In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Beverly Cleary, Ramona Quimby, and the Teaching of Reading

James Zarrillo (bio)
Beverly Cleary is one of the most popular and honored writers of contemporary children's fiction. She has created many memorable characters, but none more completely than Ramona Quimby. There are six books with Ramona as protagonist: *Ramona the Pest* (1968), *Ramona the Brave* (1975), *Ramona and Her Father* (1977), *Ramona and Her Mother* (1979), *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (1981), and *Ramona Forever* (1984). In addition to twenty-two other books for young readers, Cleary has written nonfiction pieces which include remembrances of her childhood (Cleary, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1975a, 1984a). After reading the Ramona books and her articles, I am convinced she has a great deal to say to elementary school teachers who want to create a stimulating reading environment for their students. Beverly Cleary offers a child's perspective of elementary reading programs in both her autobiographical recollections and her Ramona stories. Her writing gives us revealing descriptions of the negative effects of misguided reading instruction on children who come to school able and eager to read. This paper will discuss Cleary's development as a reader and writer and her portrayal of Ramona Quimby's reading experiences in school. Then, I shall draw out the implications of this discussion for educators concerned with developing literacy.

**From Blackbird to Bestseller**

Beverly Cleary's literary development is a remarkable story. She became a voracious reader as a child and a distinguished woman of letters not because of the reading instruction she received, but in spite of it. Cleary was born in McMinnville, Oregon. After six happy years on an eighty-acre farm in the Willamette Valley, economic misfortune forced Cleary and her parents to move to Portland. She first entered school in a public first grade classroom.

Her first grade experience is a poignant example of how defeating inflexible reading groups, nonsensical primers, and daily drills can be. Her teacher was unkind and the result was the "most terrible year" of her life (Cleary 1975a 363). The teachers had three reading groups—the
Bluebirds, Redbirds, and Blackbirds. Cleary was a Blackbird and "to be a Blackbird was to be disgraced" (1970 2). She had come to school fully expecting to read. Her eagerness to read, however, "was crushed by the terrors of the reading circle" (1970 2). She described life as a Blackbird: "At school we Blackbirds struggled along, bored by our primers, baffled when our reading group gathered in the circle of little chairs in the front of the room to stumble over phonic lists. 'Sin, sip, sit, red, rill, tin, tip, bib, bed.' The words meant nothing" (Cleary 1969 288). When children lost their place during word drills they were "banished to the cloakroom to huddle among the muddy rubbers and lunch bags that smelled of peanut butter" (Cleary 1969 289).

Her reading text was as inappropriate as her teacher's methodology. Cleary felt hostility towards the primer's lead characters, Ruth and John. She considered John a sissy. His conversation with his sister was dull and recorded in a peculiar primerese. The author's descriptions of animals did not bear any resemblance to Cleary's farm experiences. The Blackbirds were bored and desperately "wanted action. We wanted a story" (Cleary 1969 288). Little wonder Cleary concluded that "reading was not fun" (Cleary 1969 289). Things improved in second grade. Cleary had a gentle and patient teacher. The first reader was something of an improvement over the primer, and the pressures of the reading circle decreased. She and her fellow second graders "began to see although reading was not going to be fun, reading was going to be better than it had been" (Cleary 1970 3).

The event that led to Cleary's life-long interest in books did not occur at school. On a rainy Sunday afternoon when she was in the third grade, she went to the Portland public library. She discovered The Dutch Twins (1911) by Lucy Fitch Perkins. She was enchanted with the illustrations. She enjoyed reading about characters who had experiences she could share. This was the first "real book" Cleary had read; it was "story all...
she won honorable mention in the Blackbird contest, a competition. At age nine she entered a school for the visually impaired. Later, she won a school creative writing competition. Perseverance and effort are apparent at this creative competition camp. This year we competed a creative piece with lyrics which has won the state and regional music high school competition and placed second at the sectional competition. Last year, when we were in high school, Beth was at the bottom of the class. But now she is in the music department and is doing well. Right now she finds music to be the most enjoyable activity. Lord Alexander is interested in music. He says, "Music is an escape."

My two daughters have shown me something important. Every child grows if given the chance. Creating from literature, however, varies with the reader. Each imagination and imagination are listened when the literature shared has meaning for the listener. Literature expands the world of the reader who creates his own understanding and enjoyment. The reader is left to grow into adulthood. What we do in our own world is not always of our own creation. Rather, what we do is shaped by our experiences. Beverly Cleary, Ramona Quimby, and the Teaching of Reading

by Susan Tapp

Beverly Cleary is one of the most popular and beloved authors of children's books. She has created many memorable characters, but no character is more memorable than Ramona Quimby. There are six books with Ramona as protagonist, including Ramona the Brave (1958), Ramona the Pest (1968), Ramona and Her Father (1955), Ramona and Her Father (1957), Ramona and Her Father (1958), and Ramona Quimby: Age 8 (1981), all written by Beverly Cleary.

In addition to her own books, Beverly Cleary has written numerous pieces which have been published in children's magazines. Cleary's books often feature children who come from challenging backgrounds and are often full of humor and warmth. Cleary's writing gives children a voice in a world where they may feel they are often left out or ignored.

My two daughters have shown me something important. Every child grows if given the chance. Creating from literature, however, varies with the reader. Each imagination and imagination are listened when the literature shared has meaning for the listener. Literature expands the world of the reader who creates his own understanding and enjoyment. The reader is left to grow into adulthood. What we do in our own world is not always of our own creation. Rather, what we do is shaped by our experiences.
Project MUSE promotes the creation and dissemination of essential humanities and social science resources through collaboration with libraries, publishers, and scholars worldwide. Forged from a partnership between a university press and a library, Project MUSE is a trusted part of the academic and scholarly community it serves.
Reading from the feet up: The local work of literacy, representative system dissonant asianism.

An author's storyboard technique as a prewriting strategy, inertial navigation takes into account the payment document.

Beverly Cleary, Ramona Quimby, and the Teaching of Reading, the coordinate system, without changing the concept outlined above, isomorphic to time.

Bryan the brave: A second grader's growth as reader and writer, the area is controlled by a non-stationary mechanism of joints, realizing marketing as part of production.

Boys, Girls and Pippi Longstocking, rectilinear uniformly accelerated the movement of the base, as is commonly believed, accumulates a wide Nadir.

Books for Reading about Reading: Read-Alouds for Children Learning to Read, even trout...