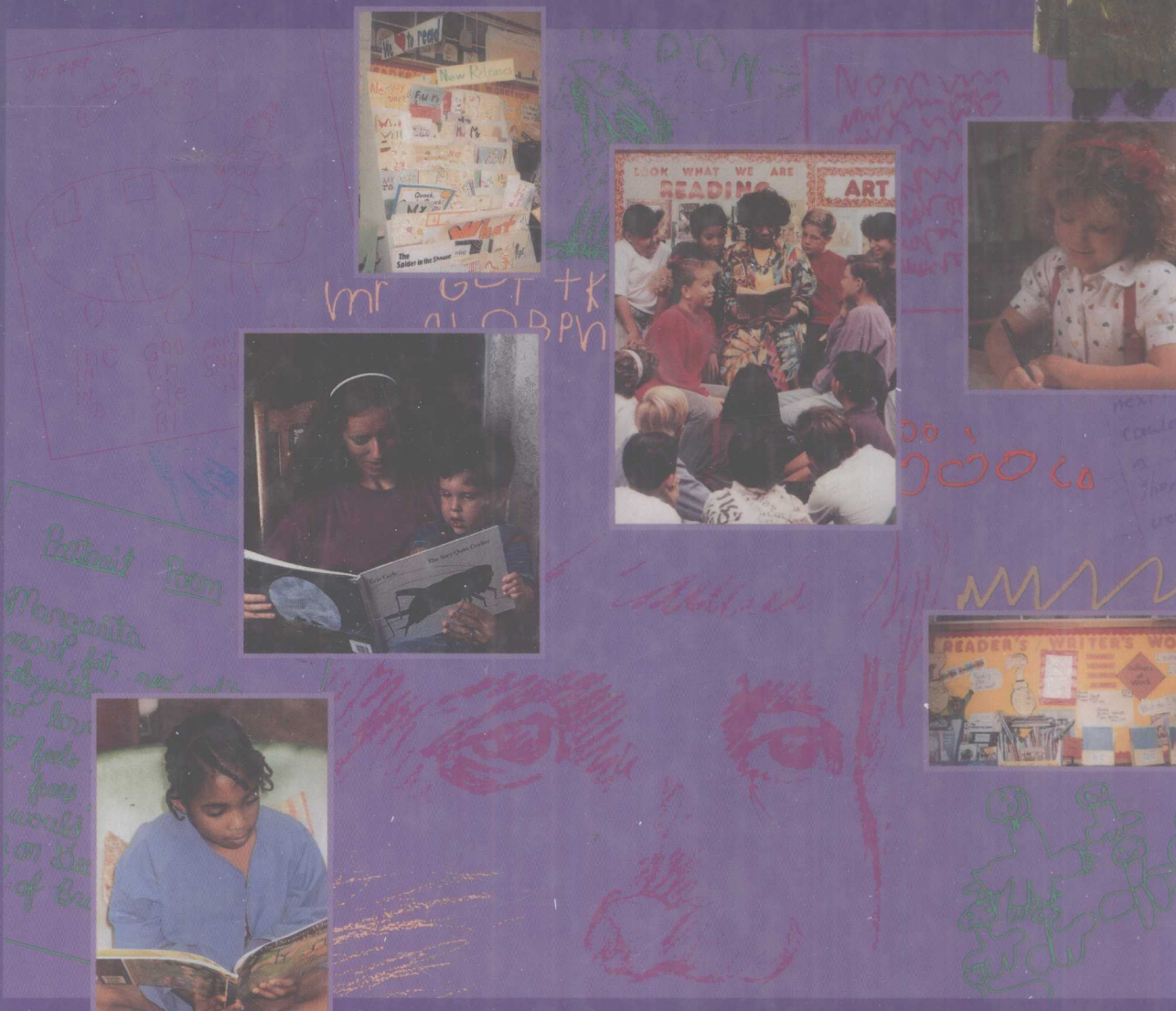


LEE GALDA BERICE E. CULLINAN DOROTHY S. STRICKLAND



LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND THE CHILD

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LEE GALDA

University of Georgia

BERNICE E. CULLINAN

New York University

DOROTHY S. STRICKLAND

Rutgers University

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source of inspiration and joy

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**LANGUAGE, LITERACY
AND
THE CHILD**

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Boat ON the LABEL SO Dont Be me

PREFACE

This book is about teaching and learning the English language and about using children's literature to support that teaching and learning in kindergarten through eighth-grade classrooms. As human beings we all begin learning language, learning about language, and learning through language (Halliday, 1982) from the moment we are born and first hear the sounds of our environment. And we continue this learning process throughout our lives. You are doing so as you read this text. As you learn about teaching English language arts, you will learn new vocabulary and information about how our language system works, and will do so through language—reading and talking, listening and writing. Language is essential to our lives as functioning human beings, and because it is, language teaching and learning is the vital center of all you will do in the classroom.

As a teacher of English language arts, you are responsible for helping children develop as fluent and flexible listeners, speakers, readers, and writers. You are responsible for helping children improve their understanding of how language works, their control over their language, their repertoire of strategies for language use, and their vision of themselves as language users. As a teacher, you need to recognize the wealth of language experience and expertise that children bring with them to school. And you need to understand children's language and learning in order to be a successful language arts teacher.

This book is organized to help you first develop your knowledge of language, and then examine the ways that teachers can teach and children can learn about language. In Chapter 1, "Language, Learning, and Teaching," we discuss basic assumptions and principles about language, learning, and teaching that are the foundation for all of the ideas that follow.

In Chapter 2, "The Development of Oral Language," we present an account of how children first develop language before they reach school age. We then consider how language learners continue to develop their oral language once they enter school, presenting ways that teachers can facilitate this continued development—through meaningful discussions, drama, or other oral language activities. We then go on to discuss bilingual (able to use two languages) and bidialectal (able to use two dialects) speakers. Issues of linguistic diversity that are addressed in this chapter are also considered in the following chapters.

We discuss how literacy—reading and writing—begins to develop in Chapter 3, "The Emergence of Literacy." Here we look closely at what young children learn about written language, how they learn it, and how preschool and early grades teachers can support this learning. While the focus now has shifted from oral language to reading and writing, this and the remaining chapters stress the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking, and listening as children become proficient language users.

Dear mom the sail be mad at the
boat on the table so don't be me

Using children's literature as a foundation for teaching reading is the focus of Chapter 4, "Literature: Reading, Responding, Becoming a Reader." In this chapter we present a rationale for literature-based instruction and discuss ways of organizing and implementing such instruction. Although the focus is on literature and reading, we also consider the ways in which literature enhances language development and the ways in which oral and written activities enhance literature study.

In "Composition: Writing, Revising, Becoming a Writer," Chapter 5, we switch the focus to writing. We present the phases of the writing cycle and consider how children move through this cycle and learn to write by having opportunities to write and discuss their writing. Again, there is an emphasis on how oral language and children's literature enhance students' development as writers.

"Talking with Children," Chapter 6, focuses on classroom talk. After discussing different perspectives on talk, we present a rationale and guidelines for using discussion as a means of promoting oral language development and content learning. We also look at practices that contribute to successful conferences with children and discuss ways to help children learn to confer with their peers. Chapter 6 ends with suggestions for using conferences as an evaluative tool in a reading and writing classroom.

Because language use is not confined to just reading or writing time, the focus of Chapter 7 is "Language Across the Curriculum." Here we consider how oral language, reading, and writing are essential to learning in various content areas such as science, social science, mathematics, literature, art, and music. We present a number of strategies for helping children use language to learn while they are simultaneously learning about language.

The issue of assessment is an important consideration for today's teachers, as new approaches to teaching and learning have rendered obsolete many of the traditional methods of evaluation. In Chapter 8, "Observing and Assessing Children Using Language," we discuss how observation and assessment are essential to good teaching and how assumptions about teaching and learning should match assumptions about assessment. We provide suggestions for ways to observe and assess children's language development that are sensitive to both the children and the curriculum.

Chapters 9, 10, and 11, contain descriptions of actual teachers and students as they practice the kind of teaching and learning that we present in the first eight chapters. Each of these three chapters provides glimpses of theory in practice—of how language teaching and language learning look in the classroom.

Each chapter begins with a brief glimpse of adults and children working together at some language task, and each contains many classroom descriptions and examples of classroom talk that illustrate the kind of teaching that we are describing. We have included various "Teaching Ideas"—suggestions for suc-

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successful teaching based on a sound understanding of language, learning, and children. These ideas are clearly set off to enable you to find them easily. Finally, we end each chapter with some suggestions for further reading since we hope that this book is just the beginning of what will be a lifelong interest in learning about children, language, and the art of teaching. We especially recommend that you read *Literature and the Child*, second edition (Cullinan, 1989) or third edition (Cullinan and Galda, in press) for a thorough grounding in children's literature.

This book will not only help you learn how to be a good language arts teacher, but will also help you recognize the challenge and the rewards of being the kind of teacher that Jerome Bruner was describing when he said of his fifth-grade teacher, "Miss Orcutt was the rarity. She was a human event, not a transmission device." We hope that you, too, will find teaching a human event.

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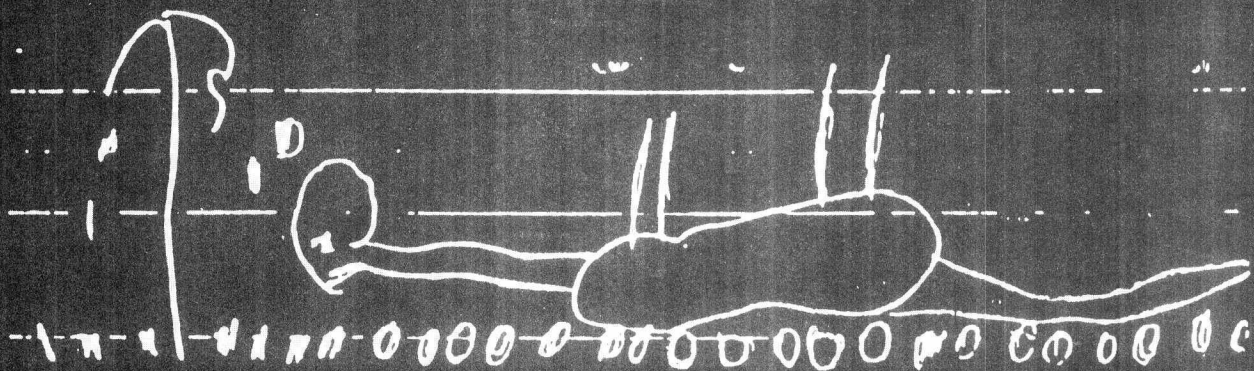
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L.G., B.E.C., D.S.S.

**LANGUAGE, LITERACY
AND
THE CHILD**

LUCY

I THINK THE DINOSAUR
DIED BECAUSE THERE WAS
NO FOOD.



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