PEARSON NEW INTERNATIONAL EDITION

Teaching Language Arts: A Student-Centered Classroom

Carole Cox

Seventh Edition

ALWAYS LEARNING™

PEARSON®

Pearson New International Edition

Teaching Language Arts:
A Student-Centered Classroom
Carole Cox
Seventh Edition

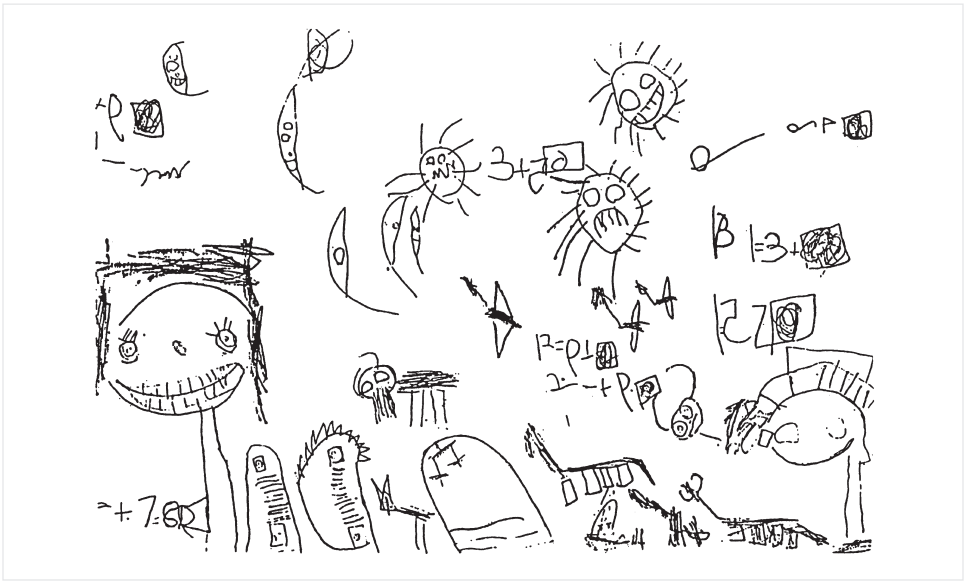
PEARSON®

Table 3 Stages of Spelling Development

Stage	Source		
	Gentry (1981)	**Henderson (1980)**	**Beers & Beers (1991)**
1. **Precommunicative** Preschool: 5 years old	**Deviant** btBpA	**Preliterate Prephonetic** dog candy bit Cinderella	**Prereading Stage** 1. Prephonetic level ABDG—Wally 11 + 02—cat 2. Phonetic level WTBO—Wally KT—cat HM—home GT—get
2. **Semiphonetic** Kindergarten and beginning first: 5–6 years old	**Prephonetic** MSR	**Preliterate Phonetic** D or DJ K or KDE B or BT S	**Phonetic Stage** GAT—get TREP—trip FRMR—farmer SCARD—scared JUPT—jumped
3. **Phonetic** Midfirst: 6 years old	**Phonetic** MONSTR	**Letter-Name Strategy** DIJ KADE BET SEDRLI	
4. **Transitional** End first/beginning second: 6–9 years old	**Transitional** MONSTUR	**Vowel Transition** DOG CANDE or CANDY BIT CINDARILA	**Orthographic Stage** GAETF—gate MAIK—make SPATER—spatter RIDDER—rider SITTIN–sitting CANT—can't
5. **Conventional** Second–fourth: 7–9 years old	**Correct** MONSTER	DOG CANDY BIT CINDERELLA	**Morphemic & Syntactic Stage** 1. Control of doubling consonants. HAPPY SMATTERING 2. Awareness of alternative forms. MANAGERIAL manage REPETITION repeat 3. Awareness of syntactic control or key elements in words. SLOWLY SAVED PASSED RESTED FASTER SLEEPING
6. **Morphemic/ Syntactic** Fifth–tenth: 10–16 years old			

Source: Adapted from Gentry, J. R. (1981). Learning to spell developmentally. *Reading Teacher, 34,* 378–381.

Figure 14 5-Year-Old's Drawing and Writing: Precommunicative Stage



of the relationships between sounds and letters in words or of what words really are. Children make drawings that gradually become more representational and are often accompanied by spoken explanations. These drawings are gradually replaced with letter- or numberlike shapes or actual letters and numbers, often scattered randomly over a page (see Figure 14). Some children at this stage can write their names. This development occurs during preschool and kindergarten (4–5 years old).

2. ***Semiphonetic stage.*** Children are still unable to spell many words conventionally, and they're still unclear about the concept of what a word is; however, they do know that letters make words, and they don't invent symbols as substitutes for letters as in the earlier stage. Children know that letter names stand for elements of words (usually consonants), and they make one-, two-, and three-letter representations of specific, individual words. They have more control over the sounds at the ends of words than they do over the middles and the beginnings. This development occurs around kindergarten and the beginning of first grade (5–6 years old) for many children.

3. ***Phonetic stage.*** Spellings at this stage include all the sound features of words as children hear and articulate them. That is, the written form contains all the speech sounds, recorded in the same sequence (e.g., *CHROBLE* = *trouble*). Children pass through this stage around the first grade (6–7 years old).

4. ***Transitional stage.*** Children include vowels in all recorded syllables and use familiar spelling patterns. Standard spellings are interspersed with invented, phonetic spellings (e.g., *HIGHCKED* = *hiked; TODE* = *toad*). Children seem to realize that it's necessary to spell words in order for them to be read and that all words have conventional spellings used in print. Children also learn that there are various ways to spell many of the same speech sounds and that many words are not spelled entirely phonetically. This stage may occur around the end of first and the beginning of second grade (6–9 years old).

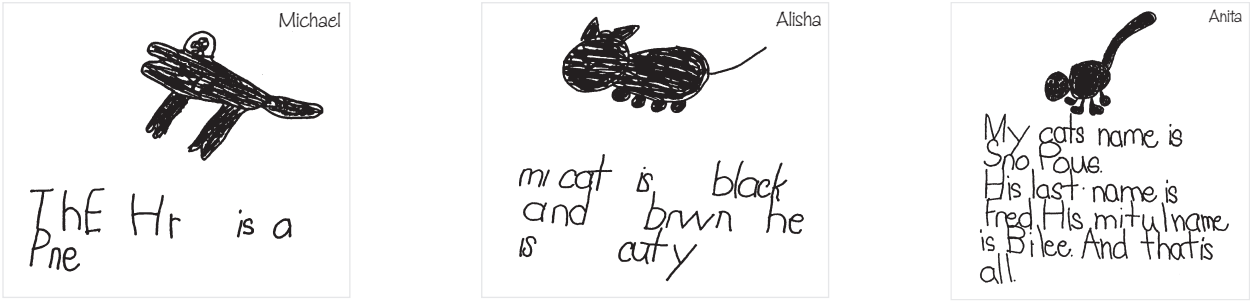
5. ***Conventional stage.*** The points of change are less clear in this stage. Children are mastering word roots, past tense, and short vowels, although they still have problems with consonant doubling, word affixes, and the positions of letters (e.g., the silent *e* that determines long vowel sounds). This stage occurs anywhere between the second and fourth grades (7–9 years old).

In order to connect research findings (Templeton, 2011) on emergent literacy and invented spelling with real children, let's look at examples of writing by Michael, Alisha, and Anita. All three wrote these stories during a writer's workshop at the beginning of first grade (see Figure 15). See if you can identify each child's stage of spelling development based on the writing sample and what he or she said about it (see the answers on the bottom of this page):

- Michael reads his one-sentence story as "There is a plane." The words *is* and *a* are spelled correctly. He has written something to represent every word. Both *ThEHr/there* and *Pne/plane* include letters that represent some of the speech sounds heard in the word.
- Alisha reads her two-sentence story as "My cat is black and brown. He is cute." *Cat, black, and, he,* and *is* are spelled correctly, and the other spellings include all the sound features of the words: *mi/my, brwn/brown, cuty/cute.*
- Anita reads her four-sentence story as "My cat's name is Snow Paws. His last name is Fred. His middle name is Billy. And that is all." Most words are spelled correctly. Invented phonetic spellings use familiar patterns. A vowel is included in every recorded syllable: *Sno/Snow, Pous/Paws, mitul/middle, Bilee/Billy.*

Concept of a Word Children in the precommunicative stage of spelling (usually kindergarten) may lack the concept of a *word,* or the relationship between sounds and letters. This is a benchmark concept for beginning to spell and write. Until children grasp this concept, they may simply use letter names to represent words. Since the unit of spelling is the word, children must understand this concept before receiving spelling instruction. To determine whether children have the concept of a word, use Assessment Toolbox 2, Concept of a Word, which uses a nursery rhyme and a simple pointing test. The first step to

Figure 15 Three First Grader's Writing: (a) Michael (b) Alisha (c) Anita



Answers: Michael is in the semiphonetic stage, Alisha is in the phonetic stage, and Anita is in the transitional stage.

teaching spelling to young children is to see whether they have a concept of a word. If they do not, you would not give them further spelling tests, such as a list of words. See the Differentiating Instruction feature for how to give the tests and real results from five kindergarten students.

Teaching Beginning Readers and Writers

The following ways to begin to teach reading and writing are founded on the assumption that from the very beginning, children learn language for authentic, meaningful purposes as they each develop the inner control necessary to work with print (Clay, 1991). In a review of the recent research on early literacy development and models of teaching that focus on both child-centered and skill-centered instruction, Morrow and Doughtery (2011) make the following recommendations for teaching beginning readers and writers.

- Concern for individual needs and level of development—physical, social, emotional, and intellectual—and prepared environments in which learning can take place
- Emphasis on learning and teaching and social interaction with supportive adults who scaffold learning
- Focus on learning through real experiences in meaningful and natural settings, settings with explicit but appropriate teaching, and actively engaging students in learning using manipulative materials and experiences that are functional and interesting
- Practicing and repeating skills learned

Assessment Toolbox 2

Concept of a Word

The concept of a word—that is, the relationship between sounds and letters—is a benchmark for learning to spell and write. This tool uses a nursery rhyme and simple pointing test to determine whether children can distinguish separate words.

1. Teach a simple nursery rhyme that children can memorize—for example:

One, two, buckle my shoe;		Hey, diddle, diddle!
Three, four, shut the door;		The cat and the fiddle,
Five, six, pick up sticks;	OR	The cow jumped over the moon;
Seven, eight, lay them straight;		The little dog laughed to see such sport,
Nine, ten, a good fat hen.		And the dish ran away with the spoon.

2. When the children can recite the rhyme by memory, print it on a large poster. Recite the rhyme slowly, pointing to each word and asking the children to follow your finger with their eyes. Ask the children to recite the rhyme with you as you point to the words.

3. Then ask the children individually to point to each word as they recite the rhyme. Note when the following occur:

a. The child moves his or her finger quickly across lines in a single movement.

b. The child points to each word but loses rhythm on a two-syllable word, such as *buckle.*

c. The child points to each individual word.

The child who can distinguish each separate word (item c) has the concept of a *word* and is emerging as a reader, writer, and speller.

Differentiating Instruction

Different Results for the Concept of a Word Test for English-Only Students and English Learners

In order to differentiate literacy instruction for students just beginning school, a kindergarten teacher administered the concept of a word test to a small group of five kindergarten children: three English-only speakers (Melinda, Grace, and Ryan) and two native Spanish-speaking English learners (Emilio and Ines). This teacher knew how important it was to carefully assess young children's levels of emergent literacy and not to assume that her students classified as English learners could not pass the test, or that her English-only students could pass the test. Here is how she did it.

1. The teacher taught students the nursery rhyme "One, two, buckle my shoe." They learned to recite it first by just listening to her and memorizing it.
2. The teacher showed them the words written fairly large on a piece of chart paper, and she pointed to each word as they recited it together slowly, repeating this until she felt they were comfortable with the rhyme.
3. She then asked each child, one at a time, to take her place and point to each word as the rest of the children recited it again.

Results

The children had fun, snapping their fingers and moving their bodies to the beat of the words as they chanted the rhyme together. Here are the results of the individual assessment for each child.

Emilio eagerly volunteered to be first. He asked if he could say the rhyme by himself, and was able to point to each word as he said each word, never getting ahead of himself. He paused after he said the bigger word *straight,* and looked at the teacher for affirmation that he was correct. He asked to do it again, and successfully pointed to each word as he said it but laughingly asked if he could change the last line from "Nine, ten, a good fat hen" to "Nine, ten, good job hen" because he said it sounded better.

Melinda went next, and also asked to say the rhyme by herself. She was able to point to each word accurately as she said it. Ines said she didn't want to say the rhyme by herself, so Melinda offered to help her. She went through the first line, but simply moved her finger along the line and chanted it with Melinda, looking at Melinda but not looking at the words or pointing to each word as it was said.

Grace reluctantly tried next and slowly got halfway through the second line, stopped, put her hand to her head and said "That's all." Ryan began by turning the chart paper upside down while starting to chant the rhyme. After his teacher turned it around, he quickly said the rhyme from memory, skipping several words and saying it faster than he could point to the words.

Results of Concept of a Word Test

	Has Concept of a Word	Does Not Have Concept of a Word
English Only	• Melinda	• Grace • Ryan
English Learner	• Emilio	• Ines

These results show how important it is to assess each student to differentiate instruction and not to assume that English learners would not have the concept of a word, and English-only students would. Now, the teacher might group Emilio and Melinda together, and Grace, Ryan, and Ines together for writing and spelling instruction.

The following teaching ideas each begin with an example from first-grade teacher Marion Harris's integrated teaching with literature around the theme of apples.

A Print-Rich Environment When Marion's students became more and more interested in apples, she found and displayed posters with information about apples:

Different Types of Apples: Delicious (Red and Golden), Macintosh, Granny Smith, Gala, and Fuji
Apple Parts: Leaves, stem, core, skin, seeds, and flesh
Apple Products: Sauce, jelly, vinegar, cider, pies, and juice
Seven Leading Apple-Growing States: Washington, Michigan, New York, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina

Young children learn a lot about written language through exposure to print in their environment. The term *environmental print* means print that is visibly situated in a context that will help children understand it, and it is an essential component of a pre-K–2 classroom (Chapman, 2006).

Signs, labels, lists, and charts should be displayed prominently in the room, and the teacher should point to them when discussing what they label. These should be functional, and children should be encouraged to use and read them. Examples:

- The teacher's name and room number on the door
- A "Welcome to Our Room" sign
- Children's names on their desks
- Labels for centers and supply storage
- A Morning Message
- A calendar with dates, school events, and birthdays
- Poems, songs, and chants
- Charts for classroom jobs
- A list of classroom rules
- A daily schedule

Letters of the alphabet can also be displayed in several ways. They can be written in sequence on several sentence strips mounted on a bulletin board or a wall in a horizontal line, or in a vertical line with space next to each letter to display pictures or words that start with the letter. For example, at the beginning of the year, the teacher might display a picture with the name of each child next to the first letter of their first name. In Marion Harris's room the students wrote the names of different apples on a short sentence strip and placed it next to the first letter of the apple name. The same could be done with any vocabulary in the content areas. Pocket charts can be used with letter strips or cards that match. Many schools have a permanent alphabet display in the room.

Sharing Time and Morning Message Every day, time should be set aside for children to share what's important to them. Many teachers do so first thing in the day. By listening to the children, the teacher can find out more about them and thus come up with ideas for teaching. Teachers can also share either school-related items, like announcements and plans for the class, and personal information, like favorite poems and things that are important to them. Combine sharing time with other activities that begin the