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**THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**

**CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF WRITING**

**IN A GRADE ONE/TWO CLASSROOM**

**BY**

**FRIEDA MAASKANT**

**A THESIS**

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

**EDMONTON, ALBERTA**

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*Frieda Maaskant*  
(Student's signature)

13936 - 119 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta

T5L 2N8

Date: ... *Jan. 4 / 89.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Children's Perceptions of Writing in a Grade One/Two Classroom" submitted by Frieda Maaskant in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

*Joyce Edwards*  
.....  
(Supervisor)

*Therese Craig*  
.....

*W. J. Cott*  
.....

Date: *Dec. 22, 1988*  
.....

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe children's experience of writing in a grade one/two classroom. I addressed the question of what it was like to be a writer by observing the children's writing behavior, listening to the way they talked during their writing and to the way they reflected on what they had written. I sought to understand and describe the aspects of writing that took on significance for the children as they wrote.

The study was carried out in a grade one/two classroom over a five month observation period. I focussed my attention on eight students in the class. Adult visitors were often present in the classroom so my presence as researcher was not experienced as an intrusion but interpreted as another person the children could talk to about their writing.

Several types of data were collected; field notes were written, student/student discussions were tape recorded, informal and formal discussions with children were tape recorded, children's writing was photocopied. The analysis of the data involved searching for themes and patterns and attempting to understand the parts, their relationship to each other, and to the whole being studied.

The children experienced the classroom as a community of learners. They chose partners to work with, accessing

the special skills and expertise of their classmates. Certain students were seen as expert by others in a specific aspect of writing whether it was punctuation, spelling, organization or ideas. They borrowed from each other and often made decisions in collaboration with others.

The children were also developing their own writing knowledge as they made their own sense of each writing task, deciding what worked best for them. In talk about their writing, the children showed they were developing their own framework for making a story better, for doing different kinds of writing, for dealing with spelling and for understanding the purpose of writing.

The findings reaffirmed the importance of responding to children as experts in their own writing. When students believe they can make critical decisions about their writing they develop their own strategies to deal with what they feel are the important aspects of writing. The important aspects described by the children included spelling, revision, organization, printing, and talk. The findings suggest that the children were becoming aware of how they went about their writing and of the choices they were continually making.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

We need to know more about our students - know more about the world they live in and come to terms with it. And they tell us that language is a living energy, something intertwined with the full context of people's lives (Torbe, 1985, p.31).

Until recently the field of writing research was dominated by attention to the written product and the forms of good writing. This is reflected in the summary of writing research published by the National Council of Teachers of English (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Schoer, 1963). These studies were based on the assumption that good writing can be defined by addressing such areas as topic sentences, outlines, word choice, and punctuation. Accordingly, children's writing can therefore improve when educators discover what is missing from children's writing and improve their writing instruction by teaching the missing skill (Applebee, 1981). The authors of Research in Written Composition concluded that "some questions which seem fundamental in the teaching and learning of written composition apparently had gone almost untouched by careful research" (p.52). Petty (1978) reminded us of a similar conclusion reached by Lyman as early as 1929, when he stated that current studies "measure pupil products and assume that by so doing they are evaluating the manifold intangible

processes of the mind by which these products were attained" (Lyman in Petty, 1978, p.73).

Petty discussed the need for new questions and new areas to be explored, suggesting "the need to examine [writing] behaviour and to formulate new research hypotheses" (p.74). Recent research by Bissex (1980), Calkins (1983), Clay (1975), Dyson (1982), Graves (1975), and Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) reflects a major change in that "the child who in the past was considered incompetent has emerged as an active participant in the process of becoming a writer" (Clay, 1983, p.259). The child has become the key informant, and when a researcher pulls up a chair alongside a student, writing research begins.

This recent research which respects the complexity of the classroom community and the learner has "revitalized" (Dillon, 1985, p.586) and "infused language arts education" with a "tremendous surge of energy" (Dyson, 1986, p.144) resulting in the popularity of such teaching activities as journal writing, child publishing, "author's chair" and conferencing.

However, we are cautioned by both Dyson (1986) and Dillon (1985) about the danger of identifying specific activities as set procedures for effective teaching rather than first of all basing our teaching on what children are communicating about themselves as writers.

When an activity, no matter how valuable achieves a status of its own, a respectability - be that activity dictation, peer conferences, sharing time, free writing, or whatever - then that activity may become the focus of [the teacher's] attention. This focus on activity diverts attention away from the goal (in this case, written communicative competence) and the child and the nature of the instructional experience (including the interaction between and among child, teacher, and peers) that will make that goal attainable (Dyson, p.141).

Teachers who are continually learning from students build a "dynamic", "interactive" classroom with students and teacher collaborating to develop curricula as each "work to reach their respective goals" (Dyson, p.135-136). An understanding of how each child experiences writing is crucial, involving continual learning on the teacher's part. When the diversity of children and their learning is acknowledged, educators can no longer be satisfied with general notions of what most children do or how most children learn. Learning to observe and listen to student's responses to activities are crucial skills for the effective teacher.

#### Purpose of the Study

This concern about the experiences children have in writing is of vital importance and forms the purpose and impetus behind this research study. The following questions help to focus on different aspects of the child's experience with writing:

1. How do children talk about the writing that they do?



2. What are some of their concerns as they write?
3. Do the children see their writing as changing and evolving or is it perceived as being a fixed product?
4. What seems to be important to the children as writers?

In this study I describe the experiences of children in a grade one/two classroom as they write. I address the question of what it is like to be a writer by observing the children's writing behaviour, listening to the way they talk during their writing, and to the way they reflect on what they have written.

A stirring and thought-provoking account of a writer's experience is communicated through Margaret Laurence's account of Morag and her poem entitled, "The Wise Men" in The Diviners. Even though the setting for the story is a Sunday school classroom and Mrs. McKee's credentials for teaching are based on the fact that she is the minister's wife, Morag's experience could be true of a regular classroom as well. This account of Morag's writing experience acts as a window to see Morag, the writer.

Should Morag show Mrs. McKee the poem she's brought to show her? Would Mrs. McKee laugh? No. Mrs. McKee isn't a laugher. Maybe.

. . . Morag slides in the door and waits. Mrs. McKee turns. Smiles.

"You're early this morning, Morag."  
Morag nods.

"Can you c'mere for a second, Mrs. McKee?  
Please."

"What is it?" Mrs. McKee walks to where Morag is standing.

Morag hands the piece of scribbler paper to her. The poem is copied very neatly in best writing.

The Wise Men  
by Morag Gunn

VERSE ONE.

Despite the cold and wintry blast,  
To Bethlehem they came at last.  
And there amid the hay and straw,  
The baby Jesus was what they saw.

"Why, this is just fine, Morag. I never knew you wrote poetry." Surprised.

"Sure. I write lots. I've got more at home. And stories. Would you --"

"The only thing," Mrs. McKee says, "is that it was a Far Eastern desert country, dear, so they wouldn't have a wintry blast, would they?"

Morag's face -- flames of shame. She snatches the paper back.

"Wait -- I'll fix it.

She goes into the classroom where the tables and chairs are set out for each class. Sits down. Finds a pencil.

Despite the desert sun's cruel ray  
To Bethlehem they came that day.

No good. It was night.

Despite the heat of the desert (what?)  
To Bethlehem they came that night.

Bright? White? Light? Might? Bite? Of course.  
Bright and light. Never mind the weather.

Guided by the Star's bright light  
To Bethlehem they came that night.

Good. Fine. Much better. Morag goes out and hands the new version to Mrs McKee. Who looks at it. One quick glance.

"Much better, dear. Now we'd better get ready for the service. Sit with your class, dear."

The others have all come in while Morag was busy. She has not noticed them until this very instant.

"Whatcha' doing, Morag? Writing out 'I must not tell a lie' four hundred times for the old bag?" Jamie Halpern, his face giggling behind his glasses.

Morag says nothing. Crumples the page and stuffs it in her pocket.

The singing. Carols. Morag sings loudly, loving the carols.

. . . "I want to read you a poem today, children," Mrs McKee says, when they are all around the table again.

Morag's heart quits beating. Hers? She will faint. A talented poem written by one of our members, class. The others will stare. Who'd have thought it? Old Morag. Gee.

"It is by the English poet, Hilaire Belloc," Mrs. McKee's gooey voice says, and she opens a book.

When Jesus Christ was four years old,  
The angels brought him toys of gold,  
Which no man ever had bought or sold.

And yet with these He would not play,  
He made Him small fowl out of clay,  
And blessed them till they flew away.

There is more, and some words in Latin, which Mrs. McKee explains, but Morag isn't listening now. At home, Morag takes off her galoshes and coat. Goes to the stove.

"What's that you're burning, Morag?" Prin asks, alarmed.

"Nothing. Just nothing."

Morag goes to her room. Sits thinking. Wants to cry, but will not, must not. 'Blessed them till they flew away.' Oh. How could anybody write anything that good?

She has shown "The Wise Men" to Mrs. McKee, and there is no way she can unshow it (Laurence, 1974, pp.63-66).

Morag's confidence in herself as a writer was suddenly eroded as she came face to face with "the expert's" notion of good writing. Her feeling that she could never write "anything that good" captures her sense of inadequacy. Morag was not able to value her writing for the meaning it had for her, rather, she imposed an external standard which devalued her own purposes and thoughts.

Research must help us "see" the child and a glimpse into Morag's classroom has allowed us to draw certain

tentative conclusions about Morag as a writer. If we could talk to Morag and have her share her thoughts and feelings about her writing, our understanding would be deepened. This study was constructed to learn more about children's writing experiences and to understand more about the children we teach. The value of this research is to increase "understanding, extend experience and increase our conviction in that which is known" (Stake, 1978, p.6).

### Design of the Study

I have used the ethnographic methodologies of participant observation, interviews, and document collection in order to express the understandings about various aspects of the writing experience as articulated by a selected group of children. Ethnographic research methodologies remind us of the importance of each child's view of reality and in so doing build a continuous awareness that each child has important cultural knowledge that influences learning (Smith, J.K., 1983).

My role in the classroom as participant observer involved being in the classroom and participating to some degree in the activities of the classroom. While the children wrote I would find a spot to sit in close proximity to where they were writing in order to observe or interact with the children about what they were doing, where their

ideas came from, or what changes they were making in the writing.

### Research Schedule

This study was carried out in a grade one/two classroom over a period of five months. I observed daily for the first nine weeks and three times a week for the following nine weeks.

I chose eight students as the main informants for my study. Some considerations were that the group include students from both grades, include boys and girls, and that they be relatively articulate in expressing their thoughts and feelings.

### Data Collection

In this study I used a variety of techniques for data collection. Extensive field notes were written to describe day to day activities, behaviours, and interactions of the whole class, small groups of children, and individual children. Tape recordings were made of class discussions, my formal and informal talks with students, student/student interactions, and my discussions with the teacher. Photocopies were made of the writing of all of the informants in each of the working stages.

In my formal and informal interactions with the children I responded to them as experts as they described

their thoughts and feelings about writing. The students participated as a direct source of knowledge about how they interpreted and approached their writing tasks.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Literacy development has become a research focus in recent years with "renewed interest in the first years of life as a period of critical significance in development. This trend points to the importance "... of regarding children as active participants in learning - hypothesis generators and problem solvers rather than as passive recipients of information" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p.xv.). The work of Clay (1975), Goodman (1980), and Durkin (1966) showed that researchers could learn a great deal by observing young children read and write before they participate in these activities in the conventional sense. In fact research showed that children can become readers and writers without being taught by conventional school methods (Bissex, 1980; Durkin, 1966; Taylor, 1983). This research suggests that the initiative and purposeful involvement of the child are crucial aspects of a child's literacy development.

Durkin (1966) found that these early readers, who she also called "paper and pencil kids", initiated their own exploration of written language through questioning readers in their environment. "What also became clear was the wonderful productivity of a young child's questions -- when they get answers." (p.26). Questions involving

identification of words, spelling of words, and formation of letters were reported.

Research shows children as young as two and three years of age actively exploring written language. Through the work of Dyson (1982) and Clay (1975) we can look at the jumbled sets of squiggles and letters and find a rich commentary on a child's learnings about print. Children experiment, explore and test their ideas as they respond to the print that is a purposeful part of their everyday lives. Children learn about print as they interact with environmental print such as labels, signs, billboards, notes on the refrigerator and other daily print activities such as receiving a letter from Grandma or a birthday invitation, making a grocery list, or reading a recipe (Goodman, 1980).

Bissex' study (1980) of her son Paul's writing shows the awareness of the purposes of print in his first "writings" which were notes to friends and a welcome home banner. At five and one half years of age, before he attended school, Paul had explored many literary forms such as labels, cards, directions, stories, lists, signs, and letters. Bissex also recorded Paul's questions about "how to make sounds" as he was writing and described his intense concentration at putting language into print.

Children are not simply observing others engaged in literacy events and independently examining and manipulating written language ... but the whole process of natural literacy development hinges upon the experience the child has in reading or writing



activities which are mediated by literate adults, older siblings or events in the everyday life (Teale, 1982, p.559).

Active learners are busy confirming, redefining, and internalizing strategies through these interactions, allowing them to continue to make discoveries about print. Teale, in putting forward a theory to account for children's "natural" literacy development in preschool years, states that literacy is first of all a social process.

The environment must provide opportunities for children to observe written language functioning in the everyday activities which surround them and the opportunity to participate in activities where reading and writing are involved. The dynamics of learning to write naturally include interactive events with adults who gauge the child's need for support (p.564).

Teale & Sulzby (1986) have drawn certain conclusions about literacy development based on the body of literacy research in early childhood:

1. Literacy development begins long before children start formal instruction. Children learn legitimate reading and writing behaviours in the informal settings of home and community. . . .
3. Literacy develops in real-life settings for real-life activities in order to "get things done". Therefore the functions of literacy are as integral a part of learning about writing and reading during early childhood as are the forms of literacy. . . .
5. Children learn written language through active engagement with their world. They interact socially with adults in writing and reading situations. They explore print on their own and they profit from modelling of literacy by significant adults (p.xviii).

As children involve themselves as "writers", they focus on tasks as whole experiences with purposes and goals for the writing playing an integral role. Through her

examination of young children's writing samples, collected from classrooms and from homes, Clay (1975) reached the following conclusion:

The individual child's progress in mastering the complexity of the writing system seems to involve letters, words and writing system all at the one time, at first in approximate, specific and what seems to be primitive ways and later with considerable skill. If there is an acquisition sequence which can be described for all children I have not been able to discover it in these examples ... As the child learns to write there is a rich intermingling of language learning across levels ... A simplification achieved by dealing firstly with letters then with words and finally with word groups may be easy for teachers to understand but children learn on all levels at once (p.19).

Dyson (1982) also showed that children have ideas and theories about written language which they grapple with during writing activities in the school setting. "Through writing children may refine their understanding of the written language system ... for it is in writing that children confront their essential problem -- how meaning is conveyed through and retrieved from the print." (p.837,832). To learn then, it is not enough that the child be exposed to print, but also be given the opportunity to actively confront the "language puzzle".

And as with most puzzles children cannot solve it by being given one piece at a time. Children must solve it gradually differentiating its pieces and at the same time, actively manipulating those pieces within the context of the production of a meaningful whole. In the case of written language that whole is not a completed picture, but a completed meaning, a message. Through their own actions children come to realize that the precise arrangement (writing) of the pieces (linguistic/graphic symbols) is necessary if the whole (the read message) is to be realized -- that is,

children establish connections between reading, writing and language (Dyson, 1982, p.838).

### **Influence of Classroom Environment**

A limited number of studies have been undertaken to explore the impact of varying language environments on developing literacy strategies. In DeFord's (1981) study three first grade classes taught by phonics, skills, and whole language models of reading were observed for seven months to discover relationships between the specific classroom literacy context and the students' reading and writing strategies. In reference to writing, a high percentage of stories from the phonics and skills class followed this basic form:

Bill can run.

Jill can run.

Jeff can run.

I can run (DeFord, p.657).

The literature-based class produced a wider variety of literacy forms, such as stories, information prose, songs, poetry, and newspaper reports. These data show that a particular environment, reflecting a belief about literacy learning, influences the child's developing writing strategies.

Harste and Burke (1980) reinforced the conclusion that "the teaching of writing is theoretically based -- that each

of us as teachers has a theory of how to teach writing which strongly affects our perception and behaviour" (p.174).

Harste examined activities that were given to grade one children and concluded that what the teacher believed about the writing process strongly affected what activities were chosen and how they were presented to the children. Harste also questioned the validity of the language activities he examined, which were based on the following assumptions about written language learning:

The goal of early written language learning is an error-free performance on basics.

Errors must be pointed out by a guiding adult as children do not have information which they can use for self correction.

Access to the writing process hinges on mastery of distinctive features of print.

The students must master basic sound/symbol and letter formation skills before they are able to write (p.171).

Many researchers (Dyson, 1983; Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975; Harste, Woodward, Burke, 1984) have examined the writing of young children and have concluded that their knowledge of written language is extensive. As writers, children are motivated by an urge to communicate and play with complex concepts of letters, words and sentences -- experimenting, testing and confirming their developing understandings. However upon examining the activities that he documented in a specific classroom, Harste and Burke (1980) concluded that the learner was not given opportunities to be involved as a writer; rather it was assumed that after learning the conventions the child would become a writer.

A study by Florio & Clark (1982) looked at the role of writing in a grade two/three classroom through its different functions: writing to participate in community, writing to know oneself and others, writing to demonstrate academic competence, and writing to occupy free time (p.120). The researchers concluded that writing was a part of the school lives of these children. However, the writing most directly concerned with academic aspects was teacher controlled and limited in format giving students little responsibility in the writing process. Diary writing and free time writing were totally initiated and controlled by students not accessed by teachers. Writing that started with the experiences of the children gave students more involvement in the process. From Graves' study (1975) we know "that an environment that requires lots of assigned writing inhibits the range, content and amount of writing done by children" (p.235). Florio and Clark (1982) conclude by saying we must continue "to study classrooms as working social units with needs for communication and [we must] begin to illuminate their unanalyzed writing curricula ... and so take advantage of the writing activities already happening and shape these activities to help children expand their written expressive repertoires and their beliefs about writing and its powers." (p.129).

The influence of an informal and formal environment of writing for seven year olds was examined by Graves (1975)

and several conclusions were made. Informal environments allow greater choice and show that students are self-motivated to write. Students write more in the informal setting and in both environments unassigned writing produces more extensive writing than assigned writing (p.235).

Some recent research has pointed out an important aspect of literacy even more basic than the question of instruction, that is, "the social meaning of literacy or the roles these abilities play in social life." (Whiteman & Hall, 1981, p.14). It is not enough to teach writing as an abstract skill; rather the social context, or what writing means to the users and how it is used by them, is crucial. There are different kinds of writing in school and out of school which serve different functions for different people. Young children learn about the purpose and special features of writing as they experience it going on around them, or as it becomes the focal point of an activity mediated by an adult. In the same way Dyson (1984) in a study of writing in a kindergarten class, observed students "looking for patterns in the way the written events were conducted." (p.259). She observed that students interpreted the writing tasks in different ways from the teacher. Despite the varying nature of the tasks the teacher set, a student, "Dexter", always responded in the same way, seeing the

writing as "coping offa' the board" (p.245). In another study Dyson (1985) explored the unofficial writing done in a grade two classroom. When their "work" was done children wrote, and their writing took many forms and functions as "they play with society's uses of print" as well as meeting the social needs of the classroom (p.636). The students filled out a dentist's prescription form, a raffle ticket, made desk placards with name and phone number, wrote stories to entertain friends, and wrote personal notes. This writing involved many forms and purposes not accessed by the official writing curriculum. If this writing was tapped it might allow more children to see themselves as writers. These studies show the significance of the function and role of writing in the classroom and the relationship between the writing and the writer.

What comes through in all the literacy research is the central role of the students' own experiences and understanding as a basis for learning (Dyson, 1982; Goodman, 1986; Harste et al, 1984).

The importance of understanding the kinds of knowledge children are developing about reading and writing is in the insights this understanding provides for teachers, curriculum developers, teacher educators and researchers. Since children are actively developing their own schemata about written language, it becomes important for those involved in teaching and curriculum development to build on this knowledge base and to exploit children's search for meaning through written language (Goodman, p.13).

In light of this research background, it is important to listen to the voices of children talking about their writing.

### **A Theoretical Framework**

A theme that is common to the work of Barnes, (1975) Britton, (1970) and Smith (1984a) is the importance of children's engagement with the world they live in. This begins when children become aware of their environment and learning takes place as they strive to make personal sense out of new knowledge and new experiences.

In my study I chose to listen to the voices of a small group of students in a particular classroom. Not only will this be valuable for what these specific students had to say, but it may also reinforce a finding noted by Harste et al. (1984) "that the child can act as informant" providing a tool for "professional self correcting strategy of major and long term import" (p.xix).

### **Making Sense: Building Connections**

Learning as described by Barnes (1975) and Britton (1970) has an important element of interaction between the learner's meaning and that of the teacher "so that what they take away is partly shared and partly unique to each of them" (Barnes, 1975, p.22). The learner is seen as making sense of new knowledge by relating it to what is already



known. Barnes refers to the work of Piaget and Bruner as "having given us the metaphor of knowledge as a series of systems for interpreting the world. From this point of view learning is a matter of changing the system by which interpretation is carried out" (p.22).

Barnes (1975) makes the distinction between school knowledge and action knowledge. School knowledge is "someone else's knowledge, not ours" (p.81). However, if connections are made between this new knowledge and the child's view of the world, enabling the use of this new knowledge in new situations, then this knowledge has become action knowledge.

In this context talk and writing become instrumental to the learner to build the connections between school knowledge and action knowledge.

We have to know not only the tasks presented to them from the teacher's point of view but also what in their existing view of things will have to be changed in order to cope with the new knowledge or solve a new problem. In one sense only the learner himself has this information and he does not know he knows it. That is why it is important for the learner to talk or write or otherwise represent the problem to himself and why his active participation is crucial (Barnes, 1975, p.82-83).

Exploratory and collaborative talk are described as supportive to learners, allowing active participation in reorganizing experiences and allowing learners "to reflect on the bases upon which they are interpreting reality and thereby change them." (Barnes, 1975, p.31).

Britton (1970) too, speaks of the use of language as "an organizing principle" (p.31). Through talk each person makes sense of experience relating it to past experience and "creating a personal context for it". (p.30). Britton reminds us of the value of the child's processes of learning that have been developing since birth. He observes that young children are simultaneously learning to talk and learning to make sense of the world. As reading and writing are added children must also be enabled to use written language to make sense of the world. This means children must be able to practise language in real situations and not in "dummy runs" (p.130).

They must continue to use [language] to make sense of the world: they must practise language in the sense in which a doctor 'practises' medicine and a lawyer 'practises' law and not in the sense in which a juggler 'practises' a new trick before he performs it (Britton, p.130).

### Describing the Learning Situation

The theme that pervades the work of Britton (1970) and Barnes (1975) is that children are actively involved in making sense out of the experiences and interactions they are part of. They need to make connections between the new knowledge and their past experience and make adjustments to account for this new knowledge. Smith (1983) too describes learning as "the brain continually updating its understanding of the world" (p.101). He suggests that there

is lots out there to be learned but it takes a special interaction between the learner and the new knowledge for the learning moment to occur.

Smith (1984a) bases his theory of learning on the belief that our brain is learning all the time.

Learning is not an occasional and specialized activity which must be extrinsically motivated, directed and reinforced. Rather children are vulnerable because learning is constantly taking place without the child's or anyone else's awareness (p.149).

Frank Smith (1983) addresses the three essential components of learning through his discussion of demonstrations, engagement, and sensitivity (p.102). Learning is constant as children are continually surrounded by demonstrations. Smith explains demonstrations as "opportunities to see how something is done" (p.102). Children are learning all the time as they see people involved in different activities, as they see different objects being used for different purposes, and as they observe how different objects are put together. Another group of demonstrations are those ideas and thoughts explored through the imagination. Through writing too, children can "construct, manipulate, and even erase whole worlds of experience and ideas which otherwise would never exist for them" (Smith, 1984a, p.152). Children are continually surrounded by demonstrations, and what is learned is "the learner's interpretations of the

demonstration, the way the learner makes sense of it" (Smith, 1981, p.634).

It is not enough for a demonstration to take place. There must be an interaction or engagement between the demonstration and the learner. Frank Smith (1983) uses the image of "the meshing of gears" to help us conceptualize the idea of engagement as the learner's brain meshes with the demonstration (p.103). At times we may be very aware of this engagement, for example, in our reading there may be a specific idea, phrase, or word that we connect with. However, at other times the learner may identify so completely with a demonstration that there is no conscious awareness of what specifically has been learned. Smith calls this vicarious learning and observes that in the case of language learning children learn without necessarily being involved as a participant. However, as he (1984a) notes, identity with the demonstration is crucial.

Children learn about spoken and written language by attaching themselves as apprentices to people who are using language as a tool to accomplish particular and self-evident ends. Children have to behave like language users, to share the purpose for which the language is being used, in order to know how the language is used (p.150).

As the learner is surrounded by demonstrations, what determines whether or not the learner will be engaged and identify with the demonstration? Frank Smith (1983) describes the third aspect of learning as sensitivity or "the absence of the expectation that learning will not take

place" (p.105). Children are born with the expectation that they can learn and when they expect learning to be difficult, tedious, and boring that itself is learned from demonstrations around them. Smith asserts that we must pay close attention to the demonstrations we surround children with at school. Do we allow them to be open to new learning situations, confident that learning will take place?

In the context of language learning it is important that children are surrounded by demonstrations that they will want to be part of and expect to be able to participate in. Smith (1984b) asserts that when children see themselves as belonging to the group or as "members of the club" they will identify with the purpose and substance of the demonstrations and expect to be able to participate.

My own research concerns have grown out of this theoretical framework. I listened to how learners in a particular classroom talked about the classroom writing activities and how they talked about what they had learned. Further, I tried to ascertain whether there was a sense of engagement, a sense of making connections and a sense of participation within a writing community.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Although writing development is talked about "in general", it always happens in particular. In the end we always teach unique children: all our students are case studies.... Children become our teachers, showing us how they learn (Calkins, 1983, p.7-8).

Decisions affecting research design and methodology were directly related to the purpose of the study and the kinds of questions being asked. This chapter will describe the purpose of the study, the framework guiding the research and the implementation of the research design.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the experience of writing of the children in a grade one/two classroom. I addressed the question of what it is like to be a writer by observing the children's writing behaviour, listening to the way they talked during their writing and to the way they reflected on what they had written. I sought to understand and describe the aspects of writing that have taken on significance for the children as they wrote. An important consideration in the methodology was that of extensive observation in the classroom. I needed to be "intimately familiar" with the classroom setting in order to be able to "capture" the children's experiences as they

occurred, allowing me to "situate the meanings" the children ascribed to their experiences (MacKinnon, 1985, p.2).

Some questions that guided the data collection involved understanding the classroom context and the experience of the children as writers in this classroom.

1. How did the children talk about the writing that they did?
2. What were some of their concerns as they wrote?
3. Did they see their writing as changing and evolving or was it perceived as being a fixed product?
4. What seemed to be important to them as writers?

#### A Framework for Inquiry

I used the ethnographic methodologies of participant observation, interviews and document collection in order to express understandings about various aspects of writing experience as articulated by a selected group of children. Some of the advantages of this research methodology are expressed by Duignan (1981) as follows:

1. It allows behaviour to be recorded as it occurs in the natural environment;
2. It permits the recording of "the stream of behaviour" so that whole events are preserved;
3. It allows the routine of the job to be observed and recorded. This routine may be the key to the understanding. (1981, p.290).

Geertz (1973) and Wilcox (1982) both suggest that what should be described is behaviour and meaning. The

researcher should be concerned with the way different people make sense out of experiences in their lives.

Qualitative researchers in education can continually be found asking questions of the people they are learning from to discover what they are experiencing, how they interpret their experiences and how they themselves structure the social world in which they live (Psanthas, 1973, as quoted by Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p.31).

Frank Smith (1983) speaks of "verstehen" or interpretive understanding as the purpose of investigation, defining it as an "attempt to achieve a sense of meaning that others give to their own situations" (p.12).

Ethnographic research methodologies remind us of the importance of each child's view of reality and in so doing builds continuing awareness that each child has important cultural knowledge that influences learning (Smith, F., 1983).

### Gaining Entry

I started the process of finding a classroom for my study by contacting a language arts consultant and requesting the names of grade one or grade two teachers who had an active writing program in their classroom. After meeting with several teachers, I selected a classroom for my study. I had previously spent some time observing in this classroom as part of a university project and welcomed the opportunity to focus on another area in this classroom. The teacher, Toni, expressed a personal interest in and a



knowledge of recent research in early literacy development and felt that my interactions with the students about their writing would be of benefit to the children involved. She felt it would give them another audience for their writing, providing additional opportunity to articulate what they were doing as they wrote, and encouraging their development as writers. Other adults in addition to the teacher were often present in the classroom. Toni encouraged the participation of "program support persons" in her classroom, that is, people who "feel comfortable helping all the children and who are willing to observe, follow and intuitively predict class learning standards remembering that the child's needs come first."

I expressed my interest in being able to visit her classroom over a three month period to observe how writing takes place and to interact with students informally and formally about how they interpret and approach their writing tasks. Because Toni felt my researcher role would benefit her students, she agreed to th's commitment.

After being granted Toni's permission I met with the principal to explain my study and requested his consent. This was readily granted with the added comment that I would enjoy the experience of being in this classroom. Shortly afterwards I received permission from the School Board to begin my study. A letter requesting permission of participation was sent to parents of the selected children

with a cover letter written by Toni explaining my study and role in the classroom as well as her support of this research project.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) state that "access is not simply a matter of physical presence or absence [and that] it is far more than a matter of the granting or withholding of permission for research to be conducted" (p.56). I felt that from the beginning of my observations in the classroom, the children and teacher went about their business as they always had. I did not feel that my presence in the classroom affected their behaviour. In my first few days in the classroom as I sat with the children on the rug during whole class discussions or joined a group at a table while they were writing, the children accepted my presence as normal. A few children asked me whose mom I was. I explained that I wasn't anyone's mom and that I would be in their classroom for a while because I wanted to learn what it was like for them to write. As I talked to students individually I explained my interest in understanding how they went about their writing. The children seemed to respond to this interest as being reasonable and legitimate. The longer I was in the classroom the more I realized that in conferences or class discussions Toni would also encourage the children to talk about how they were going about writing, so that the questions I asked the children were not foreign or outside

of their experience. At times certain children were curious about what I was writing while I was sitting with them on the rug or at a table. I explained that I wanted to write down the things that they were telling me so that I could remember them.

### Taking a Role

I was aware that from my very first day in the classroom my actions and interactions would define my role in the classroom. Wilson (1977) states this very clearly:

The ethnographer [researcher] is sensitive to the way he enters a setting and carefully establishes a role that facilitates the collection of information. He must make decisions about how involved he will become in community activities because he knows his activities will influence the way in which people react to him (Gold, 1958 in Wilson p. 254).

My position in the classroom was one of a participant observer. Research literature suggests many definitions for the term. McCall and Simmons (1969) describe participant observation as follows:

[It] involves some amount of genuine social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts and open-endedness in the direction the study takes (p.1).

Spradley (1980) contrasts the role of participant observer with that of the "ordinary participant". He explains that "the participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes. One, to engage in activities appropriate to

the situation and two, to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation" while "the ordinary participant comes...with only one purpose, to engage in the appropriate activities" (p.54).

The elements common to these definitions involve being in the setting, participating to some degree in the activities of that setting, and observing behaviours, allowing the researcher to gain some understanding of the informants' "view of reality" (Agar, 1980, p.114). It is important for the researcher to establish the extent of participation in the setting. This can range from complete identification with the participants in the setting to a more passive role with limited involvement.

I found that my role as participant observer evolved as my understanding of the classroom grew. At first I was hesitant about noticeably involving myself. For example, even though I was physically present at a table with a group of students, I was hesitant to participate actively for fear of the children responding to me as another teacher, someone monitoring their actions and behaviour. However, I soon discovered that the children did not expect me to solve their problems, spell words for them, or "rescue" them. Even when I was sitting with the students around a table they continued to direct their questions to each other. In the following example, Bruce asked David for help with respelling.

**Bruce:** I need help with respelling.

**David:** What's that? (pointing to a word spelled yers)

**Bruce:** Years.

**David:** I know. (he gets up and walks over to the blackboard where he finds the word) You forgot the "a".

This discussion continued as David and Bruce read through the whole story. With other words, they went to the dictionary to check the spelling. I soon realized that the students' independence and the way adults and children interacted in this classroom allowed me to freely participate and interact without interfering with my role as observer.

In daily interactions with the students, Toni never "rescued" a child but often directed them to peers or other resources, encouraging them to be independent responsible learners. Other adult visitors were expected to reinforce this direction. Below are some of the specific expectations that Toni had posted for all adults acting as "Program Support Persons". These expectations reflect the way adults and children interacted in the classroom.

**You are acting as Program Support Person**

1. Who is willing to observe, follow and intuitively predict class learning standards. (Remember whose and which needs come first.)

Eg.- Do not spell correctly for a child when they do not know letters and sounds while trying to write. But help them to sound out, identify and print only important letters. (lrn for learn).

Eg. -Do not rescue a child, but direct them to peers or materials that will help them to become more independent and responsible learners. (dictionaries, alphabet line, another child...)

Eg. Expand children's language and thinking by asking them to explain to you the why and how. ("Who do you think can help you with this?"; "I don't understand what you mean by this idea? Can you give me more detail?")

2. Who can support the child's needs based upon values that will promote independence, risk-taking, and responsibility within this class context.

3. Who feels comfortable taking directions from the children, observing the teacher, asking minimal questions, or does not need to be "doing" or "rescuing".

4. Who can be flexible and responsive to our class needs, changes and expectations (We do not always do what we plan.)

5. Who can after reading all this, float and learn with us, knowing that there are difficult and joyous times in this process.

I was very comfortable with my role as participant observer since it was totally compatible with the kind of adult/child interaction that occurred in the classroom on a daily basis.

My role sometimes took on an observing stance and at other times I would interact actively with the children, asking questions related to their writing. During the whole class sharing or discussion time related to writing I sat with the students on the rug but did not participate in the discussions. I took on the observer role, usually sitting near the back with my tape recorder and notebook to record and tape pertinent conversation or actions. After the discussion time the children's writing time started and they would find a spot to sit at any of the seven tables, on the rug, or at the table in the cloak-room. I would find a spot to sit at any of the tables or on the rug among the children and observe or interact with individual children about what they were doing, where their ideas came from or what changes they were making in the writing. Sometimes I would join a particular group. I was continually alert to occasions when students voiced what they were doing and thinking as well as to their behaviour while they wrote. The children were allowed to move freely around the classroom to find a place to work, to find someone to talk to, or to get whatever resources they needed. My movements around the classroom

and ongoing talk with the children was quite unobtrusive and part of the natural flow of events in the room.

### Research Schedule

November 10, 1986 was the date of my first classroom visit. I observed daily for the following nine weeks until the end of January unless other events were scheduled, such as a special projects afternoon, winter activities day, or Christmas program practise. I felt the daily visits were important for providing the opportunity to talk with students while they were working on all stages of the writing. Since writing was a part of most of the daily activities, I usually observed for about half of the morning and all of the afternoon. The fluid organization of the day and the amount of time in the day in which students were writing allowed me frequent opportunity for interaction with the children.

After the end of January I continued visiting the class for the next ten weeks approximately three times a week. I would ask the teacher what her writing plans were and plan my visits on the basis of that information.

During the first three weeks I was observing the class as a whole as well as starting to get to know individual students. Together with the teacher, I chose eight students to focus my observations on. Some considerations made were that they be from both grades, include boys and girls, and



that they be relatively articulate in expressing their thoughts and feelings.

Most of my classroom observations and interactions were centered on these eight students. However, because of the nature of the class, there were interactions with other students as well. These interactions have been included when they contribute significantly to the study.

#### Data Collection

In this study I used a variety of techniques for data collection. Extensive field notes were collected to log the day to day activities, behaviours, and interactions of the whole class, small groups of children, and of individual children. Tape recordings were made of class discussions, my formal and informal talks with students, student/student interactions, teacher/student writing conferences, and my discussions with the teacher. I made photocopies of all the writing in each of the working stages for all of the informants. When possible I made photocopies of other writing that was passed between the children such as notes and letters. The children's own writing describing how they learned to write was also collected.

Guba (1981) states that a variety of data sources are necessary to "cross-check data and interpretations" (p.85). West (1977) describes the importance of triangulation in more detail:

The best strategies of control seem to be various triangulations of data. Conscious searches for negative or modifying data, data from different sources, data collected under different circumstances (in groups and with single informant/respondents, solicited or unsolicited by the researcher, by verbal report or observation (p.68).

### Field Notes

The researcher's field notes are a detailed record of observations providing what Geertz (1975) has described as "thick description". Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) describe the aim of field notes:

Field notes consist of relatively concrete descriptions of social processes and their contexts. The aim is to capture these in their integrity, noting their various features and properties, though clearly what is recorded will depend on some general sense of what is relevant to the foreshadowed problems of the research (p.145).

My field notes were a log of the classroom activities and specifically a description of the activities the key participants were involved in. Ideally field notes are written "during actual participant observation" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.146). Most of the time I was able to write on the spot. If there was a lot to record or if I wanted to avoid being so caught up in recording that I couldn't observe or listen, I would write abbreviated notes that I could flesh out immediately following the session. The children rarely questioned what I was writing. On the occasions that a student did ask me what I was writing I would explain that I wanted to record the ideas people were

sharing with me so I would be able to remember them. On a few occasions someone asked me to read what I had just written down and I was happy to comply.

Extensive tape-recording complemented my field notes. I tape-recorded as much of the children's talk about writing as I could since I found it too disruptive to write extensively while talking with students. I also found that I wasn't able to get a complete transcript of a discussion or conversation without recording because I just couldn't write fast enough.

I did find it difficult to place a tape recorder on a table and record a whole writing session. The tape recorder would easily become covered with books or papers, students would be talking and move out of the direct range of the microphone, or the interference from background noises would make the tape too difficult to transcribe. Rather than just leaving the recorder somewhere for the whole period, I would lay it down wherever there was a conversation I wanted to record. Once in a while a student would pick it up and perform by speaking loudly into the microphone. However the tape recorder was always lying about somewhere and the children were often not aware when it was on or off. At certain times when I would reach over to turn the recorder off they would ask in a surprised voice, "Were you recording?" These recordings of children's talk are a very important part of my field notes.

### Interviews

Formal and informal interviews with students were a valuable data source for this study. Kvale (1984) explains that the qualitative research interview "gathers descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee".

Here ordinary people are able to describe their own life-world, their opinions and acts, in their own words. In contrast to multiple-choice questionnaires with questions and answers already formulated by experts, the interview makes it possible for the subjects to organize their own descriptions emphasizing what they themselves find important (p.173).

Spradley (1979) speaks of the value of descriptive questions "that seek the relationships among entities that are conceptually meaningful to the people under investigation" (p.84). Descriptive questions are broad and general, encouraging the informants to talk about an experience using their own categories and bringing in their own emphases. I tried to do this as much as possible by asking such questions as, "Tell me all about this piece of writing"; "What's it like to have a good writing time?"; "What's it like writing today?" or "Could you tell me about the writing you do at school?". At times these questions were successful and at other times I needed to expand the question so that it would have meaning for the children. I found that having the children talk about a specific piece of writing they were working on or had just completed was more effective than broad general questions that didn't have

a context. Sometimes if a new aspect about writing surfaced in an interview with one student I would ask questions about that area with another.

Through my interviews with the children both formally and informally I responded to them as the experts as they described their thoughts and feelings about writing. I consciously tried to communicate to them that I wanted to learn from them, that I needed to know what they were thinking because I didn't know what writing was like for them. I assumed the stance as Spradley (1979) describes:

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand? (p.34).

The students participated as a direct source of knowledge about how they interpreted and approached their writing tasks.

My informal talks and discussions with the teacher were also invaluable in understanding her pedagogy and the dynamics of the classroom.

#### Use of Documents

I made photocopies of all the writing the focus students did including all the stages from the first copy to the final good copy. I also had access to each students' cumulative writing folder. All the writing since September

was kept in this folder and was not taken home until the end of the school year. This enabled me to refer back to any of the writing as necessary. For the children who were in grade two, I collected a piece of writing, written at the end of grade one, which described how they learned to write.

#### Analysis of the Data

Just as Guthrie (1985) states, I found that my "initial open-minded observation" in the classroom gradually became more focussed on specific events or aspects of the children's descriptions of the experience of writing (p.20). As a result of the on-going analysis of my observations and what the children were saying, I gradually moved to more specific areas of focus in the latter part of my study. As Guthrie (1985) experienced, "These areas appeared to be significant and thus appropriate for further observation" (p.20). The on-going analysis took the form of pausing to re-read field notes and interview data as well as relevant literature from other research settings and deciding what areas needed to be deepened, what new questions should be asked, or what inconsistencies needed to be pursued. Spradley (1980) describes this cyclical pattern of research as the ethnographic research cycle. The researcher asks ethnographic questions, collects ethnographic data, makes an ethnographic record, analyzes ethnographic data to direct

the researcher to ask new ethnographic questions and start the research cycle over again (p.29).

Both Spradley (1980) and McCutcheon (1981) describe analysis as searching for patterns. When forming patterns McCutcheon (1981) describes the researcher as "considering the interdependence of different pieces of the whole being studied (p.6). She describes the significance of these patterns.

[It is by] constructive patterns about what transpires in the classroom [that] discrete actions are given coherence, form and meaning; they do not remain random, isolated acts. The specifics - discrete actions or phenomena - and patterns have a reciprocal relationship, for the specifics are understood in light of their affiliation to other specifics and the patterns, and the patterns are corroborated and illuminated by citing the specifics (p.6).

It is the understanding of the parts, their relationship to each other and to the whole that directs the analysis of the data. In this study I have come to understand the different aspects of the children's writing experience, the relationships between them and an understanding of the whole, that is, "What it is like to be a writer in this specific classroom".

As the children shared their thoughts and explained how they went about their writing, they revealed what was important to them in their writing. Certain aspects of their writing experience surfaced again and again. These became the themes that describe the children's perception of writing in this particular classroom. As the children

talked about their writing they showed an awareness of how they went about their writing; they demonstrated many views on revision and the role it played; they developed their own categories to distinguish between different kinds of writing; they remembered their experiences about learning how to write; and they shared their thoughts on how talking and sharing were instrumental to their writing.

#### Limitations of the Study

The findings of studies using participant observation methods are not generalizable across all teaching situations (Bellack, 1981). Guba (1981) states that generalizations defined in the rationalistic sense as "truth statements that are context free - that hold in any context . . . are not possible [in naturalistic research] because phenomena are intimately tied to the times and the contexts in which they are found" (p.10). Rather than use the term generalizability, Guba (1981) suggests the importance of "transferability". I have tried to embed my understandings in what Geertz (1975) has coined "thick description", connecting them to a context, because transferability from one context to another depends on "the degree of similarity (fittingness) between two contexts" (Guba, 1981, p.11). Bellack (1981) states that the value of this research is not first of all in providing rules for classroom practise but that these descriptive accounts "provide teachers with



"intellectual instrumentalities" (Dewey's term) to guide them in observations and interpretations of events in their own classroom" (p.69). Calkins (1983) reminds us of the importance of listening to the voice of each child and understanding the pathways each child follows. In her case study of one child, Susie, Calkins states that "although writing development is talked about 'in general' it always happens 'in particular'" and that her study of Susie "is representative of all children in that she too is unique" (p.7).

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SETTING

A child centred classroom is carefully planned and organized by the teacher but the curriculum is negotiated and enacted by everyone. The soul of the enactment is the dialogues in which teachers and children inform, err, question, correct, self correct, think out loud, repeat, make sense - in other words, develop together (Genishi, McCarrier, Ryan Nussbaum, 1988, p.190).

#### Description of the School Program

The grade one/two classroom in which I did this study is part of a Kindergarten-six alternative program within a large city public school system. The school attracted families from various socio-economic levels and from various parts of the city. The program's educational philosophy is summarized in a promotional pamphlet as follows:

[The program] encourages the traditional three R's plus its own three R's:

Risking to learn, teach, try, and excel;

Responsibility for one's own learning;

Relating to people and to the environment.

Parents are actively involved in their child's education and this participation is basic to the program philosophy, which considers the children, teachers, and parents as integral parts of the total school community. Parents are expected to volunteer their services for

approximately four hours a month. They can be involved in various activities such as serving on the Parent Advisory Committee, helping or being the library representative.

The pamphlet describes the learning environment that is promoted in this program as follows:

The learning environment is holistic in nature. The curriculum skills and concepts are integrated into meaningful themes. The students work in a variety of groupings on projects that demand active participation, accountability, and sharing. There is an emphasis on being responsive and developing independence. This is accomplished by giving the children choices within a framework established by the teacher.

The holistic approach is based on the reading and writing process. Literature and content books are chosen by the students, who are encouraged to share their reading through diaries, group discussions, displays, and oral and written presentations. Language is used as a tool to learn the content subjects, such as science or mathematics, with language integrated into these projects and activities.

There is personalized evaluation where each student's learning is acknowledged. Teachers monitor the student's growth with many anecdotal notes. In addition, the upper classes receive achievement grades for projects.

### Description of the Classroom

Each day as I entered the classroom I met one of two scenes. Either the children were sitting on the rug listening to each other and discussing a topic with their teacher and fellow classmates, or they were busy on their own or in small groups seated throughout the classroom. The classroom was divided into several areas by brightly painted low bookshelves and units with cubicles for the storage of learning materials as well as students' books, papers, and personal possessions. Tables of various sizes were placed throughout the classroom for students to sit at. The carpeted corner of the room was always used for whole class discussions and sharing, and at other times children would also sit here to read or write or talk. A separate cloakroom space along one side of the classroom had been converted to classroom space and there were usually students who had chosen this more private space at the table or on the floor, alone, or in a group of two or three.

Students were free to choose who they wanted to work with and where they wanted to sit. It was not unusual to see two students sitting at a table looking at a book together, children wandering over to find someone to help them look up a word in the dictionary, a child seated at a table with the teacher talking about a piece of writing and

a student going around asking classmates for ideas about what to write, all at the same time.

The children were responsible for getting their own materials and for clearing the tables and other work areas at the end of the day. All the learning materials and resources were stored in specific locations accessible to the students. Dictionaries were stored on the bookshelves along one wall of the classroom. There were lots of books, both fiction and non-fiction, in the classroom. A permanent collection of fiction books of various reading levels was stored in a bookshelf unit. A whole collection of library books, both fiction and non-fiction, were brought into the classroom as resources related to the topic being discussed such as magnets, native studies, and animals. The children used the books as resources not only for print knowledge but also for the information that they gleaned from the illustrations. A small stand with four shelves held all the different kinds of paper the children could use. Another stand easily accessible to all held daily-used supplies such as pencils, erasers, crayons, stapler, scissors, glue, rulers, scotch tape, masking tape, and paperclips.

The walls were covered with an assortment of posters and children's writing. The long bulletin board covering one wall, the bulletin board outside the classroom, and the available space between the windows were all used to display the children's writing. As new pieces of writing were

completed they would be posted and others taken down to be put into each child's own writing folder. These were some of the headings that were posted with the class writing:

1. How would you describe your past?
2. What objects are attracted to magnets?
3. What do you find funny in some of the books you like?
4. What are some of our group ideas for our questionnaire?

Other writing such as children's letters and pictures were posted above and around the teacher's desk. The back of a cubicle unit had been covered with construction paper and stories were posted there; stories such as Jessica's holiday story, Mark's photostory about his trip to Nakusp, and Joel's story about his family.

A small bulletin board in the entrance of the classroom was used to communicate information to parents including relevant journal articles on beginning literacy development and class newsletters.

#### Daily Schedule and an Introduction to the Language Arts

Each day followed a flexible routine with physical education, music, and library time being the only fixed scheduled periods. Every morning the class started the day by meeting on the rug to read the letter written on the blackboard and to discuss that day's activities.

I have included two sample letters written by the teacher to the class that reflect the daily flow of activities.

Dear Sweethearts,

Today is Wednesday, November 19, 1986.

We will begin by visiting the library. Then the writers who need to finish their letters will have time. The rest of us can read or write. Then we will package our letters and questionnaires to take home.

There will be time for magnet researching and the writing of ideas. Each group will have a chance to share one experiment they find exciting to others. I enjoy your research ideas.

In the afternoon we will continue with our routine and responsibility reports. It is fascinating to see the differences each person's report includes. This could be because each writer is writing their own thoughts and trying to be original.

Love,

Toni and Paula

Dear Sweethearts,

Today is Friday, January 9, 1987.

We will visit the gym first. Let's take a vote on whether to do movements, gymnastics or ball work.

Remember during reading time if you want to work on a

project, let me know and start on it right away. In Math, group A will begin a new game called "bop". Group E is to have boardwork and have exploration.

In the afternoon we will continue with future story writing. If you feel you need more ideas or your work is complete, perhaps you can share it with the group. Please continue your thinking and writing. Also think about respelling.

Love,

Toni and Paula

The school day was broken up into large blocks of time and each of these units followed a predictable pattern for the children. Reading time, research with magnets, writing time, etc. followed a similar pattern from day to day developing the previous day's learnings a little further. Independent reading, writing or research time was interspersed with whole group time to further the children's learning. Groups or individuals shared what they were doing, deepening their own understanding through the questions and discussions as well as introducing new possibilities to the group.

During reading time the children knew they would be able to find a book of their choice to read and find a place to sit, sometimes reading together with a partner, sometimes alone. If any of the children wanted to work on a project



of their choice they could also pursue this during reading time. At times a small group met for a discussion on a certain topic such as humour in a book they had read. After talking about the topic with each other they each wrote about the humour in a book they had read and shared this writing with the class.

The writing block had its own rhythm of writing, reading books, discussing with partners, discussing different aspects of the topic with the whole class, and sharing stories with teacher and classmates. The whole class discussions served to explore the many dimensions of a topic and to develop the various possibilities open to the children. For example, a class meeting to develop the topic of the future was introduced this way by Toni:

Think about yourself as an adult or someone who is already an elderly person which means you've lived for many, many years. Think about where you might be. You might still be living in Edmonton, maybe by then there will be people living on the moon, maybe you'll be living in another country like England or Egypt. Think about yourself in the future.

Following this introduction which presents various ways the children can branch out in their thinking of the future, several children shared the ideas they had been thinking about for their future. The following day when the 'future writing' was continued the children met together to

brainstorm about the kinds of ideas that would be interesting to include in their writing. It was stated this way.

As a writer and as an audience that listens to other's writing, what are important parts you would like to include or hear about in other people's writing.

The following suggestions were shared and made into a list on the blackboard which the students could refer to while writing.

Some people could have a job they're doing.

They could say what age they're going to be.

Make it funny, even if you make it up a little.

If it's something you're learning right now you can choose to do it, like my dad's teaching me to be a rock climber.

Maybe you'll be real good at something when you grow up and you could tell about that.

Additional ideas for their 'future writing' project were also shared before everyone went back to their writing. On subsequent days some children chose to read their piece of writing to the class asking the class for a specific response.

The reason I wanted to share was cause I thought I was complete and I want to get your ideas.

I wanted to share all my ideas I had on my paper.

The interaction with the class about possibilities and ideas was continuous through each piece of writing. Interaction between individual children and between teacher and child also occurred spontaneously and regularly while the children wrote.

#### Introduction to the Students

The class in which I did this study was a grade one/two class of twenty-one students. The students in this classroom generally came from homes where the parents were concerned about their child's education and had chosen to place their child in this program because they valued the kind of learning encouraged by the program. Many parents assisted in the classroom during the months I spent in the classroom. In my daily interactions with the students I focussed my attention on the following eight students, although as these students interacted with others the data includes comments from other students in the class.

#### Sara

Sara was a grade one student. She showed a positive open attitude to others. Sometimes she worked with others but just as often she was working on her own. In her reading, Sara was developing a phonetic sense and used context to re-affirm her sounding out attempts. She shared

her work with others and often related her personal experiences to the topic at hand.

### Jessica

Jessica was a grade one student who, according to Toni, began the year as a cautious, observant and non-committal child. She had a strong personality and in her planning of work and in her relationship to others she seemed to know what she wanted to do and how she wanted to do it. She worked hard to be an independent reader and used sound clues, context clues, and meaning clues.

### Ryan

Ryan was a grade two student who was often seen writing, talking and sharing with two other friends, Michael and Jeremy. Ryan was a quiet student who didn't draw attention to himself yet showed confidence in himself and his place in the class. During class discussions Ryan often verbalized his thoughts and feelings about the subject being discussed. He showed a willingness to help and support others.

### Brendan

Brendan was in grade one. He was eager to be involved and was recognized for his contributions. He worked hard to develop his own learning strategies. In his reading, he

predicted a word by the first letter sound and often didn't check the rest of the letters. He also based his predictions on the context. In his writing he attempted to write some of the sounds of the word and relied on the remembered meanings to be able to re-read it.

### Wendy

Wendy was a grade two student often found seated at a table with some grade one students. Wendy needed to be encouraged to take initiative and responsibility. She actively participated in group discussions and shared her thoughts and feelings. At times Wendy was very willing to talk to me about her writing and she spoke with confidence and authority. At other times she had no desire to explain what she was doing.

### Haley

Haley was a grade one student. She was bubbly and cheerful and in conversations about her writing she would often make her own meaning leaps and talk about her baby brother, her pet dog, and going camping all in one breath. She often preferred to work on her own rather than in a group. She was becoming more and more confident and starting to take more learning risks. She was a word-by-word reader but was becoming more aware of sentence

reading. When writing she listened for vowels and the order of letters.

### Steven

Steven was in grade two. He was confident in his ability to learn and was an active contributor in discussions. Steven was an independent worker. Although he liked to socialize, he would often act as the conscience of the group to remind others of the task at hand. He felt confident about his reading and writing skills.

### Michael

Michael was a grade two student. He was a pleasant fun-loving student who enjoyed socializing with his peers. He was not always consistent in his effort and involvement and needed a lot of reinforcement to join in discussions as both active listener and contributor. When he did join in, Michael could take an idea and elaborate on it.

### View of Learning / Role of Writing

A description of the language arts program can begin with a description of procedures and what the children typically did during that part of the school day. However, further exploration is necessary to understand the view of learning that was practised in this classroom. The reading

and writing activities were not ends in themselves but acted as a foundation for the learning that went on.

Toni, the teacher, was in her sixth year as teacher-learner of young children. She described the importance of writing in her classroom as "the base for exploring thought, for playing with language, for making your knowledge public so you can work around it, change it, add on to it, make it really complete but knowing that next year you could express it entirely different". Writing becomes a way of bridging thought and language, making thoughts more tangible, more concrete and giving the child a better sense of control. At the same time that the child is involved in expressing thoughts and ideas, the mechanics involved in communication are gradually being mastered as the child becomes aware of the place of conventions such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar. As Toni read the children's writing she got many clues to indicate what they were thinking, what their thought patterns were, who needed further exploration with a topic, and for whom conventions were getting in the way of communication.

Writing was part of all the learning that went on in this classroom whether it was to describe a magnet experiment, pose questions to their parents about their childhood, discuss changes for the natives in Alberta, or imagine what their future might be like. Toni described writing, thinking, and learning as being all bound up

together. As children grew more confident with the mechanics of writing they were encouraged to continue to take ownership of their ideas, and to dig deeper to develop and strengthen their thoughts. Toni believed that when the children started to do this they became aware of possibilities, "playing around" with their ideas just as they "played around" with math materials. It meant that students had a lot of choice in how they responded to a topic, in what they would choose to write, and how they would write it. Toni shared her thoughts as she came to the realization of the importance of the children's own expression in their writing.

I remember the first time I began to realize kids were answering their topic so differently from each other and from what I had expected. I had an anxiety attack, I didn't know what to do about it and then I thought, well let them go cause they're all interested in what they're doing and feeling quite successful. Don't stop them, don't be so silly. It's your need, not their need you're trying to meet right now. It really helps me realize that's how kids learn about their own expression, their own thoughts, choosing what they want to portray.

Toni stated that she most often determined the topic, but how the children responded to the topic and purpose was their choice. In one-to-one interactions with the children



and through class discussions she modelled different ways to think about the topic, discussed ways that could be used to get into their writing. In this way the children became aware of choices and developed their reflective ability. They became more aware not only of what they were doing but how they were doing it. Toni stated that children's reflections on how they went about their writing and their discussions of alternate possibilities were important parts of the writing process. Toni felt that before the children were able to elaborate on a topic and develop it in their writing they needed to be able to think and reflect about it. If they couldn't verbalize their ideas when they were talking in conferences or discussions it would be hard for them to write about them. The discussion and talking stage was important to help the children develop their thoughts in various directions.

I've included a portion of a letter sent to the parents that described the learning environment that Toni worked hard to achieve.

There are many special moments in a class of twenty-six students. Many of these moments are created when the children learn how to work with a partner or in a small group on a writing project. They begin to learn and teach with a peer and take more risks with sounding out or with sharing of personal ideas. They especially learn to listen to a peer and to make their ideas

listened to. When they work with peers to create, consolidate and present a project this especially reinforces the process of teaching what you know and learning new knowledge.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

We simply compose from the subjective fragmentary chaos a realized objective cosmos, from disorder to order, from hunches to sentences. We find the words that lift the thought up into the light, that fit it, like the shell of a snail, embodying it, giving it form and being. Again, only on paper, by writing and rewriting, can we get the fit, make the thought visible, bring it into some kind of nonsubjective being where it will bear inspection both from ourselves and others. In short, we discover it fully for the first time (Baker, 1983, p.227).

#### The Children's Experience of Writing

As the children shared their thoughts and explained how they went about their writing, they revealed what was important to them in their writing. Certain aspects of their writing experience surfaced again and again. These became the themes that describe the children's perception of writing in this particular classroom. As the children talked about their writing they showed an awareness of how they went about their writing; they demonstrated many views on revision and the role it played; they developed their own categories to distinguish between different kinds of writing; they remembered their experiences about learning how to write; and they shared their thoughts on how talking and sharing were instrumental to their writing. All of these are complex issues for any writer to be involved in. The data underscores the importance of understanding the

perceptions of the children we teach, no matter what age they are.

### Children's Self-Awareness as Writers

As I talked to the children while they wrote or in a more formal way through interviews, they expressed a developing awareness of how they went about writing and how they experienced what writing is for them. Not all the children were able to make generalizations about their writing experiences; some found it easier to talk specifically about the piece of writing they were working on at that time.

I approached Ryan tentatively. He was involved in his writing even though his pencil was not moving. He was looking ahead staring at nothing in particular with a look of concentration on his face. After some minutes he got up and walked over to a classmate and asked him what he was doing. When he came back I decided to speak to him. He said that he was struggling with the idea he wanted to write down next and he shared his thoughts with me.

Ryan: Sometimes I can write it so easy and sometimes I can't put it into words and then I try to think of -- find a word to write the idea down.... If I get frustrated it gets really hard and then I try to get that word, like my idea, down.

R: Do you think about a certain way to write that idea down?

Ryan: Yah, or if I can't put that word in or it will make it like, if I can't fit this one word in and I have to put that one word in so it's saying that one word in a different way, like say, I would have to say try for why.

R: What do you mean saying that one word in a different way?

Ryan: Like saying "why" in a different way like by saying "how come".

R: So sometimes you want to find a different way of saying something?

Ryan: Yah, to make it more interesting.

Even though Ryan was not particularly articulate he was sharing his frustration with not being able to always find the right words to express what it was he wanted to communicate. He realized that choice of words was an important aspect of making his story more interesting.

Ryan talked about different kinds of writing days. "Most days I can write my normal way and so I'm really happy with that." When he wrote in "his normal way" he meant the following:

Writing the way I want to, finding ideas, writing fast, not being tired, not being frustrated, writing ideas down the way I usually do.

[On other days] I just am tired, I keep starting over, talking a lot, being lazy, not being able to write as good as I could and I wouldn't get as much ideas.

Ryan's experience with writing enabled him to begin to express how he went about writing and he was beginning to identify a personal rhythm in the writing process. The following conversation developed after Ryan shared that sometimes the ideas were slow in coming.

R: Do the ideas sometimes come fast?

Ryan: Yah, in the starting and in the part where I plan ahead, like in the end when I start to plan ahead and ahead to see what to put in before I'm done. I get a lot of ideas in the end but in the middle it's hard.

R: Is that with most writing?

Ryan: No, sometimes it's real easy in the middle and in the beginning it's hard cause when I'm starting a new thing maybe I don't know too much about it and as soon as I start writing about it I get more and more ideas and I get more in the middle than in the last part. I just get more ideas all the time.

For Haley, writing and thinking were closely associated as the following excerpt from an interview showed.

R: Tell me what writing is all about.

Haley: You learn how to think.

R: Do you do lots of thinking when you write?

Haley: Yah, like what words to put to make it more interesting.

R: Why do you want your story to be interesting?

Haley: So people can understand what I write.

R: Do you like it when other people read your story?

Haley: Yah.

R: Can you help me understand what it's like for you to write?

Haley: I'm thinking about all kinds of things to write.

Haley's responses suggested an awareness of the choices a writer has and the many decisions that need to be made.

Comments from Michael and Sara suggested a growing awareness that writers have different styles or perhaps go about their writing in different ways. When Michael described his writing he compared it to that of others.

Part of my writing is the same as other peoples. Of course not everybody doesn't do it the same or the writing would be twins. Most people write different like I might do garter snakes and Joe is writing about different snakes so he might do red spitting cobra. Nobody does the same thing. I sometimes get a few ideas from the person who wrote a book, so I'm copying the writer of the book, not all the time, just sometimes but Joe usually doesn't do that.

Michael was quite matter-of-fact about his knowledge that different writers approach their writing task in different

ways. This to Michael was an almost self evident fact about writing and his self confidence about writing his way, shone through.

Sara described her writing in a similar way.

I think that no one writes quite like me, maybe they write a lot the same but it's not quite like me. Maybe they write a lot the same but it's not quite like me and maybe I write a lot like other people but I really don't write exactly like anybody else.

She described how she went about doing her cat project.

Well I remember when I did my first work on this project. It was tough to get all the ideas. I remember trying to find a book on cats and trying to think of some ideas in my head and getting my first page done. After that I thought of lots of ideas and it was fun.

At another time Sara responded to the question, "What's it like working on a piece of writing?" by saying

It's kind of hard sometimes. Finishing a piece of writing, you're glad to know you're finishing it but starting -- you think you have quite a lot of confidence but when you start writing it isn't really always as good as you think it will be.

R: Does writing take a lot of thinking?

Sara: I feel that choice writing takes medium thinking and medium not thinking. Writing like I'm doing now (food



chains) takes quite a bit of effort and hard working and confidence and you need to use your mind a lot.

[It is interesting to note in this context that earlier in the interview she said she enjoyed choice writing a little less than food chain writing.]

R: When do you do most of your thinking?

Sara: I notice that sometimes I do this kind of writing -- I just think before I do a sentence, then do a sentence and then think again, that's what I like doing. But in choice writing I make up my things as I go along and that's what I like.

R: Do you remember your animal project writing?

Sara: You have to think before a lot and while you're writing too.

Sara spoke of the ups and downs of writing the way she had experienced it. Writing can be hard work and she was aware that for her different kinds of writing took a different amount of effort and planning. The difference she experienced between choice writing and other writing was interesting. She suggested that the choice writing was more spontaneous whereas other writing was more consciously planned.

Sara compared a good writer to a good sport suggesting that just as in play situations you need to "roll with the punches" and play "fair and square".

A good writer writes neatly and does a lot of work just like a good sport and a poor sport. Like a poor sport is someone who cheats and cries whenever, like they cry when they go out, like I cried a little when I was out in the first period soccer baseball but I learned I could be back in it and I didn't cry. And I didn't get tagged out this morning or at lunch recess.

A poor writer is someone who takes a lot of ideas out of their rough copy and does not add new ones on to replace them. A good writer is someone who does things like they do it fair and square, like they add more ideas, use the same ideas, take away an idea and replace it.

Sara suggested that just as she had learned through her experience in soccer baseball that you discover the rough times are followed by success when you stay with it, so in writing you need to put in the effort. Sara seemed to be building a personal framework from which she approached her writing.

### Summary

The children I talked to were developing the language to be able to describe what they were doing. In being able to describe what they were doing, it was also apparent that they were conscious of choices they had made and of a growing awareness that others around them approached a

similar task in a different way. As the children shared their thoughts they revealed what was important in their writing.

Ryan struggled with how to write down the ideas he had in his head realizing that he wanted to find the "best" way to say it. Ryan was also aware of a personal rhythm to his writing. Some days his writing flowed much more easily than on other days. His ideas for some parts of a piece of writing seemed to come more easily than his ideas for other parts. As a beginning writer, Ryan was already aware of the way he wrote, what was "normal" for him. Michael and Sara expressed their confidence in their own personal approach to writing acknowledging that others go about it in a different way. They came to an understanding that there might be similarities between their own writing and that of others but "everybody doesn't do it the same or the writing would be twins" and "maybe I write a lot like other people but I really don't write like anybody else."

The children's comments suggested a developing awareness of what it was like for them to write. This awareness will support them as they start each new piece of writing, as they bring their awareness of past experience with writing to each of their writing tasks. Certain practices may be reinforced or a new writing task may lead them to new discoveries about themselves as writers. The students were able to speak this way about their writing

because they had been able to make many of the decisions involved in the actual writing task.

### Revision

#### What the Children Do

By listening to what children said about changes they made to their writing, how they went about making changes, and by observing the changes they made between first and final copy, an attempt was made to demonstrate the many views on revision and the role it played in their experience of writing.

All children started every piece of writing except the writing in their choice book with a first copy or working copy and ended with a final copy or good copy. However, depending on the child or the particular writing activity, there were sometimes additional copies made between the first and final copy. For other students there was a series of new starts sometimes on the same day or consecutive days with the previous start being discarded in favour of a new one and the latter would then develop into the first copy.

#### Sara

As Sara worked on a piece of writing there were many changes between her first copy and her good copy. Two pieces of her writing titled Future Writing and Cats have been more closely examined.

In Sara's Future Writing (see Appendix 1) the first copy seemed to be a listing of her ideas on what she might possibly want to be in the future and then as she moved to her good copy there was some more development of each idea. Her first two pages of her good copy followed the pattern of the first copy, i.e., "I want to be a gymnast because I take lessons and it's fun. I want to be an archaeologist because I like discovering things." In the last four pages she developed each idea in more detail. Sara described how this came about.

Sara: Once I was writing my Future Story and Toni made me write more and more on my bad copy and I felt really upset of that but I decided that I might do six or seven ideas anyway and I did about seven more and I was done on my good copy by six pages and that was something that was really good and it worked out fine. When I was done my good copy I was proud.

R: Tell me about feeling proud.

Sara: I wrote one whole page of details on one of my ideas.

Toni explained how in the conferences with Sara she encouraged Sara to extend her ideas.

Sara had some difficulty independently applying the process of extending her main ideas with detailed ideas. She could do this verbally in conference but not in writing. It took several rewrites before some

of her main ideas were contextualized. She said it was a little too much like hard thinking and that's why she didn't want to do it.

While she was writing the last part of her final copy and adding extra details explaining more about what she wanted to be, I had this conversation with Sara.

R: I've noticed that you're writing this in a different way than your first copy.

Sara: Well I noticed I wasn't doing it as good cause other people were putting down reasons and lots of details.

R: So what are you thinking about as you write?

Sara: Well, why I wanted to be it. I want to be a horse-rider cause I like horses. Why do I like horses? They are easy to draw and how they look and even the colours that they are. I want to be a zoo keeper cause I like animals. I want to be an archaeologist.

R: Why?

Sara: To study things like dinosaurs. I held a microscope and I looked at some things like melted snow and there were lots of things in it.

Sara seemed to be consciously working on deepening her ideas by adding more details as was evident in these sections taken from her good copy about being a zoo keeper and an author.

I want to be a zoo keeper because I like animals and their colours and the way they act and the way they look

and the way theyr difrunt. I like how tne moncys jupe, and how they swing up-side-down!

I wont to be a othr because I like the way they have to wright and how they wright and wut they wright I wont to wright abut huors's and I wont to set up a room for my wrighting in my room ther will be no windows it will be litid by a candl. I will have a desk in my room and a cher and cushns.

As Sara was writing her good copy I never saw her refer to her first copy either to copy ideas or to re-read it to see what ideas she included. Many of the ideas that were part of the good copy were also in the first copy, however the wording had been changed and the ideas were in a different order and as well many other ideas from the first copy had been left out and new ones added to her good copy. The following conversation suggested how Sara went about writing her final copy.

R: Did you read over your first copy when you made your good copy?

Sara: No, but I read it to my mom though.

R: How did you make your good copy?

Sara: I just thought up some ideas and others I remembered from my other copy.

R: Was there anything else you were thinking about when you made your good copy?

Sara: I was thinking about what it would be like when I was finished and what it would be like when people were reading that book.

R: Is this going to part of a book?

Sara: Yes my Autobiography Book.

R: How did you decide what ideas to use and which not to use?

Sara: Cause some were a little silly and some weren't all that good and I couldn't think up much details.

It seemed that for Sara the first copy acted as a rehearsal of her ideas and when she wrote her good copy she remembered her ideas, decided what ideas she would retain, as well as what ideas she still wanted to add. This was also evident when comparing the first copy and good copy of her Cat Project (see Appendix 2).

When comparing her first and final copy of her Cat Project, it was evident that several ideas from her first copy had been left out:

Cat will hiss and spit when they see dogs.

Cat like to hunt at night.

Cats will just abot sceratch on eney thing ex -- your chowtch ex -- trees.

Cats can pull their claws in ther paws.

Some ideas from the first copy were retained but changed:



Simys cat's have eyes as blue as blue punte. has  
 become Some cats have verry blue eyes ex -- Simis  
 cats.

Cats most comon enemy is dogs has become cats biggest  
 danger is prubly dogs.

Other ideas appeared the same way in both copies:

Cats will go in your garbage to get things like fish.

Cats come in all sizis and colors.

Cats sometimes eat things like well, meat and if ther  
 mischf mackers, thel eat our butter.

Other ideas appe red for the first time in the final copy.

To wosh cats lick ther paw then wrub them all over  
 them selvs.

Cat oners sometimes tiy a bow around ther neck.

.ats do not like water.

As Sara wrote her final copy she did not overtly  
 transfer ideas from her first copy. She remembered her  
 ideas and chose the best ones for her good copy.

R: I've noticed that when you make your good copy you  
 don't look at your first copy. Can you tell me about  
 that?

Sara: Well I just read a few ideas and try to memorize  
 them and then its a little easier.

R: How do you decide what ideas to put in your good copy?

Sara: Well the best ones that I have. I'll read the  
 first one cause its probably the most amazing -- "Cats

can be very colourful or very dull." That one is really quite amazing. I know that from grandma's. And like "Cat's eyes sometimes seem like cats they glow well they do sometimes when they're hiding under a bed, when they're far away in a corner and its dark but their eyes glow.

Sara made a lot of personal decisions about the value she assigned to different parts of her writing. Her response suggested her confidence to choose the best ideas, using her own personal experience in some cases to judge the value of the idea.

The organization and layout of the good copy was quite different from the first copy. The first copy was almost all written as continuous prose and in the good copy ideas were numbered, listed and separated by a wavy line. The open sections around the written ideas from #12 to the end were also coloured in. I asked Sara why she was doing this. Her answer was "I just like to. It makes it neat. I liked it when I saw Jessica do it." She had been writing alongside Jessica and the good copy of both reports looks very similar.

### Jessica

There were few changes in Jessica's writing as she moved from first copy to good copy. As Jessica worked on the good copy of her deer project she referred to her first

copy, checking off some of the ideas as she transferred them to the good copy. Her first thirteen ideas were identical and then she selected seven more ideas from the remaining fourteen since her plan was to have a total of twenty ideas in her good copy. The format was basically the same although she added the wavy lines between the ideas and coloured in the open spaces between the words on the first page ( see Appendix 3).

In another piece of writing about her routines and responsibilities before and after school I observed Jessica making additions to her rough copy squeezing extra ideas throughout (see Appendix 4 for additions in small print). I asked her what she was adding.

Jessica: Well I'm putting in more stuff, like

responsibilities like I dress in pants or jeans. I get off my snowpants and coat and boots, put my pyjamas on.

R: Why did you decide to add that?

Jessica: Well I read it to Toni. She asked me lots of things so I want to tell more stuff like when I wake up and I forgot to write that I brushed my teeth and I do it so I need to put it in.

Jessica's good copy includes all the added ideas, and she moved the section at the end of the Before I Go to School chapter to the end of the When I Come Home From School chapter. The size of print had changed considerably with

the first copy being quite large and the good copy small and compact.

In another piece of writing entitled, Future Writing, Jessica had not made any changes in the text, and print size and arrangement on the page were identical (see Appendix 5). She had circled words on her first copy, respelled them and added periods to mark the end of sentences.

Jessica demonstrated a variety of approaches to revision, sometimes having made no changes apart from spelling and punctuation. At another times she added some ideas to make her writing more complete or in the case of the deer project she decided to leave out a few ideas.

### RYAN

Ryan also showed a variety of approaches to revision as was evidenced by his writing. In his grizzly bear project there was a marked difference between his first copy and his good copy (see Appendix 6). Ryan added more information such as how much grizzlies weigh and that a grizzly can be shot in the head and still run one hundred more miles. The new information that Ryan discovered in the books he had about grizzlies seemed to impress Ryan because I heard him share this several times in conversation with other students. Ryan also talked to another student about adding a story to his project.

Ryan: I'm going to add a story about my friend's dad. Once he was tracking a grizzly and the grizzly was so smart he knew he was tracking him so he turned around and the grizzly was tracking him and he was tracking nothing.

Steven: Did the grizzly chase him?

Ryan: Yah, he got away though.

Steven: Boy, he must be able to run fast!

Ryan added new stories about experiences with grizzlies, the one about his friend's dad being tracked by a grizzly and one about a bear, possibly a grizzly getting into people's food. When Ryan added ideas he added them to the new copy he was working on rather than inserting them into his working copy. He sometimes made numerous starts, throwing away what he had written and starting over because there were ideas he wanted to add. I asked him why he didn't add his new ideas to what he had already written and his answer was, "I don't like doing that, it's too confusing." Ryan found it easier to work with his new ideas only, rather than trying to incorporate them into what he had already written. A few weeks after he had finished the good copy of the grizzly project, Ryan stated that he would like to do a little more on grizzlies. I asked him what made him decide to go back to his grizzly project and his answer was,

I'm getting more books on grizzlies, I'm getting more ideas about grizzlies. I've got to change some things,

like they can't run 100 miles - they can run 100 yards if they're shot in the head. Well, if they're shot in the head once they could probably still run.

Ryan had a strong personal interest in grizzlies and he wanted the information to be detailed and accurate.

In Ryan's writing about his plans for the future (see Appendix 7) there are no content changes, although in a few places he had changed the wording a little bit. Circled words had also been respelled. I asked Ryan about the differences between his first and final copy.

R: Were there changes between this copy and the first one?

Ryan: I wrote it harder so it will shine. The problem is if you don't do it right it's on your good copy.

R: Did you change your story?

Ryan: I made this idea a little shorter so I had to make it to the bottom of the page so I had to put some new things in.

R: Were there any changes in your chapters?

Ryan: Sort of, I put them in different words. And it's the same here, I had a long page so I had to write longer. I made the escape artist chapter 4. I didn't have a chapter so I made it into a chapter.

R: How do you feel about your piece of writing?

Ryan: Happy.

R: Could you tell why?

Ryan: Well it has details; I respelled, it's neat. It's really the best piece of writing in my life, well, the best so far this year. Maybe later on in the year I'll write better.

When Ryan talked about the changes he made in this piece of writing it was evident that the changes were not aimed at improving the quality of story. He wanted to fill up the page. Ryan showed an openness to changing and adding to his ideas as he wrote and finding the way that worked best for him.

### Brendan

Brendan's writing from first to final copy could best be described as a series of starts gradually moving toward the final copy (see Appendix 8).

Brendan spent a lot of time writing down his ideas and when he wrote something one day, it was sometimes difficult for him to figure out the next day what he had written. He often relied on his memory of the ideas from one writing time until the next. Brendan described what it was like for him.

Brendan: If I write it one day and I know what it is, let's use recess for an example - I go out to play, I forget all the words and I try to remember them but I forget them.

R: What do you do when you try to read a copy and you've forgotten what it says?

Brendan: Sometimes I'll try it over again and sometimes I'll just try and read it and if I can't get it I'll try and write another one. But if I'm going to start writing it, I'll sometimes get the words I couldn't get before recess, like I remember it.

When Brendan came back to a copy and he couldn't figure out what he had written, he started a new copy remembering some of his original ideas, adding on new ones. For the story about his past, he worked through four copies and then he was ready to make his final copy. I asked Brendan to explain why he made lots of copies and this was his response.

So if I forget one and everything and forget words in it sometimes I'll make three bad copies, sometimes I'll even make ten if I have to and it helps me cause every time it gets gooder and gooder and I know how to spell the words.

Brendan had found a method that worked for him. He didn't get frustrated making many copies but realized that this was the way he worked toward the finished product. Brendan followed this method for each piece of writing he did. In his Shark Project (see Appendix 9) he made four copies and was ready to start his final copy, working closely with the fourth copy to get his ideas. He also added many more.



Wendy

Wendy clearly stated how she moved from her first copy to a final copy showing her understanding of the "editing" process.

Wendy: First I would write down all my ideas and do another copy and I would figure out my ideas, like I would put this bunch of ideas together and then this bunch of ideas together and sort of change the ideas around, maybe change the words around and things. After that I would do some respelling and then I would do a good copy. First in my respelling it means you circle the words that you think are wrong and then you go through it again and wherever you see a circled word you erase it and look it up in a dictionary or get someone to help you figure out how to spell the word. When you figure out how to spell the word then you go to the next word. After respelling you get another sheet and write all over with the respelling with the ideas in the right order and there's your good copy.

In Wendy's story about her future (see Appendix 10) she made few content changes in her first three copies. The ideas in the first two copies were virtually identical though the arrangement and order was a little different. She had made some cosmetic changes in the printing size and in the addition of decorative shading and enlarged titles. As well she added punctuation. I talked to Wendy while she was working on her third copy.

R: You've now started on your third copy.

Wendy: Yah and there's nothing different about it except I put big, huge letters on the top and I put decorations in the square.

R: What made you decide to make a new copy?

Wendy: It's my third time cause all the other ones looked terrible.

R: How do you want your story to look?

Wendy: Nice and pretty.

This conversation suggested that Wendy's concern as she worked on the successive copies was to make it look nice and pretty. Her fourth and good copy started out with familiar ideas from her earlier copies but further reading revealed a remarkable development of ideas leading to the inclusion of additional sections with these chapter titles: How to Learn, How to Learn to be a Doctor and The Rest of My Life. Wendy explained how this final copy came to be.

Wendy: When I was working on My Future I did one thing about something and I was thinking that would be enough and then Toni said, "Do some more. Do how you would learn." So I had to go to all the trouble like I said I would go to university and she said put down more, more, more. I brought it home for homework that night and my mom said how about you make a list of things that you can put down and then write it all out about them. So I made the list, when I make a list it helps.

I put down just one word and then I put them in order like I say I'll do this first so I put a 1 there and everything and then I take 1 and I put it down and I write a bit about it and I do the next one and that helps me cause I don't just have to get an idea and then I get another one and then I write one down and I forget the other one cause it's on a piece of paper.

Then I go back to Toni and say is this enough and I read it to her and then she says do some more, do a bit about your house and stuff. And then I go back and then while I'm walking back she gives me an idea, "What's your house like, what would it look like if I come there? If a person came over there to see your place what would you do? So I wrote down I would teach them how to ride horses, we would have tea and I wrote down a bit about my house. How many bedrooms I would have, who they would be for. The first part I wrote down I would live in Argentina; I would live on a farm; I will live with my best friend Florencia and stuff like that.

Wendy has a clear concept of the process she went through in writing her good copy. She described how the exercise of making a list was helpful in helping her to remember ideas and how Toni's questions sparked new ideas. I asked Wendy if it helped to think of this way of writing while working on her whale project and her response was,

"I'm doing it in a whole different way." I also asked her how she felt about her future story when she was finished and she answered, "Yah, it was a lot better. If I wouldn't have done it, it wouldn't have been very interesting."

Wendy's Whale Project (see Appendix 11) showed no content changes between the first and final copy with the text being an exact copy. Wendy committed herself to extensive respelling, evidenced by the many circled words in the first copy. Punctuation was also added to the good copy.

When talking about writing, Wendy talked about change in her ideas and regrouping ideas as being part of her regular approach to writing. Wendy's two pieces of writing in Appendices 10 and 11 show that Wendy made few content changes between her first and good copy unless encouraged to do so by Toni.

### Haley

In the sample of writing from Haley about her past, she worked through three copies and then produced her good copy (see Appendix 12). Her first copy was quite different from subsequent copies; the ideas were not repeated and this was the only copy in which she organized her page into sections. She wrote new ideas in her second copy which were transferred to a third copy. She began by using fancy printing with the intention that this third copy would

become her good copy. She shared with me that it didn't look nice and so decided to make another good copy, re-writing the same ideas and adding several new ones to the end.

By examining this piece of writing it appears that while writing, Haley had made ongoing decisions about what to do next. She knew her ideas, her organization and also her printing style could be changed and she had made decisions involving these aspects in completing her good copy.

### Steven

Steven moved through three copies in his writing about the future, making changes along the way with his fourth copy being his final copy (see Appendix 13). Steven started with four ideas on his first copy and retained two of these ideas in his second copy, changing a third idea from a "swimmer that races against other people" to a "runner that races against other people" and dropping the fourth idea. As well Steven added four more ideas to his second copy. The third copy started out as his good copy and then Steven decided to add extra details to three of his ideas using arrows to show where the new information belonged. Steven's third and fourth copies had the same content and the reason Steven wrote the fourth copy was to "make it easier for people to read, the arrows make it kind of hard."

In Steven's story about his past (see Appendix 14) he wrote one copy and was ready for his good copy. As he wrote he explained the following:

I wouldn't just put the whole idea down cause I'd have to erase it if I had to put another detail in so I think of more details as I write it down...

Once I do that idea, I have to put in another detail, that I have to put in a detail for that detail.

In the good copy Steven followed his first copy quite closely although sometimes re-grouping ideas, and also leaving out some sections. Steven explained why he left out one section.

Once when I was about three years old I was on the sandpile and I lost my teddy and I started to cry cause I couldn't get it back." I didn't put that part in, I didn't want that cause in real life that didn't really happen.

Steven re-evaluated what he had written each time he made a new copy. He made decisions about what to delete, retain or regroup and what ideas could be added or expanded. With each piece of writing the number of copies he felt were needed and the changes he made were related to what he wanted to achieve with the writing.

### Summary

The students showed a variety of approaches to revision, sometimes making minor changes and at other times there were remarkable developments between the first and final copy, adding as well as deleting materials. Revision and change in the writing seemed basic to their approach. Sometimes changes were made after conferencing with Toni as in the case of Wendy and Sara in their Future Story. Other times students made their decisions based on what they thought would make the story better. The children used various methods to make changes - adding ideas to the first copy, using arrows to show where the new information would go, or starting a new copy when new information needed to be added. Often the students made references to earlier copies while they were working on the next copy, while Sara started fresh, remembering the ideas in her head.

As the children shared thoughts about their writing and as I asked them to describe what they were doing and what they were thinking, the topic of changes to their writing kept surfacing.

Sara made a number of personal decisions as she decided what ideas from her first copy would be retained in her good copy. She explained that she left out some ideas that weren't as interesting and retained and sometimes expanded ideas that she felt were important and added interest or informative details for her readers. Organizationally Sara

also made changes that she felt added to her writing. She seemed to have some sense of her writing as a whole and what she intended to communicate through her writing.

In comparison to Sara, Jessica's approach could be described as more meticulous and thorough. She made some additions to make her ideas more complete and at other times retained most of the ideas in her original copy.

Ryan felt very comfortable with making changes and he was often seen starting a new copy before he had officially finished the previous copy. Sometimes after group sharing or talking with friends on reading, he would discard the copy he was working on and make a new start. Ryan's actions and explanations showed he was continually open to new ideas and without hesitation would make changes in his writing. He had definite ideas about what he wanted to achieve with his writing and had discovered what way worked for him.

Brendan went about his writing in a way that worked best for him. He discovered that he needed to make many copies of his stories as he worked towards his final copy. Brendan did this because when he came back to his story he found he was unable to read it and so he started again, remembering his ideas from former copies and adding new ones. As a result Brendan reworked his ideas many times as he worked from his first copy to final copy.

Wendy's explanations of her "copies" showed she had a clear concept of the process she went through in moving to



her good copy. She was aware of how Toni's questions sparked new ideas and directed her to include new topics. She also related how making a list of her ideas before starting to write helped her to remember all her ideas while she was writing. She didn't indiscriminately apply the same methods to each piece of writing and explained how her most recent piece of writing was done in a whole different way.

Haley showed she had made many on-going decisions as she moved from copy to copy. She included new ideas and left out others. She made changes in the organization of her ideas and she changed her printing style in her good copy.

Steven continually re-evaluated what he had written and what he wanted to achieve and changed ideas, added new ones and deleted others that did not suit his purposes. The way he made changes was different for each piece of writing but what was constant was that he came back to what he had written and made his own decisions about whether it achieved the purposes he had set for the writing.

The students showed a variety of approaches to revision. Sometimes there were minor changes and at other times there were remarkable developments between the first and final copy with additions as well as deletions of text. Revision and change in the writing seemed basic to their approach. Sometimes changes were made after conferencing with Toni as in the case of Wendy and Sara in their future

story. At other times students made their decisions based on what they thought would make the story better. The children used various methods to make changes - adding ideas to the first copy, using arrows to show where the new information would go, or starting a new copy when new information needed to be added. Often the students made references to earlier copies while they were working on the next copy, whereas Sara started fresh, remembering the ideas in her head.

It was apparent from listening to the children that ongoing changes were a meaningful part of their writing style. The students also related that they had a sense of their final copy being "better". For some the standard was neatness related to printing, or it was related to respelling or it was related to the deletion of poor ideas and the addition of ideas that made their writing more interesting. As Sara noted her readers could learn "lots of interesting stuff."

#### Children's Views on Good Copy - Bad Copy

As the children talked about their writing, the terms bad copy, good copy or first, second, or third copy, naturally came up. As the preceding section demonstrated, the children viewed their work as being in progress and changeable. This section will show how the children spoke in general terms of the "copies" they had made.

When I asked Sara how she felt about writing her response was:

I feel kind of confident when I write and I feel even more confident when I write on my bad copy because you don't have to write neat but in your good copy you add more ideas and change it a little and you need to write neater and that's what I'm worried about in my good copy.

Sara's comment suggested a certain freedom that she felt when working on her "bad copy" and that it was natural to expect changes between the bad copy and good copy.

Sara: Good copy should look a certain way. Rough copy can look at ... way you work ... rough copy you can just scribble things out instead of erasing them. You do your respelling on them and the good copy would look like a rough copy if all the erasing were on it and all the reprinting and things like that.

Brendan reinforced the idea that in one's bad copy "anything goes" when he said:

I haven't really gone to a person for help on a bad copy cause that's just a bad copy. I don't really mind how many bad copies I have to do.

Wendy also explained:

A bad copy is your first copy and it's -- you don't want to do that -- you just write it badly and you don't know you're going to write it that way. And then

you have to go on to respelling, then good copy and maybe after respelling it's pretty good but on your good copy you have to write it really good, like you have to get all your words down.

Wendy also expressed that she didn't really know how the bad copy would turn out. In the good copy, the concern was with printing clearly and neatly, and "getting all the words down."

Some children spoke about how they felt about rewriting or making a good copy. Steven didn't enjoy the rewriting but acknowledged that it was important for others to be able to read what he had written.

Steven: I like writing but I don't like doing a good copy cause then you write the stuff you know over and over again.

R: So why do you write a good copy?

Steven: Well, if my work is really messy and I need to change the spelling and if Toni tells you to do a good copy you need to do a good copy.

R: Do you feel it's your choice to make a good copy?

Steven: Like, well I don't really like doing a good copy very much. I think I should do it cause I want other people to know the information and like they can't read it on the bad copy so I'll do a good copy so they can read it.

R: Is it your decision to do a good copy?

Steven: It's sort of Toni and ours, like both of ours.

Ryan showed that sometimes he liked the rewriting part and sometimes he didn't.

Ryan: Sometimes I don't write as much cause I know I'll have to do more. It will take more time to do it in good copy than bad copy and sometimes I write a lot and then I do a good copy really fast and so I sometimes like it.

R: What makes you like it more than other times?

Ryan: It doesn't take as long, I can write faster, neater.

R: Is it important to you to write a good copy?

Ryan: Not all the time if it's like two words -- but sometimes it's important because if I leave it with all these circles and words and erasing then other people will say "how do you read this," and so sometimes I really have to do a good copy.

Steven and Ryan both acknowledged that the job of writing the good copy could be tedious yet they both felt it should be done so that others could read their writing. They both expressed that their writing was not just for themselves but that they wanted to share it with a wider audience.

Jessica thought about the writing of her good copy in a different way. She found that part easier, "It was easier when I had my bad copy done because I could get things off my bad copy to write." She described her good copy as being "very different" from her bad copy and described some of the changes in a specific piece of writing:

This one is all messy and I erased a lot and it has some of the scribbles that are from when I did something wrong and I scribbled it out I pressed hard on things and I used a sharp pencil for that and not for this.

As Jessica described the changes, neatness and clarity rank high.

When Brendan described his bad copies he saw them as necessary stages to get to his good copy (see Appendix 8 and 9). He kept making a new copy because his writing "gets gooder and gooder." He added "usually I have to do three copies, and if, like, your bad copy is really messy but all the words are right, you can use them pretty good. Well then, in your good copy you just copy right off that."

Sara, Wendy, Steven, Jessica, Ryan and Brendan spoke of "bad copies" and "good copies" as basic to the way they went about working on a piece of writing. Jessica shared that when she wrote out of school she also went through a bad copy.

Jessica: At the cabin I did a bad copy and a good copy and one time I did two bad copies and 1 good copy.

R: Do you think it's a good idea to do bad copies and good copies in all your writing?

Jessica: Yah, because then you get better at writing.

Jessica was convinced that the movement from bad copy to good copy worked for her and used it in all of her writing.

### Summary

In the first copy or bad copy, as the children called it, some expressed a freedom to write in whichever way worked for them and said that changes could be made to the ideas as well as spelling, organization, neatness and clarity as they moved to the good copy. Neatness and clarity were especially important so that others could read their piece of writing, because they had important ideas to communicate. In their comments the children stated that the bad copy was for themselves, what was most important was that they could figure it out. However, the good copy needed to meet the needs of a wider audience and so certain changes were necessary. Several children also spoke of moving from a bad copy to a good copy as the way they went about their writing, the way to get a better piece of writing. The children were aware of the role of revision and the value of moving from a bad copy to a good copy.

### Children's Views on Spelling - Respelling

How they thought about spelling and the role it took was yet another dimension of their experience of writing. Beginning writers do think about spelling, about how to write down a word, and the children expressed varying thoughts on spelling and the strategies they used.

When I asked Brendan what kind of thinking he did when he was writing, his response was revealing:

Most of the time I have to think, but with easy words like on, off, a, I can just -- it only takes a second to write it down.

Brendan took for granted that I realized that what he thought about as he wrote was spelling and the physical aspect of handwriting. When asked the question, "What do you find most challenging in writing?" he answered:

Most of the challenge is with the big long words like because, university and all that, and they are so long they sometimes take me fifteen minutes to figure out.

A big concern for Brendan, as he wrote, was spelling and trying to figure out what to put on his paper to communicate the word he had in mind. Brendan realized that the way he spelled words in his writing may not have been the way others would have spelled them, and he realized that at times he might be the only one who would be able to read them. Brendan spoke of helping Toni read his story when he conferenced with her. Brendan felt that it was quite normal that he didn't spell all his words conventionally because "even the grade twoers hardly get all their words right in their first copy." When he got to his good copy Brendan wanted to make sure that others could read what he had written. On one occasion Brendan took his piece of writing to a classmate and asked him to read it. He explained that he did this because he "just wanted to make sure most of the



words are right and everything. I want to make sure parents can read it when they come."

Just as Brendan used his own invented spelling to express his thoughts in written form, Ryan too, believed that spelling would come. He shared with me that he learned to think "what the heck about spelling and I started to write faster." At the end of grade one Ryan also wrote that he learned to write, "I learned to write by knowing that you don't have to spell the words right." This is how he wrote it. "I lrnt to runt buy no that you dn't haf to spel all the wrse ruit." If he had worried about spelling he may never have written this down.

Steven also related spelling to writing, for when I asked him what he was learning about writing this was his response:

I don't know, but when I come across a word I don't know, I ask someone else and they tell me what it was and that's how I learned how to spell, I memorized it and I spell it and I know the word too.

Wendy too, shared what she did when she didn't know how to spell a word; something that happened a lot because "nobody knows how to spell all the words."

Usually I just sound it out first and then once I write it down and put it in my story then I circle every word I don't know how to spell and I go and look it up in the dictionary and if I sound out a word and I think

what's the first letter I find that in the dictionary. Sometimes I ask other people cause I don't always like to use the dictionary. It takes too long. It takes longer than asking someone.

I often noticed children circling words for "respelling" just before starting their good copy (see Appendix 5 & 11) and when I asked them how they decided which words to circle these were some of their responses:

Michael: Usually I whip down some words and then go back and go over them and see which ones are right and the ones that I think are wrong I circle.

R: How can you tell if they're maybe wrong?

Michael: I sort of look at them, see if there's too many letters or too less letters, sometimes I sound them out again then I circle them.

Wendy: The ones that don't really look like I know [are the ones I circle].

Jessica: If I can't read it, I'll circle it. If I have seen that word then I just sound it out. If I haven't seen that word before and I don't know what it looks like and when I sounded it out I thought it might be wrong [then I circle it.]

Haley: They [the circled words] are the ones I want to learn how to write cause I don't know how to yet.

Each student spoke of a personal strategy that they used to deal with re-spelling; it was a meaningful step in their

writing. Michael's comment showed it was not something he worried about initially in his writing, but only later on when his ideas were complete. At that point he would go back to look specifically at spelling.

I observed children using many sources to check the spelling of words: words on bulletin board displays, words on the blackboard, globe, classmates, books where they remembered having seen a certain word or dictionaries. Some children would circle their words for respelling and then look each one up in the dictionary. I asked several students, "What is it like using the dictionary?"

Jessica: It helps for lots of words but I wish it had every single word in them though like French and Edmonton and Calgary. They don't have countries. I remember one time I looked for Edmonton and I couldn't find it. I have a dictionary at home and it has big words and it has a lot of words. You can find them easily and it has countries and everything. I wish I could bring my dictionary to school. It has every single word, even the words I know.

Michael: Well sometimes, it doesn't have the word I want. I look in each dictionary we have till I have the word I want.

R: What's it like?

Michael: It's sort of fun.

Ryan: It's easy [to use a dictionary]. Well, think about the word you're looking for. What's the first letter

you're looking for, you go to m for mat, go to m pages and look through the pages till you find mat.

Wendy: It's better than asking Toni all the time, how do you spell this, how do you spell this, cause you can go and find out. But sometimes it takes a long time to find ... You know if they'd just put a button and pressed what you wanted it would be a lot easier.

The children were learning the value of using a dictionary as a resource. They were learning about different dictionaries and how these could help them as well as the limitations that influence their use.

### Summary

Each student spoke of the strategy that enabled them to deal with spelling. The children spoke of spelling as an aspect of writing that may demand attention all the way through the writing, as in Brendan's case. With others there was less of a focus on spelling until the children were getting ready for their good copy and the words for respelling were circled. The written texts illustrate the full range of spelling from invented to more conventional forms. Some children were able to circle words that didn't look right, while Brendan went to a peer to help him check his spelling. The children spoke of using words around them, other people, and dictionaries to help them to spell. As the children related to me their thoughts on spelling,

their awareness of the place of spelling in their writing was clear, as well as consciousness of the development of a strategy to cope with the conventions of spelling. How the children talked about spelling and the role it takes in their writing is yet another dimension of their experience of writing.

### Children's Views on Printing

The children made various references to the appearance and neatness of their writing, especially in their talk about the changes between their bad copy and good copy. Several children shared that it didn't matter to them how they wrote on their bad copy but they wanted their good copy to be neat. Anita and Jessica worked on a joint project and they planned what needed to be done. They discussed drawing pictures, respelling, and also "neatness".

Jessica: We're going to have to write much neater [on the good copy] than we are now.

Anita: Yah, much much neater.

R Why?

Jessica: So people can read it. This one doesn't matter cause we're just writing ideas.

At another time one student asked a classmate about the appearance of her writing, and specifically about the size and readability of the print.

Haley: Do I have to do a good copy? I can probably make it better. My words are really small, can you read it?

Jed: It looks kind of squishy.

Another overheard interchange between two students involved appearance:

Sara: It does look like a good copy, right? Does it to you?

Jessica: It looks good to me.

The topic of neatness and printing surfaced several times in the response to the questions, "What have you been noticing about writing?" or "How has your writing changed?"

I remember in grade one I wrote always messy and out of the lines and now in grade two I write in the lines and when I do my good copy I always write neater than the first.

In grade one I always used to write so messy and dark like I pressed hard on my pencil and I tried to copy Michael's printing.

I was surprised (when I looked at last year's writing) cause I'm so much neater this year and last year I was so messy. I'll bring some from home to show you.

I would like my writing to be a bit neater cause it's really messy. I can write neat if I really try.

Last year I was the neatest writer in the class but then Steven started being the neatest and he got

over me and was a bit neater and Stacey was a bit worse than me.

Well writing should be neat so people can read it.

These responses communicated that the children were developing a personal criteria by which they judged their printing. Some of the qualities that the children associated with neatness were writing in the lines, not being messy, and readability. Other students also referred to the size of print as being an important factor in judging the appearance of the "writing". Wendy stated that:

When you have it in neat print not in terrible print - like that's neat print - that's big enough so you can see it and it's real nice and it's just neat print so you can read it easily. I don't like it when it gets to be that small, it's harder to read. Cause you have to look down and see if that's an '8' or an '0'.

Michael referred to the aspect of size as well when he spoke about the improvements that he made in his "writing". As he looked at different pieces of writing in his writing folder, he chose to talk about printing.

Michael: Now it's a lot better than this cause on my good copy of future it's a lot better cause it's not as big. That's not such a good piece of writing cause it's so big [letters are big]

You should see Jennifer's writing, [his younger sister] how she writes. She makes lines across the whole page going all the way to the top.

R: Do you feel that as you learn how to make the letters better, they get smaller? Is that how it works?

Michael: Well, when you're tiny you have big humongous letters and they sort of get tinier as you grow.

Sara also referred to how large her print used to be and now looking back she thought "it was quite funny":

Like the first time I wrote one letter was about that big. Like this is my usual kind of letters, so that was really quite funny and it was hard to read cause I had to squish some letters in.

These young writers spoke about moving from large print to smaller print as they learned to "write" better. As one student expressed it, the next step in writing is script, then one is really grown-up:

When I grow up I want to learn how to write in script and script is what my dad does all the time but when he writes a note to me he writes how I write - print.

The changes in print between the first copy and final copy suggested that the students attended to the aspects of size and style. Sometimes the changes were very noticeable whereas at other times the changes were more subtle (see Appendices).



Sara shared her awareness that everyone has their own style of writing, "like somebody may write like this. I'm going to put made like that, 'MADE', and other people may write like this, 'made', like Jean does."

Sara: Like I don't write the way I want to, like I write one letter the way I want to and the rest just blah.

R: What way do you want to write?

Sara: I want to write like Jessica and Laura, really neat.

Sara's comments suggested that she was developing her own criteria (standards) about neat printing. She examined the printing of her classmates and chose that of Jessica and Laura as her model. I had also observed her printing just like Jessica in the good copy of her cat project, which was quite a different style than she used in her bad copy.

### Summary

The children's comments concerning printing reflected their attention to appearance especially in their good copy stage. As the children talked about their printing they referred to the qualities of size, style and readability to define what the word "neatness" meant to them. As the children developed their own criteria of "neatness", the printing of classmates seemed to become models for them.

Children's Thoughts on the Kinds of Writing

Another aspect of the children's experience with writing was the way they they talked about the different kinds of writing they were involved in. Students made distinctions between fiction and non-fiction writing, stories and reports and between writing they did for different purposes.

Ryan described how he thought about different kinds of writing:

Ryan: I tell different kinds of writing by what they're about and how it looks and what's different.

R: What are some of the different kinds of writing you've done?

Ryan: Fiction stories, space fiction, non-fiction and that's how I tell them apart ... If it's a fiction story it can be about anything and I usually have it about a problem or a race or something or who's the best man. I want to make the story exciting and not too exciting and I want to make it funny and sad and happy and other things like that.

If you're not doing a fiction story and you're going to do grizzlies and you write down they kill everything they see, that's not as much fact as you should have. They kill a lot but not everything they see. You've got to find out from books if like grizzlies eat berries which they do. And you don't know that and you

say they don't eat berries, they hate berries - then that's not so good.

Ryan made a clear distinction in his mind between fiction and non-fiction. Ryan suggested that as a writer of fiction he could decide what the story would be about and whether it was happy, sad, funny, or exciting. In non-fiction writing "you can't just write "whatever you want to". Rather Ryan's concern as a writer was with getting the facts, from books or some other accurate, knowledgeable source, since as a writer he is communicating information to the reader. Ryan clearly described a different approach to fiction and non-fiction writing.

Ryan also described how writing could be done for different purposes. Some writing could be for the purpose of "learning about things like grizzlies, hawks or eagles or whatever you're going to do". Not all writing is to learn from. "Some of it is just to have fun" and other writing like the autobiography writing is "to tell other people about your life."

Jessica began to articulate her ideas about "how to write a story, or what a story should be", when she compared her future story with Sara's. In her own "story" she thoroughly developed her main idea of being an artist by describing where she would live, what she would paint and draw, and where she would hang her art. Jessica explained how she expanded this idea of being an artist, including

details of her life as an artist-farmer. She wanted to live in the country and raise lots of different animals on her farm. She talked about her "story" being very different from Sara's, and in fact she did not call Sara's writing about her future, a story. Jessica felt that Sara basically listed what she wanted to be, without developing any of the ideas or relating them to each other enabling the reader to receive a complete picture. Jessica made a distinction between Sara's style and her own style and came to the personal conclusion that her piece of writing could be called a story because she developed her theme of being an artist, whereas Sara listed many separate ideas of what she wanted to be, without expanding on any of them.

Jessica: I think of a story like of how it sounds. Like I don't really think Sara's is a story cause it is just - I want to be, I want to be, I want to be, I want to be and all that.

R: How should a story be?

Jessica: A story is writing about a lot of things like include why you want to be it, how you're going to learn and all that stuff ... Like nobody has the idea to make a big huge story except for Laura, like it's not all different ideas but it's all one idea.

Jessica didn't give Sara's kind of writing a name, but she felt strongly that it was not a story because for her, a story involved a thorough development of an idea.

Shortly after this discussion with Jessica, a class discussion evolved on the topic of whether the "future stories" should be termed stories or reports. Many varying opinions were presented describing how a story and a report should be defined. What follows are some of the students' comments which explained what they understood a story or a report to be and what term best described their own piece of writing.

Richard: A story is something like a book over there, like those books on the shelves are full of stories. This is sort of like, not quite a story, like pretty deep ideas but not really a story.

David: In a story you don't list. Like stories have chapters. Also in a story there's lots of pictures and mostly in a report there's not many pictures.

Ryan: Some of us made little stories with lots of detail.

Jessica: Mine was a story cause it was sort of like a book with lots of ideas around it.

Haley: Mine is a story cause I put one sentence and another sentence to explain; sometimes I put another idea around it.

Ryan: I think mine is both, cause it's half report and half story, some was just listing and other parts I put more ideas. I could call it a report-story or a story-report.

Steven: I think mine was a report cause usually stories have a lesson, well, not all stories have a lesson

cause Little Badger and Fire Spirit doesn't have a lesson but it's kind of a fairy tale, but mine's not a story really.

I found this to be a revealing discussion as the children explored the possibilities of what a story and a report could be. Many students demonstrated the ability to reflect on their writing and how they put it together, showing a developing awareness of different kinds of writing. Many expressed that a story has deeper, more developed ideas and a report is more of a listing of ideas with some minor development of the ideas.

Some children expressed their feelings about experiences with the different kinds of writing. Sara shared her pleasure at writing exciting stories:

I like writing stories like, "Once upon a time, I was digging for gold. I didn't find anything but as soon as I was wiping my forehead because it was all sweaty, somebody pulled my hair. I turned around and there was a leprechaun standing behind me and he looked kind of like he was saying, "Oh, oh, somebody found me." And it's kind of exciting, I like the exciting things better than the boring kind - "Once upon a time I was digging for gold and then I found some. The end. Things like that are boring.

As Sara thought about all the different writing that she did in the classroom she found that whether she enjoyed

working on the piece of writing depended on what it was about:

It's just that you're writing about different things and I like different things more than I like other things ... Like with all sorts of nature things I can't write good, like I can't really write good on some things and on other things I can.

Sara expressed self satisfaction and pride with her completed Cat Project:

I think that what I've been writing is very neat. My ideas are neat. Why I think my ideas are neat is because I think I discovered things that nobody else ever knew, like about cats - that they can be camouflaged and things like that.

Ryan described how some days he just enjoyed writing more than other days:

I sometimes love writing, like stories and stuff and other times it's a tiring day and I want to get home and I want to get my new spinner and all that and so sometimes I don't feel like writing. After a long time I won't want to write anymore cause I don't have any other ideas so I have to wait and think for a long time.

Ryan also shared that the topic influenced his interest in the writing. Just like Sara he found certain topics or possibilities sparked his interest. I specifically asked

Ryan how he felt about the different kinds of writing that he did and this was his response:

Good and sometimes not excited. Like when we were going to do animal projects I wasn't excited at first but I got excited later cause I thought, "Oh, what am I going to do for an animal?" I knew I couldn't do lions cause I was doing lions and then Steven started and I didn't want everyone doing what I was doing and then I quit and went on to grizzlies ... So I did grizzlies and they're interesting.

Ryan stated that the important thing for him was to find a topic he was interested in, then excitement and involvement with his writing would follow. His favourite kind of writing though was fiction. He couldn't really explain why but it just seemed that he had lots of ideas and his thoughts seemed to flow easily.

When Brendan thought about different kinds of writing he said, "I can really get off on exciting stories. It's not that hard." He described how he felt about other writing such as an animal project, autobiography, or nature writing:

Sort of fun at the beginning but after a while I run out of ideas and I go, I can't get any more ideas and I've got mostly all of them. I find it kind of boring.

Steven's favourite writing was "a story, like a story story. It's one that you read like Charlie and the Great



Glass Elevator, that kind of story. I like making those kind of stories." Ryan also enjoyed writing stories that "weren't true", "like guys going up into space and getting lost and stuff like that". He felt it might be "because probably you can get more imagination into it so it sounds better."

Haley enjoyed writing "stories about me or my friends, about Indians or French people like I am [because] you can think of your own things about how they live". There were other types of writing she didn't enjoy so much, "like the kind of writing when you have to do like you have to think what we wanted to be when we grow up. It was hard to think what we would do." Haley felt that there were some topics she could relate to more than others and that influenced what she could bring to the writing as well as influencing her enjoyment of the writing.

Jessica spoke of her writing experiences as being sometimes fun and sometimes boring:

R: How do you feel about the different kinds of writing you do.

Jessica: Some are fun and some are boring cause you write too many things, sometimes I write a lot of things.

R: Can you tell me more about that?

Jessica: Like here when I did my past. I did about four pages and it started to get boring cause I was writing

a lot. At first it was fun and I did these first two pages but then it started to get boring.

R: What made it fun at first?

Jessica: Because it was fun to remember when you were a baby. I did these first two pages and then it got boring and then I stopped and the next day when I started it was fun again but then it got boring but when I started again it was fun. When you do too many things, you don't want to do more.

Jessica was saying that her enthusiasm waned when working too long on the same thing, and that she preferred a varied writing diet.

### Summary

As the students talked about the different kinds of writing they were involved in, it was clear they were developing categories in their minds for different kinds of writing as well as the awareness that one uses a different approach when writing a fiction piece as compared to non-fiction, for example. Ryan suggested this when he shared that his piece about grizzlies was "for learning about things" and other writing was "just to have fun". Jessica had developed her own thinking strategy for writing a "story" and understood it as the development of a theme with lots of details, as opposed to a piece of writing that lists ideas, that she doesn't call a story. As the students

struggled to describe what a story was, they showed the ability to reflect on how they put their writing together. These reflections suggested some overall purpose. Several students expressed their enjoyment in writing fiction stories; exciting stories that aren't true. Sara and Ryan stated that their involvement in their writing depended on their interest in the topic. Sometimes Haley found writing hard when she had to write on a certain topic. Jessica found writing fun at first but after working on a topic for a long time it was boring for her.

#### How "I" Learned to Write

The children's recollections of how they learned to write add another dimension to how they described the experience of writing. The following excerpts present what the children shared of what they remembered about learning to write and what aspects of the experience were important.

Ryan recalled how he started writing:

... by sort of writing letters and then when I came to school in grade one, I learned what the letters sounded like and so I learned how to do words and the dictionary helped me and now I know pretty good how to write.

At the end of grade one, Ryan also wrote this about learning to write:

I learnt to right by using the dictionary. I practis reading and righing at home and at school and at my gramas and grandpas house and in the car too. I lern to right because I right allways and I practis righting at home and at shool and at my frens house to. I learnt to right by going to frens for help.

Ryan remembered that thinking about the sounds of letters, using the dictionary, doing lots of writing and going to friends for help were the important aspects of his experience in learning how to write.

When Wendy thought back to when she learned to write she was struck by the fact that it was just last year:

Well, actually it was just last year when I learned. Well, sort of, I don't really know how I really I did it. I guess I just sort of got the letters and my dad kept telling me and then I would start remembering and then once I finished remembering I would know the words.

For Wendy, learning to write seemed to have been a rather automatic process. She didn't really remember what she did besides remembering words.

This was written by Michael about learning to write at the end of grade one:

I learnt to write by friends by dictionarys and by books and by my brane so I can do small and nice writing but sometimes I write big but still nice.

When Jessica looked at some pieces of writing that she had done early in the year (grade one) she was surprised to discover that "there's a big difference from here to here!" (from September/October writing to February writing.) From her present vantage point she described her early writing as being "funny" because when she read it according to the sounds she'd written, "it sounds funny." She had to look at some words several times before she could read them and realized that she "didn't know all the sounds of the letters yet" and pointed out words with incorrect letters. Jessica was surprised at what she didn't know about writing in September/October and confidently stated that "now I know how to do everything!" I asked her how she learned everything and her response was, "I guess I did lots and lots of writing and just learned."

### Summary

As the children recalled learning to write they remembered specific methods or strategies that were effective for them such as going to friends for help, using the dictionary and books, using sounds of letters to spell, using "my brain" and writing a lot. The many "I" statements communicate that the children felt they were involved, and made decisions about how they learned to write.

The Talking, Sharing Aspect of the Children's Experience of Writing

The continuous talk that surrounded the writing was an important aspect of the children's experience of writing. The children sought out classmates that were viewed as experts for their knowledge in certain topics such as hawks or grizzlies or for their expertise in such areas as punctuation or spelling. Sometimes the talk was focussed on a specific concern but more often it took the form of on-going collaboration and exchange of ideas. As they shared their writing with each other they learned more about their own writing and they experienced how their writing was received by others.

The following excerpt from my field notes demonstrates that talking and sharing was a continuous reality as the children wrote. The children were working on animal reports. Jed was collecting information on dogs.

Jed gets up from his table, picks up his paper and walks over to where Brendan is sitting and asks him, "Do you have an idea for me?" Brendan says, "Uh, what colour are they mostly?" Jed replies, "Black or brown or white. Do you know more colours?" Brendan replies, "Well maybe kind of grey, cause my neighbour's poodle is sorta grey, not white, so put that down." Jed finds a chair and sits down beside Brendan and starts to

write. Ryan and Steven are sitting at another table looking at a book on grizzlies discussing the pictures. "Look at those claws. I wonder if that's from a grizzly or a black bear? I'd love to pet that bear. I petted a grizzly - not a live one. It was in a museum. It's fur felt kind of rough and hard." Anita and Jessica are sitting at another small table opposite each other. Jessica speaks out loud as she writes, "Deers mostly live in forests." Anita says, "I don't have that idea yet." Michael and Richard are arranging their space, arranging the books they are sharing between the two of them, trying to stand them up.

As the children organized themselves, moved around to find a place to work, talking and sharing was interspersed with writing. In this section what the children said about talking with others during their writing will be described. Some examples of children talking together during writing, and the relationship this seemed to have to their writing experience will be explored. Sometimes this talking could be described as more spontaneous rather than being clearly directed by a planned purpose. Other talking times were more focussed as a child approached another person with a specific request. Whole class sharing of pieces of writing was another part of the sharing of writing with each other. Many of the examples describe different aspects of the animal project writing. I have used many examples from one piece of writing to give a fuller picture of the ways

children talked and shared, helping the reader understand another aspect of what the experience of writing is like for these children.

#### What Children Say About Talking and Sharing

Wendy shared in detail what it was like working with others on her Whale Project:

It's helpful because you can share ideas. Me and Stacey were both working on whales. She would help me read the ideas. She would read it and write down the idea and I would write down the idea too. And if I got an idea, I remembered the idea of whales eating sea otters. I remembered it from a show. I got the idea that my dad told me, that when a whale makes a sound it will go 100 miles and I gave these to Stacey and now we both have that down so it's sort of like we're both sharing ideas. As well we both wrote down some of ourselves like, I didn't share some of mine and she didn't share some of hers.

Stacey helped Wendy in reading the information books on whales. Both wrote down the ideas they discovered and Wendy shared the ideas she knew about whales with Stacey. As well, they each had some of their own ideas. Wendy indicated that sometimes things didn't work out working with others so she would stop working with that person. Others could also decide to stop working with her. Wendy related



how she had had several partners in the course of her whale project:

Like I started working on it and Sheryl started working with me, then Haley started working with me, then Jean started working with me. All those stopped except for Haley. Haley was working with me and then I found out Stacey was working on whales so I started working with her cause we were getting into a bit of a fight with the whale books cause Haley wouldn't share them so I stopped working with her. I started working with Stacey.

The working-together relationships could apparently get complex and when the "partnership" didn't seem to work Wendy chose a new partner. Wendy's earlier description of working with Stacey showed that she expected cooperation, the benefit of others' skills, and a spirit of give and take.

Jessica also shared that she preferred to share to talk to someone else while she worked on a piece of writing. She could often be found at a table with Anita:

We give each other some ideas and that was easier. I like to work with someone else, better [than working alone]. When Anita's not here. I work with Sara.

First I started playing with Sara and then I asked Sara if she wanted to play with me at recess and then after recess we were working with each other.

Jessica related that other people helped her when she wrote by giving her ideas. "When I took it home for homework, my mom helped me. Well she told me some things to do when I ran out of ideas ... Kids in class help me look at books, help looking in the dictionary and give me ideas of what to write."

For Sara working with two or three others worked out the best:

... because then you just have two people to talk to and they can give you a few ideas that they know on cats ... I think Jean and Jessica helped me. Well, Jean told me quite a few of her ideas on cats. Jessica helped me experience what my writing would be like on my good copy."

R: How did she do that?

Sara: I looked at her writing and said, I've got what my writing is going to look like in the good copy of my cat report and then I just did it.

Sara referred to the fact that the printing style and organization she used in her good copy of her cat report was "borrowed" from Jessica. She liked the look of Lysanne's report and decided to do the same.

Not only did Sara get ideas from others as they worked together but she credited learning the process of how to study from books and do a project from working together with others. Sara explained:

Me, Anita and Jessica were doing a project on snakes ... You know how I really learned how to really study from books and things - from that project, like we were all studying from books and really working hard.

Alone she would not have known what to do, but as they worked together the project just seemed to evolve and this experience gave Sara the confidence to know how to go about her own cat project.

Brendan liked to go over his writing with lots of different people "because they can sort of help me out with words and stuff. I like to go over my work with them one more time." Brendan liked to bring his story to a classmate to read "to make sure most of the words are right" so that others could read what he had written.

When Ryan explained how he thought about talking and writing he showed how it could help or hinder his progress in writing. Talking for him could be "great" or "not really great." When the talking was "great" it meant that:

Ryan: The talking is not too long and I'm learning a lot about what I'm doing and stuff like that. Sometime I have to talk. If I don't talk I don't get any ideas. I can get ideas but I have to get other ideas not just those ideas so I have to.

R: Do you go to certain people then?

Ryan: Mostly Richard, cause I'm doing hawks, right. Well he knows all about hawks and most animals. Usually I go to

Richard cause he hunts, he's seen hawks, and he's seen what they do, so I get lots of ideas from Richard.

Ryan clearly stated the importance of talking with others and the direct relationship between talking and being able to get more ideas. Ryan chose to whom he could go for ideas. In this case he went to Richard, the hawk expert, because he respected his knowledge. He used his fellow classmates as resource people, and added the ideas he got to his writing. Ryan also described talk that "isn't great." This was talk that went on and on, "well like about other things, like talking about hockey games, hockey sticks and soccer and what we are going to do at recess. That's called bad talking and taking me off the task."

Ryan explained how this talking was "fun" and "we like that talking better than the other talking" but "you don't get much work done." Michael also referred to "off topic talk" when he said that "it helps when we talk about our work but lots of times we get out of our work and onto another topic." As Ryan said, "I've got to talk and then do my project. I can't talk for three hours and then start writing ... cause I don't get enough work done."

Haley was the only student, who, when asked to respond to how she felt about talking with others while writing said, "I like thinking in my own head cause I don't always like other people's ideas."

At all stages of their writing children shared and talked with others. The children used each other as resource persons and some students like Ryan referred specifically to going to Richard because he knew a lot about hawks. Sara worked with Anita and Jessica because they were both studying deer. Working together with others gave Sara the added confidence to take charge of her own writing and confirmed that she was on the right track. Ryan specifically stated that "good talk" helped his ideas to flow. Talk played a different role for different writers. Haley preferred working on her own and "thinking in her own head".

#### Working Together Talk

The talk that accompanied the writing could be described as focussed and directed to a specific purpose, or being more spontaneous and not as clearly directed to a specific writing purpose. Students used talk in both of these ways, and examples serve to illustrate how the students were involved in talk and the relationship it had to the writing.

#### Talking about Specifics

In this section the focus is on children's talk that was directed to very specific concerns. The children approached an "expert" to talk about a specific concern they had about their writing. I included four episodes in which

children sought out classmates to talk about a particular aspect of their writing. First Wendy came to Richard so she could read her questions in her questionnaire to him to check the meaning of her questions and to see if they were good ones. Anita and Jessica read their Deer Projects to each other and discussed alternatives to improve on the meaning and the sound of the sentences. Richard came to Michael with a request for help with punctuation. Brendan sought out Steven to check that others would be able to read what he had written. The collaborative talk that was a part of each of these conversations reinforced the observation that the children's talk was an important part of their learning about writing and of their experience of how their writing was received by others.

Wendy came to Richard and asked him to listen to her questions. She had just finished writing her questionnaire to her parents asking for information and details about what she was like as a baby. As he read the questions Richard responded to what she had written.

Question 1. What was the funniest thing that I did when I was little?

Richard: This one's good cause they can tell lots of ideas.

Question 2. What colour were my eyes when I was one?

Richard: Maybe you could add and did they change?

Question 3. Did I have a favourite toy?

Richard: I think this one's good.

Question 4: What kind of food did I eat?

Richard: But they might just say spaghetti, you could add and why. Maybe you could add did it change?

Question 5: Did I cry a lot?

Richard: Most babies cry a lot. Jennifer, my sister, cried a lot. You could add and why.

Question 6: Did I sit on your lap?

Richard: That could be a yes or no answer, could add why.

Question 7: What hospital was I born in and what street was it on?

Richard: This one is good.

Question 8: What made me cry?

Richard: This one's good cause they can say you were scared or whatever and you could add why.

Richard pretended he was the one answering the questions as he went through them, showing a developed sense of audience. Wendy came to him because "Richard writes good", she saw him as an expert and seemed to respect the responses he had made to her questions. Talking to Richard helped her check the meaning of her questions; she found out what they meant to Richard so that she could make changes if she wanted to get other information through her questionnaire.

Anita and Jessica often wrote together, but this time they planned to work together in a special way. They decided they wanted to read the ideas in their animal

project to each other "to see if they sound good." This was their opening conversation:

Jessica: If I say change some and I tell you what might be better then later you can tell me what you like better.

Anita: When you're finished that one you can read it to me and I'll tell you if it's good.

Jessica: I'll do that to you too -- just so our ideas will be good. Even if it's on our good copy it's OK. It can still be my good copy.

Jessica: Why don't you read yours to me?

Anita: Deer have warm blood.

Deers are a mammal.

Deers are nice animals.

Deer are very beautiful.

Deer look like moose but they aren't. They are a different type of deer.

Jessica: I think you're saying too many deer, deer, deer like I was doing sea otters, sea otters. Like deers have warm blood. Deers are beautiful. Deers are nice animals.

Anita: So tell me what to do.

Jessica: OK, read it again.

[Anita reads again]

Anita: Maybe I should put down they are instead.

Jessica: Yah. That's what I was going to say.

[Anita erases and changes]

[Jessica spells t-h-e-y]



Anita: I'll get you a piece of paper so every word I have trouble with you can write down.

Jessica: Like a dictionary.

Anita: Yah. [gets paper, Jessica writes 'they' and Anita puts it in her sentence.] I'll start all over again.

Deers have warm blood.

They are a mammal.

Does that sound good?

Jessica: Yah.

Anita: Deers are nice animals.

Jessica: Maybe we could put and change all deers are nice animals. Are all deers nice animals?

Anita: Yah.

Jessica: OK, you could put that for a change.

Anita: All deer are nice animals. [reads sentence again]

You can see how it sounds all together.

Deers have warm blood. They are a mammal. All deers are nice animals. Deer are very beautiful. Deers look like a moose but they aren't.

Jessica: Maybe you could put ...wait ... deer are very beautiful. They look like moose but they aren't.

Anita: Deer are very beautiful.

Jessica: You can read it all the way through after. We don't have to start at the top.

Anita: What am I supposed to write instead.

Jessica: They.

Anita: They look like moose but they aren't. [erases deer and writes they]

Deer live in lots of places.

Jessica: Keep on going.

Anita: You shouldn't go near deer.

Jessica: But you mean too close to deer right?

Anita: Yah, how do I change that?

Jessica: You shouldn't go very close to deer.

Anita: [erases near and starts to write very close to]  
Very is that e-r-y?

Jessica: Yah, this is just like respelling.

Anita: Is that how you spell deer? OK. Deer are very friendly.

Jessica: Shouldn't we change that? I think now we've got too much deers. All deers are friendly. No, maybe they are friendly.

Anita: Maybe I'll put they. [erases deer and writes they]  
Some deers are very small. Deers like to live in places that no one can get into.

Jessica: That's OK.

Anita: You shouldn't kill deers.

Jessica: Why?

Anita: Cause then there wouldn't be any more deers.

Jessica: OK. Maybe you could put that in couldn't you?

Anita: I don't know. I don't think I want to.

Jessica: We're not wasting our time right? We're making it like a story.

Anita: Not like a story cause stories aren't true.

[They continue working with Anita's piece of writing and then with Jessica's]

Anita and Jessica read their sentences aloud, listened "to the sound of it", gave each other suggestions and made sure it "sounded good". They listened to each other's writing and responded to it as a reading audience, playing with alternatives aloud and deciding what sounded best. I asked Jessica how it helped to talk and work with someone else and she explained that, "it's good when somebody else can listen and see how it sounds and see what we could change a little.... I think why we work together is cause we're friends." The talk served to help them decide where and how changes should be made, explore alternatives, clarify the meaning of the text, and provide support for each other that this really was a worthwhile activity.

Richard finished the good copy of his Future Writing and he came to Michael with a specific request, "I just need punctuation." Richard sat down beside Michael and Michael picked up the "story", and said:

Michael: Is this your bad copy or good?

Richard: Good.

Michael: OK, Well anyways, this is what I did on mine.

Well this doesn't matter but I put when I grow up I might be

a hockey player or an airplane pilot and then I put a period - like right here. [points it out in his writing. Michael starts to read Richard's writing.]  
Were you working sort of fast when you were going through this? OK, remember to put ... not a period ... oh what do you call it uh, uh ... a comma I think.

Richard: I did put a comma there. Should I put one there?

Michael: I guess so cause you kinda take a short breath.

Richard: [reading] when I was about fifty ... I think I'll change this.

Michael: Yah, cause I'd put thirty or thirty-five.

Richard, this doesn't make sense, "when I'm eight years old ...

Richard: Oh trar, it's supposed to be trap.

[reading] But I don't want to be a passenger plane pilot. I would just have an airplane of my own. I think I should put a comma after pilot.

Michael: You should put in a period too.

Richard: I think I'll put in a comma.

Michael: I forgot something about something in punctuation. You can put some of these in "!"

Richard: I did, right here but I don't want to put it anywhere else cause you don't have to say it very strongly.

Michael: I think in some places you should do more periods. Maybe a few commas too like after hockey and before my.

Richard: OK [puts them in].

Richard came to Michael as the expert on punctuation, and in a collaborative manner some decisions were made to add commas, periods, and a spelling change as well as an idea change in one sentence. Richard had some knowledge of punctuation but needed Michael's guidance and confirmation in what to do. It could even be that after working with Michael, Richard came to realize he knew more about punctuation than he had thought earlier.

Brendan came to Steven with the good copy of his story with the specific request "Can you read it to make sure you can read it?" He purposely came to Steven with his good copy rather than his bad copy because this was the copy that would be received by a wider audience than himself, and he wanted to check that the words were right and that parents could read it "when they come into the classroom and see it on the bulletin board." He shared that "I haven't gone to a person for help cause that's just a bad copy", suggesting that he felt comfortable with his invented spelling in his bad copy but saw his good copy as being public. Brendan realized that there are certain conventions to follow, especially in spelling, so that his writing will communicate to others. Steven acted as a representative of that wider audience for Brendan, "to make sure that the whole thing is right."

Steven: [reading] One day there was a big lion. He was a big!!

When you put that exclamation mark sometimes, almost everytime it means it's the end of the sentence so if someone were reading it they would stop [after big].

He was a big!! coward!!

Brendan: OK, I'll get rid of those.

Steven: Keep that one cause it's good. [reads next sentence] him nobody??

Brendan: Oh -- so nobody was afraid of him?

Steven: Put in some more words. Do you know what a coward means?

Brendan: Yes, nobody was afraid of him, he's scared.

Steven: Why is nobody afraid of him?

Brendan: Cause he's a coward -- when he jumps up he wouldn't scare anybody.

Steven: Oh, I get it. [continues to read] So he grows, grows. So instead of the 'o' in there put an 'e'.

Brendan: I'll do that right now.

Steven: That says legs [lages]?

Brendan: That's why I put an e at the end.

Steven: Oh you put an e at the end so the a would say [long] a for legs. We don't need an e at the end instead put it in where the a is.

It was important to Brendan to be able to go to Steven with his writing and after reading it together and "making

it right" it appears that Brendan felt assured that it was ready for everyone to read. Whereas at other stages of his writing he talked to others about ideas to include, at this stage he was concerned that everything was written "right".

In each of these four examples the children came together to work on their writing and learn from each other. The talk that was the important aspect of this collaboration usually focussed on an area of specific concern. The children responded seriously to each other's writing, acting as an audience receiving the writing. They recognized each other as experts in different areas; those of story content and ideas, punctuation and spelling.

#### Just Talking

Probably the most all-pervasive talk was the spontaneous ongoing talk that often stemmed from a common interest in a certain area. The dialogue was not initiated for a specific purpose but often arose spontaneously as several children looked at pictures in a book or shared some information or anecdote, probably related in some way to the topic they were writing about.

This was how Ryan and Steven got in a discussion about who would win in a grizzly-gorilla fight. They were both looking at the photographs in a book about bears and stopped at a picture showing the claws of a bear.

Ryan: Look at his claws! I wonder who would win if a grizzly and a gorilla got into a fight.

Steven: A grizzly and a gorilla - probably a gorilla.

Ryan: Why?

Steven: They're almost the most powerful.

Ryan: I think it would be hard to decide.

Steven: Lots of animals attack bears.

Ryan: I think they would both die.

Steven: A gorilla and a grizzly would never get into a fight cause gorillas are so shy, even of animals.

Ryan: Well, it would be neat to find out. Guess what, you can put another story down [in your gorilla project]. In the Calgary Zoo a while ago ... [they had] a boy gorilla and a girl gorilla and they wanted to have experiments or something and it was trying to attract the boy gorilla. The boy gorilla was trying to ignore her and he lifted her up and threw her and she broke her neck and she died. But I don't think they could lift 1,000 pounds.

Steven: They could lift 1,000 pounds, that's only 10 100's. Some people weigh 300 pounds and people will be really light to gorillas when they pick them up. Like gorillas are so strong they could pick up a 300 pound person.

The discussion which evolved spontaneously from Ryan's response to the photograph of the bear's claw allowed both



Ryan, and especially Steven, to act as expert and relate what they knew about the animal they were studying, to the question Ryan posed. Then in the course of the conversation, Ryan remembered a story about gorillas in the Calgary Zoo that he suggested Steven could include in his project. In another conversation the following day, bears were being discussed and a student mentioned to Ryan, "Know what, grizzlies are getting extinct cause people are shooting lots of bears but they're trying to save grizzlies."

It was probably this comment that led Ryan to share that he wanted to find out more about "how grizzlies are being extinct". Through these kinds of spontaneous discussions, the children shared their knowledge and experiences with each other, sometimes alerting their fellow writers to an aspect of a topic that they had not previously considered.

At other times the talk did not involve discussion but seemed to serve as an oral rehearsal for the story. Some students shared the content they planned to write about in great detail. Michael shared the following true story with James about how his dog was killed, even drawing out a little map to explain the location of the house, street, dog, and truck. Following that, he wrote his story including all the same details that were part of the oral rendition.

My dog was walking along. The truck driver couldn't see very well and just before he put on the brakes, on the windshield wipers he crashed - kaboom! There was a curve and he couldn't see. See here's my house and that's the dog and that's the truck and here's me. (Michael draws a map.) And like when he was starting to run he moved, blood squirted on the truck and the truck was right there and I ran over and there was another house here and it landed over here.

As Michael told the story to James he was still trying to recall all the relevant details and to piece together the exact order of the events. This telling seemed to act as a rehearsal for Michael, helping him prepare for the writing stage.

Every day there were many casual interactions between the children as they checked up on each other's progress, showing interest in what others were doing and planning. Sometimes suggestions were offered or ideas shared. As Ryan said, "Sure I help other people, give them ideas, talk about it and all that stuff." The following interchange was a typical one.

Jonas: Are you working on ladybugs?

Sara: Yah. I'm just starting and I know quite a lot about ladybugs already.

Jonas: Well, ladybugs have spots. Ladybugs can fly.

Sara: I'm going to do chapters on this like I'm going to do, colours ladybugs can be, about the spots and how many legs ladybugs have, like chapter 1, The Colour of Ladybugs. I'm going to do it in Roman numerals.

(Sara writes chapter 1.)

Jessica: (reads) Chapter, you need a "t".

Sara clearly showed ownership as she talked about the content she planned to include and how she would organize it, yet there was ongoing collaboration as others showed interest and offered ideas.

This collaboration was clearly in evidence as the children were writing their questionnaire for their native friend. Children were visiting each other and asking, "Do you have an idea for me?" "Wow, look at all the ideas you have!" "What's your best question?" "What's on your sheet, can you read them to me?" "What questions do you have?" "If you'll give me an idea, I'll give you one." Questions were being interchanged continually and if the recipient liked the question it would be included in their list. Later when the children read their list to the class, many children wrote furiously to add the ideas they liked to their own list.

These examples described the on-going spontaneous interactions between the children as they wrote. These interactions suggested that the students were interested in what others were doing and planning, ready to share ideas

and offer suggestions. Their spontaneous discussions with each other may not have been directed at getting new ideas for their writing, but often in the process of pursuing a common interest with a classmate, the children were alerted to aspects of a topic that they had not previously considered. This gave them new ideas or new directions for their writing. Casual talk with classmates also acted as an oral rehearsal of their ideas for their writing and testing out the impact the story had. A lot of the spontaneous talk demonstrated an on-going collaboration. The children were interested in each other's progress wanting to keep in touch and exchange ideas.

#### Whole Class Sharing

Whole class sharing allowed for another kind of interaction between writer and audience. Children read their writing to their classmates and asked for their comments. These comments suggested that the children took an active role in responding to each other's writing as they made suggestions, asked for clarification and offered encouragement.

These are some of the comments the children made as a response to the stories:

It sounded like it went together. I think you did really good and put in a lot of effort.

What happened in the end? You could put a few years later and put what you might do.

If you want to put in another detail you could say that they use their tails to warn others of danger.

Did you include the moose in the starting otherwise people will think its just about an alligator.

I think this is the best one I have ever seen you write.

Maybe if you're scared to go over in the woods, you can go to the animals in the zoo.

I might be able to give you an idea. I've got some you haven't written down.

Could you put what kind of a dog it is, like is it furry, is it friendly?

You told us that the alligator makes a big hole. Maybe you could tell us how they make the hole.

Sometimes the children asked for comments about specific aspects of their writing. For example, after reading a piece of writing to their classmates the student would ask the class, "Could you tell me if I'm done", or "Should I add more ideas?" These comments suggested that the children were developing expectations about what a good piece of writing should be. They expressed an interest and involvement in each other's writing as they worked together to make the writing better.

The children talked about how they experienced this kind of talk about their writing. Wendy enjoyed presenting her writing to the class and she appreciated the feedback that she got from her classmates. She said,

Well, when I'm on my respelling and I've done a lot of work on it then I like sharing it cause people give me new ideas and give me comments about it that I would need to know and stuff and maybe some questions I need to answer and I feel proud about it when people hear it and when I feel proud about what I did then I like people to hear it.

R: Do you always want to read it?

Wendy: Well when I put in a lot of effort I do, but when I haven't put in a lot of effort I don't.

I talked to Michael after he had read the first copy of his story to his classmates and he remembered specifics about the feedback he had received. He found he could use some suggestions, while others were not applicable because in his story he wanted to remain true to the facts as they had really happened. This is how Michael explained it:

Some of the suggestions weren't very good cause I want this to be true, right. Like some of the suggestions were that maybe the dog would get the bone and run off. But I said this was true so I couldn't switch it to that. And Sara said, "Why don't you change a few sentences, but it's still true and so I did hers.

Michael was well aware of the suggestions given to him and used the ideas that fit in with his own plans for his story. He added that the responses he received made him think of some things that he possibly wouldn't have otherwise.

Sara enjoyed it when others shared their writing because "when other people share I get to experience some other animals and maybe I'll want to choose one for my next project." However she felt hesitant to share her own writing because standing in front of everyone made her nervous, though she suggested that with practice she would get used to it.

R: You shared your story today. How did you find that?

Sara: I found that it was kind of hard cause when you're doing it in front of lots of people it feels like you're famous and it's the first time you've ever been on stage and I felt really nervous because I only practised it two times. I did it fine and now I know something that's really good - always try, try, try.

When Ryan talked about sharing with the class he also related that he enjoyed sharing when he knew he had written a good story.

R : Do you like sharing with the class?

Ryan: Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. When I've done really well and I've got a lot of spelling good and when my story makes good sense and stuff.

R: What's it like to share?

Ryan: Well, they give you good comments and bad comments. Usually they're good. Most of the time they're good. Like they'll say "Could you read this a lot faster and stuff like that. That's when I don't like the comments.

Ryan appreciated the positive feedback he got but when he knew his story didn't make "good sense" he preferred not to share it, suggesting that he didn't like receiving the "bad comments".

Wendy and Michael talked about appreciating the new ideas they received from classmates when they shared their writing. Ryan felt somewhat more vulnerable and interpreted what may have been a suggestion as a "bad comment". Sara valued the ideas she got from hearing the writing of others.

The interest and involvement in the writing of classmates was carried over in to the whole class sharing time. The children took an active role in responding to each other's writing and valued "experiencing" the writing of others.

#### Summary of the Data

As the children shared their thoughts and explained how they went about their writing they revealed what was important to them in their writing. Some of the important aspects of the children's experience of writing will be highlighted.



The children showed an awareness of the way they wrote and the strategies that worked for them as well as the realization that others do not go about their writing task in the same way. Ryan explained that he found that starting a piece of writing was hard but once he got going he got more and more ideas. He was aware of a rhythm and pattern to his writing based on his own experience of writing. Comments from Sara and Michael showed confidence in their own writing styles. Michael explained that "of course not everybody doesn't do it the same" because each writer approaches the task in their own way. For example in his animal project, he explained that he got some ideas "from the person who wrote the book" and Joe, a classmate "doesn't do that". Sara explained that even though people may write in similar ways yet "I don't write exactly like anybody else". The student's writing knowledge came from their own experience of writing, as they made sense of each new writing task and figured out what worked best for them. They approached each new writing task based on their previous writing experience. The experience reinforced certain strategies or helped them make new discoveries about themselves as writers. Sara's statement reflected her experiences as a writer. She compared the effort and hard work involved in being a good sport in soccer or baseball to the effort a good writer puts into a piece of writing. It's not fun to be "out" but the game goes on. In writing, a

good writer can't take shortcuts but needs to add ideas or rework existing ideas. She alluded to the fact that this may be tedious but the result was worth it. Sara was only a grade one student but she had already developed her own personal schemata for what writing is all about, a framework she could draw on and enlarge as she approached each new writing task. The students could only speak this way about their writing when they were able to make many of the decisions involved in the actual writing tasks themselves.

The children made many on-going decisions about what to write and how to write it. As they described what they were doing while they wrote it was clear there was on-going change in their writing. Each child made his/her own decisions on what ideas would be deleted, added or changed. The students were developing their own standards as to what makes a good piece of writing and their changes were directed to making their writing "better". They were developing a sense of seeing their piece of writing as a whole and being able to reflect on what they intended to communicate through the writing. As the children related what they had done in moving from copy to copy they had a sense of the process they went through and some of the specific decisions they made. As Sara compared her "bad copy" and her "good copy" she stated, "I decided that I might do six or seven ideas anyway and I did seven more and

I was done on my good copy by six pages and that was something that was really good and it worked out fine."

She also decided to expand some of her ideas because "I noticed I wasn't doing it as good cause other people were putting down reasons and lots of detail." She also made personal decisions about the ideas she chose to put in her "good copy" of her cat project. When I asked her how she decided what ideas to put in her good copy she gave this answer. "Well the best ones I have. I'll read the first one cause it's probably the most amazing - 'Cats can be colourful or very dull.' That one is really quite amazing." Sara expressed confidence in choosing her best ideas and used her own personal experiences to judge the value of the idea.

Ryan wanted to change some of his information in his grizzly project because he found out it wasn't accurate. He decided to add a story he had heard about grizzlies from Richard because he thought it would be an interesting addition.

For Sara, Steve, Richard, Jessica, Ryan and Brendan moving from a "bad copy" to a "good copy" was basic to the way they went about their writing. They talked about the "bad copies" as working copies. The working copy was intended for their own use, giving them the freedom to get down their initial ideas. In their "good copy" their concern was to make their writing "better", to meet the

needs of a wider audience. For some of the students this meant attending to different aspects of what makes a piece of writing "good", according to their own developing criteria. For Brendan it meant making sure others could read his writing. For Jessica it meant adding some ideas, circling words to fix spelling and printing clearly and legibly. For Ryan it meant adding a chapter title, changing a few ideas, and printing legibly.

How the children thought about spelling and the role it took was another dimension of their experience of writing. For some children, spelling was more of a concern than for others. While writing, Brendan was deeply involved in figuring out what letters to write to stand for the words he wanted to write. Brendan's concern was that he would be able to come back to his writing the following day and be able to read it. Others didn't worry about spelling until they were getting ready for their final copy. Ryan shared that he learned to think "what the heck about spelling, and I started to write faster". At the end of grade one, he realized that "I learned to write by knowing you don't have to spell the words right." Richard explained his strategy, "Usually I whip down some words and then go back and go over them and see which ones are right and the ones that I think are wrong I circle." As the children related their thoughts on spelling their awareness of the place of spelling was

clear as well as their conscious development of a strategy to cope with the conventions of spelling.

Another aspect of writing that the children brought into their discussions with each other was that of printing. Several children said that how they wrote didn't matter on their "bad copy" but on their good copy they wanted it to be "neat". As the children talked about printing they described different qualities that are associated with neatness. These qualities included: the size of the print, letters in the lines, fancy letters in the title, and printing in capitals. The students also made references to the printing of others, sometimes modelling their printing on that of classmates.

How the children talked about the different kinds of writing they were involved in, was another dimension of the children's experience of writing. The students' comments suggested that they were developing categories in their minds for different kinds of writing. This understanding in turn influenced the way they approached a specific writing task. Ryan articulated the way he thought about "fiction stories" and "not fiction stories". He defined these two types of stories in terms of his experience of writing both types. Fiction stories "can be about anything." He explained that he wanted to make them "exciting, funny, sad and happy, and other things like that." When he was "not doing a fiction story" then he wrote facts he knew and those

he found in books. He referred to his grizzly bear project and used specific examples of the kind of facts to include. Accuracy was important for Ryan and if "you write down they kill everything they see that's not as much fact as you should have. They kill a lot but not everything they see." Ryan was building a schema for the different kinds of writing he had experienced and he was able to bring this understanding to future writing experiences and so further refine his framework. During a class discussion on whether the future stories that the students were working on should be called "stories" or "reports", several students put forward their ideas about how to explain what a story was and what a report was. Many expressed that a story has deeper, more developed ideas while a report can be more a listing of ideas.

In a story you don't list, like stories have chapters.  
. . . This [referring to his Future Story] is sort of like, not quite a story, like pretty deep ideas but not really a story.

Another student added:

Mine was a story cause it was sort of like a book with lots of ideas around it.

The talking and sharing with others was another important dimension of the children's writing experience. At all stages of their writing children approached others for help with ideas as well as for support in locating new

information or for new ideas related to organization or printing style. The talk also helped students to rehearse their ideas, make new connections through conversations with others and helped them to develop their thinking on a topic. Ryan explained this when he stated, "Sometimes I have to talk. If I don't talk I don't get any ideas. I can get ideas but I have to get other ideas not just those "ideas, so I have to". However, Haley preferred to work alone in putting down her ideas.

Working together with others gave Sara the added confidence to take charge of her own project writing and enabled her to know how to go about her own cat project. Sara originally worked together with Anita and Jessica on a snake project and she shared what she learned. "You know how I really learned how to really study from books and things - from that project, like we were all studying from books and working hard."

The collaborative nature of the interaction allowed the children to learn from each other and explore a topic together so that all the participants benefitted. Anita and Jessica worked together, each reading aloud the text for their Deer Project. They listened to each other's writing and responded to it, playing with alternative sentence beginnings outloud and deciding what words sounded best. Jessica explained that "it's good when somebody else can

listen and see how it sounds and see what we can change a little."

As a community of learners, special skills were acknowledged and accessed by others. Richard came to Michael for help with punctuation. Ryan engaged Steven in conversation, about the grizzly and as Steven brought his expertise about the gorilla into the conversation he reminded Ryan of a story about a gorilla in the Calgary Zoo that he suggested Steven include in his project. Brendan sought out Steven to respond to his writing as a reader and to check that it all made sense. The children showed interest and involvement in each others' writing and through their continuous interaction kept up with each other's progress.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

If you will keep trying to explain yourselves I will keep showing you how to think about the problems you need to solve (Paley, 1981, p.223).

#### Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe children's experience of writing in a grade one/two classroom. I addressed the question of what it was like to be a writer by observing the children's writing behaviour, listening to the way they talked during their writing and to the way they reflected on what they had written. I sought to understand and describe the aspects of writing that took on significance for the children as they wrote.

The study was carried out in a grade one/two classroom over a five month observation period. Adult visitors or "program support people" were often present in the classroom to "observe, follow, and intuitively predict class learning standards remembering that the child's needs come first." Therefore my presence as researcher was not experienced as an intrusion by the teacher but interpreted as another person the children could talk to about their writing.

Several types of data were collected; field notes were written, student/student discussions were tape recorded, informal and formal discussions with children were tape

recorded, and children's writing was photocopied. The analysis of the data involved searching for themes and patterns and attempting to understand the parts, their relationship to each other, and to the whole being studied.

### Major Conclusions of the Study

#### Children Experiencing the Classroom as a Community of Learners

An important conclusion of the study is that the children experienced the classroom as a community of learners. As a community of learners, special skills could be acknowledged and accessed by the others. Ryan respected Michael's informational and experiential knowledge about bears. Jessica went to Anita when she wanted someone to help her make her Deer Project more interesting. With one of his stories Brendan went to Steven since Brendan trusted that this feedback would tell him if his writing made sense and whether it was ready for a wider audience. Not only were certain students taking on the role of experts in the eyes of others, but students relied on each other to be supportive.

The children's constant interaction with others at all stages of their writing was a dominant feature of this classroom. The students were responsive to each other and supportive of each other's writing. They took each other's

writing seriously and kept up with each other's progress. Students constantly came to each other to ask for ideas. Students also worked closely with a chosen partner throughout their writing. Sara shared how working with Anita and Jessica helped her to learn how to approach the task of project writing. Jessica's partnership with Anita gave both of them a second opinion as they went through their writing, changing the beginning of their sentences and collaboratively deciding which words sounded best. As Jessica said, "It's good when somebody else can listen and see how it sounds and see what we can change a little." Ryan stated that he had to talk with others to get ideas and develop his thinking on a topic. The children used each other's writing as models for their own and "borrowed" organizational methods and printing styles as well as ideas.

Calkins (1986) speaks to the importance of the classroom as a learning community and how "everyone in it must be both teacher and student" (p.10). In the classroom it's not the teacher who knows and the children who learn, but all are learning from each other. Perl and Wilson (1986) also speak of the importance of "classrooms as communities where each individual contributes to the act of bringing forth or creating, not only writing but also the culture of the classroom itself" (p.259). To establish this community sense students must experience their role as capable learners, each with their own unique stories to

tell. When "teachers see in their students competent, capable human beings, they seem to act in ways that naturally enable their students to explore, to grow, to stretch themselves beyond their own limitations" (p.258).

### Talking Like an "Insider"

This study reinforced the importance of the children experiencing a sense of belonging, as an "insider" in a group of writers. The children communicated a sense of self-confidence in their ability as writers. Ringing through the statements made by the children was the conviction that they could make important decisions about their writing. Smith (1982) describes the complex orchestration of ideas, meaning, spelling, printing, and punctuation involved in writing and the need for children to deal with all of these areas, often simultaneously, to produce the written text. Yet as I listened to these children they had worked out their own individual ways of dealing with the complexities of writing.

Brendan's strategies come to mind. Brendan explained that he had a hard time reading what he had written the day before. He depended on the memory of his ideas as a support in his attempts to read over what he had written. Often he would start a new copy because he wanted "to make it better" which meant he wanted to be able to come back to

it later and be able to read it. Brendan had developed his own strategy to cope with the conventions of transcribing.

A lot of decision making was involved in the process of moving from the "bad copy" to "good copy". As the children described what they were doing, the common factor was the ongoing change in a piece of writing. Each child made decisions on what would be deleted, expanded, or re-organized. Sara showed she had a sense of the process she went through and an awareness of some of the decisions she made. Sara described her process as "just remembering my best ideas and putting them in my good copy". She confidently explained that in her good copy she kept "the best [ideas] I have [like] cats can be colourful or very dull. That one is really quite amazing." As the children approached the writing of their "good copy" they attended to different aspects of their writing depending on their own developing criteria of what made the writing "good". For some it meant printing legibly, for others changing or re-organizing ideas.

The students were becoming aware of how they went about the task of writing and that each person did not necessarily go about a writing task in the same way. Sara expressed this well when she said, "Nobody writes quite like me, maybe almost like me, but not exactly". When Jessica described her autobiography as a story, she was making a distinction between the way she wrote and the way a fellow classmate,

Sara, had written hers. According to Jessica, hers was a story and Sara's was not because Sara's writing consisted of separate unelaborated ideas, while in her writing, she had expanded her ideas and included lots of detail.

Many of the children talked confidently about the different aspects of their writing and the strategies and methods that worked best for them. They saw themselves as writers in their own right. Calkins (1986) and Smith (1984b) discuss the implications of a child "viewing himself as an insider, as a member of the circle of authors" (Calkins, 1986, p.221). Smith (1984b) argues that "far more than formal instruction is involved when children learn how to read and to write" (p.1). Just as children learn to speak by being accepted into the club of spoken language users so children must be allowed to be full members of the literacy club.

[As members of the literacy club] children see what written language is for, all its manifold utilities for writers and readers. They are admitted as junior members; no-one expects them to be very skilled themselves but they are helped to write and to read whenever they have a purpose or interest of their own in such activities. Children get involved in an ever-broadening range of literate activities as they make sense to them and the learning follows. . . . Children can see others engaging profitably in literacy activities who are the kind of people the children see themselves as being (Smith, 1984b, p.8).

As members of the literacy club, Smith (1984b) describes the children's learning as "meaningful, useful, incidental, collaborative, vicarious, and free of risk"

(p.5). Learning to write is more than learning what writing is about. Children learn to write by perceiving themselves as writers because of their involvement with written communication (Smith, 1982, p.199). Calkins (1986) describes how, when the child is an insider, his literary experiences "take on extra significance" (p.220). Students ask questions, make their own connections, and learn from the strategies and habits of others.

### Making Sense of It All

Another important and related conclusion is that the students realized that they have resources to bring to their writing, such as their own experiences and knowledge. The ongoing talk with partners or with the whole class often served to spark ideas and enabled the students to "get into" the topic and make personal connections.

In listening to the children, I became aware of the importance of feeling connected to the topic they were writing about. Even with prescribed writing topics students, through talk and discussion, were able to make some personal connection to an aspect of the topic. Sara said that she chose to do her project on cats because her grandma had several cats and she was able to study them and so she had information to start with. Jessica was interested in deer because she always went camping in the mountains and she had seen lots of deer. During her writing

and discussion with Anita whose project was also about deer, Jessica used her experiential knowledge of deer to make decisions about what to write and what was "true". James's story about what he wanted to be, included that he wanted to be a scientist and cure sickness. He explained that he wanted to find a cure for Krohn's, a sickness his mom suffered from. Ryan shared his interest in writing science fiction because he "liked it".

The children were also developing their own writing knowledge as they made sense of each new writing task and decided what worked best for them. In showing how they experienced the different aspects of writing it was clear that the children were developing their own framework for what makes a story better, how to do different kinds of writing, how to deal with spelling, and what writing is for. As they made sense of further writing experiences they continued to enlarge or revise this developing framework.

Many researchers (Dyson, 1982; Smith, F., 1983; Donaldson, 1978; Harste et al, 1984) suggest that children's relationship to the world is one of making sense out of events and experiences. Children are seen as active participators. Donaldson (1978) asserts that all of us, children included, "do not just sit and wait for the world to impinge on us. We try actively to interpret it, to make sense of it. We grapple with it, we construe it intellectually, we represent it to ourselves." (p.68)



Barnes (1975) discusses the importance of talk in receiving the meanings of others and in discovering the meaning of an experience for ourselves by going over it and making new connections.

Language is a means by which we learn to take part in the life of the communities we belong to and a means by which we can actively re-interpret the world around us, including that life itself. Through language we both receive a meaningful world from others and at the same time make meanings by re-interpreting that world to our own ends (p.101).

The students' constant interaction with others helped them to get ideas, expanded their own thinking, reminded them of their own related experience and knowledge, enabled them to think out loud, and encouraged confidence in their own ideas through confirmation from others.

Throughout the study I also became aware of an added dimension of my ongoing interaction with the students while they were writing. Not only did it serve to help me understand what the children were doing and thinking about during their writing, but it also made the children more aware of their own writing processes. Sometimes in anticipation of a conference with me, they would start to be more conscious of how they went about their writing, where their ideas had come from, or why they decided to make changes. Donaldson (1978) discusses the importance of this relationship between self-awareness and control over one's thinking and refers to Vygotsky.

Control of a function is the counterpart of one's consciousness of it. If a child is going to control and direct his own thinking in the kind of way we have been considering, he must become conscious of it (p.94).

In order to more fully understand how this self-awareness grows she refers to Piaget's findings.

Awareness typically develops when something gives us pause and when instead of just acting, we stop to consider instead the possibilities of acting which are before us . The claim is that we heighten our awareness of what is actual by considering what is possible. We are conscious of what we do to the extent that we are conscious also of what we do not do, of what we might have done. The notion of choice is thus central." (p.94)

My interaction with the children was a means of gaining information, yet it also served as a catalyst to help the children become more conscious of their choices and organization. My specific questions such as where certain ideas came from, what they talked about with their writing partner, why they were making a good copy, or why they made a certain change, may have made them more conscious of how they went about writing and what worked for them. They may also have become aware of choices they made and their own intentions and strategies.

It appears that when children are responded to as experts in their own writing they perceive their thinking as being taken seriously. As researcher, my relationship to the students was one of an equal who was there to find out what they were thinking. This reinforced for me the conviction that when children are responded to as experts in

their own writing and their thinking is taken seriously they become amazingly articulate about their strategies and their thinking processes.

It appears therefore that children respond to a sense of membership in a community of learners by using interaction with others to develop their writing. They view themselves as capable learners and express self-confidence in their ability as writers. Their self-confidence and continuous interaction with others was accompanied by a degree of self-awareness. The students were developing their own strategies and writing knowledge as they made sense of each new writing task and decided what they wanted to achieve and what worked best for them.

#### Directions for Further Research

The work of Calkins (1983) and Dyson (1984) has stressed the importance of pulling up a chair alongside students to listen to their thinking aloud and to their on-going decision making, as they went about a piece of writing. This study reinforces the importance of listening to the voices of children as they talk about their experience of writing. A longitudinal study interviewing children at different grade levels would be valuable. Older students could be involved by keeping response-to-writing journals as part of the data collection. The question could

be asked, "Are there certain aspects of the writing experience that stand out at different stages, for the child-writer?"

The work of Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1980) and DeFord (1981) has suggested that the teacher's approach and other contextual factors are directly related to the child's literacy experience. A study describing the child's experience of writing in different classrooms at the same grade level could seek to further examine and describe that relationship.

It has been documented by Heath (1983) that the kind of literacy background children bring to school affects their success at school. Heath (1983) has documented how important it is for teachers to understand the children's home experience, to allow the children to build on a "foundation of familiar knowledge" and bridge the gap between the home and school experience (Heath, 1983, p.340). A study describing the experience of children with writing both at home and at school would be valuable in understanding the children's experience of written communication at home and at school and the nature of the relationship between the two.

#### Final Word: Research Informing Practice

The Writing Process Movement, a term used by Graves (1983) to describe the renewed emphasis on writing in the

classroom, has certainly helped many teachers to make some important changes in their classrooms (p.185). As teachers encourage children to write about the world they know, and to talk to each other about their writing, many become excited about the kind of learning they see the children involved in.

There is a new emphasis in these classrooms on taking cues from the children rather than letting the curriculum or prescribed programs make all the decisions. When certain activities in the writing process approach, such as free writing, conferencing, "author's chair", and publishing, become sanctified and used indiscriminately, we have what Graves (1984) has called "the enemy of orthodoxy" (p.184). Dillon (1985) has called it "hardening of the ideologies" (p.586). Several researchers remind us that listening to children's responses and maintaining continuous interactions with young writers must always remain on the forefront of the teacher's agenda (Graves, 1983; Dyson, 1986; Calkins, 1986). Educators cannot assume that they know what a child has learned or that all children respond to an activity in the same way.

Every pupil in the class will go away with a version of the lesson which in some respects is different from all of the other pupils' versions, because what each pupil brings to the lesson will be different. Thus we shall not be able to understand what they learn without considering that they make sense of new knowledge by projecting it upon what they know already (Barnes, 1975, p.21-22).

Barnes reminds us that as teachers we must also be researchers in the broad sense of the term. We must be ready to listen and learn from the children and try to understand how they are tackling the task and how they perceive it.

Dyson (1986) reiterates how important it is for teachers to know children and to listen to their voices. She has borrowed a term from Stern to describe the teacher-child relationship as "a dynamic, interactive dance; teachers and children interact to create activities - to create curricula - as they work to reach their respective goals" (p.135-136). Children respond in different ways to different activities at different points in their growth. Children differ in their style of working and even differ in something as basic as their view of what written language is for. Whenever the children are involved in a writing experience, teachers must be aware of what that experience means to the child, in order for them to be teacher-learners as well as observers.

. . . critically observing the responses of our students to our teaching efforts, observing the diversity of the child's responses within any one instructional experience will prevent ossification, for children always resist too rigid notions of 'what children do' or 'how children learn' (Dyson p.142).

This study, as it describes specific children's responses to their writing, reminds us that children have important stories to tell. Dyson too reminds us that the

"essence of teaching" is "the individuality of the human learner and the appreciation of the intense human encounter that is teaching. And it is those characteristics that ... truly define the dynamic art and craft of professional teachers, who dance with their children" (Dyson 1986, p.144).

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APPENDIX 1:

Future Writing

by Sara

Bad Copy

I want to  
 rock karate  
 I want to  
 The heart of the  
 I want to be a  
 karateist.  
 I want to be a clown  
 when I'm fifteen.  
 I want to stay with  
 my brother forever.  
 I want to be  
 a knight like my aunt  
 sally.  
 I want to be a star!  
 I want to be a teacher when I'm  
 thirty.  
 I want  
 when I'm fourteen.  
 I don't want  
 to get  
 married.  
 I want to be a  
 gymnast when  
 I'm nine.  
 I want to be a  
 story teller at  
 the end of  
 each.

p.1

p.2

The FUTURE  
 I want to  
 chase my brother  
 around the  
 mouse when  
 I'm  
 I want to  
 skate when I'm  
 thirteen.  
 I want to  
 grow  
 up with  
 my  
 I want to  
 grow  
 on  
 a farm.  
 I want to  
 be  
 a  
 rock'n roll star because  
 I'm good at  
 singing.  
 I want to  
 be  
 an artist.  
 I want to  
 be a  
 baller

177



ps I want to be twont to  
a bee live in affroco  
keep becus because  
I can it's very hot.

eat the

I want

to find

four four

leaf clover

becus it's

Good luck.

I want

to

find a

white purple

orange lavender

and gray

unicorn

becus I

like them.

I want to be a bee

keep because

I like the

colors.

I want to

find four four

leaf clover

because

it's better

luck than

one.

I want

to find

one because

they're pretty.



I I I E TUTUCHR  
I MY WONT TO CHAYS  
brothr arow

Good Copy

p.1

The hous!  
I WONT TO be  
a figr SKATR  
When I am Thirteen  
because I like  
SKATING!

I WONT TO Grow UP  
on a farm because  
I like The animullis  
and I like riding The  
hors's.  
I WONT TO be a rockn  
I'll stal because  
I like singing!

I WONT TO balax  
dancer because I TOOK  
legns!

I WONT TO live in  
afroca because IT'S HOT  
and IT'S NIGHS!

p.2

2  
I WONT TO be an  
artist and on hang  
my art on the clock  
and evry werr!

I WONT TO be a  
dickroljist because  
I like diskuvring  
things!

I WONT TO be a  
farmr because I like  
it.

I WONT TO be a  
Gymnist because I  
TACK lens and ITS FUN.

I WONT TO be a  
bee keeper because  
I can eat the honny

and I like The  
clovrs!

I WONT TO find fuor  
fuor leaf clovrs  
because ITS Good WCK ar  
fuor is betr The n me.

This page started out as a good copy but was started again below.

I won't be a zoo keeper because I like the animals and the colours that are in them. I won't be a babysitter because I like kids and I like taking care of them.

I won't be a doll maker because I like making things and I like making people happy. I won't be a horse rider because I like horses and I like riding. I like the colours and how they look and how they move! I won't be a bird watcher I'll watch bluebirds and sparrows and other birds!

p. 3

I won't be a babysitter because I like kids and I like taking care of them. I won't be a zoo keeper because I like animals and their colours and the way they act and the way they look and the way they walk. I like how the monkeys jump and how they swing upside-down! I won't be a ball dancer because I took lessons and I like it.

p.4 and I like dancing and I  
 I like bAia and I like  
 how grassh. they are they  
 seemide me of birds  
 and I like how they  
 look. I won't to be  
 a othr because I  
 like the way they  
 have to wright  
 and how they  
 wright and wut they  
 wright I want to  
 wright a but hvors's  
 and I want to set up  
 a room for my wrighting

p.5 I'm my room  
 Ther will be no windows  
 It will be it'd be a  
 cand I will have  
 a desk in my room and  
 a cher and cushns.  
 I won't to be a life  
 Gard because I like  
 helping pipol and I  
 like watching pipol and  
 I like doing things for  
 pipol!  
 I want to be a  
 Gardnr because I like  
 plantng and I like growing  
 things and I like watching  
 things grow

p. 6

I WONT To be  
Some one who macks  
POTS because I'M PRITTY  
Good with clay and  
I like POTS and  
I like how the  
clay feels!

( ( U V W )

APPENDIX 2:

Cats  
by Sara  
Bad Copy

p.1

for food cats  
 will chase mice birds  
 and be singing out  
 floods. counts (unit)  
 come in will counts and  
 signs. cars nests  
 common enemies is  
 does. piece cats (unit)  
 wide and the  
 period. fed them  
 so the cats  
 stand with the people.  
 if cats get  
 lost out of  
 town then they have to hunt.

~~EST~~

p.2

1. CATS can be  
 very nice.  
 2. CATS can  
 climb trees very  
 easily. CATS will  
 hiss and spit  
 when they see  
 dogs. CATS like  
 to hunt at night.  
 A CAT will just  
 scratch on your thigh  
 ex- your chin  
 under trees.  
 CATS can  
 pull their claws  
 in their paws.

p.3

(hypo) SIMYSCAT'S have eyes

us blue us blue purple

cut's eyes some times seem like

too soon cut's like can be very long

ex - like a give unhook

some cut's have short tails ex -

rust cut

some cut's are very color full

ex - some cut's have some

in all colours cut's sometimes

eat things like well meat

and if they might make

them eat your butter

if you put a

cut in a very dark place  
Plus. it can see perfectly

## CATS

p.4

cats are machines

Cats will climb up

trees and be afraid

to come down.

CATS I think can

communicate

CATS can jump off

very high things.

some cats are cold.

TOM CATS they fight

alot. cats will

185

go in your car like

to get things like

fish. cats

P.1

~~CATS CAN BE~~

VERY COLORFUL OR  
VERY DULL.

Good Copy

2. CATS WILL EAT THINGS  
LIKE FISH.

3. SOME CATS HAVE  
VERY BLUE EYES  
EX - SIMIS CATS.

4. SOME CATS ARE  
KIND OF SILVER.

5. TO WASH  
CATS WICK THEIR PAWS  
THEN WRUB THEM WITH  
OVER THEM SEINS.

6. CATS WILL  
CLIMB ON YOUR CAR.

P.2

7. FOR FOOD CATS  
WILL CHASE MICE  
BIRDS AND THINGS  
LIKE THAT.

8. CATS COME IN ALL  
SIZES AND COLORS!

9. CATS WILL GO  
IN YOUR GARBAGE  
TO GET THINGS  
LIKE FISH.

10. IF YOU PUT  
A CAT IN A  
VERY DARK PLACE  
IT CAN SEE

11. CATS DO NOT LIKE WATER

P. 3

1. CATS CAN BE VERY  
 VERRY QUIET.  
 2. CATS WILL GO UP  
 AND CLIMB TREES.  
 3. CATS HATE  
 SOME TIMES I SEE  
 BOWS IN FRONT OF THE NECK.  
 4. CATS ARE THE DANGER  
 OF THE HOUSE.  
 5. CATS EAT EYES  
 SEEM LIKE THEY GLOW.  
 6. SOME CATS ARE  
 VERY COLORFUL.  
 7. CATS SOME TIMES  
 EAT THINGS LIKE  
 WELLS MEAT AND  
 THE MACKEREL.  
 8. CATS EAT  
 MACKERS THE EAT

P. 4

YOUR BUTTER.  
 1. SOME CATS WILL  
 CLIMB UP  
 TREES AND  
 BE AFRAID  
 TO COME  
 DOWN.  
 2. CATS CAN  
 JUMP OFF  
 VERY HIGH  
 THINGS.  
 3. LONG TIME  
 AGO CATS  
 WERE WILD  
 AND  
 WERE  
 THEM SO THE  
 CATS STAY WITH THE



APPENDIX 3:

Deer Project

by Jessica

Bad Copy

- P.1
1. (DEERS) ARE A (MAMMIL) ✓
  2. DEERS ARE WARM BLOOD ✓
  3. SOME DEERS LIVE IN JASP
  4. DEERS ARE LIKE MOSS. ✓
  5. if you live near a (FOREST) THE CHANS IS (YOU) MAY SEE A DEER
  6. (DEERS) EAT LEAVES - AND GRASS AND MEAT THEY FIND LAYING ON (THE) GROUND
  7. (DEERS) DONT LAY EGGS
  8. DEERS ARE A CARNIVOR AND HOBIVOR
  9. DEERS (HAVE) FEAR TO CEP THEM WARM.

- P.2
10. SOME DEERS ARE BIG
  11. DEERS LIVE IN THE FOREST.
  12. DEERS HAVE LIGS TO MOVE
  13. DEERS ARE AWAK AT DAY AND ASLEEP AT NIGHT.
  14. DEERS MOM AND DAD STAY WITH THIA BABY INTOL IT IS BIG
  15. A GOMIND DEER IS THE NORTH AMIRIKIN MULE DEER

- P3
16. DEERS LIKE TO WALK IN THE FOREST
  17. SOME DEERS ARE ON THEIR OWN AND SOME ARENT ON THEIR OWN
  18. THEIR ARE A COUPLE KINDS OF DEERS
  19. BABY DEERS HAVE WHITE SPOTS ON THEM
  20. DADY DEERS HAVE HOARNS.
  21. A AND DEER LIVE WIRE IT IS
  22. DEERS HAVE FOUR LEGS

## CANVA

- P4
23. DEERS LIVE MOST ALL AROUND THE WORLD
  24. DEERS DRINK FROM THE LAKE
  25. WITHIN DEER PUT THEIR TAILS UP IT TALS THE OTHER DEERS THAT THEIR DANGER AROUND THEM
  26. DEERS USE THEIR BACK LEGS TO FIG
  27. DEERS STAY U LAYT
  28. DADY DEERS DRINK FROM THEIR MOMS BARS

# DEERS



P. 5

1. DEER'S ARE A MAMMIL
2. DEER'S ARE WARM BLADID
3. DEER'S ARE LIKE MOSS
4. SOME DEER'S LIVE IN  
JASPR
5. IF YOU LIVE NEAR A FOREST  
THE CHANS IS YOU MAY
6. DEER'S EAT LEVS AND GRASS  
AND MEAT THEY FLYND  
LAYING ON THE CRAWND
7. DEER'S DON'T LAY EGGS
8. DEER'S ARE A HIBIVOR
9. DEER'S HAVE FEET TO  
KEEP THEM WARM

PAG 1

# DEERS



P. 6

10. SOME DEER'S ARE BIG
11. DEER'S LIVE IN THE FOREST
12. DEER'S HAVE LEGS TO MOVE
13. DEER'S ARE AWAK AT  
DAY AND ASLEEP AT NIGHT
14. SOME DEER'S ARE ON  
THEIR OWN AND SOME ARNT  
ON THEIR OWN
15. DEER'S DRINK FROM LAKS
16. WHEN DEER'S PUT THEIR  
TAILS UP IT TALS THE  
OTHER DEER'S THAT THEIR  
IS DANGR AROUND THEM

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Good Copy

# DEER'S

- P. 1
1. DEER'S ARE MAMMALS
  2. DEER'S HAVE WARM BLOOD
  3. DEER'S ARE LIKE MOSS
  4. SOME DEER'S LIVE IN THE  
JASPER
  5. IF YOU LIVE NEAR A FOREST  
THE CHANCE IS YOU MAY
  6. DEER'S EAT LEAVES AND GRASS  
AND MEAT THEY FIND  
LAYING ON THE GROUND
  7. DEER'S DON'T LAY EGGS
  8. DEER'S ARE A HIBERNATOR
  9. DEER'S HAVE FEET TO  
KEEP THEM WARM

PAG 1

# DEERS

- P. 2
10. SOME DEER'S ARE BIG
  11. DEER'S LIVE IN THE FOREST
  12. DEER'S HAVE LEGS TO RUN
  13. DEER'S ARE AWAKE AT  
DAY AND ASLEEP AT NIGHT
  14. SOME DEER'S ARE ON  
THEIR OWN, AND SOME ARE  
ON THEIR OWN
  15. DEER'S DRINK FROM LAKES
  16. WHEN DEER'S PUT THEIR  
TAILS UP IT TALKS. THE  
OTHER DEER'S THAT THEIR  
IS DANGER AROUND THEM

191

# DEERS



17. A GOMIND DEER IS  
THE NORTH AMERICAN  
MULE DEER

18. THIR ARE A COPOL  
CIXND OF DEERS

19. BABY DEERS HAVE SPOTS ON  
THEM TO PIRTICT THIMSILF

20. DADY DEERS HAVE HORNS

APPENDIX 4:

Before I Go  
To School

by Jessica

Bad Copy

P.1



BE FOR I GO TO SCHOOL DO CLS  
I WAG UP 5 O CLOC AWHEN I ME ASLEEP  
HAW I WAC UP IS MY BRATHR  
S TO NOYSX WITH HIS TOY CHATEA'S  
AND WAL MY MOM MAKE'S BRICFS  
AND THEN I GET JUST IN A JAZZ ON MANS  
THIN I BRASH MY MY HIR AND TETH  
AND WOSH MY HANDS AND TH'AL  
PLAY FOR A FYOU NINETS AS SAM  
THIN WE UP'S EMILY'S AND  
LEAV AND THIN MY MOM JAVS  
US TO SCHOOL WE PLAY INTO  
THE BIL RANS THIN WE GO UP  
STIRS AND CLAS AND DO MY ATINDIAS THIN  
GO TO GYM OR SIT ON THE ROE  
MAM TIMS WE RASH MY HOUES  
IS VIREY MIZY PE CAS TOYS OR AL  
OUR THO PLAYS THE BASMINT  
SPISHOLY PE CAS THIR IS A LOT  
OF TOYS DAWN THIR AND I CLE  
OMOST ALL THE BASMINT UP AND  
HOW MY BRATHR CLEMS UP IS HS  
THIN JIS TELRNON ALDRATHY  
MIX HOUES IS HOT

I THINK  
WIN'S CAM FROM SCHOOL GAILLY'S MOM ABOUT

WE MAY WITH OR CLIMBING THIS MY DAD MADE THE FARM IN THE  
 ARE NOT IN SOMETHING ALS THE MAYBE AND WE  
 YOU'LL HAVE MET FOR SAPX  
 AND I THINK WE PLAY FOR  
 IF YOU'VE MCA MINTS  
 I THINK I'VE RED A BOOKS THIN  
 I THINK MY MOM AND  
 I THINK GOES IN THE LIVEN ROOM  
 I THINK THEY GET THE NOS  
 I THINK THEY THE ALL  
 I THINK OF THIN THAT GO  
 I THINK AND SAM TIM'S  
 I THINK A J RANC OR GO  
 I THINK BATHROOM AND  
 I THINK GO BACK TO BED AND  
 I THINK MY BRATHR AND  
 I THINK TO THIN WE  
 I THINK AND SLEEP ALL NIGHT  
 I THINK WE WAKE UP

Good Copy

RE FOR I GO TO SCHOOL

I WAK UP AT 6 O CLOC THIN I FOR ASLUP AGAIN AND THIN I WAK UP AT 7 O CLOC  
HOW I WAK UP IS MY BRATHA IS TO NOISY WITH HIS TOY SHACAPS I SIT THE TABLE AND WAL  
MY MOM MACK BAICEST WE PLAY FHW WE EAT BAKREIBT THIN I BIT PRIST IN PANS OF THIS  
THIN I BRASH MY HAIR AND TEEN AND WASH MY HAIR AND ADD PAYS THIN WE PLAY FOR AWH  
MINDA PE CAL ME EMB DOB SAM THIN'S AND THAT'S WHY THIN WE PIS UP FAMILY AND  
EAL AND THIN MY MOM JBIV'S US TO SCHOOL AND WE WOK IN ALL DA SALT WE  
PLAY UNTIL THE BIL BAAKS THIN WE BOP SPIN AND BIT MY BOM PANS DE AND LEE AND BOTS  
DE AND UP DE AND OUT OF THIN'S SO IN CLASS AND DO MY AP'IALS THIN 9 O TO 9 PM OR  
BIT ON THE AAM SAM T:O'S WE AAKS

RE FOR I SAM HON BROOM SCHOOL

EMILY'S MOM PIS UP THIN'S TO EAD MY HAIR E BIT MY SOON STAP DE WE PLAY WITH  
VA SLIMEN BIT EAD MY BAR BAR YOUFLY AND IT IS FUN AND PLAY WITH SAM THIN ALS AND I  
BIT THE TABLE THIN I PE BY LARK BIT IN THE LARKIN THIN I HAVE SAM AND WE BURY N  
BIT FOR BAR AND AN BIT THIN XABO THIN WE PLAY A FEY BUREM BIT'S SAM THIN'S THIN  
I P: L ME BIT'S THIN THIN BRASH MY TEEN AND WASH MY PAM THIN I GO IN T  
BEE AND AND A BEE'S THIN DE FOR LEE AND MY MOM'S THIN SAM THIN'S AND MY MOM  
AND MO LAY A PIS TO ME THIN THAY BAIN TO THE LIVER ROOM AND RED AND BEE THE  
MOBOLA AND SAM THIN'S I GO TO THE BATHROOM TO ETC BARS OR GO TO THE TOXIT AND THIN  
MY MOM AND BAO SON ALL THE LITS OF THIN THAY GO TO SLEEP TO THIN WE SLEEP ALL  
NIGHT LOR AND THIN WAK UP SAM THIN'S MY HOUSE IS VIAX MISSY PE GAS SORTS ABE ALL  
BEE THE PLAZ THE BATHMINT SPISHOLY PE GAS THIN IS A LIT SE TOX'S BAKN THIN AN:  
I CLYN OMISS ALL THE BATHMINT UP AND HOW MY BRATHA ELYNS UP IS HE IS JUST  
LARKN HOW TO SAKN UP LIKE MO, MY HOUSE IS HAT.



APPENDIX 5:

Future Writing

by Jessica

Bad Copy

p.1 THE FVOOHR CHAPTR 1  
I WONT TO BE A ARTIST  
BE CAS I LIKE TO DRAW  
PICTURE OF EVRYTHING LIKE  
ANIMALS AND PEOPLE AND  
THE WORLD AND FRUITS AND  
VEGETABLES AND I WONT TO  
LRNE HOW TO DRAW THESE  
THINGS AND WHY I WONT  
TO BE A ARTIST BE CAS I THIK  
IF I WOULD BE FUN TO BE A  
ARTIST AND I WOULD (PAINT)  
AND DRAW PICTURES WITH (MARKERS)  
AND (CRAYONS) AND HOW IM  
GOING TO LRNE TO BE A ARTIST  
IF I HAVE A FRIEND THAT 2

p.2 NOS HOW TO BE A ARTIST IL LRNE  
WITH THEM UNTIL I LRNE AND WHEN  
I AM 17 I WILL START TO DRAW  
PICTURES AND WHEN I AM 18  
I WILL MOOV TO THE (COUNTRY)  
AND I MAY GIVE SOME OF MY  
PICTURES AWAY AND I MAY PUT  
SOME OF MY PICTONS IN TO A BOOK  
AND WELL IM LIVING IN THE  
(COUNTRY) MAYBY I WILL PAINT MY  
HOUSE AND I WILL DO A PICTURE  
AND I WILL HAG IT ON THE  
BOTTOM OF THE CLOCK AND  
I WILL PUT SOME OF THEM  
ON THE WALL AND I WILL

SOME OF THEM ON THE  
 (CHIMNEY) AND ON THE DOOR  
 AND THE OUT SIDE OF MY  
 HOUSE I WILL PUT PICTURE  
 AND IN THE ROOMS I WILL  
 PUT PICTURES AND ON THE  
 ROOF AND I WONT HAVE A  
 WHITE BE CAS THEN I CAN  
 RAIN OR BARK PICTURES AND  
 I MIGHT HAVE A RABBIT AND  
 WAY I WONT TO HAVE  
 A RABBIT IS BE CAS I LIKE  
 THEM AND BE CAS THEM  
 (FORRY) AND I MIGHT LIVE  
 WITH EMILY AND ERIN  
 CHAPTER 1 3

# CHAPTER 1

AND WAL I MAKE PICTURES FOR  
 A BOOK I WILL WRITE  
 SOME WRDS IN THE BOOK WHATS  
 MY FAVAT THING TO DRAW?  
 IT IS ANIMALS AND I  
 WILL HIG (PICTURES) FROM  
 MY BED AND I WILL PINT  
 MY BLANKETS AND I WILL  
 HAVE 5 KIDS AND SUM  
 OF THE FUTURE DA  
 YST WILL PAINT A  
 PICHR OF THE  
 SHOL'SCOOL



## CHAPTER 2

WAL I M A ARTIST I MITE  
 BE A FARMR AND WHY I  
 WONT TO IS BE CAS AT  
 NOW I CANT HAVE DOGS  
 AND CATS AND HORSES  
 AND RABBITS AT MY HOUSE  
 BE CAS MY MOM IS ALRGS  
 TO THEM AND BE CAS I  
 LIKE ANIMALS AND I THINK  
 IT WOULD BE FUN AND I  
 WOULD HAVE A BARN FOR  
 THE ANIMALS AND MY HOUSE  
 WOULD BE CLOS TO THE  
 BARN WHAT CANS OF ANIMALS  
 W/ I I HAVE I WILL HAV

CHAPTER 2 

DOGS AND DONKEYS AND GESE  
 AND HENS AND HORSES AND  
 GOATS AND CATS AND BIRDS  
 AND PIGS AND RABBITS AND  
 ROOSTERS AND SHEEP AND COWS  
 AND ANATH THING WHY I WONT  
 TO BE A FARMR IS BE CAS  
 I LIKE ANIMALS WHAT DO  
 I LIKE ABOUT THEM? WHAT  
 I LIKE ABOUT THEM IS THAT  
 THEY ARE ALL SOFT AND I  
 WILL HAVE A GARDEN AND  
 I WILL HAVE A SCARECROW

Good Copy

P1 THE FUTURE. CHAPTER 1.

I WONT TO BE A ARTIST  
BE CAS I LIKE TO DRAW  
PICTURES OF EVRYTHING LIKE  
ANIMALS AND PEOPLE AND  
THE WORLD AND FRUTS AND  
VEGETABLES. AND I WONT  
TO LRNE HOW TO DRAW THESE  
THINGS. AND WHY I WONT  
TO BE A ARTIST BE CAS  
I THINK IT WOULD BE FUN  
TO BE A ARTIST. AND I  
WOULD PAINT AND DRAW PICTURES  
WITH MARKERS AND CRAYONS.  
AND HOW IM GOING TO  
LRNE TO BE A ARTIST IS  
IF I HAVE A FRIND THAT

P2  
C

# CHAPTER 1

NOS HOW TO BE A ARTIST  
IL LRNE WITH THEM INTIL IV  
LRNED. AND WHEN I AM 14 I  
WILL START TO DRAW PICTURES. AND  
WHEN I AM 18 I WILL MOOV TO  
THE COUNTRY. AND I MIGHT GIVE  
SOME OF MY PICTURES AWAY  
AND I MIGHT PUT SOME OF  
MY PICTURES IN TO A BOOK.  
AND WELL IM LIVEING IN THE  
COUNTRY MAYBY I WILL PAINT  
MY HOUSE AND I WILL DO A  
PICTURE AND HAG IT ON THE BOTTOM  
OF THE CLOCK AND I WILL PUT  
SOME OF THEM ON THE

P.3

# CHAPTER 1

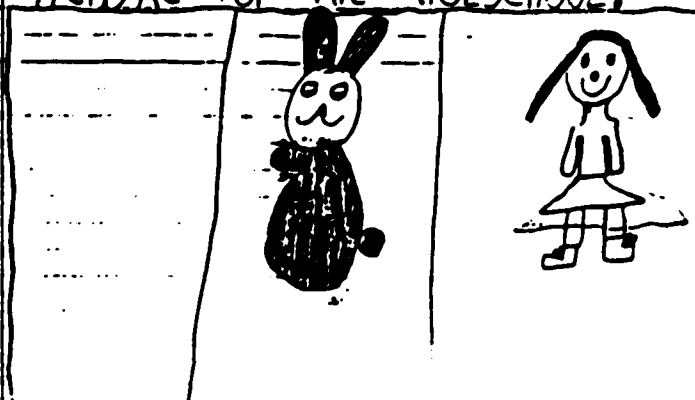
PUT SOME OF THEM ON THE CHIMNEY AND ON THE DOR AND THE OUTSID OF MY HOUSE I WILL PUT PICTURS AND IN THE ROOMS I WILL PUT PICTURS AND ON THE ROOF. AND I WONT TO HAVE A WHITE HOUSE BE CAS THEN I CAN PAINT OR DRAW PICTURES AND I MIGHT HAVE A RABBIT. AND WHY I WONT TO HAVE A RABBIT IS BE CAS I LIKE THEM.

9

P.4

# CAPTR 1

AND WAL I MAKE PICTURES FOR A BOOK I WILL WRIT SOME WRDS IN THE BOOK. WHATS MY FAVRT TO DRAW? IT IS ANIMALS. AND I WILL HAG PICTURES FROM MY BED. AND I WILL PAINT MY BLANKETS. AND I WILL HAVE FIVE KIDS. AND SOME OF THE FUTURE DAY I WILL PAINT A PICTURE OF THE HOLSCHOOL.



200

10

p.5

## CHAPTER 2

WAL IM A ARTIST I MITE BE  
A FARMR. AND WHY I WONT TO  
BE CAS RAT NOW I  
WONT HAVE DOGS AND CATS  
AND HORSES AND RABBITS.  
AT MY HOUSE BE CAS MY MOM  
IS ALRIGICK TO THIM AND BE CAS  
I LIKE ANIMALS. I WOULD HAVE  
A BARN FOR THE ANIMALS. MY  
HOUSE WOULD BE CLOS TO THE  
BARN. WHAT KINDS OF  
ANIMALS WILL I HAVE I  
WILL HAVE

11

p.6

## CHAPTER 2

DOGS AND DONKEYS AND geese  
AND HENS AND HORSES AND  
GOATS AND CATS AND BIRDS  
AND PIGS AND RABBITS AND  
ROOSTERS AND SHEEP AND COWS.  
AND ANATHR THING WHY I  
WONT TO BE A FARMR IS  
BE CAS I LIKE ANIMALS.  
WHAT DO I LIKE ABOUT  
ANIMALS? WHAT I LIKE ABOUT  
ANIMALS IS THAT THEY ARE  
ALL SOFT. I WILL HAVE A  
GARDEN AND I WILL HAVE A  
SCARECROW IN MY  
GARDEN

201

APPENDIX 6:

Grizzly Project

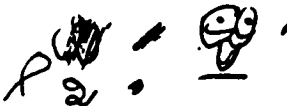
by Ryan

Bad Copy

P.1

<sup>1</sup> GIZZLYS  
 GRIZZLYS ARE VERY  
 SMART. SOME OF THE  
 THINGS THAT THEY  
 EAT ARE NOT AND  
 TRAILS AND FISH AND  
 OTHER THINGS MAKE GRIZZLYS  
 ARE LOUDEST.  
 GRIZZLYS HAVE  
 VERY GOOD HEARING  
 GRIZZLYS HAVE VERY  
 GOOD EYESIGHT AND GOOD  
 SENSE OF SMELL. GRIZZLYS  
 EAT OTHER THINGS  
 LIKE FROGS AND  
 MICE.

P.2

 GIZZLYS  
 GRIZZLYS HAVE TO HAVE  
 A GOOD SENSE OF  
 HEARING AND VERY GOOD  
 EYESIGHT AND A GOOD  
 SENSE OF SMELL BECAUSE  
 THEY HUNT FOOD.  
 GRIZZLYS ONLY GO FISHING  
 IN THE SUMMER AND  
 IN FALL THEY GET  
 BEARS AND OTHER THINGS  
 MAKE GRIZZLYS FIGHT  
 IN MATING SEASONS  
 GRIZZLYS HAVE A VERY  
 LONG LIFE.

P 3

# Jim STORES

ONE WE WENT MY DAD  
 FRIENDS DAD WAS  
 CRACKIN A GRIZZLY  
 AND THE GRIZZLY  
 TUNO MORDE AND  
 SRTI TO CRACK HE  
 AND CASIBO HOME ONE  
 WERE MY FRED DAD  
 FOTE TO PUT OUT  
 THE FOOD AND HE  
 WENT OUT TO SEE  
 WOUT WAS THE  
 MATERE AND IT WAS  
 A BEBE AND HE  
 NO IF IT WAS  
 A GRIZZLY



Good Copy

p.1

GRIZZLY  
GRIZZLY ARE VERY  
SMARTE. SOME OF THE  
THING. THEY EAT  
FISH AND ANTS AND  
TRAILS AND OTHER  
THING. MALE GRIZZLY  
ARE COLOUR BRUNS  
GRIZZLY RAN AROUND  
THEIR HOME HUNTING  
FOR FOOD. GRIZZLY  
HAVE A BUMP  
ON THEIR BACK.  
THE GRIZZLY WAVE  
OVER 500 KILOS.  
WENE A GRIZZLY  
IS CURSING YOU SHAP

P. 2

GRIZZLY  
GRIZZLYS HAVE TO  
HAVE VE GOOD  
HEARING AND EYESIGHT  
AND GOOD SENSE OF  
SMELLING BECAUSE THEY  
WANT A LOT FOR FOOD.  
GRIZZLYS ONLY FISH  
IN THE SUMMER AND  
IN THE FALL THEY  
EAT BERRIES AND OTHER  
THINGS. MALE GRIZZLYS  
SOMETIMES FIGHT IN  
MATING SITES. A GRIZZLY  
CAN BE SO FAST IN  
THE HILLS AND RUN  
AND HOP AROUND MORE.

APPENDIX 7:

Future Writing

by Ryan

Bad Copy

p.1

Dharon

we ne I GROW UP  
 I mit Be a  
 esap NOTIS BECAUSE  
 it mit come in  
 hand we ne The LOOK  
 and The not  
 RESID is it WILL  
 BE Intuition TO  
 NOWE HAVE TO GET A  
 LOOK OPEN LOOK.  
 and They ARE NETE  
 to me  
~~can't we ne I GROW~~  
 UP I MIT BE A  
 BECAUSE AM A GOOD  
 DORE.

p.2

AIR

whan I GROW  
 UP I MIT  
 BE a SCIENTIST  
 BECAUSE it WOULD BE  
 INTUITION For me  
 BECAUSE it WILL BE  
 MUST TO FIND OUT ABOUT  
 THINGS THAT NO ONE  
 NO GET  
~~can't we ne I GROW UP~~  
 I. MIT BE  
 AIR MIT BECAUSE  
 it MIT BE NET  
 to FIND OUT HOW TO  
 FIX a PLANE



Good Copy

P1 When I <sup>Imagination</sup> Grow UP I  
MIGHT Be a SCIENTIST  
BECAUSE it WOULD BE  
INTERESTING FOR ME  
BECAUSE it WILL BE  
NECESSARY TO FIND OUT  
ABOUT THINGS THAT  
~~NO ONE DOES A BOT.~~  
CATER. 2 WHEN I GROW  
UP I MIGHT BE  
A SPACE PILIT BECAUSE  
it MIGHT BE FUN  
FOR ME AND it  
MIGHT BE INTERESTING  
FOR ME TO NOW  
HAVE TO FLY A PLANE

p.2 WHEN I GROW UP I MIGHT BE A WRITER  
 BECAUSE AM A GOOD  
DRIVER  
 CHATR. 4 WHEN I GROW  
 UP I MIGHT BE  
 AN ESCAP ARTIST. BECAUSE  
 WHEN THE DOORS ARE  
 LOCKED IT HUNDREDS  
 AND IT WOULD BE  
 INCREDIBLE FOR ME TO  
 NO HOW TO GET  
 A LOCK TO GET  
 A LOCK TO UNLOCK  
 AND I LIKE  
 Theme

p.3 WHEN I GROW UP I  
 MIGHT BE A LITTLE  
 BECAUSE I WANT TO  
 HELP PEOPLE WORK  
 OUT PROBLEMS.  
CHATR. 5 WHEN I GROW  
 UP I MIGHT  
 BE A PERSON HOW  
 DOSE GYMNASTS I  
 BECAUSE IT WILL BE  
 BETTER THEN GETTING  
 IN TRUBE







Fourth Copy

I GOT MOST OF MY  
 (HAMILTON COMIZ FROMY  
 WNI WUZ HONNITWUZ I HAD A  
 PPA KABA KAO  
 WUZ SAPO MIUAP  
 WIL BEAD EMIMNWA ANDOAC FA  
 GITHET WLEWOWITETEN  
 LIJ

Good Copy


I GOT MOST OF  
 THE  
 AT COMIZ  
 WNI I WUZ FOR I HAD  
 A KABA CAR  
 I WUZ V TAPUL TOOT  
 WNI I WUZ 3 I NOO  
 WT DTA WUZ TO  
 WNI I WUZ FOR I  
 HAD NO ER  
 WNI I WUZ - 5 I GO  
 MI BICK

APPENDIX 9:

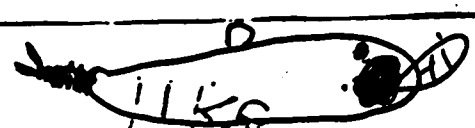
Shark Project

by Brendan

First Copy


 PEOPLE LIKE WHALES FISH  
 LIKE 2H  
 212 3ND A H P MIN  
~~TO 20000~~ SHARK? DON A LEFT  
 BIG FISH  
 VORGE  
 G HOE  
 TOOTH  
 PEOPLE

Second Copy


 SHARK? SHARK? LIVE ON OVERTHE  
 PA VISIARIA APICALIUT NATIKA  
 NO 4 AMB...  
 THA HAVE VER EL CHOP TRET

Third Copy

SHARK

OK

A SHARK CAN EAT UP TO 100  
FISH OF <sup>more</sup> ~~1~~ MORE  
A SHARK CAN EAT UP TO 100  
FISH OF <sup>more</sup> ~~1~~ MORE



- 1 SHARK2 KAN ENTUOTO
- 2 SHARK2 HAVE 20000 TEETH!!
- 3 SOME PEOPLE HUNT SHARK2
- 4 SHARK2 LIVE IN MINES OFF IN
- 5 WHAL SHARK2 DO NOT EAT PEOPLE
- 6 HAMMER HEAD SHARK2 HAVE A HAMMER ON THE HAMMER SIDE THERE IS TWO EYES ON EACH SIDE
- 7 GREAT WHITE SHARK2 ARE VERY POWERFULL
- 8 A HAMMER HEAD WHAL AS MUCH AS 1000 POUNDS AT THE LOFT
- 9 WHAL SHARK2 DONT HAVE SHARK2 TEETH
- 10 SHARK2 WILL EAT
- 11 THE IS A TRUE STORY SHARK2 WILL EAT E WITHIN E
- 12 SHARK2 EAT MAH

APPENDIX 10:

Future Writing

by Wendy

First Copy

Some stories about the  
present

When I grow up

I am going to live in  
Argentina on a farm

My best friend called

Florencia will live with

her. I will have a dog

as well. I will have

horses, cows and sheep and chickens

When I have a partner Florencia

will take care of the farm

Second Copy

a story about  
present

When I grow up - I am going  
to live on a farm in Argentina.

I will have as my farm cows, horses,  
sheep and chickens. I will be a doctor as

well. I have a friend called Florencia

she will live with me. When I

have a partner Florencia will

take care of the farm.

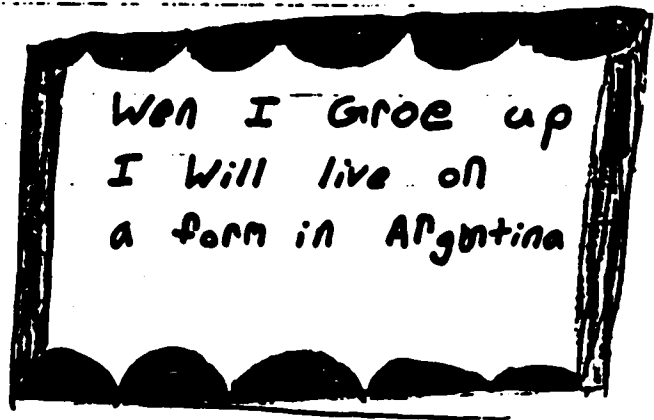
HOW TO TELL

Third Copy

A Story A  
bowt

the

Teacher



Good Copy

p.1

My future

When I grow up I will live on a farm in Argentina.  
I will be a farmer. I will be a doctor  
as well. I have a friend, could Florence  
she will live with me. We I have  
a passion. Florence will take care of the  
farm and I don't have a passion  
we both will take care of the farm.  
we will have a big yard for  
the horses to run around in and the cows.  
I will milk the cows.  
I will milk the cows in the  
barn. I will have a field  
for the sheep. there will be a  
big field for the chickens  
and a little field for the pigs  
I will have cats and dogs as well.  
I will learn <sup>how to</sup> by going to my  
sisters place and she will teach me  
how to be a farmer. I will  
learn how to be a doctor  
by going to doctor school.  
I will learn how to do all  
sorts of passion. I will  
learn how to be a physician.  
I will go to Argentina  
by three plane. I want to  
be all of this because  
I love horses and I  
like helping other people



how to learn to be a doctor

I will go to a university every day.  
 At university I will learn books.  
 I will use a microscope to  
 look and discover about germs, blood and other  
 things. I would learn about the parts in your  
 body and how they work. I would learn how the  
 bones grow and what the parts of the bones. I would  
 learn what happens to the bones when they get  
 hurt and how they heal. I will find out  
 what is in food and how you digest your food.  
 I will find out how the body grows and  
 how food helps. I will discover how much  
 vitamins and minerals you need a day. I will  
 discover what medicine is for what sickness and  
 how it helps you get better. I will learn  
 the differences between different sicknesses.  
 In the hospital I will learn  
 how the machines work like the x-ray  
 machine. the rest of my life

I will visit my Aunt and Dad every year  
 for a week. When I am retired I will  
 still live on a farm and be a farmer  
 because I love farms. It will be hard  
 but part of it will be fun. When I am  
 older I will get help the horses for teaching  
 my grandsons how to ride a horse  
 and I would get some help  
 for before.

APPENDIX 11:

Whales Project

by Wendy

Bad Copy

p.1 Mammals Wales

Wales have been going  
up on shore people  
have been trying  
to push them  
back people have  
been trying to find  
out why Wales has  
been swimming by the  
shore about 100  
how been could now  
there isent very many  
left

p. 2

## Mammals Wales

(circle) Wales (EAT)

body (Soots)

the (circle) Wales has

(Smooth) black on the top

with on the (bottom)

(skin) Wales have big

(long) (tails) they look

like this. but was

(big)



Wales will make

a sand and

it can go 100

Miles

Cilia Wales have  
 ports on the  
 top. Wales CUM up  
 at of the  
 water every twenty 20  
 minutes they let  
 go of the  
 eni and gate noo  
 cken ERA the  
 moth sent hood  
 on to the (eugs)  
 when they go under  
 the water the  
 Ene pass close

p. 4

So the Went  
 Went get in.  
 Was bout etc  
 People but People  
cell Wales. So  
 bout cell Wales  
 Wen they bident  
 bo eng thing to  
 you. Ene Wase  
 then i-ent  
Aeng meny left  
 and we bout  
Wot was to  
 get EcStingcked

p.5

mammals whales

baby whales have  
1600 liters of milk  
15.5 plants a  
bag

p.6

mammals whales

Whales are mammals.

Some whales are small.

Some are big. Whales

are different colors

like yellow black

and white. Whales give

their young milk.

Whales don't let

their young be left

alone because they were

born like fish do.

The blue whale was as

much as an elephant

## Whales

baby whales have 600 leakers  
 of milk and 155 small plants  
 a day. Whales are mammals.  
 some whales are big some are small.  
 Whales are different colours  
 like yellow, black, blue, and  
 white! Whales give their  
 young milk. Whales don't  
 let their young be left  
 alone once they were born  
 like fish do. the blue  
 whale ways as much  
 as an elephant.

## Whales

Whales have big large tails.  
 they look like this but way  
 bigger.



Whales will make a sound  
 and it will go 100

miles. Killer whales have points

on the top of their backs.

Whales come out of the water  
 every 20 minutes they let

go of the air and get new  
 clean air. the mouth is not  
 hooked on to the lungs

## Whales

p.3

Whales have been going up on shore. people have been trying to push them back. people have been trying to find out why Whales have been swimming by the shore. about 100 whales have been killed. now there is not very many left. Killer Whales eat baby sea otters. the Killer Whale has smooth black on the top, white on the bottom skin.

p.4

## Whales

When they go under the water the air passage closes so the water would not get in. Whales don't

eat people but people kill

Whales so don't kill

Whales because they did not

do any thing to you

any ways there is not

any more left

and we don't want

Whales to get extinct.



APPENDIX 12:

Past Writing

by Haley

First Copy

C U ROI-ANNE I V  
 WIN I WS BYEROD MY MOM  
 U ME U ILE BR CIND WIN  
 I WS 4 YRS OD IS TIL HD  
 MY LTL THE BEI AND HE WAS  
 TO WULRT MR FOR UN WIT WAS I LKI  
 HW TWO WC



WIN I WS 2 YRS OD I ND  
 THREE

WIN I WS 5 YRS  
 OD I LOVE MK MY MOM

Second Copy

WEN I WAS 6 YRS OD  
 I LET TO RIDE A 2 WOLP  
 BIC AT WEN I WAS 5 YRS  
 OD AT CRE S MES I WAS AT A  
 C A BE CH P A CH WEN I WA  
 5 IN A HAR MY AIR WAS  
 2 AND WEN I CAME AC C  
 F RAM KED R GOR DEN I WOD  
 LOC AT PE CTS IN A BOK WPT  
 MY B RA TR WEN I WEN I WAI  
 2 AFIL W NS C T P S MES IT WAS  
 THE FRS T TIME I SA SA TACI  
 AS WEN I SA SATU IT WAS  
 AT CAL 9 re



APPENDIX 13:

Future Writing

by Steven

Draft 1

# IN THE FUTURE

WHEN I grow up I'm going to be a Mountain climber  
because I like it Now AND I'm good at it

also I might be a SWIMMER that Races against  
other people and I'll try to win the Champion  
SHIPS

IF I ever get to be a good Mountain climber  
I think I'll go Half Way up Mount everest  
like MY Dad did

WHEN I grow up I don't want to be a

Draft 1

Draft 2

# IN THE FUTURE

WHEN I grow up I am going to be a Mountain  
climber because I like it Now AND I'm good  
at it

WHEN I get MARRIED I think I'll go to New-  
Zealand.

I might be a RUNNER that Races against  
other people AND WINS Metals.

IF I ever get to be a good Mountain climber  
I'll climb Half way up Mount everest like  
my Dad did.

WHEN I grow up I'm going to be a professional  
skateboarder WHEN I'm 15 years old.

WHEN I Retire I will make it a fun Retirement at  
playing golf swimming.

I would also like to be a comedian or a  
cartoonist...

Draft 3

WHEN I GROW UP I AM GOING TO BE A MOUNTAIN  
CLIMBER BECAUSE I LIKE IT NOW AND I'M GOOD  
AT IT. ~~WHEN I GET MARRIED I THINK I'LL GO TO NEW-~~  
ZEALAND ~~I MIGHT BE A RUNNER THAT RACES AGAINST~~  
~~OTHER PEOPLE AND WINS METALS.~~ ~~IF I EVER GET TO BE A GOOD MOUNTAIN CLIMBER~~  
~~I'LL CLIMB HARD WAY UP MOUNT EVEREST LIKE~~  
~~MY DAD DID.~~  
WHEN I GROW UP I'M GOING TO BE A PROFESSIONAL  
SKATEBOARDER WHEN I'M 15 YEARS OLD.  
WHEN I RETIRE I WILL MAKE IT A FUN RETIREMENT BY  
PLAYING GOLF SWIMMING  
I WILL ALSO LIKE TO BE A CARTOONIST  
ALSO I MIGHT BE A COMEDIAN  
→ MY DAD ALMOST DIED 5 TIMES WHEN HE TRIED  
TO CLIMB IT SO HE IS VERY NERVOUS I MIGHT CLIMB  
OTHER KINDS OF MOUNTAINS.  
→ WHO GOES OUT ON STAGE AND TELLS JOKES OR DOES  
PLAY WITH JOKES IN THEM.  
→ BECAUSE IT'S NICE AND HOT AND MY DAD IS  
GOING TO LIVE THERE IN ABOUT TWO YEARS OR SO  
BECAUSE MY GRANMA IS HAVING TROUBLE WITH  
HER ARM.

Good Copy

## In The Blue

WHEN I GROW UP I AM GOING TO BE A ROCK  
CLIMBER BECAUSE I LIKE IT AND I'M GOOD AT IT  
IF I EVER GET TO BE A REALLY GOOD ROCK CLIMBER  
I'M GOING TO TRY TO CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST (HIF HIF)  
LIKE MY DAD DID, HE ALMOST DIED ONCE. WHEN I  
GET MARRIED I'LL GO TO NEW ZEALAND AND STAY  
THERE WITH MY DAD, HE'S GOING TO NEW ZEALAND  
I DON'T KNOW WHEN I THOUGHT TO LIVE WITH MY GRAND  
MA I MIGHT BE A CHAMPION RUNNER BECAUSE I LIKE IT  
WHEN I AM 15 YEARS OLD I'LL BE A PROFESSIONAL  
SKATEBOARDER. WHEN I RETIRE I WILL MAKE A  
FUN RETIREMENT EX. SWIMMING GOLF ALSO I WOULD  
LIKE TO BE A CARTOONIST HE IS A PERSON WHO  
MAKES CARTOONS. I MIGHT BE A COMEDIAN THAT'S A  
PERSON WHO GOES OUT ON STAGE AND TELLS  
JOKES. I WANT TO BE A COMEDIAN BECAUSE I  
REALLY ENJOY JOKES

APPENDIX 14:

Past Writing

by Steven

Bad Copy

Ch. 1

a biography

once when I was about 3 years old's there was a string and it was tied to a pole with a ball of the end and I was pushing it back and forth and it came back and hit me over my back.

once at night I was walking and I saw a big monster so I screamed for help but it was only my dad.

When I was little I had a teddy bear I used to play with it alot because I loved it very much!!

When I was about 3 years of age I loved to listen to Robert Munsch because he was extremely funny!

once when I was about 3 years old I was on a sand pile and I dropped my teddy and started to cry because I wanted it back.

When I was about 3 years old I started to read write, and spell.

I remember that when I was about 6 years old I always used to play Marry-go-round on the bus outside our school.

When I was 4 I asked Santa for a big teddy bear and I got a teddy as big as my self.

One time my mom let me listen to one of my tapes and it was funny because it was me trying to talk when I was 3 years old.

once I was talking to my friend and there was an apple tree beside us and someone shook it and lots of apples fell on us.

past

Ch. 2

a biography

once when I was 3 years old I had a hotdog and my brother took the ketchup away from me and so I took his plate, his spoon his glass, and then I tried to get his knife but I fell on it and almost cut my self.

once when I was about 6 years old I was playing with my dad's car and it started to roll back.

once when I was about 4 years old my brother and his friend, Edward were climbing trees and I said I wanted to but they said no but I said yes and so I climbed anyway and I fell but something caught me and it was my foot it had got stuck in a narrow space and I was hanging over a barbed wire fence and so I yelled for my mom and she got me out of the tree. And gave me a candy.

Good Copy

Autobiography Past

once when I was about 3 years old there was a string with a ball on the end and I was pushing it back and forth and it came back and knocked me over. I was born in 1979. When I was little I had a teddy bear and whenever I feel lonely I would hug it because I loved it very much but one day I was playing with it and I put it down and the next second it wasn't there. When I was 5 years old I loved to listen to a tape by Robert Munch because it was funny!! When I was about 3 years old I started to learn to write and spell. When I was 6 years old I used to play merry go round on the balls outside our school. Once I asked Santa for a big teddy and I got one as big as me. My Mom let me listen to a tape and it was me trying to talk and it was funny! once I was playing with my dad's car and it started to roll back. once my brother and his best friend were climbing a tree and I said that I wanted to but they said no but I did anyway and I fell but there was a narrow space and my foot got caught in and my face was directly above a barbed wire fence so my Mom came and got a candy.

**APPENDIX 15: Partial Transcript of Interview with Toni**

**R:** Could you talk about the learning you value?

**Toni:** I want my kids to teach me what they know, what they don't know, what they need to know next. Not me doing all that but making them [do it]. The more work they do, the less I do and the better it is for me and them in the sense that I become more and more the facilitator, modelling, and they become the active learners, active teachers. To me whole language has that element of mediation.... So I've come a long way in feeling confident in how I do my whole language and some of the things I use as stepping blocks or whatever. It's been successful cause I've seen over the years better and better learning from my kids.

**R:** You're saying that going to the kids and finding out what they're thinking is very important?

**Toni:** Yes, sometimes practice can be very divorced from your intentions and as teachers we need to become more aware of that and the only way of doing that is going to the kids. We have to work with and through the kids to realize whether or not our intentions are being fulfilled - those are the intentions for our kids' learning, not our intentions as teachers. I find when that happens then the kids and I are creating or sharing and what I've expected doesn't always turn out but it becomes better because the kids and I push each

other even more to build something bigger. And the other thing that comes through to me is the idea of social relations; that so often the teacher is still the director and producer and stage hand and this and this. But when I move over into this kind of learning, when the kids have to work within a context to create and that we mediate at most points, then my role and their role changes. At times they're directors, at times they're producers; there's more options for us. We're not ever hooked into roles; we're hooked into what responsibility or talents we have that we're bringing to the task.

R: And do the kids respond when they're given that responsibility?

Toni: We've practised working towards it and realize there is no end result but it's a development of a group and I guess everyone starts to become sensitive to what they have and respecting what others have and taking on their own independence, [their own] responsibility and being accountable to that, accountable in the sense that if you're not, you're letting yourself down, not me. And by doing that the kids realize that it's them. They're the learners, they're the teachers in the end. It's really exciting cause when people come in September they always think that what you say you want to happen in your classroom is going to be there automatically like a package. You just pour water on



it and it blooms and they don't know it's a daily process. Some of the neatest comments I've gotten from some of the parents, especially my grade two parents - their children have changed so much. What you want to say to the parent is that they haven't changed that much. That has always been a part of them. Now they have a chance to practise and articulate those parts and they've awakened a sensitivity not only in themselves but in you to realize your child's potential.

R: I'm struck by the confidence some of the kids have in expressing their ideas.

Toni: Amy finally came to that point. Today she had this sentence and she asked me to look at it and it was something about native people kill buffaloes or something like that. I said that not all native people killed buffaloes, only in some areas. Finally in our discussion it came to the fact that this only happened on the plains. So she wondered what to do with the sentence. I said, why don't you add where it happened? Her response was, well, how? Well, where did it happen? Oh, in the plains. Okay, put that in the beginning. Oh, okay. She came back to me and she had put it in her sentence but she had changed her whole sentence around so it would be better balanced. She knew something was awkward and just adding "the plains" was not enough to satisfy her and she changed the whole

thing around and it was a better sentence. It was more complete, the tense was better and she knew it was okay. She spent at least ten minutes working on this so that was great to see. So you get all these things coming out, how they play with language, how they play with thought. To me it's exciting. You'd never have that if you had your kids doing worksheets or workbooks.