

THIRD EDITION

CAROLE COX



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Ready-to-use lesson
ideas for your
classroom in
"Schoolyear Activities
Planner."

TEACHING LANGUAGE ARTS

A STUDENT- AND RESPONSE-CENTERED CLASSROOM

Teaching Language Arts

Carole Cox

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*To my children,
Wyatt, Gordon, and Elizabeth,
and to the memory of my parents,
Alice and Gordon D. Shirreffs*

■ ■ ■

p r e f a c e

Teaching Language Arts, Third Edition, is designed for use as a main text in undergraduate and graduate language arts methods courses. Like previous editions, this third edition takes a consistent student- and response-centered approach to literature-based teaching in today's culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. It's firmly grounded in current social constructivist learning theory combined with a reader-response perspective toward teaching with literature.

I hope to bring this vision of a classroom to life not only through clear explanations of these guiding principles but through examples of real teachers in real classrooms with real children, applying the ideas that have shaped the development of this third edition. Along with real-life examples, I've provided graphic organizers called Ripple Effects, which demonstrate response-themed learning across the curriculum. Above all, I hope I've created a readable, student-friendly, engaging, and practical text built on a strong theoretical and research base.

Content of the Text

Teaching Language Arts is divided into five parts: Part I, Constructing a Foundation for Teaching Language Arts (Chapters 1–4); Part II, Spoken Language (Chapters 5–6); Part III, Literature and Reading (Chapters 7–8); Part IV, Written Language (Chapters 9–12); and Part V, Integrated Teaching (Chapters 13–14). In addition to covering the topics usually found in language arts texts, I've continued to include separate chapters on drama and media literacy, both strong interests of mine since the days I was an elementary teacher.

In including these topics, I've aimed to provide as broad a picture as possible of what it means to teach language arts in today's classroom. I've also addressed the new *Standards for the English Language Arts*, written by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (1996). These new standards expand the traditional definition of *language arts* from four arts—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—to six, by adding viewing and visually representing. This new edition continues to provide strong coverage of literature-based, integrated, student- and response-centered teaching of language arts processes and skills. This approach has been demonstrated effective in meeting the needs of emerging readers and writers, including English language learners in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.

New to This Edition

A newly organized Chapter 12, Spelling, provides increased coverage of instructional strategies specific to children's stages of spelling development across a range of grade levels. And a new appendix presents the *Standards for Teaching the English Language Arts* (1996), mentioned earlier. Several other chapters also reflect new emphases and provide increased coverage of current topics:

- Chapter 2, Children and Language Development, provides information on language learning in inclusive classrooms, with ideas for adapting instruction for students with special needs.

- A new section on word study in Chapter 8, The Reading Process, provides information on the alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, and whole-to-part phonics as integral parts of a balanced approach to reading with literature and writing. Another new section on guided reading includes a detailed review of the steps involved in this approach, using a real classroom example.

- Chapter 10, Reading and Writing, emphasizes reading and writing literary and informational texts from both efferent and aesthetic stances and addresses literacy in the content areas, as well.

Resource information on websites has also been added at the end of each chapter's text in a new section called **Exploring the Internet**; addresses and descriptions of websites related to the chapter's content are provided for both students and teachers. Chapter 13, Media Literacy, which has always had strong coverage of technology, has also been updated to reflect classroom applications of the Internet.

Another feature added in each chapter is an **Assessment Tool**. This ready-made assessment device can be put to immediate use with children in the classroom as part of field experiences or teaching or used to model and demonstrate specific assessment strategies as a basis for instruction in the college classroom.

And last but not least, a new companion resource to this textbook, *Schoolyear Activities Planner*, gives readers a handy reference they can take along to libraries and classrooms and use through their first year of teaching and beyond. This planner includes language and literacy experiences and lesson plans related to thematic monthly units that will carry teachers and students through the schoolyear, September through June. Lists of children's books and discussions of several websites provide additional resources for each thematic unit. This month-by-month planner is followed by lists of Caldecott and Newbery Medal-winning and honor books, which provide additional examples of good-quality children's literature. (Note: Velcro strips and placement guides have been provided inside the back cover of the main text to allow the reader to attach the planner to it.)

Special Features

- **Snapshots** give glimpses into real classrooms, showing the practical application of material discussed in the chapter and how ideas can be transformed into actions.
- **Lesson Plans** and **Teaching Ideas** offer specific suggestions for teaching and can readily be put into practice in the elementary classroom.
- **Chapter-opening questions** raise basic issues about the chapter topic. Following these questions, students are asked to write a **Reflective Response**, drawing on their own experiences and ideas. **Chapter-ending answers** go back to the same questions, providing summaries of chapter content.
- **Ripple Effects** serve as graphic organizers of response-themed learning, offering extensive teaching ideas and lists of children's books. Each is related to chapter content and based on actual classroom experiences.
- As noted earlier, an **Assessment Tool** has been added to the **Assessing** section near the end of each chapter, which addresses topics such as standardized versus authentic assessment, contextualized performance assessment, and student portfolios.
- **Looking Further**, another end-of-chapter feature, suggests opportunities for exploring chapter content more deeply: discussion questions, group activities focused on understanding how language is used, suggestions for observing and interacting with children, and ideas for participation and teaching applications to try out in the classroom.
- Several chapter-ending sections list resources related to the chapter content: **Exploring the Internet** provides addresses and descriptions of websites for both students and teachers; **Additional Reading** lists noted professional publications readers may wish to consult; and **Children's Books and Films** provides publication information for the children's literature discussed in text. All professional source materials have been compiled at the end of the book in the **References** section, which has been updated for this edition.
- **Marginal notes** provide definitions, expanded explanations, citations of children's books, suggestions for further reading, and extensive cross-references to related sections of the book.
- **Visuals** richly illustrate the book, showing samples of children's drawing and writing and photos of teachers and children actually discussed in the text.
- Separate indexes—a **Subject Index** and an **Index of Children's Books and Films**—provide readers with ready access to specific information.

Acknowledgments

I've learned so much from the children I taught as an elementary teacher in Los Angeles, California, and Madison, Wisconsin, and from the preservice university students and inservice teachers I've taught and whose classrooms I've

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I've also written about the language and literacy development of my own three children—Wyatt, Gordon, and Elizabeth. Watching them grow has provided me an education not available through books or university classes.

Many reviewers have made insightful comments and suggestions and have done much to shape the content of this third edition. My thanks go to Rosemary G. Cameron, College of St. Rose; Nancy Horton, University of North Texas; Jane E. Percival, Keene State College; Kathleen M. Scott, College of St. Rose; and Gwendolyn Webb-Johnson, Texas A&M University.

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Carole Cox and her children (left to right): Wyatt, 27; Gordon, 15; and Elizabeth, 13.



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