

AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAM
FOR GRADES FOUR TO SIX

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAM
FOR GRADES FOUR TO SIX

By

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was the development of an elementary school literature program for grades four through six. Chapter one investigates the need and the rationale for the inclusion of such a program in the elementary school curriculum.

Chapters two and three are reviews of literature. The nature of the elementary school child is reviewed in chapter two. In particular, this chapter reviews the elementary child's intellectual development, language development and interests, and reading interests in prose and poetry. Chapter three is a review of literature on the nature of literature programs. It reviews the purposes, the organization, the content, the teaching approaches, and the evaluation methods of literature programs as presented by different writers.

Based upon the nature of the elementary school child, the nature of literature, and the nature of literature programs, an elementary school literature program is designed in chapter four. This chapter begins with a rationale for the inclusion of literature in the elementary school curriculum. This rationale is based upon the contribution of literature to the education of the imagination. Six purposes are recommended for the literature program, the main one being to stimulate and develop children's imaginations. An organization based on genres is the approach recommended for organizing the literature curriculum. The genres recommended for study are

poetry, folk literature, fantasy, historical fiction, and modern realistic fiction. Within each genre specific literary selections are recommended for study. Some instructional approaches are also suggested for the teaching of literature. The chapter concludes with a sample unit for the literary selection Charlotte's Web.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

I. THE PROBLEM

At present, the elementary school curriculum in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador does not provide any place for the inclusion of a well-planned literature program. The language arts curriculum guides, Core Learnings in the Language Arts, Guidelines for Instruction in Language Arts, and Bridging the Gap: Curriculum Bulletin on Language Arts for Intermediate School Teachers, make no provision for a literature program in the elementary school. The emphasis throughout the curriculum guides is placed on developing the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is pointed out in the guide Bridging the Gap: Curriculum Bulletin on Language Arts for Intermediate School Teachers that teaching reading skills is not enough and each child should be guided "to make reading widely an important and integral part of his living" (p. 121). However, no reference is made to a program in literature.

It would appear, then, that any attempt to teach literature in the elementary school is left to the initiative of individual teachers or schools. Hence, all children do not leave elementary school with an equally balanced exposure to literature. In some classrooms, a regular period is scheduled weekly for sharing stories and poems. In other classrooms,

a free reading period or library period is scheduled to allow children time for the selection and independent reading of books of interest. Also, literature is sometimes used to enrich other curriculum areas, such as science or social studies. Any, all, or even none of these approaches to literature may be found in any single classroom. The experiences which result from such approaches range from an over-exposure to one particular piece of good literature to a lack of exposure to any good literature at all. Even though these approaches have something worthwhile to offer children, they cannot and should not take the place of a planned sequential program in literature.

II. THE NEED FOR A LITERATURE PROGRAM

For some years now various writers have advocated the inclusion of a well-planned literature program in the elementary school. Sloan (1977) points out that in order to begin to teach literature it must be given "a place of its own in the elementary curriculum" (p. 3). She believes that too much time and emphasis are placed on teaching skills, such as word attack skills and spelling skills. Many believe, says Sloan, that these skills must be mastered before children can understand the language of literature. Sloan disagrees, "For in literature is to be found the art of our language at its finest. Literature is the language art" (p. 4). As Sloan

points out, for many children school is the only place they will learn about children's literature. Since "feeling" is so important to children, says Sloan, they must be shown that books "can make them laugh or cry, shiver and gasp" (p. 4).

Cooper (1969), as well, believes that literature deserves time in the elementary school day "as a legitimate and important area of study in its own right" with its final goal being "enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of the best in literature" (p. 2).

Because literature helps to develop the imagination and because the imagination is so important to an individual, Loban (1966) believes that "the arts, including literature, deserve a more solid and central position in the curriculum at any level" (p. 747). He recommends that a balanced and a sequential program in literature is needed in the elementary school.

Huus (1973), as well, emphasizes the place of literature in the elementary curriculum. She says that teaching literature is not the same as teaching reading, free reading, individualized reading, or a library program:

Though reading and library classes both support a literature program, literature as a subject in the elementary school deserves a special period to itself and should appear as such on the class schedule, with adequate time allowed for teaching it. (p. 796)

Teaching literature, according to Huus, means "that pupils receive a planned program of activities designed to achieve certain stated objectives" (p. 796).

Literature as a specific area of the elementary school curriculum is advocated by Walker (1964):

Where literature is included in the program only when it correlates with subjects receiving major emphasis, or when a special occasion arises to which it might make a contribution, or when a pupil brings in a book and urges the teacher to read it to the class, children lose the benefits which are derived from a well-planned, thoughtfully organized body of literature experiences. (p. 460)

According to Iverson (1971) a secure place is needed for children's literature in the elementary school curriculum. He believes that a literature program is aimless unless it has an established place in the curriculum. What results is random content for instruction and lack of cumulative building of taste and judgment in literature.

III. RATIONALE FOR A LITERATURE PROGRAM

Since it has been shown that the inclusion of a well-planned, sequential literature program in the elementary school is favored by many authors, one must now consider the rationale for including literature as part of the elementary curriculum. Why should children be exposed to literature on a planned regular basis? In other words, what does literature do for children, how does it contribute to their development and education?

Perhaps one of the strongest bases for providing a place for literature in the elementary school curriculum is presented by Sloan (1975), who emphasizes the importance of

literature in developing the imagination. She believes that the education of the imagination is extremely important and should not be neglected, for:

It is after all through the imagination that we participate in every aspect of our daily lives: in conversation, in relating to others with sympathy and consideration, in making choices and decisions, in analyzing news reports and the speeches of politicians, in evaluating advertisements and entertainment. (p. 6)

Through literature, says Sloan, we learn that there are no limits to the imagination, since anything can happen in a story. "Literature makes carpets fly and rabbits talk" (p. 7). As well, our imaginative perspective on reality can be developed through literature as it illustrates "what happens to human beings as they try to come to terms with living. Literature gives shape to human experience" (p. 7). Also, literature can help us realize the powers of our imaginations, because it can put into words and images, things we knew before but couldn't express. It opens up limitless possibilities, says Sloan, for the kind of world and the kind of life we want.

Another writer who emphasizes literature's contribution to the development of the imagination is Loban (1966). He contends that "the imagination is important ... and that literature feeds the imagination" (p. 746). The distinguishing trait of literature, he says, is the imaginative insight it offers us. The goals usually identified as important outcomes of experiences with

literature, such as self-understanding, extension of experience, and a balanced perspective of life, "all ... depend upon imagination and the insight it bestows" (p. 746).

Loban emphasizes that as a result of a balanced and sequential literature program, children will be offered:

the whole of imaginative insight which finds the substance beneath the shadow, the reality behind the surface appearances of life; the power of literature to clarify experience, to make the reader more intensely aware of life, to extend that awareness. The best writers, whether for children or adults, extend and enrich experience, making it possible for the reader to reduce confusion and to find more meaning in his personal adventure with life. (p. 751)

According to Allen (1967), literature helps to educate what he calls our "sixth sense" -- the imagination. He explains that as a child is experiencing a story close to his own feelings, he realizes that he reacts in different ways to the same situation. These personal responses are dealt with by himself and then shared with real or imaginary friends. His imagination is quickened by the voices he hears within himself, and "literature becomes an engagement with life now and with life as it may become" (p. 734). Such an engagement, says Allen, helps to educate the imagination and "prompts the child to exercise his personal creative power over his very existence" (p. 734). His former fears and bewilderment become less and he is able to reach out beyond the comfort of the known to the adventure of the unknown. "He begins to trust this sense of wonder lying within himself, and he dares to become not only a dreamer but a creator too" (p. 735).

J.E. Miller (1967) also believes in the power of literature to educate the imagination. He states that

this aim of educating the imagination is so vital to the total educational process as to justify the placement of literature at the heart of any defensible curriculum... . Every child has an imagination; the problem for the educator is to discover not only the means to keep it from diminishing but also the means to nourish and develop it. (p. 21)

Miller believes it is literature which has "the significant part to play in the maturing process of the imagination" (p. 27).

The contribution of literature to the development of the imagination is also emphasized by R. Lewis (1975). He believes this is the most vital and important justification for the teaching of literature. Yorke (cited in Lewis) states that not only is the imagination "developed" by literature, but it is "stimulated, broadened, extended, widened, encouraged, fed, exercised, roused, sparked off, stirred up" (p. 173).

According to Lewis, one value of developing the imagination through the power of literature is that it helps us to establish areas of security that are "important both for strengthening our hold on what we already have and for extending our control into new and strange areas of experience" (p. 174). Our feelings become realized and defined, or as Cresswell (cited in Lewis) says, "the reader is experiencing things which perhaps he ... never had words

for and this gives meaning for this feeling because there it is in words. ... it actually exists" (p. 175).

The belief that literature is essential to creating a desire to read and to the development of truly literate people is held by Huck (1979), as well as Sloan (1975). Huck believes that the only way to achieve true literacy is through developing a love of good books. She says, "Children will never become fully literate persons unless they discover delight in books. The route, then, to full literacy is through literature" (p. 26).

Sloan (1975), emphasizing the importance of literature in creating a desire to read, states:

Children will become readers only if their emotions have been engaged, their imaginations stirred and stretched by what they find on printed pages. One way - a sure way - to make this happen is through literature, imaginative literature in particular, where ideally language is used with intensity and power in a direct appeal to the feelings and the imagination. (p. 1)

Children need to be made aware that reading is worth the time and attention it requires. Sloan believes literature can do this, since,

Literature appeals directly to the emotions and the imagination, carrying within a powerful motivation to participate in its wonders and delights. It is only the art of literature that can successfully counter the drawing power of television and mass media. (p. 2)

The value of literature in providing children with vicarious experiences is emphasized by Huck (1979). She believes that such experiences will enrich children's lives

and provide new perspectives from which to see themselves and their world. As Huck states:

Reading gets us out of our own time and place, out of ourselves; but in the end it will return us to ourselves, a little different, a little changed by this experience. (p. 702)

Huus (1973), as well, points out the value of literature in helping children see themselves and their world in a new perspective. Again, this is accomplished through the vicarious experiences provided by literature. Children are able to meet characters from the past, whether real or fictional, characters from different lands, characters very much like themselves, and even imaginary characters they never could have invented. As Huus says,

They meet fantasy and reality on a different plane, and through their identification with the heroes and heroines leave their reading with inner resources that assist them in meeting daily problems and developing their own philosophy of living. (p. 798)

Several authors believe that the inclusion of literature is important in the elementary school because it helps children to develop self-understanding, as well as understanding of, sensitivity to, and compassion for others. According to Cooper (1969) literature contributes to a child's personal development by helping to develop self-understanding and the understanding of others and by heightening sensitivity to nature, people, and human relationships.

Tiedt (1970) believes that literature can teach "understandings". She says, "Literature presents values; it teaches sensitivities" (p. 193). Tiedt begins a list of such

understandings to be gained from literature which she points out is inexhaustible and needs to be reviewed constantly:

- a. Everybody has problems;
- b. Problems are to be solved;
- c. Appearances may be deceiving;
- d. People are not all "good" or all "bad";
and
- e. People are much the same all over the
world. (p. 193)

Walker (1964) justifies the inclusion of literature in the elementary curriculum by referring to its contribution to the understanding of self and the development of self-concept which she considers to be major goals of education. She points out that "the school aims to give each child self-insight" (p. 459). Walker believes that through literature

he [a child] frequently gains through comparison or contrast new understandings about himself and his environment. Thus, he can be helped to a more realistic appraisal of his own personality and, as a result, to new aspirations for himself. (p. 459)

Huck (1979) states that literature develops insights into human behavior. It develops an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of human nature, and it makes children aware of how others have lived and developed. Huck emphasizes "the power of literature to educate the human heart" (p. 27) and the importance of such education in our world today:

No one can live long enough to see all of life clear and whole but through wide reading, as well as living, we can acquire a perception of life and literature; and, on this fragile green world, a tiny globe of humanity must learn compassion and cooperation or cease to exist... . Most of what

children learn in school is concerned with knowing; literature is concerned with feeling. We cannot afford to educate the head without the heart. (p. 28)

Through literature, feelings can be created and educated, says Huck. She states:

Children can begin to develop a sense of their humanness; they can develop new insights into the behavior of others and themselves. Literature can add a new dimension to life and create a new awareness, a greater sensitivity to people and surroundings. It can educate the heart as well as the head. (p. 36)

It is Carmichael's (1977) belief that literature can foster understanding of self and others. It provides children with the opportunity to explore and understand their own and others' feelings -- feelings about such things as accomplishment, fear, friends, love, security, or death.

The value of literature in developing world understanding is emphasized by Peller (1970). He states:

It implores the reader to examine and appreciate the complexity of the world about him, the complexity of human beings, the complexity of human relations. While leading the reader to broaden his understanding of himself; literature solicits the reader's compassion for mankind. In short, literature challenges, begs, encourages, incites, provokes, and charges human beings to be human. (p. 22)

There is, then, a sound rational basis for the inclusion of literature in the elementary school curriculum. The various authors reviewed suggest that literature contributes to a child's imaginative and personal development as well as helping him to become a fully literate person.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to design a literature program for the elementary grades four to six. It is felt that such a program will help fill the existing void in the elementary school curriculum.

V. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter has established the need for a literature program in the elementary school and has presented a rationale for the inclusion of literature in the elementary school curriculum. Chapter two is a review of the literature related to the nature of the elementary school child, since the child for whom a program is being developed should be considered. The views of various authors on the different aspects of an elementary school literature program are reviewed in chapter three.

Then, based upon the reviews of literature on the nature of the elementary school child and on the nature of elementary school literature programs, the design of a literature program for the elementary grades four to six is presented in chapter four. The chapter suggests a rationale for the inclusion of literature in the elementary school curriculum, the purposes for the elementary school literature program, a method of organizing the literature curriculum, appropriate content for the program, and some instructional approaches for the

teaching of literature in the elementary grades. A sample literature unit is also included for teaching a specific literary selection. This unit includes objectives and teaching suggestions for experiencing, interpreting, and responding to the literary selection.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO THE NATURE OF
THE CHILD IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

I. INTRODUCTION

In designing a literature program, the nature of the child for whom the program is intended should be considered. Knowledge of the development of the child in the elementary grades combined with knowledge of the nature of elementary school literature programs should provide the basis for designing an elementary school literature program. Such knowledge will influence the purposes to be decided upon, the organizational approach to be used, the content to be selected, and the teaching approaches and activities to be used in the literature program. This chapter will review specifically these aspects of the elementary child's development: intellectual development, language development and interests, and reading interests in prose and poetry.

II. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Among the leading studies on the intellectual development of the child are those of Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist. According to the theories presented by Piaget (1950) there are four major stages of intellectual development: the sensorimotor stage, occurring from birth to about two years

of age; the preoperational stage, occurring from about two to seven years of age; the concrete operational stage, occurring from about seven to eleven years of age; and the formal operational stage, occurring from about eleven years of age and up. Intellectual development proceeds through this sequence of stages with each stage more complex and abstract than the previous one.

Perhaps one of the most important single ideas to be derived from Piaget's work is that individuals learn best from self-initiated activity. Major emphasis is placed by Piaget (1970) on the role of activity in intellectual development. Piaget maintains, "Knowledge is derived from action" (p. 38). In his view, "To know an object is to act upon and to transform it" (p. 29).

Ginsberg and Oppen (1979), supporting the role of activity in learning, state that "the essence of knowledge is activity" (p. 224). They recommend that the teacher encourage the child's activity in all forms in order for the child to gain a genuine understanding which is more solid and long-lasting. Encouraging the child to be passive, for example, by lecturing at him, can often result in superficial learning which is soon forgotten. "True understanding" say Ginsberg and Oppen, "involves action, on both the motoric and conceptual levels" (p. 225). In order to learn, the child needs to act on things. Formal verbal instruction,

encouraging passiveness, is usually not effective for the child.

In applying Piaget's knowledge of intellectual development to the child's learning, Fisher and Terry (1977) suggest that in order for the child to develop new schemata and refine others, he needs many experiences. The authors suggest that for the elementary child, the learning environment should involve first hand observations and direct participation in classroom activities, since his learning is still based on concrete experiences. The classroom environment should not be a passive one, but rather an active one, where the child is encouraged to explore, experiment, converse, and question.

Since most of the children in grades four to six are at the concrete operational stage, the intellectual development of a child at this stage is examined in detail here. Ginsberg and Oppen (1979) conclude that during the concrete operational stage a child is "both capable of constructing hierarchical classifications and of comprehending inclusion" (p. 122). The child gains the ability to think simultaneously in terms of a whole and its parts. During this stage the child has the ability to concentrate on several dimensions of a problem at the same time and to see relationships between these dimensions. The authors point out that, as well, the child is able to note transformations and similarities about situations.

Similar ideas are noted by M.M. Lewis (1963). During the concrete operational stage, Lewis maintains, a child's thinking becomes increasingly operational. He says:

It is operational in that the child is, to some extent, able to analyze and resynthesize a situation that confronts him. He can go so far as to classify things in accordance with specific criteria; he can manage some serial relationships among things; and, whether classifying or serially ordering things, he can often take account of more than one criterion at a time. (pp. 168-169)

Lewis points out that the child's reasoning is not "necessarily confined to what is present to his senses" (p. 169) just because his thinking is concrete in nature. He suggests that perhaps the most important characteristic of concrete thinking is "the ability to deal with a new situation which is a transformation of a past situation" (p. 192). The child, during the concrete operational stage, has the ability to generalize about and to see similarities about situations before him or those already experienced.

Biehler (1974), as well, claims that the child is able to see transformations and similarities. If he has not acquired any direct knowledge in some area, Biehler suggests, he will reason by relating it to something he has previously experienced.

From a review of Piaget's research, Blair and Burton (1951) conclude, likewise, that during the stage of concrete operations "there appears to come increasing ability to see causal relationships and to form generalizations" (p. 157).

As M.M. Lewis (1963) points out, however, during the concrete operational stage, the child's thinking is still concrete in nature and not sufficiently formal enough to deal with abstractions and hypotheses. He states:

His thinking remains concrete so long as it is bound to the actual features of a situation -- present or absent -- rather than free to explore and deal with new and abstract relationships or to entertain a hypothesis and reason from it. His thinking is hardly as yet systematized, so that he hardly if ever tests a train of reasoning by applying the touchstone of generally valid principles. (p. 169)

This indicates that during the concrete operational stage, the child is unable to generalize about abstractions or form a hypothesis about new and abstract situations.

Biehler (1974), in discussing the child during the stage of concrete operations, similarly notes that the child engages in the kind of operation which is "limited to objects actually present or with which he has had direct, concrete experience" (p. 116). His thinking is limited to actual experiences. Biehler draws the conclusion that the child is not able to develop hypotheses about or generalize about new and abstract possibilities that he has not already experienced.

Fisher and Terry (1977) likewise claim that verbal and symbolic abstractions present difficulties for the child during the concrete operational stage. Therefore, such a child will learn best when a variety of direct and concrete experiences and materials are provided.

Similar conclusions about the child at the stage of concrete operations are drawn by Bruner (1960). He points

out that concrete operations are ways for structuring only immediately present reality. At this stage, he says, "the child is able to give structure to the things he encounters, but he is not yet readily able to deal with possibilities not directly before him or not already experienced" (p. 37). This does not mean that children at the stage of concrete operations are unable to anticipate things that are not present. It means, rather, that "they do not command the operations for conjuring up systematically the full range of alternative possibilities that could exist at any given time" (p. 37). However, Bruner believes:

While the child is in the stage of concrete operations, he is capable of grasping intuitively and concretely a great many of the basic ideas of mathematics, the sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences. But he can do so only in terms of concrete operations. (p. 38)

Bruner maintains that the child can learn to use the basic ideas of these subjects in progressively more complex forms but he must first understand them intuitively and have a chance to try them out on his own. He suggests that "the early teaching of science, mathematics, social studies, and literature should be designed ... with an emphasis upon the intuitive grasp of ideas and upon the use of these basic ideas" (p. 13). For example, the child in the stage of concrete operations can grasp the idea of tragedy and the basic human conditions represented in myth, but he cannot put these ideas into formal language or manipulate them as adults can. This intuitive understanding of ideas will form the

basis for further learning later on. As Bruner states, "These first representations can later be made more powerful and precise the more easily by virtue of this early learning" (p. 33).

One can conclude, then, from the review of literature on the intellectual development of the elementary school child, that the child learns best in an active environment. The role of activity seems very important in the child's intellectual development. He should be provided ample opportunity to participate actively -- both mentally and physically in classroom activities. The child ought to be encouraged to explore, converse, and question. In such an environment, the child's basic understanding of ideas should be more solid and long-lasting. A passive environment, in which the child receives formal verbal instruction in the form of lecturing, is not as effective in the child's intellectual development. The learning which results is often superficial and soon forgotten. Receptive, passive learning, whereby the child's mind is not active, does not result in true lasting understanding.

Being at the concrete operational stage, the child in the elementary grades has the ability to classify according to specific criteria, often considering more than one criterion at a time. He can concentrate on several aspects of a problem simultaneously and perceive relationships between these aspects. He is capable of handling a new situation

which is a transformation of a past situation. During the concrete operational stage the child is capable of forming generalizations about situations which are present to him or which he has encountered already. He has the ability to recognize similarities between situations. In literature, for example, the child is capable of comparing one story to another. He can note, for instance, the similarities among the beginnings and among the ends of various folk tales.

However, during the stage of concrete operations, the child's thinking is still concrete in nature. He does not have the ability to generalize about situations which he is not presently experiencing or which he has not previously experienced. He cannot deal with new and abstract relationships. For example, the child is not able to fully comprehend abstract definitions of literary concepts.

The child, during the stage of concrete operations, is still, nevertheless, able to understand intuitively and concretely many basic ideas of the major subjects. Such intuitive understanding of ideas provides a foundation for deeper more precise learning later on. The child can, for instance, intuitively perceive the structure and pattern of a particular genre, such as the folktale.

III. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERESTS

Language Development

Selected aspects of the child's language development in the elementary school are reviewed in this section. These aspects deal mainly with the child's knowledge and control over language. They include syntax, sentence structure, complexity, flexibility, and functions of language.

A child's knowledge and control over language is fairly well developed by the time he begins school. This point is noted by several writers. Smith, Goodman, and Meredith (1976) remark that "it is amazing that virtually every child achieves near mastery of at least one language by the time he is five or six" (p. 9).

McCarthy (1954) similarly concludes from her review of children's language development, that "a basic mastery of spoken language is normally acquired very rapidly during the preschool years" (p. 494). Smith (1972), generalizing from studies made by Ervin and Miller, makes the same point. He reports that these studies indicate a close approximation between the child's speech at five or six years of age and adult speech in his immediate environment. W.R. Miller (1969) states that by the age of four years a child has learned most of the grammar and phonology of his language, that "he has considerable linguistic competence" (p. 42).

Similarly, Church (1961) believes that during the school years, "the child becomes increasingly the master of language"

(p. 104). He learns to handle written language as well as quantitative and schematic symbolizations.

Many studies relating to the sentence structure and syntax of elementary school children's language have been conducted. For example, Strickland (1962) recorded and analyzed the syntactic structure of the oral language of 575 elementary school children in grades one to six. She concludes from her analysis that elementary children use patterns of linguistic structure in their oral language with great flexibility. At an early age children learn fairly thoroughly the basic structures of their language.

O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris (1967) also conducted a study on the syntax of kindergarten and elementary school children. The results show that the length of the children's responses steadily increases through the grade levels. An analysis of the use of particular syntactic structures in children's language was made. It was found that a variety of basic structure patterns are used by elementary school children. Increases were shown in the use of various types of grammatical patterns and constructions from one grade level to the next. The study indicates that the development of syntactic control occurs through the grade levels.

Herrick (1955), in discussing the child's growth in sentence structure, says that a child has used almost every form of sentence structure by the time he is six. He

concludes that as the child progresses through the elementary grades his oral and written language is characterized by:

- (a) increasing length of sentence,
- (b) increasing number of complex and compound sentences and decreasing number of simple sentences. (p. 90)

Brown and Berko (1967) conclude from a study they conducted that the grammatical competence of the child develops as he increases in age. The study examined the response words provided by children in a word association test. It was found that the child's tendency to associate words within a part-of-speech increases with age. The authors suggest that this is a result of the child's gradual organization of his vocabulary into the syntactic classes called parts-of-speech. They tested the degree to which a child could accomplish this grammatical task by administering a usage test. It was found that the child's ability to make correct grammatical use of new words also increases with age. Brown and Berko conclude that:

the formal change in word association and the ability to make correct grammatical use of new words are two manifestations of the child's developing appreciation of English syntax. (p. 305)

Another study, conducted by McGetridge, Evanechko, Hamuluk, and Brown (1969), regarding the development of language competence in children at the elementary school level, shows that children's language ability grows consistently through the grades. The measures of performance that were used include fluency, complexity, grammar, and

semantics. As noted by McFetridge et al., the fluency and complexity of children's language expressions increase through the grades while the number of grammatical errors decreases. An analysis of the results from the semantic measures shows that the use of simple factual statements decreases through the grades while the use of statements to express abstract concepts and relationships increases. The authors point out that the growth of semantic competence does not seem to develop as consistently as linguistic competence. As summarized by McFetridge et al., the findings of the study show:

During the child's elementary years growth in language competence occurs according to these aspects:

- (a) Fluency -- all measures;
- (b) Complexity as measured by subordination;
- (c) Grammar as measured by a decrease in number of errors and
- (d) Semantics as shown by a decrease in factual statements and an increase in interpretive expressions. (p. 105)

Loban (1963), as well, conducted a study of the language used by children from grade kindergarten through to grade six. The children's use, development, and control of language were investigated by the study. The study's findings on fluency of language show an increase through the grades in the amount of language children use in their size and variety of vocabulary as well as in the complexity, flexibility, and coherency of their expression. The findings on effectiveness

and control of language show that children have the ability to use and vary the basic structural patterns of English. All basic patterns of the English sentence structure could be found in the children's language. An increase in the number and kinds of subordinating clauses shows increasing grammatical complexity.

It is stated by W.R. Miller (1969) that by the time a child is four years old, "the bulk of the grammatical system has been learned" (p. 35). The child uses such grammatical words as:

modal auxiliaries, prepositions, conjunctions, and the like, inflectional suffixes such as the plural for nouns and tense for verbs, and complex grammatical operations which allow for the formation of questions, negatives, infinitives, manipulation of indirect objects, and the like. (p. 35)

The elementary school child is also aware of the dual function of words. As Iona and Peter Opie (1959) point out, the child is very interested in this duality. This is shown in the child's enjoyment of puns and riddles, such as the following one, "What has an eye but cannot see? (A needle)" (p. 78).

Church (1961), similarly suggests the child's awareness of duality in his use and enjoyment of puns. "The pun ... is fundamental to the humor of school children" (p. 182), says Church. This is shown in the child's enjoyment of such riddles as, "What has four legs and flies? What is black and white and re(a)d all over?" (p. 182).

Asch and Nerlove (1967) investigated the development of the child's use and understanding of "double-function" terms. The authors refer to such words as "hard", "deep", "bright", and "soft" as "double-function" terms because "they refer jointly to physical and psychological data" (p. 283). Asch and Nerlove note that these "double-function" terms are also "an elementary instance of metaphorical thinking, which is essential to the understanding of language" (p. 283).

The results of the study by Asch and Nerlove show an increase in the understanding of the psychological meanings of these double-function terms by fourth graders, aged nine to ten years. Their ability to state the dual function of each term also increased. These children gave such responses as: "Neither crooked people nor crooked things are upright, straight"; "Hard things and hard people are alike in that neither of them break" (pp. 286-287). The understanding of psychological meanings of these terms was not much more advanced in sixth graders, aged eleven to twelve. Their comprehension of the dual function of these terms, however, was noticeably more advanced, as shown by these comments: "Crooked things and crooked people are roundabout and may be dangerous"; "Hard things and hard people are both unmanageable" (p. 287).

The results of Asch's and Nerlove's study show that the number of times double-function terms were correctly used to name psychological qualities of persons increased from one

grade to the next. An increase was also found in the number of times the relation between the physical and psychological meanings was adequately explained.

Howards (1964) conducted a study of children in grades four, five, and six to measure how many common meanings of selected very high frequency monosyllabic, multiple-meaning words are understood by them. The results showed that development is progressive from one grade to the next. That is,

Sixth-grade pupils knew more meanings of these selected very high frequency words than did the fifth-grade pupils, and they in turn knew more meanings than did the fourth-grade pupils. (p. 379)

Howards also found that "Idiomatic and figurative usages tended to rank very high in terms of difficulty" (p. 380).

This does not mean, however, that the elementary child cannot enjoy and appreciate figurative language. As Huck (1979) points out, the child can appreciate figurative language as long as the comparisons are within his background of understanding. Also, she believes the child can understand symbolic meanings. She defines literary symbols as "recurring concrete objects or events that represent an abstract idea" (p. 12). Church (1961), as well, suggests that the child can grasp figures of speech.

A review of research on the language development of the elementary school child indicates that the child is competent in his knowledge of and control over language. A variety of basic patterns of syntactic structure can be used with great

flexibility by the child. His development of syntactic control increases through the grades. The child's fluency and complexity in the use of language grows, as does his grammatical and semantic competency. The child can use and understand the various functions of language. His awareness of the dual function of words is shown in his use and understanding of riddles, puns, multiple-meaning words, and double-function terms. Even though figurative language presents some difficulty, the child can learn to enjoy and appreciate it. As Brown (1971) concludes, from his review of research in this area, the elementary school child "can be taught much about the imaginative use of language" (p. 128).

Language Interests

Children seem to find a constant delight in ways they can play with the words and sounds of their language. M.M. Lewis (1963) says that during the elementary years there persists "an enjoyment of verbal utterance in and for itself, as a form of play" (p. 172). Puns, tongue-twisters, riddles, and other kinds of verbal play have great appeal for children. As Lewis points out, children's "pleasure in the playful exploration of the manipulation of words" (p. 174) can be seen in such characteristic features as puns, riddles, and rhymes.

As suggested by Rutherford (1971), children often recite nonsense rhymes as a form of play or entertainment. Nonsense

rhymes are among those which "children sing or recite mainly for diversion" (p. 100), claims Rutherford.

Iona and Peter Opie (1959) similarly maintain that children delight in "tangletalk" or "utter nonsense" where the order of words is changed and incongruities are deliberately juxtaposed. The following example is noted by the Opies:

One midsummer's night in winter
The snow was raining fast,
A bare-footed girl with clogs on
Stood sitting on the grass. (p. 24)

Children are fascinated by the wonderful things words can do. They are delighted by words with more than one use or meaning. This is shown in their enjoyment of puns and tongue-twisters. Certain tongue-twisters, such as the following one, seem to last forever since, as the Opies (1959) suggest, "it takes children a long time before they cease to be amazed that one word can have more than one meaning" (p. 31):

Of all the felt I ever felt,
I never felt a piece of felt
which felt the same as that
felt felt, when I first felt
the felt of that felt hat. (p. 31)

Tongue-twisters provide children with a source of verbal play. Children delight in the coincidence of sound found in tongue-twisters. The Opies record this tongue-twister:

I saw Esau sawing wood,
And Esau saw I saw him;
Though Esau saw I saw him saw
Still Esau went on sawing. (p. 13)

Puns, such as the following one recorded by the Opies, are a common element of the language of school children: "We

opened the window and influenza" (p. 30). It is suggested by the authors that puns may serve as the basis of children's riddles, as the pivot of a popular saying, and as an important part in their everyday repartee.

Ghoulism, which the Opies describe as rhymes and phrases children say to describe "the outward material facts about death" (p. 32), is another example of children's play with language. These rhymes and phrases seem very funny to children. The following example can often be found written on their books:

When I am dead and in my grave,
and all my bones are rotten,
This little book will tell my name,
when I am quite forgotten. (p. 32)

Riddles provide another means for children to delight in playing with words. Children are often heard asking each other riddles, such as the following ones noted by Mary and Herbert Knapp (1976): "What did the big chimney say to the little chimney? You're too young to smoke. Why does the rain fall in sheets? To cover the river bed" (p. 105).

Also evident in children's play with language are slang and innovation. Children's language, as M.M. Lewis (1963) claims, has "a special vocabulary, rich in slang and words foreign to the adult language" (p. 171). The Opies (1959) similarly suggest, "Their love of fun ... is shown in the constant welcome given to slang and innovation" (p. 155). Children use short, sharp words to name parts of the body. As the Opies report, they use "'mug' ... and 'phiz' for face;

'conk' for nose; 'gob' for mouth" (p. 155). They regularly attach endings, such as -cat or -puss, to certain words to make new words. For example, "copycat" or "sourpuss" (p. 155). Mary and Herbert Knapp (1976) note that children often use descriptive names to refer to some characteristic about another person. For example, a redhead is a "carrot-top"; a person who seems intelligent is a "smarty-pants"; a person who seems stupid is a "dumbbell" or a "bird-brain" (p. 67).

Children also have great fun playing with other people's names, using puns, abridgements, rhymes, and jokes. These examples, noted by the Opies, illustrate this play with names. "A boy with the surname Wood will be called 'Splinter'" (p. 158). "Any Dennis is ... named 'Dennis the Menace'" (p. 159). Any Dan is followed by the verse: "Dan, Dan, the dirty old man, Washed his face in a frying pan" (p. 159). Children sometimes add a person's name to a rhyme to tease the person. In the following rhyme the name Johnnie can be substituted with another name:

Johnnie, Johnnie is no good.
Cut him up for fire wood.
If he is no good for that,
Give him to the pussy cat.

The words and sounds of their language hold a great deal of fascination for children. They are fascinated with strange, unusual words. It is stated by Huck (1979) that "Children are intrigued with the sound of language and enjoy unusual and ridiculous combinations of words" (p. 311). The

poem, "Tea Party" by Harry Behn (in Huck, 1979) shows how the poet uses such words to delight and fascinate children:

Mister Beedle Baddlebug,
Don't bundle up in your boodlebag
Or mumble in your jumblejug,
Now eat your nummy tiffletag
Or I will never invite you
To tea again with me. Shoo! (p. 311)

Nonsense words are also sometimes borrowed or created by children in order to complete a rhyme. This example is reported by the Opies (1959):

"There was a man called Michael Finigan,
He grew whiskers on his chinigin" (p. 31).

Two other aspects of language which children find interesting are parody and satire which appear in many poems created by children. Children enjoy repeating satirical rhymes, such as the following one recorded by the Opies (1959):

Red, white, and blue,
My mother is a Jew,
My father is a Scotsman,
And I'm a Kangaroo. (p. 19)

The Opies suggest that perhaps satirical rhymes delight children because "in the crude images evoked, adults are made to look undignified" (p. 19).

Parody, which the Opies describe as "that most refined form of jeering" (p. 87), is often recited by children. Popular songs, hymns, and carols receive much parodying from children. The Opies claim that parodying also allows children to "get their own back on the great ones" and bring them "down to street level" (p. 93). The parodying of nursery rhymes,

such as the following one of Mary's Lamb, makes children feel more independent and grown-up:

Mary had a little lamb,
Its feet were black as soot,
And into Mary's bread and jam
Its sooty foot it put. (p. 90)

The Knapps (1970) make the same point about the appeal of parodying. Parodies, they say, are "a way of asserting one's perceptiveness and independence" (p. 161). Children often parody commercials, nursery rhymes, carols, patriotic songs, and religious verses, such as the following one:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
A bag of apples at my feet.
If I die before I wake,
You'll know it was a stomach ache.
(p. 171)

M.M. Lewis (1963) similarly points out that children usually find much enjoyment in parodying. Parody has great appeal for children since, as Lewis says, it is "one expression of the irreverence which is gaining strength throughout this period and onwards into adolescence" (p. 174). Children at this age enjoy making adults look absurd and undignified. It seems to be a way of asserting their independence.

Rutherford (1971), as well, claims that parodies are a source of delight for children. Parodying is one way of ridiculing, teasing, showing irreverence for, or mocking someone or something.

Other aspects of language which appeal to children include rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, repetition,

onomatopoeia, imagery and figurative language. Since children's language is so close to poetry, it seems natural for children to find these poetic aspects of language so appealing. Hopkins (1972) claims, "Children are natural poets" (p. 1). Whitehead (1968), as well, maintains that "spontaneous rhythmic expressions of the purest poetry" (p. 108) are often produced by children. It is also noted by Chukovsky (1963) that the child is "an avid creator of word rhythms and rhymes" (p. 64). As Frye (1963) says, the child's "chanting speech has at least as much verse in it as prose" (p. 54).

Similarly, Larrick (1967) emphasizes how close poetry is to children's own language, how it appeals to their imagination, their sense of rhythm, and their urge to create. She believes that "rhythm and repetition are the child's way" (p. 106). Children's language is fresh and imaginative. It is noted by Larrick that children's language is naturally musical and imaginative which are two of the essential qualities of poetry.

Rhythm delights children since it is so natural to them. They are naturally rhythmical in their movements and speech. They hop and skip, for example, or as Huck (1979) suggests, respond with delight to the rhythmical sound of "Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake". She believes "poetry satisfies the child's natural response to rhythm" (p. 309). Sloan (1975), as well, points out that children's natural expression is rhythmic as

in the language of poetry. Burrows, Monson, and Stauffer (1972) claim that the rhythm of poetry appears to satisfy children's natural desire for rhythm.

The rhythm of a poem is suited to its subject matter. Huck (1979) says the rhythm reinforces and creates the poem's meaning. It suggests the movement or mood of the poem. Consider the poem, "Where Go The Boats", by Robert Louis Stevenson (in Arbuthnot and Root, 1968) which suggests how the speed of the river increases as it flows toward the sea:

Dark brown is the river,
Golden is the sand.
It flows along forever,
With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,
Castles of the foam,
Boats of mine a-boating --
Where will all come home?

On goes the river
And out past the mill,
Away down the valley
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,
A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
Shall bring my boats ashore.
(p. 110)

Children enjoy certain aspects of sound. Rhyme, alliteration, assonance, repetition and onomatopoeia all appeal to children. As Rutherford (1971) points out, it is often these aspects -- rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, and repetition -- rather than meaning, which provide the content for many children's own verses.

Rhyme is quite often heard in the language of school children since it holds such great delight for them. As the Opies (1959) suggest, "Rhyme seems to appeal to a child as something funny and remarkable in itself, there need be neither wit nor reason to support it" (p. 17). Sometimes, the Opies say, rhymes are "repeated just for fun, for the fun of the versification" (pp. 18-19). Often, rhymes such as the following ones recorded by Shaw (1970), are recited while skipping, ball-bouncing, or hand-clapping:

Eeeper, Weeper, chimbley sweeper
 Had a wife and couldn't keep her.
 Got another, didn't love her,
 Up the chimbley he did shove her.
 (p. 71)

Holy Moses, King of the Jews,
 Bought his wife a pair of shoes,
 When the shoes began to crack
 Holy Moses sent 'em back.
 (p. 94)

Similarly, Grugeon (1988) records rhymes which children sing while playing clapping games. The following is an example recorded by Grugeon:

I went to the Chinese Restaurant,
 To buy a loaf of bread, bread, bread,
 I saw a Chinese lady,
 And this is what she said, said, said...
 (p. 10)

The presence of rhyme in children's language is also emphasized by Hopkins (1972). Children constantly play games involving the singing or reciting of rhymes. They often compose their own rhymes while playing. "Rhyme is very present in the child's world" (p. 2), says Hopkins.

M.M. Lewis (1963) similarly points out that rhyme is evident in children's language. Rhymes hold a great interest for children. As Lewis suggests, "Rhymes give pleasure in themselves, they can readily be remembered and, above all, they have a certain social force -- they can be chanted in chorus" (p. 174).

Huck (1979), as well, claims that rhyme appeals to children. She points out that "rhyme helps to create the musical qualities of a poem, and children enjoy the 'singiness of words'" (p. 310).

Alliteration, which is the repetition of initial consonant sounds, and assonance, which is the repetition of certain vowel sounds, are two other aspects of sound which children find appealing. This indicates why certain tongue twisters delight children. The repetition of the "s" sound, found in this one reported by the Opies (1959), appeals to children: "She sells sea shells on the sea shore" (p. 30). Children enjoy composing their own examples of alliteration, such as the following one recorded by Petty and Bower (in Greene and Petty, 1975): "A butterfly can fly, flap, flutter, flop, flitter, flick, float, flip-flop, and floop in a loop" (p. 335). The use of alliteration and assonance in children's poetry helps to create particular moods. As Huck (1979) points out, a mood of mystery and sustained stillness is suggested in Walter de la Mare's "Silver" (in Arbuthnot &

Root, 1968) by the quiet "s" sound and the repetition of the double "o" in "moon" and "shoon".

The repetition of words, as well as sounds, has appeal for children. They delight in saying verses, such as the following one which repeats the words "see" and "sea" and is often used with hand-clapping.

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see
But all that he could see, see, see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.

Repetition of words and phrases is often used in poetry for emphasis. Robert Frost, (in Arbuthnot & Root, 1968) for example, uses repetition of phrases to emphasize meaning in his poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". Repetition of phrases can also be found in "The Wind" by Robert Louis Stevenson (in Arbuthnot & Root, 1968).

Onomatopoeia refers to the use of a word that makes a sound resembling the action represented by the word. This aspect of sound delights children as well. Greene and Petty (1975) suggest that children are interested in words, such as "buzz", "hiss", "boom", and "clang" (p. 335), which themselves make the sounds described. Poets make use of onomatopoeia to help suggest images and create a mood. In his popular poem, "The Pickety Fence", David McCord (in Huck, 1979) imitates the sounds of hitting a picket fence with a stick:

The pickety fence
 The pickety fence
 Give it a lick it's
 The pickety fence
 Give it a lick it's
 A clickety fence
 Give it a lick it's
 A lickety fence
 Give it a lick
 Give it a lick
 Give it a lick
 With a rickety stick
 Pickety
 Pickety
 Pickety
 Pick. (p. 310)

Children respond to imagery -- visual and auditory imagery, as well as imagery of touch, taste, and smell. As Brown (1971) suggests, "Imagery appeals to the child's sense of wonder; it reveals reality with clarity and precision, and it communicates feeling" (p. 133). Huck (1979) believes that imagery reflects one of the major ways that children explore their world. Children have many sensory experiences as they use their senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Jacobs (1955) points out that the child learns about his world and extends his knowledge through these sensory impressions. Jacobs states, "Like the poet, he rejoices in the essential sensuous qualities of experience, which are of the essence of poetry" (p. 212).

The use of imagery is often evident in children's riddles which provide descriptions of their solutions. As the Opies (1959) indicate, these solutions are usually imaginatively described in terms of something else. The Opies believe, "such images are, perhaps, the fittest introduction to poetry

that a child can have" (p. 76). The following riddle, recorded by the Opies, compares a thimble to a house with a hundred windows:

A Thimble
It is a little house
It has a hundred windows
Yet it won't hold a mouse. (p. 77)

The use of imagery in a poem can enable the reader or listener to see things in a new way. It can produce a particular mood or response. Many poems are rich in visual imagery and leave the reader or listener with a clear, vivid picture in his mind. "The Eagle" by Alfred Lord Tennyson (in Arbuthnot & Root, 1968) is an example of such a poem:

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls. (p. 58)

Other poems make use of images of sound, touch, taste, and smell. The following poem, "Smells" by Christopher Morley (in Arbuthnot & Root, 1968) for example, is rich with images of smell.

My Daddy smells like tobacco and books,
Mother like lavender and listerine;
Uncle John carries a whiff of cigars,
Nannie smells starchy and soapy and clean.

Shandy, my dog, has a smell of his own
(When he's out in the rain he smells most);
But Katie, the cook, is more splendid than all --
She smells exactly like hot buttered toast?
(p. 3)

Even though figurative language presents difficulty for elementary grade children, it is still of interest and enjoyment to them. Greene and Petty (1975) claim that simile, metaphor, and personification all have appeal for children. Sloan (1975) suggests children are like poets in their creative use of simile and metaphor. "It is natural," Sloan says, "for children to make free use of metaphor" (p. 3). A child, for example, with a stomach-ache may complain that "his stomach is 'broken'" (p. 3). The Opies (1959), as well, note how children's names for things can be metaphoric. They say that "children's names for things are expressive, almost amounting to poetic speech" (p. 155). These examples, recorded by the Opies, illustrate this viewpoint: "the floor is the 'dogs-shelf', a boy's mouth is his 'cake-hole'" (p. 155).

Punning riddles, which often contain personification, delight children greatly. The Opies note that these riddles usually contain animate movement in an inanimate object or an inanimate object possessing living characteristics, as these examples illustrate: "What runs but never walks? (A river) ... What has got teeth but cannot bite? (A comb)" (p. 78).

Figurative language is often found in poetry. The use of metaphors, similes, and personification allows the reader or listener to view things in a different and unusual way. Rowena Bennett (in Arbuthnot & Root, 1968) compares the cars, as seen from a high city window, to little black beetles in

her poem "Motor Cars". In his poem "City", Langston Hughes (in Huck, 1979) personifies the city. Eve Merriam (in Cullinan, 1981) compares morning to a new sheet of paper in the poem "Metaphor".

It seems, then, that during the elementary years, children manipulate and play with the words and sounds of their language. Furthermore, this manipulation and playfulness provide a great deal of pleasure and fascination for children. They are fascinated by words and sounds and by the wonderful things they can do with them. This is evident in children's delight of puns, tongue-twisters, parodies, rhymes, and riddles -- all of which children find pleasing and satisfying. As the Opies (1959) claim:

Children are wonderfully word-conscious, more so, indeed, than the majority of their elders; and it is not extravagant to suggest that these little word-plays, hackneyed though they sound to adult ears, give youngsters genuine aesthetic satisfaction. (p. 81)

Since children's language is close to the language of poetry, it seems natural that they find certain features of language such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and imagery so appealing. They respond delightfully to such aspects of language which can be found in their own creative expressions as well as in poetry.

IV. READING INTERESTS IN POETRY AND PROSE

A review of the literature in the area of children's reading interests indicates that children in the elementary grades have preferred reading interests in poetry and prose. Certain types and aspects of poetry and prose hold particular appeal for them.

Reading Interests in Poetry

Various authors have reported on elementary children's reading interests in poetry. Certain aspects of and certain kinds of poetry appeal to children. As indicated in the section on children's language interests, particular aspects of language are appealing to children. Hence, poetry which emphasizes such aspects as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, and imagery is enjoyed by children. The element of sound found in certain poems provides much pleasure for children. Children like poems such as Mary Ann Hoberman's "A House is a House for Me" with its emphasis on assonance and alliteration; Shel Silverstein's "Tree House" with its use of internal rhyme; or David McCord's "Bananas and Cream" which captures a rhythmic chant.

Narrative poetry is favoured by children in the elementary grades. It is suggested in the Wisconsin literature curriculum (1967) that the hero characters, action, and adventure often found in narrative poems make them appealing. Donoghue (1979), as well, points out that the

action and excitement usually found in narrative poetry interests children. The appeal of adventure and accomplishment, suggests Huck (1979), makes narrative poetry a favourite among children. Children favour the story element of narratives, as well as the humour which they sometimes contain. Children's interest in narrative poetry is likewise noted by Cullinan (1981). Children respond to the rhythm, rhymes, and story element of narrative poems, says Cullinan. Jacobs (1955) believes that in narrative poetry, children enjoy "courageous deeds, adventures and misadventures, great historical personalities and achievements, tall tales, and everyday pranks" (p. 215). A study conducted by Terry (1974) involving children from grades four to six reveals that narratives are among the best liked poems. Children enjoy the humor, story element, and rhyme of narrative poetry.

Ballads, a special type of narrative poetry, are particularly liked by elementary children. Burrows, Monson, and Stauffer (1972) point out that the strong rhyme and rhythm of ballads appeal to children. It is suggested by Huck (1979) that children respond to the use of dialogue, repetition, marked rhythm and rhyme, and refrains found in ballads. Cullinan (1981) likewise suggests that the singing quality, dialogue, repetition, and refrains are liked by children.

A study conducted by Norvell (1958) indicates that humor is the quality children enjoy most in poetry. Children prefer humorous poems, such as the nonsense poetry of Edward Lear,

or the poetry of Shel Silverstein or X.J. Kennedy. Huck (1979) says, "All children enjoy humorous poetry, whether it is gay nonsense or an amusing story" (p. 325). Many humorous poems are about preposterous animals or humorous situations involving animals. Huck suggests that much of the humour in poetry centers around "the description of funny, eccentric characters with delightful sounding names" (p. 337). Ludicrous situations and funny stories are the bases for many humorous poems. As noted in the section on language interests, children are fascinated by the sound and play of words. The poems of Lewis Carroll, for example, filled with puns, double meanings, coined words, and wonderful nonsense have great appeal. Children delight in nonsense verse and limericks. As Huck reports, such features as freak spellings, oddities, and humorous twists make limericks particularly enjoyable for children. The results of Terry's study (1974) also, support the view that limericks are among children's favourite forms of poetry. The appeal of humorous poetry is pointed out, as well, by Jacobs (1955). He says that children respond to the "ludicrous situations, surprises, peculiar people, tongue-twisting words and phrases, absurdities, and nonsense" (p. 215) usually found in humorous poems. Humor, as an aspect of poetry which appeals to children, is noted by Cullinan (1981) also. Among the best loved poems for children, she says, are those containing humor.

As revealed by Norvell's (1958) study, poems about animals are also among children's preferred poems. As Huck (1974) suggests, children are very interested in reading about animals, whether they be comical or real. She states, "Poems about animals are proven favourites with children" (p. 334).

The appeal of magic and fantasy in poetry is indicated by Jacobs (1955), as well as Huck (1979). Jacobs reports that children delight "in credible make-believe, in the doings of preternatural creatures, even at times in the romantic or the grotesque" (p. 215) found in fanciful poems. It is Huck's view that fanciful poems evoke feelings of mystery and wonder in children. They love mysterious, eerie poems, such as those of Walter de la Mare. Poems which suggest the mysterious and the mystical appeal to children's sense of wonder.

Children enjoy other poems which appeal to their sense of wonder, such as poems about nature. Huck (1979) writes, "children, like poets, are fascinated with the constant changes in nature and enjoy poems that communicate a sense of wonder and appreciation for the world about them" (p. 347). Poems about reality also appeal to children's sense of wonder. Such poems, Huck notes, can allow children to "see a familiar object or interpret an everyday experience in a fresh, meaningful way" (p. 330). Common things or events are made to seem uncommon.

Whitehead (1968) concludes that children in the elementary grades enjoy poems of adventure, animal poems,

poems about everyday occurrences, ballads, narrative poems, and humorous poems.

Reading Interests in Prose

The appeal of fantasy for elementary children is suggested by several authors. MacCann (1968) notes that children particularly enjoy fantasy. She says that children in the elementary grades are "at the height of their imaginative powers" (p. 4). In their play they often use supernatural characters. Such characteristics of children, MacCann suggests, help them "to accept highly imaginative and unusual elements in a story" (p. 4). They do not find it difficult to accept the special demands made by the genre of fantasy. Neither are they confused by fantasy's improvisations on reality. As MacCann points out, children are capable of enjoying "the playful manipulations that literary fantasies provide" (p. 4).

Chukovsky (1963) makes a similar point about the child's being able to distinguish the real from the imaginary. He believes that fantasy "does not interfere with the child's orientation to the world that surrounds him" (p. 90). In fact, suggests Chukovsky, fantasy contributes "to strengthening in the child's mind the correct understanding of reality" (p. 113).

MacCann (1968) notes the appeal of fantasy because of its sense of play. One of the traits often associated with

elementary school children is play. And, as MacCann points out, "one of the most characteristic features of fantasies for children is their sense of play" (p. 5). Many times the mood of a fantasy is one of playfulness. Humor is often found throughout a fantasy, even if the symbolic level is more serious. The sense of play in a fantasy sometimes appears as word play, as in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland or as fanciful mechanical inventions, as in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

Fantasy also holds a great deal of interest for children because it helps to satisfy their sense of inquisitiveness, a dominant trait in elementary school children. Fantasy does this by providing new insights into human nature. As MacCann states:

Fantasies provide an ideal opportunity for observing the child's interest in inward aspects of life, in particular his fascination with the human personality. Because of its metaphorical possibilities, a fantasy is an opportune means for comment upon human nature. (p. 6)

Huck (1979) similarly points out the appeal of fantasy in providing new insights and perspectives into reality. She says:

Fantasy frequently proclaims ancient truths in a way that makes children see their own reality in a new perspective. (p. 248)

Burrows, Monson, and Stauffer (1972), as well, emphasize the appeal of fantasy for children. They write "Fantasy appeals to children who delight in the unusual" (p. 129). Similarly, Brown (1971) points out the appeal of fantasy to

a child's sense of wonder. He says that the child likes "that which reveals the strange and new, which will contrast with the everyday events and common surroundings which he knows" (p. 137). Fantasy appeals to this sense of wonder by providing "the reader with new, otherwise impossible, worlds of experience" (p. 137), suggests Brown.

Many authors support the view that children find great interest in folklore, including myths, legends, folk tales, and fairy tales. Huck (1979) remarks that such tales are enjoyed by children because "they are first and foremost good stories" (p. 159). They contain many elements which appeal to children. As Huck notes:

These stories are usually short and have fast-moving plots. They are frequently humorous and almost always end happily. Poetic justice prevails; the good and the just are eventually rewarded, while the evil are punished. This appeals to the child's sense of justice and his moral judgment. (p. 159)

Children also enjoy the repetition of responses, chants, or poems which is frequently found in folktales. Huck further adds that the language of folk tales appeals because of its imagery, figurative language, unusual phrases, rhythm, and dialogue.

Cook (1969), also, believes that myths, legends, and fairy tales appeal to children and are particularly suitable to their nature. Children under the age of eleven are anxious to find out what happens next in a story. She says that they are interested in character in a straightforward and moral way. That is, they see a person as characterized by one

particular quality or trait, and "they mind whether things are right or wrong" (p. 7). Such children are particularly sensitive, she says, "to the heroic virtue of justice, and they are beginning to notice why people are tempted to be unjust" (p. 7). Cook concludes:

They expect a story to be a good yarn, in which the action is swift and the characters are clearly and simply defined. And legends and fairy tales are just like that. (p. 7)

Burrows, Monson, and Stauffer (1972) believe that the adventure and heroism found in folk tales and myths capture children's interest. Huck (1979) suggests that the basic appeal of myths for children is that they are good stories containing action, suspense, and basic conflicts. She also suggests that it is the appeal of adventure and of great heroes which makes epics, such as those of Robin Hood and King Arthur, so enjoyable for children. It is similarly pointed out in the Wisconsin literature curriculum (1967) that children in the elementary grades enjoy adventure and admire legendary and real heroes. Greene and Petty (1975) believe that elementary children find delight in tall tales and folk stories of all lands.

Whitehead (1968) reports that included among the preferred reading interests of elementary school children are fables, folk tales, fairy tales, myths, adventure stories, animal stories, humorous stories, and stories of other lands and peoples. He suggests that children find folk and fairy tales appealing since they are simple narratives. He says

that "their simplicity of theme, the wonder and enchantment of the animals who speak, their exaggeration and wit" (p. 9) contribute to their appeal. The appeal of myths lies in their dramatic action. Animal stories, whether realistic or fantasy, appeal to all children, says Whitehead.

A study on children's reading interests conducted by Norvell (1958) reveals similar results. As shown by the study, fables and fairy tales are popular with elementary children. Myths, legends, and folk tales are also favoured. The results of the study further show that children enjoy animal stories, hero tales, mystery stories, adventure stories, and humorous stories. Norvell concludes that if stories contain adventure, humor, or mystery or are about animals or heroes, they will appeal to children.

Huus (1979) similarly concludes from her review of research in the area of children's reading interests that mystery, animals, adventure, and humor are well liked by children. A similar conclusion is drawn by King (1970) in summarizing her review of research on the reading interests of elementary school children. Mystery, adventure, and animal stories are among those preferred by children, she says. Jacobs (1955) holds a similar point of view that children in the elementary grades enjoy animal stories, folk literature, tall tales about folk heroes, stories of long ago, and stories of other lands.

The review of research in the area of children's reading interests indicates that elementary school children prefer particular types of poetry and prose. They like poems which emphasize rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, and imagery. Narrative poetry including ballads, and humorous poetry such as nonsense verse and limericks are among children's favourites. Poems about animals, nature, magic, and fantasy also hold a great appeal for children.

In prose, fantasy and folklore are well liked. Children like stories which appeal to their sense of wonder and which give them a new perspective. They enjoy myths, legends, fairy tales, and folktales. Stories containing adventure, heroism, suspense, animals, and humour appeal to children.

V. SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the literature related to the nature of the child in the elementary grades. Knowledge of the child's development will influence the curriculum being designed for the child. What we know about his intellectual development, language development, language interests, and reading interests will be influential in designing a literature program, particularly in terms of its content and approaches to teaching.

Intellectually, the elementary school child is at the concrete operational stage of development. During this time, he can concentrate on more than one aspect of a problem at the same time and can see relationships between these aspects. The child has the ability to see transformations between situations. He can generalize about and see similarities among present situations or he can see similarities among situations he has already experienced. He cannot, however, generalize about new or abstract possibilities. In literature, for instance, the child can see similarities between stories he experiences. He can intuitively grasp the structure of a particular genre. He cannot, however, deal with abstract definitions of form and element.

Since the role of activity seems important to the child's development, the learning environment should be one which encourages active participation. The environment should be an active one, where the child can explore, converse, question, and create, rather than a passive one, where the child receives formal verbal instruction.

The child's knowledge and control over his language is well developed in the elementary grades. He can use his language with great flexibility and for different functions.

The words and sounds of his language fascinate the child. He finds a great deal of pleasure in manipulating and playing with words and sounds. Puns, riddles, tongue twisters, and rhymes delight the child. Certain poetic aspects of language,

such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia appeal to the child. The child's language itself is so often poetic.

The elementary school child likes narrative and humorous poems. He enjoys poems which appeal to his sense of wonder. Poems containing rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, and imagery are particularly appealing to the child.

The elementary school child's preferred reading interests in prose include stories of fantasy, myths, legends, fairy tales, and folk tales. He enjoys stories which appeal to his sense of wonder. He finds stories about adventure, heroes, and animals appealing.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE NATURE OF ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAMS

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the nature of elementary school literature programs. This knowledge, together with the knowledge of the nature of the elementary school child, has implications for the development of an elementary school literature program.

The development of a literature program involves establishing its goals or purposes, planning a scope and sequence, organizing the curriculum, selecting content, determining teaching approaches, and deciding upon evaluation methods. Writers express differing opinions on each of these components of a literature program. The ideas of various writers are reviewed in this chapter.

II. PURPOSES

A literature program must have its purposes or goals identified. The establishment of these purposes would take into consideration the nature of literature and the nature of the child. The purposes of the program would be influential in determining its scope and sequence, in

selecting the content and learning experiences, and in deciding upon evaluative techniques.

Several writers have identified a number of different purposes or objectives for an elementary school literature program. The purposes suggested by each author are examined here.

The four main purposes identified by Huck (1979) are:

Discovering delight in books;

Interpreting literature;

Developing literary awareness; and

Developing appreciation (pp. 704-707)

She expands on each of these purposes and explains in more detail what is meant by each one.

Huck states that the first purpose, to provide opportunities for children to experience literature and discover delight in books, should be the major purpose of a literature program in the elementary school. "Delight in books", she says, "only comes about through long and loving experiences with them" (p. 704). She indicates that one of the best ways to motivate and interest children in literature is to provide them with many quality experiences. She believes, "a literature program must get children excited about reading, turned on to books, tuned into literature" (p. 704). It is the teacher's responsibility to provide this motivation.

All experiences with literature should indeed be delightful. However, this purpose must not be over-emphasized to the exclusion of others. There is more to literature than providing enjoyment. One concern is that an overemphasis on the goal of enjoyment may result in a lack of teaching of literary appreciation. Such a program might assume that exposing children to literature is sufficient to develop understanding and appreciation. However, experience alone is not sufficient for developing a thorough understanding of literature. A program which over-emphasizes enjoyment may come to resemble a free reading program in which students are introduced to a wide variety of books to read for enjoyment. This, however, is not what Huck is suggesting.

With regard to the second purpose, Huck believes it is necessary to provide opportunities for in-depth experiences with books in order that children's personal responses may grow and deepen. To interpret literature, she says, is to explore its personal and social values, to interpret various roles and consider alternative choices available to the characters, to examine the interrelationships of the characters, to relate what children are reading to their background of experience and so to internalize the meaning of literature. This interpretation can be accomplished through discussion and creative interpretative activities, such as dramatizations, suggests Huck. This purpose, she says, should also receive a great deal of emphasis in the elementary

school. It seems to encourage the child to be responsive, to express his perceptions and reactions to a literature selection. It allows a child to become involved, to interact with a book as long as the discussion and activities take him back to the literature selection rather than away from it. The child actively participates in the literary experience. And, as indicated by the research in chapter two, active participation is important in the child's intellectual development. By interpreting literature the child comes to discover and internalize its meaning. Through interpretation he gains a new perspective on things, he sees life in a new way, he develops his imagination.

Huck argues that the third purpose, developing literary awareness and understanding, can increase children's enjoyment of literature. However, she cautions against over-emphasizing this purpose. She does not want the study of literary criticism to be a substitute for the experience of literature. Huck feels that the experiencing of literature should be primary and knowledge about literature secondary.

Huck suggests that developing literary awareness should involve developing some understandings about genres or types of literature, about the components or elements of literature such as plot, characterization, theme, style, setting, and point of view, and about literary devices such as symbols, metaphors, and imagery. Children should be led to discover these elements gradually. The discussion of such literary

elements should only occur when it leads to a richer understanding and increased enjoyment of literature, says Huck. An over-emphasis on the development of literary awareness could result in children merely identifying, classifying, and defining literary forms and elements rather than considering why a particular form or element is used and how it contributes to the meaning of the selection. As revealed by the research in chapter two on the nature of the child, abstractions are difficult for elementary children to understand. Hence, stressing definitions of forms and techniques would present difficulties for children.

The fourth purpose, developing appreciation of literature, refers to what Huck calls the long-term goal of a literature program -- to develop a lifetime habit or preference for reading quality literature. This appreciation develops gradually as a result of many literary experiences.

However, it must be remembered that merely exposing children to literary experiences is not sufficient to develop appreciation of literature. Children must participate actively in the experience, interact with literature, and be taught how to examine its structure and to analyze it in order to develop an appreciation for it. This purpose should place emphasis on the teacher's role in helping children to develop an appreciation for quality literature.

Huck refers to the writing of Early (1960) who suggests these three developmental and sequential stages of growth in literary appreciation:

unconscious enjoyment

self-conscious appreciation

conscious delight (pp. 163-167)

Early says that at the stage of unconscious enjoyment the reader knows what he likes without necessarily knowing why. Delight comes without a struggle as he experiences a variety of literature by listening to and reading it. This stage is similar to Huck's first purpose, discovering delight in literature. At the second stage of self-conscious appreciation the reader is willing to struggle to find the writer's meaning, says Early. At this stage literary selections are interpreted and examined. Attention is given to such elements as setting, character, mood, and form. Huck's second and third purposes, interpreting literature and developing literary awareness, are similar to this second stage. Early points out that the third stage of conscious delight is not reached by many high school or university students. It refers to the mature reader who "responds with delight, knows why, chooses discriminatingly, and relies on his own judgement" (p. 166). She says that all children who have the capacity to reach this stage should be directed and guided towards it. At this stage the reader will find "delight in many kinds of literature from many periods of

time, appreciating the best of each genre and of each author" (p. 166). This stage seems to be similar to Huck's fourth purpose of developing a lifetime preference for reading quality literature.

A non-structured approach to children's literature is proposed by Groff (1970). He is opposed to the idea of a structured approach, which, he says, sees the curriculum "as a package of carefully arranged information or knowledge to be dispensed to a child" (p. 308). He does not believe there should be a standard, absolute, prearranged curriculum in children's literature with sets of predetermined questions and answers to which children must match their responses.

In the non-structured approach proposed by Groff, the curriculum is determined by the child's life experiences. The primary concern, says Groff (1977), is "each child's unique encounter with literature" (p. 661). What comes first is the inner life of the child, not how the content of each book is presented. Groff (1970) cautions against the teaching of rules, principles, and forms too soon but stresses, rather, that "they be taught only after children have had enough experience to gain a true understanding" (p. 308). It is Groff's belief that the child should first be provided with a variety of enjoyable literary experiences corresponding to areas of his own experience.

Groff's approach is similar to Huck's (1974) in that she, too, feels that one cannot prescribe the exact literature

program which is guaranteed to work with all children. She does, however, feel that such a program can be developed if the background and abilities of the children being taught are considered. She does not place an emphasis, as Groff does, on the child's life experiences in determining the curriculum. She emphasizes, instead, that the child should be provided with literary experiences of fine quality rather than with those relating directly to his own experience. Whereas Groff stresses the teaching of literary forms and techniques only after children have truly understood the literature selection, Huck feels that such teaching can increase children's enjoyment and understanding.

Groff insists that, according to the non-structured approach, the objectives of a literature program should be stated in a general way, as Huck's are, rather than as behavioral objectives for a certain grade level.

Groff (1970) proposes these goals for a non-structured literature program in the elementary grades:

to let the child see the relationship between his personal and his literary life, to develop his power to make decisions about literature, to develop his power to select literature, to give him a chance to become acquainted with the oral tradition in literature, to develop his capacity to use literature to reinforce other language skills, to develop his imagination, and to have fun or pleasure. (p. 314)

Some of these goals are vague; it is not clear what they involve or how they might be achieved. For instance, consider the goal of helping the child realize the relationship between

his life and life as literature represents it. It is not clear what Groff means by this purpose. Does he mean helping the child realize that literature allows one to see life in a new way and that it provides a new perspective on life, or does he mean helping the child realize that others share the same experiences and problems? Similarly the goal of developing the child's power to select literature is vague.

Groff's second goal of providing opportunities for the child to make his own decisions and interpretations about literature may be seen as being similar to Huck's goals of interpreting literature and developing literary awareness. Groff stresses that the child should move inductively, and not through definition, from an emotional reaction to literature to a discussion of its forms, interpretation of its parts, and evaluation of its importance. On a similar note Huck suggests beginning with the child's personal response to literature before discussing how the author created meaning. Groff believes that the interpretation of literature should develop naturally, arising from children's talk and not be preplanned, whereas Huck suggests the planning of in-depth experiences to interpret literature and develop literary awareness.

The goal of providing experiences in the oral tradition of literature would be achieved, says Groff, through reading aloud folklore, fairy tales, myths, and fables. Certainly, exposure to these forms of literature is an important part of

a literature program, and, as pointed out in chapter two, children show interest and enjoyment in these types of literature.

Groff's goal of reinforcing other language skills through the use of literature hardly seems appropriate as a goal for a literature program. Certainly creative writing activities and drama activities which grow out of literary experiences are worthwhile. However, the major purpose of such activities would not be, say, to improve speaking skills, but rather to interpret literature, to develop the imagination.

Developing the child's imagination is indeed a worthwhile goal for a literature program, especially when one considers the importance and contribution of literature in the development of the imagination.¹ Groff notes that literature can expand the child's imagination by enriching his daily experience and by stimulating him to think and to create.

The goal of having fun or pleasure is suggested by Groff because he feels that "literature must offer the child some gratification of his psychological needs" (p. 311). In other words, he sees the goal of satisfying a child's need to have fun as an important goal of a literature program. Groff does not stress the provision of enjoyable literary experiences as a way to motivate and interest children in literature, as Huck does.

¹See Chapter 1, pp. 5-8 for a discussion of this point.

One concern with Groff's approach is that if books are chosen to relate to children's own experiences and interests, if children are able to select what they wish to read, and if they read and react to books individually and at their own pace, the resulting program may come close to being an individualized or a free reading program. The role of the teacher seems chiefly to be one of providing a varied selection of literary experiences to correspond to each child's experiences and interests, and to guide each child to react individually in an emotional and in a literary way to the selections he reads. Most of the emphasis seems to be placed on the individual child and on meeting his needs. This approach seems to be overly concerned with what literature can do for the child, with how it can fulfill his psychological and sociological needs. It places little emphasis on what literature is, on teaching literature for its own sake. Groff believes in "teaching the whole child with literature rather than teaching literature to children" (p. 312).

It is stressed by Groff that planning is still an essential part of a non-structured literature program. As Groff continues, these "plans should be responsive to the child's need to engage with a piece of literature" (pp. 315-316). The approach does not seem to include a planned scope and sequence, a planned presentation of quality literature.

Consistent with Huck's beliefs and contrary to Groff's, Whitehead (1968) claims that a literature program should be

planned and well-defined with a creative, sequential program of literature activities. Whereas Huck sees a literature program as deserving a rightful place of its own in the elementary school curriculum, Whitehead sees it as "a functional part of the total reading program, making a significant contribution to both reading and the building of an appreciation for literature" (p. 1).

Whitehead says that the overall goal of a literature program is "the building in children of knowledges and skills as well as attitudes and appreciations" (p. 6). He says that such a program involves providing children with a wide range of literary experiences and introducing them to the techniques for interpreting and evaluating literature so that the final outcome will be the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of literature and its humanizing values. This, he says, ought to be the primary aim of a literature program. The goals of understanding, enjoying, and appreciating literature are similar to the purposes stated by Huck (1979).

A list of objectives for a literature program is presented by Whitehead:

1. To Help the Child Understand Himself and His Present Problems;
2. To Provide Opportunities for Escape from Routine;
3. To Provide a Focus for Leisure-time Activities;
4. To Develop an Appreciation of Country and American Ideals;

5. To Increase the Child's Knowledge and Understanding of the Problems of Others;
6. To Discover and Develop Ethical Standards;
7. To Utilize Literature as a Source for Further Creative Endeavor; and
8. To Promote an Appreciation of the English Language. (pp. 6-7)

The first purpose sees literature as mainly having a therapeutic value because it contributes to the child's emotional development. It helps the child better understand himself and his problems by showing him characters who encounter similar problems and deal with them. Whitehead's purpose of providing escape from routine considers literature merely as a form of relaxation, as "a haven of retreat and comfort for pressure-weary boys and girls" (p. 6). Both these purposes seem to take advantage of what Whitehead calls the guidance aspects of literature. Literature is regarded here simply as an aid to emotional adjustment and development.

The objective of providing a focus for leisure-time activities seems worthwhile. That is, one would certainly hope that children develop a life-long habit of reading. It seems a more appropriate goal, though, for a free reading program rather than for a literature program. Whitehead, however, sees the free personal reading program as being an integral part of a literature program.

The patriotic and historical values of literature are capitalized upon in Whitehead's fourth objective of developing an appreciation of country and American ideals. The idea of

developing in children a deep and lasting love of country and an understanding of the country's historical growth indicates the use of literature to achieve the goals of other curriculum areas, such as social studies. A similar use of literature might also be seen in the fifth objective suggested by Whitehead. This purpose refers to developing children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures and countries, other people and their problems.

Whitehead says that the purpose of discovering and developing ethical standards leads children to identify and develop the proper attitudes and decisions. Once again, he is recognizing the contribution of literature to the personality development of the child.

Using literature to stimulate creativity is what Whitehead is referring to in his seventh objective. He says that literature can stimulate creative activities such as writing an original poem, painting, or dramatizing a story. Further, he says, children should be given plenty of opportunities to share books creatively, for example, through art or music. Whitehead does not state whether such creative activities should lead the child back to the literature selection to help him to interpret it. Huck (1979) suggests similar activities for interpreting literature, but she clearly states that the activities should take the child back to the literature selection rather than away from it.

Developing an appreciation of the English language can be accomplished, suggests Whitehead, by reading aloud the best of children's literature and by casually referring to particular words, phrases, or language elements.

Whitehead's recommended list of objectives for a literature program raises one concern. That concern is how these objectives would influence the selection of literary works for the literature program. In an attempt to achieve these objectives, would only the content of the literary work be used as the criterion for selection? Would the quality of the literary work as a whole be ignored? If so, much quality literature might be overlooked while literature which is not of the best quality might be included.

Huus (1973) supports the view, as does Huck (1979), that the teaching of literature should be part of a planned literature program in the elementary school curriculum and that literature as a subject requires a scheduled period to itself. She stresses that a literature program is not the same as, nor should it be included under, the reading program, free-reading, or the library program.

Huus (1973) lists the following five objectives that she believes the teaching of literature should accomplish:

1. To help pupils realize that literature is for entertainment and can be enjoyed throughout their entire lives;
2. To acquaint pupils with their literary heritage;

3. To help pupils understand what constitutes literature and, hopefully to lead them to prefer the best;
4. To help pupils in their growing-up and in their understanding of humanity in general; and
5. To help pupils evaluate their own reading and extend beyond what is to what can be. (pp. 797-798)

Huus elaborates on each of these purposes. She says that a literature program can attempt to achieve the first objective by meeting the known or expressed reading interests of children of particular ages and by seeking to create new interests in reading. This objective differs from a similar one suggested by Groff (1970) in that Huus seems to emphasize its importance in motivating and interesting students in literature, as Huck (1979) does. Groff, on the other hand, stresses the importance of satisfying the child's psychological need to have fun.

Huus's second objective of acquainting children with their literary heritage has not been emphasized by the authors previously reviewed. This purpose sees literature as serving, what Huus calls, the "custodial" function of preserving and transmitting knowledge to children. She adds further that the recognition of literary allusions is important for children to acquire. Literature, in this case, seems to be viewed as an important part of one's cultural heritage. Huus feels that children should be acquainted with their literary heritage in order to become truly literate.

The purpose of helping children gain an understanding of what constitutes literature and guiding them to prefer the best seems to emphasize the teaching of literature for its own sake. Huus stresses that a literature program should lead children to look to the work itself, rather than to such things as the author's life, in order for them to learn what constitutes literature. The treatment of elements such as plot, character, setting, and theme would be emphasized here. This objective is similar to the goals of understanding and appreciating literature proposed by Huck (1979).

The fourth objective seems to emphasize two views of literature. Huus says literature can help children to grow in maturity as they gain useful ideas from characters who face similar problems and cope with them. This purpose considers the use of literature in its guidance function, as an aid to emotional development, and is similar to objectives suggested by Whitehead (1968). Huus, however, also notes that literature can provide children with a new perspective. They see themselves and their world in a new way. Here, Huus seems to consider the value of literature in its development of the imagination.

Huus says that the fifth objective refers to the development of appreciation, values, and taste in literature. The child, she says, learns to compare, relate, question, and make evaluations for himself. Huck (1979) presents a similar goal of developing an appreciation for literature. Huus

further adds that the goal of helping the child to extend beyond what is to what can be develops his imagination. She stresses the value of literature in extending the child's imagination "to places and creatures that do not exist, to ideas that create new images, concepts, and organizations, and dangle a dream before his eyes" (p. 798).

Huus summarizes her views on the purposes of a literature program by stating:

Pupils who leave the elementary school ought to have acquired a love for reading, enthusiasm for books, and a familiarity with literature that enhance their enjoyment, sharpen their critical abilities, and improve their taste. (p. 801)

A similar conclusion might be drawn from the purposes identified by Huck (1979).

It is Tiedt's (1970) suggestion that a literature program should be part of a well-integrated language arts program involving reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Tiedt says this would allow literature to be studied in close relationship with its companion, composition. "The literature he [the child] reads may serve as a model for his own creative efforts" (p. 194), suggests Tiedt. She says that such a program would emphasize the encoding-decoding process in the beginning primary grades with less emphasis on the study of literature and composition. The emphasis would switch to the study of literature and composition in the upper grades of elementary school. She does not recommend that literature be given a time to itself in the school curriculum but sees it

as being included under the language arts program. This presents the problem of trying to emphasize each area of the language arts program. As a result, literature might be overlooked, for example, if reading skills are considered to be more important.

The literature program, however, must still be planned with its goals or objectives, as other authors, besides Tiedt, have pointed out. Tiedt does not add anything to her list of objectives that previous authors have not included. In general, she says, the reasons for including literature in the elementary school curriculum might be listed as the following:

1. To transmit the cultural heritage;
2. To help children understand other people;
3. To increase the child's understanding of himself;
4. To expose children to excellent writing;
5. To stimulate the child's enjoyment of reading; and
6. To teach children concepts about literature. (p. 193)

Tiedt expands only on the last of these objectives. She says that usually the types of concepts to be taught include plot, theme, characterization, setting, and imagery. She further adds the concept of "understandings" -- the values and sensitivities presented in literature.

As previously noted when discussing Huck's purpose of developing literary awareness, too much emphasis on the objective of teaching literary concepts such as setting and

theme might merely lead to identifying, classifying, and defining these concepts. An over-emphasis on this objective might also result in a literary work being selected because it would be useful to teach a particular concept, such as setting, and not because of its literary worth as a whole.

The Nebraska English curriculum (1966) for the elementary school is centered around a literature program, with work in language and composition growing directly out of the experiences with literature. The major goals of the program are to teach students:

- (1) to comprehend the more frequent oral and written conventions of literature composed for young children--formal or generic conventions or simple rhetorical conventions; (2) to control these linguistic and literary conventions in their own writing; and (3) to comprehend consciously the more frequent grammatical conventions which they can handle in their speaking and writing. (p. viii)

The first goal refers to the literature aspect of the program. The writers of the program stress that "the primary purpose of the curriculum is to create understanding" (p. xiv). Since the emphasis of the program is on the understanding of literature, little stress should be placed on the analysis of a literary selection as an end in itself, with children merely identifying and categorizing elements, forms and patterns.

Cullinan (1971) recognizes the development of mature critical readers as the major long-term goal of an elementary school literature program. This can be achieved, she says, through a planned program in which "the main objective is enjoyment of literature, with a continued interest in reading

developing through sensitivity to literary elements and content" (p. 96). The purposes proposed by other authors, such as Huck (1979) and Huus (1973) are similar to Cullinan's main objective, although Cullinan seems to place more stress on analysis.

The most important objective of an intermediate literature program, according to Burrows, Monson, and Stauffer (1972) is to provide enjoyable experiences with quality literature in order to interest children in literature. This objective is noted by several authors discussed previously. However, as indicated at the beginning of this chapter, a program which places too much emphasis on enjoyment might resemble more a free reading program than a literature program.

Burrows, Monson, and Stauffer further indicate that the development of appreciation of literature is an important objective of a literature program. The authors list the following objectives which refer to specific kinds of knowledge about books that enhance the child's appreciation of literature:

1. A knowledge of the difference between fiction and nonfiction and of the value and use of each type of literature;
2. An acquaintance with several kinds of fictional material, including folk literature and drama;
3. An awareness of the importance of plot in fiction and an ability to note an author's devices for building to a climax and creating suspense in stories;

4. An appreciation of an author's style and the way in which he produces humor and exaggeration;
5. A curiosity about the sounds and imagery and patterns of poetry;
6. An awareness of the many ways in which poetry calls forth feelings;
7. A curiosity about people who write books and a desire for information about authors; and
8. A realization that good literature and poetry provides models and stimulation for his own writing. (pp. 160-161)

Most of these specific objectives refer to the development of a literary awareness of literary forms, elements, and techniques used by authors. Again, an over-emphasis on these objectives might lead to identifying, categorizing, and defining. As a result little consideration might be given to how and why an author uses particular forms, elements, and techniques.

The authors reviewed in this chapter have identified a variety of purposes for a literature program in the elementary school. Some purposes reflect the view that literature is only for enjoyment, that it is merely a form of relaxation. Other purposes seem to regard literature as a means of achieving the goals of other curriculum areas or of meeting the psychological needs of children. The therapeutic value of literature is reflected in some purposes when literature is seen as an aid to emotional adjustment and development. None of these purposes seem to reflect the view of teaching literature for its own sake. Most consider only the content

to be important. No one of these purposes is a sufficient purpose for a literature program in the elementary school. Hence, the literature program designed in this thesis will not reflect any one of these purposes.

Some purposes, however, do seem to consider teaching literature for its own inherent values. These purposes will lend direction to the literature program designed in chapter four. Such purposes include those which view literature as contributing to the development of the imagination and providing new perspectives on life. It seems appropriate that the purposes for a literature program should reflect such views, since, as discussed in chapter one, the contribution of literature to the education of the imagination is the strongest rational basis for including a literature program in the elementary school curriculum. Purposes which refer to discovering what constitutes literature, to developing an appreciation of literature, and to developing a literary awareness consider the form and structure and not just the content of literature to be important. Here literature is seen as an art.

III. SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The scope and sequence of a literature program should be structured to achieve the purposes of the program. An overall structure must be chosen around which to organize the

literature curriculum. Appropriate content must then be selected and organized to help attain the program's objectives.

Organization of the Literature Curriculum

Several ways of organizing and sequencing the literature curriculum in the elementary school are suggested by different authors. These approaches include organization according to basic components or elements of literature, themes or topics, and literary genres. The views of some authors on each of these approaches to organization are reviewed in this section.

Elements of Literature

Cullinan (1971) suggests structuring the literature program according to literary elements, form and style. She proposes that "the study of literature for children proceed by examination of the basic components" (p. 12). This would involve the analysis of form, elements, and writing style, as well as the development of critical reading skills, such as identifying and evaluating theme and distinguishing among forms. Since she believes in the major goal of developing critical readers through sensitivity to literary elements and content, it is appropriate that her approach to organization be derived from aspects of literary criticism.

An earlier proposal for a literature program suggested by Huck (cited in Cullinan, 1971), also structures the literature curriculum on the basis of the elements of literature. These basic elements include characterization, diction, tone, theme, point of view, style, genre, and structure. Guiding children in the identification and analysis of these elements should be part of a planned program, she says.

Structuring a literature program around the basic elements of literature would seem to indicate that the program's emphasis would be placed on the examination or analysis of literature selections. The focus would be on understanding the structure and form of the literature selection itself, on teaching literature for its own sake rather than for some external reason such as solving emotional and social problems.

Structuring the literature curriculum in this way indicates that an emphasis might be placed on the development of key elements or components such as setting or theme. This might lead to concentrating only on the development of such skills as identifying, classifying, or defining a particular element rather than on its function, how its use contributes to the literature selection, and how it helps to create meaning. This approach to organizing the literature curriculum will influence the selection of specific content for the program. It could result in selecting a literary work

merely because it emphasizes a particular element rather than because it represents the best in children's literature.

Themes or Topics

One possible way that Huck (1979) suggests for organizing the literature curriculum is through a thematic approach. A theme, such as friendship can be used to design a literature unit which incorporates many genres and provides a choice of reading materials. Huck further suggests that this approach would provide some shape and form for reading and exploration.

Bracken (1969) is another writer who believes in organizing literature according to various themes. She states:

In organizing by and focusing attention on a theme, all pupils in the class may share ideas, think critically about them, read orally to share or to prove a point, and discuss ways of applying ideas gained from their reading. (pp. 224-225)

Reading experiences are brought together through the thematic approach and individual differences in reading are met by the various reading levels of the books used.

Also, the Wisconsin literature curriculum (1967) is organized by themes in order of deepening awareness. The basic reading list for all children in grades four through six is arranged according to these themes:

Understanding of Human Relationships

Soaring on the Imaginative Wings of Fantasy

Literature that Springs from the People

Friends in Nature

Man and the Infinite

Understanding Cultures: Other Times and Other Places

Understanding Through Laughter

Understanding Ourselves Through the Lives of Others

Poems to Help Young Spirits Soar (pp. 39-41)

The thematic organization focuses attention on the content of a literary selection, on its subject matter. This raises several concerns. First, too much emphasis on the content of a literary work might lead to a neglect of its form and so the work as a whole would not be dealt with. Also, there is the problem of deciding which themes or topics should be used to organize the curriculum. Should topics or themes related to children's interests, their life experiences, other curriculum subject areas, child development, or personal and social problems, be considered, for instance?

Finally, there is the concern over how a thematic organization will influence the selection of literature for the program. A literature program structured around particular themes or topics would consider the content of literary works to be important. Hence, in the selection of literary works only those with an appropriate theme or subject matter might be selected. A literary work whose theme or content is not suitable to the theme being studied, would most likely be disregarded, even if the work represents the best in children's literature, is of the finest quality, and has something worthwhile to offer children. As a result much

literature of fine quality might be rejected. It is also possible that in an attempt to select literature related to a particular theme or topic, the criteria for selecting quality literature might be overlooked.

Literary Genres

Another accepted way of organizing the literature curriculum is by genre. The literature sequence in the Nebraska English curriculum (1966) is organized according to what the writers call "pseudo-genres": folk tales, fanciful stories, animal stories, adventure stories, myth, fable, other lands and people, historical fiction, biography, and poetry. The organization of the curriculum is based mainly on form or genre, although some content classifications are included, for example animal stories. The writers point out that this classification by "pseudo-genre" allows certain elements of stories to be stressed and that stressing certain elements permits the sequential development of the program's principles or concepts. It is stated that the units suggested for the program attempt "to arrange literary works in an articulated sequence designed to develop the concepts essential to the literature program in the spiral fashion" (p. viii). A basic concept is first introduced on a simple level and then is treated with more depth each time it appears. The order of the units within a grade level is left to the teacher. However, the general sequence within each classification or

pseudo-genre should be followed, since the concepts progress in complexity with each grade.

Another author who suggests structuring the literature curriculum around genres is Donoghue (1979). As in the Nebraska English curriculum, the organization is based almost entirely on genre, with some categories based on content. The classification is very similar to that of the Nebraska English curriculum. It also includes animal stories, historical fiction, folk-fairy tales, other lands/people, realistic stories, fables, myths, and legends, fantasy, biography, and poetry/rhyme. It further adds informational books.

Huck (1979) suggests, as well, that the study of literature can be organized around genres. Her classification includes traditional literature (for example, folktales, fables, legends, myths), modern fantasy, poetry, realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography, and informational books. Such an approach allows children to experience a wide variety of genres.

Frye (1964) believes that poetry should be at the center of an elementary school literature program since "poetry is the most direct and simple means of expressing oneself in words" (p. 121). Frye's emphasis on the central role of poetry in an elementary school literature curriculum is supported by the research on the nature of the child. As indicated in chapter two, poetic language is very close to the child's own language. Poetry appeals to the child's natural

sense of rhythm. Certain features of poetry, such as its rhyme and repetition, are appealing. Frye says that from poetry one would go to literary prose, and then to the applied languages of business, professions, and ordinary life.

It is Frye's archetypal view of literature which forms the basis of his suggestion for structuring the curriculum on form. Frye (1963) suggests four basic forms or archetypal genres into which stories can be classified. These literary forms are "the romantic, the comic, the tragic, and the ironic" (p. 45). He says that familiarizing children with the traditional stories of our culture (myths, legends, folktales) will provide them with a sense of the structure of these categories or forms. Not only should children become aware of these conventional forms but also discover the conventional patterns and symbols or archetypes found in literature, such as those of imagery, characters, and journeys.

The type of organization which allows the teaching of literature for its own inherent values seems most appropriate for a literature program. An organization of the literature curriculum around literary genres will, therefore, be suitable for the literature program designed in this thesis. Structuring the literature curriculum around the traditional genres of literature seems to emphasize the teaching of literature as literature, for its own sake, for its own intrinsic value, and not for some other utilitarian values. Exposure and interaction with a particular genre can help the

child develop a sense of structure for that genre. As concluded in chapter two, the child is quite capable of developing an intuitive understanding of the structure and pattern of a particular literary form. Also, organization by genre assures that each of the genres thought suitable for an elementary school literature program is experienced by the child and receives appropriate emphasis. Since genres are basic traditional forms of literature, this minimizes the amount of organization required. The concern, then, is selecting the best of each genre, the works of finest quality.

Similar points may be noted about a literature curriculum structured around archetypal genres. In addition, the archetypal approach to literature is concerned with the whole of literature, with what literature is and how it works. It relates and connects individual literary works to each other by examining what they have in common, their similarities in conventions and in structural patterns of images, themes, symbols and characters. It attempts to unify and integrate all of a child's literary experiences. However, one should be careful not to overemphasize the whole of literature in case the individual literary work, as well as the child's comprehension, response, and interpretation of that work, may be overlooked. One must be careful not to concentrate merely on identifying and classifying conventions and archetypes and neglect each unique individual literary work.

Several ways are suggested for organizing the elementary school literature curriculum. These include organizing the curriculum around literary elements, themes, and literary genres. The purposes decided upon for the literature program will influence the type of organization for the literature curriculum. Each type of organization raises some problems which should be considered carefully when deciding upon the type of organization to use.

Content of the Literature Curriculum

The content component of a literature program takes into consideration the types of literature to be included, the literary principles and concepts to be emphasized, and the literary skills to be taught. Many authors present differing views on what the content of a literature program should consist of.

Some writers stress the importance of covering a wide variety of types of literature in order to achieve balance in a literature program. Some very general guidelines are proposed by several authors to help provide for this range of coverage. Such guidelines might prove useful only in serving as checklists to ensure reasonable coverage of different categories of literature. Other writers recommend more specifically the genres and types of literature that they feel should be part of the content in an elementary school

literature program. Also, some writers suggest the principles or concepts to be emphasized and the literary skills to be taught in a literature program.

Jacobs (1967) suggests general guidelines in the form of three parallels which he feels would help provide the kinds of literature needed in an elementary school literature program.

Parallel 1: The new and the old

Jacobs believes that a balance of new literature and old literature is needed because "one's literary heritage has its source in the combination of the two" (p. 223). A child needs new or modern literature because "it is written in the idiom and in the style, mood, and tempo that he understands because he's living it" (p. 223). However, for a child's literary heritage to be rich, "he needs to know that before his time there came to us great stories, too" (p. 223).

Parallel 2: Realistic and fanciful literature

As Jacobs says, "the child loves the kinds of stories that acquaint him with his own world, whether he is close to it in time and space, or far from it" (p. 223). However, "he also wants the kind of literature which takes him out of this world into the world of the impossible, the improbable, and the fanciful" (p. 224).

Parallel 3: Prose and poetry

Children should be given "their wonderful heritage of poetry" (p. 224) as well as prose.

Similar guidelines are proposed by Walker (1964) to help provide for what she calls "a good balance in subject matter" (p. 460). These guidelines cover the categories of literature to be included in a literature program. They coincide with Jacob's parallels although she adds one more category to the list:

1. Literature of the past and of modern times;
2. Literature that is realistic and that which is imaginative;
3. Literature which is fictional and that which is factual; and
4. Literature which is prose and that which is poetry. (p. 460)

Huus (1973) makes some similar suggestions for helping to balance the categories of literature to be included in a literature program. She recommends that a literature program should contain "a balance of new and old, fanciful and realistic, prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction, and stories, biographies, drama and essay" (p. 799). Her reason for adding stories, biographies, drama, and essay is not clear since these types of literature are already covered by the category of fiction and nonfiction. Huus stresses that the content should represent works of quality.

Cullinan (1971) very generally states that a balanced literature curriculum requires exposure to all forms of literature, poetry as well as prose.

Loban (1966) recommends that the content elements of literature and the artistic elements of literature should be balanced in a literature program. He suggests that a balanced literature program will "include various kinds of content relevant to the world of the child and his growth" (p. 747) and will "make use of the full range of artistry children may encounter in literature -- form, irony, symbolism, and all the language of metaphor on which literature depends" (p. 747).

Loban seems to use the term "content elements" to refer to the various categories or kinds of literature which might be covered in a literature program. He refers to a suggested list of categories used by the public schools of Wichita, Kansas to balance the content for their literature program:

Folktales

Riddles and jokes

Poetry

Biography and history

Useful arts (language)

Bible and other books on religion

Informative articles, science, travel

Drama

Legends and myths

Short stories

Fine arts

Longer stories (p. 747)

This list covers many areas of literature but fails to include others such as fantasy, fables, and historical fiction. Also, it is not clear what might be included under some categories such as "useful arts (language)" and "longer stories" or whether some areas should be part of a literature program, for example, history or books on religion. The list mixes categories. Would the category "longer stories", for instance, include fantasy and historical fiction?

Another list which Loban says one might recommend for balancing the content elements is:

Older Classics

Newer Classics

Various Genres
(novel, drama, poetry, etc.)

Various Themes
(courage, decisions, friends in nature, etc.)

Humorous Selections

Serious Selections

Individual Silent Reading

Listening
(the oral tradition of literature) (p. 748)

As can be seen, the list seems to contain a combination of types of literature, themes of literature, forms of literature, and ways of experiencing literature. It is not clear how individual silent reading and listening might be

related to balancing the categories of literature. Also, it is difficult to see how such a disordered list would be helpful even as a checklist in balancing the content in a literature program.

The "artistic elements", which Loban refers to, are the literary elements included in a literature program. He says, "Children can and should become unconsciously aware of the way in which literary art achieves its effects, but they should not study these elements formally as yet" (p. 749) in elementary school. These elements of literary form include:

1. The power of literature to draw the reader in, to make him an imaginative participant;
2. The use of indirection to evoke important feelings and concepts through metaphor and symbolism;
3. Structural design or form; and
4. Irony. Children can recognize and enjoy this quality in literature without formally studying it.

Children can be led to a conscious awareness of many other important literary concepts in literature, which, according to Loban, include:

the hypnotic power of words arranged in certain orders; the basic myths on which literature draws; the importance of point of view or setting; the development of plot and suspense; the signals by which characterization is accomplished. The child's sense of literary form increases only as he enjoys a greater range of literature. (p. 751)

Since Loban stresses that these literary concepts should not be studied or examined formally, it is unlikely that he

would see these concepts being taught through definition, or that he would have children identify and find examples of these concepts in the literary selections they read. He says that children should simply become unconsciously aware of how an author makes use of these concepts or elements in his work. He seems to indicate that this unconscious awareness can be developed in children, but he does not suggest how this development would occur and what the teacher's role would be in its development.

Tiedt (1970) recommends the inclusion of contemporary novels, nonfiction, poetry, short stories, and drama. As can be seen, though, she omits several important types of literature, such as folktales, myths, and fantasy.

However, Tiedt's main emphasis in the content area of the literature program is on the literary concepts which should be taught. She even points out that the concepts to be taught would influence directly the selection of literary works for the program. She says that the literary selections should be carefully prepared to bring out these concepts. One problem which can be seen with Tiedt's emphasis is that literary selections might be made only because they seem useful for teaching particular concepts and not because of their fine literary quality. Also, such emphasis might lead to merely having children define and identify these concepts in literary selections rather than concentrating on why the concepts are used and how they contribute to the selections.

Tiedt believes that the types of concepts which might be included in an elementary school literature program include plot or story line, theme, characterization, setting, and imagery. She points out the importance of these concepts in discovering "how the author manipulates the English language, how he organizes his ideas, how he achieves a desired effect" (p. 193).

One of the characteristics of a good literature program suggested in the Wisconsin literature curriculum (1967) is its comprehensiveness in content coverage. The writers state that children should experience every type and form of literature through the grades. In the Wisconsin elementary literature program, the content materials which are arranged by themes, cover a variety of types and forms of literature such as classics, Bible stories, folklore, myths and legends, poetry, fantasy, biography and essay, and historical fiction. The program includes a wide variety of specific prose selections, as well as a wealth of poetry.

The content of the Wisconsin literature curriculum also places emphasis on the teaching of concepts to develop literary awareness. These concepts, similar to those suggested by Tiedt, include the literary elements of theme and structural form -- setting, plot, characterization, and mood. By providing a wealth of varied experiences with many types of literature, the program states that children should be guided to become aware of the plot, to understand

characterization, to become sensitive to the mood, to understand the theme, and to develop perception of the setting of a story. The elements of poetry emphasized in the program include rhythm, rhyme, imagery, comparisons, and symbols. Even though children are not introduced to these concepts through definition, specific examples from the program seem to place an emphasis on children being able to identify these elements in literary selections. There is little emphasis on the function of a particular element in a literary work or on its contribution to the total work.

Whitehead (1968) suggests that the literary selections to be studied in a literature program should cover many areas of literature, both fiction and nonfiction, that they should be of interest to the children, and that they should include the best written stories and books. The types of literature to be included are animal stories, adventure stories, biography, fables, folk tales, myths, stories about other regions, lands, and peoples, humorous stories, historical fiction, informational books, and poetry.

It is Whitehead's view that the content of a literature program should also include the development of what he calls literature interpretation skills to help develop literary appreciation. He suggests that the following list of literature interpretation skills be emphasized in the elementary grades:

Follow plot -- follow a larger number of characters and events; make deductions; predict outcomes; recognize inferences from various clues.

Interpret character -- read between the lines; analyze through actions and words; identify characters with self and others.

React emotionally -- feel with (be) the characters; derive an emotional satisfaction from a reading experience; judge validity and interest.

React to words -- know how they build suspense, help in establishing setting, and set the pace; learn their more precise and varied meanings in relation to context; recognize writing style.

Recognize literary forms -- distinguish between fiction and nonfiction; discriminate among fables, fairy and folk tales; know essay form and biography; recognize types of poetry. (p. 60).

The teaching of literature interpretation skills would hopefully lead to a better understanding and appreciation of literature, not to an analysis of literature as an end in itself. One concern is that the mastery of such skills might become the only focus of the program. As a result, mastery of these skills may be seen as being the same as knowing literature. Whitehead fails to mention whether the mastery of such skills should lead to helping children see literature as a whole, see the relationships and connections between literary selections.

The content for the Nebraska English curriculum (1967) includes a wide variety of genres and types of literature similar to those suggested by Whitehead (1968). Included in the selections are poetry, myth, fable, folk tales, animal stories, adventure stories, fanciful stories, historical

fiction, biography, and other lands and people. There are specific literary selections listed for each unit in the program. As well, there are alternative selections given which would be suitable for teaching each unit. Related poetry selections are suggested for each unit. For example, a suggested poem may be similar in theme to the unit studied. Also, a bibliography of related selections is given for further independent reading.

The Nebraska curriculum content also includes the development of particular concepts such as theme, imagery, and plot which the writers consider essential to comprehending the conventions of good literature. The content allows for stress on certain elements of stories in order to develop principles of literary form such as the common plot patterns found in folktales or the characteristics of a particular genre. The writers point out, however, that literary works were first selected because of their literary merit and not because they fit a particular category or principle. Too much emphasis on the principles of literary form might result in mere analysis, in simply classifying patterns, symbols, and forms. The writers emphasize, however, that the literary concepts and principles can be "taught to some level of the students' understanding, and taught in such a way that secondary school teachers can build on them" (p. xxiii).

It is Sloan's (1975) belief that the content of an elementary literature program should contain a great deal of

poetry as well as prose. She further states that the poetry should be the best available. It should be imagistic and rhythmic, she says. The prose content, Sloan suggests, should include the widest possible variety of stories, such as myths, Bible stories, legends, tales of the heroes of epic and romance, folk and fairy tales, fables, realistic stories, and fantasy. She further points out that stories representing each of the four archetypal genres be included -- romance, tragedy, irony-satire, and comedy.

The fundamental structural principles underlying all of literature should also be a part of the literature content, according to Sloan (1977). She believes that children know many of these principles intuitively, but they must be made aware of them. The following are examples of some of these structural principles:

The literary imagination seeks to suggest an identity between the human mind and the world outside it. The language of literature is associative, using figures of speech like similes and metaphors to suggest this identity. In their own poetry children make use of this principle naturally, unconsciously. (p. 7)

There are a limited number of ways to tell a story... . The content of each story may be different, but one can see patterns in stories, if one has experienced enough of them. Definite shapes emerge. One of the most common story shapes is that of the romance or quest... . There are other patterns to be found in literature. The same types of characters are used again and again in different times and in different dress. (pp. 10-11)

Man's quest is cyclical -- beginning, developing, ending, beginning again -- but it has another aspect. The imagination projects an idealized world above the world of experience, a world where wishes

are granted and dreams come true. At the opposite end of the scale is a world of nightmare, horror and chaos... . We constantly use -- in songs, advertisements, stories and poems -- images that suggest them. (p. 11)

Such principles help to illustrate what is involved in discovering what literature is and how it works. It involves looking for the patterns to be found in literature: "The recurrent themes and imagery, the conventional plots and characters, the echoes of the old in the new" (p. 13). Children can be led to this discovery inductively, says Sloan.

One concern is that these principles might be seen as abstractions to be taught to the children or to be memorized by them rather than considered as basic understandings toward which the children can be led inductively. Children should be encouraged to discover for themselves the significant patterns in literature.

Also, an emphasis on developing an understanding of literary principles might result in selecting a literary work only because it illustrates a particular principle. This might lead one to examine literature to discover the relationships, patterns, and analogies between literary works, and to ignore the individual work.

Another writer who thinks that a literature program should expose children to a wide variety of types of literature is Huck (1979). The range of content, she says, should include poetry, realism, fantasy, folklore, historical fiction, biography, and informational books.

Huck says that the content should also cover some knowledge about literature. This would include developing some understandings about various genres, about the elements of literature, such as characterization, theme, style, setting, and point of view, and about literary devices, such as metaphor and symbol.

An emphasis on developing an understanding of literary forms, elements, and devices in the program's content might result in literary works being selected because they emphasize particular elements or devices. It could also result in merely defining and identifying elements and devices. But Huck, however, stresses strongly that knowledge of literary forms, elements, and devices should only be introduced when they lead to a richer understanding of a particular literary work. Such knowledge should not be forced, she says, or taught superficially. Rather, children should be led to understand the relationship between the use of a particular form, element, or device and the author's meaning. They should be led to discover such knowledge gradually and only as it contributes to their understanding and enjoyment of literature.

The views of various authors on the content of the literature curriculum in the elementary school have been presented. Some writers propose general guidelines to help achieve a balance in the categories of literature included in the program. Specific recommendations are given by other

writers for the genres and types of literature which should be included. Many writers recommend a wide variety of types and forms of literature. Little reference is made to whether one genre might be more suitable than others for study in the elementary grades. Based on the nature of the child and on the nature of literature, the content of the literature program designed in this thesis will include specific genres suitable for the elementary school literature curriculum.

Most authors emphasize the literary principles, concepts, and skills which they feel should be taught in a literature program. One must be careful not to over-emphasize the development of skills, principles, and concepts so that definitions and identification become ends in themselves. An emphasis on literary principles, skills, and concepts should occur as it contributes to a better understanding of each literary selection and of literature as a whole. One should concentrate on why a particular element is used, on how it contributes to the total individual literary work. An emphasis on literary principles should help children to discover the significant patterns in literature, to discover what literature is and how it works.

IV. TEACHING APPROACHES

This section deals with instructional approaches to the teaching of literature in the elementary school. It presents the views of various authors on the teaching of a literary selection. More specifically, it examines some writers' ideas on the presentation and creative experiencing of literature, and on the use of discussions and questions to elicit response to literature.

Presentation and Creative Experiencing of Literature

Most writers place a great deal of emphasis on the presentation and creative experiencing of literature. Many point out that listening to literature is a useful way to experience literature. Allen (1967), for instance, believes that teaching literature first of all requires that children be taught how to listen to a story as a whole. Storytelling may be used to accomplish this first phase. He says that when a child is listening to a story, he is "being creative by lending to it his own imagination" (p. 736).

Frye (1963), as well, emphasizes that listening to stories is an art that the child should acquire. He points out that listening to stories is not a passive ability but rather a basic training for the imagination. Listening to a story as a whole allows the child to concentrate on the total

structure rather than on pieces of content. Frye says that in later years, this early training of the imagination should help the child "try to grasp first of all the totality of what is presented" (p. 44).

Another writer who places emphasis on the experiencing of literature is J.E. Miller (1967). The literary experience, he says, involves the imagination. And, he stresses, the imagination is not a passive faculty but one which is actively engaged in and educated by the literary encounter. The literary experience should result in the exercise, growth, and development of the imagination.

Each of the previous writers suggests that not only is it important for children to experience literature, but that the experiencing of literature involves the imagination. Hence, the experiencing of literature is not passive but involves the child actively and engages his imagination. The research in chapter two on the nature of the child reveals, in fact, that the child in the elementary school needs to be actively involved in order for more effective learning to take place. This active involvement can be provided for through discussions and questions whereby the child is encouraged to think, to explore, to converse, to question, and through creative activities such as dramatizations and art interpretation.

Sloan (1977) believes that the study of literature "begins in experiencing it with pleasure" (p. 2). She

recommends that reading aloud is a valuable way to accomplish this. She states:

From the earliest age and through the elementary and junior high school years, children should be read to regularly, taking in literature by the ear as well as the eye... . The finest poems and stories of all kinds and times must be introduced and shared. (p. 5)

Besides reading aloud, Sloan (1975) suggests other ways of presenting stories to children. These include presentation through pictures such as film strips, through films, and through dramatizations.

Huck (1979), as well, places a high priority on children experiencing literature. Plenty of time should be provided in the curriculum, she says, for children to hear and to read stories and poems. She stresses, as Sloan does, that the practice of reading literature aloud to children should be an important way for them to experience it. Huck, too, suggests the use of films, filmstrips, recordings, and cassettes in presenting literature.

A similar stress is placed by Huus (1973) on the importance of children listening to stories and poems read aloud, as well as to storytellings and professional recordings. She says that "listening ... frees the pupil to concentrate on ideas, and language" (p. 799).

The idea of listening to literature is recommended by many writers as a valuable way of experiencing literature. Certainly, such a technique frees the young reader from having

to concentrate on decoding skills and allows him to concentrate on other aspects such as the ideas, the language, the total structure of the literary work. As well, reading aloud permits the selection and presentation of a literary work which all children might not be able to read independently but which they can comprehend by listening. An oral presentation of a literary work is also a way of emphasizing its literary strengths, especially if these are oral qualities, such as rhythm and rhyme.

The use of creative activities as a way for children to creatively respond to and extend their literary experiences is noted by many authors. Huus (1973) believes that creative activities, such as dramatizations, pantomime, painting, and creative writing should be part of a planned literature program. Norton (1980), as well, suggests the use of creative art, oral, and written activities as a "way to extend literary enjoyment, appreciation, and comprehension" (p. 341).

In the Wisconsin literature curriculum (1967), creative activities such as dramatizing stories, creative book reports, making original drawings, and writing original stories to present, are emphasized.

Huck (1979), also, suggests that creative activities can serve as a way for children to respond to and interpret literature. For example, she says that they can respond through art and media, through music, through drama, and through creative writing. Interpreting literature in such

ways, she says, makes it more meaningful for children and allows them to become actively involved. As Huck states, "To act upon the book is to know it, to make it a memorable experience" (p. 641).

Similarly, the use of creative activities is suggested by Cullinan (1981) to "extend and enrich children's experiences with literature" (p. 462). Such activities, she says, encourage children to become actively involved in literature, to create, explore, and discover. Cullinan notes that creative activities should be relevant, they should lead children back to a literary selection to help them understand and interpret it. Some of the creative activities suggested by Cullinan include creative dramatics such as pantomime, interpretation, and improvisation; art activities such as collages, dioramas, and sculpture; writing activities; and oral activities such as storytelling and choral speaking.

In Allen's view (1967), creative dramatics can provide the opportunity for the child to participate actively in response to literature. As Allen states:

Then the reading and acting out of literature becomes an engagement with life. Through acting out his 'feelings' or 'responses' the child enlarges his understanding of the text, sharpens his perceptions, and thereby learns to know his own self more intimately. (p. 736)

Experiences in pantomime, play acting, choral speaking, and creative dramatics allow the child to become an active

participant, to express his own personal ordering of the text, to be stimulated imaginatively.

The very first step in literary criticism, says Allen, is the "uncritical responses" of the child in creative dramatics. After acting out what he has read, he is better able to express his thoughts and feelings in words. Also, teachers are better able to teach him about literary awareness, about theme, plot, characterization, and so on. Allen suggests, "Let him grow through literature for a long time before we attempt to teach him how to analyse it" (p. 737). Rushing past the process of creation and re-creation of the literature experience and into a literary analysis at a high level of abstraction, overemphasizing theme and the analysis of technique, can result in turning children off from an engaging literary experience, says Allen.

Certainly, as discussed in chapter two, the child at this level is not capable of dealing in abstractions. Verbal and symbolic abstractions present difficulties for him. Formal abstract instruction in the techniques of literary analysis might result in passive learning which is often superficial and a dull learning experience. On the other hand, a literary encounter which allows for active participation, as Allen suggests, should result in more effective learning and true understanding.

Sloan (1977) points out, as does Iverson (1971), that literature is an art form. Her ideas on responding to

literature, however, differ from Iverson's (1971) in that she suggests that children can creatively respond to literature not only through discussion but through art as well. We should expect and encourage, says Sloan, a response to literature through art, since literature is an art. Responding to literature through art is an effective way to learn what literature is and how it works. Sloan says:

If a child can work out a dramatization of the key scenes of a story he has read, he is aware of that story's structure. If he is able to make a picture of a character or a scene from a book, he has been able to visualize. If he can write a new episode for a character he has met in a story, or create a poem in the same form as one he has read, he shows that he has absorbed the details that make up the character or internalized the form of the poem. (p. 5)

It is also noted by Sloan (1975) that a creative or artistic response to literature can serve as a test of children's comprehension and understanding of a literary work. For example, a dramatization can show if a child has understood characterization, sequence of events, or mood. This would avoid the sort of comprehension check which often treats a literary work as if it were merely a piece of informational or expository writing.

The use of creative activities, then, is a way for children to creatively experience literature, to respond to and interpret literature. It is important that such activities lead children back into the literature selection and not away from it. Creative activities not related to the

literature selection being studied become an end in themselves and do not help children to interpret literature and deepen their response to it.

Responding to Literature through Discussions and Questions

The use of questions and discussions is also suggested as a way to extend children's experiences. Several writers present various ideas on the possibilities for discussions and the types of questions to ask to help children interpret a literary work and deepen their response to it.

The use of a diagram or "web" is suggested by Huck (1979) for planning the possibilities for discussion. A diagram, such as the following one suggested by Huck, might be helpful in giving the various directions a discussion could take, the possibilities for interpretations, or extended reading. Indeed, as Huck stresses, it is not meant that all possibilities for one particular literary work should be explored, but rather the most appropriate ones may be selected for particular children. Huck suggests that a web such as the following one (see p. 111) for Call It Courage by Sperry might include art interpretation, drama, personal responses, values clarification, developing literary awareness (developing characterization, use of symbols, plot development), and

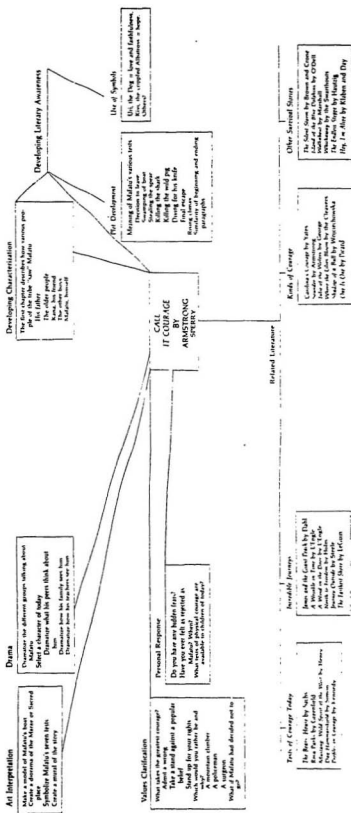
related literature. As can be seen, a web can suggest ways, other than discussions, of responding to literature.

Norton (1980) provides suggestions similar to Huck's for mapping or diagraming a book. She uses Huck's categories of activities, such as art interpretation, drama, and values clarification, to map the instructional potential for a particular literary selection. She says that certain creative and discussion activities can then be chosen from the lists of possibilities.

It should be noted that planning a web or mapping the instructional possibilities for each literary work seems very time-consuming. Also, one might become too concerned with planning all the possibilities for a literary work and lose sight of the program's objectives. As a result the discussions and activities might become an end in themselves, taking the child away from the literary work rather than back into it to help him interpret and find meaning in the work.

Besides planning a web of possibilities for a particular selection, Huck (1979) suggests that a specific lesson can be developed for an in-depth discussion of the particular literary strengths of a selection, for example, an in-depth study of characterization after reading Call It Courage.

It seems appropriate that the strengths of a particular selection, its principle characteristics or qualities, its primary elements and techniques, should become the focus of a discussion. Such a discussion would emphasize what is



important in the selection. It would avoid an attempt to teach everything about literary awareness using that selection. An in-depth discussion of the literary strengths of a selection also avoids placing too much emphasis on literary elements, since it is the dominant qualities of the selection which would provide the focus for a discussion rather than some other literary elements.

A discussion on the literary strengths of a particular selection, should, of course, be appropriate to the child's intellectual level. The research in chapter two on the nature of the child suggests that the discussion should not deal with abstractions of the selection, with definitions of literary concepts, or with instructing formally about literary concepts or qualities. The discussion should instead, encourage active participation on the part of the child, allow the child to experiment, explore, converse, and question.

Tiedt (1983) suggests that a discussion or study of literature usually follows the experiencing of literature. The focus of the discussion, she says, can be on any aspect of the literature being examined, such as:

1. Vocabulary (talk about the words used, not just a list to study);
2. Theme (author's message, ideas behind the action);
3. Specific examples of imagery (similes, picturesque use of words);
4. Meaning of specific phrases or references (idioms, clichés);

5. Reaction to provocative statements; and
6. Discussion of action, characters, setting.
(p. 315)

Tiedt seems to suggest discussing any aspect of a literary work, rather than concentrating on the literary strengths, on the dominant qualities of a work.

As Huck (1979) points out, the questions asked in a discussion will vary according to the purpose of the discussion. Questions should also be evaluated, says Huck, in terms of the level of thought they require from the children. She suggests the following categorization of questioning:

1. MEMORY (Literal Comprehension). Involves simple recall of story, naming of characters, describing the setting....
2. TRANSLATION. Requires the student to recast an idea into another mode or form of communication,
3. INTERPRETATION. Interpretation questions ask a child to go beyond the information given in the book, to begin to put it in a frame of reference useful to the child....
4. APPLICATION. These questions expect the student to make direct application of knowledge, skills, or criteria learned previously to a new situation in life, another book, or another poem....
5. ANALYSIS. Analysis questions emphasize elements, form, and organization of the story or poem....

6. SYNTHESIS. These questions require the student to put together elements and parts of poems and literature in such a way as to create a unified, unique structure....
7. EVALUATIVE. These questions require a judgment of the value or quality of the writing based upon established criteria....

(pp. 722-724)

According to Huus (1973), the ideas in a literary selection which contribute to the objectives of a literature program should be stressed. If, for example, an objective is to help children understand what constitutes literature, then the treatment of character in a particular literary work might be discussed. She stresses, however, that an "over-analysis of the work is not recommended, but pupils do need to think about what they hear and read" (p. 799). They can be stimulated to do this by appropriate questions, including both non-critical and higher level questions. Non-critical questions, says Huus, ask for a retelling of the story. They serve as a review or check and help pupils who may have missed some point in the plot. These are similar to Huck's first level questions -- memory questions. Higher level questions, such as the following, look for deeper meanings, says Huus:

interpretive and evaluative questions about character traits not stated, comparison and contrast of action, plots, and setting; and noticing especially precise and vivid phrases that draw attention to aspects that otherwise may be missed. (pp. 799-800)

These higher level questions are similar to other levels of questions suggested by Huck.

Huus's classification of questions is not as detailed as Huck's; however, both are based on levels of thinking. Such a categorization of questioning makes one aware that there is a variety of types of questions which can be asked, that different types of questions require different levels of thinking, and that one should not always concentrate on only one type of question, for example, recall questions. It is not clear, however, how such a categorization might be helpful in developing literature questions. For instance, does it suggest a sequence for asking questions? Do only literal or non-critical questions serve as a check on comprehension of a selection? Should a deliberate attempt be made to include questions from all categories?

A different guide is suggested by Beck and McKeown (1981) for developing questions. They believe questions should not only check comprehension but also serve as an aid to the development of comprehension. Beck and McKeown refer to their guide as a story map and base it on a logical organization of events and ideas which are centrally important to the story and on the inter-relationships between these events and ideas. The story map is derived from an integration of implicit and explicit ideas.

The authors state that the development of a story map involves first deciding the premise or starting point for the story. The major events and ideas that make up the plot of the story are then selected. Implied ideas and the links

between events and ideas must be considered here as well. Questions are then developed to draw out the knowledge in the map and to match the progression of ideas and events in the story. The writers suggest that additional questions can be developed to extend the discussion to broader perspectives after the story map has been developed through questioning and discussion. Beck and McKeown state that these additional questions could "develop a story interpretation, explore a general theme or lesson embodied in the story, probe the use of literary conventions within the story or act to further extend the text by using story ideas as a springboard for more general discussion" (p. 915).

As can be seen, Beck and McKeown's story map for developing questions differs from the categorization of questions based on levels of thought such as Huck's or Huus's. The story map seems more helpful in suggesting an appropriate content and sequence for questions to check and promote comprehension. These questions are concerned not only with assessing comprehension but also with promoting comprehension of a selection, and with developing literary awareness and appreciation.

Sloan (1975) goes beyond the use of questions to test basic comprehension, even though, as she points out, it is important that children understand what they read or listen to. But, the teaching of literature, she says, includes more than basic comprehension. It includes comprehension of story

content and form with an emphasis on the affective and imaginative, as well as on the cognitive, aspects of comprehending. It includes the child's response to literature. It also includes an attempt to unify and integrate all of the child's literary experiences, to see literature as a whole, to see how literary works are related.

It is Sloan's suggestion that questions be designed to foster literary understandings. They should focus attention on the elements of story and their interactions in shaping and structuring the form of the literary work as a whole rather than on bits and pieces of its content. Questions focusing on "why" should be encouraged when they lead a child to consider the reasons the author used a particular technique.

Questions can be used, says Sloan, to guide and foster the child's growth in responsiveness as well as in comprehension. They can also be used to guide children to an understanding of literature as a whole, an understanding of what literature is and how it works, and an understanding of the structural principles of literature.

Sloan points out that literary questions should take the child back into the story itself to find answers and not lead the child away from the story. They should center as much as possible in form and structure in order to promote basic critical understandings, an understanding of how literature works. Sloan provides examples of such questions:

1. What does the author do to get the story going? Suppose that opening were changed or removed, how would the rest of the story be changed?
2. What kind of person was the principal character? Did he apparently change during the course of the story? How? What caused him to change?
3. Suppose this or that character were removed from the story. How would the whole be changed?
4. Suppose the order of events were changed. What would happen to the story? Would it be a new story or no story at all?
5. Where does the story take place? If it took place somewhere else or in a different time, how would it be changed?
6. What does the author do to create suspense, to make you want to read on to find out what happens? (p. 78)

Talking about literature, discussing it, and asking questions about it are effective ways for children to learn what literature is and how it works, says Sloan. Children can discover and comprehend the structural principles underlying all of literature through planned learning sequences involving structured and purposeful discussion and questioning. She believes that such learning sequences should encourage active participation on the part of children and engage them in both convergent and divergent thinking.

It is suggested in the Wisconsin literature curriculum (1967) that exposure to structural form and theme is essential in order to teach children to read literature with

understanding. Setting, plot, characterization, and mood are the components of structural form dealt with in the elementary Wisconsin literature program. It is stated:

By the use of questions and directed activities, the skillful teacher provides an abundance of experiences in dealing with structural form and theme. The result is an awareness of the author's plan and purpose in writing the story. (p. 43)

The program makes use of appropriate questions to emphasize the plot, setting, characterization, mood, and theme of various literary works.

The questions suggested in the Wisconsin literature program, however, sometimes seem to concentrate merely on identifying literary concepts, for example, identifying the setting of a particular literary work. The questions place too little emphasis on why a particular concept is used, on how it contributes to the work, and on how individual works are related.

Iverson (1971) discusses what he believes is involved in responding to literature. He believes that it should first be recognized that literature is an art form, and should be treated as such, not as an expository piece of writing. Individual, creative, imaginative responses should be encouraged in each child. In order to get such responses, we must teach the child "to learn how a word means" (p. 9), first by looking at word choices from the writer's point of view - - how he wished the words to mean, and then by looking at word choices from the individual reader's point of view -- how the

words actually spoke to the individual imagination of the reader. "It is", as Iverson states, "how a word means that speaks to the individual imagination" (p. 9). He says we should also take time to consider why certain words were chosen by the writer.

Iverson takes two aspects of stories -- plot and character -- and suggests how the literary responses develop through three levels. With plot, the first level involves discovering what the principal events are and the order they follow. In the second level, we concentrate on how the writer wishes these events to contribute to the movement of the story and how the individual child responds to these choices. In this level the reader is encouraged to see how the events were communicated. The third level is concerned with why these choices were made by the writer and why the child responded to them as he did. The second and third levels are what Iverson calls "the appreciative response levels -- the how's and the why's" (p. 10). The child is encouraged to "go beyond just naming what happened to creating in his imagination how it happened" (pp. 10-11). Then he is encouraged to ask why the events happened as they did.

Referring to character development, Iverson says the first level is concerned with what the character is. In the second level, we ask how the character is communicated and how the character is visualized by the reader. Finally, the third level deals with why the character is represented as he is.

Iverson seems to emphasize, however, a response to literature only through discussion. Even though he stresses the child's individual, creative, imaginative responses, these are encouraged only through discussion and questions. He makes no reference to the use of creative activities, such as dramatizations, to encourage such responses to literature.

As indicated by the views of the various authors just presented, the use of planned discussions and questions is recommended as a way to encourage and guide children's responses to literature. The types of questions asked in a discussion will, of course, be influenced by the purpose of the discussion. And, indeed, the purpose of a discussion should reflect the objectives of the program.

Discussions and questions can serve both to check and promote comprehension of a literature selection. This, of course, is not their only function. They are valuable in guiding children to literary understandings, in examining the form and structure of a literature selection, in promoting an appreciation of the selection. They are also useful in helping children to discover the relationships between literary selections, to see literature as a whole, and to recognize and understand the structural principles, the significant patterns in all of literature.

The discussions and questions should, of course, be appropriate for the intellectual level of the child in the elementary grades. They should not deal with abstractions

but with concrete literary experiences. They should encourage children to become actively involved, to actively participate, and to experiment, explore, and question. The emphasis in discussions should not be merely on defining, identifying, and categorizing literary elements, techniques, and patterns but on how a particular element contributes to a literature selection, on why it is used.

V. EVALUATION METHODS

Some of the writers who discuss evaluative techniques conclude that because of the nature of literature, evaluation methods are often vague and subjective. Greene and Petty (1975), for example, suggest that questions, such as the following, be asked about each child in an attempt to evaluate him:

1. Has this child appeared to enjoy reading any book(s) during the year (or other grading period)?
2. Has he written anything creative as a result of this reading?
3. Has he recommended any book, poem, or story to another pupil?
4. Did he read anything which might be considered more difficult or a "better" book at the end of the year (grading period) than at the beginning?
5. Did he seem to gain in understanding of himself or others or of the world about him as a result of the literature program?
(p. 278)

The authors point out that appreciation of literature can probably best be determined "by noting how absorbed a child is in something he is reading, by emotions on the faces as children listen, and by comments that are made" (p. 278).

It is suggested in the Wisconsin literature curriculum (1967) that the teacher evaluate each child in terms of the proposed goal: by asking questions. The following are some examples of suggested questions which the authors feel can best be measured by day-to-day observations:

1. Does the child have an interest in an appreciation of good literature?
 - (i) Does he bring books from home to share with his friends?
 - (ii) Does he respond to a variety of moods?
 - (iii) Does he ask the teacher to reread a story?
 - (iv) Are his interests and tastes broadening as evidenced by the books he selects?
2. Is the child getting to know himself and others?
 - (i) Does he understand and interpret the characters?
 - (ii) Is he growing in his ability to state his own beliefs?
 - (iii) Is he willing to change his beliefs if they are proven inaccurate?
 - (iv) Does he test his ideas and beliefs? (p. 58)

Whitehead (1968), also, suggests that children be evaluated in terms of the program's goals. This, he says, is not easy when it is based on such things as appreciation and enjoyment of literature. The following are some of the points he would consider in evaluating children's development in literature:

1. The recurring frequency with which a child uses his leisure time, in and out of school, to read books for fun and relaxation;
2. The quality of books, stories, poems, and other reading matter the child selects independent of the help of a teacher or librarian; and
3. The ability to distinguish between desirable and undesirable qualities of literature: in themes, in plots, in characters portrayed. (p. 221)

The evaluation methods discussed by the previous authors are rather vague. They emphasize the observation of children's reading habits and attitudes, but they do not consider the evaluation of children's knowledge of literature. Other writers suggest that children's understanding of individual literary selections and of literature as a whole can be evaluated through the use of questions and creative activities.

Questions can be asked which require children to respond verbally and/or in a written form. These questions can be used to check basic comprehension, to evaluate whether children have understood what they have heard or read. The type of questions asked is an important point for

consideration. Beck and McKeown (1981) suggest asking questions which not only check comprehension of a literary selection but help in the development of comprehension. Classifications of questions, based on levels of thinking, such as those noted by Huus (1973) and by Huck (1979), suggest that one can go beyond the literal level requiring simple recall to questions which require higher levels of thinking, such as inferential or analysis questions. For example, one can go beyond questions such as, "What did the main character do?" or "When does the story occur?" to include questions such as, "Why did the character behave as he did?" or "Could the story take place in a different time? Why or why not?".

Sloan (1975) believes that one should go beyond the testing of basic comprehension to include children's understanding of story content, form, and structure. She says that questions should emphasize the affective and imaginative, as well as the cognitive aspects of comprehension. Sloan recommends asking questions to foster literary understandings. She says:

Such questions are those that focus the child's attention on the elements of story as they interact in the shaping and structuring of the form of the literary work as a whole and not in bits and pieces of its content. They are questions that center, for example, not so much on what a character did and when he did it but on why he had to behave as he did to make his story happen. (p. 13)

Children's literary awareness and understanding can, indeed, be evaluated by asking questions. Such questions

would emphasize children's understanding of the literary principles, elements, and techniques of particular selections. For example, questions can evaluate children's understanding of the importance of setting to a story, of how the setting contributes to the meaning of the story. The questions asked would also emphasize children's understanding of how individual literary works are related. Children's understanding of the basic literary patterns or archetypes and conventions found in all works of literature, for example, can be evaluated through questions. One should note, however, that evaluating children's literary awareness and understanding does not mean asking questions which deal with abstractions, with formal definitions of literary concepts and techniques. As indicated by the research in chapter two on the nature of the child, most elementary children are not capable of handling abstractions.

Children's understanding of literature can also be evaluated through a variety of creative responses, says Sloan (1975). Children can respond through art work, dramatizations, music, and creative writing. The composition of an original piece of writing, for example, can be used to evaluate a child's understanding of the form and structure of a particular genre of literature, such as the myth.

VI. SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the literature on the nature of elementary school literature programs. Such knowledge, along with the knowledge of the nature of the elementary school child, will be influential in designing an elementary school literature program.

Specifically, the following components of a literature program were examined: purposes, scope and sequence, teaching approaches, and evaluation methods. The views of various writers on each of these components were presented and discussed.

A review of the purposes or goals of an elementary school literature program reveals that a variety of purposes have been identified by many writers. These purposes range from providing enjoyment to aiding emotional development to understanding what makes up literature. Each different purpose reflects a particular view of literature. Some purposes recognize the external values of literature which include providing enjoyment and relaxation, contributing to personal and emotional development, and achieving the goals of other curriculum areas. Other purposes, however, consider literature to be important for its own sake. They see the value of literature in contributing to the development of the imagination, in providing new perspectives on life. They refer to the discovery of what literature is, to the

development of literary awareness and appreciation. Such purposes consider not only the content but the structure and form of literature to be important.

The review of literature indicates that there are several accepted ways of organizing the literature curriculum in the elementary school. Various authors suggest organizing the curriculum on one of the following bases: literary elements, themes, and literary genres. An examination of each type of organization reveals some positive aspects as well as some areas of concern.

Different views are presented on what should be included in the content component of an elementary school literature program. Certainly the genres or types of literature to be covered in the literature program must be considered. Some writers suggest general guidelines to provide for a balanced content coverage. Other recommendations include the specific genres and types of literature and even the specific selections that should be included in the content of the program. Other writers make suggestions about the literary knowledge which should be taught and which should form part of the program's content. This would include literary elements, concepts, principles, and skills.

The section on teaching approaches reviews the suggestions of various writers on the teaching of a literary work. The presentation and creative experiencing of literature is emphasized by many as an important aspect of

teaching literature. Suggestions are made about ways of experiencing literature with an emphasis on listening to literature read aloud and on creative activities such as dramatizations, art, and creative writing. Children's responses to and interpretation of literature might be encouraged and guided through the use of discussions and questions as well as creative activities.

A review of evaluation methods reveals that children should be evaluated in terms of the objectives of the program. Some writers suggest that this might be done by carefully observing the child, making notes, and answering questions about each child. These evaluation methods are vague and measure children's reading habits and attitudes. Some suggestions are made for asking questions which require children to respond in an effort to evaluate children's understanding of literature.

CHAPTER IV

AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAM

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to outline a literature program for the elementary grades, four to six. The chapter begins with a rationale for the inclusion of literature in the elementary school curriculum. It then recommends some purposes for the literature program. Based on the suggested purposes, a method of organizing the literature curriculum is chosen. Appropriate content is then selected to help attain the purposes of the program. Finally, some instructional approaches for the teaching of literature are proposed. This chapter will draw upon the research on the nature of the child in chapter two and the research on the nature of literature programs in chapter three.

II. RATIONALE

The inclusion of literature as a regular component in the elementary school curriculum must be emphasized. Literature deserves to be treated as an important subject and to have an established place in the elementary curriculum, with a regularly scheduled time period. Without the inclusion of a well-planned literature program, the teaching of

literature is likely to become part of the free reading, the individualized reading, or the library program, or may be correlated with other subject areas, or left for a special occasion, for a treat.

There exists a variety of reasons why children should be exposed to a regularly planned literature program. Literature can contribute to children's development and education in many ways. But, surely, the most important justification for including literature in the elementary curriculum is that it contributes so greatly to the education of the imagination. The development or education of the imagination should not be neglected or regarded as being superfluous. The education of the imagination is extremely important. It is as important as the education of the intellect. The imagination is fundamental to the functioning of individuals in a society. An educated imagination allows us to cope with the problems and pressures in society. It allows us to create and to evaluate new ideas. It opens up a world of possibilities. An educated imagination allows us to create the kind of world we want to live in and the kind of life we want to live. The development of the imagination is vital to our daily existence. We use our imaginations all the time. We depend upon our imaginations, for instance, to make decisions, to relate to others, to provide insight into ourselves and others, to respond to new experiences, to explore our feelings, and to find meaning in life.

The child's imagination must not be allowed to atrophy. It must be stimulated, and developed. Literature can do this. It can make a significant contribution in the developing process of the imagination.

Literature makes a lasting and worthwhile contribution to the imagination by expanding and enriching the child's experiences. The child can imaginatively travel to another time and place. In Smith, for instance, the child is transported to seventeenth century London. Literature enables the child to imaginatively experience a different way of life. The child can experience the life of a pioneer family in America in Little House in the Big Woods, for example. Literature provides opportunities for the child to experience a world filled with imaginative possibilities such as the strange and magical kingdom of Narnia in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Through literature, the child is able to meet characters from another time or another place, characters much the same as, and characters quite different from, himself, and imaginary characters he did not dream possible.

Literature allows the child inside a story to participate in the action and to meet the characters. It permits the child inside the characters to imaginatively feel what they are feeling. It has the power to make the child feel the joy, the sorrow, the death, or the struggles of the characters, for example.

Literature appeals directly to the imagination, to the feelings and emotions of the child. Literature is concerned with feeling. It creates experiences rather than merely describing or explaining them. By providing vicarious experiences, literature engages the feelings and emotions of the child. It invites the child to become involved in the story and identify with the characters. Literature encourages a personal response on the part of the child. Julie of the Wolves, for example, allows the child inside Miyax, to identify with the main character, to feel her loneliness, her struggle to survive, her love for the Arctic and for the wolves. It creates and allows the child to vicariously experience the conflict between the old Eskimo ways and the modern ways of the white man.

Literature has the power to develop the child's imaginative perspective on reality. It gives shape to experiences. It helps to clarify the world of reality and reduce confusion. As the child imaginatively recognizes the ordered physical world of literature, he creates an order in the real world around him. Literature helps the child to realize his own imaginative powers as it puts into words and images certain feelings and ideas which he knew before but could not express. This creates meaning for the child.

Literature contributes to the education of the creative imagination by offering imaginative insight. It enables the child to look at familiar things with fresh insight, to really

see something for the first time. Literature has the power to provide new perspectives on reality, to look at life in a new way. Having experienced literature, the child returns to the real world with a new perspective. Literature has the power to make the child more sensitive to, more aware of life, of the beauty, the wonder, the mystery of the world. It helps the child to look upon nature, people, experiences, and ideas from a new perspective.

Fantasy and poetry are particularly good at providing new insights into the world of reality. Charlotte's Web, for example, provides insights into the value of true friendship. A Wrinkle in Time makes one more aware of the power of human love. In the poem "On a Snowy Day", Dorothy Aldis enables the child to look upon the snow on a fencepost in a new, fresh way. Zilpha Keatley Snider shows the child a very familiar object, a tree, from a different perspective. The poem "Tree" allows the child to really see a tree and to consider its beauty and wonder. Elinor Wylie provides fresh insight into a new fallen snow in her poem "Velvet Shoes".

Literature helps to widen and enrich the child's moral awareness. It contributes to the education of a moral imagination by presenting various points of view on reality, attitudes towards people and events, and values about life. Literature confronts us with a great number of moral perspectives. Each literary work has a particular moral angle or point of view and presents particular feelings, values,

attitudes, and world views. As the child explores literary works, as he examines the meaning and effects of basic human qualities such as sorrow and joy, as he considers the moral dilemmas of characters, their feelings, values, and attitudes, and as he thinks about the moral questions confronting him in literature, the child's own moral awareness expands and deepens and takes its own distinct shape.

The language of children is fresh and imaginative. Their expressions are often creative or poetic, containing simile and metaphor. Children usually describe something by saying it is like something else. They delight in manipulating and playing with the words and sounds of their language. They like to recite or sing nonsense rhymes and rhythmic chants. Children are fascinated by the words and sounds of their language and by the wonderful things words can do. They enjoy tongue-twisters, puns, riddles, and other forms of verbal play.

Children find this same delight and fascination in the language of literature where the stylistic imagination is at its best. Literature uses language expressively, it manipulates and plays with language. It uses the language of the imagination. The language of imaginative literature appeals to children. They enjoy rhyme, rhythm, assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, repetition, figurative language, unusual vocabulary, and imagery. These stylistic devices are found especially in poetry where they are used to create a

particular mood or atmosphere, to reinforce and create meaning, to suggest particular images, to produce emphasis, to provide description, and to create humour. Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, uses rhythm to create meaning in the poem, "Where Go The Boats". The rhythm suggests how the speed of the river increases as it flows toward the sea. Harry Behn uses unusual and ridiculous combinations of words to create humour in the poem "Tea Party". Literature, in particular poetry, shows children the imaginative use of language at its best.

It seems, then, that there is a sound rational basis for including literature as a regular subject in the elementary school curriculum. Children should, indeed, experience a well-planned literature program. Literature contributes to the education of the imagination, and, the education of the imagination is essential to our very existence. As children's emotions and imaginations are engaged and stimulated by literature, they realize that reading is worthwhile and they become motivated to share in the wonders and delights of literature.

Furthermore, literature contributes to the development of a fully literate person. The experiencing of quality literature allows children to develop a love of language, to experience the power of language, and to become aware of its limitless possibilities, and, so, leads to the development of genuine literacy. As Sloan (1975) states, literature helps

to develop those who are truly literate, "readers and writers who are aware of the potential of language: its nature, its uses, its joy" (p. 118).

III. PURPOSES

The purposes or goals are identified here for the elementary school literature program developed in this chapter. The establishment of these purposes takes into consideration the nature of literature and the nature of the child for whom the program is being developed. These purposes are influential in determining the program's organization and content.

The following purposes are identified for the recommended literature program in the elementary school:

1. To stimulate and develop children's imagination;
2. To provide opportunities for children to experience quality literature;
3. To provide opportunities for children to respond to and interpret literary selections;
4. To develop children's literary awareness and understanding;
5. To develop children's appreciation of literature; and
6. To stimulate children to want to become truly literate.

The purposes identified reflect the view that literature is important for its own sake, for its own inherent values. They consider the form and structure, as well as the content of literature, to be important. These purposes reject the view that literature is important only as a form of recreation or as a means of meeting the psychological needs of the child. The therapeutic or guidance function of literature is not reflected in these purposes. Neither do these purposes regard literature as a means of achieving the goals of other curriculum areas.

The first purpose identified, to stimulate and develop children's imagination, is considered to be the central, overall purpose of the literature program outlined here. The other purposes grow out of or are aspects of this main purpose. The development of the imagination is important to the total education of the child. Children in the elementary school are, indeed, imaginative. They think and speak imaginatively. The best way to stimulate and develop this imagination is through experiencing and interpreting literature. Literature, indeed, appeals directly to children's feelings and emotions. The language of literature is so close to their own imaginative use of language. Literature can widen and enrich children's experiences. With an educated imagination, children can extend beyond what is to what can be. They can develop new perspectives on reality, they can see things in a new way, they can realize the power

of their imagination by experiencing and interpreting literature. They can become more sensitive to, more aware of the world around them.

The second purpose of the literature program involves providing children with quality literary experiences. Children can experience literature through dramatizations, through visual presentations, by listening to someone read aloud, by choral reading or by reading themselves. As children experience literature their imaginations are actively engaged, stimulated, and developed. They find pleasure and delight in experiencing literature.

The third purpose goes beyond the experiencing of literature to a response to and interpretation of literature. This purpose allows children to be responsive, to become actively involved, to interact with literature. Discussions, questions, and creative activities can take children back to a literary selection to interpret it and to make it more meaningful. Children develop new perspectives on things, they see life in a new way, they develop their imaginations.

The inclusion of the fourth purpose, to develop children's literary awareness and understanding, is important in helping children gain knowledge about literature. This purpose would involve developing an awareness and understanding of the various literary forms or genres, elements, and techniques as well as the conventional patterns and symbols found in literature. The development of this

awareness and understanding should lead children to an increased understanding and enjoyment of literature. This purpose is concerned with helping children to understand the individual literary work as well as the whole of literature, its structure and patterns.

The development of children's appreciation of literature is identified as the fifth purpose. Appreciating literature involves enjoying and understanding it. This purpose involves the development of values and taste in reading quality literature. It involves developing children's appreciation of an individual literary work, its uniqueness, its beauty, its meaning. It involves developing an appreciation of literature as a whole, of how individual literary works are related, of the way literature works. The child's appreciation of literature can be enhanced through experiencing, interpreting, and examining literary works of fine quality.

The sixth purpose, to develop true literacy, is concerned with motivating children to become readers of quality literature for life. It is concerned with creating a desire to read by providing children with quality experiences in literature which stimulate their imaginations and arouse their emotions. It involves creating a love of language and an awareness of its potential. Children will see literature as a worthwhile and necessary part of life.

IV. ORGANIZATION

An organization based on literary genres is the approach selected for organizing the elementary school literature program recommended here. This approach to organization better serves the purposes of the literature program and has certain advantages over a thematic organization or an organization based on literary elements such as plot, characterization, and setting. A literature program organized according to literary genres focuses attention on the teaching of literature for its own sake, for its own fundamental values, and not for some utilitarian value such as solving emotional problems.

Structuring the literature program around literary genres, rather than around literary elements, avoids the tendency to isolate particular key elements and to use a literary selection to teach these elements. It avoids an emphasis on the mere development of skills, such as defining and identifying certain literary elements in a literary work. It avoids a fragmented examination of a literary work and stresses, instead, an examination of the work as a whole. Basing the organization of the literature program on genres allows an emphasis on the importance of literary elements as they occur in a literary selection. It permits a concentration on the function of a particular element in the literary selection, on its contribution to the creation of meaning in the literary selection.

An organization based on genres, rather than themes, avoids an overemphasis on the content or subject matter of a literary selection which may result in a neglect of its form and structure. It calls attention to the form and structure, and not just the content, of a literary work. An organization based on genres permits children to see similarities in conventions and structural patterns among individual literary works. It allows children to see the whole of literature, to see what literature is and how it works.

Structuring the literature program around literary genres minimizes the amount of organization required since genres are basic traditional forms of literature. It ensures that each of the genres considered appropriate for an elementary school literature program is included and receives emphasis. The selection of specific literary works would, therefore, be a matter of selecting the best of each genre, selecting the literary works of finest quality. A thematic organization, on the other hand, would consider the subject matter of literary works to be of primary importance in selection. Hence, a literary work might be selected because its theme is appropriate, regardless of its literary quality. Similarly, a work of the finest quality might be rejected because its subject matter is not suited to the themes being studied. A thematic organization also poses the problem of having to decide which themes or topics should be used in organizing the literature program.

V. CONTENT

Having decided on an organization based on literary genres, the writer in this section is concerned with the selection of genres considered appropriate for the elementary school literature program discussed here and with the recommendation of specific literary selections within each genre. This selection of content takes into consideration the nature of literature and the nature of the elementary school child. The child's language and reading interests and abilities are considered. As well, the values of each genre for the child are recognized.

The content of the elementary school literature program developed here includes poetry as well as prose selections. The genres to be studied in each grade level of the program include poetry, fantasy, folk literature (myths, fables, epics, and folktales), realistic fiction, and historical fiction. These genres can be studied in any order thought suitable for a particular group of children. The order suggested in this literature program begins with poetry, moves to folk literature (folktales, fables, myths, legends and epics) and fantasy, and then to realistic fiction and historical fiction. To begin the study of literature with poetry is to begin with the elementary child's language and interests. The language of poetry is much like the child's own language. Many aspects of poetry appeal to and delight the elementary child. Poetry appeals to the child's

imagination. The study of folk literature and fantasy further develops the child's imagination. The imaginative use of language in folk literature and fantasy is a natural progression from poetic language. The final genres presented in each grade are realistic fiction and historical fiction.

The suggested literary works within each genre are selected to serve the purposes of the program, to meet and extend the interests and abilities of elementary school children, and to represent works of fine quality in children's literature. There are core literary selections suggested for the study of each genre. Alternate selections, which may be used in place of the core selections, are also recommended. An alternate selection could be used if the core selection is not available or if the teacher prefers not to use the core selection for some reason. It is possible, for example, that the children may have experienced a particular core selection in previous grades. In such a situation the teacher might prefer to use the alternate selection. The alternate selections provide a variety in materials for the teacher as well.

The grade level for each of the literary selections is suggested only. However, the selections within each genre do progress in an increasing order of difficulty. The fantasy selections recommended for grade six, for example, are more complex than those for grade four. The study of the literary

selections for each grade leads to the work of following grades. The stories of traditional folk literature lay a foundation for the study of other stories. The study of folk tales, fables, myths, and legends contributes to a better understanding of other literary works. The structural principles, the recurring patterns and conventions of folk literature provide a framework for all literature. The recurring motifs, themes, images, and patterns, the conventional characters and story shapes found in folk literature are common to all literature. The grade six selections, Julie of the Wolves, and The Hobbit, for example, are better understood and become more significant if children recognize the journey motif, the hero's or heroine's quest or search for identity and see the similarities to the quests of Jason, Perseus, and Hercules. The recurring images of the cycles of the seasons found in many stories of traditional literature, such as "Demeter and Persephone", "The Death of Balder" and Akavak, provide a foundation for the study of Charlotte's Web, and The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, and contribute to children's understanding of the cyclical structure underlying literary imagery. The recurring theme of good overcoming evil, found in such works as A Wrinkle in Time, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and A Stranger Came Ashore, is familiar to children from such tales as The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship and Beauty and the Beast and the tales of King Arthur and Finn MacCool.

The number of literary selections studied in any one year would depend upon the students' abilities as well as on the time allotted. Certainly, the core selections would form the basis of the literature program for grades four, five, and six. Further study of a particular genre might make use of the suggested alternate selections.

To aid in the selection of specific literary works suitable for the elementary school literature program, various selection aids such as the following were used: Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature by Donna E. Norton, Children and Books by Zena Sutherland, Diane Monson, and May Hill Arbuthnot, Children's Literature in the Elementary School by Charlotte S. Huck, The Horn Book Magazine, The Arbuthnot Anthology of Children's Literature by May Hill Arbuthnot, Children's Poetry Preferences by Ann Terry, Literature and the Child by Bernice E. Cullinan, and Children's Books Too Good To Miss by May Hill Arbuthnot.

It should be noted that the literary selections are suggested content for the elementary school literature program. They should not be the only literary works which children are exposed to during their elementary school years. Children should be exposed or introduced to as wide a variety of literary selections as possible throughout all areas of the curriculum whenever an opportunity arises. They should be encouraged as much as possible to read other literary works of interest throughout the elementary grades.

The selection of genres considered appropriate for the elementary school literature program is examined here in more detail. As well, recommendations for specific literary selections used in the study of each genre are made. A summary and explanation is provided for the choice of each core literary selection.

Poetry

Certainly, poetry should form an important part of the literature program in the elementary school. As revealed by the research in chapter two on the nature of the child, the language of poetry is very close to elementary children's own language. It appeals to their imagination and sense of rhythm. Elementary children delight in exploring the words and sounds of their language. They are fascinated by the wonderful things words can do. Puns, tongue-twisters, riddles, and rhymes are characteristic features of their language. Their vocabulary is rich in slang and innovation. They often create new descriptive words for people and things.

Elementary children are intrigued with strange, unusual words and nonsense words. They find many poetic aspects of language appealing. They enjoy rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, repetition, onomatopoeia, imagery, and figurative language. These features of language are evident in children's own creative expressions as well as in poetry.

Poems which emphasize these features are appealing to children.

Children in the elementary grades also find certain kinds of poetry appealing. Narrative poetry is a favourite among children. The heroes, action, adventure, and accomplishments found in narrative poems make them appealing. They enjoy the story element, humour, and rhyme of narrative poetry. Children especially like the ballads because of the strong rhyme and rhythm, dialogue, repetition, and refrains they contain.

Humorous poems are another favourite of elementary school children. They enjoy nonsense verse, poems which tell funny stories, and limericks. The appeal of humorous situations, funny characters, and strange and funny words makes humorous poetry a favourite.

Children also enjoy poems which appeal to their sense of wonder. Poems containing magic, fantasy, and mystery are well liked. Poems about nature, animals, and other familiar things are also of interest to children.

The choice of poetry, then, to be used in the elementary literature program includes narrative and descriptive poems - ballads, humorous poems, poems which appeal to children's sense of wonder, and poems about nature, animals, and other familiar things. In addition, there are poems which effectively employ such poetic devices as rhythm, rhyme,

alliteration, assonance, repetition, onomatopoeia, imagery, metaphor, simile, and personification.

The poetry selected for the elementary school literature program not only appeals to children's language and reading interests but represents the best in children's literature. This choice of quality poetry stimulates and develops children's imaginations. It broadens and enriches children's experiences. It enables children to look at things in a different and unusual way. It provides new insights into life. Poetry of fine quality appeals to children's thoughts, emotions, senses, and imaginations.

Since elementary children are poetic in their use of language, since poetry appeals to children's reading and language interests, and since poetry stimulates and develops children's imaginations, the genre of poetry certainly deserves a place in the elementary school literature program. Here, poetry is not regarded as a frill or kept only for a special occasion, but it is given a deserved emphasis in the elementary school literature program.

The poems selected for the literature program represent a variety of poetic forms -- nonsense rhymes, limericks, narratives, ballads, lyrics, and free verse; a variety of poetic elements -- rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, imagery, metaphor, simile, and personification; and a variety of content -- people, animals, humour, nature, familiar experiences, adventure, and mystery.

As well, both traditional and contemporary poems are represented.

The poems suggested for the literature program are listed under these categories: narrative poems and ballads; limericks, nonsense verse, and humorous verse; and descriptive poems. Within each of the first two categories there are four core poetry selections suggested for study at each grade level. The third category, descriptive poems, contains six suggested poetry selections for each grade level since this is a larger category of poems. Some poems could indeed belong to more than one category. Suggested grade levels are given within each category of poems. Also, a brief explanation of each group of core poetry selections is provided. Each suggested alternate selection relates to one of the core selections in its content, form, and/or use of poetic elements.

The poems chosen for the program are indeed suggestions and are not meant to limit the teachers' choices of poems. The recommended poems should not be the only poems which children experience in the elementary grades. All children should, however, study representative poems from each suggested category.

Narrative Poems and Ballads

The humour and the simple story element found in the following narratives make them particularly appealing to the

younger elementary children in grade four. They are amused by the humorous tale of a boy named Hughbert who gets stuck in glue in the poem "Hughbert and the Glue". The hilarious situation in which Hughbert finds himself seems very funny to elementary children. The humorous story of the conflict between the gingham dog and the calico cat in the poem "The Duel" and the ironic tragedy of the monkeys in "The Monkeys and the Crocodile" appeal to children's sense of humour.

The comic plot about the stubborn old man and his wife in the ballad "Get Up and Bar the Door" makes it suitable for younger elementary children. The rhythm and rhyme and the use of dialogue also add to the appeal of this ballad.

Grade Four Core Poetry Selections

The Duel by Eugene Field

Get Up and Bar the Door. Author Unknown

Hughbert and the Glue by Karla Kuskin

The Monkeys and the Crocodile by Laura E. Richards

Grade Four Alternate Poetry Selections

The Crafty Farmer. Author Unknown

Custard the Dragon by Ogden Nash

The King's Breakfast by A.A. Milne

The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee by Mildred Plew Meigs

The poems suggested for study in grade five include two contemporary poems "Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast" and "Questions". These poems are humorous narratives about experiences familiar to children. The poet's use of simile and exaggeration adds to the humour of "Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast". Children enjoy stories of adventure and stories of brave heroes. These qualities are found in the ballad "Robin Hood and the Widow's Sons". The rapidly moving action and the rhythm add to the appeal of this poem. The traditional favourite, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" has particular qualities which makes it appropriate for elementary children. The plot develops swiftly, it has a marked rhythm, and it contains much visual imagery.

Grade Five Core Poetry Selections

Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast by John Ciardi

The Pied Piper of Hamelin by Robert Browning

Questions by Marci Ridlon

Robin Hood and the Widow's Sons. Author Unknown

Grade Five Alternate Poetry Selections

The Cremation of Sam McGee by Robert Service

Fire! Fire! Author Unknown

Macavity: The Mystery Cat by T.S. Eliot

Robin Hood and Allan-a-Dale. Author Unknown

The following narrative poems and ballads are suggested for grade six. "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver" is a longer tragic tale about a poor mother's love and sacrifice for her young son. The fantasy and mystery of this poem, as well as its rhyme and rhythm, appeal to children. Children enjoy "Casey at the Bat", a humorous poem about a baseball hero, Casey. The romantic plots of "The Highwayman" and of "The Raggle Taggle Gypsies" make these poems suitable for older elementary children. The plot of these poems which unfolds rapidly and dramatically, and the use of repetition and rhythm add enjoyment for children.

Grade Six Core Poetry Selections

The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Casey at the Bat by Ernest L. Thayer

The Highwayman by Alfred Noyes

The Raggle Taggle Gypsies. Author Unknown

Grade Six Alternate Poetry Selections

Adventures of Isabel by Ogden Nash

Bonny Barbara Allan. Author Unknown

Lochinvar by Sir Walter Scott

The Wife of Usher's Well. Author Unknown

Limericks, Nonsense Verse, and Humorous Verse

"I wish that my room had a floor" and "There was an old man of Blackheath" are two limericks suggested for the literature program in grade four. Limericks are among children's most preferred types of poetry. Children enjoy the rhyme and rhythm of limericks. Limericks appeal to children because they are short and humorous. Elementary children enjoy the pure nonsense of the limerick "I wish that my room had a floor" and the comical situation of "There was an old man of Blackheath".

Ciardi's poem about a "grin-cat" and a "cat-bird" is also suggested for the grade four literature program. Children should find this poem about the fate of a cat-bird very amusing. The poet's use of repetition, external and internal rhyme, and the unusual names, cat-bird and grin-cat, makes the poem delightful to hear. Children in grade four should enjoy the nonsense verse "Garbage Delight". The rhythm, the rhyming words, and the word play make this poem delightful to hear.

Grade Four Core Poetry Selections

I wish that my room had a floor by Gelett Burgess
There was an old man of Blackheath. Author Unknown
Garbage Delight by Dennis Lee
The Cat Heard the Cat-Bird by John Ciardi

Grade Four Alternate Poetry Selections

There was an old man with a beard by Edward Lear

Jabberwacky by Lewis Carroll

Grizzly Bear by Mary Austin

The Yak by Jack Prelutsky

The two limericks suggested for grade five are "There was a young lady of Niger" and "There was a Young Lady whose chin". Children are amused by what happens to the young lady of Niger and by the description of the young lady's chin. They enjoy the rhyming words and the rhythm of these limericks.

Children should enjoy the nonsense poem "The Lizard". They delight in hearing about when and how to tickle a lizard. The subject matter of the poem, an animal, is a favourite among elementary children. The poet's use of rhyming words also makes the poem appealing.

The hilarious nonsense and delightful sounding words of "Eletelephony" make this poem one of children's favorites. Children are fascinated with the sound and play of words. Richard's unusual and ridiculous combinations of words intrigue and delight children. The poet's description of the absurd situation of a poor elephant trying to use the telephone appeals to children.

Grade Five Core Poetry Selections

There was a young lady of Niger. Author Unknown

There was a young lady whose chin by Edward Lear

Eletelephony by Laura E. Richards

The Lizard by Theodor Roethke

Grade Five Alternate Poetry Selections

There was a young lady whose nose by Edward Lear

Tea Party by Harry Behn

A Centipede. Author Unknown

Don't Ever Seize a Weasel by the Tail by Jack Prelutsky

"A tutor who tooted the flute", one of the two limericks suggested for grade six, depends upon word play for its humour. The poet uses alliteration of the consonant "t" to produce a tongue-twisting rhyming verse. The play on the words "to tutor" and "two tooters" adds to the humorous sound of the limerick. The limerick "Relativity" makes use of a ridiculous, impossible situation to appeal to children's sense of humour.

The humorous verse "Bickering" is enjoyed by older elementary children. They enjoy the poet's humorous questions and use of word play. "Little Miss Muffet", a parody of a nursery rhyme, holds great appeal for children, especially in grade six. The limerick form of the poem and its contemporary

content appeal to children's interests. They are amused by Little Miss Muffet being blown to bits by an H-bomb.

Grade Six Core Poetry Selections

Relativity. Author Unknown

A tutor who tooted the flute by Carolyn Wells

Little Miss Muffet by Paul Dehn

Bickering by N.M. Bodecker

Grade Six Alternate Poetry Selections

There was an old man of Tarentum. Author Unknown

The Folk Who Live in Backward Town by Mary Ann Hoberman

The Panther by Ogden Nash

Phizzog by Carl Sandberg

Descriptive Poems

The poems "The Pickety Fence", "Mrs. Peck-Pigeon", and "Poem to Mud" contain the poetic elements of rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and repetition which appeal to children. The bobbing rhythm of the poem "Mrs. Pick-Pigeon" reinforces its content, a vivid description of a pigeon picking for bread. Farjeon creates this rhythm through the pattern of the lines, the use of words such as "bob" and "picking", and the repetition of the hard "b" and "p" sounds. The rhyming words, the rhythm, the alliteration, the repetition, and the poem's

content combine to make this poem suitable for the grade four elementary literature program.

McCord uses rhythm in his poem "The Pickety Fence" to imitate the sounds of a stick hitting a picket fence. The rhythm involves children in the action in the poem. Children enjoy the rhythmical quality of this poem created by the use of rhyming words such as "pickety", "clickety" and "lickety" and through repetition of lines. Also, the auditory images of the poem appeal to children's sense of sound.

The element of sound makes "Poem to Mud" a pleasure to hear. The appeal of the rhyming words, both internal and external, the coined words, such as "sickier" and "cooler", and the tongue-twisting quality make this poem suitable for elementary children in grade four. Snyder also makes use of imagery in this poem. She creates a vivid sensory impression of how mud looks and feels, a familiar experience for children. This poem, which appeals particularly to children's sense of touch, is well-liked.

The poem "Whispers" employs the technique of imagery to appeal to children's senses. The imagery in "Whispers" describes the familiar experience of whispering that children can relate to. The images appeal to children's senses of sound and touch. The poet's use of rhyme adds further appeal to the poem.

In the poem "On a Snowy Day", Aldis describes the fenceposts as wearing marshmallow hats. The poet's use of

personification allows children to view a familiar aspect of nature in a new, fresh way. Children in grade four respond to the figurative language in this poem since it is based upon familiar objects.

Morrison's contemporary poem "The Sidewalk Racer" or "On the Skateboard" is an example of free verse. Children need to become aware of the fact that not all poetry rhymes. Familiar content helps to make free verse more appealing to children. The subject of this poem is a popular sport with children and they can relate to the feelings associated with skateboarding.

Grade Four Core Poetry Selections

The Pickety Fence by David McCord
Mrs. Peck-Pigeon by Eleanor Farjeon
Poem to Mud by Zilpha Keatley Snyder
On a Snowy Day by Dorothy Aldis
Whispers by Myra Cohn Livingston
The Sidewalk Racer by Lillian Morrison

Grade Four Alternate Poetry Selections

Railroad Reverie by E.R. Young
Beautiful Soup by Lewis Carroll
Mean Song by Eve Merriam
Skins by Aileen Fisher
The Wind by Kaye Starbird
Sliding by Myra Cohn Livingston

The appeal of the lyrical poem "Lone Dog", suggested for study in grade five, depends to a large extent upon its rhythm and rhyme. The poem contains both internal and external rhyme, a quality children especially enjoy. The singing quality of this poem makes it one of children's favorites. The content of the poem, as well, adds to its appeal.

In the poem "Tree", Snyder uses repetition of the word "tree" to emphasize the importance of a tree. The emphasis in the poem allows children to look at a familiar object in nature in a new way, to really see a tree and not take it for granted.

"December Leaves" and "Steam Shovel" are two poems which make use of figurative language. In "Steam Shovel", Malam compares a steam shovel to a dinosaur throughout his poem. The visual images created in the poem should appeal to children. In "December Leaves", Starbird helps children to see certain aspects of nature in a different and unusual way. She uses figurative language based on familiar objects so that children can understand and relate to the comparisons. The use of rhyme and the content of these poems add to their appeal.

An eerie and mysterious mood is created by Walter de la Mare in his poem "Some One". This hushed and mysterious poem appeals to children's interests. It leaves children with feelings of mystery and wonder, since the identity of the mysterious visitor is never revealed to the reader or to the speaker. The stillness, the hush, the mystery of the visitor,

the repetition of certain words, and the auditory images help to create an eerie feeling. The poem's content, its use of rhythm, rhyme, repetition, and images of sound make it appropriate for the grade five elementary literature program.

The poem "April Rain Song", written in free verse, uses imagery to describe the rain. The images created by Hughes appeal to children's senses of sound, touch, and sight. The repetition of the quiet "s" sound helps to reinforce the poem's description of a gently falling rain. This melodic poem conveys the speaker's feelings of love for the rain. It appeals to children's feelings and relates to their familiar experiences with rain.

Grade Five Core Selections

Tree by Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Lone Dog by Irene Rutherford McLeod

Some One by Walter de la Mare

December Leaves by Kaye Starbird

Steam Shovel by Charles Malam

April Rain Song by Langston Hughes

Grade Five Alternate Selections

My Shadow by Robert Louis Stevenson

I Like It When It's Mizzly by Aileen Fisher

Rain Sizes by John Ciardi

The Toaster by William Jay Smith

Motor Cars by Rowene Bennett

Foghorns by Lilian Moore

The poem "The Wind", recommended for the literature program in grade six, is a lyrical poem. The poet's use of rhythm, rhyme, and repetition appeals to children. Stevenson uses imagery and personification to describe the wind and to help children view a common part of nature in a new way.

The short poems "Fog" and "Spill" are written in free verse. Sandburg compares the fog hanging over a city to a cat silently sitting on his haunches. This metaphorical description of the fog helps to create a quiet mood and to enable children to see fog in a different and unusual way. Thurman, too, enables children to see a common occurrence in a new way as she compares a flock of sparrows flying to a handful of change spilling from a pocket.

In his poem "City", Langston Hughes describes the city by comparing it to a bird and by personifying it.

Walter de la Mare uses repetition of the quiet "s" sound and the double "o" to reinforce the slow quiet movement and the mysterious beauty of the moon. The use of visual images, rhyme, and repetition adds to the appeal of the poem "Silver". A quiet mood is also created in Wylie's "Velvet Shoes". The images of sight, sound, and touch appropriately describe the quietness and softness of the new fallen snow. Both these poems provide a fresh insight into familiar experiences of children.

Grade Six Core Poetry Selections

Silver by Walter de la Mare
The Wind by Robert Louis Stevenson
Velvet Shoes by Elinor Wylie
The City by Langston Hughes
Spill by Judith Thurman
Fog by Carl Sandberg

Grade Six Alternate Poetry Selections

Windy Nights by Robert Louis Stevenson
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost
The Sea by James Reeves
Metaphor by Eve Merriam
Dreams by Langston Hughes
Winter Cardinal by Lilian Moore

Folk Literature

Various kinds of traditional folk literature are included in the elementary school literature program. These include myths, legends, folk tales, and fables.

The research in chapter two on the nature of the child supports the view that elementary children find folk literature interesting and enjoyable. Many features of folk literature appeal to children. They enjoy the swift dramatic action, the clearly and simply defined characters, and the

straightforward plots of myths, legends, and folk tales. The appeal of adventure and heroism makes folk tales, myths, and legends interesting to children. Children delight in animals talking and acting like humans and, so, enjoy many folk tales and fables. The magic and supernatural found in folk tales and myths hold particular appeal for children.

The rich language of folk literature is appealing to elementary children. They enjoy the dialogue, repetition, exaggeration, and unusual phrases found in folk stories. The use of imagery and figurative language appeals to children.

Traditional folk literature is a part of children's literary heritage. It provides a framework for understanding other literary works. Many literary selections contain allusions to folk literature. The structural principles, the recurring patterns and conventions of folk literature can be found again in all of literature. Discovering the significant patterns in literature helps children to see the whole of literature. By becoming familiar with the conventional forms of traditional folk literature -- myths, legends, folk tales, and fables, children gain a sense of the structure of these forms. They discover the structural patterns and symbols or archetypes found in literature, such as those of imagery, characters, themes, and story shapes.

There are many retellings or interpretations available for each folk literature selection. Particular versions or editions of fine literary merit are recommended for the

literature program developed here. However, other suitable versions can, indeed, be used.

Myths

Many aspects of myths make them an appealing and appropriate part of the literature curriculum for elementary school children. Myths are enjoyed because they are good stories containing action, suspense, and conflict. The plot is straight forward, the characters are clearly and simply defined, and the action is swift and dramatic. The elements of adventure and heroism found in myths appeal to children's reading interests. They are also interested in the magic and supernatural elements found in myths. These stories of gods and goddesses stimulate and develop children's imaginations. Children are enchanted by the wonder and beauty found in myths. The rich language, the poetry, the imagery found in myths develop the imaginations of children.

Much of literature contains mythic allusions and many of our words and phrases originate in the Greek and Norse myths. Children who are familiar with myths will be better able to enjoy and understand, to appreciate many great literary works. Children who are familiar with myths gain a sense of the structure of this form and discover the structural patterns and symbols which are found in all of literature. The recurring themes and motifs of myths are reflected in all literature throughout the ages.

There are several types of myths, including nature myths, hero myths, creation myths, and moral myths. Nature myths attempt to explain natural occurrences such as the change of seasons or the rising and setting of the sun. Natural forces are often personified and given supernatural powers. Hero myths center around the challenges and achievements of a particular hero. They are stories of adventures of the gods. Moral myths warn against the dangers or consequences of particular sins. They present a moral or lesson. Creation myths attempt to explain the beginning of the world. These myths include stories about the creation of man, the creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and the creation of earth. Many of the creation myths are too complex and abstract for elementary children. They are often mature in content and contain much symbolism and inner meanings, and so, are not appropriate for elementary children. The myths recommended for the elementary literature program developed here include nature myths, hero myths, and moral myths. Both Greek and Norse myths are included.

There are many interpretations or versions of the myths available. The best versions attempt to recreate the feelings of the original story. They are filled with rich and interesting language and with wonder, and they stimulate children's imaginations. Many of these versions are well-illustrated to reflect the story's mood and theme. The versions suggested here are recommended for their literary

quality and to meet the levels and interests of elementary children.

It is suggested that children be first introduced to the simpler but exciting myths. They can then become familiar with the longer versions of the hero myths.

The two myths suggested for study in grade four are single well-illustrated versions of simple but exciting myths. The myth Daedalus and Icarus by Penelope Farmer is suitable for the younger elementary children. This version is clearly and simply written and is not too long. Children should be delighted in this fast-moving dramatic tale of adventure. The story of Daedalus and his son, Icarus should enchant children.

The great Greek architect and engineer, Daedalus, is forced to leave Athens and flee to Crete after having killed his nephew, Talus, when the boy's great skill had threatened him. Daedalus takes his son, Icarus, with him. While on the island of Crete, King Minos has Daedalus design and build a labyrinth to hold the monster, Minotaur, and his victims. King Minos did not want Daedalus and Icarus to escape for fear his secret labyrinth would become known. The proud and confident Daedalus invents a way to escape by flight. As they make their escape, his son attempts to soar like the gods. This defiance, this proud and reckless behavior, angers the gods. The wax on Icarus's wings melts as he flies too close to the sun and he plunges to his death.

The myth Pegasus is the story of the winged horse, Pegasus, and his proud and arrogant rider, Bellerophon. Bellerophon's excessive pride and defiance angers the gods and leads to his death. Krystyna Turska provides rich descriptive details which vividly bring alive this exciting myth.

Grade Four Core Myths

Daedalus and Icarus by Penelope Farmer, illustrated by Chris Conner.

Pegasus by Krystyna Turska.

Grade Four Alternate Myths

The Golden Touch by Nathaniel Hawthorne, illustrated by Paul Galdone.

"Athena" in Book of Greek Myths by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire.

The myth of Demeter and Persephone is available in many versions. The story of Persephone, goddess of springtime, is told in a clear simple style by Penelope Proddow. The language is rich and filled with imagery. This well-known nature myth is recommended here for children in grade five. The suspense and excitement appeal to children's interests. Children's imaginations are stimulated by the wonder and beauty of this myth.

The myth Demeter and Persephone explains the seasonal changes which occur in nature. It is the story of Demeter, goddess of earth, and her daughter, Persephone, goddess of

springtime. Persephone is taken by the god of the underworld, Hades, to be his bride. A wide search is carried out by Persephone's grieving mother, Demeter. Winter falls over the earth while Demeter mourns her loss, but with the return of Persephone comes spring again. However, Persephone must return to Hades for four months each year. The theme of this myth, the cycle of the seasons, recurs in many literary works.

One of the most popular Norse myths is the story of Balder. A single edition of this myth, Balder and the Mistletoe: A Story for the Winter Holidays, retold by Edna Barth, is an appropriate version for grade five children. The story develops around Balder, the god of light and joy. Of all the Norse gods and goddesses, the favorite was Balder.

Grade Five Core Myths

Demeter and Persephone translated by Penelope Proddow, illustrated by Barbara Cooney.

Balder and the Mistletoe: A Story for the Winter Holidays by Edna Barth, illustrated by Richard Cuffari.

Grade Five Alternate Myths

Phaëthon by Merrill Pollack, illustrated by William Hofmann.

"The Death of Balder" in Norse Gods and Giants by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire.

The Gorgon's Head is the story of Perseus, one of the great well-known Greek heroes. The version by Margaret Hodges is written in clear prose. Having been introduced to the

simpler myths in grades four and five, the slightly longer and more difficult hero myths, such as the tale of Perseus, is appropriate for children in grade six. The elements of adventure and heroism found in this myth appeal to elementary children's interests. The heroic deeds and actions of Perseus should intrigue children. The wonder and magic found in this myth appeal to children's imaginations.

In The Gorgon's Head, Perseus sets out on a daring quest to bring back the head of Medusa, a Gorgon with hair of snakes who would turn to stone anyone who looked upon her. Perseus overcomes the obstacles he encounters with the help of the goddess Athena and the god Hermes. He succeeds in cutting off Medusa's head. On his return trip home he rescues Andromeda, a beautiful girl, from a dangerous sea monster. He becomes king and makes Andromeda his queen on his arrival home. This journey involving a daring quest, an accomplishment, and a return home is an archetype found in most hero myths.

Clashing Rocks: The Story of Jason is the narrative of Jason's quest for the golden fleece which he needs in order to claim his rightful kingdom. Ian Serrailier's version is a well-written and vivid retelling of this familiar Greek hero tale. The style is rich with superb imagery. This myth tells the story of how Jason was reared on Mount Pelion, of his travel in the Argo, of his successful attempt to take the golden fleece, and of his adventurous but safe return home.

Grade Six Core Myths

The Gorgon's Head by Margaret Hodges, illustrated by Charles Mikolaycak.

Clashing Rocks: The Story of Jason by Ian Serraillier, illustrated by William Stobbs.

Grade Six Alternate Myths

The Way of Danger: The Story of Theseus by Ian Serraillier, illustrated by William Stobbs.

Heracles, The Strong by Ian Serraillier, illustrated by Rocco Negri.

Fables

Elementary children find fables interesting since the characters are usually animals, one of children's preferred reading interests. The fact that these animals talk and act like human beings adds to children's enjoyment of fables. Children find fables appealing since they are brief stories. The plot of a fable is usually based on one event. The characters are few and are not personalized; they are not given names. A moral or lesson is implied or stated in each fable. Children enjoy figuring out what the moral is and applying it to human behavior.

In a fable, the good characters are usually rewarded. That is, animals with desirable characteristics such as honesty and industry are portrayed as the winners. The evil characters are often punished in fables. Animals with

undesirable characteristics such as greed and jealousy are looked upon as the losers. They are often laughed at. Hence, fables appeal to children's sense of justice.

Since fables are brief, they may be considered a very simple form of literature. This is misleading, as fables attempt to make an important point, to comment on human nature and so are more complicated stories than they appear on the surface.

The above point needs to be considered when selecting fables for elementary children. Versions which are complicated and too difficult for children to understand should be avoided. Rather, versions containing rich language and illustrations are more appropriate. Many editions of fables are well-illustrated and contain vivid details. The illustrations are sometimes humorous, adding to the enjoyment of fables.

The fables recommended here for the elementary literature program include those of Aesop and La Fontaine as well as some fables from India. Children are first introduced to the simplest fables and then to slightly more complex fables.

Barbara Cooney has adapted and illustrated the fable Chanticleer and the Fox based on "The Nun's Priest's Tale" from Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer. Cooney's version is written in a rhythmical and humorous prose style. The text is simple enough for children in grade four. The rich language and illustrations bring alive the proud rooster who

learns not to place any trust in the flattery of the sly fox. The plot develops around the conflict between the rooster, Chanticleer, and the fox. The crafty fox tricks Chanticleer through the use of flattery and captures him. In the end, however, Chanticleer outwits the wicked fox and learns a lesson.

The simple style and the humor of the La Fontaine fable, The Miller, the Boy, and the Donkey make it appealing to grade four children. The story involves a poor miller and his son who try to please everybody. They cannot decide whose advice to accept as they travel to market with their donkey.

Marcia Brown's Once a Mouse is a fable of India. The moral of this fable is that one should not have too much self-pride. The plot of the fable centers around a small frightened mouse who is rescued from a crow by a hermit and transformed into larger and still larger animals including a cat, a dog, and a tiger. However, his increasing pride in himself results in his own downfall and the tiger is changed back to a mouse.

Grade Four Core Fables

Chanticleer and the Fox by Geoffrey Chaucer, adapted and illustrated by Barbara Cooney.

The Miller, the Boy, and the Donkey by Jean de la Fontaine, illustrated by Brian Wildsmith.

Once a Mouse by Marcia Brown.

Grade Four Alternate Fables

The Lion and the Mouse, illustrated by Ed Young.

The Hare and the Tortoise by Jean de la Fontaine, illustrated by Brian Wildsmith.

The Monkey and the Crocodile by Paul Galdone.

The fables suggested here for study in grades five and six are Aesop's fables. There are several editions of Aesop's fables suitable for elementary children. One such edition, containing forty of Aesop's fables, is Louis Untermeyer's Aesop's Fables.

These fables, lively and full of humor, hold great appeal for elementary children. This popular collection of fables is colorfully illustrated by Alice and Martin Provensen with large animal cartoon-figures. Humorous comments about the fables are provided in a conversational style by these cartoon-animals.

Another popular edition of Aesop's fables is Joseph Jacobs' The Fables of Aesop. His version remains true to the original Aesop fables. This collection contains over eighty Aesop fables and is well-illustrated by David Levine.

Two other editions include Fables from Aesop, adapted by James Reeves, and Aesop's Fables, retold by Anne Terry White. Reeves has introduced a conversational style and added descriptive phrases to fifty of Aesop's fables. Anne Terry White has retold forty of these well-known fables in a simple, contemporary style. The fables suggested for grade six are

a little more complex than those for grade five. Their morals are more subtle and difficult to comprehend.

Grade Five Core Fables

The Ant and the Grasshopper.

The Dog and the Shadow.

The Crow and the Pitcher.

Grade Five Alternate Fables

The Fox and the Crow.

The Frog and the Ox.

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse.

Grade Six Core Fables

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.

The Fox and the Grapes.

The Jay and the Peacocks.

Grade Six Alternate Fables

The Milkmaid and Her Pail.

The Dog in the Manger.

The Eagle and the Arrow.

Folktales

The folktale is another type of folk literature included in the elementary school literature program developed here. Folktales are good stories containing elements of suspense, adventure, heroism, and romance which appeal to elementary school children. Children's imaginations are stirred by the exciting incidents and by the wonder found in folktales. Through folktales, children experience an imaginary world where wonderful and unusual things happen. Characters are usually representative of good or evil. Children are satisfied when good overcomes evil, when the courageous, the just, and the kind are rewarded.

The language of folktales is rich with rhythm, repetition, poetry, unusual phrases, and figurative language. Children's interest is quickly achieved and maintained in folktales. This is accomplished through a brief introduction, a swift flow of action, and an appropriate conclusion.

A variety of themes and motifs are represented in folktales. The power of love to overcome evil is one such theme. Certain motifs such as magical powers or long sleeps recur throughout many folktales.

Folktales cover a variety of types from the simpler cumulative tales, such as The House That Jack Built to the longer fairy tales, such as Beauty and the Beast. The recommended selections include a variety of types of folktales including fairy tales, pourquoi stories, and beast tales.

The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship is a lively Russian folktale taken from Old Peter's Russian Tales. Arthur Ransome has retold this tale with illustrations by Uri Shulevitz. This tale of magical powers and the evil wizard, Koshchei, should enchant elementary children in grade four. Children's imaginations are stirred as they read of how the youngest son, a poor peasant, outsmarts the dangerous and wicked Tsar to win the princess and marry her. He is aided in his quest by a group of companions, each of whom holds a magical power. The foolish but kindhearted son is also aided by a little old man who rewards him with a magical ship. This common motif of magical powers and objects recurs in many folktales.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, a Grimm fairy tale, is recommended here for grade four. This famous German folk tale of a wicked step-mother, a lovely young girl, dwarfs, romance, and magic should appeal to elementary children.

Grade Four Core Folktales

The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship retold by Arthur Ransome, illustrated by Uri Shulevitz.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs by Grimm Brothers, translated by Randall Jarrell, illustrated by Nancy Ekholm Burkert.

Grade Four Alternate Folktales

Soldier and Tsar in the Forest: A Russian Tale by Alexander Afanasyev, translated by Richard Lourie, illustrated by Uri Shulevitz.

The Sleeping Beauty by Grimm Brothers, retold and illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman.

The Fire Bringer is a native American folktale. Grade five children are quickly absorbed in this exciting nature tale of a young Paiute Indian boy who, with the help of his friend, Coyote, sets out to get fire for the Paiutes. Through their intelligence, swiftness, and courage they are successful in their dangerous quest and return fire from the Burning Mountain. This Indian tale explains not only how the Paiute Indian tribe obtained fire but also how the coyote received his markings on his fur.

Beauty and the Beast is a tale of magic and wonder. This French folk tale contains the very common motif of magical transformations. The handsome prince is transformed into a beast by the evil witch. This wicked enchantment is broken by a compassionate and loving girl, Beauty, who loves the beast for himself. Children in grade five are still fascinated and their imaginations are stimulated by this fairy tale of magic, love, romance, and beauty. The rich prose used by Philippa Pearce and the mysterious paintings by Alan Barnett add to the appeal of this book.

Grade Five Core Folktales

The Fire Bringer by Margaret Hodges, illustrated by Peter Parnell.

Beauty and the Beast by Marie Leprince de Beaumont, retold by Philippa Pearce, illustrated by Alan Barrett.

Grade Five Alternate Folktales

The Loon's Necklace by William Toye, illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver.

"East o'the Sun and West o'the Moon" in East o'the Sun and West o'the Moon by Peter Christian Asbjornsen and Jorgen Moe.

The Story of Prince Ivan, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf

is a more complicated Russian wonder tale recommended for grade six. Prince Ivan, the youngest son, sets out on a quest to find the firebird. He has many tasks to complete but is successful against all obstacles. After being murdered by his two evil brothers, he is brought back to life with the help of the gray wolf. Ivan triumphs in the end to win the lovely Princess Elena. The magic, the wonder, and the fascinating plot help make this folktale appealing to grade six students.

The Eskimo folktale, Akavak, is suggested here for study in grade six. The hero, Akavak, displays courage as he and his grandfather try to survive the hardships and difficulties of a long journey. Children should enjoy this dramatic tale of courage and survival.

Grade Six Core Folktales

The Story of Prince Ivan, the Firebird and the Gray Wolf
translated by Thomas P. Whitney, illustrated by Nonny
Hogrogian.

Akavak: An Eskimo Journey by James Houston.

Grade Six Alternate Folktales

The Three Princes of Serendip by Elizabeth J. Hodges,
illustrated by Joan Berg.

Tikta Likta: An Eskimo Legend by James Houston.

Epics and Legends

The appeal of legends and epics for elementary children is most obviously shown by their love of the stories of Robin Hood. The elements of adventure, heroism, and suspense found in legends and epics make this type of folk literature very appropriate for elementary school children. Children enjoy stories with lots of action and clearly defined characters and, so, they delight in reading legends and epics. Children's imaginations are stimulated as they experience the life of a legendary hero who lived in another time.

Epics and legends center around the life and accomplishments of a particular human hero such as King Arthur or Robin Hood. Such characters are usually national heroes and usually represent ideal heroic characteristics. Robin Hood, for example, represents justice and freedom.

Legends and epics are available in collections and in single editions. The simpler editions of single episodes seem more appropriate for the younger elementary children. The older elementary children can be exposed to the more difficult versions of the legendary and epic heroes. The epics and legends recommended for the literature program developed here include tales of King Arthur, Robin Hood, and Finn MacCool, as well as episodes from the Odyssey.

Recommended for the grade four literature program developed here are single well-illustrated editions of episodes from the legends and epics. Children are intrigued by the story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. They enjoy the fascinating tale of Sir Gawain, one of King Arthur's knights, who is challenged by an enemy. The elements of suspense, mystery, and adventure which are present in this story make it interesting for elementary children. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, a short adventure story, is a good introduction for grade four children to the legend of King Arthur.

Taliesin and King Arthur is well-written and illustrated by Ruth Robbins. The story of the young Welsh poet, Taliesin, who comes to King Arthur's court to enter a contest, is told in a rich poetic style. Taliesin entertains and greatly pleases King Arthur with his songs and storytelling and, so, is honored by the King as the greatest. Children in grade

four should enjoy this story about Taliesin's experiences at King Arthur's court.

Grade Four Core Epics and Legends

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight by Selina Hastings, illustrated by Juan Wijngaard.

Taliesin and King Arthur by Ruth Robbins.

Grade Four Alternate Epics and Legends

The Kitchen Knight by Barbara Schiller, illustrated by Nonny Hogrogian.

The Joy of the Court by Constance Hieatt, illustrated by Pauline Baynes.

Children in grade five enjoy the adventures of the legendary hero, Robin Hood. Howard Pyle's popular version The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood provides children with many adventurous tales of this favorite hero of Sherwood Forest. The daring and funny escapades of Robin Hood and his merry outlaws are appealing to elementary children. Any of these tales about Robin Hood, Little John, Alan A Dale, or Friar Tuck are suitable for children in grade five. The two tales suggested here for study are stories about Allan A Dale and Little John.

Grade Five Core Epics and Legends

"How Robin Hood Came To Be An Outlaw" and "Robin Hood and Allan A Dale" in The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood by Howard Pyle.

Grade Five Alternate Epics and Legends

"Little John and the Tanner of Blyth" and "King Richard comes to Sherwood Forest" in The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood by Howard Pyle.

The Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer by Alfred Church contains well-written prose versions of the epics, in the Iliad and the Odyssey. Children should enjoy the exciting tales of the brave and clever Odysseus or Ulysses as he makes his way from Troy to his home. The tale of the Trojan War, fought between the Greeks and the Trojans, should also hold excitement for children in grade six.

The legend of the well-known Irish hero, Finn MacCool, is recommended here for the grade six literature program. Rosemary Sutcliff has written a vivid account of the adventures of Finn in The High Deeds of Finn MacCool. Children experience the heroic actions of Finn, including how he defeats Aileen of the Flaming Breath. The daring and dangerous adventures of Finn come alive for children in this Fenian legend.

Grade Six Core Epics and Legends

"The Cyclops" in The Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer by Alfred Church.

The High Deeds of Finn MacCool by Rosemary Sutcliff, illustrated by Michael Charlton.

Grade Six Alternate Epics and Legends

"The Duel of Paris and Menelaus" in The Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer by Alfred Church.

The Hound of Ulster by Rosemary Sutcliff, illustrated by Victor Ambrus.

Fantasy

Fantasy is an important genre in the elementary school literature program. As shown by the research in chapter two on the nature of the child, books of fantasy appeal to elementary children and are among their favourites. Elementary children are imaginative and playful and, so, they enjoy the imaginative and unusual elements and the playful manipulations found in fantasy. They delight in the humour, the strange and funny characters, the funny situations, and the word play which are provided in fantasy.

Fantasy challenges and develops children's imaginations. It provides new insights into human nature. It appeals to children's sense of inquisitiveness. Fantasy says something about the meaning of life, it presents some universal truth. New perspectives into reality are provided by fantasy. Fantasy broadens children's experiences. It provides children with new, otherwise impossible experiences. It allows them to dream and to create strange new worlds. Fantasy appeals to children's sense of wonder. They delight in the strange, new, and unusual characters and worlds created in fantasy.

The animals, the mystery, the magic, the suspense, the adventure, and the humor which are so often found in books of fantasy are qualities of elementary children's preferred reading. They add to the appeal of fantasy for children. The language of fantasy appeals to children. It is often metaphorical and imagistic, making a strong appeal to children's imaginations, emotions, and senses. The language sometimes contains strange, new names.

Elementary children are able to accept the special demands made by fantasy. They are easily able to suspend disbelief, to believe in the unbelievable. Elementary children are also capable of distinguishing the real from the imaginary. Fantasy can actually strengthen children's understanding of reality as they compare the real world to the fantastic world.

Fantasy includes stories of imaginary kingdoms, animal stories, adventure stories, time fantasies, stories of little people, stories of the supernatural, stories of good versus evil, and others. There are many fine examples of fantasy books available for elementary children. The selections recommended represent some of the best fantasy in children's literature. These selections contain elements of fantasy, such as talking animals or imaginary worlds. As well, each selection presents some worthwhile theme or universal truth. The plot of each fantasy is consistent and creative. The characters, the setting, the conflicts, and the theme of each

fantasy are quite believable so that the reader is able to suspend disbelief.

One of the most popular fantasies for young children is the animal fantasy Charlotte's Web. Children in grade four are delighted by this compassionate and sometimes funny story of friendship, sacrifice, and love written by E.B. White. They are fascinated by the story of a young girl, Fern, who is able to understand the communication between the animals on the Zuckerman farm. Wilbur, the humble pig, and Charlotte, his loyal and true friend, are loved by children. Wilbur is destined to be slaughtered, but the resourceful and intelligent Charlotte comes up with an unusual plan to save him. She writes great messages about Wilbur in her web which not only save him but bring him fame at an animal fair. Wilbur is not able to save Charlotte from a natural death, but he does take great care of her egg sac which she leaves behind and begins a friendship with some of her children.

The characterization of each animal in Charlotte's Web is well developed by White. Each character is vividly brought alive. Children are introduced to convincing and unforgettable animal characters who are able to talk--Wilbur, the lonely and silly pig, Charlotte, the beautiful gray spider who proves to be an understanding and faithful friend to Wilbur, and Templeton, the selfish barnyard rat who is without morals. The vividly detailed descriptions of the setting allow children to vicariously experience the barnyard. The

significant themes of the power of love and friendship and the cycle of life and death are well developed in this outstanding fantasy.

The second fantasy suggested here for the grade four literature program is Mary Norton's The Borrowers. This is a suspenseful and humorous fantasy about the Clocks, a family of tiny people living under an old grandfather clock in an old country house in England. The things they need to survive are "borrowed" from the ordinary humans living in the house. This can be dangerous since there is the chance of being discovered. Arrietty, the daughter, makes friends with a human boy while she is on an excursion with her father to "borrow" things. The story ends with the borrowers having to flee their home after having been discovered. The human boy helps them to escape.

The Borrowers has great appeal for elementary children. The miniature world which exists beneath the floor is intriguing. The vivid details that describe the Borrower's home and their activities stimulate children's imaginations. Children are able to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of this tiny world beneath the clock. They quickly become involved in the lives of these little people and share their joys, their sorrows, and their fears.

The portrayal of each member of the Clock family of Borrowers is unforgettable for children. Pod, the father, is realistically depicted as a brave realist, and Homily, the

mother, is seen as a loving person but a constant worrier. The most memorable character of all is Arrietty, the daughter, portrayed as a happy, fearless, and trusting individual who wants to explore the world. The Borrowers is a convincing fantasy told mainly through the eyes of six inch high Arrietty. The characters are believable, the setting is authentic, and the themes of survival and the value of family life are worthwhile.

Grade Four Core Fantasy Selections

Charlotte's Web by E.B. White, illustrated by Garth Williams.

The Borrowers by Mary Norton, illustrated by Beth and Joe Krush.

Grade Four Alternate Fantasy Selections

Rabbit Hill by Robert Lawson.

The Gammage Cup by Carol Kendall, illustrated by Erik Blegvad.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is the first of the Narnia stories, a fantasy series by C.S. Lewis. While staying at an old country house, four English children, Lucy, Susan, Edmund, and Peter walk through a door in the back of a wardrobe and enter the enchanted and mysterious land of Narnia. The cold, snow covered world of Narnia is under the spell of the wicked White Witch. The children experience great adventures in their attempts to help the rightful ruler,

the lion Aslan, break the witch's spell and free Narnia and its inhabitants. Spring returns to Narnia as the evil forces are defeated. The children are crowned Kings and Queens of Narnia by the noble lion King Aslan.

In the literature program developed here, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is recommended for grade five. Elementary children should find this exciting fantasy very appealing. They should be intrigued by the suspense and mystery of this great fantasy filled with lots of adventure. The detailed setting provided by Lewis brings the imaginary and mythical kingdom of Narnia to life. Children imaginatively enter this strange magical world of Narnia where talking animals and mythological creatures, such as mymphs and minotaurs, exist. They become involved in the great conflict between the evil White Witch and the good lion Aslan. The significant theme of good overcoming evil is a recurring theme in many great works of fantasy.

The suspenseful and mysterious fantasy, A Stranger Came Ashore, is based on the Selkie Folk legends of the Shetland Islands. According to legend, the Selkie Folk are seals who can take the form of humans. The story opens with a handsome stranger, Finn Learson, appearing at the home of Robbie Henderson one night after a shipwreck. Twelve year old Robbie and his grandfather, Old Da, suspect that all is not right with this stranger. When his grandfather dies, Robbie is left to discover the real identity of the stranger. With the help

of a mad schoolmaster, Yarl Corbie, Robbie learns that Finn Learson is the Great Selkie. He is determined to protect his sister, Elspeth, from Learson's evil intentions to lure her to the world of the Selkie Folk at the bottom of the sea. During a suspenseful struggle of good against evil, Robbie defeats the Selkie Folk and saves his sister.

A Stranger Came Ashore, recommended here for the grade five literature program, is a fantasy which should enthrall children. Mollie Hunter creates an atmosphere of eeriness and suspense which catches and maintains children's interest and brings the setting to life. The sense of mystery and evil surrounding the stranger should intrigue elementary children. The elements of folklore, the legends, the mythic quality, the supernatural creatures and events contribute to the appeal of this fantasy. The characters of Robbie Henderson and Finn Learson are quite believable and children become totally involved in the struggle between the evil Selkie Folk and the heroic young boy. The recurring theme of good versus evil is an important and satisfying theme for children.

Grade Five Core Fantasy Selections

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis,
illustrated by Pauline Baynes.

A Stranger Came Ashore by Mollie Hunter.

Grade Five Alternate Fantasy Selections

Over Sea, Under Stone by Susan Cooper.

The Haunted Mountain: A Story of Suspense by Mollie Hunter,
illustrated by Laszly Kubinyi.

A Wrinkle in Time, a fantasy of space and time, is about the adventures of twelve year old Meg Murray, her five year old brother, Charles Wallace and her friend, Calvin, as they travel through space into another world using a tesseract or a wrinkle in time. Meg's and Charles's father, a scientist, has mysteriously disappeared and the three children set out on an incredible journey to find him. Three very unusual characters, Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which, who have supernatural powers, aid them in their quest. As they travel in a mysterious and strange world, Meg, Charles, and Calvin encounter many evil powers, including the fearful "IT", which they must overcome. Meg's father is finally rescued from imprisonment on the evil planet, Camazotz, and they all tesseract safely back to their own world on Earth.

The outstanding fantasy, A Wrinkle in Time, should hold great appeal for children in grade six. Children become involved in the exciting plot filled with action and suspense. Their imaginations are stretched as they experience the adventures of Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin in their constant struggle against evil and hate. L'Engle's ability to portray memorable characters also adds to children's enjoyment of this fantasy. Meg, a stubborn, independent, and

brave young girl, Charles Wallace, her extremely intelligent young brother, and Calvin, her dependable friend are unique, unforgettable characters. The theme of the power of love to conquer evil is a familiar theme to many children. The theme is well developed in this well-written fantasy by L'Engle.

J.R.R. Tolkien introduces children to the small creatures of Middle-Earth in his outstanding fantasy The Hobbit. Bilbo Baggins, a rather quiet respectable hobbit, embarks on a dangerous journey when he is tricked into helping the wizard Gandalf to recover the gold stolen from thirteen dwarfs by the evil dragon Smaug. Bilbo, accustomed to a comfortable home and a peaceful life, is reluctant to do anything out of the ordinary. During the perilous quest he encounters evil creatures such as Follum and does many unexpected things. He saves the lives of his companions and discovers some new things about himself as he demonstrates resourcefulness, determination, self-sacrifice, and courage. In the end, Bilbo emerges as a hero and returns to his home in Hobbiton to live happily.

The Hobbit is a classic fantasy loved by many children. The adventures of the little creatures who dwell in Middle-Earth enthrall children. Children imaginatively enter this strange new world of dwarfs, elves, and hobbits. The detailed setting and well-depicted characters seem real and believable. The setting and characters are described in vivid detail. Tolkien's creation and use of special languages for the

different characters in Middle-Earth help to bring this new world to life. The rich language filled with riddles and chants appeals to children. Children are fascinated by the exciting adventures of Bilbo, a unique and lovable character. They become involved in his struggle against evil, his battles with the goblins, and his terrifying encounters with strange creatures. This timid, loyal, and heroic hobbit is very appealing to children. Humorous qualities contribute to the appeal of The Hobbit. Tolkien has invented appropriate names for the characters and places. Children find these names funny and unusual.

The Hobbit contains many folklore elements. The recurring theme of good overcoming evil, a common theme in folklore, is superbly developed by Tolkien. This fantasy is the story of a successful heroic quest for stolen treasure. The Kingdom of Middle-Earth is inhabited by many mythical creatures, such as clever dwarfs, evil dragons, elves, and wizards. Also, magic and enchantment are found in this story.

Grade Six Core Fantasy Selections

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle.

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Grade Six Alternate Core Fantasy Selections

The White Mountains by John Christopher.

A Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula LeGuin, illustrated by Ruth Robbins.

Historical Fiction

Books of historical fiction contain many features that elementary children find enjoyable. Children are very interested in stories containing adventure, action, and suspense. Books of historical fiction are filled with appealing adventures. Historical fiction stimulates children's imaginations as it transports them to a time in the past to experience historical events and to meet characters from the past. It enables children to relive a significant part of a period in history. It recreates the atmosphere of another time and place. It brings the past alive, enlarging and enriching children's views of the past. Historical fiction provides children with a new perspective on humanity as human conditions and experiences of the past are brought alive.

Books of historical fiction recreate different historical periods from prehistoric times to the middle ages to the time of World War II. The selections recommended for the elementary literature program discussed here represent a variety of historical periods including pioneer days, World War II, eighteenth century England, civil war in the U.S., and medieval England. The suggested historical fiction selections are, most importantly, examples of fine quality children's literature. They are good stories with exciting plots, well-developed realistic characters, and basic themes. Furthermore, each book recreates a clear image of some

historical period. The detailed and authentic setting brings the characters and events alive. Each book is accurate in its historical facts and in its depiction of life in a particular historical period. The characters are unique and believable and their actions and experiences reflect the historical period in which they live. The plot of each book is plausible and the conflicts are appropriate to the particular time and place in history. Each theme is worthwhile and recurs in many fine works of literature.

Little House in the Big Woods is the first in a series of books about the Ingalls, a pioneer family. The life of the Ingalls family living in a log house on the Wisconsin frontier in the 1870's is realistically depicted by young Laura Ingalls. Laura, her two sisters, Mary and Carrie, and her parents share a close family relationship. Together they work and play and face the hardships of pioneer living.

Laura Ingalls Wilder provides an accurate and detailed picture of pioneer life in America. Through her rich descriptions of the setting, elementary children can imaginatively live in a pioneer environment. They can experience the warmth and security of a loving pioneer family. Children can feel the courage and determination of a strong hard-working family in pioneer days. The Ingalls family is realistically portrayed. Elementary children, especially, identify with the well-developed character of Laura. Little House in the Big Woods, with its emphasis on the love and

courage of a pioneer family, should be of great interest to elementary children and is recommended here for grade four.

Judith Kerr provides children with a story of a Jewish family's escape from Germany in 1933 in When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit. As Anna and her family flee Germany before World War II they are forced to leave behind many possessions including a pink rabbit. They travel to Switzerland to join Anna's father, a newspaper journalist, who had escaped before he could be arrested for writing articles expressing views against the Nazis. The escape of Anna's family is a close one for all their possessions in Germany are claimed by the Nazi government soon after. The family moves on from Switzerland to France and then to England, not really belonging to any one place.

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit is a moving story which should appeal to elementary children. Children follow Anna and her family in their flight from Germany to Switzerland and then on to other countries. Children experience the family's fear and suspicion of being persecuted. They share their difficulties in living as refugees from Germany. They admire the courage shown by Anna and her family living in fear and danger. The importance of family life and of the family staying together adds further appeal to this book. The authentic details of this story of escape from Germany is based on Kerr's personal experiences.

Grade Four Core Historical Fiction Selections

Little House in the Big Woods by Laura Ingalls Wilder, illustrated by Garth Williams.

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by Judith Kerr.

Grade Four Alternate Historical Fiction Selections

Carolina's Courage by Elizabeth Yates, illustrated by Nora H. Unwin.

The House of Sixty Fathers by Meindert DeJong, illustrated by Maurice Sendak.

Caddie Woodlawn depicts the life of a young girl, Caddie, and her family in the 1860's. The adventures of tomboy Caddie and her two brothers on the Wisconsin frontier provide an exciting story of pioneer days. Caddie spends many hours playing with her brothers. She is always looking for fun and adventure in life. Caddie is friendly with the Indians and warns her friend Indian John about a planned attack she had overheard. As a result, a threatened uprising is stopped.

This book allows children to imaginatively experience the adventures and escapades of a young girl in pioneer times. The character of Caddie is quite appealing to elementary children. Caddie is realistically portrayed as an independent, strong-willed, and courageous young girl. Children share in her fun and adventure as well as in her growing up and accepting responsibility. When Caddie gives up her tomboy life and agrees to become a lady, this is a reflection of the period in which she lives.

The Door in the Wall is the story of Robin, a ten year old crippled boy living in England during the thirteenth century. Robin falls ill and his legs are paralysed. Robin is all alone for his father is at war and the servants have abandoned him. Robin is found and cared for by Brother Luke who teaches him many things. He helps Robin to regain his strength and courage. Robin overcomes his unhappiness and learns to accept his handicap. He learns how to swim and how to use his hands and his mind. When the castle in which he stays is under siege by the Welsh, Robin escapes to get help. He proves to himself that he is an important and worthwhile person.

This is a well-written book of historical fiction depicting life in medieval London. Children in grade five should enjoy the wonderful story of Robin, a realistic and heroic character. de Angeli has portrayed a courageous and strong character who overcomes a problem and who appeals to children.

Grade Five Core Historical Fiction Selections

Caddie Woodlawn by Carol Ryrie Brink, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman.

The Door in the Wall by Marguerite de Angeli.

Grade Five Alternate Historical Fiction Selections

Trouble River by Betsy Byars.

The Witch's Brat by Rosemary Sutcliff.

Smith is the story of a twelve year old pickpocket in seventeenth century England. The adventures of Smith place him in dangerous and at times funny situations. After robbing a man of a document he witnesses the murder of this man. Smith encounters many dangerous characters who are searching for this stolen document.

This intriguing and fast-paced book is recommended here for the older elementary children. The elements of adventure, suspense, and mystery make Smith very appealing to grade six children. Children are fascinated by the character of Smith. This unusual hero is realistically and vividly portrayed by Garfield. The depiction of life and the conditions in underworld eighteenth century London is accurate and authentic. Because of Garfield's vivid descriptions and creation of mood and atmosphere, children are able to imaginatively live on the streets of London in the eighteenth century.

Across Five Aprils is the story of the Creighton family during the Civil War. To nine year old Jethro Creighton, the youngest son, the war seems wonderful and full of glory. He watches his two brothers go to fight on opposite sides in the war and he is left with much of the responsibility for looking after their southern Illinois farm. Jethro's ideas about the war change as he and his family experience so much pain during the years of the Civil War. Jethro's brother in the Union Army is reported dead. The fact that his brother, Billy,

joined the Confederate Army has upset some people who contaminate the Creighton well and burn the barn. Jethro's father has a heart attack. Jethro has to take on the responsibility of a man before his childhood is over. When the war is finally ended, fourteen year old Jethro is able to continue his education as he desperately longs to do.

Through Irene Hunt's vivid depiction of scenes and characters, elementary children are able to experience the impact of the Civil War on family life. The pain and struggle of the Creighton family are realistically depicted. Each member of the family is vividly portrayed but the character of Jethro is especially memorable. Children share Jethro's pain and sorrow and his happiness at the end when it seems as if his wish for an education will happen. This book of historical fiction brings alive the events of the Civil War. Authentic details of the battles and campaigns are provided by Hunt. Across Five Aprils is recommended here for grade six.

Grade Six Core Historical Fiction Selections

Smith by Leon Garfield, illustrated by Antony Maitland.

Across Five Aprils by Irene Hunt.

Grade Six Alternate Historical Fiction Selections

To Ravensprigg by Hester Burton.

My Brother Sam Is Dead by James and Christopher Collier.

Modern Realistic Fiction

The content of the elementary school literature program recommended here also includes modern realistic fiction. Children in the elementary school are very interested in books of realistic fiction. They especially enjoy stories containing adventure, mystery, suspense, and humour and stories about animals and heroes. Realistic fiction stretches children's imaginations. It broadens or expands their experiences. Children are able to experience things they never experienced before. They can travel to new places, meet new characters, and experience new adventures. Realistic fiction can provide children with a new perspective on life. Children can look upon themselves and humanity with new insights. They can see events and happenings in a new light.

Books of realistic fiction cover a wide variety of topics. The selections recommended for the elementary literature program include animal stories, mystery stories, adventure stories, humorous stories, and stories about family life, growing up, friendships, and coping with problems. These selections represent works of fine literary quality. They are stories with well-constructed plots which could possibly happen. They are stories with realistic settings and worthwhile themes. The characters are well-developed and believable.

The funny predicaments in which Homer finds himself are presented in Homer Price. Homer, living in the small midwestern town of Centerburg, gets involved in some hilarious situations such as catching burglars with a pet skunk and trying to stop his uncle's doughnut machine from producing doughnuts. Homer's solutions to problems show his cleverness and perceptiveness.

The humorous adventures of Homer make this book very appealing to young elementary children in grade four. Children enjoy the humorous predicaments and Homer's clever solutions. The author's portrayal of midwestern small town life is very convincing. His depiction of the main character is true to life. Homer is a unique individual who is very appealing to children. Children should thoroughly enjoy this humorous realistic story.

Sheila Burnford provides the story of three heroic animals in The Incredible Journey. An old English bull terrier, a young Labrador retriever, and a Siamese cat travel across 250 miles of Canadian wilderness to get to their home. The animals had become homesick while staying with another family. The exciting adventures of these three house pets in their incredible journey through the wilderness of north-western Ontario are realistically described by the author. Along the way they encounter many hazards. They become lost, encounter storms, battle with a bear, meet unfriendly people,

become tired and hungry, and face other problems in the hostile wilderness.

The Incredible Journey provides children with the experience of crossing the Canadian wilderness with the retriever, the cat, and the terrier. The author's vivid descriptions of the realistic setting and of the three heroic animals help to bring alive this incredible journey. Children enjoy the elements of adventure and suspense. Each of the animal characters is realistically portrayed. The Siamese cat is independent and shows her characteristic temperament. The bull terrier expects people to provide food and help. The Labrador retriever, a trained hunter, leads the others. Each character is unique and appealing to children. Children experience the struggles and dangers as these three heroes attempt to survive and make it to their home. They should enjoy this original story of three loyal and responsible animals. This realistic animal story is recommended here for grade four.

Grade Four Core Realistic Fiction Selections

Homer Price by Robert McCloskey.

The Incredible Journey by Sheila Burnford, illustrated by Carl Burger.

Grade Four Alternate Realistic Fiction Selections

Henry Huggins by Beverly Cleary, illustrated by Louis Darling.

King of the Wind by Marguerite Henry, illustrated by Wesley Dennis.

E.L. Konigsburg provides children with the exciting adventures of two runaways, Claudia and her younger brother, Jamie, in From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. Claudia and Jamie Kincaid hide out in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City after having run away from home. Claudia carefully planned to take Jamie with her when she ran away from a monotonous and uneventful life because he always saved money. While living undetected in the elegant museum, Claudia and Jamie become involved in the mystery of an angel statue. Their search for the sculptor's identity leads them to Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. The children finally solve the mystery of the statue's authenticity through perseverance and cleverness. They happily return to their home in the end.

Children should enjoy this original and sometimes humorous story of two runaways hiding out in a museum. The characters are realistically portrayed, especially Claudia who is depicted as a resourceful and clever eleven year old determined to show her independence. Children find this heroine very appealing. Children can imaginatively experience the unusual and intriguing adventure of Claudia and Jamie in the Metropolitan Museum of Arts. The elements of humor,

mystery, suspense, and adventure add to the appeal of this great book.

The Bridge to Terabithia is the story of a friendship which develops between Jess and Leslie. Terabithia is Leslie's and Jess's secret place, their magical world of imaginative play and learning. They spend a lot of time sharing their dreams and imaginations and forming a close friendship. They reach the secret imaginary kingdom of Terabithia by swinging on a large rope over a creek. One day Leslie has a tragic accident while visiting Terabithia alone. Jess is saddened over the death of Leslie but learns to accept it. He has hopes that his younger sister will share the magical kingdom of Terabithia with him and so he builds a new bridge and leads her across.

The characters of Jess and Leslie should appeal to children. Children become involved in the lives of these two friends and enter the magical kingdom of Terabithia. The characters are well-developed and realistically depicted. Leslie is an intelligent and imaginative young girl. Jess looks up to Leslie and learns a lot from her. The author brings these two characters and their imaginary kingdom to life through her vivid descriptions.

Grade Five Core Realistic Fiction Selections

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler by E.L. Konigsburg.

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson, illustrated by Donna Diamond.

Grade Five Alternate Realistic Fiction Selections

The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin.

Summer of the Swans by Betsy Byars, illustrated by Ted Coconis.

Julie of the Wolves is the story of a 13 year old Eskimo girl, Miyax or Julie as she is called in English. Miyax is lost on the North Slope of Alaska after having run away from an unhappy home life. She must learn to survive in the harsh cold climate as she makes her way across the Arctic. In her lonely plight, she develops a close friendship with a pack of wolves who help her to survive by bringing her food. Miyax faces life and death situations as she struggles against the elements of nature, searches for food, and tries to find her way across the Arctic tundra. She grows to love and respect her own heritage but realizes sadly, in the end, that the traditional Eskimo way of life might not survive in modern civilization.

An outstanding book of realistic fiction, Julie of the Wolves provides children with the adventure of surviving in the lonely Arctic. Many elements of this book make it appealing to children. Elementary children enjoy the adventure and suspense which develops as Miyax struggles against nature. The theme of survival is appealing. The communication and development of friendship between Miyax and the wolves is interesting to children. The courageous and determined Miyax should hold a great deal of appeal for

children. Jean Craighead George has created a most memorable heroine whom children can identify with. Children are able to understand Miyax and her love for the Arctic, the wolves, and the old Eskimo ways. They experience Miyax's conflict with nature and with society. They identify with the challenges she faces and the choices she makes as she matures emotionally and personally. The author's descriptions of the beautiful but harsh and lonesome Arctic bring the setting to life and make Miyax's desperate situation more realistic.

Where the Lilies Bloom is the story of fourteen year old Mary Call Luther. Mary Call has the great responsibility of caring for her older mentally handicapped sister, Devola, and her younger sister and brother, Irma Dean and Romey. Her responsibilities increase when her father, Roy Luther dies and she promises to keep it a secret so the family can stay together. Mary Call is a proud independent girl who shows great courage, resourcefulness, and strength in keeping the poor family together and in surviving the harsh winter. She makes a living by windcrafting or gathering medicinal plants on the slopes of the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. Mary Call's father has taught her to be proud and not to accept charity from others, but she realizes that she needs to accept the help of other people in order for the family to survive and to remain together.

Where the Lilies Bloom should hold great appeal for elementary children. Children's imaginations are broadened

as they live with this family struggling to survive after the death of the father. The unforgettable character of Mary Call should appeal to children. Children can identify with this strong character as she struggles bravely and displays inner strength to keep the family secure. The character of this heroine is realistically portrayed.

Grade Six Core Realistic Fiction Selections

Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George, illustrated by John Schoenherr.

Where the Lilies Bloom by Vera and Bill Cleaver, illustrated by James Spanfeller.

Grade Six Alternate Realistic Fiction Selections

Call It Courage by Armstrong Sperry.

The Pinballs by Betsy Byars.

The tables which follow provide a summary of the core selections recommended for the content of the elementary school literature program developed here. The poetry and prose selections are arranged according to the suggested grade level and type of literature.

Core Elementary Poetry Selections

	Grade Four	Grade Five	Grade Six
Narrative Poems and Ballads	"The Duel" "Get Up and Bar the Door" "Hughbert and the Glue" "The Monkeys and the Crocodile"	"Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast" "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" "Questions" "Robin Hood and the Widow's Sons"	"The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver" "Casey at the Bat" "The Highwayman" "The Raggle Taggle Gypsies"
Limericks, Nonsense Verse, and Humorous Verse	"I Wish that My Room had a Floor" "There Was an Old Man of Blackheath" "Garbage Delight" "The Cat Heard the Cat-Bird"	"There Was a Young Lady of Niger" "There Was a Young Lady Whose Chin" "Eletelephony" "The Lizard"	"Relativity" "A Tutor Who Tooted the Flute" "Little Miss Muffet" "Bickering"
Descriptive Poems	"The Pickety Fence" "Mrs. Peck-Pigeon" "Poem to Mud" "On a Snowy Day" "Whispers" "The Sidewalk Racer"	"Tree" "Lone Dog" "Some One" "December Leaves" "Steam Shovel" "April Rain Song"	"Silver" "The Wind" "Velvet Shoes" "City" "Spill" "Fog"

Core Elementary Prose Selections

	<u>Grade Four</u>	<u>Grade Five</u>	<u>Grade Six</u>
Myth	<u>Daedalus and Icarus</u> <u>Pegasus</u> <u>Balder and the Mistletoe</u>	<u>Demeter and Persephone</u> <u>Balder and the</u> <u>Mistletoe</u>	<u>The Gorgon's Head</u> <u>Clashing Rocks: The</u> <u>Story of Jason</u>
Fable	<u>Chanticleer and the Fox</u> <u>The Miller, the Boy,</u> <u>and the Donkey</u> <u>Once a Mouse</u>	"The Ant and the Grasshopper" "The Dog and the Shadow" "The Crow and the Pitcher"	"The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" "The Fox and the Grapes" "The Jay and the Peacocks"
Folktales	<u>The Fool of the World</u> <u>and the Flying Ship</u> <u>Snow White and the Seven</u> <u>Dwarfs</u>	<u>The Fire Bringer</u> <u>Beauty and the Beast</u>	<u>The Story of Prince</u> <u>Ivan, the Firebird and</u> <u>the Gray Wolf</u> <u>Akavak: An Eskimo</u> <u>Journey</u>
Epic and Legend	<u>Sir Gawain and the Green</u> <u>Knight</u> <u>Taliesin and King Arthur</u>	"How Robin Hood Came to Be an Outlaw" "Robin Hood and Alan A Dale"	<u>The High Deeds of Finn</u> <u>MacCool</u> "The Cyclops"

Core Elementary Prose Selections

	Grade Four	Grade Five	Grade Six
Fantasy	<u>Charlotte's Web</u> <u>The Borrowers</u>	<u>The Lion, the Witch</u> <u>and the Wardrobe</u> <u>A Stranger Came Ashore</u>	<u>A Wrinkle in Time</u> <u>The Hobbit</u>
Historical Fiction	<u>Little House in the Big</u> <u>Woods</u> <u>When Hitler Stole Pink</u> <u>Rabbit</u>	<u>Caddie Woodlawn</u> <u>The Door in the Wall</u>	<u>Smith</u> <u>Across Five Aprils</u>
Realistic Fiction	<u>Homer Price</u> <u>The Incredible Journey</u>	<u>From the Mixed-Up Files</u> <u>of Mrs. Basil E.</u> <u>Frankweiler</u> <u>Bridge to Terabithia</u>	<u>Julie of the Wolves</u> <u>Where the Lilies Bloom</u>

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

Some suggestions are made here for instructional approaches to the teaching of literature in the elementary school. In making these suggestions, knowledge of the nature of elementary school children and the nature of literature has been considered. These suggestions for instructional approaches help to achieve the purposes for the elementary school literature program.

The teaching of literature in the elementary school involves, first of all, the presentation of literature to children. Children must experience quality literary selections. However, the teaching of literature must go beyond the actual experiencing of literature. Children must be encouraged and given opportunities to respond to and interpret literature. The teaching of literature also involves the development of some literary awareness and understanding. Children must be led to develop some understandings about literary genres, elements, techniques, and structural patterns and conventions as they contribute to an understanding of a literary work and to an understanding of literature as a whole.

The teaching of literature begins, certainly, with children experiencing literature. Since a purpose of the literature program is to provide opportunities for children to experience quality literature, this aspect of teaching literature must not be overlooked. The experiencing of

literature is an important aspect of the literature program since it provides a means for children to experience important literary works, such as The Hobbit or Across Five Aprils.

The experiencing of literature also helps to achieve the main purpose of the literature program--to stimulate and develop children's imaginations. As children experience quality literature their imaginations are stimulated and developed. Children's own experiences are enriched and broadened as they live with the Ingalls family in the historical period of the American pioneer days in Little House in the Big Woods. Children extend their imaginations beyond reality as they enter the strange and magical world of Narnia in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. As children hear poems such as "City", "Steam Shovel", and "Fog" they gain imaginative insight to look upon ordinary things with a new sense of wonder, in a fresh new way. As children experience the rhymes and word plays in poems such as "Garbage Delight", "Eletelephony", and "The Pickety Fence" they expand on their own imaginative use of language. As indicated by the research on the nature of the child in chapter two, the language of children is often poetic and children can, indeed, learn a lot about the creative use of language. Experiencing literary selections contributes to the education of the emotions. As children read a selection such as The Bridge to Terabithia their emotions are stimulated and their sensitivities are deepened.

Another purpose of the literature program is to stimulate children to want to become truly literate. The experiencing of literature can help to achieve this purpose. Children will be motivated to read as they discover delight in books, as their imaginations are stimulated by experiencing quality literature. As children read The Borrowers or The Hobbit, for example, they gain a desire to read other great works of fantasy. The teacher must be prepared to recommend other fine literary selections for independent reading so that children will develop a love and appreciation for the worthwhile and enjoyable experience of reading and become life long readers.

The experiencing of literature can help to achieve the purposes of the elementary literature program, and, so, it deserves a great deal of emphasis. Perhaps the best way for children to experience literature is by listening to it. Reading literature aloud to children is a valuable way to introduce and share the poems and stories in the literature program. Selections may be read aloud by a teacher or by a student. Also, there are professional recordings of many literary selections available. Students can listen to literature being read by poets, authors, and interpreters. Listening to literature is not a passive activity but one which engages the imagination of children. As children listen to a poem or a story as a whole, their imaginations are stimulated and stretched by what they hear.

Reading literature aloud to children certainly avoids the problem of children having to concentrate on decoding skills. It permits children to concentrate on the ideas and the language of the literary work. As children listen to a poem or a story as a whole, they can concentrate on the total structure of the literary selection. Elementary children's listening comprehension level is higher than their independent reading level. Hence, reading literature aloud permits the selection and presentation of a story or poem of fine quality which all children cannot read independently but which they can understand and appreciate by hearing.

The literary strengths of a selection can be emphasized through an oral presentation. For instance, the oral qualities of a poem, such as its use of rhythm or repetition, can be enhanced through an oral reading. Farjeon's splendid use of rhythm and rhyme in the poem "Mrs. Peck-Pigeon", for example, can be emphasized through an oral presentation. Similarly, reading aloud permits an emphasis on the subtle humour or on the mood and atmosphere of a particular story. For example, an oral reading of A Stranger Came Ashore will enhance the suspenseful and eerie atmosphere.

Music or appropriate sound effects can be used to accompany an oral reading. Such an accompaniment places emphasis on the rhythm, the mood, the meaning of a literary selection. For example, appropriate background music to

accompany Walter de la Mare's poem "Silver" can enhance the mysterious mood.

The choral reading of a literary selection can emphasize the rhythm and repetition of its language. The repetition of words and lines in the poem "The Highway Man" can be emphasized through a choral reading. An oral presentation using choral reading can emphasize meaning, enhance mood, and allow children to experience the rhythm of a selection. Many folktale selections and poetry selections are particularly appropriate for choral reading because of their oral qualities.

Literary selections can also be presented through drama. Folktales, myths, scenes from longer stories containing action and dialogue, ballads, and other poems containing dialogue provide sources for dramatization. The ballad "Get Up and Bar the Door" and the poem "Questions" are suitable for dramatization, for example.

A visual presentation might also be used, where appropriate, to emphasize the visual aspects of a literary selection. A poem which uses its shape, its arrangement of words to emphasize the images created should be presented visually, for example.

In order to achieve the purposes of providing opportunities for children's responses and interpretations, developing literary awareness and understanding, and developing appreciation of literature, then the teaching of

literature cannot stop when children have experienced a literary selection. Children must go beyond the actual experiencing of literature to a response and interpretation. Children's initial responses to a literary selection should be encouraged. Opportunities should be provided for children to comment on, question, and discuss a particular selection. A child's initial response to a selection might be the movement of his body to the rhythm of a poem such as "The Pickety Fence" or "Lone Dog" or the smiles and chuckles as he reads the hilarious situations in Homer Price. A child might comment on something surprising which happened in a story such as the sudden death of Leslie in Bridge to Terabithia. He might question the behavior of a character or a turn of events such as why Mary Call will not accept help from outside the family in Where the Lilies Bloom.

Children's response to and interpretation of a literary selection can be encouraged through creative activities. Such activities might include dramatizations, art and media interpretations, activities involving body movement, responses through music, and creative writing. Providing opportunities for children to respond to and interpret literature through creative activities stimulates and develops children's imaginations. Children's imaginations are engaged, for example, as they act out or dramatize the story of Snow White, as they create their own episode of the adventures of Robin Hood, or as they put a poem such as "Silver" or "Velvet Shoes"

to music. Such creative interpretations exercise children's imaginations and make a literary selection more meaningful. As children respond to and interpret literature their imaginations are engaged and they become active participants. As indicated by the research in chapter two on the nature of the child, an environment which encourages active participation should result in more effective learning and true understanding. Children's responses to literary experiences should not be rushed or by-passed in an attempt to analyze literature.

Responding to and interpreting literature also provides a means of checking children's comprehension and understanding of a literary selection. Children's discussion of the behavior of a main character, such as Miyax in Julie of the Wolves, can reveal their understanding of that character. Children's art work can show their understanding of the setting of a particular selection, such as Smith. A dramatization can show their understanding of the sequence of events in a story, such as Daedalus and Icarus.

It must be remembered, however, that activities encouraging children's response to and interpretation of a particular literary selection should lead them back into that literary selection rather than away from it. Activities which take children away from a literary selection, which are related to something outside the selection do not permit children to interact with the literary selection. For

example, asking children to research how a spider spins a web or to write a report on the artworks of Michelangelo does not provide children with an opportunity to interpret and respond to Charlotte's Web and From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. Such activities become an end in themselves.

The relationship between the study of literature and children's creative writing should be stressed here. The experiencing of literature is a stimulus or motivation for students' own original writing. Through the study of literature children are exposed to a wide variety of forms of literature. As children become familiar with various forms, such as the limerick, myth, or folktale they are able to use these forms in their own writing. Children can experiment with different forms of poetry, they can use the poetic structures and patterns as models to express their experiences, feelings, and thoughts in their own poetry writing. As well, the forms and conventions of literary stories can be used by children in their own story compositions. Children must experience literature before they can be expected to compose poems and stories, for, as Sloan (1975) says, "literature grows out of other literature" (p. 99).

Since the basis of the literature program developed here is the development of the imagination, then the nature of the imagination to create, as well as experience, should be stressed. Children should be encouraged to create--to act out

stories, to tell stories, to interpret through art, media, and music, to compose poems and stories.

Children's responses and interpretations can be encouraged and guided through the use of planned questions and discussions. There are different types of questions which can be asked, for example, recall, inferential, and critical. The questions asked should help children to interpret literature by taking them back into a literary selection and not away from it. Questions such as the following, "Does Claudia Kincaid behave as you would? Where would you go if you decided to run away from home?" do not promote children's understanding and interpretation of From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler but, instead, take children outside the literary selection to talk about their own personal lives. The following questions should help children to interpret and respond to the literary selection and gain an understanding of the main character, "Why does Claudia decide to run away to the Metropolitan Museum of Art? What kind of person is Claudia? Does she change during the story? How?".

The use of planned questions and discussions can help to achieve the purpose of developing literary awareness and understanding. Through the use of discussions and questions, children can develop some understanding of the structure and pattern of various genres of literature, literary elements such as plot, characterization, theme, setting, and mood,

literary techniques such as imagery, metaphor, sound devices, and symbol, and the structural principles of literature, its significant patterns and conventions. It should be remembered that everything about literary awareness should not be taught using the one literary selection but, rather, the literary strengths of a particular selection should be emphasized in questions and discussions.

In a discussion of Smith, for example, a focus on the elements of setting, mood, and atmosphere emphasizes the literary strengths of this selection. A discussion of the poems "Poem to Mud" and "Lemons" might focus on the literary technique of imagery. A focus on a selection's literary strengths puts emphasis, therefore, on what is important in that selection, on its principle qualities, elements, and techniques.

The questions and discussions should be planned to meet the elementary school child's intellectual level. As suggested by the research in chapter two on the nature of the child, elementary children cannot deal with abstractions. Hence, the questions and discussions should not focus on abstractions of a literary selection, on formal definitions of literary genres, elements, and techniques. Formal instruction in literary analysis should be avoided since abstractions are beyond the intellectual level of most elementary children. In developing literary awareness and understanding, the focus of the questions and discussions

should be on how a particular element or technique contributes to a literary selection, on why the author used it, on how it contributes to the meaning of the selection. In a discussion of Julie of the Wolves, for example, it is not sufficient to focus merely on when and where the story takes place, but to emphasize the importance of the setting to the story, how it helps you to understand the main character, Miyax, how it contributes to a major conflict in the story. Through such discussions children would learn to appreciate, to enjoy and understand the literary selection.

The questions and discussions should also focus on how individual literary works are related, on similarities in conventions and patterns. Such a focus should guide children to an understanding of the structural principles of literature, to an understanding of literature as a whole. An emphasis in questions and discussions on the form and structure as well as on the content of literary selections will develop an understanding of the individual work and of the whole of literature. Questions such as the following might be emphasized: "How is the selection Akavak: An Eskimo Journey similar to other stories you have read? In what ways is the character of Akavak like other characters you have met?" The research in chapter two on the nature of the child indicates that elementary children are capable of seeing similarities, of discovering the conventions and patterns in literature, of perceiving the structure and pattern of a

particular literary form. It should be pointed out that an emphasis on merely memorizing, defining, identifying, and classifying literary genres, elements, and techniques, and on identifying and classifying literary conventions and patterns should be avoided. Such an emphasis would not result in a better understanding of the individual literary work or of literature as a whole. It would not stimulate children's imaginations or help them to appreciate literature.

The next section provides specific teaching suggestions for a unit on Charlotte's Web. It includes objectives, discussion, questions, creative activities, and suggestions for further reading.

VII. SAMPLE UNIT

Charlotte's Web

Author: E.B. White

Illustrator: Garth Williams

184 pages

46 black and white illustrations

Genre: Fantasy

Recommended Grade: Four

Introduction

Charlotte's Web is a well-known animal fantasy. It is the story of Wilbur, a runt pig, who is cared for by an eight year old girl, Fern Arable. When Wilbur has grown enough he is sold to Fern's uncle and goes to live on the Zuckerman farm. Fern visits the farm every day and listens to the animals talking. Wilbur becomes lonely and bored with this life until he meets Charlotte, a beautiful gray spider. Charlotte and Wilbur become very close friends and it is Charlotte who devises a plan to save Wilbur when the Zuckermans plan to kill him. She spins great messages about Wilbur in her web. Wilbur is an ordinary pig no longer. Many people come to the Zuckerman farm to see this special pig. Wilbur becomes famous and wins a grand prize at the county fair. Charlotte's life, however, comes to an end. Wilbur is saddened by her death and misses her terribly. He protects and cares for Charlotte's egg sac and grows to accept her death. Life is renewed when Charlotte's children are born and Wilbur begins a friendship with them.

E.B. White creates a world of fantasy within a world of reality. He firmly establishes a real life situation at the beginning of the story. The world of fantasy is introduced as Fern overhears the farm animals talking. The story moves constantly back and forth between the real world and the fantasy world. The reader can willingly suspend disbelief as he enters this fabulous world of talking animals.

The animal characters are given human characteristics and are brought to life. Each animal has a distinct and unique character. Charlotte is realistically portrayed as a true and loyal friend who is patient and intelligent. Wilbur is depicted as lonely, naive, and sometimes silly. He matures throughout the story and becomes wiser and self-confident because of Charlotte's friendship and her faith in him. Charlotte and Wilbur, along with the other characters, are memorable and appealing.

The language of Charlotte's Web is rich and fresh. The descriptions are vivid and detailed and stir the imagination. The setting is made realistic and believable through E.B. White's descriptions. The barnyard comes alive through the rich imagery which appeals to one's senses of smell, sight, and sound. The dialogue is sometimes funny and delightful to hear. It contains some of the features of language which are quite appealing to children, such as repetition, rhyme, and word play. Also, the dialogue helps to reveal the animals' characteristics and feelings. Several important themes are effectively developed in Charlotte's Web. This fantasy presents the theme of the cyclical patterns of nature--the cycle of birth, life, and death. Death is accepted and life is renewed in this story. The themes of friendship and maturity are also found in E.B. White's book of fantasy.

Having introduced the selection Charlotte's Web, the writer provides some specific objectives for the teaching of the unit. As well, some questions for discussion, some creative activities, and a list of recommended books for further reading are suggested in this section. The questions and activities are indeed suggestions and are not meant to be exhaustive. They focus on the essential aspects of the book, on its literary strengths and are meant to fulfill the objectives.

Objectives

A list of specific objectives is provided for the teaching of this unit. These objectives take into consideration the purposes of the elementary school literature program developed in this chapter.

- To experience an animal fantasy of high quality--Charlotte's Web.
- To stimulate and develop the imagination as children experience, respond to, and interpret Charlotte's Web.
- To see similarities between this selection and other works of literature.
- To develop a literary awareness and understanding of character, setting, and imagery in literature.
- To develop an awareness of the author's imaginative use of language.

Creative Experiencing

The study of any literary selection must begin with experiencing it with delight. The experiencing of literature is an important aspect of teaching literature and it should not be overlooked or rushed past. Children must be provided with the opportunity to experience Charlotte's Web before being asked to respond to and interpret it.

The experiencing of literature involves the engagement and education of the imagination. Children's imaginations are stimulated and developed as they experience Charlotte's Web. As children enter the fabulous world of talking animals in Charlotte's Web their imaginations are extended beyond reality. Their experiences are enriched and expanded as they live with Wilbur, Charlotte, Templeton, and the other farm animals in the Zuckerman barn. As children become acquainted with the characters and participate in the action of the story, they are able to experience vicariously what the characters are feeling. They are able to put themselves in a character's place. Children can feel Wilbur's loneliness and boredom, his fear of being slaughtered, his growing self-confidence, and his sadness over the death of Charlotte, for example. Children's feelings and emotions are engaged through the vicarious experiences provided in Charlotte's Web.

As children experience this literary work they gain imaginative insight to look upon familiar things, such as a spider's web, with fresh insight, with a new sense of wonder.

They become more aware of and more sensitive to the beauty and wonder of nature. Children are provided with new perspectives on reality as they experience Charlotte's Web. They are able to look upon nature, upon friendship, upon life and death, for example, from a new perspective.

The experiencing of Charlotte's Web develops the stylistic imagination as children encounter E.B. White's imaginative use of language. Children's imaginations are stirred by the vivid, detailed descriptions of the sights, sounds, and smells in the Zuckerman barn and at the Fair Grounds. Their senses are aroused by White's use of rich imagery. As they experience Charlotte's Web they can become aware of White's effective use of certain stylistic devices to create humour, to provide description, and to create a setting.

There are different ways for children to experience a literary selection. Children can hear a selection being read aloud. Music or appropriate sound effects can be used to accompany an oral reading. A choral reading, a dramatization, or a visual presentation could be used. A selection can be read silently by children. The method of presentation chosen for a particular selection should reflect and emphasize the essential aspects of the work.

It is recommended in the literature program developed here that children experience Charlotte's Web by hearing it read aloud by the teacher. Each of the twenty-two chapters

in: Charlotte's Web can be read in approximately five to ten minutes. As children listen to the story being read aloud they are able to concentrate on the ideas, the language, and the total structure of the work. Reading the selection aloud emphasizes its style -- one of the main literary strengths of the book. The humour, the delightful dialogue, the rich imagery, the figurative language, and the rhythm and other sound devices used by E.B. White are greatly enhanced through an oral presentation of the book.

Response and Interpretation

The teaching of Charlotte's Web goes beyond the actual experiencing of the work. Children must be provided with the opportunities to creatively respond to and interpret the selection in order to extend and enrich their literary experience, to refine their uncritical responses, to make the literary work more meaningful. Questions and creative activities are provided to guide and develop children's response to and interpretation of Charlotte's Web.

The suggested questions and activities are relevant to Charlotte's Web. They lead children back to the selection to help them to find meaning in the work, to understand and interpret it, to deepen their response to it. They allow children to interact with the selection rather than leading them away from it.

The questions and activities recommended here are appropriate to the intellectual development of the elementary child. They do not deal with abstractions or with formal definitions of literary genres, elements, and techniques. They are not concerned with formal instruction in literary analysis. The questions and activities encourage active participation on the part of children. They allow children to converse, question, discover, explore, create.

The creative activities and questions developed for Charlotte's Web help to meet the objectives of the unit. As children respond to and interpret Charlotte's Web through these questions and activities their imaginations are stimulated and developed. Some of the questions are concerned with the feelings evoked by Charlotte's Web, with how the reader can imaginatively feel what Wilbur or another character is feeling, with how he can get inside the character and identify with him. There are questions which center around the language of Charlotte's Web, which help children become aware of E.B. White's imaginative use of language and his effective use of certain stylistic devices. The creative activities suggested here take into consideration the nature of the imagination to create--to act out, to interpret through art, to compose. Since literature is an art form, the suggested activities encourage creative responses and interpretations through art, drama, and written composition. These activities engage and educate the imagination.

There are questions and activities which help to develop some literary awareness and understanding. Some questions and activities are concerned with developing an understanding of character, setting, and imagery in literature. These questions and activities do not attempt to cover everything about literary awareness using Charlotte's Web but emphasize what is dominant in the selection, its literary strengths. They do not concentrate on memorizing, defining, identifying, and classifying literary elements and techniques but focus on why E.B. White uses a particular element or technique, on its significance, on how it contributes to the meaning of Charlotte's Web. These questions and activities center on form and structure and not just content. They help children to see the similarities in patterns and conventions, to gain an understanding of what literature is and how it works, to see literature as a whole.

The questions recommended here are categorized into questions concerned with feelings, questions about language, and questions dealing with literary understanding of character, setting, and imagery. The questions and activities are meant to be used after children have experienced the whole story. Teachers may choose to be selective in the use of these questions and activities and may wish to add their own appropriate questions and activities based on the ideas presented in this section.

Questions

Feelings

Are you able to put yourself in Wilbur's place, to feel the way he feels?

At what points in the story do you feel lonely? contented? afraid? What makes you feel that way?

Describe how you feel as you experience the death of Charlotte. Why do you feel this way? What does E.B. White do to make you feel this way?

Describe how you feel at the end of the story. What are the reasons for this feeling? How does E.B. White help to create this feeling?

Character

What sort of character is Wilbur when he first arrives at the Zuckerman farm?

Does Wilbur's character change throughout the story? In what ways? What accounts for these changes?

Have you met any other characters like Wilbur in literature? How were they different? Can people in real life change as Wilbur did?

What is revealed about Templeton's character through his speech, his actions, and E.B. White's comments? Why does Templeton behave as he does? How would the story be different if Templeton were taken out of the story?

Setting

Where does most of the action in the story take place? Why do you think E.B. White chose this setting?

Do you think the setting is a good one for this story? Why? Why not? Could the story take place somewhere else? Explain.

Does the setting seem realistic? Why are you able to picture the setting so clearly?

Language

What are some words and phrases that E.B. White uses to help you see, smell, and hear the Zuckerman barn? (see pp. 13, 14, 33) the Fair Grounds? (see pp. 130, 138) Do you know any other words one might use? How do these descriptions make you feel?

Consider the passage describing Wilbur's lunch. (see p. 75) Does this description appeal to any of your senses? Add some of your own words to the description. Does the description change?

Notice how E.B. White gives human qualities to the animals in Charlotte's Web (see pp. 113, 114). Why does he do this? How is it important to the story?

Consider E.B. White's use of comparison to provide description. Charlotte "was about the size of a gumbdrop". When looking at Charlotte's web on a foggy morning, "each thin strand was decorated with dozens of tiny beads of water" and "the web ... made a pattern ... like a delicate veil". "A fair is a rat's paradise". "His [the rat's] stomach was as big around as a jelly jar". Are these comparisons effective? Write your own comparisons to describe these things. Are they as effective as E.B. White's?

Does E.B. White make use of language to create humour? Does he use words and phrases to make you laugh? Find some examples. Suppose you were to change some of these words and phrases. Do the new words and phrases create humour?

Imagery of literature

Charlotte dies during the Fall of the year. In the story what are some other sad things which happen during the fall? (see pp. 113, 173). Can you think of some other things which happen in nature during the fall?

Wilbur is born in the springtime. Also, Charlotte's children are born in the spring of the year. In the story what are some other things which occur during this season? (see p. 176). Name some other things which occur in nature during the spring.

Have you read or heard other stories in which the seasons of the year reflect the cycle of life and death, in which good things happen in the summer and springtime and sad things occur in the fall and winter?

Creative Activities

Art

Using an art form of your choice (painting, drawing, collage, for example) depict the setting of the Zuckerman barn as portrayed in chapter three and the Fair Grounds as portrayed in chapter twenty-seven.

This activity shows children's understanding of the setting of Charlotte's Web. It provides children with the opportunity to interpret the imagery provided by E.B. White and to visualize the setting. It engages and develops children's imaginations as they interpret the setting through an art form.

Drama

Dramatize or act out some of the key scenes from the story. The following pages contain some scenes appropriate for dramatization: pp. 16-23; pp. 34-40; pp. 55-62; pp. 86-91; pp. 122-127; pp. 163-170.

This activity shows children's understanding of characterization, mood, and sequence of events in Charlotte's Web. It provides children with the opportunity to participate actively in response to Charlotte's Web. It stimulates and develops children's imaginations as they interpret and act out what they have heard.

Written composition

Create an original story composition involving one of Charlotte's daughters, Wilbur, Templeton, and the other barn animals. The story might center around life in the barn upon the arrival of a new animal at the Zuckerman farm.

This activity shows children's understanding of characterization and setting in Charlotte's Web. It allows children to develop their imagination as they compose their own story about Wilbur and the other barn animals. It permits children to make use of form and structure in their own story compositions.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Children should be encouraged to read other animal fantasies. These selections should be made available and introduced to children to stimulate them to read further in this area.

Grahame, Kenneth. The Wind in the Willows. Illustrated by E.H. Shepard. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

Holman, Felice. Cricket Winter. New York: Frosset and Dunlap, Inc., 1967.

Lawson, Robert. Rabbit Hill. New York: Viking Press, 1944.

Lawson, Robert. The Pough Winter. New York: Viking Press, 1954.

O'Brien, Robert C. Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH. Illustrated by Zena Bernstein. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1971.

Selden, George. The Cricker in Times Square. Illustrated by Garth Williams. New York. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., 1960.

Steig, William. Abel's Island. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., 1976.

White, E.B. Stuart Little. Illustrated by Garth Williams. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1945.

VIII. SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined a literature program for the elementary grades four to six. A rationale for the inclusion of literature in the elementary school curriculum has been presented. Since literature contributes to the education of the imagination and to the development of a fully literate person then it deserves to be treated as a regular component of the elementary school curriculum.

Six main purposes have been identified for the elementary school literature program. These are:

1. To stimulate and develop children's imagination.
2. To provide opportunities for children to experience quality literature.
3. To provide opportunities for children to respond to and interpret literary selections.
4. To develop children's literary awareness and understanding.
5. To develop children's appreciation of literature.

6. To stimulate children to want to become truly literate.

These purposes indicate that literature is important for its own sake, for its own inherent values. These purposes do not regard literature simply as a form of recreation, as a means of meeting the goals of other curriculum areas, or as a form of therapy.

The elementary school literature curriculum has been organized according to genres, rather than themes or literary elements. An organization based on literary genres emphasizes the teaching of literature for its own sake. It emphasizes the form and structure and not simply the content of literature. The content of the literature program includes specific literary selections for each grade level and represents the genres of poetry, folklore (myths, fables, folktales, legends and epics), fantasy, historical fiction, and realistic fiction.

Some suggestions for the teaching of literature in the elementary grades have been proposed. These suggestions take into account the purposes of the literature program. They emphasize the importance of experiencing literature, responding to and interpreting literature, and developing an appreciation for literature. As a sample, specific suggestions for the teaching of Charlotte's Web have been included.

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