THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DR. SEUSS: A GROUP INTERPRETATION
SCRIPT FOR THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

THESIS

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By

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This thesis proposed the idea of oral interpretation of children's literature as a pedagogical tool in the primary classroom. A group interpretation script entitled "The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss" was compiled for performance in the primary classroom as a viable vehicle for teaching children to understand and appreciate literature. The script was evaluated by qualified teachers in the areas of English, oral interpretation, and elementary education as well as a critical analysis by the author.

The thesis concluded that oral communication is necessary in the primary grade and that group interpretation is an exciting way to enhance learning.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Children's Literature for Performance

For the very youngest children, their first introduction to the world of books occurs when their parents read to them. Similarly, as they enter public school, they do not yet have the keys to unlock the word symbols on the printed page; therefore, they rely on the teacher to overcome this barrier. As Veilleux, an educator who stresses the importance of verbal classrooms, points out, "Reading aloud is a valuable process; it is the link between the spoken word and the written word" (116). Comparing literature to music, he contends that literature is essentially designed for the ear. He explains that it is through oral reading that one hears the tones of literature (Veilleux 116).

The child benefits from hearing the musical qualities of word symbols. Another scholar in the field of children's literature is Wilbert Pronovost, who claims that "Children will enjoy and appreciate good literature if they hear it read aloud well." Further, if literature is to be "an enjoyable experience for the reader and listener it must be done skillfully" (192). Robert Whitehead reinforces this statement in his address to the Convention of the International Reading Association:
Beautiful literature must be heard to be fully appreciated. The very nature of our profession dictates reading aloud well—to children. Everyday we should read aloud to children a piece or two of prose or poetry, for in so doing we are helping them to see the beauty and fun of literature, to perceive its values, and to appreciate the great literary works, old and new. (84)

Whitehead is not alone in his belief that oral reading is an indispensible part of a child's education. At the 1969 meeting of the Illinois Council of Teachers of English, members declared the value of oral interpretation in the classroom. They praised the work of those who were knowledgeable of the skills of oral interpretation and who used these skills in the classroom. The assembly recommended that classes in oral interpretation be a requirement for education majors (Fernandez 8). This recommendation certainly reflects its affirmation of oral interpretation as a valuable teaching tool.

Children's literature is ideal for oral presentation. This material is, by nature, highly imaginative and is a stimulant for a creative experience. A successful reading will stimulate a child's imagination. Their reading range is broadened, and their limited experiences are enlarged as they vicariously experience the lives of others. They participate in the reading by listening creatively, hearing words
and giving them shapes in their mind. Characters and settings unfold as the reader supplies the information and the child mentally tunes in the picture. Ideally, the child, as audience, participates in the reading as actively as the reader.

Participating in a performance where the audience is comprised primarily of children is a delightful experience. Unlike adults, children tend to discount the distinction between the real world and world of make-believe (Smith 230). They do not question the existence of giants or the credibility of talking animals. Likewise, then, viewing a group performance, they accept the presence of scripts, the absence of elaborate stage settings, and the direct contact with a narrator. An audience of children is spontaneous, eager, and very demonstrative in their responses.

With ever increasing importance placed on literacy in our society, all possibilities that enhance its achievement should be explored. If we are to encourage children to read, we must determine what will motivate them. Oral interpretation as an academic discipline includes multi-voiced performances referred to by various names, such as group interpretation, readers theatre, chamber theatre, and interpreters theatre. These terms may be used interchangeably.

Statement of the Problems

Children's literature, like the child it is written for, is complex, intriguing, unpredictable, and honest. A combination of the child and the literature, in a performance
setting, can produce a pleasurable and educational experience. The emphasis is on the educational value of oral interpretation in the classroom. Anderson and Groff support this educational concept: "Oral interpretation is the oldest form of children's literature and is of special interest and value to children" (4).

Children enjoy seeing their peers perform, not to mention the creativity and energy that children add to children's literature. They conceptualize ideas in a different manner and, therefore, the physical and vocal outcome is vivid and fresh. A group interpretation of various stories by Dr. Seuss can exercise a child's creative processes as well as invoke a sense of unity in working with others. Whether they know it or not, as children interpret stories, they discover various meanings and new insights involving the literature. Literature gives pleasure to the child as well as understanding. As Lukens points out, "It explores the nature of human beings, the condition of human-kind" (9).

As a performer the child develops performing skills and expands language growth. As Lukens emphasizes, "Words are merely words, but real literature must give its readers pleasure and help them understand themselves and others" (23).

All evidence indicates that children benefit from experiencing literature presented to them orally. It might be assumed that even more benefits may be derived if the
children participate in the literature as performers. This thesis proposes to investigate the assumption that such participation will enhance a child's comprehension and appreciation of the literature performed, and to examine Readers Theatre as a means of achieving that participation.

Significance of the Study

There are many diverse literary genres to explore in children's literature: fantasy, folktales, myths, legends, fairy tales, and picture books. Today, children have the opportunity to meet and enjoy literature through many different media and in various places.

Lonsdale and Mackintosh believe that "The trend in modern education stresses personal growth--certain physical, social and intellectual needs" (16). Good literature can enhance this educational concept. Paul Hazard describes good literature in this statement:

I like books that remain faithful to the very essence of art... namely, those books that offer to children an intuitive and direct way of knowledge, a simple beauty capable of being perceived immediately, arousing in their souls vibration which will endure all their lives. (5)

Dr. Suess' stories can be considered good literature. His stories explore as well as fulfill a child's emotional needs. Experts in the field support his public recognition. May Hill Arbuthnot, author of Children and Books states,
"Dr. Suess is fact, fable, fantasy and fun" (Commine 311). Helen Ferris, Editor-in-Chief, Junior Literary Guild, writes: "...Dr. Seuss a delight for all—inimitable pictures, gay action, humor, zestful imagination" (Hoffman and Samuels 221). A group interpretation involving various pieces from Dr. Seuss can develop a child's mind as well as the performance ability. Most contemporary audiences expect to see adult performers in theatre or interpretation presentations. This thesis provides an alternative: the child performing children's literature. A child who understands a piece of literature as well as vocally expressing the piece can enjoy a very satisfying experience. Improving the voice and expressing one's self verbally heightens the effectiveness of the communication process.

The child as an oral reader benefits from the whole experience. Through analysis, prior to performance, the child makes discoveries of the piece, perhaps unknown to fellow students. An extended vocabulary is built by searching for meanings of new words and articulating them in performance. The reader must re-create for the listener the author's intent; therefore, one must know the major idea and concept of the piece. The child achieves this through analysis and imaginative study of the manuscript. Then, through practice and development of techniques, using the total body becomes an exciting experience for the reader and the listener. As David Thompson says, "In the process, the
interpreter can transcend his own role as a student of literature and become something of an artist himself (140).

Responding to literature with voice, face, body, gesture, and the total being comes very naturally to children. They are less inhibited than adults and are generally more spontaneous in their reactions. The rhythms of play, running, jumping, and hopping make the child sensitive to the rhythms and movements in poetry that make its strongest appeal to children (Arbuthnot 323).

Children who participate in an oral performance of literature are engaged in a social event, that of sharing. They bring pleasure and appreciation to their listeners but also add to their own pleasures.

Oral interpretation offers an exciting approach to the study of literature. Although many of its objectives are measured in intangibles as values, attitudes, appreciation, one can clearly observe the pleasure gained when exposed to this dynamic art.

Children's literature explores as well as fulfills a child's emotional needs. Security, acceptance, and love are major factors in early childhood development. Developing a child's appreciation of good children's literature can benefit children and their environment.

Scope of the Study

This thesis proposes a preparation of a Readers Theatre script employing children's literature as a viable vehicle
for teaching children to understand and appreciate literature based upon the assumption that oral interpretation is needed in the classroom. A review of the literature clearly illustrates this need. A group interpretation script: "The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss," is the main focus of concentration. The script will include only stories by Dr. Suess. It is not the purpose of this study to perform or explore other forms of literature. As primary grades are the main concern, middle school and high school will not be discussed.

With those goals in mind a critical analysis by the author as well as professional evaluations will be the major determiners to the overall effectiveness of this study.

Review of Literature

The subject of performing children's literature as an educational and creative concept in the classroom includes many areas of concentration. First, the significance of an oral approach to literature must be determined. Then sources justifying the correct method concerning the group interpretation approach and the evaluation measures in relation to the critical analysis of the script must be examined. Finally, a discussion concerning the literature chosen for the script will be included, as well as a discussion of the author's intent.

Lonsdale and Mackintosh discuss the importance of children meeting certain physical, social, and intellectual needs. These needs can be reinforced with various oral approaches to children's literature.
There are many studies related to the humanistic needs of the child in relation to children's literature. Huck specifically states the advantages of children's literature claiming that it "provides enjoyment, develops imagination, gives vicarious experience, develops insight into human behavior, and presents the universality of experience" (72). These are educational developments that children must receive in their formulative years. There are many significant texts in the field of children's literature in relation to the area of child development. Lonsdale and Mackintosh (16), deal with the nature of human beings and the condition of human-kind. They discuss how good children's literature can fulfill the child's emotional needs as well as develop security, acceptance, and love, all of which are factors in early childhood development. Anderson and Groff (6), stress the importance of oral literature, the oldest form of children's literature. In Higgen's book, Beyond Words: Mystical Fancy in Children's Literature, the value of reading literature aloud is reinforced and implemented as an industrious and effective teaching tool for language growth.

Lindfors (310-15) and Willebrand and Rieke (7-9) provide excellent evaluations of criticism and response of children's literature. Many examples of children's literature are examined, and the author's approaches are studied.

If one examines the history of literature one finds two major traditions: oral and written. Children do not
necessarily have to wait to learn to read before they are exposed to literature. There are many sources supporting the importance of expressing oneself verbally in the classroom. Chambers (82), Nelson and La Russo (vii), Phillips et al. (26), and Sikes (41) all support the statement that communication is the center of the education system. Relevant studies on the students’ verbal behavior and intellect in relation to oral methods are measured and re-evaluated.

There are many credible sources to justify oral interpretation and group interpretation as an effective means for performance and evaluative measures. Charlotte Lee’s *Oral Interpretation* is considered by many to be one of the best in the field. Her text includes an analysis of literature, body involvement, and voice development as the three main points of focus. Bowen et al. (220-25) also contribute to these concentrated areas through a discussion of the criteria involved in developing these elements. Interpretation is defined, and the principles of communication both visible and audible are determined. Different modes of literature prose, poetry, and drama, are introduced and defined. Finally, Coger and White (168-82) discuss the importance of group interpretation and its concept in relation to children’s literature. Long, et al. (77-86) also reinforce the importance of group interpretation and provide helpful staging concepts through examples.
Children's literature can be used for educational advancement beginning at an early age. Reading aloud makes children aware of language and expression, and encourages their creativity. Children performing children's literature should give the audience a fresh and honest approach, as well as stimulate the educational growth of the child in the process. Good children's literature, such as the stories written by Dr. Seuss, develop a child's mind; reading aloud enriches the child's vocabulary. The existing research regarding children performing children's literature seems to indicate that this type of activity would be a potentially useful educational technique.

Methodology

The first step involved is an investigation of the importance of children's literature in the academic environment. Many books on children's literature and oral interpretation in the classroom are concerned with the value of developing the child's humanistic values. According to various children's literature texts concerning educational development, literature provides the following stimuli: heightens enjoyment and imagination, give vicarious experience, develops insight into human behavior, and presents the universality of experience. If literature produces these qualities, then an oral approach can enhance and reinforce the language experience. Therefore, striving for a more verbal classroom situation through the performance of children's
literature should develop the child's educational growth. Frank Josette stresses: "Books are still the backbone of our accumulated knowledge and culture. They will long remain so, fed and stimulated by their rising ebullient sister arts" (21).

The second step in this study involves a script, consisting of stories by Dr. Seuss. Child performers will be used to illustrate the educational value of oral interpretation in the classroom. Ruth Strickland summarizes the importance of this educational concept:

Oral language in the elementary school is both means and end. It is almost of necessity the stuff of which the entire curriculum is made, if it is a curriculum that touches vitally the lives of children. Today when speech is of the utmost significance in every aspect of life outside the school, nothing could be more relevant. (61)

Third, the compiled script will be analyzed focusing on the criteria set by Coger and White in Readers Theatre Handbook: "evocative power, compelling characters, action, enriched language, and wholeness" (171). This is a highly respected book in the field of interpretation and incorporates many values discussed in this thesis. Coger and White reinforce the performance concept: "Children enjoy and profit in this activity themselves as well as being entertained by it" (171).
Martin Cobin, a scholar in the field of research, states: "The interpretative analysis, if it is complete, will also explore the relationship of interpretative speech techniques to the details of literary analysis" (342). The analysis itself is the essential part of the method. This type of methodology, descriptive or analytic, is clearly recognized as an acceptable and workable approach for this thesis.

Fourth, the outcome of this educational concept will be critically evaluated by the author. The criteria to be used are the following.

1. The script should provide a valuable tool for increasing a child's appreciation of literature.

2. The script should provide a creative outlet for the written word to transform to the spoken word.

3. The script should be easily adaptable to classroom environment.

Chapter II explores the importance of children's literature and the oral tradition as it applies to the classroom. Chapter III is the script, and the preparation and production procedures. Chapter IV discusses the evaluative measures.
Works Cited


CHAPTER II

ORAL COMMUNICATION AS A TEACHING CONCEPT

The Classroom as a Verbal Community

Teachers of all subjects and at all levels of instruction are involved with the process of communication in the classroom, whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, effectively or ineffectively. Unfortunately, the expression "Children should be seen and not heard" is practiced frequently in the classroom. Such practice inhibits the students from expressing themselves to their full communicative abilities. According to studies done by Willebrand and Rieke: "Oral communication has recently been identified as one of the basic skills that all school children should be taught" (v.). Helen K. Mackintosh, Editorial Chairman for various national child education committees, supports the previous statement and adds:

Because the effort of oral communication is so crucial, there is a need to make careful appraisal of current practices in teaching children. . . The total oral communication skills must be taught well at all levels of instruction so that pupils may develop increased proficiency as a continuing practice. Articulate communication is essential not only for adequate participation in society but also
Although the desire and need for classroom communication are clearly visible, educators frequently fail to incorporate them into their curriculum. The word "communication" is a modification of the Latin word *communicatus*, "to share." Therefore, educators should strive for a responsive atmosphere in the classroom. The extent to which a teacher can help students develop insight and understanding regarding their own behavior as individuals depends upon the effectiveness of classroom communication (Nelson and La Russo vii).

There is a validity for the claim that oral communication is one of the basic skills that society has an obligation to provide its children. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is designed to

... assist Federal, State, and local educational agencies to coordinate the utilization of all available resources for elementary and secondary education to improve instruction so that all children are able to master the basic skills of reading, mathematics, and effective communication, both written and oral.

(Willebrand and Rieke 78)

This Educational Act acknowledges oral communication as a co-equal partner within the traditional "three R's." The act is a very positive breakthrough for oral communication, but it also poses the problem of developing a working program with the realm of communication skills. Being a part of
a communicative society, teachers and administrators in the elementary schools should have dedicated themselves to providing instruction in oral interpretation. Why then are our elementary schools deficient in this area? Willebrand and Rieke suggest five reasons.

First, some are concerned with cost. Administrators feel materials and qualified instructors would not comply with the budget. In reality the cost are minimal since regular classroom teachers with training and supervision can do the instruction (Willebrand and Rieke 7).

Second, many people are ignorant of the law or choose to ignore it. Usually teachers care about developing the oral skills of students and will not let the need be unmet (Willebrand and Rieke 8).

Third, a few schools have indeed made tentative steps toward establishing programs in oral communication but they fall short of completion because of incomplete coverage of communication or the failure or inability to set out specific competencies. These limited attempts need to be recognized as tentative steps and be developed further (Willebrand and Rieke 8).

Fourth, some districts claim they have programs, but what they are actually doing is reporting on clinical speech programs or assistance from high school speech teachers. This is not providing a communication skills program for elementary children (Willebrand and Rieke 8).

Fifth, and foremost, schools have not built programs in oral communication because of the lack of qualified teachers and suitable materials (Willebrand and Rieke 8).
To be sure, classroom teachers must develop their own abilities to teach oral communication skills. The younger generation must learn to function in society, but the current methods of teaching do not seem to comply with oral communication standards. There is a genuine reciprocity in teaching oral communication. Children can learn to communicate, and their communication competencies can be built if children are allowed to express themselves openly in the classroom. With imagination, there is virtually no subject that cannot be taught while working on communication skills.

Willebrand and Rieke reiterate: "Because oral communication is the cement that binds society together and is the medium through which we learn and share our knowledge with others, it is possible to build skill in oral communication while studying other subjects" (14). Communication is essential to the teaching-learning experience; it is both a means and an end of learning.

The next logical consideration for effective classroom communication hinges on the development of language growth and the child as a versatile communicator. Judith Lindfors suggests three possibilities for developing children's language functions: narration, explanation, and personal expression (310). The teacher can incorporate these functions in the classroom curriculum. The examples focus attention on language usage in a very simplistic manner and constitute a starting point for a more verbal classroom situation.

The basic goal of narration is to develop in the child an orderly time sequence within a story, either real or imaginary.
Of course narrating serves different functions. Narration sometimes involves information purposes; sometimes persuades someone to change a course of action; sometimes for pure enjoyment. Lindfors discusses four major concepts that characterize effective narrating. The first involves selecting content appropriately (Lindfors 313). One should provide enough information without rambling; develop concise and to-the-point language patterns. The second concept is categorized as foregrounding and backgrounding (Lindfors 315). The major events should be carefully selected in carrying the momentum of the story. Relate the main events and do not dwell on the unimportant subordinate ideas. A third goal for effective narrating is conveying a chronological sequence of events (Lindfors 313). Be aware that the telling, whatever the techniques used, must make the order of events apparent to the listener. The fourth variable stresses using a variety of linguistic means (Lindfors 314). Avoid the monotonous phrases such as, and then . . . and so . . . .

Immerging children in these narrative concepts is an effective way to develop their ability to interpret narration. Children's literature is an obvious source for the development of narrative techniques. There are various activities related to basic skills that provide verbal outlets in the classroom. The first, of course, is a reading period. It is up to the teacher to provide the appropriate books and a comfortable surrounding conducive to a learning situation. Another idea for developing oral awareness is storytelling. The child may write his or her own story and then share it with the class.
These are just some ways to initiate a communicative environment. The child's reasons for engaging in narration are real ones—sheer enjoyment, sharing, and interesting information. The child should not be subjected to a narrative experience that is ruled by the teacher.

The same rule applies for the explanation process. Children should be able to put into words something that they understand and do so in such a way that their listeners will understand. Because they are so closely related, explanation/informing involve many of the same criteria as narration. As with narrative, effective explanation also involves selecting appropriate content for the listener's knowledge and interest. We must know what is appropriate and inappropriate for each particular listener.

Again, the purpose of foregrounding and backgrounding, is to inform others of the structure, relation, and processes of something they do not know about. An effective explanation incorporates enough but not too many relevant examples whose relationship to the main principles or processes remains clear and subordinate (Lindfors 319).

The next step for the explanation process involves ordering material clearly. What is crucial is that the information be presented in a series of bits such that they build coherently to form, ultimately, a comprehensible whole (Lindfors 319).

And the last is using a variety of linguistic means. An explanation is likely to be more effective if it is not simply
a series of factual statements, but involves various devices that help to relate it to the listeners knowledge and interest, such as an apt metaphor or several vivid examples (Lindfors 320).

Children can be important learning resource for one another. Informing and explaining to each other is natural. Teachers ask children to explain something so that they might get some insight into their understanding. The precaution a teacher must take is not to talk for the student. Children are practicing explanation everytime they read, write, listen to, or give someone directions. Children must explore language on their own; it is a valuable life skill.

Personal expression is another very important function in a child's language growth. At the very least the child's personal use of language builds self-identity, supports the growing understanding of the feelings of others, and provides a solid base for the appreciation of great literature (Lindfors 322). Despite the increasing pressures of an academically-oriented curriculum, teachers can develop verbal skills into all facets of learning.

Children's literature is an excellent way to feed this personal understanding and expression. The action-packed plot, character s word sounds, word meanings, and pictorial style all expose the child to learning experience. In A New Look at Children's Literature, Anderson and Groff state: "The foremost determinant of literary effectiveness is language. Only
through language can literature communicate; whether written or spoken the essence of literature is always verbal" (Hennings 76).

Narrating, explaining/informing, and expressing personal feelings and opinions are just a few language functions available for children. All the basic principles for effective language use remains the same. Lindfors succinctly states three effective language skills.

1. Language involves both receptive and productive abilities (interpreting and responding to the writing and speech of others as well as expressing in speech and writing).

2. Language involves developing an awareness of another's perspective and shaping expression appropriately for the listener/reader; or interpreting the language of others from the producer's perspective.

3. Language develops through the active involvement of children figuring out through using language in meaningful interaction, how they can make language work effectively--how they can accomplish with words. (330)

As educators the first responsibility is the student. The child must be received as an educated communicator at an impressionable age. An eminent speech pathologist, W. Johnson, states in the dedication page of his book, edited with
D. Moeller, *Speech Handicapped School children*:

Listen to the child well, to what he is saying, and almost saying, and not saying at all. He has something he wants to tell you, something that has meaning for him, that is important to him. He is not just being verbally frisky. Respect him as a speaker. Listen to him enough to hear him out. It is wonderful for him as a growing person to feel that he is being heard, that others care about what he is saying. Assume he's doing the best he can and that it is more important for him to want to talk to you than to sound correct. (7)

Readers Theatre is an excellent medium for the elementary classroom and children's literature is an effective genre both educationally and creatively for children to perform. It is an exciting way to introduce children to a vast wealth of literature. The foremost importance of performance of children's literature is its worth as sheer pleasure, but it also quickens children's imaginations, develops language skills, encourages them to read avidly, and stimulates concentrated listening (Coger and White 169-70).

Children enjoy becoming involved personally in classroom activities. Educationally, Readers Theatre for children develops a child's life skills. Long, Hudson and Jeffrey suggest "... that the children can perhaps enjoy an even fuller participation in literature through group performance,
a medium that actualizes the oral, aural, visual, and kineesthetic dimensions of the literary experience" (81). This concept encompasses the totality of language skills, and is a definite attraction supporting Readers Theatre in the classroom. When performing Readers Theatre in the classroom educators will observe a general improvement in individual speech skills, vocal responsiveness, body control, and the ability to listen with comprehension and appreciation.

As a result of such active involvement in the communication process, young people grow in oral sharing skills, develop a positive attitude toward presentational activity, and expand their vocabulary by listening and speaking together. Coger and White support this statement: "Readers Theatre well-presented can help make children attentive listeners, creative participators, and, hopefully, creators" (177).

The simplicity of production and effectiveness of results make Readers Theatre desirable in schools with inadequate stage facilities and where rehearsal time is at a minimum. More than that, it is a way of enjoying good literature through guided study, a mutually agreed-upon interpretation, and clear and expressive oral reading (McCaslin 161). The joy of performing in an educational situation is the feeling of unity one can achieve through classroom practice. Robert M. Post points out:

In ensemble reading, readers can be assigned parts commensurate with their abilities. Poorer readers,
for example, can be given small, easy parts which insure their success, and at the same time they will not be slowing down the more gifted readers. (170)

Teachers as directors of group performances of children's literature must be aware of the special demands of a child audience. Long, Hudson and Jeffrey have developed the following staging principles which may serve as basic guidelines for the primary teacher/director:

1. Credibility--the director should design and render all aspects of the production credible within the context of the story (children are quick to detect deception);

2. Action--rather than use descriptive phrasing, visualize the literature;

3. Characters--emphasize the qualities of one-dimensional, stereotyped, or caricatured (flat) characters;

4. Rhythm--emphasize patterns of rhythm which alternate "seize and relax" attention. Any repeated element (a color, phrase, prop or sound) becomes a rhythmic quality of the production;

5. Conflict--emphasize conflict, contrast and surprise whether in character, plot, scene;

6. Exaggeration--exaggerate voice quality, facial expressions and physical gestures;

7. Spectacle--use lighting, costumes, make-up,
and music to highlight important characters, scenes, movements and progressions that "connect" the beginning, middle and end of the story. (81)

Performance of literature is currently a vehicle for learning almost everything in the curriculum, including reading, writing, arithmetic, sciences, social studies and art. Children develop their physical and mental health, improve thinking abilities, clarify values and grow creatively through performing literature. The performance process is an ideal way to build aesthetic understanding and knowledge of good literature not to mention independent thinking, group cooperation and social awareness. Coger and White emphasize this philosophy:

Readers Theatre can be a highly dynamic and enjoyable way of broadening the lives of young people by allowing them a keener understanding of the world about them, of their fellow human beings, and of themselves. It introduces them to the wealth of literary materials that have been written especially for them. When vividly interpreted, this living canvas of literature creates for them an aesthetic adventure--a brush with beauty. (182)

This chapter discusses oral communication and Readers Theatre as a pedagogical tool for children. The next chapter illustrates the use of a children's script in the primary grades.
Works Cited


CHAPTER III

CREATING THE SCRIPT

Selection of Literature

Children's literature is the appropriate choice for this particular study. The task becomes not what literature to include, but rather, what literature to exclude. There is a vast amount of creative children's literature, and it is the function of the teacher as director to explore the literary possibilities.

The same qualities appear in children's books as in adult's books, but there are certain special qualities to look for in literature shared aloud with children (Coger and White 171). The stories should be entertaining, inspire creativity, offer excitement, and evoke verbal imagery. Dr. Suess' literature is a prime example. Margaret Martignini, Superintendent of Work with Children, Brooklyn Public Library, remarks:

"... pure unadulterated joy! Who more than boys and girls can appreciate the truth of 'a person's a person, no matter how small?' Only grownups, who will undoubtedly fight for the privilege of reading this aloud to children" (Seuss Horton Hears cover).

Coger and White's Reader's Theatre Handbook offers excellent criteria for helpful selection of material. Evocative
power, compelling characters, action, enriched language, and wholeness are definite considerations when choosing specific stories (33).

The first criteria, literature with strong evocative power, provides a creative outlet for the imagination through the incredible Zooks and Yooks and their outrageous weapons. The Butter Battle Book is an excellent example because it encourages the reader to empathize with the story and characters. It describes the nuclear uncertainty which is evident in the world today and creates within the reader an incredible feeling as Grandfather and VanItch confront each other with similar devices that could destroy humanity. The ultimate question is:

"Who's going to drop it?
Will you . . . ?
Or will he . . . ?" (42)

Stimulating a child's imagination and creativity develops a child's meaningful appreciation of literature.

The interaction of strongly delineated characters is the second essential criterion for a successful script. In addition to such intriguing names as Zooks and Yooks, Suess arouses the curiosity of adults and children with characters such as Sneetches, Gertrude McFuzz, and Bartholomew Cubbins. No matter how outrageous the characters, Seuss incorporates humanistic qualities which intensify the believability and compel the attention.
The third criterion, action, deserves special attention in a script for children. This need not always be an overt physical action, but may be an inward action concerning conflicts within plots and characters. The language of Seuss being rhythmic in nature creates a fast moving, active pace. The descriptive phrases work well for creative staging. The Seuss script lends itself to vivid stage pictures and flamboyant action. Children enjoy this visual imagery if it is presented suggestively because the objective is to stimulate creativity and imagination, not stifle it.

Dr. Seuss expands the English vocabulary with interesting nonsense words like grinch, oobleck, lorax, and bopulous. He is a master of sounds built into stories. The fourth criterion for appropriate material selection is "enriched language." Seuss' literature stresses this educational concept as language development is a main point of focus in many of the stories.

Dr. Seuss tells stories with a rhythmic rhyming that is so natural that an oral reader feels the words must always have belonged together in exactly that order. Seuss creatively uses alliteration and rhyme to achieve special effects; for example, it is Horton who hatches the egg and Lazy Mazy who claims it in the end in the marvelously silly, yet meaningful, *Horton Hatches the Egg* (Hennings 76). Humor is achieved through repetition, sometimes relatively simple, as in "My goodness! My gracious! My word!" (Seuss *Horton Hatches* 20)
and sometimes through more involved repetition, as in the recurring line, "An elephant's faithful one hundred percent!" (Suess Horton Hatches 15). Seuss occasionally invents words to achieve the precise combination of sound needed within the story. In other cases, he relies on onomatopoetic words—whizz, thumping, bumping, squeak, crack.

The fifth criterion is wholeness. The finished script must possess a wholeness, a clear beginning, middle, and end; and should adhere to a reasonable time limit and structured transitional material. The entire production should encompass a clear and concise unity worthy of performance standards.

Dr. Seuss fits all previous categories; now the process of adaptation and compilation takes place. An important consideration, especially for the child audience, is time limitations. The audience is an important factor when one is making arrangement decisions. Because of the heavy demands of imaginative participation of the audience a thirty to forty-five minute script is suitable. The child's attention span does not allow for a lengthy production, no matter how much spectacle is involved. This length of script also is convenient within the allotted class time.

The main focus of the script is to showcase "The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss." In compiling the various stories, emphasis is placed on dramatic framework, progression, and cohesion. Dramatic framework of a performance must include a strong interaction between the interpreters and the audience.
This provides for a sense of progression, or one idea leading to another, making for a strong denouement. The cohesion of the script, or linking the selections by transitions, is an important factor for structural purposes.

Because of the time element many of the selections must be shortened or "cut." The method of adapting a piece of literature involves a careful study of the literature. Seuss' literature poses a problem because it has a definite rhyme scheme and exact wording. The adapter must not break the rhythm that is inherent in the story. Rather than extracting a word here and a word there, it is more workable to lift whole stanzas from the literature. Yet the author's intent must be preserved. Coger and White support the adaptation process used in "The Wonderful World of dr. Seuss" by stating:

The adapter should select the details of description that will best stimulate the imagination of the audience to see the characters, their appearance and actions, and the setting in both its physical appearance and its mood values (82).

The script needs to include a variety of stories in order to sustain the interest of a young audience. Since time is an important factor, portions of the literature may be cut or rearranged for creative purposes.

The ultimate goal in preparing this script is to vivify the literature through performance, preserve the author's intent, and provide an educational as well as entertaining
Staging Techniques

Because of limited space in classroom situations, stage settings must be kept simple and readily adaptable. Fortunately the script contains enough imaginative action that simplicity of spectacle only heightens the literature and the performance.

The staging principles for the child audience in Long, Hudson, and Jeffrey support many of the ideas developed in the Seuss script. First of all, credibility is essential for the success of a children's script (81). James E. Higgens makes an interesting observation in Beyond Words: Mystical Fancy in Children's Literature:

Inventiveness, remember, is not to be judged by how far out the imagination of the writer may take his readers, but rather by the degree to which he can make the readers believe in the world he has created. (25)

Seuss' literature usually has a specific purpose no matter how absurd and zany the story. Whether it be educational or entertaining or both, Seuss' works usually have some identifiable meaning to adults and children.

The staging concepts for this production stimulate kinesic creativity. Action appeals to the child's imagination and sens of adventure. Action includes facial expressions and action phrases as well as animated movement. Because the
script is so animated, it lends itself to a movement oriented performance. For example, in *Yertle the Turtle*, the following passage occurs:

He order nine turtles to swim to his stone
and using these turtles he built a new throne.
Then Yertle climbed up the nine turtle stack
and viewed his domain from the ninth turtle's back. (6)

The action described suggest the possibility of building a pyramid. With two blocks and a simple stage levels a nine turtle stack can be accomplished with ease. A concerned director/teacher must remember the basic principle in children's literature for performance: "Show it don't tell it" (Long, Hudson and Jeffrey 81).

Characterization is another exciting aspect that builds upon the imagination and fantasy of a child. While children identify with "flat" or predictable characters, some degree of honesty must remain. Long, Hudson, and Jeffrey contend: "Flat characters are not necessarily shallow nor do they lack human dignity or depth of insight; rather, they are singularly directed and tenaciously persue the singular direction of their vision" (84). With such outlandish characters as Sylvester McMonkey McBean, or humanistic Horton the elephant, Seuss produces characters that are vivid, lively, and believable. They possess enduring qualities.

One final principle from Long, Hudson, and Jeffrey, which accompanies action, is exaggeration. This implies enlarging
the vocal quality, facial expressions, and movement, without distortion of the text. One is almost compelled to perform when reading the literature of Seuss, the rhythm and verbal sounds force an animated performance. Group performances can recapture the vitality of images and dialogue that the printed words only partially represent (86).

This particular script is to be performed in the primary classroom by the students for the students. A total of fifteen voices are indicated, but the script can accommodate any number of students. A large number presents a difficult but not impossible task of placement. The director/teacher must become a traffic control cop. It is important to incorporate all performers in every scene, this adds unity and provides for a more visually pleasing stage picture. As stated before, a simple stage setting, two blocks, makes for a more descriptive and vivid performance. Too much spectacle inhibits the imagination of the child as performer and audience member.

The basic purpose of this performance is to develop children's creative ability through motivational literature. Emphasis is on the voice and the body rather than elaborate stage settings, costumes, or make-up. If one is to experience literature fully, the text must be featured and not the spectacle.

Another factor in performing Readers Theatre is the use of the manuscript. The question of whether a script is to be memorized or the readers are to carry the script depends upon
the demands of the text. When a production is very animated and requires a lot of movement, a manuscript often limits the action and therefore may limit the total effectiveness. On the other hand the manuscript is a symbol of the literature, and to retain the symbolic role of the manuscript is an effort to suggest the storytelling mode. The decision was made that the narrator for each story should carry a script. This leaves the performers free to move and gives the audience the opportunity to enjoy the highly visual elements of readers' interaction. At the same time the narrator's script helps retain the presentational mode of interpreters theatre.

Another common characteristic of group reading is the use of offstage focus rather than onstage or direct focus used in traditional theatrical productions. Because of the energy involved in children's literature and the enormous amount of action, onstage focus along with audience interaction is the most desirable solution. The narrators usually employ offstage focus as storytellers while the interpreters react to one another and the audience response. Staging devices are important for the success of any production. The staging may be simple in style or utilize the many techniques of spectacle. Children's literature is visual and action-oriented by nature, but as educators the main concern is to serve the literature. Bowen, Aggert, and Rickert apply this rule to all performances: "Do no more than absolutely necessary. Good reading will force the audience to do the rest" (429).
Production Concept

After the material is selected and adapted a production concept is necessary for structural purposes. Long, Hudson, and Jeffrey describe the production concept as follows:

A production concept establishes a causal relationship between what you take a piece of literature to mean and how it is actualized. A production concept embodies what you have found (your interpretation through analysis) and what you intend to do (adaptation, rehearsal, staging); it is the articulation of your intent. Without a production concept, a performance is left to whim or change; with one, you as the director, have an approach from which to work—-even though that approach may change. (19)

A group performance of "The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss" is a literary form that simultaneously entertains and educates children. The basic thematic approach dictates a script "filled with memorable characters and the visual and physical illusions of a fantasy world" (Long, Hudson, and Jeffrey 345). The script's main objective is to vivify through action the story's humanistic experiences for the child.

One or more narrators are used in each of the various segments or stories. This helps to develop the storytelling quality essential for total sharing of the literature. Consistent with the narrative approach, the narrators will employ offstage focus so as to maintain a direct audience relationship.
The other interpreters will incorporate onstage focus.

For educational purposes the script is arranged for many voices, although it can easily be reduced to any size. The main emphasis is the child performing for the child. Much creative energy and vocal expression is needed to successfully accomplish this task, but it can be done with enthusiastic students who believe in total vocal and body involvement without the use of spectacle.

This production offers the performers practice in several specific aspects of performance:

1. developing broad characterization that boarders caricature;
2. establishing rhythm and pace through style of language;
3. achieving ensemble interaction to advance scenes;
4. using movement and set pieces with clarity and economy and;
5. achieving mobility within the narrator in relation to the characters in the story and to the child audience (Long, Hudson, and Jeffrey 299 and 327).

Through many rehearsals and discussions concerning the literature, the humanistic goals of Dr. Seuss' stories can be better understood. The approach a teacher takes with a specific story is an intrinsic factor in developing the humanistic qualities within the literature. The staging, the
characterizations, and the line divisions also dictate the course of the literature. The decision to use narrators, which help aesthetic distance, aid in developing the flow of the story. This in turn creates strongly delineated characters, who in turn visualize the meaning of the text and bring it to life.

With a practical understanding of the production concept and a discussion of production procedures, one can then explore the possibilities within the following script.

"The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss"

This script includes fifteen voices indicated by the # symbol. It can be adapted for any number of voices depending upon the classroom situation.

All: Enter singing ABC song and stop on W . . .

#1: Willie Waterloo washes Warren Wiggens who is washing Waldo Woo.

#1: W stands for Wonderful.

#3: It stands for watermoose, too.

#4: For worms

#1-5: and worlds

#1-10: and words

#1-15: and welcome.

All: Welcome to the wonderful, wonderful, wonderful, world of Dr. Seuss.
All but #5: Uh, what do you know about tweetle beetles? (Seuss Fox 50). (Frenetic transitional mutterings of "tweetle beetles" till placement is achieved. This occurs during all "tweetle beetle" transitions.)

#5: Did I ever tell you that Mrs. McCave had twenty three sons and she named them all Dave? Well, she did, and that wasn't a smart thing to do. You see, when she wants one and calls out:

#14: Yoo-Hoo, come into the house, Dave, . . .

#5: she doesn't get one.

All twenty-three Daves of hers come on the run. This makes things quite difficult on the McCaves' as you can imagine with so many Daves. and often she wishes that, when they were born she had name one of them:

#6: Bodkin Van Horn.

#7: And one of them Hoos-Foos.

#8: And one of them Snim.

#9: And one of them Hot-Shot.

#10: And one Sunny Jim.

#11: And one of them Shadrack.

#12: And one of them Blinkey.

#13: And one of them Stuffy.

#15: And one of them Stinkey.

#1: Another one Putt-Putt.
#2: Another one Moon Face.
#3: Another one Marvin O'Gravel Balloon Face.
#4: And one of them Ziggy.
#15: And one Soggy Muff.
#6: One Buffalo Bill.
#7: And one Buffalo Buff.
#8: And one of them Sneepy.
#9: And one Weepy Weed.
#10: And one Paris Garters.
#11: And one Harris Tweed.
#12: And one of them Sir Michael Carmichael Zutt.
#13: And one of them Zanzibar Buck-Buck McFate.
#5: But she didn't do it.
And now it's too late.
#14: Yoo-Hoo come into the house Dave!!!!!!! (Seuss Sneetches 37-41)

All but #2 & 15:
Say what do you know about tweetle beetles? (Seuss Fox 50)

#15: On the far away island of Sala-ma-sond,
Yertle the turtle was King of the pond.
Yertle the turtle the King of them all
decided the kingdom he ruled was too small.
#1: I'm ruler and master of all that I see,
but I don't see enough,
that's the trouble with me.
He ordered nine turtles to swim to his stone and using these turtle he built a new throne.

Then Yertle climbed up the nine-turtle stack and viewed his domain from the ninth turtle's back.

I'm Yertle the turtle, oh marvelous me for I am the ruler of all that I see.

Turtles. More turtles.

Don't look so dismayed.

But the turtles way down in the pond were afraid.

They trembled.

They shook.

But they came.

They obeyed.

From all over the pond they cam swimming by dozens.

Whole families of turtles with uncles and cousins.

Then Yertle the turtle was perched up so high, he could see forty miles from his throne in the sky.

I'm King of the butterflies,

King of the air.

Ah, me, what a throne.

What a wonderful chair.

And then from below in the great heavy stack came a groan from a plain little turtle named Mack:

Your Majesty, please, I don't like to complain,
but down here below we're feeling great pain.
I know up on top you are seeing great sights,
but down at the bottom, we too, should have rights.
We turtles can't stand it.
Our shells will all crack.

#15: And that plain little turtle below in the stack,
#2: That plain little turtle whose name was just Mack
#15 & #2: decided he'd taken enough and he had.
#15: And that plain little lad got a little bit mad.
#2: And that plain little Mack did a plain little thing.
#15 & #2: He burped. And his burp shook the throne of the King.
#2: And Yertle the turtle, the King of the trees
#15: the King of the air and the bird and the bees,
#2 & #15: King Yertle the turtle of all Sala-ma-sond
fell off his high throne
and fell plunk in the pond. (Seuss Yertle 1-28)

All but #4 & 6:
Hey, what do you know about tweetle beetles? (Seuss Fox 50)

#4 & #6: One day making tracks in the prairie of Prax,
#4: came a North-Going Zax
#6: and a South-Going Zax.
#4 & #6: And it happened that both of them came to a place
where they bumped.
There they stood.
Foot to foot.
Face to face.

#7: Look here, now,

#4: the North-Going Zax said.

#7: I say, you're blocking my path.

You are right in my way.

I'm a North-Going Zax and I always go North.

Get out of my way now and let me go forth.

#8: Who's in whose way?

#6: Snapped the South-Going Zax.

#8: I always go South, making South-Going tracks.

So you're in my way.

And I ask you to move

and let me go South

in my South-Going groove.

#4: Then the North-Going Zax puffed his chest up with pride.

#7: Well, I never,

take a step to one side

and I'll prove to you that I won't change my ways

if I have to keep standing here fifty-nine days.

#8: And I'll prove to you,

#5: yelled the South-Going Zax.

#8: That I can stand here on the prairie of Prax

for fifty-nine years

for I live by a rule

that I learned as a girl in South-Going school.
Never budge.
That's my rule.
Never budge in the least.
Not an inch to the west.
Not an inch to the east.
I'll stay here not budging, I can and I will,
if it makes you and me and the whole world stand still.

Well . . . of course the world didn't stand still.
The world grew.
In a couple of years the new highway came through,
and they built it right over those two stubborn Zax,
and left them there standing unbudged in their tracks.

(Seuss Sneetches 27-35)

I ask you, what do you know about tweetle beetles?
(Seuss Fox 50)

Sighed Mazy a lazy bird hatching an egg.

I'm tired and I'm bored and I've kinks in my leg
from sitting, just sitting here day after day.
It's work.
How I hate it.
I'd much rather play.

Then Horton the elephant passed by her tree.

Hello.
You've nothing to do
and I do need a rest.
Would you like to sit on the egg,
on the egg in my nest?

#12: Me on your egg?
Why, that doesn't make sense.
Your egg is so small, Mam,
and I'm so immense.

#10: Tut tut. I know you can do it.
Just sit on it softly.
You are gentle and kind.
Come be a good fellow.
I know you won't mind.

#12: Very well. You want a vacation?
Go fly off and take it.
I'll sit on your egg
and I'll try not to break it.
I'll stay and be faithful.
I mean what I say.

#10: Toodle-oo.
#9: Sang out Mazy and fluttered away.
#10: Hm-m-m ... The first thing to do
is to prop up this tree
and make it much stronger.
That has to be done before I get on it,
I must weigh a ton.

#9: Then carefully,
#11: tenderly,
gently he crept
up the trunk to the nest
where the little egg slept.
And he sat all that day
and kept the egg warm . . .
. . . and he sat all night
through a terrible storm.
It poured.
And it lightninged.
It thundered.
It rumbled.
This isn't much fun.
The poor elephant grumbled.
I wish she'd come back
cause I'm cold and I'm wet.
I hope that that Mazy bird doesn't forget.
So Horton kept sitting there day after day.
And soon it was Autumn.
The leaves blew away.
And then came the Winter,
the snow and the sleet.
And icicles hung from his trunk and his feet.
But Horton kept sitting,
and said with a sneeze,
I'll stay on this egg
and I won't let it freeze
I meant what I said
and I said what I meant . . .

... an elephant's faithful
one hundred per cent.

So poor Horton sat there the whole Winter through
and then came the Springtime with troubles anew.
His friends gathered round and they shouted with

glee!

Look! Horton the elephant's up in a tree.

How absurd!

Old Horton the elephant thinks he's a bird.

From the egg that he'd sat on for 51 weeks.

There rang out the noisiest ear splitting squeak.

A thumping.

A bumping

A wild alive scratching.


But it's mine,

screamed the bird when she heard the egg crack.

The work was all done,
so she had flown back.

It's my egg. It's my egg.

You stole it from me.

Get off of my nest
and get out of my tree.

Poor Horton backed down with a sad heavy heart . . .
but at that very instant the egg burst apart.

#9: And out of the pieces of red and white shell,
from the egg that he'd sat on so long and so well,

#11: Horton the elephant saw something whizz.

#9: It had ears and a tale and a trunk just like his.

It's something brand new.

All: It's an elephant bird. (Seuss Horton Hatches)

All but #13 & #14:

Please--what do you know about tweetle beetles?
(Seuss Fox 50)

#13: Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches had bellies with stars.

#14: The Plain-Belly Sneetches had none upon thars.

#13: Those stars weren't so big.
They were really so small
you might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.
But, because they had stars,
all the Star-Belly Sneetches would brag,

#1-#6: We're the best kind of Sneetch on the beaches.

#13: With their snoots in the air,
they would sniff and they'd snort,

#1-#6: We'll have nothing to do with the Plain-Belly sort.

#13: And whenever they met some,
when they were out walking,
they'd hike on past them
without even talking.
When the Star-Belly children went out to play ball,

Could a Plain-Belly get in the game . . .? Not at all.

You only could play if your bellies had stars,

and the Plain-Belly children had none upon thars.

When the Star-Belly Sneetches had frankfurter roasts or picnics or parties or marshmallow toasts,

They never invited the Plain-Belly Sneetches.

They left them out cold, in the dark of the beaches.

They kept them away.

Never let them come near.

And that's how they treated them year after year.

Then ONE day, it seems . . .

while the Plain-Belly Sneetches were moping and doping along on the beaches,

just sitting there wishing their bellies had stars...

A stranger zipped up in the strangest of cars!

My friends

he announced in a voice clear and keen,

My name is Sylvester McMonkey McBean.

And I've heard of your troubles.

I've heard you're unhappy.

But I can fix that
I'm the Fix-it-up Chappie.
I've come here to help you.
I have what you need.
And my prices are low.
And I work at great speed.
And my work is one hundred per cent guaranteed!

#13 & #14: Then, quickly, Sylvester McMonkey McBean
put together a very peculiar machine.
And he said,

#15: You want stars like a Star-Belly Sneetch . . .?
My friends, you can have them for three dollars each!
Just pay me your money and hop right aboard!

#13 & #14: So they clambered inside.
Then the big machine roared.

#13: And it klonked.
#14: And it bonked.
#13: And it jerked.
#14: And it berkled.

#13 & #14: And it bopped them about.
But the thing really worked!

#14: When the Plain-Belly Sneetches popped out,
they had stars!
They actually did.
They had stars upon thars!
Then they yelled at the ones who had stars at the start,
We're exactly like you.
You can't tell us apart.
We're all just the same, now, you snooty old smarties.
And now we can go to your frankfurter parties.

Good grief!

Groaned the ones who had stars at the first.

We're still the best Sneetches
and they are the worst.
But, now, how in the world will we know,

they all frowned,

if which kind is what,
or the other way round?

Then up came McBean with a very sly wink and he said,

Things are not quite as bad as you think.
So you don't know who's who.
That is perfectly true.
But come with me, friends.
Do you know what I'll do?
I'll make you, again, the best Sneetches on beaches
and all it will cost you is ten dollars eaches.
Belly stars are no longer in style,
what you need is a trip through my Star-off-Machine.
This wondrous contraption will take off your stars
so you won't look like Sneetches who have them on thars.
And that handy machine working very precisely removed all the stars from their tummies quite nicely. Then, with snoots in the air, they paraded about and they opened their beaks and they let out a shout.

We know who is who! Now there isn't a doubt. The best kind of Sneetches are Sneetches without!

Then, of course, those with stars all got frightfully mad. To be wearing a star now was frightfully bad. Then, of course, old Sylvester McMonkey McBean invited them into his Star-off-Machine.

Then, of course from then on, as you probably guess, things really got into a horrible mess.

All the rest of that day, on those wild screaming beaches, the Fix-it-Up Chappie kept fixing up Sneetches.

Off again!

On again!

In again!

Out again!

Through the machine they raced round and about again, changing their stars every minute or two.
They kept paying money.
They kept running through.
Until neither the Plain nor the Star-Bellies knew whether this one
was that one . . .
or that one
was this one
or which one
was what one . . .
or what one
was who.
Then, when every last cent of their money was spent,
The Fix-it-Up Chappie packed up and he went.
And he laughed as he drove in his car up the beach,
They never will learn.
No. You can't teach a Sneetch!
But McBean was quite wrong.
I’m quite happy to say
that the Sneetches got really quite smart on that day.
THAT DAY THEY decided that Sneetches are Sneetches
and no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches.
That day, all the Sneetches forgot about stars
and whether they had one,
or not,
upon thars. (Seuss Sneetches 3-24)
All but #1 & #2:

Now, what do you know about tweetle beetles?
(Seuss Fox 50)

#1: On the last day of summer,
ten hours before fall . . .
my grandfather took me out to the Wall.
For a while he stood silent.
Then finally he said,
with a very sad shake of his very old head,

#2: As you know, on this side of the Wall are Yooks.
On the far other side of this Wall live the Zooks.

#1: Then my grandfather said,

#2: It's high time that you knew
of the terribly horrible thing that Zooks do.
In every Zook house
and in every Zook town

All: every Zook eats his bread with the butter side down.

#2: But we Yooks, as you know, when we breakfast or sup,
spread our bread,

#1: Grandpa said,

#2: with the butter side up.
That's the right, honest way!

#1: Grandpa gritted his teeth.

#2: So you can't trust a Zook who spreads bread under-
neath!

Every Zook must be watched!
He has kinks in his soul!
That's why, as a youth, I made watching my goal,
watching Zooks for the Zook-Watching Border Patrol!
In those days, of course, the Wall wasn't so high
and I could look any Zook square in the eye.
If he dared to come close I could give him a twitch
with my tough-tufted prickly Snick-Berry Switch.
For a while that worked fine.
All the Zooks stayed away and our country was safe.
Then one terrible day a very rude Zook by the name of VanItch
snuck up and sling shotted my Snick-Berry Switch!
With my broken-off switch, with head hung in shame,
to the Chief Yookeroo in great sorrow I came.
But our Leader just smiled. He said,

#3: You're not to blame.
And those Zooks will be sorry they started this game.
We'll dress you right up in a fancier suit!
We'll give you a fancier slingshot to shoot.

#2: And he ordered the Boys in the Back Room to figger
how to build me some sort of a Triple-Sling-Jigger.
With my Triple-Sling-Jigger I sure felt much bigger.
I marched to the Wall with great vim and great vigor,
right up to VanItch with my hand on the trigger.
I'll have no more nonsense, I said with a frown,
from Zooks who eat bread with the butter side down!
VanItch looked quite sickly.
He ran off quite quickly.
I'm unhappy to say he came back the next day
in a spiffy new suit with a big new machine,
and he snarled as he said,
looking frightfully mean,

You may fling those hard rocks with your Triple-
Sling-Jigger.
But I also, now have my hand on a trigger!
My wonderful weapon,
Jigger-Rock Snatchem
will fling'em right back just as quick as we catch'em.
We'll have no more nonsense.
We'll take no more gupp
from you Yooks who eat bread with the butter side up.

I have failed, sir, I sobbed as I made my report
to the Chief Yookeroo in the headquarters fort.
He just laughed.

You've done nothing at all of the sort.
Our slingshots have failed.
That was old-fashioned stuff.
Slingshots, dear boy, are not modern enough.
All we need is some new fangled kind of a gun.
My Boys in the Back Room have already begun
to think up a walloping whizz-zinger one!
My Bright Boys are thinking.
They're on the right track.
They'll think one up quick
and we'll send you right back.

#2: They thought up a great one!
They certainly did.
They thought up a gun called the Kick-a-Poo Kid
which they loaded with powerful Poo-a-Doo Powder
and ant's eggs and bee's legs and dried-fried clam chowder.
And they carefully trained a real smart dog named Daniel
to serve as our country's first gun-toting spaniel.
Then Daniel, the Kick-a-Poo Spaniel,
and I marched back toward the Wall with our heads held up high
while everyone cheered and their cheers filled the sky:

All: Fight! Fight! For the Butter Side Up! Do or die!

#2: Well . . . We didn't do.
And we didn't quite die.
But we sure did get worsted, poor Daniel and I.
VanItch was there too!
And he said, the old pig,

#4: The Boys in my Back Room invented this rig
called the Eight-Nozzled, Elephant-Toted Boom-Blitz.
It shoots high-explosive sour cherry stone pits
and will put your dumb Kick-a-Poo Kid on the fritz.

#2: Poor Daniel and I were scared out of our witz!
Once more, by VanItch I was bested and beat.
Once again I limped home from the Wall in defeat.
I dragged and I sagged and my spirits were low,
as low as I though they ever could go,
when I heard a . . .

All: . . . Boom-Bah!

#2: And a . . .

All: . . . Diddle-dee-dill!

#2: And our Butter-Up Band marched up over the hill!
The Chief Yookeroo had sent them to meet me
along with the Right-Side-Up song Girls to greet me.
They sang:

Girls: Oh, be faithful! Believe in thy butter!

#2: And they lifted my spirits right out of the gutter!

#3: My boy

#2: smiled the Chief Yookeroo,

#3: we've just voted and made you a general!
You've been promoted.
Your pretty new uniform's ready.
Get in it!
And what's more, this time you are certain to win it.
My Boys in the Back Room have finally found how.
Just wait till you see what they've puttered up now!
In their great new machine you'll fly over that Wall
and clobber those Butter-Down Zooks one and all!

#2: Those Boys in the Back Room sure knew how to putter!
They made me a thing called the Utterly Sputter
and I jumped aboard with my heart all aflutter
and steered toward the land of the Upside-Down Butter.
This machine was so modern, so frightfully new,
no one knew quite exactly just what it would do!
But it had several faucets that sprinkle Blue Goo
which somehow, would sprinkle the Zooks as I flew
and gum up that upside-down butter they chew.
I was racing pell-mell
when I heard a voice yell,

#4: If you sprinkle us Zooks, you'll get sprinkled as well!

#2: VanItch had a Sputter exactly like mine! And he yelled,

#4: My Blue-Gooer is working just fine!
And I'm here to say
that if Yooks can goo Zooks, you'd better forget it.
Cause Zooks can goo Yooks.

#2: I flew right back home and, as you may have guessed,
I was downright despondent, disturbed, and depressed.
And I saw, just as soon as I stepped back on land,
so were all of the girls of the Butter-Up Band.
The Chief Drum Majorette, Miz Yookie-Ann Sue, said

#6: That was a pretty sour fight that you flew.
And the Chief Yookeroo has been looking for you!

#2: I raced to his office. The place was a sight.

#3: Have no fears,

#2: Said the Chief.

#3: Everything is all right.

My Bright Back Room Boys have been brighter than bright.

They've thought up a gadget that's newer than new.

It is filled with mysterious Moo-Lacka-Moo

and can blow all those Zooks clear to Sala-ma-goo.

They've invented:

Boys: The BITSY BIG-BOY BOOMEROO!

#3: is around.

#2: As I raced for that Wall, with bomb in my hand,

I noticed that every last Yook in our land

was obeying our Chief Yookeroo's grim command.

They were all bravely marching, with banners aflutter.

Down a hole! For their country! And Right-Side-Up Butter!

#1: That's when Grandfather found me! He grabbed me.

He said,

#2: You should be down that hole! And you're up here instead!

But perhaps this is all for the better, somehow.

You will see me make history! Right Here! AND RIGHT NOW!
Grandpa leapt up that Wall with a lopulous leap
and he cleared his hoarse throat with a bopulous beep.
He screamed,

Here's the end of that terrible town
full of Zooks who ear bread with butter side down!

And at that very instant we heard a klupp-klupp
of feet on the Wall
and old VanItch klupped up!
The Boys in HIS Back Room had made him one too!
In his fist was another Big-Boy Boomeroo!

I'll blow you,
he yelled,
into pork and wee beans!
I'll butter-side-up you to small smithereens!

Grandpa! I shouted. Be careful! Oh, gee!
Who's going to drop it?
Will you . . .? Or will he . . .?
Be patient,
Said Grandpa.

We'll see. We will see . . . (Seuss Butter)

Tell us: What do you know about tweetle beetles?

Well, Okay . . . When Tweetle Beetles fight it's
called a tweetle beetle battle.

And when they battle in a puddle it's a tweetle
beetle puddle battle.

#6: And when tweetle beetles battle with paddles in a puddle they call it a tweetle beetle puddle paddle battle.

#7: And when beetle battle beetles in a paddle puddle battle and the beetle battle puddle is puddle in a bottle they call this a tweetle beetle bottle puddle paddle battle muddle.

#8: And when beetles fight these battles in a bottle with their paddles and the bottle's on a puddle and the poodle's eating noodles they call this a muddle puddle tweetle poodle beetle noodle bottle paddle battle. (Seuss Fox 50-9)

#15: Okay! Okay! That's enough of all of that we have to figure a way to get out of here . . .

All but #15: (start singing ABC song till G)

#15: No, no, no, not that again. G stands for goodbye!

All: GOODBYE! FROM THE WONDERFUL OF DR. SEUSS.

The following chapter constitutes an evaluation of the script and production procedures.
Works Cited


Seuss, Dr. *Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories.* New York:
CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter constitutes an evaluation of the script, "The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss" and will emphasize oral skill development in the child. As previously shown, verbal communication through readers theatre gives students an appreciation for literature and enriches their language and vocabulary skills. Interpretation as a means of enhancing language growth in the elementary student is examined. In order for these benefits to be realized, teachers in the elementary grades must be cognizant of the importance of oral communication skills. Consequently, this evaluation will include suggestions from elementary school teachers and will propose ways in which these teachers can effectively teach these important skills to the students.

Copies of the script were submitted to four educators. Because of the nature of this study, teachers with background in oral interpretation, elementary education, English, and reading skills were selected. Three teachers were chosen from Newton Rayzor Elementary School, Denton, Texas. They are: Cheryll Dennis, a remedial reading teacher, Joy Wright, a third grade teacher, and Louis Tanner, a librarian. Also chosen was Ann Caldwell, an English teacher at Denton (Texas) High School, and formerly a middle school Speech teacher at
Strickland Junior High School, Denton, Texas. Each individual was asked to critique the script based on that individual's area of expertise. A complete transcript of these critiques is included in the appendix (See Appendices B, C, and D).

The following criteria were used to evaluate the script as it relates to the oral activity in students.

1. The script should provide a valuable tool for increasing a child's appreciation of literature.

2. The script should provide a creative outlet for transforming the written word to the spoken word.

3. The script should be easily adaptable to classroom environments.

The first criterion suggests the script's function as a pedagogical tool for literary appreciation. As stated earlier, a strong script includes the guidelines provided in Coger and White's *Readers Theatre Handbook*. These guidelines include "evocative power, compelling characters, action, enriched language, and wholeness" (33). "The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss" meets these criteria. It is a self-contained script, which stimulate imagination and insight, and it can leave the audience with a pleasurable and memorable experience. Therefore, the script can be a valuable tool for increasing a child's appreciation of literature.

Joy Wright and Cheryll Dennis, commenting on this script, claim it is a fun and exciting way for children to improve their appreciation of literature and develop language growth.
Louise Tanner, while expressing some doubts about Dr. Seuss' stories does appreciate his use of morals in the stories. Ann Caldwell makes positive comments regarding the rhythm of the language and the balance of selections within the script. Wright, Dennis, and Tanner stress the need to perform the script, although they express some reservations regarding the selection of student performers. Additionally, they feel the script is too long, and they warn that the characters and vocabulary may be too complex for primary students. To overcome some of these problems, they suggest using older students or a select group for performing the script. Caldwell, a former oral interpretation teacher, does not express these doubts. Perhaps those elementary teachers who are trained in oral interpretation and have taught oral interpretation in the classroom are more familiar with these problems and how they can be overcome.

The second criterion concerns the script as a viable vehicle for expressing the written word. Students must learn to express their ideas, and oral interpretation may be a way of vitalizing the study of literature, achieving a personal growth in students and enriching the cultural life in the community (Coger and White 13). If students can bring to life what they read on a page by verbally expressing it, they have internalized that literature and therefore may develop a deeper knowledge of the written word. Ann Caldwell notes that the literature involved in this script "cries to be read
aloud." She also emphasizes an important potential outcome, that children will realize the power and delight of our language when they see this script in performance.

A group interpretation performance of Seuss literature allows the students to express themselves at every level: "mental, emotional, physical, visual, aural, and aesthetic" (Coger and White 171). The exploration of the written word through performance will almost certainly achieve more enjoyment and educational response than mere silent reading of the text.

The third criterion is practical use of the script in the classroom. The obvious benefits of oral interpretation in the classroom are: vocabulary enrichment, verbal expression, and listening skill development. In the view of this author, Dr. Seuss' literature is easily adaptable to a performance mode because it is so rhythmic and stylized in nature.

While there are benefits to using oral interpretation in the classroom many limitations may be present. The first potential limitation is the length of the script. Wright, Dennis, and Tanner feel the script is too long for students in grades one through three. In addition Tanner concentrates on the last two stories and advises shortening them or excluding them all together. Caldwell seems to think the script is short enough to accommodate a child's attention span. Perhaps Caldwell's experience allows her to visualize the fast pace and action in the script. While the script may be too
long, this length was chosen to permit teachers greater flexibility in adapting the script for classroom use. It may easily be shortened or excerpts may be utilized depending upon the particular needs of the teacher.

A second limitation involves the performance abilities of the students. This limitation may be especially problematic for students who are below-average readers, as is the case with Dennis' remedial reading class. Perhaps this problem can be overcome with shorter lines and minor adaptations of the script. Tanner and Wright concur in this view that students in grades one through three may not have the stamina or reading experience to perform such an animated script.

The elementary teachers place a high priority on student intellect in preparing to perform this script. In addition, students who are highly motivated by experienced teachers are better equipped to perform this script in the classroom. This is a result of the teacher's ability to develop appreciation of oral expression of the written word.

The third limitation concerns teacher preparation. As some of the critiques of this script indicate, unfortunately, not all teachers are adequately prepared to teach oral interpretation. Since teacher certification frequently excludes training in oral interpretation, many teachers are not properly trained to teach oral interpretation in the classroom. This results in a situation where only the very bright students are capable of undertaking the performance of a script such as
the one proposed in this study. This writer concludes, however, that students of all learning levels should not only be given the opportunity to express themselves in the classroom, but should be urged to do so.

In summary, in order to realize the benefits of using this script in the classroom, several limitations must be overcome. If these limitations can be overcome, the script will satisfy the third criterion.

Three conclusions are drawn from this study. First, the script is an educational as well as an enjoyable way to promote appreciation of children's literature in the classroom. Each educator who evaluated the script found Dr. Seuss' stories helpful in teaching literature to children. Second, the script provides a creative outlet for the student, transforming the written word to the spoken word. Encouraging a child to add interpretive meaning and personal insight to the literature. Third, the script is adaptable to classroom environments. As noted earlier this task is made easier when the teacher has experience involving group interpretation techniques.

Overall, oral communication is the process of sharing with others, through speech, one's understanding of the intellectual and emotional meaning of a particular literary object. Primary among the several values attributed to oral reading as an instrument of learning and teaching in primary classrooms is its use as a means of studying literature. The
verbal classroom also contributes to improving speech skills, developing creativity, and is useful as a mode for communicating information. Its limitations arise chiefly from improper application.

The questions raised in this study that need to be addressed by researchers in the future are the following.

1. Can teachers be trained to incorporate effective oral skills and readers theatre in the elementary classroom?

2. How do skills learned through oral interpretation enhance other subject fields?

3. How can classes designed to further the study of oral awareness in the primary classroom be instituted in the curriculum?

This thesis studies the appreciation and understanding of children's literature through performance in the primary classroom. Only through stronger concern for the verbal skills in the classroom can young children develop oral awareness.
Works Cited

APPENDIX A

EVALUATION COVER LETTER

This is a first draft of my script for my thesis—"The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss: A Group Interpretation Script for Performance in the Primary Classroom. Any comments and criticism you can offer would be appreciated. I plan to include your evaluations in my thesis, so I would appreciate a separate written appraisal.

Basically, my script adheres to the basic principles of Coger and White: evocative power, compelling characters, action, enriched language and wholeness. This script will not be performed for the thesis itself, so the material and supposition of performance should be the main focus. I plan on incorporating children in a classroom situation to perform the script. And because of your affiliation with students and their needs, I hope you can tell me if it is a viable vehicle for the understanding and appreciation of children's literature as well as developing language growth, creativity, and listening skills within the student.

A little insight into my production concept may give you a better idea how to approach the script. It is a very animated (characters) and very visual (movement) script. If you keep those two concepts in mind it will enhance the fast pace of the script. Thank you for your cooperation. When you have finished you can call me at: 383-2981 or mail the evaluation to: Karen Dodds

333 Bernard #102
Denton, Texas 76201

Thank you again,

Karen Dodds

P.S. I would appreciate your response on or before Monday, June 17.
APPENDIX B

EVALUATION BY LOUISE TANNER

As an elementary librarian, I have never been a fan of Dr. Seuss and therefore, seldom use his stories for reading aloud to children. The one thing I do like about the author is, however, that there is a moral to the stories and students (older) can usually indentify it.

My main criticism of his books is that almost all students at the lower primary level (grades 1-3) have difficulty reading the stories. Very few, I have found, can read them with expression. Therefore, I do not believe the script would work well with those ages of students and I'm not sure grades 4-5 would enjoy participation in such. However, if you had a "select" group of third graders it might work. I do think the individual parts in the last part of this script are too long and would advise your shortening them or else not using that story.

Louise Tanner
Elementary Librarian
Rayzor Elementary
"The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss" is a fun way for primary children to improve their appreciation of literature and develop language growth.

In order to have the animation and movement needed for this performance, the lines would need to be memorized. Can primary children learn something of this length? Can they "pick up" on the lines to make it move? It seems only very bright ones could.

In consideration of the length, the complexity of characters, and the vocabulary, it seems this script would be appropriate for the intermediate grade children to perform for the primary grades.

Thank you for allowing us to critique this script.

Joy Wright
Third Grade
Rayzor Elementary

Cheryll Dennis
Remedial Reading
Rayzor Elementary
My overall impression is very favorable. The fast pace is intrinsic and I could feel various rhythms, tempos, and crescendos as each segment developed.

Your beginning and ending ("ABC" Song etc.) are clever and logical. The transition phrase "... what do you know about tweetle beetles ..." was a good catch phrase that clearly signaled the end of one story and the beginning of the next. It also provided suspense and foreshadowing of the end.

Your decision to base a script on the literature of Seuss was good. The literature cries to be read aloud and there is no children's literature that uses words any more imaginatively than the Dr. Seuss books. You've done a sensitive job of selecting the stories—there's a good sampling of old favorites and, of course, the recent controversial Zook/Yook allegory.

As a speech teacher, I wish for staging directions and notations about onstage and offstage focus.

In summary, the script would be excellent for children (or for any age!). It is short enough to accommodate a child's attention span. (Each time a reader speaks, he/she has only a few words or a few sentences at most—that alone keeps the pace building.) You have emphasized key words or funny words—listening skills will be well developed through your scripting. Children will realize the power and delight of our language when they see this script in performance.

Ann Caldwell
English Teacher
Denton High School


