

TEACHING LITERACY THROUGH INTERACTION

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Education

The Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 1989

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Date Oct 3, 1989

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe the similarities between adult assistance to children's early language development and teacher assistance to primary children's literacy development. The main problem the study addresses is how child-centered language interaction was used by teachers in an Emergent Literacy program to promote student's skills in reading and writing. The methodology used were field-based, qualitative research techniques to document interaction during reading and writing conferences. The documentation was done through the use of field notes and audio taping during the conferences. The notes and transcriptions were analyzed for the presence of teacher use of framing and formatting. It was also analyzed for the presence of verbal scaffolds, accountability structures and semantically contingent utterances on the part of the teachers. The study concludes that those selected features of adult assistances to children's language development are present in the teacher assistance to children in this program. This may be explained by the teachers' commitment to child-centered, teacher-guided interactions which place children's efforts and sense of meaning at the center of the literacy learning experiences.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A work of this scope would not be possible without the professional and personal support of others. I would like to thank the following people: the two teachers who are the heart of the study for their willing participation and commitment to pioneering education practice, Dr. Donald Fisher for his generous assistance with the methodological aspects of this study,, Dr. Hillel Goelman for his contribution during the original Emergent Literacy seminars and subsequent participation on my committee, Jay Stewart for editing the final document, my husband Robert Laval for his love, patience and support with technical aspects of the document production, and Dr. Kenneth Reeder for his faith and astute guidance which were central to my completion of this study.

Chapter One: Introduction to the Problem

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the similarities between adult assistance to children's early language development and teacher assistance to children's early literacy development. The working hypothesis of this study is that the constellation of features that characterizes parents' assistance to their children's language development is present in the way two teachers interact with their students who are learning to read and write. This study documents the interaction between teacher and student in a unique setting. The uniqueness of the setting is based on the teaching methodology. The research method chosen is field-based and naturalistic. A naturalistic study was chosen because it yields a full description of the teachers' practices. The study includes information about the teachers' purposes and beliefs, the setting and context of their teaching, and the language they used in interacting with their students.

The acquisition of literacy is a key factor in school success. North American school systems are built on the premise that it is necessary for children to be taught literacy skills in their school experience. Methods for teaching reading and writing have been undergoing significant changes in the last fifteen years. These changes are in part a result of a greater understanding of how children acquire and develop language abilities before

entering school. That research also demonstrates how some of those abilities are linked to a child's success at literacy learning in typical school settings. Those abilities center on knowing how to treat language as an object and have been referred to as a literate bias in oral language use (Olson, 1977, 1984).

The Culture of Literacy

Most of the time our relationship to language is transparent. Language is unconsciously embedded in our thoughts and actions. However, in a literate culture, the range of oral language practices includes the ability and inclination to see language as opaque. When we do so we see it as a discrete entity to be held apart, and examined. From this perspective it can also be seen as something with which we can consciously play and work. Encouraging young children to play and work with language creates a foundation for their understanding of the literate bias in language-use. This culminates in the acquisition of literacy and proficiency in creating the products of literacy. Seeing language as opaque and using it in decontextualized ways is also reflected in many teaching practices which children encounter in their early schooling.

Research has demonstrated that a child's ability to treat language as an object facilitates the formalized process of literacy acquisition encountered in early schooling (Donaldson, 1978, Mattingly 1972, Wells,

1981,1985). The origins of this ability to treat language as an object and to use it in decontextualized ways has been linked to specific kinds of interaction between adult and child during the formative experiences of language acquisition (Snow, 1983, Wells, 1981, 1985). Certain features of interaction present in some adult-child dyads during the acquisition of speech, some early game-playing and early book-reading episodes reveal the role which parents play in supporting their children's language development. This role is general with respect to language development. In some cases, the interaction is more specific and is directed to familiarize the child with the use of decontextualized language. The adult, as a language master, introduces the child, as an apprentice, to the world of book language and book talk. By exploring these worlds with a parent, a child learns to manipulate meaning gained and expressed in different contexts. The parent is teaching the child strategies for manoeuvring in the realm of language and literacy. Such exposure lays a foundation for the acquisition of literacy which is formalized during early schooling. Most children come to their early schooling having already developed many language abilities including the ability to comprehend language and express themselves in interaction with others. However, they arrive with varying degrees of ability to understand and respond to decontextualized uses of language.

Teaching Practices

Formal and conventional teaching practice is based upon acceptance of the premise that language has an opaque, object-like quality. It also assumes that children have some familiarity with the decontextualized use of it. In addition, methodologies for teaching reading and writing have fluctuated in the extent to which the knowledge of the symbols and conventions of literacy take precedence over the message itself. Regardless of the methodology used, teaching practice generally builds upon the child's familiarity with those opaque qualities of language which have been learned in the home environment. Included in these qualities are familiarity with the symbols of written language, aptitude with book-handling routines, knowledge about the nature and use of print, and most important and for the child most confusing, the ability to recognize, and respond appropriately to the use of decontextualized language in an unfamiliar setting. All of these approaches capitalize on familiarity with the opaque qualities of language. Teaching practice may access only a select part of the full spectrum of communicative competence in the children entering this context. This limited access excludes a number of children from full participation in formal literacy acquisition and fails to tap motivational resources even in those who do participate.

Formal teaching practice builds upon the child's experience and knowledge of literacy and its conventions.

It also uses techniques traditionally associated with its own framework to do so. This may result in separating, to a greater or less extent, the message from the medium.

Teaching often puts the conventions in the forefront, and the message behind. For example, a teacher may require students know all of the letters of the alphabet before they are encouraged to give simple messages in print. This differs from the approach of the parent when exposing the child to language in use. In the parent-child system, the child's world is the ground upon which the figure of language-use is drawn. The message and the means to convey it are always meaning-centered, and knowledge about the conventions of use explored simultaneously with the meaning being conveyed. Dyadic interaction in this context proceeds without prerequisite knowledge as an entry point for learning.

Purpose of this Study

This study describes a teaching approach which does not rely on previous experience with decontextualized language for success in acquiring literacy. The teaching practice described here regards the message and the means to convey the message as interwoven and puts the child in control of unfolding the two simultaneously. This practice encourages the child to read and write, as the child defines that. The teachers take the role of receiving, extending and exploring with the child the experience of making and finding meaning in text. Like a parent, the teachers are the interested and

skilled partners in the apprenticeship. In this case the foci are the acts of literacy. In this teaching environment, the teachers do not focus on learning the conventions of literate language use. Instead they have given themselves a role which centers on exploring the message and intentions of the literacy apprentice. They recognize and support the child's endeavor to communicate meaning and they reinforce the child's awareness of that intent. The teachers assist the child's growing awareness of meaning which is associated with form in the conventions of literacy. This model of teaching is premised upon a joint engagement in a language-based endeavor where meaning and form are encountered simultaneously.

This study is based on the premise that the salient features of early interaction in the aid of language acquisition are present in episodes of dyadic interaction as practised by the two teachers being studied. Studies of language acquisition from an interactionist perspective (Kaye 1982, Bruner 1983) document the extent to which the adult partner in communication structures and extends opportunities for children to develop their system of speaking. Kaye and Bruner offer conceptual background for viewing learning through interaction in the classroom context. In particular the studies of early dyadic interaction document the tacit ways in which an adult accepts the apprentice learner and generates fields of interaction which become opportunities for extended

learning. This investigation concerns the adult role with respect to the apprentice literate and whether it coincides with the adult role in the earlier language acquisition process.

Research Questions

The questions for this study evolve from a basic concern with the similarities in features of interaction. The interactionist studies document the particular way in which the adult facilitates and structures learning experiences for the child. The set of research questions for this study is:

1. How is the teaching setting, including routines, structured?
2. How are engagements with individual children structured?
3. How does the teacher facilitate and develop interaction?
4. What is the evidence for framing and formatting in the dialogue between teacher and child?
5. What is the evidence for the use of scaffolding, accountability and semantic contingency in the language exchanges between teacher and student?

The interactionist studies portray how, under certain circumstances, the actual dynamic of interaction can either expand or contract to facilitate specific learning. In the case of expansion, the dynamic goes beyond the scope of the child's task into relevant thoughts and experiences. In the

case of contractions, the interaction can become focussed with respect to a particular requirement from the adult or the text. This study seeks to look at the expansion and contraction of interaction in an educational setting. To this point there have been few studies of interaction in the classroom which focus on systematic one-to-one dialogue. This program and the teachers' use of interaction in the learning process offer a unique opportunity for the study of interaction as a formal teaching strategy. It is hoped that the study will reveal some of the depth and scope of interactions and be a pedagogical tool for working with the apprentice reader and writer. It is also hoped that it will contribute to our knowledge of effective classroom practices which put children at the center of their learning experiences.

Chapter Two: Theoretical and Research Background

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on child-adult interaction during language-learning to establish a framework for understanding the adult's role in promoting language development. The research to be reviewed pertains to:

- socialization patterns in pre-speech interaction which facilitate language learning,

- language devices care-givers use to promote optimum language development in children and

- predispositions in early language exchanges which may influence the child's subsequent orientation to literacy tasks encountered in school.

Researchers have long sought to construct models of language development. Most recently they have looked at the environmental factors which promote language development in children. Holding that no behavior occurs in isolation, their investigations have centered on the role of the caregiver in children's language development. These researchers maintain that the interaction between parent and child motivates and fosters the child's language development. This results in the child learning to map meaning on to convention using language in a way which is practised, reinforced and extended with caregiver assistance. The interaction itself has both particular and

cultural elements. It serves the growth of the individual and is part of the bond and expression between two individuals. It is also rooted in the norms and conventions of social exchange.

The research reviewed here was chosen for its contribution to our understanding of how the behavior of the caregivers creates an opportunity for children to maximize success and skill in the acquisition of a repertoire of communicative behaviors. The work will be reviewed in the order of the age of child to highlight the caregiver's changing strategies which accompany the child's development. The goal of this discussion is to establish guidelines for viewing interaction between adults and children in a different learning setting serving a different set of language requirements.

Socialization Patterns in Pre-speech Interaction

Kaye (1982) examined the interactive mechanisms between care-givers and infants with attention to the adult's capacity to respond to infant behaviors in a way that extends the infant's inherent capacities. Kaye terms these adult behaviors *the parental frame* (p. 70). He maintains that these behaviors are motivated by and triggered by gestures and behaviors of the infant. He contends that these adult behaviors are universal in structure and are characteristic of all parents' ability to organize interaction with their children. The particulars

of the interaction are specific to the adult-child dyad and the activity being pursued

Central to Kaye's list of functions is the idea of a *frame*. Frames are "recurring units of organized activity which are provided by the adult but fitted to the intrinsic features of infant behavior" (p. 6). While practised between individuals, frames bring the child into the larger culture of which he is a member. Kaye speaks of frames as the extent to which adjustment must occur in parents as a pre-condition for the infant learning to be a member of the cultural system. Frames are microcosms in which time and space are organized by the parent for the child. This spatial and temporal organization creates behavioral contexts in which "the parent relies on the infant's intrinsic abilities to differentiate his own skills gradually" (p. 77).

The caregiver's ability to construct this interactive framework pivots on anticipating the infant's next step in development and on acting as if that step is an already accomplished fact. Acting as if it is a fact, the caregiver guides the child in repeated scenarios until that developmental step finally appears. We consistently hold out our arms for our children's first step fully believing they will walk into them. Sooner or later they do, much to our delight. Long before an infant can speak, the mother is mirroring her child's vocalizations and putting them in a frame which gives them criteria for dialogue. For example,

the child coos, the mother coos back and says, "Oh you are happy today." In these early episodes, she is establishing joint focus, turn-taking and shared meaning in their interactions.

Kaye sees this *acting as if* as the moving baseline for a child's development. Anticipation of the infant's progress plays a key role in the infant moving ahead. Feedback and projection on the part of the adult provides major impetus for the continued construction of the anticipated event. This observation leads Kaye to postulate the notion of the infant as apprentice. He asserts that one of the functions of the frame is to make certain behaviors, or the understanding of those behaviors (in the case of language), inevitable.

Within the language frame, this *acting as if* makes it possible for parents to sustain a dialogue with their children by providing for the construction and elaboration of topics. In their study of mothers in dialogue with two-year olds, Kaye and Charney (1980) found an essential asymmetry in partner roles. It is the mother who maintains topic continuity by responding to and extending the child's meaning. Mothers produce the majority of conversational turn-about based on their child's utterances. A turn-about is a language pivot which requires a child to pursue or elaborate a topic. Here is an example of a turn-about from a book-reading episode:

Mother:(point to picture) What is that?

Child: Kitty cat.

Mother: Well, what is it?

Child: Kitty cat.

Mother: Well, I know there's a kitty in it, what's he in?

Child: huh?

Mother: What's he riding in?

Child: Airplane.

Mother: Right (1980, p. 219).

Everytime the mother returns the conversational ball to the child with a question she is requiring the child to add more to their dialogue. Kaye and Charney conclude that the type of verbal behavior they document here is consistent with other types of face-to-face interaction appearing earlier in the child's development. Mothers treat their children as participants in dialogue while they model how to keep a dialogue going by maintaining topic continuity and elaborating meaning.

To Kaye the ability to frame lies beneath conscious human recognition and manipulation. This is not to say that the behavior cannot be made conscious, but rather that consciousness is not a necessary condition for its existence. Kaye also states that the behaviors described are a feature of a more skilled person interacting with a less skilled partner. The social system, as represented by the caring adult, assimilates the infant's behavior into its functioning. An element of caregiver competency is mastery

acquired in kind of interaction which the caregiver is later able to initiate and sustain.

Language Devices Caregivers use to Promote Language Development

A second researcher who addresses learning through interaction is Jerome Bruner (1983). His work centers on the interactive behaviors between mothers and young children detailing the inherent competencies each mother brings to tailor her behavior to the growing skill of her child.

The configuration of the mother's competencies, as revealed in adjusted routines which organize and sustain interaction, Bruner calls *formats*. These parental behaviors form the *Language Acquisition Support System* (1983) by which parents culturally transmit the substance and structure of language-use to their children. Bruner has defined a format as "a standardized initially microcosmic interaction pattern between an adult and an infant that contains demarcated roles that eventually become reversible" (p. 121). He also writes that "natural contexts are conventionalized into conventional forms and regularized as formats. A format is a routinized and repeated interaction in which an adult and a child do things to and with each other" (p. 132). Formats act to arrange early speech interaction episodes.

Bruner's notion of a format is very structural in its qualities. It carries many of the features of language itself. These features include deep and surface structure, rules for transforming the structure, coherence,

transactionality, and a means for distribution of joint attention. It is the task of the adult to pre-form the context and constantly adjust the presentation of events such that the child's engagement is optimal. Formats appear early in the interactions between care-giver and child as games and naming routines. As games they occur spontaneously in peek-a-boo, and Ride-a-Cock-Horse and others where language and gesture are repeated in patterned exchange. In naming routines formats appear with reference to objects and in book-reading. For example:

Mother: Look!

Child: (touching a picture)

Mother: What are those:

Child: (babble string and a smile)

Mother: Yes, they are rabbits (p. 78).

The adult's competency lies in maintaining the child's engagement and initially in supplying all elements of the routine. The child's initial contribution is attention (as marked by gaze), babble and/or gesture. In time he will "take over" more of the routine, as illustrated below:

Mother: What's that?

Child: Fishy

Mother: Yes and what is he doing? (p. 84)

At each step in the take-over the mother is ready to extend the routine to include new elements in her child's repertoire of language behaviors. In the case above that

occurs when she asks for elaboration after the child produces the correct label.

A key feature of the format is the judgements the adult makes with respect to the child's efforts. These include requesting more of the child and refusing less:

Child: (points to ball in fireplace, requesting) ogho-wa-wa-wa-wa

Mother: Fire

Child: wa

Mother: Don't say "wa-wa." Fire, Richard.

Child: Fire

Mother: That's better (p. 101).

They also include supplying more and accepting less:

Mother: What's that?

Child: Ouse.

Mother: Mouse, yes. That's a mouse.

Child: More mouse (pointing to another picture),

Mother: No, those are squirrels. They're like mice but with long tails. Sort of.

Child: Mouse, mouse, mouse.

Mother: Yes, all right, they're mice.

Child: Mice, mice (p.86).

Ninio and Bruner (1978) previously demonstrated the relationship between caregivers' earlier supply of labels and the child's subsequent use of them. The caregiver begins by modeling the appropriate language. Later, she may require the child to use the language. In this way she is

continually adjusting the routine in the direction of expanded language use. The presence of modeling and accountability makes the routinized exchanges of the format a strong language teaching device.

Comparing frames and formats by role illuminates their similarities and differences. (See Table I.) The chief difference in these two concepts seems to rest with Bruner's focus on the patterned devices by which the culture and skill of language use is exchanged. His focus on language-learning casts the format in a particular light where the feedback loop of accountability is an essential ingredient. Bruner emphasizes the power of caregiver language use in routines and patterns where their constraint and predictability make certain kinds of language learning inevitable for the child. Kaye also refers to the inevitability of learning by caregiver framing behavior. He does not highlight routines per se as the avenue by which this is made possible. Instead he seems to rely more on the affective power of shared meaning and consistent imputing (on the part of the caregiver) coupled with development and differential display of skills (on the part of the child) as the force behind learning. The similarity in emphasis can also be seen in the role of the child. Both authors require a minimum commitment from the child in terms of engagement. Beyond that Kaye leaves the child's role in broad terms: it is to participate with the adult. The nature of that participation is not elaborated any further. Bruner,

Table I

Comparison of Function by Role
in Kaye's Frame and Bruner's Format

	Frame	Format
Adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enter into intersubjectivity • impute meaning to child's behavior • build units of organized activity based on infant behavior • rely on child's development and repertoire of material produced in exchanges to make behavior inevitable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage child • maintain child's optimum involvement • establish joint focus • create routines of patterned interaction in naturally occurring contexts • supply language and gesture for both partners • accept as meaningful the child's contribution • incorporate child's contribution into routines • make judgements with respect to accountability • hand over control of routine
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage in interaction with adult • maintain joint focus • participate with adult behavior within the frame becomes second nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage in interaction with adult • respond spontaneously and globally • return adult's model (imitate) • incorporate adjustments in expression

however, has a more specific concern. He talks about imitation and also the ability to incorporate adjustments learned from parental modeling. Both authors are describing the unfolding of human capacity in the presence of selective responses which induct the individual child into cultural practices. However Bruner's description of interaction is more closely tuned to the requirement for a standard.

Within the inductive force of both the frame and the format can be found specific elements of language use which adults employ to assist children's language learning. These elements may also, in some cases, be linked forward to literacy development.

Early Language Experiences and Subsequent Orientation to Literacy

In her article on language and literacy, Snow (1983) demonstrates the characteristics of interaction between caregiver and child which facilitate the development of both language and literacy. In her case study of Nathaniel she demonstrates how caregiver use of *semantic contingency*, *scaffolding* and *accountability* all contribute to Nathaniel's awareness of conventions and skills involved in literacy.

Semantic contingency is a device which enables the caregiver to continue, expand or extend topics introduced by the child. It is similar to the device Kaye and Charney isolate as the *turn-about*, and resembles the caregiver response of imputing and linking meaning in children's

utterances. When the adult responds to a child with a semantically contingent phrase or sentence, the adult requires the child to elaborate or extend his language. The effect is to make what is implicit in their exchange more explicit. As it relates to literacy, semantic contingency includes eliciting and incorporating children's observations about text, pictures and writing into linked exchanges. For example:

Child: (noticing a sign in traffic) S says Stop.

Mother: Yes, that says Stop. Grandma has an S too.

Child: Grandma?

Mother: Yes, S for Shirley. Grandma Shirley has an S.

Child: Shirley. Grandma Shirley.

Following on the child's initiation, the adult brings in an example that has personal relevance and extends the child's awareness of literacy conventions.

Scaffolding (Bruner, 1978) refers to an adult breaking a task into manageable parts so the child can focus successfully on one element. The language frame and different formats are examples of verbal scaffolds. Scaffolds are present in many ordinary exchanges between adults and children. Scaffolding is particularly important if some pre-selection or organization of a task or concept is an essential element in a child beginning to understand or do something. As scaffolds relate to literacy tasks, they involve the caregiver structuring a literacy event or concept to make it more accessible. For example when

children are first learning to print or recognize their names, an adult may focus on the initial capital to the exclusion of other letters in the name as the one to recognize, name and print.

Finally, Snow reviews the role of accountability in learning the conventions of literacy. As it pertains to literacy, accountability involves modeling or demonstrating the literacy skill or convention and then requiring it in subsequent displays. Accountability also includes an adult not accepting behavior that does not incorporate what the child has previously demonstrated or seen modeled. Here Nathaniel and his mother are spelling his name with magnetic letters:

Mother: Can you find an H?

Nathaniel: Find de M.

Mother: We don't need an M.

Nathaniel: That's an M.

Mother: Yeah, but we don't need an M. No M in Nathaniel

Nathaniel: (puts it down) (p. 173)

Snow observes that learning literacy is as much a social phenomenon as a cognitive process. What promotes early pre-disposition to literacy is caregiver attention to and focus on its requirements in exchanges with their children. The language devices that the caregiver employs are the same ones used in earlier exchanges where children were first learning to talk. It is the focus on the demands and conventions of literacy which is different. The author

notes that both middle and working class children are exposed to literacy materials and contextualized literacy skills. These include having access to books, knowing the names of the letters of the alphabet and being able to read environmental print. What may differ in their experiences and account for the literacy success rates of the middle class population over the working class population is exposure to and familiarity with decontextualized language use as a literacy convention.

Donaldson (1972) looked at school failure in light of the same consideration. Like Snow, Donaldson states that the convention of using language as a tool for speculation beyond the context of on-going events is an aspect of adult literate language use unfamiliar to many children. She claims that this orientation is even somewhat alien to a child's intention-centered, context dependent bias in language use. The convention of decontextualized use is one which can be learned in particular kinds of interaction. Snow observes that many middle class homes prepare children for this use by providing literate features in oral use. These include discussions of point of view, relating past events or scenes from distant setting and encouraging children to build internal representations by relating stories and telling about past events. These language based exchanges provide experience with shifts in context and form a basis for the child's experience with decontextualized language use.

Snow and Ninio (1986) document the set of literacy conventions which children acquire in shared book-reading episodes. These episodes provide opportunities for extended orientation to the set of rules implicit in finding and sharing meaning in text. The authors show how adults transmit those rules or contracts in interaction. Among these rules are several which lead the way to understanding decontextualized and recontextualized language use. One of these is orientation to book-time, separate from and not affected by the flow of daily events. The time line in text stays constant and shared knowledge acquired with text can be recalled and elaborated in successive episodes. A corollary to this contract concerning time is one concerning autonomous fictional worlds created by language. With adult assistance in the form of dialogue, the child begins to learn about the parameters of that autonomy. Here is Nathaniel at three years with his mother:

Mother: Look what Dingo did. What'd he take into the
restaurant with him?

Nathaniel: His hat.

Mother: And what else?

Nathaniel: And what else. His car.

Mother: His car. Are you allowed to take your car into a
restaurant?

Nathaniel: No! (p. 137)

With text, anything is possible. Nathaniel's mother molds this interaction to expose him to that convention.

Olson (1977, 1984) suggests that there is a literate bias in oral language use which accompanies the personal and cultural development of literacy skills. This bias, as practiced by caregivers, may lead them to shape interactions with their children in the direction of modeling and requiring increasing explicitness of meaning in oral exchange. Olson maintains that this shift in the locus of meaning away from the context of immediate events and into the context of meaning created by and expressed by language is a consequence of exposure to the conventions of literacy. With literacy meaning is primarily in text itself and out of the context of the structure of daily events. In the previous example, Nathaniel must contend with the meaning possibility introduced in text that is dissimilar to any in his own experience. He cannot rely on an on-going event structure or shared intentions between himself and his mother to assist him. He must construct his understanding of that event based on text clues and his own internal representation. His mother is assisting him by bringing him face to face with an apparent incongruity and encouraging him to explore the possibilities. In these early stages she also assists him in a resolution. The episode continues:

Mother: Dingo, get that car out of there.

Nathaniel: You drive it out, Dingo.

Mother: You drive it right out and you put it in the parking lot and you walk back in, please.

Nathaniel: Why?

Mother: Cuz that's what you do in restaurants. (p. 137)

As Snow and Ninio point out Nathaniel is just beginning to be able to collaborate with an author. With his mother's assistance, he is learning about different meaning conventions. These conventions relate to the use of decontextualized and recontextualized language where meaning is weighted semantically toward the world constructed with words.

Finally Wells (1985) has isolated those same particular features of oral language exchange that prepare children for success with literacy tasks in school. His study of pre-school literacy-related activities and school success show that the critical element in interaction which may contribute to success with school literacy progress is the child listening to a story being read or told by an adult and having an opportunity to talk with the adult about the meaning being derived from the story. Wells finds that there is a qualitative difference in the kinds of exchanges between parent and child where parents enjoy reading to their children and use the book-reading to extend and elaborate the child's experience with meaning. It is this extension which exposes children to the "context-independent" potential of language. As Wells points out, these ventures with text stretch a child's world out to include new possibilities which he must reconcile with his own world and his understanding of it. The culture of literate use is taught in early socialization patterns in

which literacy events appear. The key element is an adult partner who can lead a child to some measure of experience and understanding of the conventions literacy requires. These include many obvious ones concerning the nature of written language. They also include some more subtle skills concerning the nature of meaning in text and how to access and use it. This includes using oral language in de-contextualized and re-contextualized ways.

The research reviewed here demonstrates how a skilled adult partner is a critical resource for young children learning the socialization patterns and skills of language use. The devices which caregivers employ include early imputing of meaning to utterance and gesture, establishment of turn-taking and joint focus in exchanges, providing systematic and predictable routines for exchange where modeling and accountability occur, breaking complex tasks down into manageable but meaningful parts, using children's efforts and utterances as the basis for elaboration and extension of meaning and finally engaging children in dialogues which rely on words and word-constructed worlds for meaning. This spectrum of adult-assisted language events facilitate a child through early gesture and utterance to competent language use and into the realm of literacy.

Chapter Three: Research Method

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a rationale and framework for the design of this study. The goal of the investigation is to describe a particular approach to teaching and compare the teachers' roles in that approach to the role of care-givers in children's early language development. The central phenomenon to be described is language based dyadic interaction centered on literacy events of elementary children in a public school setting. The method of investigation meets the need to study interactive language in the context in which it is generated under the supposition that the phenomenon being observed will be present in many levels of the environment and in the interactions of the people involved.

Rationale for Field-based Research for this Study

The method of investigation for this study is field-based research. The choice of this method reflects the desire to study language in context. It also reflects my concern as the researcher to develop skills as a reflexive practitioner which includes the ability to practice and evaluate different methods and approaches to teaching.

The general concern for preserving the picture of the context while studying certain particulars in the setting is a main factor in the choice of field-based research

methods. This concern originates in the assumption that the entire fabric of the research site, including the setting, the people, and events reveal different and important aspects of interaction. The tools and procedures employed in field-based research take a rigorous look at all aspects of an environment for the information revealed about the nature of interaction in that environment.

Premise and History of Field-Based Research

The field-based research tradition has roots in several places. Its theoretical and philosophical roots lie in investigations into what constitutes knowledge. For field-based research, what constitutes knowledge can best be expressed as interpretation. This contrasts to the quantitative or positivist position that fact constitutes knowledge. One way of approaching this distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is to characterize how each tradition views the relationship between research, theory and data. For the quantitative researcher, the world is explained in terms of laws and the research task is one where situations (experiments) are set up and data (sensory, quantifiable evidence) is generated to reveal relationships. The act of doing this proves or disproves a theory or conceptual framework which describes and explains the functioning of the laws. The researcher's goal is prediction and his stance with respect to his evidence is neutrality. In the qualitative tradition, the researcher's

task is to understand the meaning of events, relationships and symbols generated by human interaction. This is accomplished by becoming sensitive to issues and interpretations and then immersing oneself in a situation to study. The researcher's participation in a setting allows his human responses to it to draw him in and orient his developing understanding. His presence is also from the perspective of an observer as he systematically records information and insights from the context he is studying. His experiences and responses become part of how he proceeds in the investigation. In the process of immersion into the site and collecting material from it, the outline of interpretive explanation emerges. The researcher continually refers to the original concepts and rebuilds or modifies them. His stance with regard to what he is doing is reflexive. His goal is explanation. The qualitative research tradition is linked with the study of social process. In qualitative research, the researcher is a principal instrument in the investigation.

The field-based research tradition has historical roots in the development of the social sciences. One of the main historical roots came from the study of worker and immigrant populations in the late 1800's and early 1900's in England. These social surveys originated in various researchers' responses to the conditions of workers lives. Similarly, in the United States, social surveys were conducted in the early 1900's by researchers believing in a connection

between a description of conditions and social action to change those conditions. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state, "The social survey carries particular importance for understanding this history of qualitative research in education because of its immediate relation to social problems and because of its particular position midway between the expose and scientific study" (p. 8). This suggests that this methodology used in educational settings reflects a concern for social issues inherent in those settings. This differs from anthropologists' use of field-based methodology to preserve social and cultural configurations. Early anthropologists used inductive methods of inquiry as part of their efforts to understand different cultures in those cultures' terms. In North America, the qualitative research tradition is associated with the University of Chicago School of Sociology (1890's-1930's) where it became known as the Chicago Method. Researchers there were not reformers and brought a consistency to qualitative research that was based on a theoretical assumption that all symbols and personalities emerge from interaction. They also created a methodological consistency based on first-hand data gathering.

The social and cultural issue which drew me to this setting concerns the prognosis for school failure amongst children who have not been introduced to the conventions of literate use of language at home and are then expected to respond in early learning situations as if they did

understand that usage. It has always struck me that it is incumbent upon teachers of young children to understand and endeavor to provide to their pupils those demonstrated educational experiences which lay a foundation for school success. This cannot be done effectively without respect for and incorporation of the effective learning behaviors which children have acquired and used successfully before entering school.

Site Selection in Field-based Research

The issue of site selection is amongst the first the researcher faces. My own experience suggests that each researcher is drawn to a particular site or type of site, as a consequence of his own reflections on social, cultural or educational issues. Once on the threshold of that site, particular issues in entry reflect something of the social nature of the site. In choosing a site, Schatzman and Strauss (1973) suggest three criteria for selection. They are suitability, feasibility and suitable tactics (p. 19). The authors pose the following questions: Will the site meet the researcher's needs in terms of issues present? Does the site match the researcher's resources in terms of time, money and skills.? Finally, can the researcher gather enough information for successful entry and investigation? Along the same lines of concern, Spradley (1980) cites five criteria for decision on the nature of the site. They are: (1) simplicity, (2) accessibility, (3) the extent to which

the researcher can be unobtrusive, (4) permission to explore the setting and (5) the ability to participate in activities in the setting. While access is high-lighted at the beginning of a study, it is also an ongoing issue. With familiarity and trust, a researcher will penetrate more deeply into a setting and the thoughts of the people in it as time goes by.

The site chosen for this study fulfills the requirements of feasibility, suitability and suitable tactics. It also met Spradley's five conditions. The setting offered me, as researcher, an opportunity beyond its general feasibility, suitability and accessibility because it was in many ways unique in educational practices in British Columbia. In my experience as a teacher and as a Graduate Assistant supervising student teaching practicums, I had not known any setting which equaled it in terms of the direction of the educational innovation. The setting was unique by virtue of the lack of direct instruction practised by all members of the teaching team. While there has been general professional interest in the Emergent Literacy approach to teaching reading and writing amongst primary educators for a number of years preceding this study, few teachers were known to have adopted practices such as these on such a large scale for such an extended time as those described here. The program being investigated here evolved from many combined years of teaching practice and research. It had been piloted and documented by the teachers

themselves. The teachers had documented their aims, beliefs and principles with respect to the acquisition of literacy and their understanding of the developmental progress children make through successive stages of literacy acquisition in a process-centered program. An aspect of this program these teachers had not studied in detail was their own interaction with the students. Yet, it was at the heart of their program. They did not have a complete picture of themselves in the process, particularly their use of focussed interaction as a method of teaching. This was due in some part to the difficulty of studying themselves in interaction. This aspect of the program is central to the study.

The site for this study offered many possibilities for investigation and research. The setting itself, the design of the program, the teaching philosophy and the personnel in the setting, the students and their activities were all intrinsic and instrumental in contributing to the environment. However, the key element around which all other aspects were to be viewed, was that of interaction between teacher and student during reading and writing conferences. In order to best view that interaction, and to best portray the role of the teacher and compare that role to the parental role in early language development, the study focusses on the two teachers who are key to the program.

Role of the Researcher

Hammersly and Atkinson (1983) suggest that the role of the field-based researcher is best characterized as being an acceptable, marginal member of the setting. This position allows for the maintenance of both involvement and detachment characteristic of this work. Interpersonally, it involves the researcher being friendly, open and receptive while not offering opinions or allegiances. Acceptance and trust are key qualities in the researcher's relationship to others in the setting. In my case this was certainly facilitated by the professional and personal regard which was extended to me by the one member of the teaching team who was a graduate colleague. She was my closest informant through-out the study.

Both practical and theoretical issues emerge in the decisions concerning the extent to which the researcher will involve himself in the routines and tasks characteristic of the setting. These are expressed in the typology of the participant-observer spectrum.

Junker (1960) outlines four options in terms of the researcher's involvement in the setting. They are: (1) complete participation, (2) participant as observer, (3) observer as participant, and (4) complete observation. Within this range of options the researcher selects the

depth to which he experiences the activities and meaning generated in interaction characteristic of the setting. This must be balanced against the amount of detachment the researcher allows from the roles and watching or reflecting on the generation of interaction and meaning in the site. The selection of a role may set boundaries on the involvement and detachment matrix .

In this study, as researcher, I have taken the role of participant as observer. My background, training and interests made aspects of the setting familiar and comprehensible. Physically I remained visibly present throughout the entire period of investigation. I sat close enough to the teachers while taking field notes so that I could hear them while they worked with the children yet was not close enough to confuse the children or be obtrusive. While I did not often seek interaction with the children as they worked, I never refused to interact with them if they approached me. I freely interacted with the team of teachers who ran the program which was the site of the study. This included social interaction as would be normal in a collegial relationship, and also asking questions and seeking clarification concerning the teaching practices I observed. I systematically recorded information and insights from the context being studied. Those experiences and responses became part of how I proceeded with the investigation.

A field-based researcher uses him or herself as a tool in the investigation. The process by which this occurs is called reflexivity. Reflexivity is an attitude and a strategy which allows for the gathering of information as a participant observer in a manner which is open, allows for questions and feelings while at the same time proceeds with a regular, systematic process of discovery. In order to do this the researcher must share in the activities of the people in the setting, become part of the normal life of the setting and be able to register, interpret and conceptualize while relating to the setting and people in it (Bruyn, 1966). As a method of studying educational practice, it allowed me, as a practitioner, to enjoin in new processes and gain insight while maintaining enough distance to conceptualize and discriminate.

Methodology

The field-based researcher's methodological tool kit contains a range of possible alternatives for gathering data. It should be stressed that while the purpose is to sample an entire context, all choices for doing this create only partial views of the site. It is literally impossible to obtain a full view of a site. What is possible is a self-conscious partial view. Schatzman and Strauss suggest that the researcher should choose methods and techniques for applying them which account for a representative sample, perspective and framework. This reflects concern for

sampling (time, place and people), perspective (through whose eyes to look), and framework (relationship to concept or theory). The various tools for gathering data offer possibilities with respect to these criteria. The range of tools employed in field-based research include observations, interviews, and document and photo analysis. The tools used in this study are observations (including the use of a field diary) and document analysis.

Learning how to take good field notes or observations was a challenging experience. The concept of "rich" field material which is in many ways the ideal, reveals the purpose and texture of field notes. In order to capture the detail and color of a situations, the researcher lets his antenna work in the gathering process. While the object is to record the essence and detail of the site, knowing what and how is the challenge. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) write, "The goal is to capture the slice of life" (p. 84). They continue, "Rich data is filled with pieces of evidence...The expectation is that you let it all hang out" (p. 86). Basically field notes, be they formal or informal, are a record of what the researcher absorbs and observes on the site. Informal notes usually begin very generally and give a sense of physical and emotional atmosphere, the things and people, the activity in which people engage. They include Spradley's topology of space, actors, activities, objects, acts, events, time, goals and feelings. Beyond this, however, to adequately do this research means venturing into

the realm of subjectivity. For this reason, the researcher also employs techniques for incorporating his biases, misgivings, intuitions and reactions. This may be done in margins, brackets, or a separate book. This aspect of the work of note-taking documents reflexivity. Field notes are to reflect the situation in which they originate; they also reflect the process in which the researcher is engaged. Formal observations usually follow informal ones and focus on particulars in interaction with details concerning gesture and language. A very focussed observation would narrow the range of factors recorded and go very deep into the detail around these factors. Electronic recording devices such as audio and video tape can be part of focussed observation. They allow for more of certain kinds of detail to be recorded at certain times.

Sampling Frame and Field Notes

Two teachers were chosen as the focus for this study. In order to adequately sample their activities, I devised a sampling plan (see Table II). This plan accounts for a representative sampling of time, place and people.

I used informal, formal and focussed observations as the primary means of data gathering. A sample of each of these three types of protocols may be found in Appendix A, B and C. Each set of observations was designed to include a range of interactions which began at the most general level and gradually was reduced to a very specific set of factors.

Table 2
SAMPLING PLAN

	Feb/Mar	April	May	June
Informal	ABx (4 days)	Axy (4 days) Bxy (4 days)		
Formal			ABxy (5 days)	ABxy (4 days)
Focussed			ABx (4 days)	ABx (4 days)

KEY: A = Teacher (Ann)
 B = Teacher (Marion)
 x = Learning Assistance Centre
 y = Classroom

At the informal level (Appendix A), the observation schedule included a series of observations on each teacher in all of her contexts for a full week of teaching. A week of teaching in this setting included Monday through Thursday mornings. The focus of these general observations was on the physical context, general events and routines which occupied the teacher. Each teacher taught a range of grade levels and subjects in their capacity as Learning Assistance teachers, and the entire range was included in the observations. The range included remedial Language Arts and Mathematics for primary and intermediate grades.

The second level of observations were the formal observations (Appendix B). This series of observations focussed on both teachers individually but shifted with respect to the age group and subject. This series included only primary children and only Language Arts instruction. It also concentrated more on the language of interaction between teacher and student. I attempted to get as much running conversation as possible, and capture the relationship between the teacher and student during their interactions around literacy events. This series included a set of observations done on each teacher while either of them had a primary group. The schedule of groups for the Center allowed me to go from primary group to primary group as each teacher worked with them through the day. In some cases both teachers were working with primary groups, and so I would record the observations on the missed group another

day to insure that I had seen each teacher for a complete cycle of one week.

The third level of observations was the focussed observations (Appendix C). It was recorded in two formats which included written notes and audio-recordings. The target set of interactions used in this series was those between the two teachers and all primary children who attended the Center for assistance with Language Arts. The field notes themselves focussed on the physical movements, gestures and orientation which the teachers and children displayed during the conferences. These notes form a running accompaniment to the transcripts which came from the audio recordings. The addition of audio recording to the study design placed limits on the range of the interactions. These limits in turn were more than compensated for by the rich data which recording exact language during interaction offered. The limits were physical. It was not possible to record the teachers interacting with any students outside the Center where the equipment was set up. In addition, the physical placement of the microphone limited the recording of interactions to those in its physical proximity. The microphone used was a multi-directional table microphone which was taped to one table in the Center. Each of the two teachers used a different area of the room they shared, and the microphone was moved to their respective areas. Once it was in place, the teachers endeavored to confer with their students in its

proximity. While it was not possible to capture every interaction, the recording generated much more data than this single study could incorporate.

In order to record those observations and comments which would drive the reflexive aspect of this study, I used my field diary and brackets within the field notes. Typically, I used brackets while in the setting to jot down thoughts, and the field diary when I was away from the setting and thought of something I wished to record.

Finally, document analysis was done to provide insight into the philosophy and beliefs which were central to this program. Since both teachers under study had done research themselves, and the team of teachers were consciously developing a program, statements of philosophy were easily obtained. I chose three (Appendix D, E, and F) which had been produced by the teachers themselves to explain and describe the setting.

Data Analysis

The data for this study were generated from the field notes, the field diary, the audio recordings and the documents mentioned above. The field notes were converted from handwritten notes recorded in field notebooks to typed documents which contained all the material from the field notebooks. This material included dates, times, running commentary on the activities of students and children, verbatim speech and personal observations. After the field

note documents had been prepared, the audio tapes were transcribed. There was some selection involved in this process. I listened through all the tapes and transcribed episodes where there was a consistent level of engagement between the teacher and the student while working on reading or writing. I looked for episodes which were typical of the kinds of interaction I had observed and recorded. These were transcribed verbatim on a transcription sheet (Appendix E).

The analysis of all data was done by applying the theoretical framework from the literature on adult assistance to children's language development to the document data. This involved developing working definitions for the terms which characterize adult assistance (provided below) and applying those definitions to the data. The goal was to contrast the adult's role in two different language-based enterprises (oral and literate).

The working definitions for framing and formatting come from the description of the roles played by each adult (see Table I) as described by Kaye and Bruner. In examples of framing behavior we would expect to see the adult 1) enter into intersubjectivity, 2) impute meaning to childrens' efforts, 3) build units of organized activity based on children's behavior and, 4) rely on the childrens' development and repertoire of behaviors acquired in exchanges to produce learning. In the case of formatting, we would expect to see the teacher working at 1) engaging children

in literacy task, 2) maintaining joint involvement through turn-taking through out episodes of interaction, 3) creating routines of patterned interaction, 4) accepting the childrens' contributions as meaningful, 5) incorporating childrens' contributions into the routine, 6) making judgments about contributions and 7) handing over control of the routine.

The working definitions of semantic contingency, scaffolds, and accountability are taken from the review in Chapter Two. With semantic contingency we would expect to see the teachers reflecting back a child's sense of meaning by repeating or extending the child's offering, or asking for clarification. With scaffolds we would expect to see the teachers using verbal strategies to structure a complicated literacy event so that a child may access a portion of it. This might involve supplying some elements of the event or providing phrasing which clarifies some aspect of a problem in text presented to the child. With accountability we would expect to see the teachers requiring a display of a certain ability which they judge the children are capable of incorporating into their efforts with literacy tasks.

The final analysis of the data occurred through the writing of this thesis. The philosophy of the program and the description of the setting came from my informal observations and documents I had received from the teachers under study and forms the main body of data in Chapter Four.

The discussion of engagement and routines came from my formal observations and forms the main body of data in Chapter Five. Finally the discussion of scaffolding, accountability and semantic contingency came from the focussed observations including the transcripts of audio tapes and forms the main body of data in Chapter Six.

The selection of material to be included in the body of the study came from the data set allocated to each chapter. This selection process was done with an eye to the typical and relevant, but also with an eye to those episodes which had intrinsic value in terms of my interest in both good teaching practice and children's clear and spontaneous ability to respond to the tasks at hand. Their inclusion here is to illustrate the theoretical constructs under discussion and also as testimony to children's capacities, both in terms of joy in success and challenge in difficulty. The data is also cross-tabulated. This has been done by including material which illustrates each theoretical construct from different data sets .

The goal of the analysis which is represented in the writing, is to bring into focus the pattern which is present in the setting. The key to the pattern is, in Schatzman and Straus' terms, in the linkage of the various elements documented. The data verifies and reiterates its presence. Seeing this pattern is not a reflection of my personal judgements, for this is not my purpose. Bogden and Biklen summarize the pupose of analysis in this way, "A judgement

is not the goal; rather, the goal is to understand the subject's world and to determine how and with what criteria they judge it" (p. 210).

Chapter Four: The Setting

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the setting of the study is structured. Two aspects of that structure, the philosophical and the physical, will be examined. To look at philosophical structure I will analyze the curricular beliefs which are the premise of the program and described in documents collected on the site. In addition, a description of implementation of those beliefs will be provided using materials from my field notes describing children and teachers engaged in various activities. To describe the setting I will use material from my field notes which pertains to the physical setting, the personnel and the routines.

Entry into the Site

My initial contact with the Centre which became the site for this study occurred in October 1985. The Centre was one of ten potential practicum placements for fourth and fifth year Primary Education students from the University of British Columbia. These placements were the result of collaborative work between Dr. Kenneth Reeder and Dr. Hillel Goelman of the University of British Columbia's Department of Language Education, and practising teachers in the lower mainland who shared an interest in research in emergent literacy. The intent was to augment the Language Arts

Curriculum and Instruction course being taught by Dr. Goelman with a seminar and praticum placements where theory and description were being put into practice. My role as teaching assistant was to support Dr. Reeder in supervision of the students and to support Dr. Goelman in presenting selected methods by lecture and demonstration. As I acquainted myself with the teachers who were offering student teaching placements, I was pleased to encounter a former graduate colleague who was a Learning Assistance teacher, working as a team member, in a Centre taking a student teacher.

Ann¹ had been in a graduate seminar on Emergent Literacy I had also attended the year before under the direction of Dr. Reeder. During seminar discussions, she and I shared a perspective on the importance of attention to children's self-esteem in the learning environment. We also shared the conviction that it was important to study the learning of literacy in the social contexts in which it occurs. As I spent time with Ann and her colleague Marion prior to supervising students in their Centre, I discovered the depth of their knowledge and experience with the literature on language development and the development of literacy. The program Ann and her colleagues had constructed was the product of several years of combined inquiry, research and practice in the realm of how children acquire

¹ Teachers and children referred to in this document are renamed using pseudonyms.

literacy. In developing their program they had been influenced by other writers in emergent literacy (Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975; Graves, 1983; Holdaway, 1979; Smith, 1978). Ann and Marion's research work had focussed on documenting the stages of development through which children advance in a process-centered literacy program. An important aspect of this program, which had little documentation, concerned a description of the role of the teacher in the student's learning process. I began to think in terms of a study in this setting where I could investigate teaching practice in a program using process of reading and writing principles. When I approached Ann and Marion with my ideas they willingly offered their consent to be part of a study.

The teachers who designed and implemented this program are the subjects of this research study. Their beliefs and endeavors are the focus of my extended observations to document how they teach through interaction.²

Curricular Beliefs

Three documents collected from the study site will be examined to explicate the beliefs which provide the foundation for the programming in this setting.

²Formal entry into this setting for the purposes of conducting academic research involved the presentation of the topic and the method of investigation for review to The University Ethics Committee and the Vancouver School Board. Permission to conduct this research was granted in the Spring 1986.

The teachers in this study express the belief that the factors which contribute positively to oral language development also contribute positively to the development of literacy. They are expressed in their document on Principles Which Nurture the Growth of Emergent Writing (Appendix D). This document originates in Marion's earlier research and has become the core set of guidelines shared by the teachers in this program.

Explicating the text of the Principles gives a picture of the expectations the teachers hold for themselves and the children with which they work. These include expectations concerning attitudes, the actions of teachers and children, and the expected course of development in writing skills. What follows is the text³ and an elaboration of the beliefs.

1. Provide a warm setting rich in interactions and demonstrations of functional oral language and literacy.

The emotional environment in which the child works is important. It sets the tone for learning and should contain examples of the kinds of behaviors children are expected to perform. They are not expected to act in isolation, but to follow given models.

2. Emphasize the process of writing rather than the product.

It is the exploratory practice of literacy skills which creates learning of those skills.

³The order of the items in the text is changed.

3. Respond to the intended meaning of the children's writing first.

The important connection between child and adult in language learning is intended meaning. Intended meaning and its social expression is also held as the prime motivator for continued engagement in expression.

4. Expect children to come up with their own topics to insure that writing is meaningful and purposeful from their point of view.

Given the importance of the child's message it is a corollary to expect topics initiated by children.

5. Encourage the children to use their own illustrations as a source and support for their writing.

The children are also expected to use their pictures as part of the strategy of communicating their message.

6. Some attention can be paid to form, but only when the children indicate they are ready to use it in their work.

Usage is seen as a form of legitimate expression, as is.

This belief is linked to the following one concerning the developmental, rule-governed nature of the language learning enterprise.

7. Expect a developmental progression in the children's writing efforts, over time. Have confidence that errors are natural rather than habit-forming and that children will self-correct in direct relation to their stage of development.

An underlying assumption present here is that the children will work first at a global level and then gradually refine their usage. That refinement will include the incorporation

of specific and conventional symbols as they recognize their validity.

8. Present the writing task as a problem-solving enterprise in which the children learn to write by writing using their initiative and all resources at their disposal to discover the meaning and to solve problems of form.

The writing enterprise is seen as an occasion in which thinking strategies are to be developed. The focus is the literacy task; the skills and strategies are linked to processes of higher cognition.

9. Evaluate individually both in terms of the developmental progression and in terms of their own oral language.

The child is working in relation to himself and his own intrinsic timetable for growth. A child's literacy development can not be accurately evaluated without reference to his oral language abilities.

This document gives direction to what teacher and learner are expected to be doing to foster the acquisition of literacy through writing. Being concerned with meaning is a main theme which emerges. In their following the Principles, the teachers are adhering to a central theme that it is critical not to lose meaning in the search for the appropriate convention. That commitment to children and their meaning can be seen in the exchanges between teacher and student. Here a grade one student reads her journal entry to Ann. The actual text which the child wrote was: today my Fads yaze plag raslg. It was accompanied by a

picture of two smiling people, one kicking out his foot, next to a tree.

- Student: (reading his text slowly) *Today my friend was playing wrestling.*
 Teacher: *Oh, is this him with his foot coming out here?*
 Student: *Yes, and he is playing.*
 Teacher: *Do they trip people when they're wrestling?*
 Student: *Yeah, and they, they fight and you know, they have to throw them down and the other one have to count and when they count the other one win.*
 Teacher: *Oh, so if I get somebody down and count...*
 Student: *No, the other one count. 1, 2, 3.*
 Teacher: *Oh, there is a referee!*
 Student: *Yeah, and he counts up to three and when he dos (sic) that guy wins.⁴ (June 4)*

Following the Principles, teacher comments are based on the child's meaning as expressed in his text and in his pictures.

In a similar example, the teacher again confers with a grade one student who has just written the following entry in his journal: the boy pad Bask Ball and the Jet-. It is accompanied by a picture of a boy next to a house with a ball. A jet looms large in the sky above the house.

- Teacher: *Jason, could you read yours to me...please.*
 Student: *The boy played basketball and the jet.*
 Teacher: (referring to the picture) *I see his hoop, right? This is the boy that's playing basketball. What is the jet doing?*
 Student: *He is carrying it.*
 Teacher: *He's carrying it...Tell me more about that.*
 Student: *He's gonna take it. To his place.*
 Teacher: *Oh. You mean the jet is going to lift this right up. (June 3)*

⁴All italicized text represents verbatim speech taken from transcripts of speech recorded in the setting.

In order to provide a simple statement which describes and explains their program, the teaching team constructed a brief overview entitled Literacy for Everyone (Appendix E). Intended for parents and their many visitors, it is a concise philosophical statement supplemented by a description of practice and examples of children's endeavors. There is also a brief description of the role of conferencing as the main instrument of direct teaching. The title Literacy for Everyone and repeated reference to holistic approaches across cultural and linguistic diversity highlights the team's view that the process of literacy acquisition is developmental and systematic regardless of the particulars of language and background. Learning in a holistic manner refers to learning based on what is whole and meaningful to the child. In this case that refers to reading text which is literature and encouraging children to find personally meaningful messages in what they read. Here a grade two student has read and then retold Jack in the Beanstalk. He is being asked to talk about the story's message.

Teacher: *What a long story you told. You are out of breath. So, what was the real problem in the story, Kenny.*

Kenny: *Jack and his Mom wanna be rich. Wanna be rich.*

Teacher: *Yes, right. And did someone learn a lesson?*

Kenny: *The Big One.*

Teacher: *What did he learn, The Big One?*

Kenny: *I don't know. I think he don't kill people. I don't know.*

Teacher: *Well, think about it for a moment. What might he have learned?*

Kenny: *Don't get mad at the little people. The little persons...the children...cause they only a little kid.*

Teacher: *Oh, what a nice thing to learn. Do you feel that sometimes in your own life? Can you tell me of a situation like that?*

Kenny: *Oh. I forgot.*

Teacher: *When you are saying don't hurt the little people.*

Kenny: *Yeah. The little kids.*

Teacher: *Have you had a problem with that?*

Kenny: *Sometimes.*

Teacher: *Yes, what happens?*

Kenny: *Well, if you kill these little children, they'll be dead and they have to learn the lesson. Don't kill the little people.*

Teacher: *Don't kill the little people..that's quite a lesson. We could all take a lesson from this story. Do you ever put a lesson on your stories?*

Kenny: *I don't know. (June 4)*

The role of the teacher shifts with the curriculum orientation being adopted in this program. This changed role is reflected in the document on Responsibilities (Appendix F) prepared as a guideline for teachers to understand their place in the child's process of literacy learning. The child is responsible for engaging in the process and generating the activity for himself. He is in control of the strategies and their deployment. The teacher sees herself as a partner in that process, supporting and facilitating the engagement. Different aspects of the role of the teacher and child are contained in the list of Responsibilities. Several of them vary greatly with conventional teaching wisdom. Conventional wisdom often does not give serious weight to a child's existent understanding or to the array of strategies he has used to gain that understanding. In this setting the teachers rely on that understanding and those strategies. They expect a

child to continue to employ them. The teacher's role adjusts by acknowledging and reflecting on the successful strategies and the appropriate knowledge that the child demonstrates. The child's tacit knowledge then becomes more explicit. Here the teacher is listening to a grade three boy read The Sunflower that Went Flop (Cowley, 1982).

- Student: (reading from the text) *The sunflower was hot and...No...The sun was hot and days (sic) the next afternoon and suddenly the sunflower went flop...* commenting on the illustration showing the sunflower) *Its, its had it...(having trouble reading) I gotta read it, read that thing before I read it out loud.*
- Teacher: *Oh. O.K.*
- Student: *What a shame said the people passing by...*
- Teacher: *Uhhmm*
- Student: *Mrs. Brown...(stumbles) It's...ahh. I don't know that word. I gotta try the rest of the sentence. It'sit again, she said. It's done it again!*
- Teacher: *Good. That was an excellent strategy. (June 2)*

In another example, Marion works with a grade two student. Her questioning strategy again supports the reader's control of his efforts to derive meaning from the text.

- Teacher: *You see if it makes sense. Start again.*
- Student: (reading) *We have to sell these logs down the river to the mill.*
- Teacher: *Does that make sense? To sell these logs down the river to the mill? O.K. Where do you think the problem lies? Get your brain to think it through.*
- Student: *Sawed?*
- Teacher: *We have to what?*
- Student: *Sawed.*
- Teacher: *Sawed. We have to sawed these logs down the river to the mill. What do they have to do with these logs? Forget about the print. Just explain it to me. Use your picture clues too. What do the men have to do?*
- Student: *They cut them down. They put them in the water.*
- Teacher: *Yes.*

Student: *They cut them up.*
 Teacher: *Yes, so what happens in the water then?*
 Student: *They, umm, the logs, they push them down the water.*
 Teacher: *That's right, so you have understood. Keep reading. (May 28)*

The teachers who are the focus of this study have adopted a role they believe introduces and strengthens the child's inner process of deriving benefit from contact with text. From their framework on Responsibilities we can deduce the outline of their perceived role with respect to the child making sense out of text. In their role they approach the child honoring meaning-making as a valid process in itself and let recognition of the particular phonemic, graphemic and syntactic cues that foster that process be secondary to the actual meaning. Here Marion works with a grade two student who has faltered because he cannot decode a word.

Teacher: *O.K. Can you tell me about that ? What do you understand. What about the animals. What is he (pointing) doing?*
 Student: *(inaudible)*
 Teacher: *What does he want?*
 Student: *Peanuts.*
 Teacher: *O.K. Have you ever heard of what you say when a pet is showing that they want some food. What do we call it? What are they doing?*
 Student: *Hungry.*
 Teacher: *They are hungry. But we say they are doing something. They are like asking for food. Only they can't use language. They can't say, "I am hungry." So, what do they do?*
 Student: *They...bark?*
 Teacher: *They bark to show, yes. It's a kind of speaking. Sometimes they might show without barking, too. What is it that they are doing in fact? Can you think of a word that describes that?*
 Student: *Begging?*
 Teacher: *Could that be? Try it with the print.*

Student: (reading from book) *The animals were begging for peanuts.*
 Teacher: *What have you done? Just pause for a moment. You worked that out for yourself. I didn't have to tell you what the word was. How did you do that?*
 Student: (pointing) *Cause this is begged.*
 Teacher: *Well, how did you know that?*
 Student: *It has to be a (letter) b.*
 Teacher: *It. does, but you figured it out from the picture, but also from what you know in your head, and from a situation. Do you sometimes see animals begging?*
 Student: *Oh, I haven't seen them.*
 Teacher: *Well, when you read you use what you know and what you understand. (June 2)*

With support from the teacher, the child synthesizes his own knowledge in the act of applying it.

The teaching role being outlined in these documents is one based on partnership, feedback and problem solving between master and apprentice. The basis for interaction between teacher and student is the child's own endeavors.

Physical Set-up and Personnel

During the last weeks of February and beginning of March 1986 I did a series of four observations to establish the basic organization of the setting and to focus my basic research questions.

The school which houses the Centre is situated in the East End of Vancouver. The neighborhood is multi-cultural and is the home of many Asian and East Indian families. Ann and Marion were both Learning Assistance teachers who shared a teaching assignment and teaching space with two other teachers. One of their colleagues, Jan, was the English Second Language teacher. The fourth teacher, Margaret, was

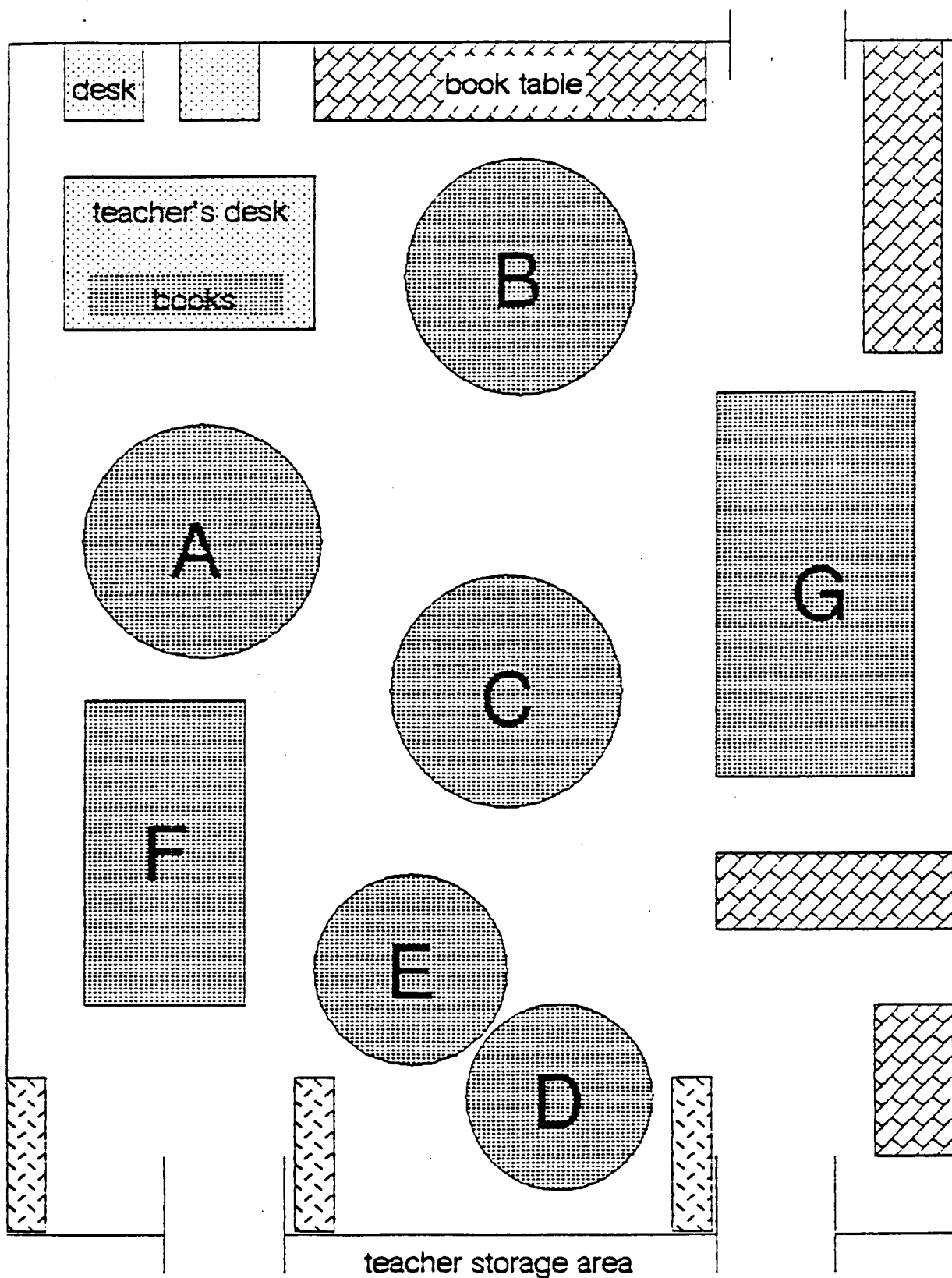
also a Learning Assistance teacher and the newest member of this team. I discovered in my informal talks with Ann and Marion that they had previously taught together with Jan at another East Vancouver school. The former school and its pupils had been the site of some of their earliest research work on Emergent Literacy. They had done the ground work for establishing the principles and routines for working with children that they were presently using. They had moved as a unit to their present school the previous Fall. In the present school the four teachers were jointly responsible for the Learning Assistance and English Second Language instruction.

The Centre was a large, spacious area consisting of two adjoining rooms, both of which had access to the halls on the first floor of the school building. This joint use of space by two programs reflected the teachers' basic assumptions that their teaching approach responded to basic needs in literacy development for both student populations. As the smaller of the two rooms was used almost exclusively by the ESL teacher, it was not central to this study. The larger room was the main working area for Jan and Marion who became the focus of the study. This room was used by four teachers. They had set it up according to their philosophy and needs and were often all present working together. (See Figure 1.)

Children, teachers and visitors entered the room from the main hall. Immediately to the left of the doorway was a

Figure 1

The Learning Assistance Centre



low shelf with cubbies. They were arranged by class and contained the children's writing folders with work and record sheets. To the right of the doorway was a large flat table with books arranged on it. At any one time there were upwards to fifty books arranged there. The titles were all taken from children's literature. They contained trade books, childrens' starter series such as the Story Box (Shortland Publications), paperbacks and some hardback primary books with fairy tales. The books in this library were selected by the teachers because they contained good literature, colorful illustrations, predictable story lines and inherent meaning. The selection contained few prescribed readers. All of the books were displayed laying flat with the cover exposed.

The central floor space of the room contained three large round tables, two large rectangular tables, and two smaller round tables. The arrangement of this furniture sometimes varied according to teacher or child decision. Each teacher generally worked in a specific area of the room. The layout of the room reflected clearly what the teachers wanted from the children in terms of routines for entry and settling to work. The children were very accustomed to this routine which is described below.

Three girls enter, go to cubbies and pick up their folders. They ask for Marion, and are told she is coming and that they should carry on with what they are supposed to do. They go to table C, put down their folders and chat amongst themselves, look around the room (at others working), and try to

engage in conversation with several boys working at table B. Three boys enter, look around, pick up their folders and settle at an adjacent table. Marion enters, surveys the room and comments to the children how wonderful it is that they have organized themselves. (February 10)⁵

Marion's comment is interesting, because it acknowledges both the expectation, and their successful compliance with it. Once the children proceeded to a table, they would typically open their folders and begin to either read, write or discuss the material they were working on. Surveying the room, my impression was often that the activities taking place could best be described as small tutorials. Each child or group of children worked at a table they seemed to know was theirs. They were joined by a teacher who also was theirs for that period, and the work proceeded from there. Here is a selection from my early notes recording the typical flow of activities in the setting.

10:56 There are five groups each with one adult doing. Verbal interactions are specific to one child, and the task at hand. Marion is at G talking about comets. The group is sharing science books about constellations and outer space. The whole room is working at a low hum. Marion moves around the table to another student and asks what she is working on. They discuss it together. The children seem rooted to their tables; there is little moving about. The students get up to get supplies or change books, but return to their work place. 11:07 Teachers at each table are either talking with students or writing. Marion has moved to last child at her table. Jan hasn't moved around her table,

⁵All indented material represents field notes gathered in the setting on the date indicated.

but stays stationery while students are writing. She has a clipboard of what appear to be record sheets. She moves to D where a student who has been reading to himself is working. She staples something to his folder. Two more boys come in and join the group at G. (February 10)

While these small groups worked, it was also not uncommon to see a child working alone.

A child is working alone at D. He is reading aloud to himself - going quickly through a book - reciting to himself, turning pages quickly. Toward the end, he focuses intently on the last page, closes the book, makes a note in his folder, chooses a second book, reads aloud to himself with gestures and movements. He makes another note in his folder and moves to a third book. He follows the text with his finger. He finishes this book, and gets up and crosses to the book table to make another selection. (February 10)

This child, who looked about seven, continued this routine of selecting a book, reading it, recording in his folder for at least fifteen minutes without any direction.

When the Centre was in full use, all of the round tables contained groups of children with an adult. At the busiest times there could be close to twenty-five children working, with the four teachers, and often another adult volunteer, present. This put the ratio of adult to children at about 1:5 at peak times. It was often less, never more.

The Centre was used most heavily in the morning, and all of my observations were done during this time. All of the four teachers who worked in the Centre worked part-time by choice. Three of these teachers were pursuing graduate degrees or publishing in their field and so had on-going

writing projects of their own. The senior members of this team, Ann, Jan and Marion were all involved in conducting professional development work for colleagues in and out of their district. The Centre was also visited by other teachers wanting more information on their program and how it worked. Adult visitors and volunteers were a common enough occurrence in this setting and did not seem to disturb the children. The activities in the Centre worked on a scheduled basis with flexibility. The morning was divided up into periods, for each teacher. During those specified times, a particular group of children would be in the Centre working with a particular teacher. The periods lasted from thirty to forty minutes and the groups contained an average of four children. Ann worked almost exclusively with primary children doing reading and writing. Marion worked with primary and intermediates reading and writing. The children's schedule rotated so that they usually came every other day, or three times per week depending on Marion's and Ann's assessment.

Both Ann and Marion also worked outside of the Centre for a selected period during the morning. During this time they would work in classrooms where an extended writing time was part of the children's day. They would conduct conferences with the children on an individual basis during that writing time.

Having a better understanding of the basic organization of the Centre and how time and space were set up, I began to take a look at the activities.

Activities and Routines

Whether there were twenty children and five adults, or six children and two adults, the basic feel of this Centre remained one of quiet, purposeful activity. As an observer, my first impressions were that I did not necessarily know how the activities I observed were being generated, but to my eye they occurred in an efficient, predictable and accepting manner. There was very little tension between students and teachers, or between teachers. Everyone seemed to have a part to play, they knew their part and played it with ease. There was almost no need for the teachers to attend overtly to problems in management or discipline. Reminders as to appropriate tasks were often presented as suggestions. Here is how a typical period would begin.

11:30 Marion comes into the Centre and pushes tables together, and then goes and gets her grade two group. Children start to pour in, getting their folders. "Where's mine?" somebody says. "Careful folks," Marion responds. "It would be nice if each of you had a book, so when I come by you are ready." One student tells Marion it is her birthday. She wishes her happy birthday. "Some of you have't finished your writing. I want you to do that first. I am giving you long paper," Marion says to all. (February 24)

After the children had entered the Centre, they would, on their own, begin to read, write or they would listen to nearby discussion. If working alone reading, it would either be aloud to themselves, or silently to themselves. Sometimes they worked using a tape recorder to record and listen to themselves reading. Having completed a book, they would proceed to the book table and choose another one. In this context, "reading" included skimming, glancing, studying (particularly pictures) reciting aloud (from apparent memory), singing (as in nursery rhymes or songs in a book), reading aloud (to self or occasionally into a tape recorder) and sustained silent reading. The choosing of text was in the child's control, except where occasionally the teacher would assist if a particular title was desired for a mutually discussed reason.

In the earlier sessions I observed less spontaneous writing on the part of the children. It seemed they had to be cued to begin this.

The room has been rearranged and two computers are not present against the window wall. Ann is talking with the children as they come in, telling them she wants to write and read today. This is a Grade 2 group, and she picks one boy in particular and as he sits down with his materials, makes an agreement with him about what specific time he will do his writing. He is a small child and I cannot hear everything she says to him. Another student comes in and Ann orients him to one of the computers. He goes over and starts to work, excited. Two other children are waiting at a table for Ann. They have their folders and books ready. She takes

one of them back to the book table to select a book. (March 5)

Sometimes that cuing would be a simple reference to the writing folder.

Where are you in here? (indicating the child's journal) (March 5th)

Writing in this context included the drawing of pictures, drafting and doing final versions of edited stories.

It became apparent that while the children seemed to be engaging in a great deal of independent activity, the teachers' presence in shaping that activity was consistent, directly and indirectly. I turned my attention to what the teachers were doing. At first glance, this seemed to be a consistent mixture of surveying and engaging. They would glance around the room or their table to see how and what the children were doing. They would then engage a child in interaction. That interaction could be brief, or extended. It could be a cue to task, or a direct engagement with the task. It served repeatedly to generate or extend the child's engagement.

A child is reading The Billy Goats Gruff aloud to Ann. He reads slowly. When he has difficulty he starts squirming his body around, while keeping his eyes on the text. It seems a great effort for him. Ann reads a sentence or two for him with great intonation. After her example he uses more intonation...His voice gets louder and more unnatural. He tells Ann he is tired. She says "Wait a minute." She then summarizes the plot action and adds "Let's see if the problem gets solved." He returns to reading. (March 5)

In another episode a grade three boy had been reading to himself for about ten minutes. Ann had passed him several times as she moved from child to child. At one point she went over to him and he read aloud to her, slowly. She asked him what was going to happen next in the story. He stopped, grinned and gave her a reply. She left him for a few minutes to assist another child, and then returned to him.

He reads aloud. Ann starts (referring to the text) "Do you know what he snatched?" The student looks startled, and replies "No." Ann replies, "Well, read it again." He looks at the book, puzzled. She urges him again. He is still puzzled. "Well, use the illustration," she urges. He looks at the book again. "A lantern!" he exclaims. "I thought you knew," says Ann. The student appears pleased and continues to read, glancing up once to smile at her. (March 5)

These engagements with the child were the basis of the teaching in this Centre. They occurred generally on a one to one basis, though at times other children would be drawn in, or would simply watch and listen.

Relationship of Conceptual Framework to the Site

Intuitively I felt that what the teachers were doing in these engagements was similar in content and structure to the features of adult speech documented in the literature on the adult's role in child language development. As the teachers in this Centre had developed their model for learning literacy based on the literature on oral language

development, they had cast themselves in an analogous role to that of a parent. I had heard other teachers query them about what they were doing in terms of actual teaching. Their answers to these queries were not always direct or specific. I asked Ann in February to describe the teaching itself. She began by saying that she expected the children's efforts to make sense, and she responded to that. It was only later that the teachers realized there was a system in action and that their responses to the children were fairly predictable. They then realized that the responses were a teaching device. In Ann's words:

In the beginning it was only us keeping up our end of the conversation (with the children). Refusing a child's statement of meaning will stop the process. Refusing or correcting the form or structure is what? How does a child take that? They see it as refusing their meaning, they don't separate the two. They are wiser than we are.
(February 10)

My idea was that the "predictable" way of responding to the child might contain some of the features of parent speech already documented. The investigation became a search for a description of what the teachers were doing and the similarities with respect to what parents do to assist children learning language.

Chapter Five: Routines and Engagement: Evidence for Frames
and Formats in Teacher-Child Interaction

The purpose of this chapter is to look at how engagements with individual children were structured. In this setting, the reading and writing conferences themselves were often the occasion of sustained engagement between student and teacher. Both my informal and formal observations looked at what the teachers and children were doing with each other while working together in the Centre. I was primarily sensitive to the verbal exchanges which occurred when reading and writing were the central event.

My observations were guided by Kaye's supposition that the adult possesses the intuitive ability to guide a child's endeavors in a certain direction by creating enabling frameworks based on the child's own efforts. I expected to see the teachers merging the demands of the literacy task with the children's efforts and comments and holding them in context using verbal exchange. My observations were also guided by Bruner's thinking with respect to formatted interaction. In particular, I was concerned to see evidence for two features of formatting: engagement and routines. He maintains that one of the primary features of a format is engagement where the adult manages to insure the child's optimum involvement in maintaining their joint focus. How would engagement be managed in this setting with this focus on literacy tasks? Would the teacher-child interaction show evidence of predictability and consistency in structure

which facilitated extended literacy development? Reading and writing are complex activities which involve many skills and strategies. Would routines between teacher and child establish guidelines for applying those skills? Both Kaye and Bruner speak in terms of child-led and adult-managed engagement as the central feature of framing and formatting. I wanted to see how these features applied to the teaching practised in this setting.

Evidence for Framing in Teacher-Child Interactions

The week I chose to return to the school coincided with the mounting of a school musical in which all classes were participating. When I entered the school I went directly to the principal. He spoke with obvious pleasure about the production. He also mentioned that while the children were excited and involved, the teachers were in various states of disgruntlement concerning the disruptions. When Ann met me at the L.A.C. door, one of her first comments was a concerned one about how the production was disturbing routines in the center.

The children entered the center in small groups. There seemed to be fewer children coming and they entered irregularly that first morning. My notes document two children and their activities during the first period.

9:05 Enters room. 9:15 Has chosen a book and gone to the tape-recorder and is playing with the buttons and humming to himself. Ann comes to him and explains what he is to do to start the tape. She

starts it for him. He starts to read. She leaves him and returns to another child. 9:17 Bobby leaves the tape and comes to Ann's side. She is surprised. He insists he has already read. She takes him back to the tape and reverses it so he can listen to himself. She leaves him to listen to himself. 9:23 Bobby leaves the tape and crosses the room to talk to another child who is also taping himself. 9:25 Bobby asks if he can leave and return to class. Ann replies yes. He puts his things away and leaves. (April 15)

The sense of this episode is of missed engagement. Yet Ann is managing the interaction by following Bobby's lead. Using the essence of each player's turn as the introduction of a topic or comment upon a topic, and separating the role of teacher and student, a pattern of turn-taking and engagement emerges. Schematically, it looks like this:

Bobby

Ann

playing with tape recorder

suggests he use tape
recorder to read

sets up recorder

reads

returns to Ann

re-establishes task with
different focus

listens to recording

walks away

requests to leave

permission to leave

It is clear that the child led the interaction and that Ann's responses led from his actions. The direction of the incident takes its shape from her management and her

management followed his lead. For instance, he is playing with the tape-recorder. She uses that to introduce using the tape for the task of reading. The strategy of using what the child is doing to introduce what is to be done is a feature of framing behavior.

One other child was working under Ann's supervision at the same time. He received more of her attention.

9:05 Alex enters the room, picks up his writing folder. 9:09 Ann approaches Alex and goes over his story record with him. She questions him, he retells a story. They discuss it. 9:15 They are still discussing stories, but the topic has changed to the general one of baby animals. 9:15 Ann asks him if he has recorded his reading recently. He says no. She sets up the tape recorder for him while explaining how to do it. He reads. She leaves him. 9:35 Ann returns to Alex. At this point he is listening to himself. She listens with him, then leaves. 9:40 Ann returns to him, comments about what he has read. She then shows him where to store his tape. He packs up and leaves the Center. (April 15)

Ann initiates the engagement by joining him. Their talk is about stories, then about a general topic from the stories. From this she moves him into reading into the tape recorder. The incident differs from the previous one in the amount of talk which preceded the taping session. Here is the schematic representation:

Alex

sitting with folder
retell story

Ann

asks about stories read
questions about
story

continues retelling	introduction of baby animal topic
comment	
response	query about tape
reads into tape	set up tape
listens to self reading	
continues to read and listen	joins in listening
	comments on reading
	shows where to store tape
puts things away and leaves	

Ann begins the engagement by sitting with Alex. Their topic of conversation relates directly to his record in the folder he is holding. As with the previous incident the teacher uses elements of what the child is doing to initiate further activity. This session is devoted to review and practice. Ann directs him, again based on what is established between them by his leads. In this case his endeavors with the tape are intrinsically motivating enough for him to continue unassisted for a longer period than Bobby. He successfully engages himself in the task she sets.

On the following day, the routines of engagement appear again, but the focus changes. Here three children are working together during the same period under Ann's supervision. Again, she manages each of them in separate episodes of interaction. When the children first enter, she immediately approaches Mitchell with a request that he read something he has previously written.

9:00 Ann starts Mitchell on the tape recorder. 9:03 Ann checks with him to see if he wants to tape a book. He says no. 9:10 Mitchell wanders about- goes first to book table, then back to work area. Ann gives him his journal. He takes it away, then returns and interrupts her while she is working with someone else. She sends him away telling him to write. 9:15 Mitchell is still wandering. Ann, who is still listening to someone else read, seats him behind her at the adjacent table. 9:15 Mitchell leans over to Ann and says "I don't have a story." Ann tells him that it is his job to come up with one. He turns around and starts to write. 9:30 Ann turns around to Mitchell and reads aloud what he has written, "Autobot is bigger than Megatron." She asks him to draw a picture to show that. He shows resistance. 9:35 Ann returns to Mitchell, he still has not drawn a picture; she rereads his sentence. He starts to draw. When he is finished she asks him how Megatron could win if he is so small. Mitchell very excitedly launches an explanation of Megatron's special powers. Ann acknowledges his explanation telling him it gives her "pictures in my mind." (April 16)

This episode shows many attempts to engage the child in the literacy task. Once engaged, her comments shift toward the meaning in what he has produced. Here is the episode schematically:

<u>Mitchell</u>	<u>Ann</u>
	starts him taping his writing
reads on tape	
	requests he read a book
responds no	
starts wandering	
	gives him his journal
goes to table	

returns to Ann

continues wandering

I don't have a story

writes

draws

elaboration

sends him away to
write

seats him near her

tells him to come
up with one

reads his writing

requests a picture

rereads writing

query re Megatron

With this child, persistence brings results. He eventually engages with the writing task. After he has produced both the text and the picture she draws him into a dialogue which expands the meaning he has expressed in text. This discussion requires him to elaborate the thinking behind both his sentence and his picture. Watching Mitchell, it was easy to see his obvious pleasure when he described his character orally. The simple sentence in text only told part of the story. All of Ann's endeavors, as documented, served to draw his efforts, his thinking and sense of meaning to the surface where writing occurs and is shared with others. By requiring the child to extend orally what he has written in text, she is enabling his recognition of a direct connection between his elaborated thoughts and text in print.

While guiding Mitchell, Ann was also working with two other children. Here is the second one.

9:05 Saspreet enters room and gets her folder and book. 9:05 Ann comes over to listen to her as she reads the book she has chosen. She stays at her side. 9:10 Saspreet continues to read. Ann asks her to stop. She covers the page with her hands and asks Saspreet what has happened. Saspreet describes the action. Ann asks her what is going to happen next. Saspreet ventures a guess. Ann asks if that is going to be a "good thing." She then asks what the character might be thinking. 9:22 Saspreet still reading aloud. When she finishes Ann asks her if the ending was a surprise. Saspreet responds. (April 16)

In this episode, Ann comes to Saspreet as she is reading. Saspreet is already engaged in the literacy task, and Ann's interaction with her centers on the text itself. Ann questions her on her understanding of the text (what has happened). She also asks her to make predictions (what is going to happen next, will it be good) and to look at the story from a different perspective (what might the character think). From this episode we can see that there are different kinds of engagement possible. Clearly, the child's job is to engage in the literacy task. If he does not, the teacher is working at managing the child into engagement. Once engaged, the interaction between the child and teacher shifts to focus on the text itself. Within that focus, there are different possibilities for comment and exchange. It can also be observed that until the child engages, any work with meaning in text is limited. Once the child and the teacher are mutually engaged and focussed on the text, their talk is more specific and directed toward constructing meaning from text.

Ann worked with a third child during that period. In this episode there is extended engagement focussed on text.

9:30 Ray enters the Center and sits down with his folder and the book he has chosen. Ann asks him about a story he has on the computer. She requests that he call it up. He does and works on it at the computer. 9:50 Ann checks his story and tells him it is ready to print. She asks him to read to her. He chooses a book and reads the title. Ann asks him what it is going to be about. He responds. She asks him if he has read it. He says no and begins to read. Ann stops him and asks him about a certain word he has missed. He explains the passage, using the missed word. She points that out. He continues reading, gets stuck on a word. Ann asks him what the character could do in the situation. He responds and then figures out the text. He continues reading with greater fluency. When he completes the story, Ann requests he retell the story. He does. They are facing each other and she listens to his retelling. It is a humorous story and the retelling is humorous. When he finishes he closes the book and opens his writing folder and looks through his stories. (April 16)

The last portion of this episode looks like this schematically:

<u>Ray</u>	<u>Ann</u>
chooses a book, reads the title	requests he read
response	requests story prediction
responds no	question re having read it
reads text	
misses word	stops him and requests

explains passage using missed word	retelling of passage
reads text, then stops	points out use of word
response leads to decoding text	query about what character's choices
continues reading to end	
retells story	requests retelling

In this section Ann is using verbal strategies to enhance and improve Ray's engagement with the text. She uses several strategies. They include the same ones employed in the previous incident (prediction, retelling and change in point of view). In this she is leading the student to think about the story and to use that thinking as a basis for problem solving about the text. As a framework this strategy reduces the possible range of variables that the text (particularly the missed portions) could be about. It constrains the student's focus and gives him greater possibility for success in determining the meaning in the text.

In the cases cited the teacher is structuring the child's encounter with the literacy task based on what the child is already doing or already knows. At the minimum level this structuring serves to engage and maintain involvement with the demands of the task. In more closely focussed encounters it serves to focus on the meaning gained in the text. In both cases we have evidence for framing the literacy task so that the child can successfully work on the

demands of the task itself. The teacher achieves this by using the children's endeavors as the basis for engagement. Once the child is engaged, the teacher uses questions and comments to bring the child's thinking about meaning to the surface and then requiring the child to apply it to the process of reading or writing. In this way, the teacher molds sequences of activity (or dialogue) which are collaboratively built by virtue of adult expertise and sensitivity to the demands of the task and the child's efforts. The early data demonstrated that sustained interaction over text produced many opportunities for elaboration between teacher and student. Kaye has suggested that it is the affective power of shared meaning within a frame that makes learning inevitable. In these incidents the teacher works towards using the child's efforts and understanding to establish shared meaning as the basis for interaction.

Later in the study, during the focussed observations, the same set of features was present in the teacher's assistance to children. The data is more specific in terms of providing more evidence about the language which the teacher uses to mold the interaction, thereby creating the frame. In the following episode, the child is engaged in the writing process. Ann's comments and facilitation work to keep that engagement going, and also serve to assist with the clarification of the student's intended meaning. Here is Mitchell again. He has been talking with Ann for several

minutes and resisting the task of having to write his stories down. He prefers to tell them orally. Just before this transcribed portion, he had been deliberating out loud about his title and what he was going to write about.

Mitchell: *O.K. The rabbit, and the mice and the cat. No, I want the rabbit and the mice. No, a tortoise.*
 Ann: *A tortoise, O.K.*
 Mitchell: *(sounding the word out to himself) Tortoise...tortoise....The rabbit and the tortoise and the dog.*
 Ann: *Uhhmm*
 Mitchell: *(talking as he writes) One day..the rabbit...One day the rabbit asked (continues to whisper sounds to self as he writes) the tortoise...tortoise and the dog...dog for a race... (repeats it again to self)*
 Ann: *Good stuff.*
 Mitchell: *in the park...*
 Ann: *Uhhmm*
 Mitchell: *The rabbit said...ready? (repeats again to self) Ready said....*
 Ann: *Ready, set.*
 Mitchell: *Ready..set..go! I was going to put it backwards-that doesn't make sense. A-D-N, that's not a word A-N-D*
 Ann: *Good correcting.*
 Mitchell: *(slowly) And the dog ...sleep*
 Ann: *So...*
 Mitchell: *Ready, set, go and then the dog sleep.*
 Ann: *Oh. You've got the dog sleeping*
 Mitchell: *(no response)*
 Ann: *No, that's fine! I thought you meant to do that.*
 Mitchell: *Ready, set go and then the dog sleep..for one hour... (subvocalizing) hour, hour, where's my hour? H-O-U-R....for one hour and then, then I think... I think he'll sleep.*
 Ann: *Uhhmm. So then, the dog sleeps for one hour and then..*
 Mitchell: *And then...and then...*
 Ann: *I want to know what these other creatures are up to?*
 Mitchell: *The rabbit won! And ...then ...the... rabbit ...asked...the... tortoise (continues writing)*
(June 4)

Here is the schematic representation of the episode. As Mitchell is talking to himself as he writes, I represent

most of his contribution as composing, with a parenthetical note.

Mitchell

Ann

composing (tortoise)

A tortoise, O.K.

composing (and the dog)

Umhmm

composing (for a race)

Good stuff

composing (in the park)

Umhmm

composing (*ready, said*)

ready, set

composing (...A- N-D)

good correcting

composing (*and the dog
sleep*)

So...

composing- repeats self

*Oh, you've got the dog
sleeping.*

(pause)

*No, that's fine. I
thought you meant to do
that.*

composing (*then I think he'll
sleep*)

*So then the dog sleeps,
and then...*

composing (*and then...and
then*)

*I want to know what
happens to these other
animals.*

The rabbit won!
(resumes composing)

Ann's comments qualify as an example of framing behavior. She is maintaining the child's engagement, based on what he is doing and working to develop shared meaning. The student has his hands full. First, it is difficult for him to commit his stories to writing, something which the teacher knows. Second, he is composing, self-talking and writing

simultaneously in his second language. Third, he is keeping track of what Ann is saying to him. Her initial first few turns are gentle encouragements indicating that she is following him. She gives him outright assistance with the ready-set idiom. He accepts it and carries on. However, when it appears he may be stuck about where to go next after the dog is asleep, and she repeats his last phrase back to him, something changes. His hesitation either connotes uncertainty, or a concern on his part of criticism from her. She repairs the breakdown by clarifying the intention behind her mirroring. However, he is still stuck (*and then...and then*). This time she comes at it differently and asks for a prediction. It works to break the log jam by reestablishing shared meaning (based on his ideas) and he continues composing.

Evidence for Formats in Teacher-Child Interaction

In the earlier chapter on theoretical frameworks, the similarities and differences between frames and formats was discussed. Formats rely on routines and the establishment of roles which can be exchanged. They also are characterized by the adult modeling behavior which becomes incorporated into children's repertoire of behaviors. As part of the dynamic of the format, what is modeled (by the adult) in one episode is required (by the adult) in another. In this setting where the teachers are striving to foster

children's elaboration of their own meaning and their own strategies for comprehending and encoding meaning it was of interest to see how routines and modeling within routines would be handled.

While most of Ann and Marion's contact with children occurred in the Center, they also worked in classrooms where they conferred with children about their writing. The children worked on drafting or editing. Marion or Ann and the classroom teacher would confer with children individually. Because the children were called for or requested conferences on particular pieces, these episodes of interaction were characterized by high levels of engagement focussed on a piece of text, in this case writing. The following episodes occurred between Marion and children in a grade three classroom. Since it is the spring of the year, the children are accustomed to the routine and the flow of events go very smoothly. Usually the children were already at work writing when Marion arrived. She conferred with them at a particular table set up near the door. When the children came for conferences some eagerly shared their writing and displayed obvious enjoyment at the opportunity for a conference. For others it was a challenge to overcome their inhibitions.

10:50 The room is noisier than usual when we enter today. The teacher is circulating and asking for quiet. Several girls come to Marion and want to know when it is their turn. One says she is stuck. Marion

suggests she read the section to a friend. It is Matt's turn and he comes to the table. He seems shy and glances at me solemnly. He and Marion begin. Marion asks if he is just starting a new story. He nods. She asks, "What kind of story:." "Cosmic Cow" replies Mark. Marion comments on how interesting the title is and how the title gives her several pictures in her mind. He describes Cosmic Cow. "She is a girl and she's big and fat and has a cape and flies." Marion asks for more and Mark tells about the character in his story who has problems in school and how Cosmic Cow helps him. Then he adds "But it doesn't say that in the story." Marion asks him to read his story. He does. When he finishes Marions laughs and says, "It is a big idea but a simple one. Even the boy wonders why he didn't think of the solution." Marks says the chartacter has a lot of homework. Marions asks about that. They talk for a moment, then Marion comments that there are other things she wants to ask him, particularly about the several little drawings in with the text. She says, "O.K. you've put some little pieces in- you haven't read them. Can you tell me about them? Should they be read by the reader?" He does not respond. She adds, "That's the cow saying that? Is there some way we can put that in the story?" He seems stumped. Marion continues. "I wonder how books do that...let's pretend someone wants to tell something to someone." Mark says suddenly, "It says they said." Marion agrees. They start to insert quotation marks and the necessary text. He works on it. Marion asks if there are other places in the story where they are talking. He re-reads his ending and looks up smiling. Marion compliments him on how much he has shown the reader. She dates his folder and asks him to send the next child. (April 22)

Structurally this conference may be seen to have three sections. In the first section Marion establishes common ground with Matt. She does this by asking about the story and having him retell it. The second section begins with

his reading of his text, and includes her comments on the storyline, his reference to homework, and her asking for elaboration. The final section is initiated by Marion when she asks for clarification about the drawings. Using what he has done in text she explores his understanding of the conventions around quotation marks. It takes three attempts before he sees her point. It is interesting that she never actually prescribes the convention as being necessary, but rather draws him in to seeing what it could add to his text. His happiness at the discovery gives the impression he thinks he discovered something. The possibly routinized aspect of this engagement is in the structure of the three distinct phases. The modeling that occurs is not anything Marion does, but is contained in her references to his use of little drawings, and in her question to him about how books handle that problem. The model being referred to here is in literate conventions she is asking the student to recall.

The following day the same structure of three phases appeared in a writing conference in this class. However, the student and the focus were very different. The student had approached Marion toward the end of the previous day asking for a conference. The student said her problem was not knowing what was going to happen in her story. Marion remembered that this same student had another unfinished story and they agreed to review it the next day.

Priscilla

10:50 Priscilla brings her Little Witch story. Marion asks her to quickly re-tell it. It is about a witch teacher who "teaches little witches to be bad." In order to pass the little witch has to change a singing bird into a bat. Priscilla has set the story problem up. Marion asks her to start reading from this part. Priscilla begins and reads fluently and then her voice falters. Marion asks, "What have you noticed?...There is a lesson...What is it?" Priscilla offers an idea which is very convoluted and involves bringing in more characters. Marion says, "What would that look like?" Priscilla ventures a resolution. Marion says, "How is all this going to help the little witch?" Priscilla responds, "I think I made it too difficult." Marion asks her how she could get herself out of the difficulty. Priscilla says, "I could make it a dream. She could fall asleep and dream about a key and when she wakes up the key could be in her hand." "How will that help her?" Marion asks again. Priscilla says it will help her remember her dream. Marion asks how will it help her become a witch. Priscilla ventures that she doesn't know how long this story is going to be. Marion suggests she leave it and think about it. Priscilla agrees because "there are a lot of ideas swishing around in my head." Marion then asks her if she thinks before she writes. Priscilla says yes she is always thinking about her stories. Marion says, "Well in this conference you've done some planning." She then records the conference on her record sheet. Priscilla interjects, "Put down: Come back later." Marion asks if she would like to come back. Priscilla says yes. Marion asks her to send the next child. (April 23)

This episode uncovers some complex issues in writing. These have been raised by the student herself. Structurally, the three phases are present. First, the story framework is

established in retelling. Second, the text is read. Third, a particular problem raised in the reading, is explored. Each of these sections flows from the previous one. In this episode the problem raised is planning. By Priscilla's own admission, she has more ideas than resolutions. Marion attempts to refocus her on resolution (How is this going to help the little witch? How could you get yourself out of this difficulty? How will that help her become a little witch?). As with the previous episodes, she uses questioning to assist the student to find a solution. In this case Priscilla's responses do not bring her closer to solving her problem. (Make it a dream. I don't know how long this is going to be. There are lots of words swishing around in my head.) Marion does not attempt to give her a solution, even though her use of the word planning does indicate a direction that might lead to a solution. The model of the behavior which would assist the child is not immediately evident. It is only suggested.

In both of these classroom conferences Marion uses questioning in the third phase of the conference in an attempt to get the student to "take over" a new aspect of their writing process. In the case of Matt her questions do lead him to a recognition of the convention of quotations and their place in his writing. Her strategy allows him to make a link between what he has read and how he has written. In the case of Priscilla, the take-over does not seem to work. Priscilla is dealing with a strategy, not a

convention, and is not yet able to be in control of the solution that is appropriate for her.

As examples of formatting, these episodes contain both high levels of engagement, a routine and reference to models which could be incorporated or demonstrated in the child's repertoire of literate behaviors. These features are a direct result of the teacher's management of the episode using questions that bring to the surface the child's abilities and understanding. These probes are requests for display of literacy abilities. They draw tighter and tighter circles around particular features of literacy which can be incorporated into the child's efforts. If the adult probe succeeds in drawing out an insight from the child, then that insight is incorporated into the literacy task.

Having found evidence for formats in the conferences held in classrooms, I was curious to see if formatted routines would occur in the Learning Assistance setting. In the Centre, both the students and the structure of the setting were different. The students had demonstrated difficulty with literacy tasks. The structure of the setting required that a teacher worked with several students at once and as a result, the interactions overlapped. Both of these factors might result in some adaptations in how the teachers worked with their students.

I did not return to the school until a month later. In the set of observations made then, I was concerned with capturing more of the language between teachers and

children. It seemed that episodes between children and teachers in the Centre were potentially full of disruptions. Unlike the classroom conference which was designed to focus on one child and his writing for an extended time, engagements in the Centre overlapped and were punctuated with interruptions. The need to keep track of more than one child may have influenced the quality of the interaction. Also, the children at one table often watched each other and chimed in suggestions and opinions during any discussion with a teacher. Here Ann is working with Bobby and Saspreet, who have just finished listening to another student read a story.

After some time, Bobby leaves the table. Eventually he gets a book and returns to sit next to Ann. She asks him, "Well, what's happening here?" Saspreet interjects that he has read that book before. "Well, maybe he likes it," Ann replies. Bobby reads aloud, and Ann leans forward and listens. He falters on a word. "Are you happy with that?" she asks. She turns to Saspreet and comments on her journal entry. Saspreet smiles and continues writing. Bobby continues reading, and stumbles on a word. Ann says, "Well, it certainly starts with an 'h'. What's the most important thing in the picture? Tell me quickly all the things you see in the picture." Bobby starts listing them. Ann interjects, "And if you have a whole lot of people and they are going fast- that's called a _?" Bobby says "highway!" and continues listing. Ann replies, "Good for you - super reading." (May 21)

In order for a student to make sense of reading, he must grasp enough of the text to construct meaning for himself. When there is a struggle for lexical items, the

process of making meaning may be impaired. Ann is working with Bobby to recover a missed lexical item. Her strategy contains the same three phases as seen in the previous writing episodes even though the context and the student's ability are different. First she elicits a frame of reference on the item in question. She does this by restating the child's phonetic strategy (Well, it certainly starts with an "h".) and then requesting that he orally use the picture cues to list possible words that might fit. This is similar to a request for retelling a story. It is a request that gives a parameter to the task. The second phase is the child's response, a list of words that might possibly contain the missing one. Here the child himself must come up with something, using his own knowledge. In the third phase, Ann uses a question to focus what the child has displayed in his list. She attempts to tailor a slot in which he will fit the missing item (If you have a whole lot of people and they are going fast- that's called a _?). Bobby's success at filling the slot comes from two directions, his own list and the context it created, and Ann's ability to use language to create a slot where he could fit a final, refined attempt. To qualify as a format, this episode must display the quality of routine in addition to developing a reciprocal relationship between modeling and display. The similarity of this episode with respect to the previous ones is the teacher's use of probes to obtain clarification. They require the child to focus on certain

sets of linguistic requirements. However, unlike the writing conferences which had a definite three part routine (retelling, reading, editing), the probes of the reading conferences focus on the demands of one word or sentence at a time. In order to accomplish this they proceed from the general to the specific, and perhaps in this way there is a routine. It may also be that the requirements of a writing conference are per se different than the requirements of a reading conference by virtue of the difference between reading and writing.

In the following episode Ann is working with a grade three student. This student appeared briefly in Chapter Four and is reading the same book (The Sunflower that Went Flop) as he was then, though this is a different episode.

- Vincent: (reading) *Mr Brown opened up his fix-it bag and got out some sticky tape.*
 Ann: *Uhhmm*
 Vincent: (still reading) *This should do it, you said. He said. He went sticking, sticking, sticking and stood the flower up by the well again. What a-*
 Ann: (interrupting) *Is there a well or am I hearing you incorrectly?*
 Vincent: *well..wail*
 Ann: *Are we talking about a well there?*
 Vincent: *Yeah*
 Ann: *Is the sunflower by a well?*
 Vincent: *No, by the...*
 Ann: *Well, what would you say it is by?*
 Vincent: *Wood!*
 Ann: *Yes, it seems to be made of wood. I'm not sure that I think...*
 Vincent: *A fence!*
 Ann: (is interrupted by another student and speaking with him)
 Vincent: (still trying to figure out the word) *WHALE!*
 Ann: *A whale?*
 Other student: *Wall!*
 Vincent: *Wall!*

Ann: *Aah, that makes sense. That could be called a wall couldn't it? It could be called a wall.*
 Vincent: *True*
 Other student: *Wall again*
 Ann: *Yes, but you've got to get the whole thing. (reads from text) He went stick, stick, stick and stood the sunflower up by the wall again. (May 28)*

First Marion clarifies what she has heard. She then asks Vincent if his reading makes sense. He tries to maintain it does (which could be a bluff on his part). She asks him a straight question which refers only to picture clues, and he admits the discrepancy. Having established that they are both talking about the same item (a picture of a fence) she proceeds to elicit a list of possibilities from him. This is a strategy identical to the one she used with Bobby and follows the same pattern. The only difference here is that Vincent is aided by the second student who gives him the correct word (a model).

As a final example, Marion is conferring with a grade two student on a story he had written. When this exchange occurred they had already worked through a good portion of the story and were nearing the end. The story was about some robbers stealing money and in the end the arrival of the good guys prevents the robbers from getting away. Kenny is working on a section about a siren which frightened the robbers.

Marion: *Tell me in your own word*
 Kenny: *He heard it flash on.*
 Marion: *How can he hear it?*
 Kenny: *It made a noise.*
 Marion: *Does it say that? See if you can figure it out.*
 Kenny: *I don't know if I can figure it out where to put it.*
 Marion: *(Covers the text with her hands)*

Kenny: *Leader One saw a red light.*
 Marion: *Tell me what he heard.*
 Kenny: *A red buzzer flashed on.*
 Marion: *AAh, very good.*
 Kenny: *(Writes on his draft while sub-vocalizing a red buzzer flashed on.)*
 Marion: *You got it worked out beautifully- a red buzzer flashed on. I can hear it and I can see it.*
(May 22)

This exchange centers on Marion's probe concerning the student's intention to convey the sound of the buzzer. First, that is established. Second, Marion explores with the student the difference between the sound and the sight. Finally, she has the student orally convey the thought and description which is not part of his text. After having rehearsed it, he is able to insert it into text. The same pattern of probe, recognition and incorporation occurs here as in the previous episodes. As with the others it proceeds from the general to the specific. It begins with a general agreement to clarify an item and ends with the student incorporating his solution into his text.

The data in these series of observations confirmed the presence of engagement and aspects of routines, both of which are characteristic of formats. Referring back to Table I, those characteristics of the adults role which Bruner describes are present in the teachers' participation with and guidance to their students. The teachers consistently engage the children, maintain their involvement, establish joint focus, create routines of patterned interaction, supply language (or probe for student language), accept as meaningful the childrens' contributions, incorporate childrens' contributions, make

judgements with respect to accountability, and where the children are capable, hand-over aspects of the routine. The data also revealed how modeling in this setting varies from what is found in Bruner's research . Here modeling was not always given directly by the adult. Instead it was discovered or rediscovered by the student by virtue of following the teacher's probes.

The data suggest that episodes which are limited in focus show potential for more elaborate development of specific skills and conventions with respect to literacy. Within the formatted episodes, the teachers' use of questions as probes for understanding played a critical role in what the students could incorporate into their efforts with respect to the requirements of reading and writing. Successful probes led to student recognition and incorporation. A successful probe contains both an understanding of the demands of literacy, and a respect for the validity of the child's perspective and efforts.

From these data, the next step was to look at very specific language exchanges between teacher and student. They might reveal more about the nature of the probe and its role in learning through interaction.

Chapter Six: Making Learning Inevitable: The Use of
Scaffolds, Accountability and Semantic Contingency in the
Development of Literacy

Snow (1983) and Snow and Ninio (1986) have suggested that the basic language devices which are standard fare in the repertoire of adult assistance to children's language development are also present in parental assistance with the development of children's early orientation to literacy. Scaffolds, accountability and semantic contingency are resilient and adaptable language devices which adults can use to expand a child's awareness of the conventions and contracts of literacy. The investigation here centers on discovering how those strategies work in an educational setting where the goal is for students to acquire competence in expressing and understanding meaning in text.

Previous chapters have demonstrated how the environment is organized and reflects the teachers' beliefs that both children's efforts and sense of meaning are central to the educational endeavor. It has also been demonstrated how the teachers under study build frameworks of interaction with their students which draw together the demands of the literacy task and the child's efforts at that task in language exchanges. Characteristically these exchanges are built on student endeavors, maintain engagement with the demands of the literacy task, have a routine element and are directed by the teacher towards giving and receiving meaning in text. This chapter will look at the specifics of

language exchanges to see how the teachers use the devices of scaffolding, accountability and semantic contingency to promote the acquisition of literacy in their interactions with students.

The Use of Verbal Scaffolds in Reading Conferences

A language scaffold is an enabling framework built with words. It narrows the focus of an exchange between an adult. The child can then attend to a particular set of language demands to the exclusion of others. Here Ann is listening to Luke read. Luke is shy and not fond of reading aloud. English is his second language. He is reading from Will You Be My Mother (Melser and Cowley, 1982).

- Luke: *Lamb cry and cry. All right said the boy, I will be your mother.*
 Ann: *Was he able to be the mother? (pause) What did he have to do to be the mother?*
 Luke: *Because - he have to make him stop crying.*
 Ann: *Yes, he talked him into it by crying. And the boy, what did he do? - to be the mother?*
 Luke: *(softly) Feed him.*
 Ann: *Did you see that? Feeding. Did you see the special thing he used for feeding?*
 Luke: *Yeah.*
 Ann: *Did you see what it was? Can you tell me about it?*
 Luke: *A bottle.*
 Ann: *A bottle of ____?*
 Luke: *Milk.*
 Ann: *Milk! Yes. (May 26)*

Ann is building a language framework using questions to draw out particulars of meaning and vocabulary here. Possibly she is checking to make sure Luke knows the word for milk. Together they are also exploring the meaning set that comes with the boy becoming the mother to the lamb. Her queries

construct a set of requirements that focus the exchange (*What did he have to do to be the mother? Did you see the special thing that he used? Can you tell me about it?*) By following her language leads, Luke is directed to the set of semantic concerns which point first to the word "bottle" and then the word "milk".

In the following episode, the search for an appropriate lexical item creates some interesting scaffolding which enables the child to approach a range of meaning issues. Here Mitchell is reading to Ann from If You Give a Mouse a Cookie (Numeroff, 1985).

- Mitchell: (reading the text) *As well, when he done, he'll probably take a nap.*
 Ann: *Umhmm, well he will be tired after all that work.*
 Mitchell: *He is, he got...*
 Ann: *You think he'll be tired?*
 Mitchell: (referring to illustration) *He got everything in the garbage. Then...*
 Ann: *What kind of everything do we have in the garbage?*
 Mitchell: *I don't know. ... (continuing to read) And then he just looks at the cupboard and jump up.*
 Ann: *O.K. Well let's not...*
 Mitchell: *And then he draw his family.*
 Ann: *All right, well let's get here. O.k. so what's he going to have to do?*
 Mitchell: *He'll have to...fix up the little box for him..with ummm...*
 Ann: *With a _____? (pause) Well, remember what he is going to have? What is he going to have? What is he going to do?*
 Mitchell: *...Bed?*
 Ann: *He needs a bed because he is going to have a nap, isn't he? So, you'll have to fix up a little box for him with a _____ and a _____.*
 Mitchell: *Pillow!*
 Ann: *A pillow, yes and a _____? What does he need here?*
 Mitchell: *This thing. I forgot what's it.*
 Ann: *You forgot what it's called?*
 Mitchell: *Ummm, I don't know its...*
 Ann: *What is it like?*

Mitchell: *It's like napkin stuff.*
 Ann: *Well, with a napkin you'd wipe your face. Where would thisthing go?*
 Mitchell: *The ...bed?*
 Ann: *What do you do with the pillow? You put your head on it. Do you have a pillow?*
 Mitchell: *Yeah.*
 Ann: *You put your head on a pillow. O.K. What else do you do?*
 Mitchell: *Sleep!*
 Ann: *You go to sleep. Don't you feel kinda cold?*
 Mitchell: *Yeah.*
 Ann: *What do you have to stop you from getting cold?*
 Mitchell: *Warm.*
 Ann: *What keeps you warm?*
 Mitchell: *Ummmmmm.*
 Ann: *What do you call it? What do you do? Do you pull something up over your body?*
 Mitchell: *Yeah.*
 Ann: *What do you call it?*
 Mitchell: *I don't know.*
 Ann: *Do you know the Chinese word for that?*
 Mitchell: *Yeah.*
 Ann: *What is it?*
 Mitchell: *You don't know.*
 Ann: *Of course I don't know. You are going to tell me. That's why I am asking you....What is the Chinese word for it?*
 Mitchell: *Pei.*
 Ann: *Is that right? O.K. Well, in English, the word is blanket.*
 Mitchell: *(surprised) Blanket?*
 Ann: *So, you see, I tell you my words and you tell me yours, right?*
 Mitchell: *Oh, yeah! (May 28)*

Ann's verbal strategies here are masterful; as teaching techniques they are familiar. The mastery lies in the way she uses them to build communication with her student. She begins with a general question to set the stage (*What kind of everythings do we have in the garbage?*). She proceeds to the verbal cloze procedure (*So, you'll have to fix a little box for him with a ____ and a ____.*). When she receives only part of what is missing, she and Mitchell go on a long journey toward the missing lexical item. She builds a

verbal framework of shared experience to provide the background for the word. They explore all of the attributes of blanket (*What is it like? Where would this thing go?*). When her questions bring Mitchell back to pillow (the word he knows), she begins building a scaffold with questions that would distinguish a pillow from a blanket (*What do you have to stop from getting cold? What keeps you warm?*). Finally, they establish that his knowledge of his first language is relevant and can be shared. The scaffolds which Ann constructs and Mitchell climbs become more specific as she is satisfied that he understands and can follow the direction in which she is proceeding. This eventually leads them to the specific semantic requirements represented in the word "blanket". In terms of making learning inevitable, the language exchange which the teacher establishes sets parameters, incorporates the students's knowledge and finally makes sense with respect to that knowledge.

In these two examples the teacher's use of scaffolding assists the child in the task of obtaining meaning from text. Scaffolding can also be used to assist in the formulation of a task. Here Marion is circulating among her grade two group who are reading and writing.

Marion goes to Ian and asks about his story. "What is this about?" Ian: "'New sports car.'" Marion: "And what would you do if you had a sports car?" Ian goes into a long explanation of what he is writing. Marion crouches down next to him so their heads are level- her left arm on his chair. She asks a few more questions- he reads his text. The questioning brings out details

which he has not written. Ian concludes, "Well the car, it got broken." Marion asks, "Where does it say that and leans over and looks at the paper as if she had never seen it before. Ian: "Well, not really but when the other car got broken, we sold that one and got another." Marion: "I'll be interested to read that, Ian." Ian asks, "Should I write that down?" Marion replies, "Well, you decide, you are the writer." and leaves him and goes to another table. After she leaves he starts writing, wrapping his arm around and across the paper. He leans right down next to the paper, head on his forearm sometimes and continues writing....After about two minutes Marion returns and listens to Ian again. She is standing next to him. He reads, his hand going hop, hop along the words. He had added what he told her before, even though the sports car never got into what he wrote. (May 21)

This kind of strategic contact with a student keeps the student on the task with a focus. What Marion establishes in their dialogue is the value and relevance of the child's intentions and thoughts. She also indicates to him the gap between his intentions and thoughts and what he had written. She then leaves it to him to bridge the gap. What Ian can verbally express to Marion may find a place in his writing, either directly or indirectly. Her questions and comments are a scaffold that become touchstones in his endeavors to compose.

Teaching requires the ability to structure tasks for children. Earlier in my observations I had watched Ann teach a math lesson to some intermediate students. I was aware of her ability to keep that structuring lively and in direct touch with her student's efforts. It is the same ability I later observed in the conferences, transposed to a

different set of requirements. Here is an excerpt from my earlier notes:

Ann tells the group she is going to start them on fractions, starting with like denominators. She gives them problems orally. They write then down and solve them on the board. "Take it down," she says. "No, no, no," she calls when someone starts to erase—meaning she wants them to reduce their answer. She calls out, "You are on the right track." She goes to a second problem. She watches over them, correcting as they work—which is more like alerting them when they are on the wrong track, praising them when they are on the right track. She taps one guy on the shoulder saying, "Subtract, subtract." "Oh," he exclaims and quickly erases. Her pace is quick and focussed. She is watching and involved. (April 17)

Ann continued in this manner for about a half hour. The problems became more complicated, but the children worked on steadily and with enthusiasm. Her comments to them, as directions, as requirements, as praise or warnings, are the scaffolding that structure the event and their progress as they dealt with more complicated problems.

These episodes illustrate the range of density which is possible with scaffolding. In the examples based on transcribed language (focussed observations) the elements of the scaffolds can be seen to be closely tied, one to another, in response to the child's abilities and understanding. In the last two examples (taken from formal observations) there was more space between the elements the teacher contributed. The scaffold

appears expanded giving the children more space in which to work out their solutions to the problems before them.

The Use of Accountability in Conferencing

Accountability refers to an adult requiring a child to display certain features or conventions of language use. With respect to the acquisition of literacy, accountability would refer to a requirement to display features or conventions of literacy. A requirement for display may take several forms. It may include refusing incorrect usage and then giving correct usage. It may also include requiring or encouraging a student to find the most appropriate solution to their own problem.

The teachers in this program do not give spelling to children as they draft. This is based on the teachers' belief that the child's attempts serve an educational purpose greater than what is achieved by giving correct spelling. Here Ann responds to Saspreet's request.

Saspreet: *How do you spell guess?*

Ann: *Gas?*

Saspreet: *Guess.*

Ann: *What have you put down?*

Saspreet: *G.*

Ann: *Uh huh. Do you hear the g? What else do you hear?*

Saspreet: (long pause) *A?*

Ann: *Umhmm* (indicating affirmation)

Saspreet: (subvocalizing to self) *Guess.* (spelling aloud)
G-A-S-S. (May 27)

The requirement from Ann is contained in her question (*What do you hear?*). The unspoken requirement is for the student

to use what she hears and incorporate it into her effort.
This she does.

Beyond conventions for usage lies conventions for meaning. Making reading make sense is a recurring theme in this setting. Here Marion works with Stuart who is reading The Muffin Monster (out of print). Stuart reads very quickly.

Stuart: (reading the text) *But because the villagers were so poor they had to use all their money they had to buy more firewood and floor in order to make more muffins.*
Marion: *Did that make sense?*
Stuart: *Floor?*
Marion: *Try it.*
Stuart: *Floor.*
Marion: *...but because the villagers were so poor....*
Stuart: *...they had to use all the money they had earned to buy more firewood and fl...floor in order to make muffins.*
Marion: *Does that make sense? They had to buy firewood and floor to make muffins? What do you need to make muffins? (long pause) They needed firewood, didn't they? What for? What was the firewood used for?*
Stuart: *For the fire.*
Marion: *Yes, and why did they need a fire?*
Stuart: *For the oven.*
Marion: *For the oven, exactly. What else do they need? (pause) That can't be floor.*
Stuart: (sounding out) *Flou...ahh*
Marion: *Does that give you an idea? What do you need to make muffins?*
Stuart: (slowly) *Flour.*
Marion: *Yes. Do you know what flour is? Do you know what it looks like?*
Stuart: *It's like powder.*
Marion: *Yes, it is like powder. You need flour, of course. Now, don't leave it like that. Don't leave it at floor if floor isn't going to work. Use your good brain. O.K. You are the only one who knows when it doesn't make sense.*

(May 26)

Marion's requirement is that the text make sense. As a graphophonemic element floor resembles flour. Semantically,

however, it does not make sense. She asks directly if the substitution makes sense. She then questions him to see if he understands what the villagers were doing by building a fire. When he supplies the critical word "oven", Stuart puts himself in the semantic constellation where flour might be a good guess given the context. Marion does not solve his problem for him. She does some linking using scaffolds and lets him do the rest. After he is successful she restates her requirement that text must make sense, even if it takes a little effort.

The requirement that students produce writing from their own initiative was also a part of the accountability structures present in this setting. The teachers consistently encouraged children to work from their own sense of meaning. They also required that children produce writing as part of their contract. This requirement was reinforced by the acceptance and integrity with which the children were treated. In the following episode Ray is having trouble producing some writing. His discouragement is evident. The day previous to this exchange, when he had been asked by Ann to do some writing, he had managed to begin by writing just a title.

Ann: *Now is this the topic you want to write on, that's the first question?*

Ray: *What topic?*

Ann: *The title. Is this the kind of thing you want to write about?*

Ray: *It is. (somewhat belligerently). This is the topic.*

Ann: *Ummm. Well, I am wondering because it is hard to write something if you really don't care what you are saying.*

Ray: Yeah.
 Ann: You see, you have got to want to write about a title.
 Ray: Can I change?
 Ann: Sure, sure. I mean you want to make a story that's what you want to make. You don't want to make it just because I want you to make a story. It wants to be a story that's yours, that's what you want to make. That's what I am saying.
 Ray: (after a pause) Miz D. I really don't feel like I want to do this. I have to think.
 Ann: You've got to think about it. Well, O.K. I think that is a good idea. Get a book, read it and tell me about it when you are done. (June 4)

Several days later Ray returned to the center. The requirement to produce some writing, from his own topic and motivation, is still being held by Ann. The following episode occurred.

Ann has been encouraging Ray to write. She tells him to find a nice quiet place to work and to start. He just sits and stares at his open folder. A few seconds later she told him it was important not to be too perfect and to just start. He gets up and wanders around. He looks sad, discouraged and vulnerable. He goes over to the book table and flips through some books. He calls over his buddy, and together they start to look at books. Ann comes over and says, "I don't know why you two are finding it so difficult to write." She adds, "I am getting irritated at waiting for this writing." Finally she says, "We'll all write together." She gets a folder and sits at the table where Ray and his buddy are. Several other students come in and she redirects them away from the table where she and the two boys are seated...Finally she says "We are all going to write. I've got something to do too." Ray watches her curiously- says something to her- she looks back at him and says, "You are interrupting me. I don't want to be interrupted." Ray looks very bewildered. Meanwhile Ann is working on some writing. She occasionally pauses and looks up, clearly thinking about what she is doing. Ray twists around to look at others at an adjacent table. He leans on

his arms and watches his buddy. Ann continues. Ray gets up and goes to the supply table and comes back with an eraser. He looks around and watches Ann intently. She looks up but does not meet his gaze. Ray looks around, finally with pencil in hand, still watching Ann write. By now, twenty minutes have passed. More children start to filter in. Ann is still composing. Ray finally starts to write. He writes a bit more, then erases. He rests his chin on his hand- looks around- writes some more- erases- writes. There is no talk at this table, though the rest of the room is busy. (June 9)

This example illustrates the limits to which I observed accountability pressed in this setting. The dilemma is one faced by all teachers and students at some point. In this case the requirement to write is amplified by the requirement that it be motivated from within the student and mean something to him. Ann's strategy of providing a model, by writing herself, yields success. It has the effect of moving the issue of accountability away from a struggle between two individuals and into an open arena of action where the student himself can observe the required behavior. Bruner maintains that the strength of accountability as a learning device comes from its direct connection to the adult modeling the desired behavior. This example bears out his assertion. It also demonstrates the intrinsic respect for the individual which is central to the implementation of the philosophy behind this program.

The Use of Semantic Contingency in Conferencing

Semantic contingency is a device which continues or expands a topic introduced by a child. Characteristically the employment of this device involves using a child's own word or phrase in a question or sentence back to him. It allows the adult to maintain topic continuity and gives the child an opportunity to expand the thought behind the utterance. In the writing conferences, getting at the thoughts behind the words a child writes helps to reveal and make comprehensible the context, point of view and message. Here are Ann and Saspreet. She has now finished the writing she was working on when she earlier asked for the spelling of guess.

- Saspreet: (reading aloud to Ann) *I like dogs. Do you like dogs? I guess you like dogs.*
 Ann: *Why do you guess: Or who are you talking to there?*
 Saspreet: *A person.*
 Ann: *Are you talking to me?*
 Saspreet: *Yeah.*
 Ann: *Who is the listener? Who is the I? Are you the I?*
 Saspreet: *Yeah.*
 Ann: *Yeah. Okay. Who is this you?*
 Saspreet: *You! It's you.*
 Ann: *It's me. Okay. So, you are saying you like dogs, eh? (reading from Saspreet's text) I like dogs. Do you like dogs? At that point I say, yes I do because I have a dog of my own. And then you say I guess you like dogs. And you are right. I do. What do you like about dogs?*
 Saspreet: *They are so cuddly. Some dogs have fur that don't come off and I just like squeezing them.*
 (May 27)

In the beginning of this episode Ann is establishing who is the reader and who is the writer. It is made more complex by the fact that the child is writing as she would speak and assuming that she is being answered. She is

exploring the conventions of written conversation. Ann, by feeding bits of it back to her, clarifies this intention. It is this feeding back which constitutes semantic contingency. The final question Ann poses about what Saspreet likes about dogs is also an example of semantic contingency. It keeps the topic going and allows for expansion.

In the following episode Ann uses the technique of feedback in an effort to establish the meaning in what a child has written. Here is Luke reading to Ann about his Grandfather.

- Luke: (softly) *My Grandpa have two dogs. My Grandpa said the dogs stay and the dogs stay.*
 Ann: *Oh. So how did he get those dogs? (pause) You mean he wants the dogs to stay does he? Does somebody else want them to go?*
 Luke: (inaudible)
 Ann: *Do they have names? (pause) You are not sure about these names. What do you know about the dogs?*
 Luke: *He say the dogs stay and the dogs go and stay.*
 Ann: *Oh! I see what you mean about stay. Your Grandpa said stay and they just stay in one place and they don't move at all. Is that what you mean? They don't go. They are good obedient dogs.*
 Luke: *I tell them to move and they do.*
 Ann: *Oh, they do what you say too. (May 26)*

Ann's feedback to Luke is designed to clarify his meaning. At first she assumes the use of the word stay has something to do with the dogs having to leave. When she feeds this back to him (*Oh you mean he wants the dogs to stay does he? Does somebody else want them to go?*) he is not able to respond immediately. She senses he is having trouble clarifying his intended meaning, so she retreats to a more general question, still centering on the dogs (*What do you*

know about the dogs?). Finally Luke is able to clarify what he meant by stay. Having understood, Ann is able to restate his intended meaning and add further elaboration using the word obedient. The exchange succeeds in making the child's intended meaning more clear. Orally, Ann and Luke are establishing that the world of print comes from the world of thought.

Several weeks later, Ann worked with Luke again on the same issue. In this episode she addresses directly the issue of intention and the thoughts behind writing. She does it by using semantically contingent phrases which require him to elaborate the thought behind what he has written.

- Luke: (reading softly from his journal) *My sister said let's play hide. I said O.K.* (The entry contains an illustration made with two small pieces of paper pasted on the page next to a drawing of a child.)
- Ann: *Oh. So which is this, you here?* (pointing to illustration) *And there she is hiding in there?*
- Luke: *Yeah.*
- Ann: *Do you find her?*
- Luke: *Yeah.*
- Ann: *Do you? But what room is there in behind there?*
- Luke: *It's the...we hide in the door and we hide in the closet.*
- Ann: *Oh. It's the door to the closet. It's inside the closet.*
- Luke: *And I hide there and she didn't find me.*
- Ann: *She didn't? Where were you then?*
- Luke: *Under something.*
- Ann: *That's right. Luke you've got a whole story there. You know, I'd like for you to tell me about some of that tomorrow. Do you think you can keep it in your head until tomorrow? Can you imagine in your mind?*
- Luke: *O.K.*

Luke went on to add more to his entry and expand from his initial two sentences to four sentences. The result was

more like a narrative in which it was clear that he and his sister were playing a game of hide and seek where he outwitted her.

Semantic contingency is easily found within transcripts of conferences because it is a common device which adults use to request elaboration of topics or thoughts from children. In my other data sets, semantic contingency appears less as a device necessary to preserve turn-taking and elaborate meaning and more as a request to focus on a topic and elaborate it. Here Ann is conducting a group discussion on hamburgers. The necessity for this discussion derives from the fact that the children participating are from different cultural backgrounds and possibility not familiar with North American foods.

Ann has two (new) students- Danny and Jatinder. Danny has selected a book on hamburgers. Ann engages him in a discussion on "how this is a different book" (it is non-fiction). A three-way discussion ensues on how it is a book about hamburgers. Ann asks Danny if he has ever eaten a hamburger. He says no. She is surprised. She starts around table discussion on "how would you make a hamburger?" Danny offers some ideas. Ann turns to him and says, "Oh, but you don't know anything about hamburgers." He replies, "But I have seen one." She laughs. She has the children lists all the things in a hamburgers. They pour forth with suggestions- several things they do not know the names of. Ann requires they describe the ingredients, searching their memories and experiences, before she gives them the name. (April 17)

The topic of this exchange originates with the child's selection of the book. The maintenance of topic, the building of verbal exchange through eliciting the children's previous knowledge and conjectures is organized through the principle of semantic contingency. All features of a hamburger are semantically contingent in this exchange.

In the following episode, Marion uses semantic contingency to assist a student elaborate on her ideas before she drafts a piece of writing.

Marion asks, "What are you up to these days, Donna? What would you like to talk about?" No response from student. Marion looks at her conference record and ventures, "Is there something in here you would like to talk about?" Then point to the beginning of a draft say, "Looks to me like this is the one." Donna says, "I have gone to Expo." Marion asks, "What did you see?" Donna launches into along explanation of what she saw. She still does not make eye contact with Marion. Marion asks, "So for you, what is it about Expo you enjoyed the most?" Donna describes going to Omnimax and seeing the film and how it made her feel sick. Marion asks, "What did you do?— I know what I would do!" "Close your eyes!" Donna says with enthusiasm. "Are you going to write that in your story?" Marion asks. Donna replies yes. They talk for a few more minutes before Marion checks with her again saying, "So you are feeling happy about what you are going to write?" Donna says yes and leaves after telling Marion how much she love school. (June 3)

With the use of semantic contingency both of these teachers enter into the world and thoughts of their students. It grounds their interactions with their students

in the students' perceptions. It is a good example of child-led adult-molded dialogue.

This chapter has considered examples of three language devices which adults use to successfully guide children through expanded language use. In this context, those devices have been employed by the two teachers under study to guide children in acquiring skill with literacy. The examples were chosen in an attempt to illustrate the three devices, scaffolding, accountability and semantic contingency separately. In truth, the three devices are used together and form the basis of interaction in the exchanges between teacher and pupil. The devices per se do not give direction to the episodes, but rather facilitate the interaction. The direction of the episodes is guided by the teachers' belief in the primacy of children's intended meaning and its role in the acquisition of language and literacy. Verbal scaffolding is used to help children to focus on the specific needs of a particular language problem, so that they can bring what they already know to bear on that problem. Accountability is used to require the children to use their own knowledge in solving literacy problems. Finally, semantically contingent turns were used by the teachers to assist the children in bringing their intended meaning to the surface of their literacy tasks. All three devices appear as questions or comments. Their

phrasing elicits direction, requirements and information appropriate to the literacy tasks.

Chapter Seven: Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has two purposes. The first is to review the research questions posed in the first chapter and summarize the evidence presented by the data for each of them. The second is to consider the implications of this data for teaching practice in the area of literacy acquisition.

The Structure of the Setting

The first question this study posed concerned how the teaching environment was structured. In general the data suggest that the setting of this study serves as an environmental scaffold which supports and facilitates certain kinds of behavior and activities to the exclusion of others. The activities which are supported are done so by virtue of the organization of the space and materials and by the attitudes and activities modeled by the teachers.

The organization of space and materials reflects and suggests a certain spectrum of activities. This organization includes the placement of furniture which supports flexibility in choice of work place and working together in small groups. It also includes the arrangement and availability of the tools of literacy. Among these are particular kinds of reading materials. In addition, each student's work is contained in a format which is accessible and easily manipulated.

Within this physical organization, the teachers set the tone concerning the nature of desired activity. They work together as a team and model a style of interaction to the students. This features being available to the children and each other, respect for the worth of individual expression and respect for the processes and products of literacy. There is little direct instruction. Their style of work is based on a joint commitment to certain beliefs and behaviors. This belief places value on interacting with students using the student's work as a focal point. The commitment to this belief serves as a strong regulatory device which is both prescriptive and descriptive. It keeps them aligned with each other and keeps the message to the children about appropriate activity congruent.

The setting and the manner in which the teachers conduct themselves, including their expectations of the children, creates the milieu in which the learning activity takes place. This milieu is a cultural microcosm. Within that microcosm, the range of appropriate activities which teachers encourage children to do includes, handling books properly, using pictures and text to discover meaning, taking responsibility for creating and sharing meaning in text, participating in dialogue with others about the meaning found in text, and relating text to their own life and experiences. All of this activity is pursued in a framework which supports collaboration. At the general

level the activities supported represent a microcosm of certain cultural values which include respect for individual expression and the pursuit of meaning given and received in text. Shared meaning has value within the community of students and teachers.

The Structure of Engagement- Evidence for Frames and Formats

Three of the research questions deal with the structure of the engagement between the teachers and the students. They were aimed at obtaining a picture of how the teachers facilitate and develop interaction in reading and writing conferences. In particular I was looking for evidence to determine whether the interaction fit the theoretical constructs offered by Kaye (framing) and Bruner (formatting).

The evidence suggests that the teachers facilitate a child's engagement in reading or writing by encouraging a range of behaviors that will lead to reading and writing with attention to a full range of the conventions of literacy. In the initial stages of literacy development, the behaviors in which the teachers encourage the students to engage may include talking about topics related to books, responding to text, retelling, predicting and inferring storylines and encouraging all writing-like behavior, including drawing and invented spelling. This is largely done by responding to children as if what they were doing was an example of the desired behaviors or would lead to the

desired behavior. This method of engaging the child is exactly as Kaye describes it, *acting as if* in order to provide a baseline for the development of the desired behavior.

In order for the teachers' behavior to qualify as framing, it is necessary that it provide (recurring) units of organized behavior based on what the student is doing. In repeated episodes the data shows that this is what the teachers are doing. Generally speaking, the units of activity which the teachers generate maintain engagement, support desired behaviors and provide for the elaboration of students' skills through the requirement to elaborate meaning. In many respects, framing structures interaction much as organization of space and beliefs structures the physical and cultural environment in this setting. There is also a deep congruity with respect to the message about the learning and practice of literacy conveyed in the setting and the interactive framework. This congruity is directly the result of the agreements among the teachers concerning their beliefs about the learning of literacy and acting on those beliefs with their students.

The evidence for formatting is also conclusive with respect to the range of behaviors both teachers and children display which correspond to Bruner's descriptions.

What has been demonstrated is that there are routines present in the conferences conducted. This is especially true with respect to writing conferences which contain three

distinct phases. These three phases are retelling, reading and editing for one feature, convention or strategy. The routines however are not "game-like". This may be because the age of the student does not dictate the necessity for that quality in order for the routine to have power. It is certainly possible that the children themselves would be able to take-over these routines, given enough familiarity and practice with them. In this study the way the teachers conduct the conferences the students generally incorporate material into their writing where they have recognized a model from previous contact with reading and writing. This qualifies as a take-over of certain aspects of convention within the overall routine. It kept the student in control of his writing process even as the teacher facilitated the process for doing it.

The data also give evidence for Bruner's description of the reciprocal relationship between adult modeling and children's demonstration of elements of the routine. In order to assist the student in recalling or recognizing previous contact with an appropriate model contained in their own experience with text, the teachers use questions or probes designed to highlight the child's experience or understanding of the appropriate model. The fact that the teachers are inconsistent with the provision of models themselves may weaken the literacy-learning capacity of the routines they create. The fact that the teachers themselves seldom provided the models may be explained by their

commitment to have the child's efforts and understanding be at the center of the interaction. This commitment may have precluded them from providing the models.

Scaffolds, Accountability and Semantic Contingency

The final research question concerns the use of language devices which provide adult assistance to children's development of language and literacy.

The study contains many instances of conferences where the teacher uses scaffolds, the building of language-based requirements, to assist a student to successfully employ or recognize a convention or strategy of literacy. These scaffolds were most often constructed with the use of questions which were initially general ones and became more and more specific as the conference progressed. The specificity of some of these scaffolds enabled some very finely tuned and well developed learning to take place. The scaffolds were consistently built upon what the student demonstrated in terms of comprehension.

The data also shows many examples of the use of accountability. In this setting, the accountability standard is set generally with respect to what makes sense to the student, is meaningful to the student or is based on the student's efforts. It is seldom set with respect to literate conventions for their own sake. Because of this, the accountability system which is fostered here is a direct reflection of the teachers' belief in the necessity for

students to be responsible for their own efforts and is individually tailored to each student. While it may be phrased as a request from the teacher the ultimate goal is for the child to engage in meaning-making within the framework of a literate task. This is balanced by a generous individualized support for each student in pursuit of his own skill with giving and discovering meaning in text.

Finally, there is ample evidence for the use of semantic contingency in the data. It would be surprising if this were not so. The device itself is prevalent in ordinary language use, particularly where a listener is attempting to get clarification on a speaker's meaning. It is also well documented as a primary form of adult assistance to children's language development. In this setting, teachers use it to elicit elaboration of understanding and meaning from students. The elaboration of meaning is one of the key elements of this setting, both in terms of beliefs and in practice. The data certainly demonstrates this in the existence of numerous instances of dialogic turns based on teacher's using key words and phrases initially supplied by students.

For the purposes of data analysis, the three language devices were isolated and treated separately. This does not mean that they exist separately. In many of the episodes presented, all three devices are present and the teacher is using them together in a conference. Used this way they

form a strong matrix for teacher assistance to the development of literacy.

General Conclusions to the Study Questions

The general question which this study addressed concerned the presence of a constellation of features of adult assistance to children's language development in a program devoted to literacy learning. In general, the constellation of features chosen from the literature was found to be present in this setting in the representative examples chosen from the data set. The three data sets themselves were originally allocated to the three data chapters in the following way. The informal (general activity in the setting) observations were allocated to Chapter Four, the formal observations (concerned with the interactions between the target teachers and primary aged children) to Chapter Five, and finally the focussed (concerned with specifics of language exchanges) to Chapter Six. Once this was done, the data was cross-tabulated with episodes from the two other data sets added to the primary data set. By virtue of the cross-tabulation the study has a measure of internal validity. A similar constellation of features based on the theoretical concepts being applied were discovered in each data set. The setting, the interactive frameworks and the language exchanges all showed consistency with respect to these features. The features in turn were consistent with the teachers' beliefs and

premises outlined in the document analysis. Those documents were based on the teachers' beliefs that the learning of literacy can be facilitated in the same ways as the learning of the first language.

The conclusion is that the teachers were practising an approach to literacy learning analagous to that documented in some of the research on adult assistance to children's language learning. This is not to say that the teachers were consciously setting about to replicate the practices that adults use with infants and young children. Those practices are intuitive and second nature to the parent and part of the affective bond that exists between care-givers and children. Here the practices appear to be motivated by a strong commitment to place children and their messages and understanding at the center of the learning endeavor. From this commitment the teachers have evolved method of teaching. A parent does this out of love. In this setting, the teachers are doing it from a commitment to the inherent capacities within the individual student. At several points in this study I heard discussions concerning the difficulty of demonstrating or transmitting this method of teaching to other teachers. The teachers themselves believed that an interested practitioner could observe them at work, but in the final analysis would only learn by actually working with children and allowing the children's message and intent to be the central focus of the interaction. My observation is that this method of teaching has two basic requirements.

They are that the teacher not control the interaction, but rather follow the child's lead while at the same time provide ample guidelines which shape the interaction in the direction of the desired skills. The second is that children take risks and engage in literate behaviors to the best of their abilities. As simple as this sounds, it challenges some basic beliefs about teaching. It puts less emphasis on instruction and more emphasis on the developmental capacities of children.

Limits of this Study and Implications for Future Research

The limit of this study is inherent in the limit of the methodology used. The data presented here reflects the single setting in which it was gathered. The picture generated is one of two teachers and their style of conferencing students toward greater skill with literacy. In another setting, examining other teachers conferencing students, a different picture might emerge using the same theoretical framework.

Within the limits of the method used there are still unanswered questions about the use of formats in literacy routines. Particularly with the writing conferences which give evidence of a structure which can be lifted from the substances of the actual exchanges, a comparative study which examines the role of adult modeling and its effect on children's acquisition of skills may be useful.

With the currency of a paradigm shift in teaching methodologies, particularly in language arts, there is need for further search on how to provide successful literacy learning situations. With young children, keeping methodologies child-centered is necessary to provide the most relevant activities and exchanges to the individual student. The teaching practices which are evolving out of the literature on Emergent Literacy have spawned new sets of classroom practices. Initially they were piloted by experienced teachers who were willing to try something new. We do not have a complete picture of that teaching practice. We lack a description of many of the actual teaching devices which can be presented to other practitioners. Further research which describes in depth what teachers are actually doing in the implementing of these new methodologies is required. Additionally, we require data which correlate teaching practice with student progress to determine which aspects of practice are yielding best results.

Implications of this Research on Teaching Practice

This study has both cultural and practical implications.

I began this paper with a reference to Olson's comment on the opacity of language for the literate user. I followed this with a description of how early facility with language as an object is linked to certain kinds of interactions between parents and children and one of the

determinants of school successs. In effect these are cultural practices which are handed down in literate families from parents to children. The same set of practices may then become the baseline of early school experiences. Where these experiences are not inherent in a child's upbringing, schooling practices may be confusing and unfamiliar. The result, for the child who has not had the early training at home, and for whom the early schooling experience relies too much on the presence of these abilities with language, is too often a poor start on learning what literacy is all about. This perpetuates itself as a disaffection from the culture of literacy. It has personal consequences in terms of the student's success with school and also generational consequences when the pattern is repeated.

This research offers a partial solution, or the direction of a solution, to the dilemma portrayed above. The children who appear in this study were not generally from homes where early experiences with the literate bias in language use could have been expected. Yet in this setting, they are learning literacy based on what they themselves could demonstrate they knew about it. By engaging in the process of giving and receiving meaning in text, and being asked to clarify and explore the meaning, they engaged in both the process of producing literacy and in the process of using oral language in a literate manner. In this way, they become literate users of oral language and more capable

members of the culture of literacy. This is done in the same simple way that oral language is learned and the literate bias in language use is learned: by paying attention to the message (not the form) and relating the message to personal experience and reflection (using language to reflect on meaning). How the teachers achieve this seems largely based on discovering the student intention and working with them as they clarify and express it.

As teachers we are not warranted in assuming a level of tacit knowledge about literacy or the literate use of oral language in our young students. Recent research serves us well in pointing out exactly what children need in order to experience success with literacy and become fully participating members of literate culture. We can build into teaching practice ways of achieving it for all children. Succinctly put, we must rely on our students to take the risk and write and read in whatever way they can and we must be willing to not attempt to control that and instead rely on our ability to understand them and respond to them in such a way that they learn more about what they themselves are already doing.

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APPENDIX A

Informal Observation Sample

8:57 1. I met Lee and Marietta in the staffroom upstairs. I had
2. negotiated this observation several days ago. I am always
3. made to feel welcome. We came down together with the two
4. teachers discussing minor changes in the day's routine.
5. The room has been re-arranged again, I notice. Two compu-
6. ters are now present against the window wall. Lee is
9:00 7. talking with children as they come in, Telling them she
8. wants them to write and read today. This is a Grade 2
9. group. She zeroes in on one boy in particular as he sits
10. down with his materials and makes an agreement with him
11. about what specific time he will do his writing. He is a
12. small Asian child. I cannot hear everything she says and
13. nothing of what he says. Victor comes in and Lee orients
14. him to one of the computers. He goes over to start work.
15. He is excited. The adult volunteer is working with one
16. child reading. Two others are in the room waiting at
17. table for Lee. They have their folders and books ready.
18. Lee is using tables G and F for this period. She takes
19. one of the boys from her group back to the book selection
20. table to select a book. The older (Gr. 7) children come
21. in and gather at other tables with Marietta. Lee returns
22. to G and settles with one boy, Blake. She makes a note in
23. her record folder. He starts to read aloud slowly. The
24. adult volunteer is also seated at this table with the boy
25. she is working with. There are two girls at F also wor-
26. king. They too are part of Lee's group. Lee asks
27. Blake how this version of the story of the Gingerbread Man
28. is different from another version he has read. He replies
29. that the animals are wearing clothes. Lee asks him how
30. the ending is different... She queries him further. He
31. appears not to clue in to what her questions intend to
32. lead him to notice. They go back to the book table toge-
33. ther and return with the earlier-read version of the
34. story. He comments how the Gingerbread Boy himself is
35. different. Lee says, "Yes, the illustrations are dif-
36. ferent." Lee works with him on looking at how there
37. are different animals in the two versions. He talks about
38. that, listing the animals verbally. By now there are 12
39. children and 3 adults working in the Centre. It is quiet
40. and calm. Everyone is either reading, writing, discussing
41. or listening. Lee and Blake continue to compare the two
42. stories. Lee directs him to read a portion of the pre-
43. vious story (version). This pupil is a very slow reader,
44. it appears to be hard work for him. At one point, he
45. sticks his thumb in his mouth. Lee asks him how he would
46. write the story if he were going to do it himself. He
47. mentions he would have a lion sucking thumb in his story.
48. Lee asks him to choose another story from within his book.
49. He says, "Billy Goats Gruff!" with no hesitation. She
50. asks him to find the story in the table of contents. He
9:13 51. does, and starts to read. Marietta's group of Gr. 7's are
52. all working. She conferences them individually, moving
53. around. It appears they are continuing to do research-
54. type activity. The adult volunteer has moved to F to work
55. with one of the girls. The child she has just finished
56. working with is not writing. Blake continues to read the
57. Billy Goats. He reads slowly. When he has difficulty he
58. starts squirming his body around, all the while keeping

APPENDIX B
Formal Observation Sample

1. She leans in his direction, but her body is at right
 2. angles to his. L.: "How does he feel about her?" A. -
 3. L.: "Let's do this part again." (they do) L.: "What
 4. happened there?" A.: "Argument." L.: "The whole way?"
 5. A.: "No, they be friends in the end." L... L.: "Do you
 6. have a friend you argue with?" A.: "Dominick." L.: "So
 7. sometimes you argue and sometimes you are friends." L.
 8. leans back and looks over to adjacent table to check on B.
 9. and Boy X. S. has joined Jaspreet and they are working
 10. side by side at the same table. A. finishes his recording
 11. and Lee says, "How about a different kind of story? You
 12. and I have a little more time together. A. goes to book
 9:25 13. table. L. has gone to xerox something for puppeteers. B.
 14. and Boy X and now S. and J. are all working making puppets
 15. and props. L. brings back xeroxing. B. grabs up for
 16. them. L.: "What are you going to do? You tell me. B.:
 17. "I'm going to do it. L.: "You can put them in order for
 18. people." B. takes paper to another table. L. follows and
 19. shows him where something needs cutting to be put in
 20. order. She sits next to Andy. He has chosen a book.
 21. Across the table, B. and S. are ordering xerox pages. L.
 22. watches them. They are trying to figure out the order.
 23. L. watches, makes a few suggestions. She is sitting some
 24. distance from Andy - but turns to him. L.: "Is that what
 25. you are reading? Well, carry on." He reads aloud to
 26. himself, basically - Lee is by him, but not totally en-
 27. gaged w/ him. A. stops reading. L.: "Don't get distrac-
 28. ted, Andy, carry on. M. comes over w/ journal. L. looks
 29. at it, laughs. L.: "Was he going to share his dinner w/
 30. the rabbit? What does share mean?" M. retells his [story
 31. thoughts]. L., looking directly at him. He is standing
 32. in front of her. She looks right into his face. L.:
 33. "Are dogs and rabbits friendly?" M. puts hands behind
 34. back, chats away. - then turns back to book, on table.
 35. L.: "Well, you can do that tomorrow...How are you going
 36. to remember? You could put the title down to remind you."
 37. M. takes book away, writes. M. doing a re-write of a
 38. story (book) "My Home is Here" - has changed the end -
 39. not comprehending the story the way the author intended.
 40. M.: "The cats and the mice [sub vocalizing] - (then) "I
 41. wrote it, Miz Dobson." Brings book back to Lee. - tells
 42. her another title. L.: "Oh, I like that." M. takes book
 43. to Beth. L. returns to Andy, "What do you think about
 44. that Gingerbread Man?" A. retells story. L.: "What do
 45. you think about the G.B. Man, not smart enough?" They
 46. continue. Lee is now sitting parallel to him, S. & M. at
 47. some distance - leaning forward, arms across body mid-
 48. section - then arm up, hand to chin - asks Michael if he
 49. has ever written a G.B. Man story - then tells him to go
 50. find another G.B. Man to compare them. B. gets some help
 51. w/ his ordering from S. - She is still sitting - then
 52. turns around and checks on S. and Boy X. Shes goes to
 53. their table and asks if everyone has a copy. S. starts
 54. looking for xerox paper. M. tells her he has added ano-
 55. ther character. "Cat and Mouse and Dog". He reads it
 56. again, then sits and writes some more - He talks to him-
 57. self as he writes. [Children who are intensely engaged
 58. get basically same treatment as those marginally engaged
 59. —??— the standard for conduct is internalized by L. and

APPENDIX C

Focussed Observation Sample

1. left hand extends around to book space - [Again, the
3. encircling] - while they are working on "blanket" - Mi.
4. lays head down on book, but keeps left hand finger on
- 9:30 5. place in text. Bl. chimes in w/ his memory of text while
6. continuing his folding. Mi. trucks on, holding page w/
7. right hand, pointing w/ left. L.: "What will he need?" -
8. Lee picks up a roll of tape which is on the table. Mi.
9. looks all around, in the book, on the table. Lee goes to
- * 10. get some from her desk drawer - "Here is it" - pulling out
11. a piece. Bl. still working on pop-out's, putting them in
12. his journal. [to make a pop-out book]. L.: "So then,
13. he'll want to —" She points to the text. When Mi.
14. wanted "remind" he looked up at Lee. Mi.: "He's
15. choking.." turns too many pictures. Lee stops him - she's
16. looking over at Roy and Victor. Mi. stands up when he
17. finishes - "Go back over here, indicating the front of the
18. book - all the re-telling is accompanied by gestures
19. (flip, trim hair, wipe face, etc.), even Victor chimes in.
- 9:40 20. [L. R. & V. in their negotiations re: task] [directive
21. to task] Lee moves over to Ma.
22. L.: "Oh, I remember you had a dragon story." Ma. reading
23. from text he had selected several days ago. [h.b. kids
24. keep their current reading selections in their folders.]
25. Ma. sits back in his chair as he reads. He is turned
26. slightly away from Lee. He follows lines in text w/ piece
- 9:45 27. of construction paper (bookmark). Lee directs B. to extra
28. reading or writing. Little girl comes in for message re:
29. gym. Lee touches her journal several times. Mi. wiggling
30. around in his chair when Lee asks about "odd picture". He
31. puts hands in lap, passive/quiet while Lee talks. He puts
32. hands down by side while L. reads. (Bl. leaving during
33. "good-bye...") Ma. several times shakes/nods his head,
- 9:45 34. "yes". Tape over - I'm letting it go as period is over
35. and new group coming in - first David, Raymond come in.
- 9:50 36. Lee getting everyone to pack up. Lee calls Jaspreet back
37. to hear her story. J.: "This part w/ the fancy designs"
38. - indicates on her picture - looking at picture's on wall
39. for alphabet. If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Joffe
- 10:00 40. Numeroff. [I've been doing some xeroxing - purposely have
41. shut off machine and left - Victor and Roy are pushing.
42. Lee and I feel that the presence of the mike is a contri-
43. buting factor to their resistance, particularly w/Victor.]
- 10:05 44. Tape on - Roy is working on a re-write of his Frog and
45. Princess story. I told Victor and Darryl I wouldn't keep
46. recording if they were working - Victor gets it and goes
47. back to his reading -
48. Victor is reading - Ray, writing, Darryl thumbing through
49. a book. Lee is watching Victor more than working with
50. him. D. & R. getting a kick out of V.'s intonation and
51. characterization. - Talk about the flapping flower accom-
52. panied by gestures by both Lee and Victor. As L. reads,

April
2nd
Monday
Mr. / June 2
Continued working here from May 28.

beginning

building, citizens
building, means

my intention

Being a leader in my community

O.K. Can you fill me in

was dem. Was ist die nun anwesende

1

yes, and without without the

Journal. [printing] What's

the diary?

Yes, what does the month

Products

O.K. Have you ever heard of

what you say when a girl

is showing that they want

perme front. What do we call it?

what are they doing?

Survey

they are hungry. But we

any thing we don't answer

They are 'like asking for trouble'

APPENDIX D

Principles Which Nurture the Growth of Emergent Literacy

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1. Provide a warm supportive setting rich in interactions and demonstrations of functional oral language and literacy.
2. Emphasize the *process* of writing rather than the product, allowing generous periods of time to explore and experience the process.
3. Respond to the intended meaning of the children's writing first. Some attention can be paid to form, but only when the children indicate they are ready to use it in their work.
4. Present the writing task as a problem-solving enterprise in which the children learn to write by writing using their initiative and all the resources at their disposal to discover the meaning and to solve problems of form.
5. Expect children to come up with their own topics to ensure that the writing is meaningful and purposeful from their point of view.
6. Encourage the children to use their own illustrations as a source and support for their writing.
7. Accept the children's own representations of written communication as a legitimate indication of their conceptualization of the writing task.
8. Expect a developmental progression in the children's writing efforts, over time. Have confidence that errors are natural rather than habit-forming and that the children will self-correct in direct relation to their stage of development.
9. Evaluate individually both in terms of the developmental progression and in terms of their own oral language.

APPENDIX E

Literacy for Everyone

Literacy for Everyone

Rationale

Parents are enormously successful in teaching their children to speak and to understand. In oral language learning, children move through stages e.g. from babbling to telegraphic sentences to elaborated language. We, as teachers, have researched the principles at work in the environments conducive to early language learning, and have come to share them as sound principles of learning and teaching writing and reading.

We see children as learning written language in parallel to their learning of oral language. e.g., they move from scribble to telegraphic to conventional writing.

We have found considerable current research which supports the development of integrated, holistic, whole language programs.

Literacy Program

At [redacted] School, we have an integrated English Language Centre (ELC) and Learning Assistance Centre (LAC) resource room program. We not only share teaching quarters, we also share an integrative, holistic perspective of language learning. [redacted] (ELC), and [redacted] (LAC) originally developed the program and they have since been joined by [redacted] a classroom teacher, also shares this philosophy. The extension of this program into the classroom was jointly worked out with her.

Special features of the writing/reading program

- integrative, holistic approach (whole language) to early literacy
- resource teachers joining teachers in the classroom to conference children's writing
- daily writing and reading on self-selected topics
- individual conferencing on writing and reading with meaning as the focus
- humanistic, yet not a laissez-faire approach
- all children making progress including those of varying language and cultural backgrounds
- a choice from a wide variety of reading material which is well written, highly predictable and inherently meaningful
- children wanting to read and to write

Early literacy

- we set up an equal expectation and opportunity for children to write as well as to read from the very beginning of Kindergarten
- we focus on the meaning as the absolute priority
- we accept errors rather than expect correctness
- with such expectations, children can and do engage in these activities from the very beginning of school (ERIBC, March 1986)
- contrary to traditional expectations, young children find writing easier than reading and see themselves as writers more easily than as readers.

An early writing sample illustrates the presence of systematic errors of form in the transcription of a meaningful message.

TR WZ A
BT A FL HS

There was a
beautiful house

At this stage children find it easier to read their own writing than to read conventional text. In fact regular writing and their reading of it appears to facilitate learning to read text. In their efforts to put their thoughts into print, children gradually discover and understand the conventions of form. We continually observe that the errors are systematic across children as they progress.

Early readers of conventional text invent their own story to suit their expectations and/or memory of the story. They use their understanding of the context for their message just as they do when they read signs in the environment. They gradually come to incorporate the conventions of written language into their reading strategies which then enables them to shift from invention to the recreation of the author's message.

Conferencing at all levels

At all levels, children learn gradually in a holistic manner, with meaning as the focus. This perspective of learning applies equally to all children including those who attend our Learning Assistance Centre (LAC), and our English Language Centre (ELC), for extra help with English, reading and writing. These two resource programs share a common perspective and set of principles of the integrated learning of writing and reading. We focus on the learner and the whole tasks with individualized conferences on both.

These conferences also take place in classroom writing programs. Classroom teachers invited centres (LAC/ELC) teachers to work beside them in their classrooms in the development of writing programs. This came about through the joint study and discussion, and sharing of ideas and pupil accomplishments, which led to the development of mutual respect, and to a drawing together of teaching colleagues. The joint development of such programs by centres and classroom teachers has resulted in consistent approaches reinforcing one another in both settings.

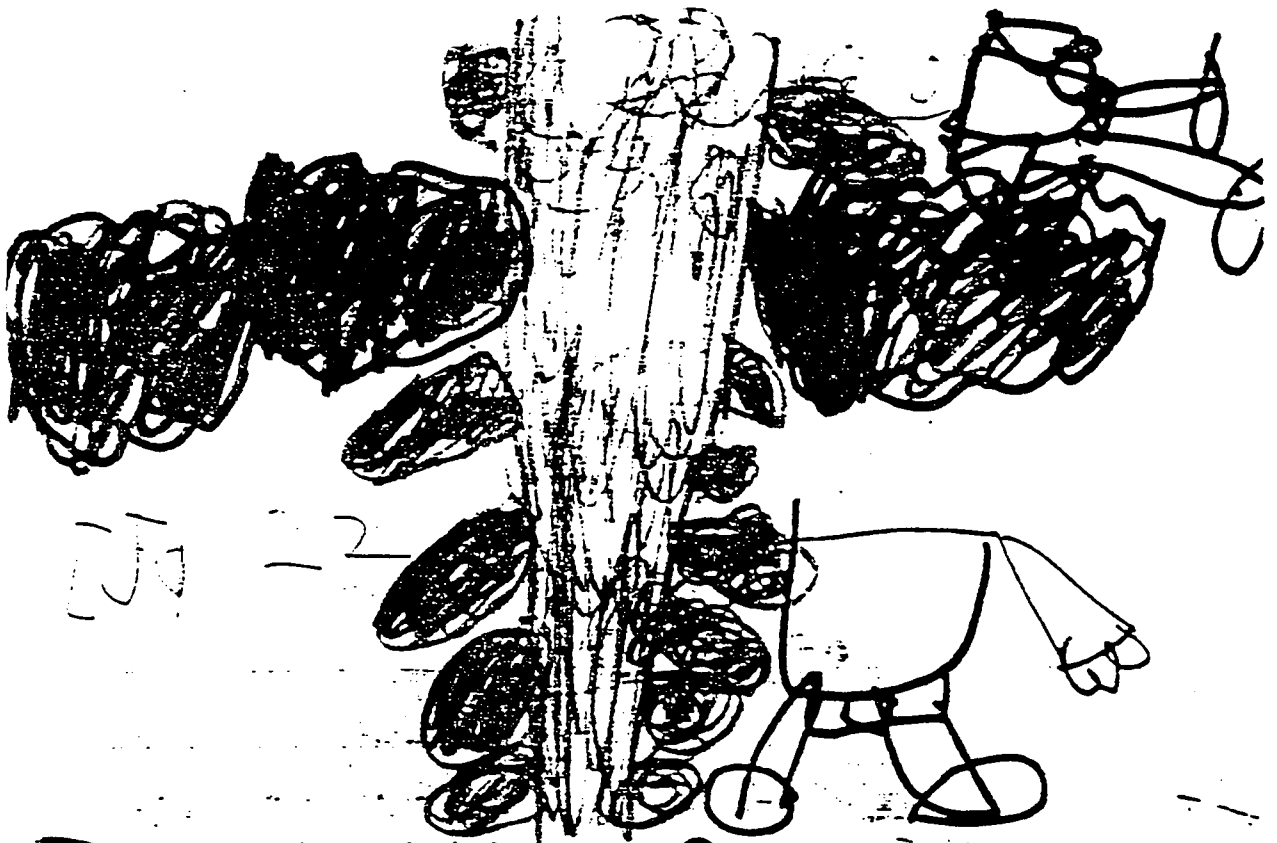
The shared philosophy involves:

- a humanistic yet not laissez-faire view
- a particular perspective of children and their learning
- recognition that children have already developed considerable knowledge and sound language learning strategies by the time they enter school
- respect of the children, their knowledge, abilities and strategies
- faith that children will make sense of literacy tasks for themselves
- encouragement of children to be risk-takers

Enclosures:

- two pieces of children's writing

If you wish to photograph the original pieces of work they are available.

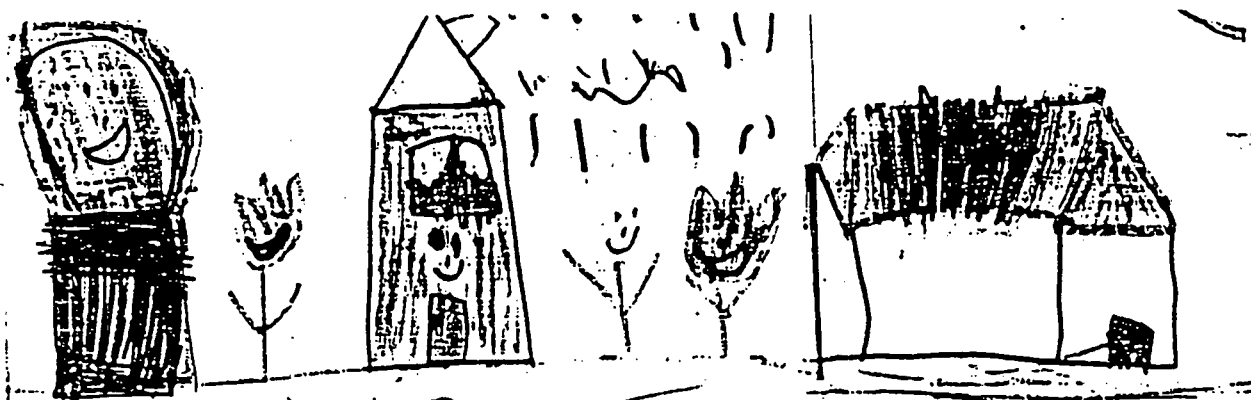


JACK KHLIBON THE

BUNSOCK BUT ON THE WAY

HE SAE A GAYT

Jack climbed on the beanstalk but on
the way he saw a giant.



TW-AMSLD

TWANCH'S
AD FACTS

*There was a
magical land.*

APPENDIX F

Responsibilities

RESPONSIBILITIES

Teacher's Responsibilities

1. -to understand and sensitively observe how children's writing develops; to expect children's writing to follow a developmental progression of successive approximations in which they induce the rules and conventions of written language

-to project confidence onto the children that they can learn to write by writing

2. -to act as a genuine audience to the intended meanings of children's writing

3. -to give children control and ownership of their writing; its level, pace and content (coming up with their own topics)

4. -to emphasize the content rather than form; to value and accept all children's personal expressions as presented

-to provide ample and regular time for children to explore a variety of topic choices, styles, forms and mechanics of writing

5. -to emphasize the learning process rather than the product; to expect children to use their prior knowledge and oral language competence to induce the rules or conventions of written language through experimentation

-to establish where individual children are on the written language learning continuum to make decisions on appropriate interactions with them

-to individualize and restrict teaching to aspects that children are ready to incorporate into their writing

-to give children feedback on their progress and accomplishments which will foster the development of a conscious awareness of their tacit understandings

Children's Responsibilities

1. -to become aware that writing develops from their own efforts

-to produce writing

2. -to share the meaning of their writing

3. -to take control and ownership of their writing; its level, pace and content

4. -to risk error as they experiment with solving problems of topic choice, style, form and the conventions and mechanics of written language

5. -to bring their prior knowledge and their oral language competence to make sense of print

-to make connections between what they know and what they encounter including the print in the environment and teacher demonstrations

-to make sense of print for themselves