went to her bedroom alone to practice

reading and her mother verified this. Subject C also had the greatest gains in paragraph meaning and word study skills on the Stanford Reading Achievement Test (see Table 3). Subject G was able to get 82 percent of the words in the four stories (see Table 2) which she read. Her comment suggest that she may have been helped to do this by going back and ahead.

Subject H, who had the highest word study skills score, may have had a loss rather than a gain on paragraph meaning because of past instruction with too much emphasis on isolated skills. The fact that she read very fast and did not appear concerned whether her words made sense further suggests this. It is probably not best to begin early reading instruction with a primary goal of decoding from print to sound as has been suggested by Weaver (1978). Her teacher said she had a high degree of proficiency in using sound-symbol cues, but didn't appear to understand much of what she read. The effect of past over-emphasis on sound-symbol knowledge may have something to do with the fact that she didn't know whether her own reading had improved. Possibly, children who overuse such knowledge need much longer exposure to cloze strategies.

The comments of all subjects except H support the findings of Smith (1975) and Thurlow et. al. (1974) that much more instructional time should be spent in having children actually

reading. Cloze reading strategies certainly seemed to motivate the experimental group to read and think more about what they do when they read. Subject B even suggested that these strategies helped her tell when reading is difficult and how to attempt to make sense of it. Her teacher mentioned that she initially read words in lists better than in context and that she showed little interest in attempting to read when she knew she wasn't going to know all the words. When she did, she usually had left out the unknown words. This suggests that cloze reading strategies may be useful for such children. They seemed to make Subject A more independent because in the past she had always sought help for unknown words.

Subject D was considered by her teacher as having the best degree of conceptual, experiential and language knowledge. Her comment about knowing that she can do it if she tries suggests that children who have good conceptual, experiential and language knowledge may use cloze reading strategies to capitalize on this resourceful knowledge. This subject and especially subject B suggest that cloze reading strategies may help them deal with more difficult materials than they would have attempted in the past.

Subject E further supports the importance of capitalizing on prior knowledge. Her teacher pointed out that before the

study she was better able to cope with words in lists than in context and she was above average intelligence. Her comment about how she is better able to keep her place when reading suggests that now she may be focusing more on overall meaning and not on words. This suggests that children who are searching for meaning will become immediately aware if they lose their place because what they are reading will not make sense to them.

The comments of both subjects F and I suggest that cloze reading instruction may have helped them to think. The teacher pointed out that subject F had tended to rush things without stopping to think what she was supposed to do. Subject I had the third highest gain on paragraph meaning of Stanford Reading Achievement Test (see Table 3). However, like subjects A, C and G, her comment suggests that she may still be focusing too much on the words.

In relation to the initial assumption about presenting children with directions for cloze reading strategies, it seems that this is one assumption which may have to be modified. From the discussions and children's comments, it appeared that it would be better to provide an environment conducive to children developing their own individual predicting strategies. In developing such an environment, it will be important to take

cues from the children as informants of what is best for each of them. However, both the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that cloze reading strategies appear to have much potential for helping readers cope with unfamiliar text. The initial assumption about helping to cope with unknown words has been changed to unfamiliar text because the children have demonstrated that the procedures presented led about half of them to focus too much on words. Parts b, c, d and e of assumption 3 (p. 3 of this report) can remain as is. Most children appeared to make use of prior knowledge, become more independent and more willing to attempt unknown words. However, it appears that this study was too short to reveal the potential of cloze reading strategies for children who overuse sound-symbol cues.

Since the children's comments focused on actual reading situations, it does not appear that they need practice with cloze procedure passages in order to develop cloze reading strategies. Besides giving much fewer directions in the future, the present writer will encourage cloze reading strategies without prior cloze procedure exposure. Streib (1976-77) has suggested that further research be conducted in which children apply cloze reading strategies in actual reading situations.

The major aspects of most past research that this study supports are:

1. Cloze procedure can be used with children in the elementary grades.

2. Cloze reading instructional activities must involve discussion of responses.

3. These cloze reading activities appear to help elementary pupils focus on meaning.

4. Children seem to find these strategies highly motivating; children once reluctant to read appeared more willing to engage in independent reading.

The following two areas are suggested for future research as an extension of this six-week study.

1. Supply instructional activities with cloze reading strategies without prior cloze procedure exercises.

2. Supply these instructional activities with cloze reading strategies without detailed directions for the readers to follow.

CHAPTER IV

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES WITH ELEMENTARY-GRADE PUPILS

Since 1976 the present writer has worked as a reading
specialist in two different elementary schools. During this
time, she has exposed many children to cloze reading strategies
without prior cloze procedure exercises. The children have
acted as informants through their ability to utilize cloze
reading strategies without step-by-step directions as was demon-
strated in the procedure of Chapter Three; and their ability
to talk about how these strategies have helped them. The pre-
sent chapter will present practical instructional experiences
which either support and/or extend the findings of the previous
chapter.

Elementary-Grade Pupils

These elementary-grade pupils had been referred to the
present writer for extra help in reading over the past eight
years. For the first three years, the children were from a
rural school in Newfoundland; and for the next five years, they
were from a rural school in Nova Scotia. Both schools had
enrollments of approximately six hundred. In the Newfoundland
school, all pupils had been on the Nelson (1977) basal program.
In the Nova Scotia school, the children were on either Ginn 360

(1974) basal program, Expressways (Thorn and Irwin, 1977) basal program, or a whole-language program. The whole-language programs involved such activities as: daily reading to children and by the children themselves; daily writing by the children; and reading strategy instruction. These programs used materials of Holdaway (1980) and materials similar to those in Appendix B. On the average, approximately 60 children had been referred each year by teachers, principals and/or parents. While small groups of children were usually involved in reading, writing, listening and speaking activities, cloze reading strategies were very often discussed with individuals and small groups. This chapter will just report on a few children who were really good informants.

Three Grade-One Boys

The present writer worked with three boys (who were repeating grade one) three times a week (half hour) for half the school year of 1979. During this time she was expected to follow the Nelson (McInnes, et. al., 1977) basal program which included workbooks. Instead of using the workbooks, all the time was spent having the children read from their basal readers (Whiskers and Toy-Box). The only direction which they were given was to pretend that unknown words were blanks and to go back and attempt to get them from the sense of the story. At

first, this did not work because they did not appear to be able to focus on meaning once they said blank. However, after only a few experiences with group predictions (similar to Holdaway, 1979), they could handle cloze reading strategies in actual reading situations.

Their regular classroom teacher had been on sick leave most of this time. When she returned, their improvement was so noticeable that she wanted to know what had been done to get them to progress so well in such a short time. They had gone through stories in their basal readers without doing the work-book activities, for they were usually engaged in actual reading utilizing cloze reading strategies. As well, they had begun to use these strategies in the independent reading of children's books.

All three of the children improved by a grade level or more in half a year (Gates-McGinitie Reading Test, Forma, 1965). By the end of the school year, one of them was reading at a grade two level and another was reading at grade three level. Even so, these children had been retained in grade one because at the beginning of the year they were not considered ready to cope with grade two materials. If these children had been encouraged to use meaning seeking strategies before, they may never have had to repeat grade one.

It seems that even in grade one, children can very quickly learn to use cloze reading strategies without detailed cloze procedure instructions and experiences. (They were in an environment conducive to predicting and controlling their own learning to read). They began to inform the writer when they needed to learn new information. For example, one child could not get the word - way - from context and was directed to look at the first letter as an additional clue; he noticed that it was a lot like - day - but day did not make sense. Once he was encouraged to think about words which began with w, he very quickly got way. This was a lot more meaningful than teaching the sound-symbol relationship of w in isolation. Once children realize that they cannot make sense of something in the written form by relying on the context alone, they will want to acquire whatever information is necessary for them to make sense of the message. The major thing which teachers have to teach children to do is ask themselves - "Does it make sense?" If children do this, they can correct themselves, and thus get immediate reinforcement - so necessary if they are to continue their quest for knowledge.

However, in 1979 the present writer by having children say "blank" for each word may having been causing children to think they had to get all unknown words. Sometimes, it is only

necessary to get the gist of unfamiliar text. Recently, a grade two child caused the writer to think very seriously about this and her own reading strategies.

One Grade-Two Boy

This boy was referred for extra help by his teacher who suggested that he had very little sight vocabulary and limited ability to use sound-symbol cues. However, she failed to capitalize on his wealth of conceptual, experiential and language knowledge.

His instruction took place with five other second-grade children for one-half hour a day from September to December. These children were told to pretend that unknown words were blanks and to go back and get them later from the sense of the story. They did not need the Holdaway (1979) experiences which had been found necessary for the grade one children. Stories from the beginning levels of Expressways (Thorn and Irwin, 1977) basal program were used. Results were very positive for all children. However, David used this strategy so much that another child soon gave him ownership of it. One day when Stan was very engaged in cloze reading strategies, he said, "I'm using David's trick."

While the present writer had encouraged David's teacher to present him with whole meaningful language so that he could

use prior knowledge to put his print world in perspective, it took David to inform her this is what he needed. He showed his teacher how he could get unknown words on his own (cloze reading strategies) because he just loved the fact that he was in control of his own learning. The present writer was elated when his teacher came to her to get materials with more content because she had finally decided that David was not learning much from isolated skills instruction.

However, David did seem to become a bit too concerned with getting all the unknown words. He also became very annoyed if someone told him an unknown word before he had time to predict it. David seemed to find cloze reading strategies a real challenge to his potential as a learner. It was pointed out to David that it was not important that he get every word if he could make sense of what he was reading. He could not accept this, because he was preoccupied with demonstrating to himself how he was in control and capable of unlocking this print puzzle.

It was David who made the present writer realize that if she wanted to demonstrate that it is not important that readers get every word, she should think about what she does when reading something difficult. The book "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco (1983) certainly helped the present writer to do this. It is a most difficult book to read, with many

unfamiliar terms because it takes place in an Italian abbey in 1327. Besides the time period, it has a very complex plot with seven deaths in seven days and all the loose ends do not come together until the last chapter. The present writer found that she often left out unfamiliar text. Often, as she got into more of the context of the book, she found that she was able to get additional insight about much of the unfamiliar text. She became satisfied as long as she was getting more meaning. Reading this book has helped the present writer think more about instructional approaches to demonstrate to children that it is not important that they get all the words or even all unfamiliar text when reading. She has begun to attempt this with children beyond grade three. From discussion about this book with a fifth grade boy he began to realize that there were many common-sense things which he was capable of doing but which he had not even attempted because of past instruction.

Grade-Five Boy

After talking to this fifth grade boy about how to deal with difficult reading, the present writer decided to examine in detail the cumulative school record of Greg. She had already been working with him a year, but it was comments about past instruction which made her decide to look at his records in detail.

This was Greg's eighth year in school; he had repeated grades one and three. After his first year in grade one, his teacher suggested that he was a good thinker but he had to be held back to get a better foundation. After his second year in grade one, his teacher said that he was attentive and had used his language arts skills. His grade two teacher reported that he did fairly well in language arts skills but that his comprehension was weak. By his first year in grade three, both his language arts skills and his comprehension were reported to be weak. After his second year in grade three, his teacher reported that he had gained in oral reading and comprehension but still benefited from a controlled vocabulary. His fourth grade teacher said that he had very poor phonetic skills but a good understanding for oral vocabulary. While he was scoring low on comprehension but maintaining an acceptable score on vocabulary and word analysis (end of level test of basal), Ginn 360 (Clymer, 1974) and supplementary materials which emphasized isolated skills were used with him.

Much help which he has received during the past year from the present writer has encouraged cloze reading strategies in which he could make use of his ability to think - which was never mentioned in his first year in grade one. (Trade books such as those in Appendix B have been used). In one discussion

about how he tries to read now, he said, "Before this year, I thought learning to read was learning vowels, beginnings, endings and how to decode the word so you can say it right." He went on to explain that he could read better now because he knew all the things he was supposed to do (searching, predicting and confirming strategies). He also said, "Some teachers just taught you the first thing, told you it and expected you to keep a hold of it till the rest of the year." He went on to explain how it is different now because when he keeps practising reading he can read better. From his beginning school experiences, he was presented with language (no longer language) that had been fragmented into meaningless bits and pieces. It seems that cloze reading strategies and discussions about reading difficult materials has been a start in providing an environment conducive to making sense. When encouraged to use cloze reading strategies and his prior knowledge, he explained that he never thought of doing that before.

In a recent Reading Miscue Inventory and Performance, Greg's high retelling score of 91 percent while having twenty miscues per one hundred words further suggests that it is not necessary to get all unfamiliar text. This seems to support research findings of the Goodmans and Burke in Beebee (1976) and others within the past twenty years on the reading process.

Reading does not have to be an accurate word-for-word matching. While past evaluations of Greg's reading performance have been extrinsic (evaluation of isolated skills), the present writer has discussed the miscue inventory with him and encouraged him to make his own evaluations. While Greg's reading is still not fluent, he enjoys reading more now because he has begun to develop strategies for getting meaning.

Practical Instructional Experiences

While the present writer did not give the elementary pupils (with whom she has worked with over the past eight years) detailed directions, she did find that most children engaged in the following when beginning to try cloze reading strategies:

1. Read fairly short stories with plenty of contextual clues or their own language experience stories.

2. Underlined unknown words.

3. Reread the story and said "blank" for each unknown word.

4. Predicted meaningful words for the pretend blanks by going back and ahead to search for clues.

5. Looked at the sound-symbol features of the unknown words which had not been predicted to see if these additional clues would help predict suitable words.

6. If there were unfamiliar words which still had not been predicted, decided whether they were relevant to getting meaning.

7. If they did not appear relevant, eliminated them.

8. If they appeared relevant, kept using own resources until words which "sounded like language" and "made sense" had been predicted.

9. Sought help for any relevant words still not predicted.

10. Reread the story to check that it "sounded like language" and "made sense."

As often as possible, the present writer discussed appropriateness of predictions with individuals. The children would point out clues which aided them in making predictions. They would discuss whether meaning was affected by predictions different from the original passage. Through such discussion, the present writer would note instructional needs of individuals. She would then attempt to meet these needs by giving the children as much control as possible of their own learning. (The trick was knowing when to intervene). For example, with the grade one children (already mentioned), it was necessary to use some group oral cloze before they could grasp the blank concept. However, with most children, cloze reading strategies were best introduced individually because then the individual could read aloud and the present writer would then help the reader underline appropriate unfamiliar text.

One child also informed the present writer that there are times when it may be necessary to use a mask to cover up text.

The underlined words in the following language-experience story were the unknown words of a sixth grade boy with extreme reading difficulties.

> I had a friend named Randy and he is leaving for the United States. <u>His</u> brothers are leaving for the United States too. They are <u>coming</u> back in the <u>summer</u> to help <u>their</u> grandfather, grandmother, mother and father <u>build</u> <u>up</u> the canteen.

He had difficulty predicting the two possessive pronouns <u>his</u> and <u>their</u>. He tried <u>has</u> and <u>they</u> respectively. This suggested that he wasn't even checking to see if what he was saying "sounded like language." The present writer realized that because there were only lines under the words he was quite possibly focusing on sound-symbol features of the unknown words. When she used a <u>mask</u> to blank out the words and encouraged him to put in words which "made sense" he was able to predict them. This further suggested that hard and fast rules about amount of control cannot be set down. One has to take cues from the children and know when to intervene.

This boy also benefited from the "Strategy-Lesson for Varieties of Grammatical Function" in Reading Strategies (Goodman and Burke, 1980, pp. 101-108). He also worked with short exercises where he was provided with choices which were different grammatical functions, for example:

I fell _____. boy down ran

only the adverb <u>down</u> makes sense in the blank. "I fell ran." or "I fell boy." would not "sound like language" because verbs or nouns do not fit in the position of the blank.

A different grade-six child thought about reading into a tape recorder and saying "blank" for each word he did not know. A teacher aide prepared a written cloze passage from his tape. Besides the blanks which he had created, the teacher aide left the rest of the text as he had read it, regardless of whether it all made sense. He then tried to complete the blanks. He could usually get most of the blanks, and often he could find other parts which now did not make sense to him. There was much discussion about acceptability of responses. He then recorded the story again. Next, he listened to both tapes and discussed the progress he had made. A number of other children became interested in doing this when they saw the satisfaction he was getting out of it.

The classroom climate must be conducive to taking risks when implementing cloze reading strategies. Teachers need to be patient and allow a reasonable time for children to get unknown words, even when they are reading orally. Other students need to be encouraged to be patient and quiet and let their classmates figure out words on their own. Thus, they learn from each other. The classroom has the potential to

become qualitatively a natural language environment in which there is a variety of worthwhile predictable literature (e.g. Appendix B). Teachers will see that quantitatively there will be more opportunities for productive language communication in listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this environment, teachers need to use more questioning techniques. For example, after they have read stories, ask them how they figured out unknown words.

The present writer has noticed that there have been fewer children referred to her for extra help in reading from those on whole-language programs than those on traditional basals. This is quite possibly because these classrooms already have climates similar to the above. However, a few children from whole-language programs have had the problem of overusing composing strategies and not focusing enough on print. But their problem seems to be more easily overcome when they are encouraged to focus on the first letter of words when necessary. Initial consonants are the easiest sound-symbol associations to learn and if readers are using contextual cues, oftimes this may be all the additional information they need.

Throughout this past eight years, it has become evident that cloze reading strategies is but one common-sense way to encourage children to take control of their own learning to

read. Often, children who need the most practice reading get the least by overexposure to isolated skills instruction. Cloze reading strategies help children understand what they are try-ing to do when they read because they are interacting with whole meaningful language.

Conclusions

These practical experiences have supported the findings of the 1976 study in demonstrating that cloze reading strategies do <u>not</u> have to be preceded by cloze procedure exercises. While this report has focused on cloze reading strategies, strategy instruction appears to be an alternative to skills instruction in all curriculum areas, because instead of trying to cover the curriculum, the teacher is free to take cues from the chil-dren. The next chapter will suggest a learning environment conducive to such instruction.

Two issues which the present writer is still trying to come to grips with in her evolving theory of cloze reading instruction are: (1) the degree of control by the learner and intervention by the teacher and others; and (2) how best to get across the idea that not all unfamiliar text has to be predicted. In relation to number one, it seems that no one can tell a teacher how much intervention there should be.

Teachers appear to need to see the children as informants and take their cues from them; setting up an environment for this is not an easy task in many traditional type school settings. However, the present writer will begin to make suggestions in the next chapter. In relation to number two, the only way the present writer has attempted to get children not to be concerned with getting all unfamiliar text has been through discussions of theirs and her own reading strategies. However, in the past, with the underlining technique, she seems to have caused some children to focus too much on words. Possibly, it is best not to suggest underlining, but just to demonstrate through talking about one's own reading. Smith (1983) has said children "learn what we demonstrate to them, not what we hope and think we teach" (p. 106). Elementary pupils have certainly informed the present writer of this.

These practical experiences have further supported the findings of the 1976 study in that the children who seemed to benefit the most were those who: (1) overused their knowledge of sound-symbol cues; (2) did not make enough use of grammatical cues; (3) had a wealth of conceptual, experiential and language knowledge but limited ability to recognize words in isolation; and (4) came to realize what they had to do to become more independent readers. Throughout all cloze instruction,

the most outstanding features seem to be the high degree of motivation and independence which resulted. Children are highly motivated when they cope with unfamiliar text on their own. Their ability to develop searching, predicting, confirming and correcting strategies invited them to continue to participate in all language activities and to seek just what help they needed. Throughout, there was much collaboration through listening and speaking with the present writer and other children. Through such collaboration, they realized that they were often composing just as writers do.

This leads to a major extension of this report in the future. Cloze can not be looked at just in terms of reading. It has to be looked at in terms of all literacy learning. Learners are becoming more literate each time they fill a gap in their existing cognitive structures when they are confronted with new information. In attempting to set up the best environment for literacy learning, the authoring cycle (Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984b) appears to offer much potential in terms of what is involved in literacy learning. The authoring cycle is characteristic of language learning, but especially of reading and writing. "Literacy is governed by the search for a unified meaning" (Harste and Stephens, 1984). The authoring cycle will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

Besides demonstrating that elementary pupils do not appear to need prior cloze procedure experiences to develop cloze reading strategies, these elementary pupils have also demonstrated that they do not need detailed directions for cloze reading strategies. In relation to the three assumptions in the first chapter, it does not appear that either one should be abandoned entirely. These practical experiences support the 1976 study in that: assumption one should change unknown words to unfamiliar text; and assumption two should delete the directions part. While the time period was too short in 1976 to see if cloze reading strategies were effective for children who overused sound-symbol cues, these practical experiences suggest that they are useful for such children. These practical experiences have also supported past research in relation to: (1) use with elementary-grade pupils; (2) need for discussion; (3) help elementary pupils focus on meaning; and (4) children seem to find these strategies motivate them towards resourceful independent reading.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this chapter are: (1) to summarize the findings which have been reported; (2) to suggest some practical instructional implications that arise as a result of these findings; and (3) to make suggestions for future research.

Summary of Findings

This report attempted to answer these three questions:

1. Do elementary-grade pupils need detailed directions for cloze procedure exercises and cloze reading strategies in order to develop predicting strategies in which they maintain control of their own learning to read?

2. What is the best learning environment conducive for inviting readers to use effective individual predicting strategies?

3. What cloze reading instructional assumptions should be abandoned and what do cloze reading strategies appear to do for encouraging independent resourceful reading?

Elementary pupils do not appear to need detailed directions for cloze procedure exercises and cloze reading strategies in order to develop predicting strategies in which they maintain control of their own learning to read. Furthermore, they do not appear to need practice with cloze procedure exercises in order to develop cloze reading strategies. They seem to be

capable of developing cloze reading strategies when simply told to pretend that unfamiliar text is blanked out until they can predict something which makes sense. It appears that teachers need to be sensitive to the needs of individuals in order to know when to intervene and at the same time give children as much control as possible of their own learning to read.

The best learning environment conducive to inviting readers to use effective individual predicting strategies is one in which reading is not isolated from all literacy learning. It should provide learners with many opportunities to fill gaps in their existing cognitive structures in the natural social context. It should set the stage for learners to be informants to teachers as to what they are trying to learn in their attainment of literacy. Teachers will have to know as much as possible about literacy learning in order to take cues from children and capitalize on their prior knowledge. Such an environment will have to be very conducive to risk-taking, questioning, searching, predicting, confirming or disconfirming, and self-correcting.

In relation to the three cloze reading instructional assumptions in Chapter One, it appears that none need be totally abandoned. However, they could all do with some re-wording as a result of the findings in this report. These assumptions will now read:

1. Variation of the cloze procedure to cloze reading strategies appears to be a potentially good instructional technique for encouraging readers to be more independent when confronted with unfamiliar texts.

2. Elementary pupils can through appropriate discussion develop cloze reading strategies which: (a) are highly motivating for independent resourceful reading; (b) put them in control of their own learning to read; and (c) enable them to inform teachers when to intervene without taking away this control.

3. Cloze reading strategies should prove especially useful to readers who: (a) overuse sound-symbol cues; (b) have good conceptual, experiential and language knowledge but poor sound-symbol knowledge; (c) fail to use grammatical cues; (d) avoid reading independently; (e) always seek help with unknown words; and/or (f) omit all unknown words.

In view of the findings of this report, as a matter of theory, the following assumption will be added:

4. Cloze instruction should be expanded to all literacy learning because literacy is governed by a search for unified meaning. In the present writer's constant search for strategies in which children maintain control of their own learning, these assumptions will be constantly open to change.

While this report mentions a number of ways in which its findings support past research, the present writer is not sure

as to what aspects of cloze instructional research it truly
supports, because: (1) past research mostly dealt with cloze
procedure and not cloze reading strategies; (2) this report
suggests that elementary-grade pupils do not need practice with
cloze procedure exercises to develop cloze reading strategies;
and (3) much past cloze procedure research has claimed to
improve comprehension, but the readers may have been able to
comprehend without filling in all the gaps in cloze procedure
exercises. Nevertheless, aspects of past research which this
report appear to support will be dealt with in the hope that
future researchers will examine in more detail the above three
issues.

As with much instructional cloze research, this report has
demonstrated that: (1) elementary pupils can perform cloze
tasks; (2) discussion of responses is important; (3) cloze is
useful for those who fail to see reading as a unitary act; (4)
cloze activities are highly motivating; (5) cloze strategies
increase independence; and (6) cloze instruction focuses atten-
tion on meaning. The present writer has also found that cloze
reading strategies have: (1) helped children to take control
of their own learning to read; (2) helped them to evaluate their
own reading; (3) been used with basals, but the experiences are
more enjoyable with predictable children's literature (Appendix
B); (4) helped children and the present writer better understand

transactions between reader and text; (5) made the present writer think more of her own reading strategies, which reflection has enabled her to present better demonstrations to children; and (6) helped create an environment in which children acted as informants of the need to rethink cloze reading instructional assumptions.

Most important of all, examining cloze reading instructional assumptions over the past eight years has led the present writer to many insights into the reading process which have been dealt with in Chapter One. Most past research has involved children in cloze procedure exercises. However, this research suggests that this time would be much better spent having children actually reading, for they do not appear to need this practice. Such practice may also cause children to focus too much on surface structure. Cloze reading strategies focus readers' attention more on deep structures and semantic meanings. While this report has dealt with cloze reading strategies in the elementary school, these strategies appear useful for any reader. This was especially demonstrated when the present writer started to examine her own reading strategies. Cloze instruction appears to be one common-sense way of encouraging learners to take control of their own literacy learning.

Instructional Implications

The major practical instructional implications of this
report are associated with viewing curriculum as both content
and form (Eisner, 1982). Too often, curriculum is thought of
in terms of what content should be taught children. Thus, too
often, instructional activities are a set of skills which are
supposed to be a holding ground before children confront the
real thing. As one grade-five informant has said, "Some
teachers just taught you the first thing, told you it and
expected you to keep a hold of it till the rest of the year."
When not enough attention is given to form or process, this
leads to equating teaching and learning. The present writer
did this to some extent with her task analysis procedures in
the 1976 study. In order to confront learners with the real
thing, the process by which content is taught is so crucial to
curriculum that it "affects not only the kinds of mental and
linguistic operations which children engage in but even what
they potentially can engage in" (Harste, 1984, p. 2). Teachers
can best support children in discovering the potential of oral
and written literacy through using them as curricular infor-
mants, as the present writer did, and putting their assumptions
to test. Such a language arts curriculum will be effective for
both children and teachers. It allows for the unexpected, by

giving learners control at the same time that it frees the
teacher to take cues from the children to decide when to inter-
vene in their rereading, rethinking and reconsidering. In such
an environment, an alternate to skills instruction is strategy
lessons. Thus the major practical implications are associated
with strategy instruction, learning environment and teacher
education.

Strategy Instruction

Strategy instruction differs both theoretically and pro-
cedurally from skills instruction. Skills instruction is
usually based on linear views of the reading process. Children
who do not provide the right answers are often exposed to more
practice on isolated skills. Strategy instruction is based
on a transactional view of literacy in which the process (read-
ing, talking, thinking with others, etc.) is the curriculum.
Strategy instruction encourages students to use what they know
to unlock new meanings. Instead of looking for "right answers,"
there is much collaboration between teachers and children in
which they share what they know. This sharing can go on before,
during and after the reading of a text.

For example, even with children just entering school, the
teacher could extend an invitation to read. The teacher would
then observe the children (maybe only ten minutes). The children

could then discuss with the teacher what they did. Certain
children may have actually read independently; these may be
interested in deciding how they want to share this with others
(through reading, writing, doing a play, etc.). Others may
have informed the teacher that they had very little concept of
what reading is all about. The teacher can take cues from
individual children as to appropriate strategy lessons. Goodman
and Burke (1980), Atwell and Rhodes (1984) and others have begun
to propose strategy instruction as an alternative to skills
instruction.

In relation to cloze reading strategies, such instruction
involves children in much time actually reading. These strate-
gies (prediction) do not have to be taught; "prediction is
routinely practiced in reading by beginners as well as by
fluent readers" (Smith, 1983, p. 27). Strategy instruction
which encourages prediction must involve: (1) materials which
are meaningful to children; and (2) an environment in which
children feel free to predict and make use of what they already
know. While the children in this report have demonstrated that
they could make predictions with basal readers, often these
books do not contain highly predictable stories, such as those
in Appendix B. Materials which may be predictable for some
children may not be predictable for others. Thus, it is impor-
tant that teachers know as much as possible about their students.

Learning Environment

A learning environment conducive to risk-taking, question-
ing, searching, predicting, etc., is one in which teachers and
children need to be supportive and patient. In relation to cloze
reading strategies, teachers need to allow children time to think
about an unfamiliar text. Other children need to be encouraged
to be patient and quiet at times whenever their classmates need
time to think and concentrate. When reading orally, a child who
ponders over a word may not want help but be simply wondering
what the word has to do with the rest of the story. A child
who miscues on a word needs time to self-correct; this self-
correction may take place in a later paragraph. Cloze reading
strategies provide children with reinforcement from themselves
because they realize they have miscued if what they are reading
does not make sense to them. (The greatest impediment to predic-
tion is anxiety). The advantage of cloze reading strategies is
that they facilitate confident, resourceful, meaningful reading.
Cloze strategy instruction enables children to perceive reading
as a thinking, learning process in which they use their own
resources to construct meaning. In the past, too many children
have perceived reading as sounding out words (Tovey, 1976).

In relation to all literacy learning, one of the best
learning environments conducive to strategy instruction is that
represented in Figure 1. Harste et. al. see the authoring
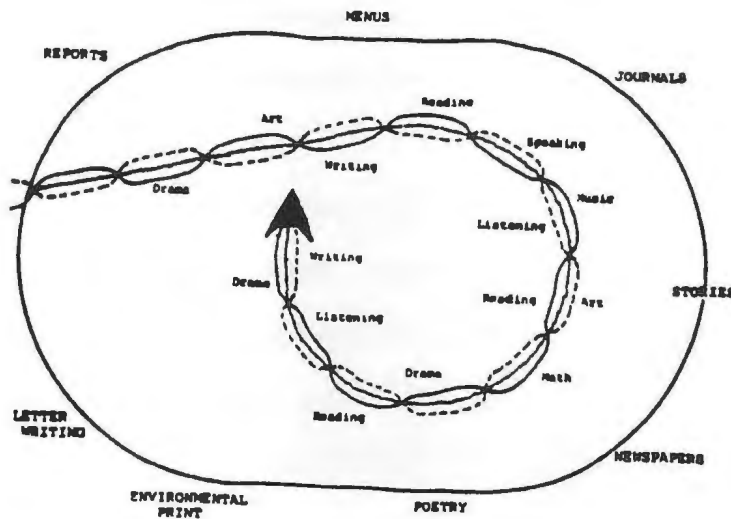
cycle as characteristic of all literacy learning, but especially
reading and writing. The spiral in this learning environment
suggests that any literacy learning is seen as an event that
takes place in time. Thus prior knowledge is important in form-
ing new perspectives when learners are confronted with the unknown
or unfamiliar. Speaking, listening, reading and writing are
alternate available expressions of language. Art, music, drama,
etc., are other communication systems which are an important
part of literacy. The oval suggests that literacy is context-
dependent. For example, self-correction in oral reading as
opposed to self-correction in silent reading is context specific;
in oral reading, the reader will self-correct in relation to the

audience. The labels outside the oval represent alternative
contexts - journals, reports, newspapers, poetry, stories,
environmental print, personal letters, etc. - around which cur-
riculum might be organized.

Instructional activities which constitute such a curriculum
"permit children to discover, experience, and come to value key
psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes in successful
oral and written language use" (Harste and Stephens, 1984).
Harste and others view curriculum as something which happens in
the learner's head. Thus children, not programs, must become
curricular informants. Teachers must be capable of making
instructional adjustments to support what is going on in the
head of the learner.

Teacher Education

It is not the intent of this report to suggest that teachers
have been doing everything wrong. Many teachers may have been
intuitively providing strategy instruction in risk-taking learn-
ing environments. As well, other teachers who may think they
are providing strategy instruction may in reality be still
involved in skills instruction. The present writer has realized
that within the past eight years she has sometimes done this.
However, she has constantly been open to new perspectives which
has led to rethinking cloze instructional assumptions. Thus

the present writer may be in a good position to make some suggestions for other teachers.

Teachers must educate themselves so that they have as much information as possible to develop their own practical theory of literacy and learning. With this knowledge, teachers should not feel the need to follow prescribed programs and teacher guides. They need to become especially good pupil-watchers. To do this, they need to understand the socio-psycholinguistic process involved in the attainment of literacy. Language learning, which is sociologically rooted, must be viewed in its social context. Psycholinguistic "means" the interrelationships of psychological and linguistic behavior. The process is the cognitive assumptions language users make and the strategies they engage in during a literacy event. With this information, the teacher is in a better position to build a reading strategy curriculum so that it does not violate what is currently known about the reading process.

Teachers must allow children to become their curricular informants. Each time they do this, they are putting their own beliefs and assumptions in a position of vulnerability. Unless teachers examine the assumptions underlying their instructional practices, it is difficult to ensure that these will be tested in their teaching. Teachers need to be constantly putting the

assumptions underlying their beliefs to test. This report has demonstrated that teachers need to proceed from theory which is constantly open to change.

Conclusions

The major purpose of this report has been to challenge some existing cloze reading instructional assumptions through using elementary-grade pupils as informants. These children demonstrated that they do not need practice with cloze procedure exercises and detailed directions in order to develop cloze reading strategies. However, these results are limited by the fact that most past research has dealt with cloze procedure and not actual reading situations in which unfamiliar text became the deletions in cloze reading passages. There is the need for a great deal more research in which readers are exposed to cloze reading strategies without prior cloze procedure exercises. As well, many of the cloze procedure studies reviewed claimed to improve comprehension. In view of elementary-grade pupils' ability to develop cloze reading strategies, the readers in these studies may have improved comprehension without completing all deletions. Thus, it would be a most worthwhile research project to examine cloze procedure comprehension studies in relation to their initial assumptions.

A major conclusion of this report is that cloze reading instruction should be examined in the future in the context of all literacy learning. In order to do this, the research methodology will have to be much clearer than in the present report. When this project was begun eight years ago, the present writer knew very little about the formal research process of triangulation (Jick, 1979) which ethnographers capitalize on. Triangulation is a multi-method research design (qualitative and quantitative) which enables researchers to be more confident of results because the qualitative findings are complemented with quantitative ones.

While this project began with a short experimental type study, the present writer increasingly relied on naturalistic procedures. Using children as informants in examining cloze instructional assumptions demonstrated that experimental research and ethnographic tradition represented incompatible views. Thus this report has been most difficult to complete; to write impersonally was inconsistent because the present writer's evolving theory of cloze instruction was an integral part of this report. However, the processes which the present writer has engaged in over the past eight years have been very liberating because she has been increasingly getting the find-out attitude which embodies what Harste et. al. (1983) view as "the child as informant."

The find-out attitude contrasts the "I can find out" attitude of much past research in which the means and ends are presented as proof (knowledge production). The present writer, both a teacher and researcher, has been concerned with knowledge utilization in the examination of assumptions. Harste (1982) suggests that much past research fails "to examine assumptions - assumptions often deeply embedded in the what and how of teaching and research" (p. 6). He further suggests that a shift to ethnography should be a very worthwhile learning experience for teachers, researchers and children; this has important implications for future research. Just as the children in this report took control of their learning to read, teachers and researchers can take control of what they learn about curriculum and instruction. This can be done by using ethnography to alter assumptions because the assumptions one makes limits what one can learn.

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APPENDIX A

FIRST THREE CLOZE PASSAGES

1. The Little Pot

There was once a _____ but good little girl _____ lived alone with her _____, and they no longer _____ anything to eat. The _____ girl went into the _____, and there she met _____ old woman who felt _____ for her. So the woman gave her a _____ pot which when she _____, "Cook, little pot, cook," _____ cook good sweet porridge. _____ when she said, "Stop, _____ pot," it would stop _____. The child took the _____ home to her mother, _____ now they were no _____ hungry, for they ate _____ porridge as often as _____ wished.

One day the _____ girl had gone out, _____ her mother said, "Cook, _____ pot, cook." And the _____ did cook, and she _____ until she was full. _____ she wanted the pot _____ stop cooking, but she _____ not know the right _____ to say to make _____ stop. Only the little _____ knew that, and she _____ not at home. So _____ pot went on cooking, _____ porridge bubbled over the _____, and still it cooked _____ until the kitchen and _____ whole house were full _____ porridge, and then the _____ house, and then the _____ street. And everyone in _____ wanted the pot to _____ cooking, but no one _____ how to stop it.

_____ last, when only one _____ house remained that was _____ covered with porridge, the _____ girl came home. She _____, "Stop, little pot," and _____ stopped cooking. And whoever _____ to return to town _____ to eat his way _____.

2.

A young man asked to work in the circus. He (1) <u>said</u> he would do any kind of work.

The man who owned the circus (2) _____ it over. "You can help the lion tamer," he said. Then he (3) _____ the young man to the lion cage.

The head lion tamer was just starting to work. She (4) _____ into the cage. Then she (5) _____ her hand at one of the lions. Right away, the lion came up to the woman. Then it rolled over two times.

The owner turned to the young man. "Do you think you could learn to do that?" he (6) _____.

"I am sure I could, sir," the young man (7) _____. "But first you will have to get those lions out of there."

3. Downhill Run

The March sun (1) _was_ warm. Beth turned to her friend Abby.

"Will you come on!" she said. "We have been skiing on this baby hill all day. They're going to close the lift soon. This (2) _____ our last chance to ski down a hard trail."

"But Beth," Abby began. "No one else is going up. And those trails are too hard for us. Besides, it's getting late ..." She stopped. Beth was already heading for the chair lift that went to the top of the mountain.

There was never any stopping Beth. Abby (3) _____ after her friend, and got on the lift, too.

The girls (4) _____ for a long time. By the time they reached the end of the lift, they were the only skiers on the mountain.

"We'd better hurry!" said Beth. "It could take a long time to ski down!" She (5) _____ to a trail marked "expert."

"Not that one!" cried Abby. But she was too late. Beth had already skied out of sight. Abby (6) _____ to ski fast. But

the soft spring snow was getting cold and hard. It seemed to throw her skis the wrong way.

Then Abby heard a cry. She (7) _____ around a bend. Beth was lying in the snow, holding her leg.

"I'm hurt!" Beth cried. "I fell on my leg. You have to ski down for help."

"I'll walk down," Abby said. "I'll never make it skiing. This trail is too hard for me."

"That will take too long!" Beth said. "I (8) _____ help fast!"

"All right. I'll do it," Abby said. "And don't worry. I'll get help."

Abby did not feel so sure as she skied away. It was very cold. And it would soon be too dark to see the bumps in the snow. "I have to speed up!" she (9) _____.

She pointed her skis straight down the mountain. Soon she was going very fast. The wind was blowing in her hair. Her eyes were watering from the cold.

Abby knew she was out of control. She picked up more and more speed. A hanging branch (10) _____ her face. She tried not to think of hitting a tree. Or falling off a steep drop.

Then Abby went over a big bump. Her feet (11) _____ up in the air. She was thrown down on the hard snow.

Abby lay still for a minute. It was so nice to rest. Then she (12) _____ of Beth. "I have to make it," she said. "If only I can!" She made herself get up. Before she could think, she was racing down the mountain again. She did not know how far she had come. The mountain seemed to go on and on.

Then, she (13) _____ voices. She saw a light. And she knew she had made it. She was down.

Abby cried out. Some people (14) _____ toward her. "My friend!" Abby pointed, "Up there! She's hurt. Near the bend at the top of the expert trail!"

Some of the people (15) _____ to turn the lift back on. Others ran for a stretcher.

One man took Abby's arm. "They will find your friend fast, because they know where she is," he said. "But that trail you came down. It's a bad one (16) _____ even for an expert! How did you every make it?"

"I don't know," answered Abby. And she bent down to take off her skis.

FIRST ACTUAL READING SITUATION PASSAGE

Pierre liked to do lots of things. He liked to drive a dog cart and sail on his father's boat. But most of all he liked to build ship models. It took a great deal of patience to do this, but when he grew tired of it, Pierre would always run down to the beach to play.

He liked visiting the store near the dock where the boats came in. The shelves were full of canned foods and cloth and fishing tackle and clothes for the people who lived in the town, and there were wood carvings for tourists who liked to buy souvenirs. But most of all Pierre liked the shelf halfway up on the right, just inside the door. For one day, when he walked inside the store to buy a spool of thread for his mother, he looked at that shelf. There in the middle of it he saw a beautiful ship model. It was the nicest he had ever seen. It was even better than the ones he made, because it was all inside a bottle!

CLOZE PASSAGES FROM CHILDREN'S STORIES

Cathy and her Cat, Tiger

One summer afternoon, Cathy _____ to take Tiger for _____ walk. Because Tiger loved _____ nature, he would sniff _____ flowers and he would _____ to the birds and _____. But one thing went _____, Tiger did not like _____ and Cathy saw Pat _____ with Mr. Mugs. Cathy was _____, but Tiger didn't want _____ go with Cathy. He _____ to sniff the flowers. _____ picked up Tiger and _____ inside. Mother said, "Cathy, _____ are you inside so _____? You just went out _____ minute ago."

"Pat is _____ with Mr. Mugs," Cathy said. "_____ does not like dogs."

_____ said, "Well, Mr. Mugs is ..." _____, knock. Cathy answered the door, and Tiger ran with _____. It was Pat.

"Are you _____ coming out?"

"Well, I _____ know." Cathy looked down, _____ she saw Mr. Mugs _____ Tiger, and they were _____. Cathy cried out, "Mother, _____ look! _____ is playing with Tiger."

"_____," said Mother, "there's one _____ Tiger likes."

"Yes Mother, _____ does like Mr. Mugs."

A Dog

Once upon a time _____ had a dog. His _____ was Sport. I like _____ name. One day I _____ Sport for a walk _____ a leash. He didn't _____ a leash so he _____ away. I went home _____ told Mom and Dad. _____ phoned the police. The _____ know what to do. _____ told the description and _____ next day we went _____ the police and they _____ him. I had my _____ and I thanked the _____ and we went home.

Daddy Finds the Hats

Daddy came home from _____ and asked Jane and _____ if they want to _____ out.

"Yes," said Jane.

"_____," said Tom.

"I will _____ too," said Mother. "Where's _____ hat, Jane, and where's _____, Tom? Go in the _____ and get your hats, _____ I must get mine _____."

So everyone went in _____ look for their hats, _____ they couldn't find them. _____, Daddy blew the horn. _____ had looked in the _____ trunk and there were _____ the hats. So everyone _____ their hat and went _____ a drive.

The Money Tree

Once there was a _____ tree in my back _____. I can pick money _____ it all the time. _____ day I woke up _____ the tree was gone. _____ I got out of _____ bed and went downstairs. _____ asked my mother where _____ money tree was gone. _____ was on the other _____ of my house.

My Dog

I have a dog _____ Lassie and she knows _____ tricks. One day she _____ rope. I thought it _____ funny so I wanted _____ see if she could _____ a pipe and I _____, "Smoke," and she did. _____ asked Mommy could we _____ a show of our _____. Mommy said, "Yes." The _____ came when our show _____ on. I put Lassie _____ a horse. She rode _____ until it was time _____ the next trick. She _____ to a post and _____ to sing. No other _____ do what she _____. Everyone begged me to _____ Lassie to them but _____ said, "No," and we _____ a lot of money.

The Horse Races

Once I went in _____ Goulds to camp. That _____ was Saturday. And I _____ the horse races open. _____ bought a ticket on _____ horse. Number 5 won the _____ and I won $53.00 _____ first time. And I _____ another ticket. It was _____ horse this time. I _____ on shouting, "Come on _____, come on Number 6. Number 6 _____ the race, _____ I won $4.40. Then _____ put all my money _____ and I had $57.40. _____ divided it up and _____ got $10.00 each. Then _____ went back to the _____. It was very dark. _____ could not see where _____ were going but we _____ it home safely to _____ trailer.

School - Time

One day my teacher, _____, rang the school bell. _____ we came, marching two _____ two. We each had _____ partner. We had come in _____ playing. We took out _____ readers. She said, "Read _____ story, Clowning Around in _____ Circus." We began to _____. Then we read it _____ loud. It started like _____. Three big clowns came _____ by, arms folded, looking _____ cross and they were _____ mad. They popped _____ balloons. We asked out _____ if we could stop _____ because it was a _____ story. She said alright _____ this is the way _____ ended. We didn't ever _____ it.

A Skunk for a Pet

One day Maureen and _____ went to the pet _____. They wanted to get _____ skunk but of course _____ tame skunk. Maureen and _____ went to Mr. Roberts who _____ at the shop. _____ and Pamela skipped down _____ road holding hands. They said, "Do you have any _____?" He said, "Them little _____ things."

"My no, we _____ a tame one."

"Oh! _____, well no. Go down _____ Mr. Kennedy's store.
He _____ have tame skunks there."

_____ off they went and _____ got one. They brought _____
to school. "Oh! Oh! _____! Oh! Put that beast _____. Are
you some kind _____ nut trying to kill _____?"

"No, he's tame. He _____ spray. He doesn't bite. _____
friendly."

"What a relief _____ tame."

They showed everyone _____ and she brought it _____. And
everyone lived happily _____ after.

Oh! Not a Cat

Once upon a time, _____ was going to school. _____ school
my friend Cathy _____ going to a pet _____ to buy a bird. _____
asked me if I _____ like to go with _____. I said, "Yes," so
_____ school we went. I _____ four cats in the _____. One was
white and _____. One was brown and _____ was white and the
_____ one black. They _____ very playful so I _____ I'd buy a
cat. I _____ him Mitts. He liked _____ name. When I brought
_____ in the house, Mom _____ "Oh! Not a cat." _____ didn't
mind after. And _____ loved my cat and _____ lived happily ever
after.

Diane, Maureen and I

My sister was in _____ fight with me. So _____ was going to
a _____ house and he asked _____ to go with him. I said to
Daddy, "O.K." _____, my sister, said, "Can _____ and I go too?"

"_____," said Daddy.

"Why not?"

"_____ you're playing with Diane _____ you won't play with _____."

"_____, gee, gee, boy _____ fair."

The lady gave _____ a barrel of pennies _____ a ginger bread house. _____ sister came up and _____, "What do you have?"

_____ said, "A barrel of _____ and a ginger bread _____."

My mother said, "_____, well what do we _____ here?"

"The lady gave _____ these pennies."

APPENDIX B

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PREDICTABLE BOOKS*

Compiled by
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