

major components in pictures are related in terms of informational value.

Readers were less likely to fixate function words. As readers progressed throughout the text, they learned more about how the text was constructed. As a result, they were able to make more informed predictions about what was coming next and where valuable information would be located in the print. They arrived at places in the text where constraints of the text and their knowledge of English were so strong that they were able to confidently predict function words, making it unnecessary to fixate those words in order to produce them orally.

The sampling of pictures and print played key roles in correction strategies. Readers regressed and refixated the miscued word and generally resampled the picture. Their knowledge of the relationship between content words and major components in pictures proved informative in the correction process. They seemed to know where they would find useful information in order to confirm or disconfirm the text that they were producing and where to get cues to textual constraints in building meaning.

Reading is a constructive process. The first-grade beginning readers in this study used the same reading processes as adult readers, but perhaps because they were less experienced, the readers in this study sampled the pictures and print more frequently than older, more experienced readers.

### Implications

Educators need to be aware that pictures do not constitute a distraction in the reading of picture books. Practices such as covering the illustrations to force readers to focus on print only create a further fracturing of the reading experience and makes reading more difficult.

The fact that readers in this study (and proficient adult readers) do not fixate every word as they read implies that reading is not a word-by-word identification process. If instruction focuses on having readers fixate every word in print, the reading process will be influenced in ways that run contrary to what proficient readers do when reading. Instructional practices that demand that readers look at every word (or every letter) will slow down the reading process, making comprehension more difficult.

Educators need to realize that when readers miscue, it is not because they have not thoroughly examined the word on which the miscue occurs. The data from this study and Paulson (2000) show that miscues occur only after readers have thoroughly examined the text and rejected what it offers because it does not fit with the syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic knowledge that the reader brings to the text.

Proficient readers are sometimes characterized by their ability to identify words in any context in an equal amount of time. By this definition, good read-