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gaged in every stage of the reading process. According to Harkrader and Moore (1997), fourth-grade students do not have strong preferences for reading informational texts. Using K-W-L Plus to introduce informational texts in the early elementary grades may influence students' reading choices in the upper elementary grades. During the Plus component of K-W-L Plus students organize known information about the topic into categories, thus forming connections between seemingly isolated bits of knowledge.

Using *Big Blue Whale* in conjunction with K-W-L Plus, the basic procedures are as follows:

1. Activate students' prior knowledge before reading by asking them to brainstorm ideas and discuss what they know about whales. On a chalkboard, overhead transparency, or classroom chart, construct a list of what class members feel they know about whales. This represents the *K* (What Is Known) of the K-W-L chart. All ideas students offer are accepted even if they are incorrect. Through students' incorrect statements, teachers can identify potential obstacles to comprehension. Later, during guided reading and discussion, the teacher can clarify students' understanding and correct pre- and misconceptions. Partners or teams may be used as part of the brainstorming step. If students have developed independent writing skills, allow them to list what they feel they know about whales on teacher-prepared worksheets or in journals.

2. Before reading, initiate the Plus component of K-W-L Plus by asking students to categorize or group the information listed in the *K* column. This will improve students' awareness of content and how information is structured in *Big Blue Whale*. When working with beginning readers, teachers should model the categorization process by "thinking aloud" as categories are developed, combined, and classified.

3. Ask students to consider questions they would like to have answered as they read or listen to the selection. Questions should be listed in the *W* (What I Want to Learn) column of the chart by the teacher or by students with independent writing skills. This step helps students develop purposes for reading and will support them in monitoring their own learning.

4. Prior to reading, several stopping points are identified for discussion and clarification of information. As the teacher reads the first segment of the book aloud, students listen for words

### **Using K-W-L Plus with informational trade books**

K-W-L Plus (Carr & Ogle, 1987) is a teaching strategy designed to engage readers in connecting prior knowledge with textual information, as well as organizing, integrating, and summarizing knowledge acquired from reading. K-W-L Plus is particularly useful with informational texts because students are actively en-

or phrases that answer questions listed in the *W* column. At each stopping point, students answer questions listed in the *W* column; responses are written in the *L* (What I Learned) column. Students may add questions to the *W* column throughout the activity.

5. At each stopping point, students discuss and list in the *L* column new information learned about whales whether the information answers a question from the *W* column or not. More advanced readers can complete the *L* column independently as they read each predetermined segment of the informational text. (See Figure 1.) Once all segments of the text have been read, the class notes questions that were and were not answered while reading *Big Blue Whale*. For unanswered questions, students may read other books about whales.

6. Students continue through the Plus component of K-W-L Plus as they categorize information listed in the *L* column of the chart using categories from the *K* column. Categories may include Type, Body Parts, and Location. New categories may be generated as needed.

7. Using the topic of the book, whales, as a center point, students create a graphic outline or

display (map) of information listed in the *L* column of the chart. Categories determined in step 6 should be the major concepts presented on the map with specific details learned from the reading listed below the appropriate category. Lines are added to represent the relationship of the main topic (whales) to the categories. (See Figure 2.)

8. Students number each category on the map in order of importance or preference. Students can retell or summarize the text using the numbered categories on the map to guide their talks or written summaries. In written summaries, each numbered category and its corresponding details should form a separate paragraph. When applied to appropriate text, K-W-L Plus provides a model students may use while independently reading informational books, conducting their own research, and summarizing findings into written reports.

The procedures for *Big Blue Whale* can be used with other informational texts such as Gail Gibbons's (1998) book about eagles, *Soaring With the Wind*. Examples of a K-W-L Plus chart and a concept map that focus on eagles are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

**Figure 1**  
***Big Blue Whale* K-W-L chart**

Know	Want to learn	Learned
Whales are mammals.	How much do whales weigh?	Blue whales are the biggest creatures on earth.
Whales live in the sea.	How do whales breathe?	Whales can weigh 150 tons.
Whales can swim.	What do whales eat?	Whales breathe air through blow-holes on top of their heads.
Whales are the biggest mammals in the ocean.	Where do whales live?	Blue whales eat krill with help from their baleen plates.
Whales can travel a long way.	Do whales lay eggs?	Whales have a mouth with baleen plates for eating.
Whales make strange sounds that are scary.	Do whales eat people?	Whales have springy, slippery skin that is smooth to touch.
Whales move their tails in the water and make a big splash.	How do whales talk to each other?	Whales have eyes and ears.
		Whales live at the North and South Poles and the Equator.

## Using Directed Listening-Thinking Activity and Discussion Web with picture books

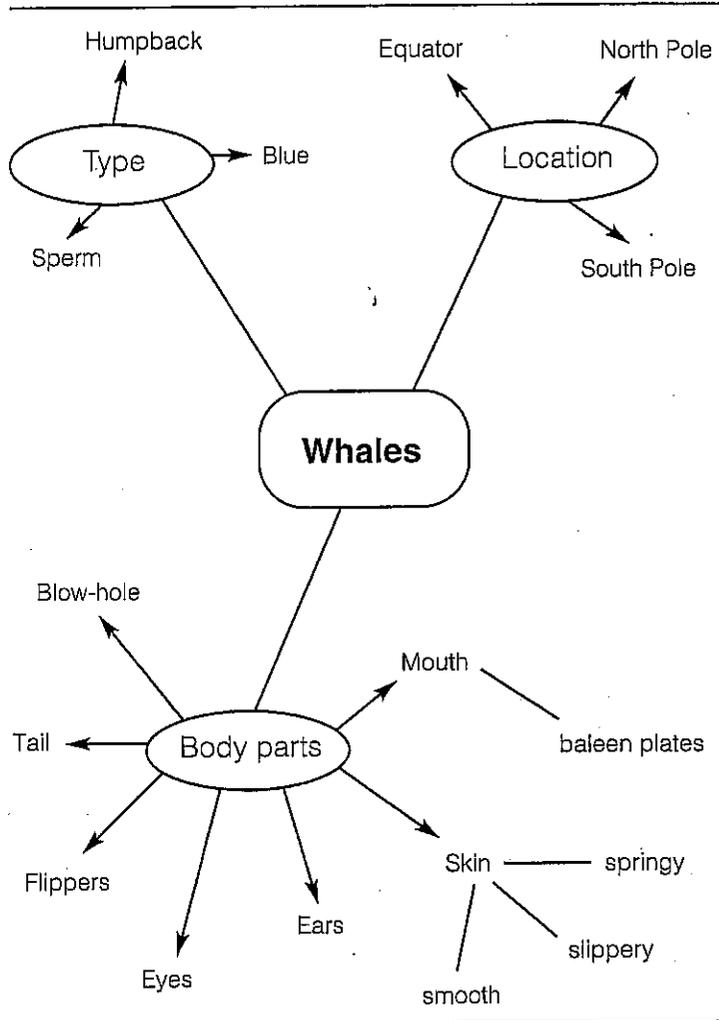
Another teaching strategy that can be used in the elementary grades to promote inferential comprehension and prediction is the Directed Listening-Thinking Activity (DL-TA) (Stauffer, 1976). The questions teachers ask with DL-TA are deliberately open ended to encourage children to form and discuss individual interpretations of the story.

Another strategy, Discussion Web (Alvermann, 1991), can be used in conjunction with DL-TA as a means of teaching students the principles of classroom discussion. When using Discussion Webs, teachers assist students in focusing their thoughts and responses to statements with which they may agree or disagree. The purpose of the strategy is to encourage students to form, state, support, discuss, and adjust personal opinions. The following teaching steps, incorporating the Discussion Web and DL-TA teaching strategies, are based on Margaree King Mitchell's *Granddaddy's Gift* (1997). In this picture book, Little Joe, the narrator, tells about her grandfather's efforts in securing his right to vote, an experience enveloped in danger and risk.

1. Prior to reading *Granddaddy's Gift*, teachers identify five to six stopping points where students will make predictions. Discussing what kinds of gifts students have received from grandparents and on what occasions activates students' prior knowledge before reading. Questions used to guide the prereading discussion may include "What do you think this story will be about? Why do you think so? What do you think Granddaddy's gift will be? Why do you think that? To whom will he give the gift? Why do you think so?"

2. At the point in the story where Granddaddy learns that he must pass a test to be allowed to register to vote, students should discuss what is meant by the word *vote* as well as how a person goes about voting and why a person would vote. After the discussion, students respond to the following Discussion Web statement: Little Joe's granddaddy should have to take a test to be able to vote. Pair students and ask them to consider whether or not they agree with the statement. For approximately 5 minutes, students work with their partners to think of rea-

Figure 2  
Big Blue Whale concept map for K-W-L Plus



sons why Granddaddy should (yes) have to take a test and reasons why Granddaddy should not (no) have to take a test to be able to vote. In other words, students should argue both sides of the issue and provide reasons for their thinking. (See Figure 5.)

3. When time is up, students form groups of four by one pair joining another and present each member's opinion and justification. For approximately 10 minutes, group members should discuss all views presented and reach a group consensus as to whether or not Little Joe's granddaddy should have to pass a test to vote.

**Figure 3**  
**Soar With the Wind K-W-L chart**

Know	Want to learn	Learned
Eagles can fly.	Where do eagles live?	Eagles capture prey with their sharp talons.
Eagles are birds.	How do eagles fly?	Eagles eat live fish, rabbits, and dead animals.
Eagles build nests in trees.	What do eagles eat?	Eagles have bones that are filled with air.
Eagles look mean.	Are eagles really bald?	An eagle's baby is called a fledgling and a young eagles is called an eaglet.
Eagles have black and white feathers.	Why are eagles special to us?	Eagles do not live in the same place all the time. They migrate.
Eagles have big claws.	How long do eagles live?	Eagles live in North America.
Eagles have big beaks.	Can eagles hurt people?	Eagles have wings that are more than 7 feet wide.
Eagles lay eggs.		Eagles have strong eyes and powerful feet.

4. A spokesperson from each group presents the group's view of Little Joe's granddaddy having to pass a test to vote and reasons for their thinking. Yes and no responses can be tallied to determine the general opinion of all groups in the class. Students are encouraged to justify their thinking and question the thinking of classmates.

5. After discussion as to whether or not Granddaddy should have to pass a test to be able to vote and establishment of the class majority view, students respond to the following questions: "Do you think Granddaddy will take the test? Why do you think so? Now what do you think Granddaddy's gift will be? Why do you think that? To whom do you think Granddaddy will give his gift? What makes you think that?" After predictions, students continue reading the story, stopping at predetermined points to answer open-ended questions that encourage students to speculate, predict, and discuss.

6. Stopping at the bottom of p. 15 in *Granddaddy's Gift*, students respond to the following questions: "How do you think the story will end? Why?" Once students' predictions are recorded and explained, students delete endings that might not be feasible. Volunteers should explain

why the ending isn't feasible and why it should be eliminated from the list. If the class agrees with the line of reasoning, the ending is eliminated from the list. After the list of possible endings is narrowed to two or three, the students vote for the ending they agree with and finish reading the story. Upon completion, comparisons are drawn between the ending of the story and the students' predictions. After the class discusses the "gift" that Granddaddy gave and to whom he gave it, when and why people vote, and the importance of voting, the teacher may point out how the class used voting throughout the story (i.e., reaching consensus using the Discussion Web and selecting possible endings to the story).

### **Interactional strategies, informational books**

In this article we described three teaching strategies (K-W-L Plus, DL-TA, and Discussion Web) that create interactive, or transactive (Pappas et al., 1999), opportunities for young readers. Suggestions were provided for using the strategies in conjunction with one informational

and one narrative picture book from the International Reading Association's 1998 Teachers' Choices list, *Big Blue Whale* and *Granddaddy's Gift*, and examples illustrated for *Soaring With the Wind*, an informational picture book from the 1999 Teachers' Choices list.

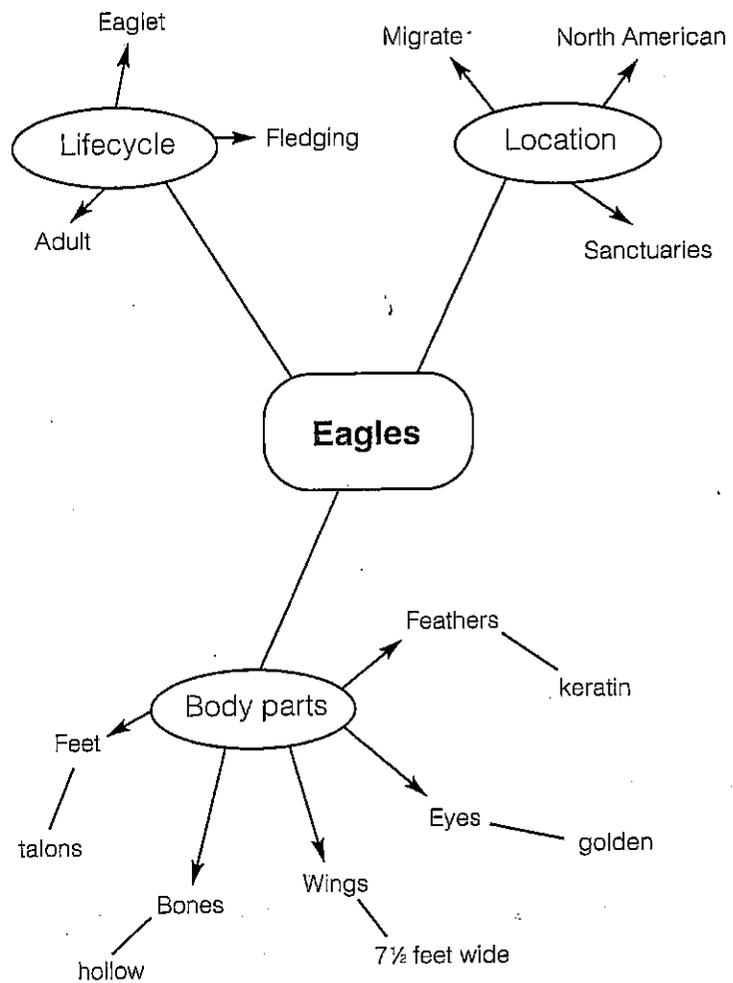
In addition to the excellent quality books from Teachers' Choices lists, many other recognized trade books could be used for similar purposes, such as those identified by the National Council of Teachers of English's K-8 Notable Books and the International Reading Association/Children's Book Council's Children's Choices. However, we have focused on Teachers' Choices books because these books have been selected by teachers for their potential to enrich the curriculum. A selection of 1998 and 1999 primary Teachers' Choices books and corresponding Discussion Web statements are listed in the Table. A summary of the story line and point at which the Discussion Web should be introduced are included for each book.

Many would argue that narratives, or stories, are the only genre that should be used for literacy instruction in the primary grades (Adams, 1990; Egan, 1988; Wells, 1986). To the contrary, Pappas (1991) warned that "if a diet of only stories is provided" and "if good information books are not available for children to read, their writing of nonfiction will not develop; and the Great Divide, or expository gap, will persist" (p. 461). Urging the use of informational books along with narrative text, Pappas further stated that

Exclusive use of stories, thus, may end up being a barrier to full access to literacy. Children need opportunities to use books from a range of genres so they can acquire the book language that written language in our culture affords. (p. 461)

Interesting and appealing examples of informational and expository text, such as *Big Blue Whale* and *Soaring With the Wind*, open the door for tapping students' prior knowledge and connecting new information with the known. In addition, informational trade books provide a transition from narrative picture books to textbooks. Informational trade books in the primary grades frequently look like narrative picture books, but students quickly learn that the presentation of information (text structure) is very different. Students learn that informational and expository texts are read differently (we don't have to start at the begin-

Figure 4  
*Soar With the Wind* concept map for K-W-L Plus



ning and read through to the end) and that their approach to reading requires different strategies for constructing meaning.

We have presented ideas for embedding three teaching strategies within the reading of current children's literature for the purpose of activating prior knowledge, predicting, discussing, organizing, integrating, and summarizing information from reading. The strategies we outlined promote interactive learning experiences that are important to literacy learning (Galda & Cullinan, 1991). According to Galda

Figure 5  
*Granddaddy's Gift Discussion Web*

Yes	Little Joe's granddaddy <i>should</i> have to take a test to be able to vote.	No
Reasons:		Reasons:
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____

Consensus:
_____
_____
_____
_____

and Cullinan, students need literacy experiences that enable them to think deeply and complete tasks that they could not have completed alone.

The three strategies described offer students guidance, modeling, structure, and support necessary to complete such tasks. In addition, these strategies help build a collaborative learning environment that supports be-

ginning readers' comprehension of text and lay a foundation for comprehension of more complex texts in the future.

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## Teachers' Choices books and Discussion Web statements

Book	Content	Discussion Web statement [point of introduction]
<i>Black Cowboy Wild Horses: A True Story</i> by Julius Lester. (1998). New York: Dial.	Bob Lemmons, a former slave and legendary cowboy, captures herds of wild mustangs.	Horses should not be allowed to run wild. [Prereading]
<i>Boom Town</i> by Sonia Levitin. (1998). New York: Orchard.	A young baker is the catalyst for a town's growth during the California gold rush.	Children should begin working at a very young age. [Prereading]
<i>Drummer Boy</i> by Ann Turner. (1998). New York: HarperCollins.	U.S. Civil War drummer boys and their roles during combat is the theme of this moving story.	Boys over the age of 12 should join the military during war times. [During reading where the boy signs up]
<i>Emma and the Silk Train</i> by Julie Lawson. (1997). Toronto: Kids Can Press.	As high-speed trains rush silk cross country, Emma places herself in danger attempting to rescue precious remnants from a derailment.	Emma should not have traveled so far in her search for silk along the river. [During reading after Emma grabs the silk cloth]
<i>Look to the North: A Wolf Pup Diary</i> by Jean Craighead George. (1999). New York: HarperCollins.	This informational text describes the life cycle of the wolf.	Wolves should be destroyed. [Prereading]
<i>Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man</i> by David A. Adler. (1999). New York: Harcourt Brace.	This book tells the story of the triumphs and struggles of baseball hero Lou Gehrig.	Sick people should not be allowed to play sports. [Prereading]
<i>Mailing May</i> by Michael O. Tunnell. (1997). New York: Greenwillow.	Having no money for a train ticket, May's parents "mail" her to her grandmother.	Traveling alone the 75 miles to Grandmother's house was the right thing to May to do. [Postreading]
<i>My Freedom Trip: A Child's Escape from North Korea</i> by Frances Park & Ginger Park. (1998). Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.	In this story based on the life of the authors' mother, a young girl travels from North Korea to freedom in South Korea prior to the war.	Soo's father should leave his family behind as he travels to South Korea. [During reading just prior to the father's leaving]
<i>One Grain of Rice: A Mathematical Folktale</i> by Demi. New York: Scholastic.	This book is a folk tale about the impact one grain of rice can have if doubled each day for 30 days.	One grain of rice, doubled each day for 30 days, is a foolish request as a reward. [During reading as the raja agrees to Rani's request]
<i>Sacagawea: The Journey to the West</i> by Dennis Fradin. (1998). Parsippany, NJ: Silver Press.	The legendary story of the girl who was interpreter and guide for Lewis and Clark's expedition is the theme of this book.	Sacagawea should stay with her family. [During reading when Sacagawea is reunited with her family]
<i>Saguaro Cactus</i> by Paul Berquist and Shirley Berquist. (1997). Danbury, CT: Children's Press.	An informational text that documents the life of a saguaro cactus through photographs and descriptive diagrams.	Dead plants are not useful to people or animals. [Prereading]
<i>The Summer My Father Was Ten</i> by Pat Brisson. (1998). Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.	A young boy learns a valuable lesson when Mr. Bellavista's garden is destroyed.	Even if the other boys won't take responsibility for the garden, the narrator's father should help Mr. Bellavista. [During reading after the garden's destruction]