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A Brailsford

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EARLY READING EXPERIENCES:

THE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

VIEWED FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

by



ANNE BRAILSFORD

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Early Reading Experiences: The Literacy Development of Kindergarten Children Viewed From a Cultural Perspective", submitted by Anne Brailsford in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date November, 1984

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of James Brailsford, the key mediator in my childhood learning and to the living examples of literacy-in-action in this study, Janette, Belinda, Marvin, Janice, Trevor and Mark, who taught me so much about print-related learning in today's world.

ABSTRACT

Our culture values literacy and we have accumulated a vast body of research on children's reading difficulties in a manner that parallels our pragmatic insistence on promoting successful literacy development. Recognizing the utility of exploring emergent reading behaviours prior to the onset of formal instruction, this research focused on an exploration of kindergarten children's literacy experiences within the sub-contexts of home, community and school, and especially within the classroom.

Within one kindergarten classroom, three children were delineated as High Print aware and three as Low Print aware, on the basis of their performances on Structured Literacy Tasks. Five of the children were observed for six months in the kindergarten classroom and the sixth was observed for three months prior to his family leaving the area. Fieldnotes and audiotapings were utilized for recording the children's literacy-related experiences in the school and kindergarten settings, and the Structured Literacy Tasks were used at the conclusion of the study to provide an indication of print-related learning over time. The home literacy environments of the six children were explored via open-ended interviews conducted with their parents. Other key informants in the school and community were also interviewed to provide insight into the cross-contextual learning of the children. All observational fieldnotes and audiotapes were transcribed, analyzed and interpreted. Patterns emerged for the High and Low Print aware children that could be related to literacy learning across each of the contexts studied.

From the data on the High Print aware children, home-based variables emerged that seemed vitally important in the promotion of emergent reading behaviours. Parental belief systems that focused on interweaving literacy

into the daily lives of the children, and specific caregiver-child participatory print-related strategies, were perceived to be key factors in stimulating literacy learning. In the Low Print aware children's homes, literacy events were separated from other activities; reading was perceived as a skill and the children experienced a limited range of interactive strategies with printed materials. Influenced by home-based learning, the High Print aware children entered kindergarten with a rich fund of literacy strategies and knowledge, and perceived themselves as readers-in-progress. Alternatively, the Low Print aware children had more limited conceptions of the reading process and the need for active participation in their own literacy development.

During six months of the kindergarten year, the High Print aware children consolidated their literacy knowledge, and two of these children were reading independently by February. During the same timespan, the Low Print aware children's knowledge about storybooks increased but, by post-testing, they had still acquired less literacy knowledge than the High Print aware children possessed at pre-testing. School-based inconsistencies in the promotion of literacy learning, together with differing strategies utilized in the homes of the High and Low Print aware children, were conceived to be related to the widening literacy gap between the two groups of children. The school librarian's interactive strategies during story reading sessions and her networking of print materials and socio-communicative techniques were perceived to be positive variables that enhanced all the children's literacy knowledge.

This research indicates that caregiver literacy belief systems and communication strategies are intimately related to young children's literacy development. Belief in literacy as a lifelong process, together

with caregiver-child interactions that are congruent with this belief, seem effective in stimulating kindergarten children's emergent reading behaviours. Effectiveness may be optimal if occurring across home, community and classroom sub-contexts. In this study, the High Print aware children experienced congruence between the literacy beliefs and actions within home and school library contexts whereas the Low Print aware children were only exposed to such congruence in the school library setting.

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 - Gratitude and a real sense of appreciation is extended to their teacher, Mrs. Compton. Although perceiving me as "living furniture" in the room, at times it cannot have been easy to have a permanent observer over so many months, especially one who provided such limited feedback. I sense that Noreen may not be at ease with some of my findings and empathize with her feelings. I do thank her for her openness and acceptance of me in the kindergarten classroom.
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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

Breathing the atmosphere of human education as we do from the moment of our birth, we have little inclination or time to consider what it represents, either on its own account or in relation to ourselves. Yet if we pause to look we can find much to make us marvel. (Teilhard de Chardin, 1964, p. 31)

"Know how to read?"

On September 14th, 1983, twenty-two kindergarten children are gathered together for their first afternoon of formal schooling. During that afternoon Belinda and Vanessa are asked to select centres. Both girls stand by the shelf where several margarine tubs hold brightly coloured centre cards. Other children cluster in the area and make their choices for the activity period. Belinda and Vanessa are about to make their first "schooling decision" and their uncertainty is palpable. Belinda's hand hovers over the array of cards. It stops at the Block Centre cards and then drops by her side. The cards are quickly disappearing and finally only the Book Corner cards are left. Hesitantly both girls select Book Corner and file the green cards in their name pockets on the main centre choice chart. Belinda and Vanessa walk over to the Book Corner and side-by-side view the collection of books arranged on the rack. All the books have pictures of animals on their jackets. Each child selects a book and sits on the foam library pad close to the book rack. Vanessa flips through the

pages of her book, progressing from the back to the front. She looks at each page, but also glances intermittently around the classroom. Belinda holds a large animal picture book open on her lap. She looks through it from the front to the back, occasionally casting sideways looks at Vanessa.

Belinda: "Know how to read?"

Vanessa: "Yes."

Belinda: "I don't."

Vanessa: "It's all pictures." (Her book has a picture on each page with an accompanying text below.)

Belinda: "Too big!" (She stands up and returns her animal picture book to the rack and selects a smaller animal book. She sits back down on the pad and opens the book at the front.)

"Pretend we're reading books."

Vanessa: "I don't know how to read books."

Belinda: "Pretend it's a house -- pretend." (She points to a picture of a polar bear in her book.) "I think you're really hungry." (Sing-song voice) "Here's a bear -- hu-n-gry."

Vanessa: "I read ... Go to sleep." (She points to a picture of an owl sitting on a tree branch in her book. She turns the page as Belinda looks over.) "Now it's morning -- he's awake." (Sing-song voice)

Belinda: (Looks at her own book. There is a picture of a monkey on the page.) "Monkey's very hungry." (flips quickly through the pages) "-- all very hungry."

Vanessa: (Hums, capturing the rhythm of Belinda's sing-song voice)
Mm -- mm -- mm -- mm."

Belinda: "What's it about?" (Looks at Vanessa's book.)

Vanessa: (Shrugs)

Belinda: "See, this is about --" (closes her book and pauses).

Vanessa: "Monkeys!" (Both girls giggle.)

During that initial afternoon of school Belinda and Vanessa are engaged in the first of countless literacy interactions that they will experience during future years of formal education. That particular afternoon is a time for crossing contexts for those girls, a time of transition from the life-world of home and community to a life-world that would now also encompass school. Belinda is aware of that movement. To read a book at school she requests that Vanessa pretends that they are in a different context where reading has presumably been encountered before, i.e. "Pretend it's a house". In that first day Belinda is coming

to terms with the expansion of her life-world by attempting to transpose a literacy event from a familiar context to a new context. Vanessa accepts the "rules" and engages in Belinda's schema for, "let's pretend we're reading at home". Belinda seems sure that she cannot read, but her behaviour indicates that she does know how to re-capture a reading event. The rhythmic quality of her voice as she "sings" through the pages demonstrates that she has some conception that written language is different from oral language. Vanessa seems ambivalent about her reading capabilities. She says that she does not "know how to read books", but possibly when "it's all pictures" the task becomes easier. Vanessa's humming of Belinda's voice pattern suggests that maybe she considers humming-like-a-book might be helpful in the process.

Belinda and Vanessa are enacting a literacy event within the context of a kindergarten classroom. Such a classroom is a place where strands of literacy may be interwoven through the fabric of the programme. It provides a context for literacy learning and is, in itself, part of larger literacy contexts that encompass the whole school, the homes of the children, the community and indeed the macrostructure of the culture (Peters and Klein, 1981). Literacy events are experienced by children within overlapping contexts which influence, and in turn are influenced by, the larger contexts of our culture.

Vanessa and Belinda demonstrate an intrinsic interest in their developing literacy knowledge. "Know how to read?" is a key question that occurs frequently in that kindergarten context. Their interest in literacy is not an unusual phenomenon but is demonstrated pervasively by other four and five year old children in our culture (Goodman, Y., 1980; Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1982; Mason, 1980). Their fascination with

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"know how to read?" mirrors the interest of the micro- and macro- contexts that influence their lives. Literacy learning has dynamic importance within our culture (Heath, 1980; O'Brien, 1981), and homes, schools, communities and cultural institutions are cognizant of the need to stimulate its growth, displaying anxiety when literacy failure is evidenced (Elkind, 1981). Failure in "knowing how to read" has received major focus in recent years as evidenced by the abundance of research on the remediation of children experiencing reading difficulties and the vast array of training programmes and materials aimed at ameliorating literacy failure.

Holdaway (1979) reflects:

Learning to read and write ought to be one of the most joyful and successful of human undertakings. Notoriously it is not so. By contrast, most developmental tasks such as learning to walk or to talk are learned almost universally with deep personal satisfaction. What explanation can we give for the continuing difficulties experienced by so many children in learning the tasks of literacy? (p. 11)

The question he asks provides some motivational force for this study. Having spent a good portion of my working life assisting children who found "knowing how to read" neither "joyful" nor "successful" within their life-contexts, a re-direction of focus seemed necessary. The "know how to read?" question of four year old Belinda can evolve into the ten year old's statement, "I can't read, you know". The former question embodies such potential for seeking and knowing when compared with the despondent ten year old's sense of failure in a task considered vital by the culture. My study demonstrates a personal shift in focus from the reading successes or failures experienced by children after several years of classroom reading instruction, to view the emerging literacy development and knowledge of kindergarten children who have not

yet been introduced to formal reading instruction. It shifts to the world of Vanessas and Belindas, to the exploration of their learning contexts, their developing literacy knowledge and their print-related interactions with peers and caregivers within the kindergarten classroom. It asks, how does "know how to read?" progress from reflection to action in the life-worlds of these preschool children?

The General Purpose of the Study

Undoubtedly "knowing how to read" is a complex process (Clay, 1979a) that is developed within the various contexts of childhood. The underlying purpose of this study is to describe the kindergarten child's early literacy experiences in a manner that does some justice to the complexity of the literacy process and the contexts in which it is learned and demonstrated.

Overlapping research techniques, namely participant observation, interviews, document collection and structured literacy tasks have been utilized in order to view the phenomenon from several perspectives. The children's literacy knowledge and print-related interactions were investigated within the context provided by a kindergarten classroom. The larger contexts of home, school and community provide supporting data to lend insight into the multiple structures in which kindergarten children enact literacy events. Primarily, the study focuses on six kindergarten children whose literacy learning is described in-depth over a period of six months. Three children demonstrating well developed literacy knowledge were selected and three children with more limited literacy knowledge were selected on the basis of their performance on two structured tasks. Their progress is described against the backdrop of the whole kindergarten context, and the overlapping contexts of home,

school and community.

Key Assumptions

Two basic assumptions are central to this study:

1. Literacy learning is viewed as "part of the process of cultural transmission" (Bloome, 1982, p. 5). It is assumed that the culture selects key features and concepts to transmit to young children. Literacy knowledge is vital for full group membership within our culture, and hence literacy information is transmitted to the young, both informally in the home and community and also more formally in our schools. Literacy is, thus, not perceived as an isolated school-based phenomenon, but a culturally embedded process actively transmitted to the oncoming generation.
2. Literacy learning is perceived to occur within the dynamic interactions amongst the child,¹ his caregivers and peers, and within the natural contexts in which print-related knowledge occurs. Within these social contexts the participants are assumed to be "predisposed to make sense of their experience, to pose problems for themselves and actively to search for and achieve solutions" (Wells, 1983, p. 294).

The assumption that "knowing how to read" is part of the process of cultural transmission foreshadows this research in that its tentacles of influence are observable in the design and methodology and ultimately within the findings. Envisaging literacy learning as occurring within the

¹Though at risk of being considered sexually biased, I have preserved the "he" pronoun for references to the child. Clarity and referent consistency seemed personally important. "He" was selected as, in the kindergarten, the composition of boys to girls was 2:1.

overlapping social contexts embedded in our culture, and stimulated by the intrinsic needs and interest of cultural members, has direct implications for the manner in which the study is pursued. Ways of "seeing" a problem influence ways of "knowing" or understanding what is seen. Thus, the broad conceptual foreshadowing of "what is seen" assumes centrality.

The Conceptual Context of the Study

Culture

Culture is not an exotic notion studied by a select group of anthropologists in the South Seas. It is a mold in which we are all cast, and it controls our daily lives in many unsuspected ways. (Hall, 1973, p. 30)

In our society we live juxtaposed with fellow humans and pursue our daily lives, travelling along well worn, and often subconscious paths. We rarely acknowledge, or make explicit, the pervasive influence of culture on our everyday existence or our complex endeavours. However, the fabric of our cultural inheritance is intricately embedded in our cognition, language, social communication and values. It is threaded through each individual and is implicitly woven into our communal enterprises.

This ephemeral and tacit abstraction that we label as "culture" has defied absolute definition. Cultural anthropologists have long committed themselves to its study, and long recognized that it is the groundbed for understanding life as it is lived by humans. Over their lengthy period of commitment the same anthropologists readily acknowledge that they have never "captured the butterfly" by reaching a consensus to describe the very concept that lies at the heart of their studies (Spain, 1978; Spradley and McCurdy, 1979; Viveló, 1978). Culture has been described

as a total way of life, namely a "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tyler, 1871 in Vivello, 1978, p. 16). It has been conceptualized as an energy system of learned, adaptive behaviours through which man relates to his environment (Cohen and Ericksen, 1975). A more abstract notion of culture is encompassed in the view that it is a learned code that enables the generation of rules for behaviour within a group of people (Kroeber and Parsons, 1958). Though conceptions of culture may be diverse, certain central assumptions demonstrate underlying core similarities. Firstly, it seems apparent that "culture" is a uniquely human phenomenon and that it is acquired or learned by participating group members. Secondly, cultural acquisition appears to be a necessity for group survival. It permits individual to relate to individual and allows the society to adapt to the environment. As group cohesion and survival depends on learning a code or a network of learned, adaptive behaviours then a framework for transmitting the culture is a logical necessity.

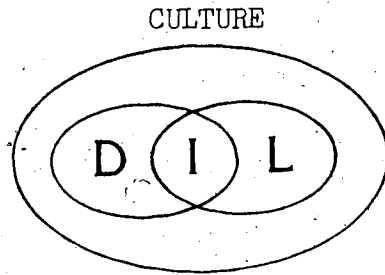
Cultural Transmission

Despite the great variety of their cultural forms, the communities of mankind have, throughout time, possessed in common the need to transmit their cultural heritage to each oncoming generation. It is thus that societies ensure their continuity and establish the conditions necessary for further cultural growth. (Kimball, 1974, p. 7)

Full participation in societal life requires individual enculturation. Like "the house that Jack built" that primary statement raises multiple and complex implications. Enculturation implies human learning. For the transmission of culture to occur we require human cultural "describers"²

²Term adapted from Suransky's "thick describers" (1981, p. 14).

and "learners" and an interaction process in which learning is accomplished.



(Adapted from Gearing's transactional theory of cultural transmission, 1973)

D = Human cultural describers

L = Human learners

I = The learning interactions (i.e. the cultural transmission process)

Figure 1: A Learning Interaction

- a) Human cultural describers are those members of a group who are already initiated into the culture. For the purposes of this study these "describers" are the kindergarten children's caregivers and peers who possess literacy knowledge and enact literacy events with "learners".
- b) Human learners are delineated as the culture's young children and within this study they are kindergarten aged children. In broader terms, of course, these learners may well be adult newcomers, wise in the ways of an alternate culture, but novitiates in a new culture.
- c) The learning interactions, or the process of cultural transmission, are visualized as the socially enacted engagements amongst describers and learners that focus on culturally relevant information. Within this study such learning interactions focus on the transmission of literacy.

Human Describers and Learners: Conception of a cultural inheritance, understanding of a present cultural identity, and transmission of the core of that identity to the oncoming generation are specifically human endeavours. Within our societies the human young are universally dependent on older group members for an extended time period. During the dependency period young children rely upon caregivers, not only for the fulfilment of biological needs but also for the purposeful development of the knowledge necessary for adult participation in society (Burton, 1978; Kimball, 1974). In our culture we may well qualify the dependency period as the timespan between birth and the conclusion of High School and, of course, we even legislate an age of majority for formal entrance into adult cultural roles and responsibilities. During the dependency years we attempt to maximize the opportunities for cultural learning, and the describer-learner relationships zoom into sharp focus.

In some cultures the transmission process is predominantly assigned to parents and extended family members. Roles, values, behaviours and skills are shared informally with the young, and the home, village and community provide contextual examples of culture-in-action (Mead, 1970). Within our industrial culture the lines of transmission from old to young are diffuse. The extended family is frequently separated from the younger generation by virtue of immigration patterns or by familial geographic moves to seek employment (Suransky, 1982). The nuclear family has equally lacked a cohesive influence over recent years. Feuerstein and Hoffman (1983) suggest:

The breakdown of the extended family and the growing divorce rate has limited the effective range of familial agents for cultural transmission. Whereas grandparents and relatives once played an active role in children's informal educational processes, this burden now falls increasingly on the parents together or, in more and more cases, on the single parent alone (p. 59).

In addition, as the work-force absorbs both adult males and females, cultural transmission to the young has increasingly been entrusted to institutions within our society (Elkind, 1981; Suransky, 1982). Thus, we may delineate parents as primary describers of our culture to preschool children, but we cannot forget that daycare workers, babysitters and older siblings serve a caregiver function. Nor can we deny the "caretaker service" offered by mass media, for some children receive many hours of cultural messages from the television each week though such exposure "is unable to offer the crucial mediating influence of the adult agent" (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1983, p. 59).

Hence, for the preschool child, cultural describers encompass a wide range of human caregivers. The range becomes more diverse as the child grows older. The school system may be considered as the country's, or province's, official voice of cultural transmission (Kimball, 1974; Paulsen, 1968) and, as such, exerts a powerful influence upon young children. Wilcox (1982) notes that "schools are agents of cultural transmission involved in socializing a new generation to fit the needs of the culture" (p. 301). We might then add the school in general, and teachers in particular, to our accumulating range of cultural describers. The school and classroom, both geographically and conceptually, may be somewhat distanced from the family context. Classroom peers, who share the same educational and social milieu for several hours each day, may also emerge as cultural or sub-cultural influences (Elkind, 1981; Mead, 1970).

This study focuses on kindergarten children in our culture. They are the "learners" and it is acknowledged that they may interact with multiple "describers" within their life-contexts. Within the conceptual

framework of cultural transmission these kindergarten children may be viewed as a unique group. They are "learners" in transition. Partial days are spent in school and partial days with parents or substitute caregivers. Kindergarten children receive cultural information from both the formal arm of the transmission process, the education system, and from informal interactions with relevant caregivers. This of course happens throughout the child's school life, but the kindergarten year crystalizes the transition from informal to formal cultural transmission.

Who are these "learners" of our culture? They have been delineated as young children, and for the purpose of this research, as kindergarten-aged children. They have been described as biologically and culturally dependent (Burton, 1978), and as fulfilling a learner role in the interactive process of cultural transmission. Our view of the nature of the learner is dependent upon our conception of the child. If he is considered a *tabula rasa* then one could well conceptualize the child as a sponge, soaking in layers of knowledge directly acquired from the describer or the environment. However, I would suggest that implications that the child is a vessel to be filled, a blank sheet to be inscribed or clay to be molded, do not do him justice. We have sufficient evidence to suggest that the child not only abstracts information but also dynamically acts upon his world from birth (Bower, 1979). He is an active processor, selecting, organizing and utilizing information directly from the environment and from transactions with fellow humans.

As the describer brings his accumulated cultural store to the transmission process so the child brings his knowledge and strategies to the interaction. The active, intentional describer meets the apprentice, or cultural learner-in-action, during the learning process.

Learning Interactions: The Process of Cultural Transmission:

... a child's growth of knowledge must be seen in terms of an initiation into a public and accepted body of understanding ... and ... that depends upon the child's attention being drawn to things and his being put in the way of things by adults. (Hamlyn, 1982, p. 29)

The process of cultural transmission focuses on the learning interaction between the describer and the learner, the initiated and the apprentice. Cultural learning is thus a social dynamic (Shotter and Newson, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978), and literacy learning, as one strand of the cultural fabric, is also perceived to occur within the context of human interactions (Taylor, 1983). Three assumptions are basic to conceptualizing the interactive process of cultural transmission.

Initially, we must assume that there is an underlying human need to advance beyond biological existence to encompass knowledge, ideas, values and beliefs within one's everyday life. An interdependent assumption is that, as humans, we find it important to transmit that transcendent knowledge to new generations. Thirdly, we need to assume that humans are receptive, open learning systems, adaptable and responsive to change (Feuerstein et al, 1980; Piaget, 1965).

Feuerstein's (1980) model of cognitive competence and modifiability is grounded in these three assumptions and offers some insight into the qualities of the transmission process. He suggests that cultural knowledge and human learning are inextricably intertwined. If culture is not transmitted then the child has restricted cognitive performance and reduced ability to interact directly with his world. Conversely, the child maximizes his performance as a functional societal member if cultural knowledge has been transmitted effectively. Feuerstein explains that the child learns in two ways. He learns through direct interaction with his environment (Piaget, 1965), namely through "chance encounter with and

direct exposure to stimuli and his active interaction with them" (Feuerstein, 1980, p. xvii). The child also learns through mediated interactions wherein caregivers interpret, or describe, the cultural environment to the child. Feuerstein symbolizes the two modes of interactive learning as:

- a) S-O-R: stimulus - organism - response, i.e. direct interaction with the environment.
- b) S-H-O-R: stimulus - human mediator - organism - response, i.e. mediated learning experience.

Feuerstein maintains that the quality and quantity of the child's mediated learning experiences appear to be central to cultural transmission, for they not only serve to interpret the culture at the child's level but also enhance the child's opportunities to obtain maximum benefit from his direct interactions with the environment. In mediated learning experiences the caregiver as the mediating agent, or describer, and the child, as apprentice or learner, interact in the transmission process:

This mediating agent, guided by his intentions, culture and emotional investment, selects and organizes the world of stimuli for the child. The mediator selects stimuli that are most appropriate and then frames, filters and schedules them; he determines the appearance or disappearance of certain stimuli and ignores others. Through the process of mediation, the cognitive structure of the child is affected. The child acquires behavior patterns and learning sets, which in turn become important ingredients of his capacity to become modified through direct exposure to stimuli. Since direct exposure to stimuli quantitatively constitutes the greatest source of the organism's experience, the existence of sets of strategies and repertoires that permit the organism to efficiently use this exposure has considerable bearing upon cognitive development. (Feuerstein, 1980, p. 16)

Feuerstein explains that the process is "culturally determined" (1980, p. 20) in the sense that such learning interactions are necessary for shaping the behaviour of future generations.

Feuerstein and Hoffman (1983) explicate the five major characteristics that define the mediated learning experience. In the following description the first three qualities, they maintain, are considered vital components of mediated interactions. The last two, they suggest, when combined with the primary three, result in effective mediated learning:

1. Intentionality of the mediator: the caregiver should, explicitly or implicitly, share his purpose with the child to engage his attention and to stimulate shared participation in the interaction.
2. "Transcendence from the immediate here-and-now situation" (1983, p. 56): mediated learning does not involve satisfying basic needs, but has an expansionary purpose to encourage the child to project his knowledge into other contexts.
3. Interpreting meaning by the mediator: during the transmission process the content has cultural meaning with an accompanying value for cultural members. This content arises directly from personal, family or general cultural needs.
4. Competence: the mediator's job is to make the child feel competent during the interaction. Tasks and content have to be organized to encourage the child to feel successful. Only then will the young child feel confident to try out his learning in new contexts.
5. Regulation of behaviour: the mediator is required to select age-appropriate cultural learning experiences, to pace them, and to regulate the information flow.

In defining these five qualities Feuerstein emphasizes the role of the describer in the transmission process, though he does acknowledge that the learner has to be reciprocally involved in the interaction for

learning to occur. Feuerstein focuses on the child to describe the results of the mediated learning experience, maintaining that such interactions stimulate within-child cognitive growth and also enhance the young learner's ability to benefit from his direct interactions with the environment. Thus, from Feuerstein's model of cultural learning, we may conceptualize two types of learning engagements, namely the adult supported interaction described previously as the describer-learner interaction (Figure 2: Diagram a), and the child initiated-direct interaction with the environment that results from prior experiences with the former type of engagement (Figure 2: Diagram b).

Diagram a

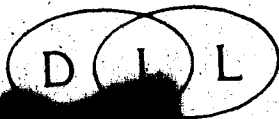
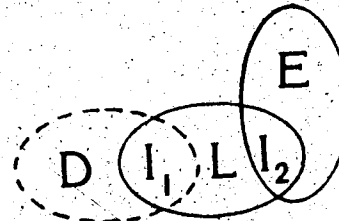


Diagram b



- cultural describers
- cultural learners
- learning interaction (describer-learner)
- environment
- learning interaction (learner-environment)

Figure 2: Two Types of Learning Interactions

Nearly the child, as learner, provides a pragmatic focus to Feuerstein's theoretical conception of cultural learning. However his emphasis on the describer's role leaves me somewhat uncertain about the interplay between the child and caregiver during the course of a social learning experience. The child has an active contribution to make and it would seem that success or failure of the transmission process may lie

within the dynamic of reciprocity, the mutual "give-and-take" that characterizes human communication. Wells (1983), in his longitudinal study of young children's language learning, recorded many hours of dialogue amongst children and their caregivers. Within the homes, Wells noted that there was no curriculum or direct teaching.

Yet all the children we observed made great progress in learning their native language and simultaneously in learning, through language, about the world in which they lived. All were noticing features of interest and asking questions about them, meeting problems and trying to find solutions to them, sometimes on their own, and sometimes by enlisting adult assistance. There were no non-verbal children, none who were not active makers of meaning.
(Wells, 1983, p. 279)

A significant portion of a learning interaction is thus contributed by the children themselves. They initiate topics of interest, they see problems and tackle them, they ask for assistance and they continually attempt to make sense out of their environment. The caregivers, suggests Wells (1983), treat the children "as equal partners in conversation" (p. 279) by encouraging the children's initiations and by expanding their contributions. Home-based dialogue is thus frequently "a reciprocal form of interaction in which meanings are negotiated, not unilaterally imposed" (p. 279). Thus, encouraging and accepting the children's contributions, sharing their interests, negotiating meaning and extending their knowledge by moving from familiar to new contexts, are facets of the learning interaction that may occur in the context of home activities when "jointly engaged in with an adult" (Wells, 1983, p. 281).

Dyson and Genishi (1983) also affirm the powerful impact of reciprocity on children's learning. They suggest that a key variable in a learning interaction is the caregiver's ability to support children's thinking by responding to their contributions. This form of sensitive

interconnection with the children's worlds, they propose, leads to reflective thinking whereby children can transpose one event from a concretely experienced context to past experiences and to "hypothesize about the future" (p. 754). Snow (1983) also emphasizes the importance of the "give-and-take" dynamic in caregiver-child interactions. She suggests that children's learning is facilitated by the adult's ability to utilize semantically contingent dialogue. This type of strategy includes the adult's continuation of child-initiated topics, expansions that are limited to the child's topic, extensions which build new information on to the theme, clarifying questions to seek negotiated meaning with the child, and the provision of direct answers.

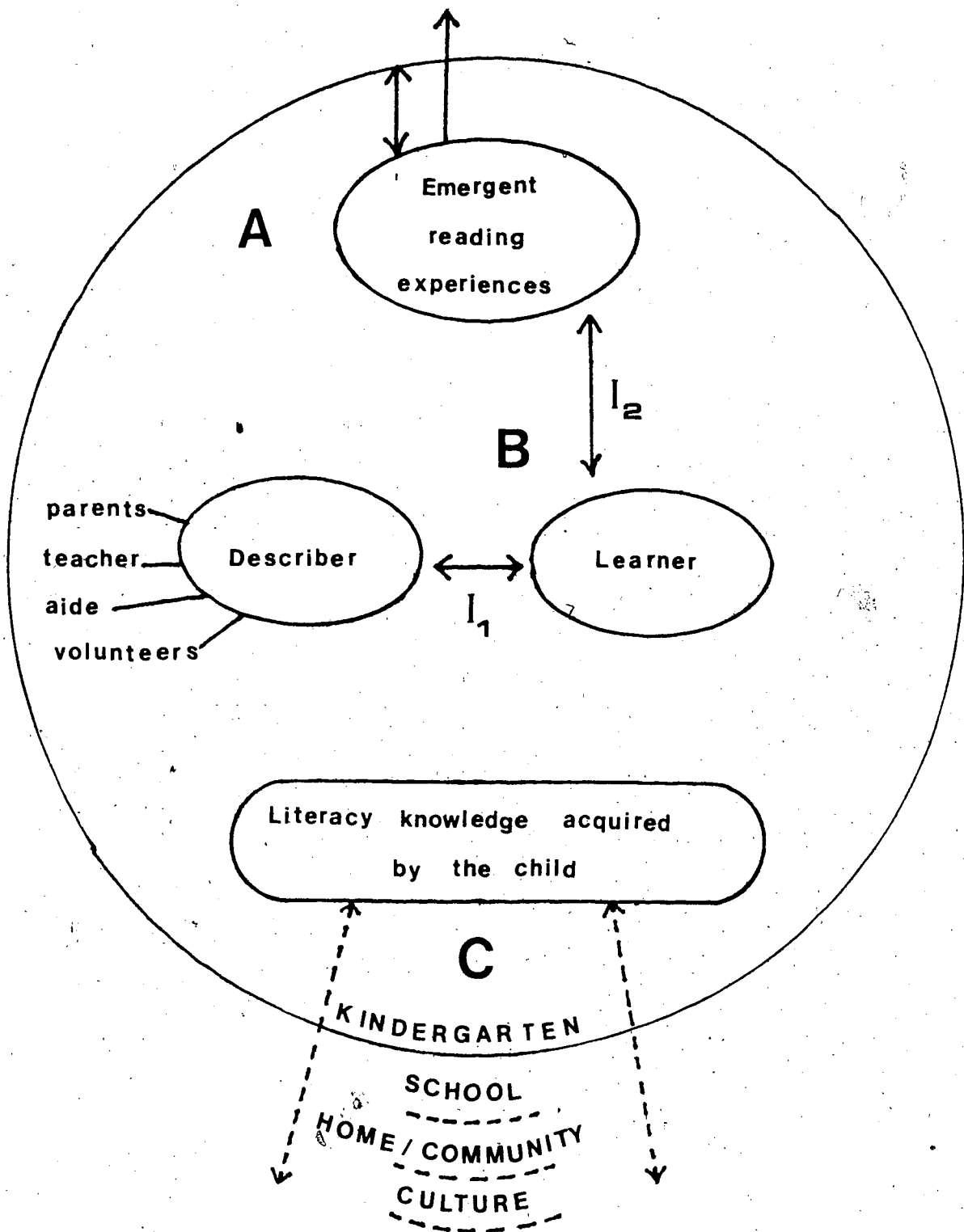
Hence, the qualities of the contributions of both the describers and the learners are major variables in the interactive process of cultural transmission. There is a delicate interplay of reciprocity between the caregiver and the child in learning interactions, with the describer providing an interpretive context to build upon the learner's contributions. Feuerstein (1980) provides little information about the reciprocity involved in this engagement, nor does he suggest how the subtleties of the exchange are affected when the child moves from the home contexts to the world of multiple caregivers in a daycare setting, or to the world of school where the caregiver-child ratio may be 1:25 or more. Dyson and Genishi (1983), Wells (1983) and Suransky (1982; 1981) note that the process of learning is diametrically changed for the child when he does move from one childhood context to another. He may well lose his "thick describers" (Suransky, 1981), or caregivers who know his personal world and who can hence offer semantically contingent strategies. He also may be "limited to fitting into the teacher's

interpretive context, rather than supported in creating (his) own" (Dyson and Genishi, 1983, p. 754). Wells (1983) suggests that indeed the child's learning interactions at school may be "almost the exact reverse of his experience at home" (p. 287) in that, at school, few of the engagements are one-to-one and few are initiated by the child. Adult questions at school are frequently geared towards encouraging the child to "display" (p. 286) his knowledge and few interactions extend from the child's topic, but strongly tend to pursue the teacher's agenda. Thus, there is a firm suggestion that the child experiences qualitatively different learning interactions in the multiple social contexts of childhood. Cultural transmission may well embody alternate interactive styles within the different contexts experienced by the child.

Focusing on Cultural Transmission in One Context

This study primarily focuses on one context, the kindergarten classroom, and particularly on six children's experiences within that setting, although the other contexts of childhood will receive some consideration. Cultural transmission of knowledge provides the conceptual framework for the study, the approach to how the phenomenon is "seen". Literacy learning, as one aspect of knowledge that is transmitted by the culture, is the phenomenon investigated.

Figure 3 provides a framework within which children's literacy experiences, in this study, are envisaged. The children are conceptualized as being engaged in literacy interactions (B), and growing in literacy knowledge (C), within the social context of the Kindergarten classroom (A). These interactions, and the knowledge base acquired, are clearly influenced by the interrelated contexts of school, home and community and the macro-contexts provided by cultural needs, interests and values, and



- A Literacy Context i.e. print-related materials and activities
- B Print-related human interactions:
- I_1 : describer-learner interactions
 - I_2 : direct learner-environment interactions
- C Literacy knowledge acquired by the child, over time

Figure 3: Focusing on One Context for the Cultural Transmission of Literacy

embodied within cultural institutions such as the hierarchical education system. Figure 3 echoes my belief that "knowing how to read" is, "a social phenomenon -- which is intrinsically embedded in the culture ..."
(Snow, 1983, p. 167).

CHAPTER TWO

FOCUSING: A REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Cultural Transmission and Print Literacy

Cultural knowledge is coded in complex systems of symbols ... Children in every society are taught to "see" the world in a particular way. They learn to recognize and identify some objects and ignore others. For example, although each person can make and recognize an almost infinite number of sounds, in every society so far studied, less than sixty have been selected for linguistic communication ... Thus, through a long period of socialization, children learn to organize their perceptions, concepts and behavior. (Spradley and McCurdy, 1972, pp. 8-9)

Cultural groups select and filter knowledge about their world in order to describe it to the younger generation. Clearly, the knowledge interpreted to young children reflects the perceptions and values of the describers. Via the cultural transmission process children develop a tacit theory of the world in which they live, namely they begin to make sense out of their environmental context (Smith, 1971, 1975; Spradley and McCurdy, 1972). Caregivers mediate by selectively framing key aspects of the cultural heritage to pass on to the young. Components emphasized largely reflect the life-needs of the culture. As the child interacts with caregivers he develops mainstream and explicit learning about culturally related content, for example "table manners" and "cooking the Christmas turkey", and at the same time an implicit or underground learning related to things valued by the culture. Thus, when an aspect of the culture is framed by the caregiver, the child perceives that it is both important and valued by the culture. Frequently, this transmission of content valued by the culture is described as hidden content or even the "hidden curriculum" within our schools (Gearing and Epstein, 1982;

Wilcox, 1982).

Print literacy, or accumulating knowledge about reading, is essential for the life-needs of members of our culture, and hence is both selected and framed for transmission to the young and also highly valued by the cultural describers. Goodman (1977) underscores the intimate relationship between life-needs and culturally transmitted content, when he comments, "On a world basis, literacy can be easily seen to be proportionate to the need for literacy within any society or subgroup of the particular society" (p. 309). Holdaway (1980) notes our consensus of agreement centred around the attainment of print literacy within our society:

Despite the popularity of newer media, such as radio and TV, no person can reach full human stature in our society without competence in reading. Ten years of compulsory failure at school can be crippling enough for the poor reader without the continuing experience of deprivation which he faces in a society based on the expectations of literacy (p. 11).

It would seem that our industrial society expects literate members and implicitly conveys the message that literacy is valued, and indeed holds a partial, but powerful, passport into full group membership. Conversely, breakdown in the cultural transmission of print literacy carries an attendant burden of isolation or deprivation from cultural affairs.

In non-industrial cultures hunting and food collection are vital activities for sustaining life. The child serves an ongoing "readiness" training related to role learning. "Boy" the stick thrower, spear sharpener, arrow carrier and tracker, and "Girl" the child minder, flour pounder or fire mender are apprentices for Man the Hunter and Woman the Homemaker. Apprenticeships and readiness training start in infancy and follow a continuum to puberty, serving useful functions to permit the child to accept a full adult role in his society. Whilst the lengthy

apprenticeship towards adult literacy does not precisely parallel the survival-training apprenticeship of children reared in non-industrial cultures, nevertheless literate growth pursues a continuum and the attainment of literacy is inherently necessary for life in our modern world. The twentieth century interest in the child's emerging print literacy is undoubtedly tied to the demands of living within an increasingly print-oriented society. Reading serves a pragmatic function in our society for, "it would be difficult to find any activity, whether in school, in the home, on the farm, in business, in the professions, or even in recreational pursuits that does not require some reading ability" (Bond, Tinker and Wasson, 1979, p. 3). It serves an enrichment function, also, in that literate exploration can forge links between present experience and one's cultural inheritance, and can aid in conceptualizing cultural subgroups or the larger world context. Cultural transmission, focusing on the acquisition of print literacy, is implicitly woven into our informal and formal educational endeavours, though the question of how the child should best "serve the apprenticeship" is at issue.

There is a "conflict of minds" (Bronowski and Mazlish, 1960, p. 502) centred on the child as an apprentice reader. There are educators and researchers who believe that the transmission of literacy should be orderly and highly structured. They note that reading can be broken down from a complex whole into a hierarchy of sub-skills (Engelman and Osborn, 1970; Flesch, 1955; Stevens and Orem, 1968). Teaching the young child to read can be accomplished by any caregiver, as long as the describer provides the sub-skills in a pre-arranged pattern. The receiver thus learns letter features and letter sounds, syllables and consonant and vowel combinations, and then words. He is thought to progress into

literacy by utilizing the growing clusters of sub-skills to decode print symbols and hence gain access to comprehension (Gough, 1972; La Berge and Samuels, 1974). For the beginning reader, cultural content and meaning are subordinated to skill learning and methodology. Strict adherents of this approach would suggest that reading is not effective until the child can decode print independently and with some degree of automaticity. Hence there are young children who are literate or non-literate, readers or non-readers.

An alternate school of thought suggests that literacy is not confined to learning "a technology of reading skills" (Goodman, 1977, p. 309), but is part of a language learning and communication process that starts at birth. Literacy is not considered to be an "all or nothing" phenomenon, but is viewed as being part of the child's general learning continuum, with a rich variety of emergent reading behaviours acquired over time. There are, thus, no neat or absolute separations between readers and non-readers. The child is viewed as learning about print as he learns about language, through direct interaction with his print oriented world and through mediated reading-related experiences with caregivers (Clay, 1979a; Doake, 1981; Goodman, 1977; Holdaway, 1979; King, 1980; Lass, 1983; McKenzie, 1977). Within this philosophical framework the child is conceptualized as a cultural learner, a meaning-seeker and a pragmatist. He brings his knowledge of the culture, his ability to make sense from his world (Smith, 1975) and his intentions or purposes to each reading encounter. Reading, from this viewpoint, is a "whole language process" (McKenzie, 1977) which is learned naturally, given a facilitative and intentional caregiver, a rich print environment and a receptive and intentional learner.

A third view of apprenticeship towards literacy in general, and towards beginning reading in particular, is embodied in the school system's eclectic approach. Though several schools may support the "sub-skills" or "natural language" philosophies, a more general classroom stance is to avoid absolute adherence to either. Schools, as the official arms of cultural transmission and socialization, are extremely conservative (Wilcox, 1982) and their approach to transmitting literacy must either reflect such conservatism or possibly confusion in the face of conflicting views and research. It would seem that schools largely view the concept of "beginning to read" as quite synonymous with starting First Grade at the age of six (Durkin, 1980). Formal reading readiness exercises focusing on "visual discrimination, auditory discrimination and blending and auditory-visual integration" (Ollila, 1981, p. 48) are still incorporated into Grade One programmes, and hence there are implicit divisions apparent, namely non-readers, readers-getting-ready, and readers. Ollila's (1981) recent description of Canadian beginning reading instruction emphasizes the eclecticism of the schools' approach in the transmission of literacy:

Reading is most likely to be in a subgroup of the class using basal readers which include a phonics program. Subskills in decoding and comprehension are taught and practised in group and independent activities. The sub-skills program often is supplemented by a language experience program in which the children write stories or by an individualized program in which they read library books or supplemental readers. The reading program is coordinated with the total language arts program although separate instructional activities are provided for speaking and listening, penmanship, spelling, and literature (p. 50).

With the evidence of a dense, complex field of literature, and the enormous time investment accumulated over the past century, few would doubt our commitment in transmitting literacy to our young. However,

equally few would doubt our present confusion. Effective transmission of literacy, or "serving the apprenticeship", is still enshrouded in mist. In order to look at new perspectives, and to build a framework from which to conceptualize the transmission of literacy within a cultural context, it seems imperative to explore the avenues previously travelled and researched. My intent is not to re-tread old avenues, but through awareness of past approaches new roadways through the mist may be sought. Brief cornerstones of thought, in the last century's research on early reading experiences, will be explored, as "yesterday's" findings clearly influence "today's" picture, and may well provide springboards for "tomorrow's" thoughts.

Early Reading Experiences: A Historical Perspective

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the child's introduction to reading seemed a dreary affair. The content of the readers was dull and moralistic and the language stilted to such an extent that "almost all the sentences were foreign to the child's natural thought and expression" (Huey, 1908, p. 319). Introductory reading instruction followed a mechanistic pattern of alphabet and syllable repetition, spelling, rote learning and recitation (Smith, 1965). The emphasis was placed clearly on the content of the cultural knowledge to be transmitted to the young, namely the religious, moral, nationalistic and social messages that were considered necessary for sustaining cultural life and values. Little attention was thus focused on the developmental needs of the child as the learner, or the quality of the interaction between the child and the teacher. The describer, usually the classroom teacher, certainly was embodied with purpose though minimal attention was given to the learner's intentions.

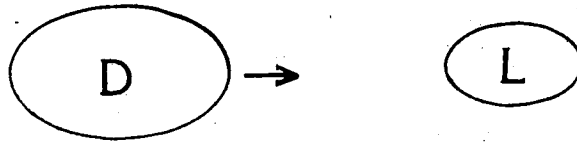


Figure 4: Uni-directional Literacy Transmission

The flow of transmission was somewhat uni-directional with the describer directing a stream of literacy knowledge to the learner (Figure 4). The learner's verbal recitation of transmitted skills served, not as initiating steps in an interaction, but rather as repetitions of the teacher's transmission.

Dissatisfaction with educational practices had been rumbling beneath the surface for decades, but at the close to the nineteenth century the insistent opposition demanded to be heard. Transmission of literacy, with the focal emphasis on the cultural message and the teacher's role rather than the child, was actively questioned. The questioning arose from rather diverse sources. Watson (1924) as an advocate of the supremacy of learned behaviour, was strongly in favour of teaching and shaping desired behaviours, literacy being considered as representative of one such behaviour. Learning, he noted, occurred as a direct result of controlled interaction between the teacher and the learner. Caregiver and child were, thus, equally key variables in a learning activity. Watson's conception was de-emphasized by educators, at the time, for a more powerful voice held public attention. The naturalistic thinkers, as cognitive descendants of Rousseau, Froebel and Pestalozzi, espoused the view that the child was born with an innate thought structure that required nurturing to develop into mature cognition. The stamping-on of literacy knowledge was considered

antithetical to the child's natural growth and development. In the early days of the twentieth century such a naturalistic view of child development emerged in educational practice.

Huey, writing at the turn of the century, was truly an eclectic on the subject of reading pedagogy, but his views on early reading instruction reflected the naturalistic perspective. He favoured postponing formal reading instruction until the child was eight or nine years of age (1908). Huey, however, was actively in favour of print exposure and experiences within the home and believed that "the natural method of learning to read was just the same as that of learning to talk" (1908, p. 330). Dewey (1900; 1902), whose educational writings spearheaded the progressive school movement of the 1920's (Smith, 1965), also advocated natural print exposure in early childhood and the postponement of formal reading instruction until the child was sufficiently mature to cope with its rigors:

While there are exceptions, present physiological knowledge points to the age of about eight years as early enough for anything more than an incidental attention to visual and written language forms.
(Dewey, 1898; cited in Ollila, 1981, p. 27)

Both Huey and Dewey were supported by the popular "stage" theorists of their time. Hall (1904), followed by his pupil Gesell (1925), supported the genetic view of child development. They noted that the human organism was predetermined to unfold in stages. As the child grew he passed through developmental episodes. Individual differences were apparent but all could be viewed within developmental ranges common to all children. Hence, as we would expect variability in the onset of walking and talking but anticipate that most children will accomplish these feats within broad developmental stages, we should also expect a

range in reading achievement. "Natural maturity, or "ripeness", was considered necessary for beginning reading instruction and the child's progress would "always depend primarily upon the maturity of the nervous system" (Gesell and Ilg, 1946, p. 28). The implications seemed obvious in the early twentieth century educational world, namely, if the child was not ready to learn to read, then "wait", as readiness would occur within the predetermined maturational framework.

Thus, view a tacit shift of emphasis in the components of cultural literacy transmission. The culture no longer appeared to be emphasizing the precedence of the describer and de-emphasizing the learner's contributions to the process. On the contrary, now the learner became central to the transmission, for success or failure appeared to rest on within-child factors.

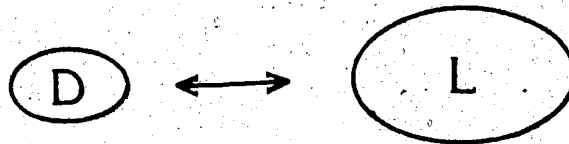


Figure 5: Focusing on Within-Child Factors
in Literacy Transmission

Breakdown of literacy transmission was perceived to be a function of timing, or of not finding optimum periods for matching the transmitted message to the child's physiological readiness.

Much of the early literacy research in the first half of the twentieth century was devoted to seeking information concerning the child's "readiness" to read. The mission to find a definable readiness period was assisted by the parallel growth of the educational testing movement (Durkin, 1980). Early literacy research was frequently pursued within an interdependent alliance with the psychological testing field.

The period may be characterized as being totally committed to elucidating within-child factors that contributed to the success or breakdown of literacy transmission.

Research's primary thrust focused on defining the magic age when neural ripeness was sufficiently developed to permit beginning reading instruction to be effective. Holmes (1927), after conducting a United States' survey of Grade One classrooms, reported that one-fifth of the children were repeating the year due to reading difficulties. Harrison (1936) observed, from her research, the alarming number of Grade One failures. Both attributed the failures to physiological immaturity and Holmes (1927) insisted that educators should consider "making mental age a requirement for permitting a child to attempt the present grade one course of study" (p. 221). The curriculum content, the abilities of the describers and the quality of the teaching-learning interactions did not appear to be issues. The central problem lay within the mental maturity of the child to tackle the intricacies of literacy. Following Morphett and Washburne's (1931) landmark research, it was considered that the answer to timing had been discovered. In 1928 and 1929, two sets of Winnetka School District first graders were tested on standard intelligence measures and locally prepared reading materials. From correlations between mental age and reading achievement it was concluded that children with a mental age of six years and six months made better progress than "less mature children" (Morphett and Washburne, 1931, p. 503). Results from this small school district were rapidly generalized across North America, as the mental age of 6.5 years became equated with the optimum stage for beginning reading instruction. Extreme analysis of mental age in relation to chronological age became an accepted byword in

the struggle to capture the "right moment" for teaching a child to read (Harrison, 1936).

A secondary thrust of early literacy research followed in close order. A form of resolution had been effected concerning "timing", and now a thorough investigation of within-child readiness factors and aptitudes was required. A veritable proliferation of research followed. Reading readiness checklists and tests were designed to track down the child's status on neurological, physiological, environmental and emotional factors (Downing and Thackray, 1971; Durkin, 1980). Hierarchies of sub-aptitudes and sub-skills were created (Betts, 1936; Cole, 1938; Harrison, 1936) and within a short period of time publishing companies added readiness materials to their basal reading series.

The unitary mental age theory, followed by the more diverse sub-skills approach, were both implicitly woven into reading readiness testing and the resultant readiness programmes that were created in schools. These approaches dwelled on within-child factors, gained educational respectability in the late 1920's, were utilized extensively through the 1940's and even seem to have residual use in today's classrooms (Downing and Thackray, 1971; Ollila, 1981). However, since inception, dissenting voices have been raised concerning both the reliability and validity of the readiness tests and also the utility of placing a high degree of emphasis on within-child variables to the exclusion of others.

Gates (1937) raised questions about the teacher's ability and the teaching methodologies that surely interacted with the child's contribution. He tested four groups of Grade One students learning to read in four different contexts. The four sets of teachers ranged from

those considered "expert" to those ranked as "below average". The classroom reading materials varied from excellent multiple resources, both commercial and teacher-made, to those considered "inferior (1937, p. 505). Methodologies were also diverse. The expert teachers, using a wide range of materials, taught diagnostically, constantly monitored pupil progress and made adaptations to match individual learning needs. At the other end of the spectrum the below average teachers, using poor materials, tended to teach "largely by mass methods, with much oral instruction and little individual or self-manageable work" (1937, p. 505). Gates reported that a mental age of five years appeared to be sufficient for beginning reading in the "excellent" condition, whereas a mental age of six years and six months or even seven years were not indicators of success in the "below average" context. Gates denied the simplistic relationship between mental age and literacy acquisition. He cited multivariate factors involved in teaching the child to read. Gates emphasized the importance of quality instruction to meet individual needs, diverse methodologies, varied materials, and factors related to the child's preschool home environment. Though Gates could be considered a lonely voice in the wilderness, as few listened to his views on early reading at the time (Durkin, 1980), his work redressed the balance in the describer-learner relationship. Both teacher and child were considered as equally contributing partners in the literacy transmission process. Though Gates (1937) did not specifically address the interaction between the describer and the learner, it is implicitly embedded in his discussions of discovering "the particular needs of the individual pupils and (making) adjustments to them" (p. 508) and his advocacy for the utilization of diverse methodologies and materials for teaching

beginning reading. Gates' research indicated a movement towards an interactionist view of literacy acquisition, namely that literate behaviour emerged from a qualitative interaction between the caregiver and the child (Figure 6).

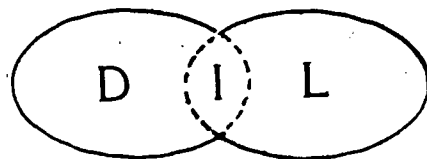


Figure 6: Describers and Learners:

Equal Partners in Literacy Transmission

Following the Second World War a new stream of thought arose to challenge the total reading readiness concept in general and the mental age theory in particular. No longer was the naturalistic view of "wait for maturity" before beginning reading instruction treated with the reverence it had previously inspired. Pragmatic reality reared its head. The war had revealed that a significant portion of soldiers, presumably reared under the "wait" system, were functionally illiterate (Smith, 1965). The postwar space age technology demanded a higher degree of citizen literacy than any previous age. The concept emerged that reading readiness was not only an early childhood phenomenon but could apply at any point in life when the reader was faced with alien concepts embedded in print (Gray, 1956; Russell, 1949). In addition, North America turned its thoughts away from external affairs to focus on the urgent problems within its domestic structure. The impact of environmental influences on the young child reared in the ghettos of New York or the barrens of Inuvik could no longer be denied. Environmental deprivation

or enrichment, and reader-teacher-methodology variables were indisputably involved in the success or failure of early reading instruction. During the postwar period reading readiness testing procedures underwent stringent analysis and were criticized for their lack of utility in suggesting strategies for teaching literate behaviour (MacGinitie, 1969), for the weak reliability and validity of sub-test measures (Downing and Thackray, 1971; Durkin, 1980; MacGinitie, 1969), and indeed for their "excessive emphasis on factors intrinsic to the child" (Coltheart, 1979, p. 25).

Looking back along historical avenues we can see a progression of thought concerning early reading experiences. The progression certainly cannot be described as linear. At all times the thought avenues are complex, and on some occasions they spring into diversity. Through following broad perspectives it is possible to trace trends and shifts of focus. When these trends are viewed within the conceptual framework of cultural transmission and literacy acquisition we perceive that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' emphases on cultural content and the primacy of the describer, gradually give way to an emphasis on the learner, or the within-child factors, during the first decades of the twentieth century. More recently we may view a new shift of focus. The environmental learning context, the purposes and methods of the caregiver, and the intentions and attributes of the child seem complexly interwoven in the transmission of literacy.

Movement Towards Understanding the Complexities
of Literacy Transmission: Today's Thoughts

Embedded within the research perspective, the key assumptions and the general purposes of this study are the central premises that literacy

learning takes place within a socio-cultural context, and its development is stimulated through children's dynamic interactions with caregivers and through their direct interactions with print-related stimuli in the environment. From these premises three questions emerge:

1. What type of cultural context facilitates literacy growth in young children?
2. How is literacy acquired within that context?
3. What literacy learning is accomplished by young children?

Quite frequently, when "today's thoughts" are examined, we find that research makes oblique references to these premises and resulting questions. For example, McKenzie (1977), in explaining factors contributing to successful literacy learning, comments on children from privileged environments:

They are taken out, and talked with, have stories read to them, own and share books as a pleasurable experience; they observe their parents read, and perhaps write and receive letters. Such background experiences nurture children's general knowledge as well as their understanding of books and written language. They appear to be the right contextual support for successful ventures into reading and writing and provide a foundation and a spring-board for further learning (p. 315).

Within this extract, McKenzie implicitly focuses on key elements:

1. The context for literacy growth:
 - a) The "human factors" embedded within the context, e.g. the "contextual support" from caregivers and the interest in literacy events demonstrated by the children.
 - b) The literacy context, e.g. the "written language" of books, stories and letters provided in the environment.
2. The "How?" of literacy acquisition, namely the young children's learning interactions:

- a) The learning interactions with caregivers, e.g. the children were "taken out", "talked with" and shared books with their parents.
 - b) The children's direct interactions with print-related materials, e.g. their own "successful ventures into reading and writing".
3. The developing literacy knowledge acquired by the children in such contexts and through such interactions, e.g. the "foundation" of literacy learning being accumulated.

Within the framework provided by these elements "today's thoughts" on the cultural transmission of literacy will be examined. Each element will be highlighted by investigating current research, though it is readily acknowledged that the factors are only separated for the purposes of such investigation. In the lived-world of the child many of these elements are interwoven within literacy transmission and learning.

The Context

The Human Factors: Teale (1978) likens the complexity of early reading research:

... to that ball of tangled yarn buried in the sewing basket. While the ball is all yarn, it consists of bits and pieces of various types and colors, all intertwined. Loose ends protrude at several points (p. 924).

This is an especially appropriate analogy to describe the research focusing on the human context in which literacy develops. It is problematic to unravel the "human tangles" when studies have investigated groups of early readers (Briggs and Elkind, 1973; Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; King and Friesen, 1972; Plessas and Oakes, 1964; Tobin, 1982), or individual children (Bishop, 1974; Gardner, 1970; Krippner, 1963; Lass, 1983, 1982; Soderbergh, 1971; Torrey, 1969; Yates, 1981), when some have

been concerned with measurement on standardized psychological, psycholinguistic or sociological tests (Briggs and Elkind, 1973; Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; King and Friesen, 1972; Krippner, 1963; Tobin, 1982) and others have focused on "natural" print environments and criterion referenced measures (Doake, 1981; Dyson, 1982, 1981; Forester, 1977; Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1982; Lass, 1983, 1982; Schickedanz and Sullivan, 1984; Sulzby, 1981; Taylor, 1983, 1981), and when some studies have researched children in the process of acquiring literate behaviour (Doake, 1981; Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982; Lass, 1983, 1982; Mason, 1982, 1981; Soderbergh, 1971; Sulzby, 1981) and others have gained information from retrospective techniques (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Tobin, 1982). When reading the range of research, quite frequently the human context of literacy learning seems an implicit backdrop rather than an active variable.

White (1975) acknowledges that the child's family context, during the early years of life, is "obviously central" (p. 4) to the child's later learning in school. However, the factors contributing to that centrality seem less than obvious. Various researchers have claimed a positive relationship between the early reading behaviour of children and the high socioeconomic status and education level of their parents (Briggs and Elkind, 1973; King and Friesen, 1972; Plessas and Oakes, 1964). However, it seems unlikely that we can assume any straightforward relationship between the parents' societal and educational levels and effective literacy transmission. Torrey's (1969) study of an early reader indicates that the parents could claim neither middle class status nor enriched education. Durkin's (1966) California study of early readers reports largely lower-middle class or lower-working class

parents. In Clark's (1976) study of Scottish precocious readers, only twelve out of sixty-four parents had obtained post-secondary education. These studies suggest the dangers of over-simplification. In a similar vein, researchers have noted that the child's early literacy behaviours may be stimulated by the presence of older siblings in the family (Durkin, 1966; Plessas and Oakes, 1964), though clearly there have been many children who were early readers without this advantage (Durkin, 1966; Clark, 1976; Krippner, 1963; Lass, 1983, 1982). As Kifer (1977) observes, such home or family characteristics "are of limited utility in explaining how homes actually operate to provide either effective or ineffective educational settings for children" (pp. 6-7).

When delving into the research, human qualities surface that seem to be more pertinent to the young child's literacy acquisition than the dimensions of societal class or the child's birth position within the family. Several studies mention parents' attitudes (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Keshian, 1963; Moon, 1977). If parents value education in general, and reading acquisition in particular, then it seems that they are willing to stimulate their young child's growth towards literacy. Clark (1976) reports this positive attitude towards education from her interviews with parents of early readers:

All parents did ... seem to value education and to wish for their children what they themselves experienced - or what they had missed (p. 102).

As Raven (1980) points out, in his analysis of a Scottish preschool intervention programme, this valuation of education may not be tied to altruistic concerns for one's child but may reflect the society's economic health. In his study, parental concern for the educational progress of their young was allied with a strong desire that their

children would be able to gain employment during post-school years in a society where jobs were difficult to find. Whatever the underlying purpose, it seems clear that homes that value education are prepared to translate that attitude into the reality of spending time to encourage the child's growth (Clark, 1976; Keshian, 1963). A common characteristic of homes with early readers, or children rapidly accumulating literacy knowledge, is that caregivers are "readily available as resource persons" (Cohn, 1981, p. 550) to answer questions concerning the functions and forms of print, and to encourage the child's personal print explorations. Durkin (1966), in summarizing her New York case studies of families with early readers, comments on the facilitative nature of the homes:

From family interview data, it appeared that most of the parental help which led to a child's early reading ability was given in response to the child's questions and requests for assistance (p. 135).

Another home-based factor that appears related to early literacy development is that older family members not only serve as resource people but also actively initiate story reading sessions with the young child (Clark, 1976; Cohn, 1981; Doake, 1981; Durkin, 1966; King and Friesen, 1972; Krippner, 1963; Lass, 1983, 1982; McKenzie, 1977; Sutton, 1969; Taylor, 1983). Research thus supports the concept that parents involved in the literacy growth of their children serve as attitudinal transmitters, responsive listeners, active initiators and also as models. Several studies indicate that young children successfully developing literacy knowledge live in homes where the parents read widely themselves, and hence function as readers-in-action models (Durkin, 1966; Krippner, 1963; Keshian, 1963). The studies reporting the positive relationship between the presence of an older sibling and the early reading behaviour of a younger child in the family may, in actuality, be describing a home

context in which the older child emulates the caregivers' positive characteristics in providing a reading model, in acting as a print facilitator, and in initiating story reading with the younger child.

The attitudes, characteristics and intentions of caregivers and siblings are clearly important in the human context of literacy acquisition. However, the learner, or the young child, has an equally key role in the learning process. The child as a learner, in research studies, has often been described as a relatively disembodied being with certain global characteristics. In studies focusing on early readers we may discover that these children have special aptitudes in sound blending (Briggs and Elkind, 1973; Evans and Smith, cited in Torrey, 1969), or syntactic ability (Briggs and Elkind, 1973), in letter naming (King and Friesen, 1972) or visual memory (Krippner, 1963; Tobin, 1982), or in intelligence (Krippner, 1963; Plessas and Oakes, 1964; Sutton, 1969). However, as in the research on the family's socioeconomic status, these correlational links between early reading ability and later performance on psychological or psycholinguistic tasks really have such limited utility in describing the child. They involve circuitous reasoning; namely because certain test scores are correlated with early reading ability it does not mean that abilities, supposedly embedded in the scores, in any way explain the onset of reading in the first place (Downing and Thackray, 1971). Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) point out two major problems with this type of research:

For one thing, one must not confuse positive correlation with a causal relationship. The fact that all these variables correlate positively with school achievement in reading and writing does not mean that they are the cause of the observed achievement. For another thing, one cannot help wondering what in this drawn-out list of factors is specifically linked to reading and writing (p. 12).

An excellent example may be found in Krippner's (1963) study of Larry, who apparently commenced reading at eighteen months. Larry was four and a half when tested on a massive battery of psychological, linguistic and sociological measures. Larry was able to read second and third grade materials, and demonstrated sound performance on most of the tests, and yet interestingly he had a visual problem, crossed dominance, relatively unsophisticated visual-motor integration and failed the reading readiness battery!

Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) comment, "We have searched unsuccessfully in this literature for references to children themselves" (p. 12). With few exceptions, my search mirrors their lack of success. Some human characteristics do emerge. Durkin (1966), in generalizing about early readers discovered in California and New York, describes them as perfectionistic, persistent, competitive and eager. She also notes that the children liked to play quietly on their own. Clark (1976) reports that her group of early readers was similarly "very self-sufficient" (p. 54) and willing to draw and play alone. They demonstrated sound concentration, memory for environmental details, and were motivated self-starters in activities. Plessas and Oakes (1964) also mention the initiative of their early readers, in that they were personally motivated to read without adult intervention, and were always initiating questions about print. Lass (1982), in writing of the early literacy development of her son, notes that he, like all "interested toddlers and preschoolers insist(s) on help in reading the print" (p. 21) in the environment. Torrey (1969) describes John's early reading ability, evolving within a relatively underprivileged environment, and notes that he demonstrated amazing initiative by demanding print-related information

from caregivers who were somewhat puzzled by his insistence. Torrey (1969) concludes: "The key for learning to read may be the child's asking the right questions of his environment" (p. 556). Sutton (1969), in her evaluation of children who were invited to participate in reading activities in the kindergarten, explains that a group of children actively chose to move towards the reading tasks, but:

Because specific kindergarten experiences were offered only to those children who sought them, the many individual factors which caused the seeking behavior remained almost completely unidentified and unmeasured (p. 602).

Sutton surmised that the children who became "book hungry" (1969, p. 601) were those who were willing to take risks and try new experiences, and those who were self-motivated by "personal drives" (p. 602). Sulzby (1981) describes children who acquire early reading behaviours as those who "do certain things voluntarily ... they provide drill-and-practice for themselves" (p. 42), implying again a self-initiated, self-regulated approach to learning. Cohn (1981), in writing of her young children's literacy development, lends support for the link between the child's intrinsic desire to learn and literacy acquisition. She notes that story-time reading "was almost always initiated by the children" (p. 550). In synthesizing the qualities described in the studies it seems apparent that young children are actively involved in acquiring literacy. They are initiators with intentions and purposes. They are self-motivated and persistent in questioning the humans in their environment about print. They implicitly realize that print has meaning in their lives, for without that realization questioning and print involvement would seem facile and be quickly discontinued. Such children demand interaction, but they are also eager to practise their acquired knowledge alone. However, as the literature focuses largely on children rapidly acquiring reading

behaviours, or indeed on children who are already readers, then it is difficult to know whether these within-child characteristics are limited to such children or whether they are equally demonstrated by children who are making limited advances in print knowledge.

Research focusing on the human context of literacy development is hard to find. By sifting through studies the human qualities that seem to be related to early literacy acquisition may be elicited. It seems viable to suggest that the home context that stimulates literacy growth is one in which the caregiver-older sibling's print-related attitudes, intentions and facilitations match the child's print-related purposes, questions and activities. We know these may be necessary conditions to stimulate literacy but we do not have any indication that they are sufficient in themselves. We also have no clear indication whether these conditions are only present in homes where the children demonstrate early literacy development, or whether they are also apparent in families where the children have limited literacy knowledge. Of equal difficulty is that, though we may have some clues concerning the human context of literacy development in homes, we have a dearth of information concerning the human context for literacy growth in kindergarten. The kindergarten year is a period of transition, for the child receives literacy transmission on a half-time basis from the formal school context and half-time from the informal home context. During that year the kindergarten teacher, aides, volunteers and general school personnel and children, provide a human context for literacy growth. From studies focusing on the socialization process of schooling (Bremme and Erickson, Shultz, 1979; Genishi, 1979; Hart, 1982; Merritt and [redacted] 1973; Wallat and Green, 1979; Wilcox, 1982;

Wilkinson and Dollaghan, 1979) and from those emphasizing oral language growth in early childhood programmes (Dyson and Genishi, 1983; Genishi, 1981, 1979; Heath, 1982a, b; Wells, 1983) we may infer that as the human context is vitally involved in the learning process in general it certainly must be implicated in literacy development in particular.

Rist (1973), in his study of children learning in a kindergarten and then in a first grade setting, notes that teachers provide a conservative context in that they are, "mediators of the socialization process at work in school" (p. 148). Rist describes teachers as socializers embodied with their own beliefs, assumptions and filtered perceptions of children and their learning. He suggests that such belief systems impact on the human learning process in the classroom for they "transform themselves into expectations for individual children, with the result that differential treatment is accorded various members of the same class" (p. 242). Mrs. Caplow, the kindergarten teacher that Rist observed during the course of a school year, had specific criteria for evaluating the children as potential "successes" or "failures". Rist suggests that Mrs. Caplow's projections arose from her assumptions about the children's out-of-school lives and also from her observations during the first days of class. These assumptions and perceptions arose from Mrs. Caplow's beliefs about "good learners" and "poor learners", stereotypic conceptions embedded within her value system. The major variables for consideration, in this classroom, were the "socioeconomic status factors" (p. 88), namely the family's income, education and family size, plus the child's physical appearance, behaviour in class and ability to communicate effectively with the teacher. On the basis of these variables the children in Mrs. Caplow's class were evaluated and

assigned to groups on the eighth day of school. They remained in these clusterings until the end of their kindergarten year.

Those children who closely fit the teacher's "ideal type" of the successful child were chosen for seats at Table 1. Those who fell farthest from it were placed at the third table. (Rist, 1973, p. 89)

In this classroom the Table 1 children, observes Rist, received, "the most teaching time, rewards and attention from the teacher" whereas the Table 3 children, "were taught infrequently, subjected to more control, and received little if any support from the teacher" (p. 91).

Rist, though not specifically focusing on literacy learning, does raise the issue of the teacher's belief system and its resultant impact on the evaluation and learning of kindergarten children. Other researchers (Hart, 1982; Wilcox, 1982; Wells, 1983) suggest that children's classroom learning is affected by their ability to assimilate the "hidden messages" embedded in the teacher's belief structure and manifested in the social organization of the classroom. The teacher is a communicative rule maker (Merritt and Humphrey, 1979) and through the subtleties of verbal and non-verbal cues (Bremme and Erickson, 1977) transposes her expectations to the children. Those children with facility in interpreting the subtle interplays demonstrate social competence in the classroom (Florio and Shultz, 1979) and are perceived as "good learners" by the teacher. Those children who are less adept at transferring from home communicative rules to classroom rules are viewed, quite frequently, as disruptive or "inadequate learners". Thus, the teacher's beliefs may be overtly displayed within the social context of the classroom and covertly woven into the underlying messages embodied in communicative style. Wells (1983), in his observational study related to five-seven year old children's classroom and home learning, suggests

that such stylistic patterns are quite differently conceived and enacted in home and school. In the home, teaching is indirect and incidental whereas at school it is often direct and planned, and demands that the children display their knowledge for teacher evaluation. At home there is one-to-one dialogue wherein shared meanings for topics and concepts are negotiated, but at school the dialogue is frequently enacted within groups and meanings are imposed to dovetail with the teacher's agenda. As following the teacher's expectations at school is so intertwined with "success" in the classroom, Wells believes that underlying messages about learning are inadvertently transmitted to children, namely that 1) learning only takes place when the teacher provides the task, 2) personal experiences are not seen as particularly relevant to learning, 3) initiation is not as productive in learning as following the teacher's directions, and 4) worthwhile learning is supervised externally by the teacher.

Hence, we have some information on the potential impact of teachers' beliefs, assumptions, styles and messages on children's learning in early childhood settings. This information offers glimpses into the human qualities that may affect the transmission process. What we now require is salient information on how such human factors relate to the process of literacy transmission in the kindergarten classroom, for what "teachers do in the classroom" (Kifer, 1977, p. 7) reflects their human beliefs, and the interplay between "believing" and "doing" must surely influence literacy learning.

The Literacy Context: The human context lies in an interdependent relationship with a print-oriented world. Environmental print is abundant in our culture (Goodman, Goodman and Burke, 1978). We are

immersed in signs, labels, newspapers, magazines, books and visual media. Children, unless they live in almost total isolation, can hardly fail to be in contact with this print world.

The research on children's early literacy growth abounds with reference to print in the child's milieu. Teale (1978), in reviewing the studies on early readers, notes that a common home characteristic was the "availability and range of printed materials in the environment" (p. 925). Durkin (1966) specifically relates the availability of print in the home to early reading acquisition. As an example, Durkin's case study notes on Carol, an early reader, describe the rich print context in the home:

A visit to this playroom showed not only toys, a television set, and an old piano, but also a variety of materials which had obvious instructional potential. There were about 75 books, some of which were alphabet books and picture dictionaries. There were school-like workbooks, a blackboard, and an abundance of pencils and paper. There were coloring books that had captions beneath the pictures and, sometimes simple directions for how the pictures were to be colored. There were games that required the matching of pictures and words, and there were stencils for tracing the letters of the alphabet. (1966, p. 62)

Doake (1981), in his study of four children's shared book experiences, notes that each home had "a plentiful supply of children's books and other print-related materials" (p. 198). In Gillian's home there were approximately 140 children's books, in Kaaren and Sean's 70 books, and in Jennifer's 194 books. Books-and-records, book club and magazine subscriptions and the library were additional sources of print. King and Friesen (1972), in their Calgary study of early readers, report that, "Almost all the children had access to easy reading material in the home. Some parents mentioned having extensive book collections for children" (p. 152). Lass (1982) writes that young Jed had his own "books, crayons, paper, plastic letters ... as well as educational television" (p. 22),

and also a large collection of "hand-me-down books" (p. 25). Several studies also mention that families with early readers make intensive use of the local library (Clark, 1976; King and Friesen, 1972). In print-oriented homes books are received as gifts and the literacy context is enriched with subscriptions to children's magazines and book clubs (Doake, 1981; Keshian, 1963). In addition, the early reader studies indicate that the children came from environments that provided writing materials to facilitate paper and pencil activities (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Plessas and Oakes, 1964). Cohn's (1981) comment that, "my children's environment is 'alive' with ... print" (p. 550) seems to reflect many home contexts where children are making rapid strides in literacy development (Bishop, 1978; Crago and Crago, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Yates, 1981).

Torrey's (1969) early reader, John, does not seem to have had the advantage of a rich book environment, but reportedly taught himself to read from food labels and television commercials. Environmental print, as a source of reading materials, is mentioned by many researchers (Clark, 1976; Doake, 1981; Durkin, 1966; Goodman, Goodman and Burke, 1978; Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1982; Hiebert, 1981; Krippner, 1963; Lass, 1983, 1982; Mason, 1980; Torrey, 1969). Mason (1980) relates Sesame Street and Electric Company with reading behaviours acquired from television. Plessas and Oakes (1964) note that fourteen out of twenty early readers learned to read words from television. Household labels are a source of print for many children. Larry (Krippner, 1963), at eighteen months, reportedly, "looked at a bottle of medicine and said, 'V-I-C-K-S spells Vicks'," which proved to be the springboard for future proficiency in reading road signs and other environmental labels. Lass

(1982) reports twenty-months old Jed's fascination with commercial labels in the community:

We'd take long walks along a nearby commercial street and be bombarded with letters on signs and store names and numbers in store addresses and sale prices. Jed loved finding the ones he knew and fairly shouted their names. When he began to identify logos, this became a hazardous game; we couldn't stop at McDonald's for french fries as often as he wanted to (p. 24).

Thus, a relatively rich literacy context seems necessary to stimulate young children's print awareness. However, it may be a necessary though not sufficient condition for the acquisition of early literacy. As with the research reports on the human context, we have little information on the literacy context in homes where young children have developed limited print knowledge. The literacy context provided by the kindergarten also seems to be a relatively unexplored wilderness, though we might assume that its quality may have impact on the young child's literacy learning. One study (Gourley, Benedict, Gundersheim and McClellan, 1983), focusing on observation of children's literacy learning in a kindergarten classroom, does offer some description of the literacy context provided. The authors suggest that the context is rich with print due to the teacher's belief "that children can learn written language in the same way they have learned spoken language" (p. 5), namely by being immersed in a variety of social and direct interactions with print. Within this kindergarten setting, labelling was common. Learning areas were labelled and the children's cloakroom hooks, cubby-holes and mailboxes bore their names. The children's name cards were functionally useful in that they were utilized as attendance slips and to record centre choices. Print labels were also used on the helpers' chart, the calendar and the snack chart, and were made to accompany

specific play activities. The "letter of the week" activity stimulated transference of print from bulletin boards to cooking, art and play. Classroom songs were printed in a large songbook and stories, often linked to classroom themes, were read on a daily basis. The library corner was a busy place. Here, literacy events were enacted, both teacher-children's interactions with print and also children's-direct interactions with books. Journal writing was an intrinsic part of the programme from the first day of school. Within this literacy context three children, Jack, Emily and Beatrix, were observed learning about literacy:

... all three developed new strategies and competence with written language during their kindergarten year -- not the same strategies or the same competence by any measure. Yet at the end of the year all said they liked reading and writing and all said they were good readers and writers. (Gourley, Benedict, Gundersheim and McClellan, 1983, p. 49)

Thus, the teacher's belief about written language learning was mirrored in the literacy context she provided and, perhaps equally importantly, in the strategies and interactions she provided for the children. As King (1980) suggests, "The literacy environment means more than the availability of books; it requires involvement with a reader" (p. 47). The quality of that "involvement" is surely a concern for it provides an interactive bridge between the context of learning and the literacy knowledge acquired by the children.

The Learning Interaction

... We can make more use of the practice of filling the child's environment with a full variety of printed stimuli, making sure, however, that they are also interpreted for the child. (Carroll, 1966, p. 581)

In Carroll's statement the literacy context is an explicit

requirement for literacy acquisition, the human factor a backdrop, and the interaction between cultural describer and learner implicitly embedded within the final statement. The literacy context is present in our culture and available, to a greater or lesser extent, within the life-world of each child, but without learning interactions with a human being the child may remain unaware of the function of written language, its form and its meaning. There is evidence to suggest that describer-learner literacy interactions pave the way for direct child-print interactions in that the former engagements stimulate and enhance the learner in internalizing cognitive strategies for independent utilization (Doake, 1981; Dyson and Genishi, 1983; Feuerstein, 1980; Snow, 1983; Teale, 1981; Taylor, 1983; Wells, 1983, 1982). Thus, to interact with print independently a literacy learner initially requires a literacy describer and a qualitative social interaction.

The Describer-Learner Interaction: In the reading research studies focusing on the child's early literacy experiences we are provided with hints concerning this describer-learner interaction:

... adults and older children may even involve children in the use of print. Through these experiences children learn about the purposes of print and how print is used ... (Hiebert, 1981, p. 256)

Reading can be initiated as children learn the alphabet from parents, older siblings or TV ... When they live in a clearly-labelled, sign-laden environment with helpful adults, it is relatively easy for them to learn to identify and remember stop signs, names of stores that they visit, their own name ... and labels on packages of food that they eat. (Mason, 1980, p. 221)

While half the parents felt the children were helped daily many stressed that this help was at odd times as requested, that it was casual rather than systematic, and that it was part of their daily life rather than something separate. (Clark, 1976, p. 53)

The findings on the histories of early readers might be summarized by saying that they were not taught to read, they just learned in an environment that contained enough stimulation and material.
(Torrey, 1970, p. 123)
(my underlinings)

Much of the research describes parents helping or stimulating the child through print activities, and the child requesting help and learning about written language incidentally within a rich print environment. From this research we frequently see reading as being "naturally" acquired, namely "just learned" (Torrey, 1979, p. 123). Little emphasis has been placed on the qualitative dimensions that describe the describer-learner interactions during this supposedly "natural" acquisition. How natural is "natural"? Are descriptions such as "helpful adults" (Mason, 1980, p. 221) and "just learned" (Torrey, 1979, p. 123) adequate to describe the process and consequence of literacy transmission? Is what is "natural" in one environment absent in another? Clearly children beginning reading instruction in school have developed differing degrees of literacy competence (Hiebert, 1981; Mason, 1980; McKenzie, 1977). Hence, what may be a "natural" part of the home and kindergarten context for one child may be qualitatively different for another child. As studies have emphasized children with advanced literacy development it is difficult to elicit the qualities of the literacy interaction for children with relatively undeveloped print knowledge at school entrance. In addition, even the studies concerning early readers have paid little detailed attention to the dynamic qualities of the child-caregiver literacy interaction or the direct child-print interaction. What attention there has been has largely focused on home rather than school-based interactions, though from research on oral language acquisition and from anthropological research on socialization

and schooling we may infer that the transmission process is quite different in both contexts (Dyson and Genishi, 1983; Florio and Shultz, 1979; Genishi, 1981; Mehan, 1979; Wells, 1983).

Observations of Home-based Describer-Learner Interactions: One holistic caregiver-child print interaction that has received some attention is the child's shared book experiences (Doake, 1981; Holdaway, 1979). Research has recognized its importance in the development of literate behaviour in children, and this recognition is not a new phenomenon. Almost seventy years ago Huey (1908) affirmed, "(the) secret of it all lies in the parents' reading aloud to and with the child" (p. 352). The "secret" has been illuminated, to some extent, during the intervening years. Teale (1981) reports correlational studies that have linked reading to children with language and vocabulary development, children's motivation to read for themselves, and success in beginning reading instruction. However, he notes:

... they do not address the important theoretical and practical issues of how it is that these competencies develop as a result of the story book reading events (p. 903).

Smith (1978) and Clay (1979a) explain that through shared book interactions children learn a great deal about the complexities of written language. They discover that meaning is embedded in print and that oral language structures differ from written language structures (Wells, 1982). Children are also introduced to our culture's traditional story structures (Mason, 1980; McKenzie, 1977) and develop a "sense of story" (Applebee, 1977, p. 342). They internalize cognitive-conceptual frameworks, or schemas (Anderson, 1978), for narratives which enables them to predict and hypothesize events in future stories (Smith, 1978). Children also learn, through the caregiver's modelling of reading, "what

it feels like to read a book with comprehension" (Sulzby, 1981, p. 11) before they can accomplish this task alone. Although this transmitted information seems vitally important to literacy learning, Teale (1981) suggests that we have limited information about the "interactions between parent and child which help develop these understandings" (p. 903).

Holdaway's (1979) work, though instrumental in exposing a wide audience to the utilization of shared book experiences in a variety of early childhood contexts, focuses largely on the consequences of story reading engagements rather than the qualities embedded within the interactions. Doake's (1981) study of story reading interactions emphasizes the context for literacy development and the related literacy knowledge growth displayed by the children. He does, however, offer some information on the characteristic dimensions of the caregiver-child story sessions. The parents of the four children in his study claimed that they frequently held the book in position to enable the children to see the text and the pictures. Pointing to the print or running a finger beneath a line of text was common. Story questioning, centred on word meanings, action events, and maybe underlying morals was a pattern adopted by the parents. Doake (1981) comments that the adults were "sensitive to just how many questions they could ask before the child would begin to lose interest" (p. 230). These parents read aloud with good inflection and with an appropriate pace to encourage interaction. Doake (1981) reports that rapid parental reading discouraged the child's interactions. They paused, during reading, to stimulate the child to predict words and phrases, and they occasionally substituted incorrect or nonsense words which the child would correct, i.e. Jennifer's father explains, "Sometimes I tease her and say something absolutely wrong and

she will correct me" (p. 232). Another characteristic of the story reading sessions is that child-initiated questions were frequently welcomed and responded to "simply and directly" (p. 230), in a manner that often linked text information to the child's experiences. Doake (1981) concludes by stating that a "warm, supportive, invitational atmosphere" (p. 403) during shared story experiences is an extremely significant factor in the young child's literacy development.

From the literature a rather shadowy figure emerges and is named the "helpful adult" (Mason, 1980, p. 221) or the "supportive adult" (Dyson and Genishi, 1983, p. 755). As this figure is the "cultural describer" of literacy, in this study, this shadow cannot be permitted to retain a "fairy-godmother-like" quality. Several strategies used by "helpful" and "supportive" adults, to enhance literacy acquisition, are suggested in the studies focusing on caregiver-child shared book experiences and other informal literacy engagements (Doake, 1981; Ninio and Bruner, 1978; Snow, 1983).

Strategy I: Maximizing the child's contribution to a literacy event.

Snow (1983) describes the literacy interaction between three year old Nathaniel and his mother. Nathaniel initiates a literacy event by placing magnetic letters and numbers on a board. From a seemingly random start, though encouraged by his mother's interest in his activity, Nathaniel appears to request that they make his name from the letters. The mother picks up his suggestion and offers assistance, at the same time expanding his letter identification knowledge, clarifying his responses in order to share task meaning, and answering his questions. Snow describes the mother's strategy as semantic contingency for it engages the child's meaningful contribution in an incidental teaching

episode. Wells (1983) suggests that such strategies are "extending conversations" (p. 281) wherein the caregiver responds to "the child's expression of interest" (p. 281) and spontaneously expands his knowledge. He postulates that these types of conversations encourage the child to feel confident about sharing his knowledge and to feel that his contributions are worthy in the eyes of another. Thus, semantic contingency or "extending conversations" are strong motivators to stimulate the child in the learning process, and as they involve building on the child's contributions in a collaborative manner they may well be "associated with early acquisition of literacy" (Snow, 1983, p. 168).

Strategy II: Scaffolding

A scaffold is a temporary framework for construction in progress. (Cazden, 1983, p. 6)

Ninio and Bruner (1978) observed a mother-child shared book interaction over ten months (child: 8 months-18 months). During this time period it became clear that the interactions involved participant reciprocity in both verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The storybook interaction contained a structured framework or a "scaffolding" (p. 3) quality that embodied social intent and "turn-taking in early vocal and gestural exchanges" (p. 3). For example, one exchange centred on a picture book interaction when the child was 13 months old:

Mother: Look!
 Child: (Touches picture)
 Mother: What are those?
 Child: (Vocalizes and smiles)
 Mother: Yes, they are rabbits.
 Child: (Vocalizes, smiles and looks up at mother)
 Mother: (Laughs) Yes, rabbit.
 Child: (Vocalizes and smiles)
 Mother: (Laughs) Yes. (Ninio and Bruner, 1978 p. 6-7)

In this literacy engagement the mother creates a framework of interactive questioning, attention focusing, feedback, labelling and warmth, allowing.

pauses for the child's contribution. Snow (1983) suggests that this type of structure is utilized by Nathaniel's mother as they focus on making his name. His mother:

... extensively scaffolds the rather difficult task of spelling Nathaniel, by reminding him of what they are doing, rejecting false starts ... and guiding the letter search (p. 170).

Feuerstein's (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1983) description of the mediator's "regulation of behavior" (p. 57) is intrinsically similar to Snow's (1983) and Ninio and Bruner's (1978) explication of scaffolding, wherein the caregiver:

.... schedules objects and/or events in time and space, introduces a differentiated rhythm of behavior and pacing, and reduces the child's impulsivity in gathering, elaborating and expressing information (p. 57).

A characteristic of this strategy is that the caregiver requires increasingly sophisticated behaviour from the child (Ninio and Bruner, 1978), and over time reduces the structure to permit the child to take over more of the activity in a self-regulated, rather than adult-regulated, manner (Feuerstein, 1980; Vygotsky, 1978). The following episode, from Doake's (1981) study illustrates a mother reading with her daughter, Jennifer (3 years 10 months). This child is older than the infant in Ninio and Bruner's (1978) study and has engaged in countless shared-book exchanges with her parents:

Mother: lower case letters
Jennifer: upper case letters

Text

Mother and Jennifer

In an old house in Paris
that was covered with vines

lived twelve little girls
in two straight lines.
In two straight lines
they broke their bread

(M) In an old house in Paris that
was covered with -

(J) VINES

(M) lived -

(J) TWELVE LITTLE GIRLS IN
TWO STRAIGHT LINES
THEY BROKE THEIR BREAD

and brushed their teeth
and went to bed.
They smiled at the good

and frowned at the bad
and sometimes they
were very sad.

AND BRUSHED THEIR TEETH
AND WENT TO BED
(M) They smiled -
(J) AT THE GOOD
THEY FROWNED AT THE BAD
(M) And sometimes they were -
(J) VERY SAD
(Doake, 1981, pp. 429-430)

Jennifer's mother provides a "light" scaffold and permits her daughter to contribute a great deal of the story. The mother is thus sensitive to Jennifer's needs and print-related abilities and knows when to "support" and when to "withdraw".

This strategy may indeed provide a significant contribution to literacy learning. Questioning-answering procedures are introduced in a context-specific manner, and the child's attention to print's form, function and meaning is highlighted. Knowledge of interactive questioning strategies seems to be important in classroom instruction (Heath, 1982) and clearly attention to print is a necessary requirement for literacy acquisition (Clay, 1979a, b). Equally important is the trend, in this strategy, to move from high degrees of adult structure to increasing reliance on the self-regulation of the child. This qualitative movement is necessary in the child's journey from adult-supported literacy behaviour to independent reconstruction of text (Clay, 1979a, b; McKenzie, 1977; Sulzby, 1981).

Strategy III: Routines

This strategy, alternately termed "formats" (Bruner, in Snow, 1983), is similar to scaffolding in that it provides an interactive structure or framework that is internalized by the child and later used in self-regulatory engagements. However, a routine has a ritualized quality (Bruner, in Snow, 1983) that is highly predictable for both participants in the exchange. Snow (1983) suggests that many shared book interactions

are routinized with a "prime example of the exploitation of a format" being the "traditional ABC books, with their standard, 'A is for a--', B is for b--,' form" (p. 177). Another example Snow provides is the Dr. Seuss books, "which use rhyme, rhythm and nonsense words in ways that facilitate rote memorization" (p. 177). Memorization of a book, or emulating the routine of shared book reading by "talking like a book" (Clay, 1979a, p. 59) has been identified as an early reading behaviour. Routines or formats may well support its development.

Strategy IV: Transference of learning across contexts

Dyson and Genishi (1983) describe a storybook interaction between four and a half year old Eloisa and her father. They discuss the book just read, "Madeline", and Eloisa initiates a discussion of how she would feel if she was away at boarding school like the main character in the story. Eloisa is relating a book experience to her own world and, in so doing, is transferring her thinking from one context to another. Dyson and Genishi (1983) suggest that her father "(provides) much social support" (p. 753) in that he utilizes the storybook occasion to encourage his daughter to reflect on how the story may relate to her life. He listens and expands on her contributions in order to promote the transformation of a present context into an alternate context. Dyson and Genishi (1983) and Snow (1983) refer to this strategy as decontextualization. Feuerstein (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1983), though using the label "transcendence" to describe the strategy, maintains that it is a key interactive variable in the transmission process:

It is the transcending characteristic of MLE (mediated learning experience) that is responsible for establishing in the child the anticipation of events, and search for horizons that go beyond the immediate (p. 56).

Dyson and Genishi (1983) maintain that this type of interaction,

where the child is encouraged to think reflectively across contexts, provides the cornerstone for language development in general. Snow (1983) relates this transference strategy to written language itself, noting that "literacy is the ultimate decontextualized skill" (p. 175). She suggests that young children depend on the "physical context" (p. 175) for their initial interpretations of print, but then increasingly rely on the "historical context" (p. 175), wherein the child utilizes previous experiences to support present print interpretations. Wells (1983) notes that comprehension of written language requires that the child can reflectively "create 'alternative possible worlds' to be explored through the imagination" (p. 281). Donaldson (1978) refers to this reflective movement from concrete experience to more abstract, representational thought as "disembedded thinking" (p. 75) and notes that transference from the immediate context is necessary for understanding of another's viewpoint. Independent reading surely requires the child to reconstruct another's viewpoint, namely the author's. Tough (1983) suggests that children who are adept in this type of thinking and who have engaged in decontextualized dialogue may well have "a preparedness for reading that will guarantee immediate take off" (p. 65) when formal instruction begins.

Strategy V: Uncritical acceptance of child-demonstrated literacy
behaviour

Doake (1981) suggests that one characteristic undergirded the shared book observations in his study. In these engagements the parents supplied a "warm environment" (p. 222) where:

their positive approach to the task and their obvious enjoyment of it created an intensely secure and loving family situation that was repeated over and over again. Since books became, for the children, the vehicle through which they could experience this warm, human sharing, it seems entirely possible that, apart from

their story, language and pictorial qualities, books came to be seen by these children as sources of pleasure, enjoyment and security in themselves (p. 222).

From Doake's descriptions of shared book times it seems clear that the parents did not jeopardize the security of the moment by insisting on the accurate reproduction of text. These children were permitted to "mumble" read, "echo" read and to complete sentences and portions of the text, uncritically. Approximations, that retained the story meaning, were accepted. Hence, it may be suggested that the "warm environment" encompassed the strategy of uncritical acceptance of the child's attempts to participate in literacy events.

Clearly these home-based literacy strategies, emerging from the literature, are overlapping in the sense that the describer-learner interaction may incorporate several within one literacy engagement. For example, one could infer that transcendence or decontextualizing may well be more effectively accomplished if the caregiver offers semantically contingent responses, namely responds to the child's interest and initiations and expands his contributions into new contexts. Similarly, with a young child, such semantically contingent expansion may occur within a scaffolded dialogue. These strategies cannot be conceived to be all encompassing. Explication of the rich qualities of literacy interactions has been a recent trend in research and undoubtedly more details will emerge as the area receives more attention.

In addition, we cannot infer that these qualitative dimensions are common to all homes. Studies that provide glimpses of these strategies are frequently based on data from literate or book-oriented families (Doake, 1981; Lass, 1983, 1982; Snow, 1983; Taylor, 1983). Guinagh and Jester (1972) in their study of fifty mother-preschool child storybook

interactions note that these strategies were not utilized effectively by the majority of the participants. Though the results of their study may have been influenced by the laboratory setting, which may be considered quite different from the home context, Heath's (1982b) study of home-based storybook interactions lends support to their findings. Heath observes "radical differences" (p. 57) in the interactive caregiver-child styles during literacy events enacted in three different communities. In middle-class Maintown, parents utilized the five strategies hypothesized to stimulate literacy development in this chapter. In white working-class Roadville, more direct teaching of print-related information was employed. Children were discouraged from contributing to storybook occasions beyond the age of three or four years, for example:

Wendy, stop that, you be quiet when someone is reading to you. You listen. Now sit still and be quiet. (Heath, 1982b, p. 60)

Heath observes that Roadville children rarely engaged in transcendent strategies with caregivers and were not encouraged "to move their understanding of books into other situational contexts" (p. 61). In black working-class Trackton the children grew up in an oral, rather than a literate, culture and print exposure was limited to the functional needs of the family, for example brochures, pamphlets and advertisements. Reading was frequently a group enterprise and the interactional questioning and feedback styles employed in the strategies of semantic contingency, scaffolding, routines and transference were rarely experienced by these children during literacy events.

We may infer that children entering the kindergarten context may have experienced a variety of describer-learner strategies during a literacy interaction. Several strategies have been identified as

facilitative for literacy development in children, but it is apparent that not all children can be assumed to have experienced them prior to school entrance. It is equally apparent that we cannot make the assumption that the school utilizes such home-based strategies during the literacy transmission process. Hence, selected literature will be investigated to elicit the school-based strategies used in describer-learner interactions within that context.

Observations of School-based Describer-Learner Interactions:

There is little research focusing on kindergarten literacy interactions within the classroom context. Hence, studies investigating interactive dynamics within early childhood programmes will be utilized to offer insight into general interactional strategies that may impact on general school learning, including literacy learning.

Many researchers suggest that the five home-based literacy strategies should be used more consistently in young children's school environments (Cazden, 1983; Doake, 1981; Dyson and Genishi, 1983; Florio and Shultz, 1979; Heath, 1982a, b; Holdaway, 1979; Mehan, 1979; Wells, 1983, 1982). Wells (1983) audiotaped thirty-two children's interactive dialogue a few weeks prior to school entry and then during their first term in school. He discovered that children engage in far more caregiver-child interactions in home when compared with school, which is maybe not surprising "given the relative number of adults and children in the two settings" (Wells, 1983, p. 286). However, he also noted major qualitative differences between home and school in terms of the nature of the interactions in both contexts. Table 1 illustrates these differences.

Table 1

Comparison of Children's Language Experienceat Home and at School: Mean Values

	Home	School
1. % of all adult-child sequences that are one-to-one	99	58*
2. % of sequences that are child initiated	73	16*
3. % of child utterances to adults that are questions	12	3*
4. % of adult utterances that are questions	15	21
5. % of adult questions that are "display" questions	20	52*
6. % of adult utterances that extend child's topic	38	14*
7. % of adult utterances that pursue adult topic	14	40*

* Differences significant at 1% level (Mann-Whitney U Test)
(Wells, 1983, p. 287)

In considering Table 1, it may be suggested that, in school, there is less semantically contingent dialogue (items 2 and 7) and less conversation that permits the child to transfer personal knowledge into new contexts (item 6), but more reliance on the public display of knowledge (item 5). Wells' results are not limited to literacy interactions but his data emerge from all activities experienced during the child's day, where literacy events can be anticipated to be included. He suggests that, to maximize effective caregiver-young child interactions, the classroom needs to be organized to permit the teacher to engage in more one-to-one dialogue rather than whole class or large group discussion. Hence, one body of research, with Wells' (1983) study included here as a representative sample, is making a plea for the

incorporation of the individualized, home-based interaction strategies within the classroom. In one recent study (Courley, Benedict, Gundersheim and McClellan, 1983) these types of supportive strategies appear to be utilized to stimulate literacy growth in the kindergarten, to the apparent benefit of the children. Possibly the identified strategies of semantic contingency, scaffolding, routines, transference, and the uncritical acceptance of the child's literacy approximations, are being woven into many early childhood programmes. However, much of the research would suggest that this is not the case, but that rather different interactive processes are being utilized in such settings (Doake, 1981; Dyson and Genishi, 1983; Florio and Shultz, 1979; Heath, 1982a, b; Mehan, 1979; Shultz, Florio and Erickson, 1982; Wallat and Green, 1979). The following strategies appear to predominate:

Strategy I: Establishing a social context for learning

Classroom life constitutes a series of "social occasions" (Bremmé and Erickson, 1977, p. 153) that demand socially appropriate interactions from all participants. Frequently the teacher serves as a master or mistress of ceremonies structuring the social event to socialize the children into their roles in the interactions and to stimulate group learning (Hart, 1982; Mehan, 1982, 1979; Wallat and Green, 1979). Bremmé and Erickson (1977) observe a kindergarten-first grade classroom and describe the immense interactional complexity within the setting. They focus their research on the caregiver-whole group, daily Circle Time (First Circle) in the classroom and note:

To bring off a social occasion like First Circle ... requires some complex -- and collaborative -- social and mental work. It requires that each participant be able:

- (1) to determine what social situation, or context, is happening now, from moment to moment within

- the occasion;
- (2) to interpret the social meaning of others' behaviors in the light of the social situation happening now; and,
 - (3) to identify and produce, from among one's "repertoire" of behaviors, those forms considered appropriate alternatives now, in "this" social occasion (pp. 153-154).

Hence, helpful sub-strategies within group contexts, would undoubtedly be sharing group social meaning, analysis of group dynamics and the possession and display of appropriately timed behaviours. Learning the social "form" of the classroom appears to be an important element in classroom-based interactions. Young children, suggest Bremme and Erickson (1977), are amazingly adept at learning the network of verbal and non-verbal signals that signal specific classroom engagements. In the classroom they observed, the children were aware of the subtleties that encompassed Teacher Time, where the teacher's agenda was paramount and where she did "most of the talking" (p. 155), and could effectively gauge the differences in Student Time where it was appropriate for students to initiate topics and converse extensively. The teacher, through an intricate pattern of verbal and non-verbal signals, controlled the occasion by supporting appropriate responses and reprimanding or ignoring inappropriate contributions, e.g. 35/40 of the children's responses were either ignored or criticized as irrelevant during Teacher Time, as they contained topics unrelated to the teacher's agenda. Mapping the teacher's agenda and learning the implicit rules underlying turn taking, "one person speaks at a time" (Wallat and Green, 1979, p. 275), accessing a caregiver-child interaction (Bremme and Erickson, 1977; Mehan, 1982; Merritt and Humphrey, 1979), and "holding the floor" (Mehan, 1982, p. 76) for a prolonged interaction, are important interactive dynamics for participating in the social learning context of the

classroom. In the kindergarten the teacher's role involves introducing these elements to the children and the orchestration of interactions.

The child's role is to internalize the social rules that qualify him for a caregiver-child interaction. As Bremme and Erickson (1977) suggest:

(It) is extremely important for students -- especially in the early grades -- to be able to identify relevant situational contexts and rules for making sense within them ... (p. 159).

Children who do engage successfully in group interactions "may be deemed socially and intellectually more competent than those who do not" (p. 159). As classroom instruction largely focuses on group teaching (Wells, 1983), and as those with inappropriate social behaviour may actually receive less instructional time (Rist, 1973), then the children who engage effectively in the teacher-controlled strategies for establishing a social classroom context, may indeed be in an advantageous position for literacy learning in school.

Strategy II: "Procedural Display" (Bloome, 1983, p. 17)

The most frequently used interactive strategy in classrooms appears to be questioning in general, and the teacher initiates - student responds - teacher evaluates (I-R-E) questioning pattern in particular (Bloome, 1983; Heath, 1982a; Mehan, 1982, 1979). An example of this pattern is presented below:

(Initiation) Teacher: What letter is at the beginning of March?

(Response) Student: M.

(Evaluation) Teacher: Very good, Joe.

Teacher initiation and "teacher-talk" dominates the classroom context (Ayers and Evans, 1983; Wells, 1983) and frequently students are asked to "display" their knowledge for evaluation (Bloome, 1983). As Mehan (1982, 1979) points out, such dialogue frequently has an inbuilt

redundancy within the structure as both child and teacher are aware that the teacher already knows the answer. Many of these encounters involve producing one correct answer, with the teacher using supporting sub-strategies such as providing clues, rephrasing, simplifying and restating, in order to access this response from the children (Mehan, 1979). The evaluation of a student's response usually involves measuring the quality of the child's verbalization against the teacher's criteria. Meanings are not negotiated but are judged as accurate or inaccurate according to imposed preconceptions embedded in the teacher's agenda (Wells, 1983).

Dyson and Genishi (1983) and Wells (1983) acknowledge the prevalence of the IRE questioning pattern in the classroom, but suggest that this structure discourages reflective, decontextualized thinking in children. Heath (1982a, b) notes that the ability to "display" knowledge in the IRE interaction is related to experience with scaffolded and routinized questioning procedures utilized in the home during infancy. Maintown children, in her study, having teachers as parents, proved to be adept participants in this questioning structure at school. Trackton children, not socialized to provide answers to "pseudoquestions" (Dyson and Genishi, 1983, p. 755), and to display knowledge that is apparently obvious to one or more participants in the exchange, could not engage effectively in this questioning strategy when they started school. Their strengths lay in analogous thinking and expanded oral storytelling, which were not utilized or considered relevant by the local early childhood teachers, who were socialized in the IRE pattern.

Mehan (1982, 1979) and Bloome (1983) suggest that to be successful in the classroom the child needs to be able to contribute in this major

questioning strategy for:

The students' acquisition of this interactional knowledge seems to be intertwined with the acquisition of academic knowledge. (Mehan, 1979, p. 294)

Contribution demands the child's development of knowledge of the interactive structure or form, the ability to search personal background knowledge for relevant information, and the capability for displaying such knowledge publicly. It presumably must also demand a well developed within-child self-concept to withstand the scrutiny and evaluation from the teacher.

Strategy III: Establishing the primacy of academic content:

the curriculum

Classrooms have two agendas, academic and social (Bloome, 1983; Hart, 1982) and both may be considered interwoven in the "teacher's agenda" (Bremme and Erickson, 1977, p. 155). Clearly the social strategies and questioning techniques suggested previously are vehicles for the propagation of academic content in the classroom (Bloome, 1983). However, Wells (1983) suggests that the academic agenda is ascendant in many classrooms because early childhood teachers have come to value "structured and graded curricula" (p. 295) so extensively that the "display of knowledge" is valued more than any other contribution from the child. He refers to examples of dialogue in primary classrooms wherein the teacher-learner interactions are geared to linear, systematic instruction in sub-skills, rather than the expansion of the children's personal knowledge bases. The regulation of behaviour (Feuerstein, 1980) receives major focus in this type of learning for the teacher presents academic content at the expense, suggest Wells (1983) and Dyson and Genishi (1983), of transcendent and semantically contingent strategies.

Bremme and Erickson (1977) provide an example of a kindergarten-first grade teacher's emphasis on her academic agenda. In the classroom the children's initiations and responses that negated the social rules were either corrected or ignored. However, 98.4 percent of the interruptions during Teacher Time (academic orientation) were accepted when the child made a comment that related to the teacher's topic. Thus, "gaining the floor" and accessing a caregiver-learner interaction was virtually guaranteed if the child was academically on-topic, in spite of the disruption to the accepted rules of the social context.

Thus, these strategies indicate that teachers' dual agenda and interactive form dominate the classroom learning context. The teacher orchestrates the interactions and the child is required to demonstrate social competence in "the display of academic knowledge" (Mehan, 1982, p. 79). As Mehan (1982) suggests, children are expected to make explicit "what they know" in an appropriate manner, namely they have to "unite form and content" (p. 79) within the interactional framework of the classroom.

It is acknowledged that these rather general, classroom-based strategies appear to lack the specificity of the home-based strategies discussed previously. They encapsulate somewhat catholic qualities for, at the present time, we know little about the dynamic caregiver-child literacy interaction within the kindergarten context. The paucity of research in this specific area provides additional motivational force for this study.

The Direct Child-Environment Interaction:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological) ... All

the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

Vygotsky (1978) suggests that all direct child-environmental interactions are affected by the nature of the child's experiences in the social realm. Thus, strategies learned during describer-learner interactions are, over time, internalized by the child and become part of his cognitive repertoire for utilization in personal interactions with the world. Feuerstein (1980) observes that without qualitative mediated learning experiences with caregivers the child is unable to build a network of cognitive structures, and thus does not receive maximum benefit from independent encounters with environmental stimuli. As a large part of a human's knowledge is constructed from personal, direct interaction with the world, deficiencies in describer-learner interactions may result in rather severe restrictions in the child's ability to learn independently. Vygotsky (1978) hypothesizes that it requires sensitivity and flexibility from the caregiver in gauging the child's relative needs for support and independence. As strategies and tasks become more familiar to the child, the adult is required to evaluate the learning interaction and gradually remove the supportive structure to permit the child to demonstrate independence.

The reviewed literature suggests that the "supportive adult" (Dyson and Genishi, 1983) in home-based literacy interactions prepares the child for independent interactions with print (Doake, 1981; Dyson and Genishi, 1983; Lass, 1983, 1982; McKenzie, 1977; Snow, 1983; Sulzby, 1981). The school-based research on interactive strategies has been less illuminating in providing suggestions for how the child makes the transition from "supported" to "independent" learner. It would seem that the school assumes that particular movement is inherent, for even kindergarten

teachers stress that children should be able to work independently (Rist, 1973), namely demonstrate ability to interact with materials without adult support. However, knowing that children receive a wide range of parenting strategies prior to school entrance (Guinagh and Jester, 1972; Heath, 1982a, b), we may anticipate that some young children require more supported learning than others in early childhood programmes. We may also assume that, as a large proportion of classroom instruction focuses on groups (Wells, 1983), then some children may be more adept at utilizing the presented information, in independent follow-up activities, than others. Task complexity is also implicated in the child's ability to benefit from direct interactions, for personal experience tells us that throughout life we may need support to master the intricacies of a new activity before we can interact with it directly. Clay (1979a) notes that the individuality of children is her immediate thought when she observes them at school entrance:

How different children are, even at 5 years old! Not only are they different in sex, boys and girls, and in style, pretty or perky, intelligent or sociable, but also they have learned quite different things from the environments they live in. They are complex beings whose behaviours are all tied up mysteriously into patterns we can sense but are not always able to describe. They are very different one from another. (p. 27)

It is these very differences that suggest schools cannot assume that all class members can benefit from independent interactions with provided materials, without adult support. The complexity of the contextual materials, the individual experiences of the children, together with the sensitivity of the caregivers, affect children's abilities to benefit from direct interactions with the world. For example, if some children have not experienced supported literacy interactions on a "social level" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57), then we cannot anticipate that they will be

able to interact with print-related materials in an independent manner. Clay (1979a) stresses that our educational aim is that children "teach themselves" (p. 68) to read independently. However, her comment should not be interpreted as advocating the provision of print materials and simply leaving children to pursue direct-interactions. Clay (1979b) views the teacher and child as "co-worker(s)" (p. 42) wherein the teacher provides a structured framework to stimulate and guide the child towards independence. The teacher is thus viewed as a flexible facilitator who offers guidance to enable the child to assume some control over "teaching himself". Clay is stressing that child learning is internal and ultimately child-directed. The caregiver's role is to provide literacy strategies to enable the child to internalize them and hence assume some control over his learning process.

Are some contexts more facilitative than others in enhancing the movement from other-directed to child-directed literacy learning? Taylor (1983) and Schickedanz and Sullivan (1984) suggest that homes provide more literacy events and more supportive literacy interactions than schools. They observe that families weave print through their everyday lives and the children move spontaneously from adult supported print interactions to self-directed literacy engagements. Caregivers facilitate when requests are made by the child and then withdraw to permit the children to explore print on their own. Schickedanz and Sullivan (1984) observed a nursery school context, in addition to homes, and noted that the caregivers there offered similar "support-and-withdrawal" strategies. The major difference seemed to be that the nursery setting offered few print materials and hence these strategies were not focused on literacy acquisition. As a result of their study, Schickedanz and Sullivan (1984) suggest that early childhood programmes need to

incorporate more literacy materials into their context, to enable the children to explore them in direct interactions. Such materials, as far as possible, should emulate the home's provision of print materials, e.g. recipe books, stationery and envelopes, telephone books, paper, pencils and books. In the nursery school they could be included as props in the playhouse, and in a play office area or restaurant. Two relevant areas are embedded in the Schickedanz and Sullivan (1984) study. Firstly, their home research was conducted in "literate" homes and hence we cannot assume discontinuity between home and school experiences for all children. Some homes may not have provided supportive literacy interactions, nor the potential for direct interactions with print, and the school provision of some literacy interactions and materials may offer a new richness for such children. Again, the sensitivity of the teacher in providing "support-and-withdrawal" strategies in literacy engagements is paramount, for individual children require different levels of support with literacy materials. Secondly, Schickedanz and Sullivan discuss the notion of play, which is intrinsically so much a part of early childhood experiences (Garvey, 1977; Sutton-Smith, 1982). They suggest that print materials be provided as "props" in play contexts, which requires the ability to abstract features from one context to another, or disembedded thinking (Donaldson, 1978) from children. Presumably children who have experienced print materials in one personal context may respond more effectively to "print as props" within another context. For children with limited exposures to print at home some degree of social interaction with caregivers at school may well be a necessary forerunner to benefitting from direct interactions with literacy materials.

It seems clear that increasing independence in reading requires knowledge of the form of print and an increasing ability to decontextualize (Snow, 1983), or to disembed (Donaldson, 1978), thinking from the physical context to more remote, abstract or representational contexts (Tough, 1973). Hence, one may infer that children's direct interactions with the environment may stimulate literacy learning if they enhance the child's movement from context-specific to context-remote thinking. Children's play represents one such learning context. Fien (in Wolfgang and Sanders, 1981) suggests that there are four stages in play, wherein the child moves from context-dependent interactions to abstract, symbolic interactions. For example, at stage one, a child may playfully attempt to drink from an empty cup; at stage two the child symbolically utilizes a walnut shell as a cup; at stage three the child serves refreshments to dolls using a pretend cup and at stage four the child says, "Let's pretend", and enacts a tea-time drama with no visible props. Wolfgang and Sanders (1981) link literacy learning to the type of symbolic thought illustrated in these play stages. The representational, transcendent thinking of stage four play, they suggest, is similar to the type of decontextualized thought required for independent reading. Krasner (1975) postulates that, for children, "play is part of the serious business of life" (p. 10) for it involves the mental flexibility to move to and fro between the physical world and the imagined world. It stimulates language learning in that play frequently involves social engagement or self-verbalization so that the child conceptualizes, through language, "a theory of the world which includes what is and what is not, and also what could be and what could not be" (Lindfors, 1980, p. 245: author's emphases). Corsaro (1983)

suggests, in addition, that children's play involves the development of elaborate story schemas that may be closely linked to lived-experiences in home and community contexts, or may involve monsters and creatures from the world of books, media and the child's imagination. Within such schematized play the child adopts the role of "other" and transcends, momentarily, to experience another's viewpoint. Thus, the child's play engagements may well be facilitative for developing the underlying thinking strategies that have been linked to literacy learning, namely language development (Tough, 1973), decontextualized thought (Snow, 1983; Wells, 1983), ability to view another's viewpoint (Donaldson, 1978) and the development of cultural story schemas (Applebee, 1977).

Hence, children's direct interactions with the environment may be considered to enhance literacy development if they 1) stimulate the thinking processes underlying the independent reconstruction of text, and 2) involve the children in the world of print. Literacy materials and adults who gauge the child's needs for "support-and-independence" in print-related engagements may be viewed as facilitative for literacy learning in early childhood programmes.

Literacy Knowledge

The child, growing in his cultural context, interacting with human mediators, and directly with his world, builds a fund of literacy knowledge. This may be considered a body of stored information that encompasses the child's concepts about himself as a "reader", and others as readers, and that includes knowledge concerning the form and communicative function of written language. Many researchers (Clay, 1979a; Doake, 1981; Goodman, 1979, 1977; Goodman, Goodman and Burke, 1978; Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1982; Hiebert, 1981; McKenzie, 1977;

(Taylor, 1983) suggest that literacy knowledge is acquired, by the young child, in an "interrelated, holistic" (Hiebert, 1981, p. 243) manner and not as an "accumulation of isolated segments of information about written language" (p. 243). It is suggested that this literacy fund of information may grow along a broad continuum where general patterns may be observed, but it seems unlikely that it progresses in an orderly, linear, lock-step manner (Cazden, 1972; Hiebert, 1981). It also seems unlikely that we can describe an exact moment when a pre-reader becomes a reader (Smith, 1978).

Patterns, within the holistic continuum, have been etched by several researchers. Sulzby (1981) describes three key components of early reading, namely comprehension, word knowledge and letter-sound knowledge. Comprehension of text, she suggests, first emerges as part of a child's general ability to make sense out of his world, and then specific text comprehension is facilitated through meaningful child-parent shared book experiences. Comprehension is thus a vital groundbed for the growth of word and letter-sound knowledge. Gradually, as the child associates enjoyment and meaning with story activities, he begins to develop text memory and re-enacts stories to others. Knowledge of word features, word boundaries, letter-sound associations and letter-cluster-sound segment associations may arise from the child's increasingly focused attention to key print features during shared book time, verbal re-enactment of stories, and indeed from a related interest in writing. Hence, Sulzby (1981) describes a general literacy knowledge continuum based on a global concept of sensemaking, and progressively differentiating in focus over time. She notes that the child gradually focuses on comprehension of written language, on the stability of visual

word units and on orthographic details, and through approximation and differentiation becomes an independent, self-regulated reader, i.e.:

- The child is actually reading the print independently, using comprehension, letter-sound knowledge, and known words in a co-ordinated fashion in re-creating the text. (Sulzby and Otto, 1981, p. 196)

McKenzie (1977) describes three broad stages in young children's acquisition of literacy knowledge. Firstly, she characterizes emergent reading as "the period from the child's first encounters with books and printed materials and during which early concepts about literacy are developed" (p. 317). These "encounters" include shared book experiences, learning rhymes and retelling memorized stories. The second stage is when the child is "tackling the written language system" (p. 317), paying attention to orthographic features, developing a pool of known sight words, making print-related generalizations and integrating a self-developed body of rules. The third stage is "reading" which is intrinsically similar to Sulzby's (1981) "independent reading". At this stage the child:

... has integrated various aspects of reading: the characteristics of stories, the elements of the various language systems, and the visual aspects of print. The reader can now read simple stories with confidence ... (McKenzie, 1977, p. 317)

Mason (1980) offers hypotheses about a "natural hierarchy" (p. 220) of children's literacy knowledge. She suggests that children move through three stages also, though she defines them rather differently than McKenzie (1977). Mason (1980) describes an initial "context-dependent" stage, wherein the child is able to associate meaning to environmental labels and signs. This stage, due to home and media teaching, usually includes alphabet letter recognition. The next stage involves the child's increasing ability to decontextualize print and

recognize words "as unique visual patterns" (Mason, 1980, p. 22). At the third level the child's attention to print details is apparent, and the child is able to utilize sound-letter and sound-word associations, and to segment words in a relatively abstract, and certainly decontextualized, manner.

Clay (1979a) suggests that children move from a general "fascination" with print in their world to the utilization of detailed reading strategies. As Clay's five year olds are recipients of reading instruction in school, then her developmental stages describe patterns of literacy learning that accompany classroom instruction. However, Clay does stress that even with instruction "the child learns how to teach himself to read" (1979a, p. 269), namely that the teacher guides, but it is the child who monitors and integrates his own learning. Clay (1979a) describes five stages of early reading behaviour. During the first stage the child discovers that print has a message that "can be turned into speech". At this stage the child may label pictures or use his own oral language style to invent a sentence for particular pictures in a book. During stage two the child utilizes the language of books, e.g. "Once upon a time", as he invents sentences to describe story events. At stage three the child is heavily constrained by picture details in his story invention, and at stage four he has memorized many of the captions in a simple book. He is "prompted by the pictures" but also relies on "what his ear remembers of the text" (Clay, 1979a, p. 60) in order to recall story events. At stage five, which Clay considers a transitional stage, the child coordinates cues from different sources, his memory for text, picture cues, orthographic cues and his knowledge of language. At this stage a child, considers Clay, is likely to benefit from formal reading

instruction. Such a child has the following pattern of abilities:

- moves with some consistency across print within the broad directional constraints of written English ...
- produces a nearly perfect rendering of a simple caption book.
- matches speech and text word by word and space by space with some accuracy using hand or voice to synchronize the matching.
- locates a few familiar words on the basis of cues although he is vague about what these are.
- expects what he reads to sound meaningful and sensible. (Clay, 1979a, p. 256)

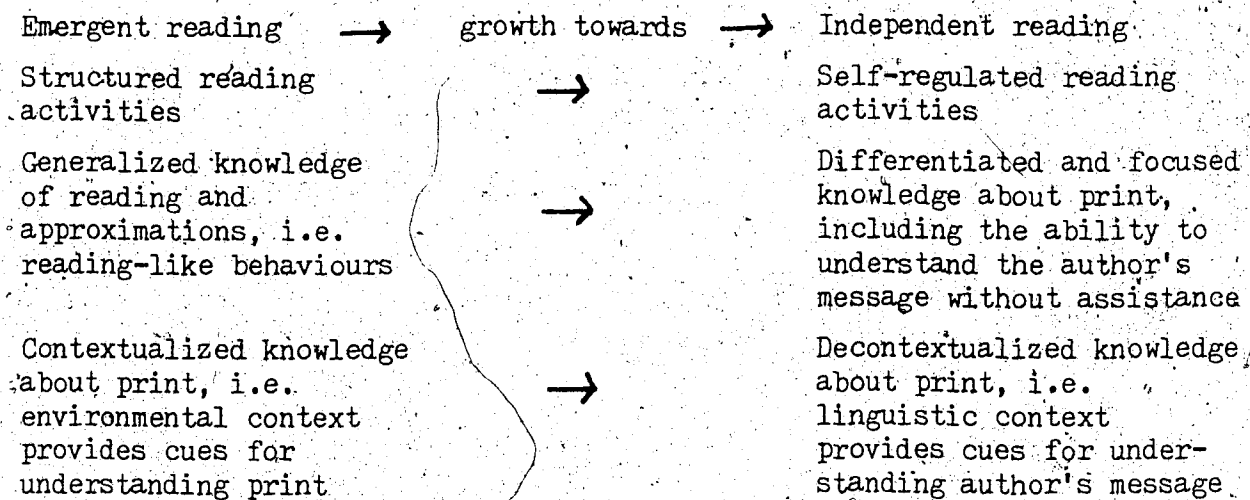
During early reading instruction the child gradually learns additional cueing systems and his "letter knowledge, word knowledge, letter-sound associations" (Clay, 1979a, p. 267) and letter cluster-sound associations become more developed. Over time the child gains more control and accuracy and is able to integrate these systems into independent reading wherein the teacher "acts as a resource but the child pursues a large amount of the activity himself" (p. 251).

Though Mason (1980), McKenzie (1977), Sulzby (1981) and Clay (1979a) describe the growth of literacy knowledge in somewhat different ways, core similarities are apparent. They all envisage literacy information being acquired within a print-oriented context, and all perceive a continuum of growth. They share the view that literacy development is not the linear learning of discrete skills, but a holistic process. This process appears to commence with approximations, manifested in reading-like behaviours, within a social literacy context, and gradually refines and focuses over time. Sulzby (1981) and Clay (1979a) explicitly, and Mason (1980) and McKenzie (1977) implicitly, note the general trend for the child to learn literacy concepts initially through structured caregiver-child activities, and then to increasingly develop strategies to permit self-regulated direct interactions with print. Rather than

describing non-readers and readers, they acknowledge the vital importance of an emergent reading phase where the child develops increasing awareness of written language structures, forms and purposes, and which seems a prerequisite for independent reading where the child is able to utilize self-regulated strategies to reconstruct the author's message in print. Characteristics of general trends observed from Mason's, McKenzie's, Sulzby's and Clay's research may be synthesized diagrammatically (Table 2).

Table 2

Patterns in a Continuum of Literacy Knowledge



These suggested patterns of literacy knowledge growth are clearly only general trends. Researchers, focusing on other dimensions of literacy growth than Mason (1980), Clay (1979a), McKenzie (1977) and Sulzby (1981), do, however, offer further support. Hiebert (1981) investigated three, four and five year olds' letter naming, visual discrimination and auditory discrimination ability, and their knowledge of the process and purpose of reading. Her tasks in the latter two areas were contextualized. For example, a child involved in a "process" task was asked to label various dramatized activities that included

demonstrations of silent and oral reading. A child completing a "purpose" activity was requested to view Christmas packages to decide if there was any way of knowing who was to receive each gift. Hiebert (1981) reports group developmental differences on all tasks in the battery. Overall, five year olds demonstrated more effective literacy knowledge than four year olds, and four year olds performed more successfully than three year olds. However, these developmental literacy knowledge patterns were not incrementally smooth, as the major period of growth appeared to be between ages three and four years. When examining individual patterns Hiebert discovered that several three year olds performed like five year olds, and that there were marked individual differences in print awareness among the four and five year olds. Hence, general trends in the growth of literacy knowledge may be apparent, but individual variations discovered by Hiebert (1981) suggest that development may follow different paths for different children. Another interesting facet of Hiebert's work is that factor analytic analysis of her task variables lends support to the unitary hypothesis of literacy knowledge development. All of Hiebert's task measures, though seemingly diverse in nature, loaded on a single factor "explaining 65% of the variation" (1981, p. 250). From this finding Hiebert suggests that we should not try to treat "the various dimensions of print awareness as distinct entities" (p. 255), but consider them as holistic knowledge that is "integrally related" (p. 255), and presumably integrally acquired by the child.

Lass (1983, 1982), Doake (1981) and Day (1979) provide support for the suggested "approximation to increasing differentiation" pattern observed in the movement from emergent to independent reading. Lass

(1983, 1982) describes her son's growth from generalized playing with books and sharing stories, to the memorization of texts and rhymes, and then to focused attention on letters and words. Doake (1981), in describing the literacy knowledge of four preschoolers, explains that differentiation:

... from the general to the specific and from relatively unconscious efforts to well co-ordinated and finely controlled ones, seemed to be an outstanding characteristic of these children's learning in the area of written language (p. 403).

Day (1979) administered the Concepts About Print Test (Clay, 1979b) to kindergarten, and later, beginning first grade children to investigate their development in print awareness. Day factor-analyzed the test items and four patterns emerged, namely 1) Print-directionality, 2) Letter-word knowledge, 3) Advanced print concepts, and 4) Book orientation. Day (1979) reports that general book orientation concepts, such as knowledge that print carries a message, had been acquired by early kindergarten age. Advanced print concepts, for example, knowledge of punctuation and correct letter sequencing with words, were only known by a few children early in Grade One. Print-directionality concepts, such as knowing where to start reading and how to traverse a line of print in a left-right direction, and letter-word concepts, namely demonstrated knowledge of letter and word boundaries, were acquired during the kindergarten year. Day's (1979) results, together with Lass' (1983, 1982) and Doake's (1981) descriptions, suggest that children do grasp general print knowledge and then, through further print experiences, gradually focus to differentiate detailed graphic information.

Thus, many researchers conceptualize children entering school with an accompanying wealth of reading-related knowledge, though they recognize

that individual children differ in the amount and quality of that knowledge (Hiebert, 1981). The same researchers would agree that the literacy knowledge of beginning school children is "more extensive than is frequently recognized" (Hiebert, 1981, p. 257) by teachers. Some educators may well be implicitly part of the "know nothing" movement described by Goodman (1979), and feel that children come to school to learn to read knowing little or nothing about written language. Research, presently reviewed, contradicts that notion. However, there is one body of research that is narrow in scope, but has received a good deal of public notice, and could be generalized, albeit unwisely, to support the "know nothing" movement's claims. Reid (1966), investigating Scottish five year olds' knowledge of print and its functions, suggests that young children perceive reading as a "mysterious activity" (p. 60) and are not aware "whether to 'read' the pictures or the other 'marks' on the page" (p. 61). Clearly, we have here a researcher claiming that children know virtually nothing about print and the purpose of reading, which certainly contravenes findings by others (Day, 1979; Doake, 1981; Goodman, Goodman and Burke, 1978; Hiebert, 1981; Holdaway, 1979; Lass, 1983, 1982; Mason, 1980; Sulzby, 1981). However, research that appears to demonstrate that young children have developed sparse literacy knowledge has frequently been conducted in an abstract, decontextualized manner (Denny and Weintraub, 1966, 1963; Mason, G., 1967; Reid, 1966). Since the emergence of these studies we have discovered that children develop and demonstrate knowledge within a situational context (Donaldson, 1978; Halliday, 1975). If a decontextualized task is presented to a young child then the child's knowledge may well be masked by the manner of presentation. Downing (1970a, b), in replicating Reid's work, found that when children were

given real objects with which to interact, then they responded to print-related tasks more appropriately. Harste, Burke and Woodward (1982), Ylisto (1967), Goodman, Goodman and Burke (1978) and Hiebert (1981) all confirm the importance of evaluating children's print knowledge within a concrete literacy context. However, we cannot ignore Downing's (1979, 1977, 1970a, b) work, when he suggests that young children may well have limited knowledge of the technical terms frequently used in early reading instruction, namely "word", "letter" and "sound". He declares that children may be considered to be "in a state of cognitive confusion about the characteristics and purposes of reading activities" (1979, p. 9). It is possible that children are confused about certain aspects of growing print knowledge. Confusion about the labels, "letter" or "word", may certainly have a deleterious impact during mediated print-related learning interactions, when the caregiver or teacher may assume, inappropriately, that the child understands the technical terms. However Downing's (1979) generalization of attributing "cognitive confusion" to the child may well be over-stated. Certainly, researchers experience difficulty in "capturing" the child's literacy knowledge and it is possible that we place over-reliance on the child's verbal responses to questions. It is conceivable that we may judge the child's "confusion" or "clarity" by adult standards. The child may have developed meaningful concepts concerning "letters" or "words" but, as yet, does not comprehend the labels that we affix to the concepts. Doake's (1981) Jennifer, aged three years and eight months, when asked, "How do I know what to read?" responded, "Pictures" (p. 281). On the basis of her comment we might suggest that Jennifer is confused, and has not yet developed an understanding that print carries the message. However, when Jennifer was asked

to help Doake to read a book she showed him where to start reading, and her fingers traced the correct left-right directionality along the top line of print. Hence, Jennifer's verbalizations bore little relationship to her demonstrated behaviour. Clearly, in investigating the child's literacy knowledge the context and manner of probing for that knowledge seem vital factors. There is a necessity to collect information from more than one source. Torrey's (1979) comments offer pertinent directions:

If we were to take seriously the problem of discovering the "natural" method of learning to read, we would have to spend more time and effort observing what children actually do. We would have to focus on their spontaneous behavior in free situations and less upon their responses to our predetermined questions (p. 135).

This study does not consider learning to read as "natural" in the sense that one may anticipate reading behaviour to occur spontaneously and inherently in children. Rather, it suggests that literacy learning may be nurtured in a socio-cultural context, by supportive caregivers, and the process may be monitored by the child, who perceives its meaning, function and importance in his life. Thus, the context, the human interactions and the print knowledge acquired by the child form a dynamic structure for the cultural transmission of literacy. Relative success or failure of the transmission process is perceived as a breakdown in one or more of the interactive components. Investigation of literacy learning within a kindergarten classroom requires multiple research techniques to access information concerning this complex social enterprise.

CHAPTER THREE

A RESEARCHER'S DECISIONS: METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

A Researcher's Decisions

Man's activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. (Freire, 1982, p. 119)

In planning research to realize specific purposes a researcher has to make practical decisions related to design and implementation and theoretical decisions related to the conceptual framework, and the philosophical stance, embodied in the study. Clearly, both theory and practice are intimately related in a sensitive interplay and neither can be separated from the other. In the following description "reflection and action" are intertwined though, for the purposes of clarity, one aspect or the other may be highlighted. A statement of the specific purposes of the study precedes discussion focusing on the practical implementation of the research and the methodological framework, as both flow from the researcher's intents.

A Researcher's Intents:

Specific Purposes of the Study

1. The primary purpose of this study was to describe kindergarten children's emerging literacy development within the learning contexts provided by the school and classroom. Though the whole kindergarten group was included in the study, major attention was devoted to three children who had well developed literacy knowledge and three children who demonstrated more limited literacy knowledge on specific print tasks. For each of these children key foci for

attention included:

- a) The literacy contexts, namely the print-related environments provided by the kindergarten classroom and the school.
 - b) Each child's direct interactions with the print-related materials provided in the literacy contexts.
 - c) The human interactions between each child and the classroom caregivers, focusing on print-related materials and occurring within the educational environment.
2. The second purpose was to describe selected features of the six children's homes and community literacy contexts in terms of the print-related materials, the opportunities for each child's direct interactions with print, and the social print interactions provided for each child.
 3. The third purpose was to examine changes over time that occurred in the children's literacy knowledge via analysis of performance on selected literacy tasks and through classroom observations. The emerging literacy knowledge of the six children received primary focus, though the literacy knowledge of the whole class, in which this small group was embedded, received attention.

Implementing the Research

Access to the Kindergarten Classroom

At the beginning of April, 1983, a preliminary contact was made with the principal of a large elementary school in Edmonton. I explained that I was interested in researching kindergarten children's literacy development from school entry to approximately halfway through the school year. The principal expressed an interest in the study and volunteered

to contact his two kindergarten teachers. On April 13th, I was invited to meet the teachers to explain my project. One of the teachers said that she would be unable to participate as she was leaving teaching at the end of the 1983 school year. Mrs. Compton, the other teacher, was receptive to my plan and agreed to have me as a classroom observer over several months during the 1983-84 school year. She explained that aides and parent helpers were constantly involved in her kindergarten programme and an observer should present few problems. Mrs. Compton noted that she was pleased that researchers were "at last interested in literacy development in the kindergarten classroom". We briefly discussed my role as an observer, rather than as an aide or an additional teacher, and I explained that I would have minimal interactions with the children during the course of the study, other than when I worked on the structured literacy tasks with them. I indicated that I would be writing extensive observational notes in the classroom. Mrs. Compton thought that this would create no difficulty as she frequently wrote informal observations of the children so "they become used to you jotting down information". It was agreed that, as a preliminary to the major research, I would observe in the classroom during the month of May, 1983.

An Introduction to the Community

During April I familiarized myself with the community around the school. I walked for miles along the major roads, side streets and alleys and visited the school playground, the nearby shopping centres and the community facilities. As I became more familiar with the area I started to photograph the environmental print for possible inclusion in one of my structured literacy tasks.

The Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted for two basic reasons. Firstly, I thought it would provide an opportunity for the kindergarten teacher to assess her "comfort level" with an observer in the classroom before committing herself to the extended research planned for the following school year. Secondly, I wished to pilot my structured literacy tasks and refine my observational and record-keeping techniques.

I spent six afternoons (approximately seventeen hours) in the classroom during May. Mrs. Compton introduced me as a "visitor from the University" and the children appeared to accept my presence. In spite of Mrs. Compton's assurances that the children were used to adults writing observational records I was somewhat surprised that no child asked why I was taking notes. The teacher permitted me to be a "fly on the wall" and did not seem perturbed by my observational role. When I asked for her feelings concerning my presence she hesitated and then commented, "I know this seems awful ... I hate to tell you this -- but I don't know you're there most of the time. You're like living furniture." "Living furniture" was an apt description of the passive observational stance I wished to adopt and hence I was far from troubled by this particular analogy! At the conclusion of the six days Mrs. Compton affirmed that she felt quite comfortable with being engaged in the extended research planned for the next school year.

During this brief study I piloted the literacy tasks on a randomly selected group of six children and subsequently modified the Environmental Print task. No modifications seemed necessary on the Shared-Book task (see page 108: Structured Literacy Tasks). A third task, focusing on reading as a process distinguishable from other activities, had been prepared. It was not utilized as the Environmental Print and Shared-Book

tasks provided a good deal of information concerning the children's literacy knowledge and a third task would have been overwhelmingly time-consuming to complete with a whole class in the main study.

When not engaged in the literacy tasks I spent time observing the large and small group, and one-to-one interactions in the classroom and wrote detailed observational notes. I also collected classroom hand-outs and documented the literacy contexts provided by the school and classroom. Several decisions emerged from the observational and recording activities I pursued:

a) Observation in the classroom must remain flexible. When the children were gathered together for a whole-group activity the teacher-group interactions could be observed, though clearly when I narrowed down to attend to six children within the group, rather than the entire class, my observation could be more focused. As the children dispersed to activity centres arranged around the room the observational task became more complex. The children randomly selected for the literacy tasks were chosen for in-depth observation during the pilot study. Immediately I realized that I could not track all their activities when they chose different centres. Hence I decided to watch each child for a ten minute interval. This was found to be too rigid and involved heavy clock-watching. I then decided to observe the print-related centres but this, as an overall approach, was equally impractical as two of the children never selected such centres! I finally adopted a more informal approach. When there were natural breaks in the afternoon, such as activity changes or key incidents, I recorded the time to provide chronological "signposts". I evolved two internal, observational rules, namely if two or more of the selected children chose one centre then I would observe

their activities, and if all selected different centres I would first observe the child in a print-related centre and then rotate through the other children in turn. When adopting these flexible "rules" I did not ration my time but only moved on to a new observation when a natural break occurred in the first. In this way each observation retained a holistic quality whereas timed "kidwatching" (Goodman, 1982, p. 120) seemed fragmented. At intervals I trained myself to scan the room to check briefly on the activities of the other selected children who were not presently being observed in depth.

b) My stance of minimal interaction with the children must be maintained. I was conscious that I needed to adopt a reflective stance in observing in the classroom. Had I intervened then the literacy development of the children could easily be affected by my presence. On the pilot study I realized that this attitude may be difficult to maintain without vigilance and careful thought. Again I started to formulate "rules". I decided never to intervene in an activity however puzzled a child might be, and whenever directly asked a question I would answer simply and without expansion. For example, a young boy was attempting to build words, related to a gardening theme, by placing felt letters on a flannelboard. A word card was tacked on the flannelboard and the object of the activity was to reproduce the "gardening" words. The boy appeared frustrated with the task and finally turned to me and asked, "What is this word?" I smiled. He demanded, "Tell me! Tell me!" and I responded, "Plant". A direct response could not be avoided, though it was possible to provide a limited, non-expanded reply. Similarly, I decided not to ask the children direct questions. I became very interested in their book choices from the classroom library, but did not

ask the children the reasons for their book selections as I did not wish to focus their attention onto their strategies. I decided that observations over time would eventually reveal their reasons for choosing certain books.

Record keeping must be meticulous and organized. The format for my observational record keeping was formulated during my pilot study. My classroom observations were recorded in a compact notebook. Each evening these observations were transcribed into detailed fieldnotes. A column on each page provided space for noting ideas and observed relationships. A journal of subjective thoughts and ongoing questions had been started at the beginning of April and would continue throughout the major study. Separate folders were designated for my document collection, for my notes on the literacy context of the community, school and classroom, and for the interview data. All interviews would be taped, with the permission of the informant, and then transcribed. All fieldnotes, literacy context notes and interview transcriptions would be typed to maximize clarity in data analysis.

At the conclusion of the pilot study, Mrs. Compton and I met and finalized various practical aspects of the research. It was agreed that I would send introductory letters to the parents of all the new kindergarten children, and that I should begin my observations on the first day of school in September. The afternoon kindergarten class was selected for observation as I had teaching and course commitments in the mornings.

Permission for the Research

Permission for the initial pilot study had been obtained from Field Services at the University of Alberta, the local School Board, the school and teacher in April, 1983. In August, 1983, permission was granted for

the major research study by the same agencies and personnel.

A letter to the new kindergarten children's parents was distributed at an orientation day in early September, 1983. (A copy of this letter is provided in Appendix A.) The letter requested parents to contact Mrs. Compton or myself if they did not wish their child to be included in the research project. I received no telephone calls or written communications from parents. Noreen Compton received one telephone call in support of the study. The parent had stated that she was pleased research was going to take place in the kindergarten classroom.

During the research, interviews with the teacher, aide, principal, school librarian and parents were tape recorded. Prior to recording I always requested permission from the informant. All participants agreed to the use of the tape recorder.

The Research Schedule

I had originally planned to observe in the classroom from early September, 1983, to the end of January, 1984. However this plan was modified, with the agreement of the school, as I required more observational time. I concluded the research in the first week of March, 1984. The research schedule is outlined in Appendix B.

During the six months of the study the classroom was visited for sixty-six afternoons and observational records were obtained for 165 hours. Formal interviews with parents and school personnel were conducted for 26 hours over the research period, though of course informal conversations and telephone conversations were interspersed through each day.

Thus far the sequential framework of implementing the research has been described. Various methodological and practical considerations,

arising from the pilot study, have been recounted. These considerations and decisions, and the chronological account, provide a bare outline of the research, permitting the reader to conceptualize the course of the study. The methodological underpinnings and design of the major project are embedded within these practicalities. The following section will bring into focus the holistic groundbed in which "reflection and action" are intertwined.

Methodology and Design

One reason ... why researchers have fought shy of studying classroom interaction is the notorious complexity of communicative behaviour. But complexity will not dissolve if we ignore it. (Stubbs, 1976, p. 75)

This study focused on the kindergarten child's literacy development within a cultural context. As suggested in the related literature review, literacy learning takes place in the naturalistic settings embodied by the home, the community, the school and the classroom. Research methodology and project design had, therefore, to take into account the complexity of the contexts, the dynamic interactions involved in the cultural transmission of literacy, and the qualities of the child's growing fund of literacy knowledge. In fulfilling the specific purposes of this study my object was not to "dissolve" (Stubbs, 1976, p. 75) or reduce complexity to simple elements. Rather, my purpose was to illuminate our understanding of early literacy development by substituting "a complexity more intelligible for one which is less" (Geertz, 1979, p. 35).

To offer justice to the complexity of literacy development occurring within the cultural context, "triangulation" (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1980; Sulzby, 1981) of research techniques was utilized. Sulzby

(1981), in her research focusing on young children's developing conceptions of written language, stated her belief in:

overlapping looks at the phenomena, "triangulating" by using overlapping research tools (naturalistic observation; structured tasks; interviews; experimental designs) and realizing that each is a product of human judgement (p. 7: author's underlining).

As a researcher, my belief mirrored Sulzby's. In making sense of early literacy development I was conscious that the "educational phenomena define(d) the method, not vice versa" (Hamilton, 1980, p. 81). The educational phenomenon I studied was embedded in the communicative social contexts of community, home, school and classroom. Stripping away the contexts would reveal no core as literacy learning, "is essentially constructed interactionally in social contexts" (Teale, 1982, p. 107). Thus, the context is a dynamic part of the phenomenon and the tentacles of early literacy learning and development are interwoven within the whole. My research sought to focus on, and trace, these strands through the interactional contexts. "Overlapping research tools" (Sulzby, 1981, p. 7) permitted me to observe the phenomenon through various "windows" and hence offered complementary access to a complex area. Understanding of the kindergarten child's literacy development was pursued, in this study, through the utilization of extensive observation, the collection of kindergarten hand-outs and print-related school-home communiques, the structuring of literacy tasks and through interviews. Each of these "windows" will be described to illustrate the development of the study.

"Windows" for Understanding the Phenomenon

Observation

It becomes immediately apparent to the thoughtful observer that one cannot describe everything ... However, each competent researcher has begun with some sort of scheme, ... which enables the research to select among phenomena for observation and to assign significance to phenomena uncovered in the process of research. (Wilcox, 1982, p. 459)

Classroom observations, over six months, focused on describing the children's literacy learning within the kindergarten setting. Detailed fieldnotes and audiotapes were made to offer insight into the human interactions, centering on print-related materials and experiences, and the literacy knowledge base acquired by kindergarten children. In addition, notes and photographs were taken to capture the literacy context, over time, within the print environments provided by the classroom, school and neighbourhood. Record keeping procedures formulated during the pilot study were maintained throughout the research.

At the beginning of the research, observations encompassed the whole kindergarten context, the physical organization of the room, the displays of print-related materials, the variety of print-related activities and the nature of the human literacy-related interactions. Following the administration of the structured literacy tasks, three children with high literacy awareness and three children with limited literacy knowledge were selected for extensive observation. Such observation described five children's literacy interactions and development over a period of five months (one child was followed for three months as his family then moved from the area), when "key incidents, or concrete instances of the working of abstract principles" (Wilcox, 1982, p. 462) emerged, revealing patterns of learning to the researcher.

When planning the study I envisaged "print-related" observations.

would focus on activities centering on graphic content, namely print itself. My conception of "print-related" broadened during the study and hence my observations ranged from focusing on graphic content to centering on activities that were perceived to have some bearing on literacy development, but contained little or no print. My observational broadening was influenced by two factors. Firstly, there were few activities focusing on graphic content during the early part of the school year, and hence pragmatic necessity directed my observations of the whole class and the selected children into a range of activities. Secondly, there was an interplay between the observations I was constrained to pursue and my conception of "print-related". As I observed the children in teacher-group sessions, in small-group play and in individual activities, I observed an interactional pattern that could surely be linked to literacy development. The children's demonstration of background knowledge, their development and enactment of story schemas in play, their perceptions of personal competence in interacting with the activities provided in the classroom, and their monitoring of performance during these interactions, were examples of variables that may well relate to the contribution these children bring to reading experiences. The teacher's introduction of school-learning concepts such as "how to" act as a responsible classroom member, "how to" utilize school-based tools of learning, e.g. glue, paint, scissors, pencils, computer and tape recorder, and "how to" respond in classroom discussions, provided a firm introduction to the process of formal schooling within our culture. The children's abilities to internalize these "how to" directives could well affect their contributions to the formal classroom reading instruction offered in the elementary grades. Observations of these broader human

dynamics were thus included as they were perceived as potential contributory factors that may impact on the children's literacy development. As these patterns became clearer, and as more graphic content was introduced into the classroom, the observational focus shifted towards capturing print activities. If print tasks were introduced to the whole group then the observational focus on print itself could be retained. However, when the six children selected for indepth observation moved into centres then a variety of activities was observed. The flexible "rules" for observation, developed in the pilot study, were maintained. For example, Belinda, a child designated as Low Print aware during the selection process, rarely chose centres that focused on print. Thus, using a rotational observation system amongst the six children, Belinda was observed pursuing whatever activities she chose.

In the research there was a covert aspect to the observations. The names of the six High and Low Print aware children were not revealed to the teacher, as I wished to investigate their natural literacy learning and did not desire to provoke either conscious or subconscious changes in the teacher's interactions with these children. Hence, it was necessary to observe other children in the classroom to prevent an overt over-focusing on the selected group. Two strategies that I utilized provide examples of the attempts made to preserve the small group's anonymity. When checking the centre choices of the six children, at the classroom centre chart, I always checked the choices of at least six additional children. On one particular occasion I observed Janice and Trevor at the computer by positioning myself in the nearby book corner where two other children were playing with puppets. After the latter

observation Mrs. Compton commented that "the puppet play was super -- they really took off". I nodded and commented that the children were indeed, "really involved". Thus care was taken to minimize the teacher's knowledge concerning my observational focus on the six children.

The Role of the Observer: My role in the kindergarten context was that of a participant observer. Freilich (1970) described this role as "observing the behavior of a group while participating in its community life" (p. 1). He emphasized that role adoption could move along a continuum from "going native", in which the researcher personally identifies with the group and approximates its behaviours and customs, through to a role of researcher as "privileged stranger" (Freilich, 1970, p. 2). In the latter role the researcher serves as a "stranger with rights" to work or reside in the context for a period of time in order to "question community members extensively, and to record what he observes and hears" (p. 2). My observation within the kindergarten classroom largely could be described as fulfilling the "privileged stranger" role. At times it may even have reflected Wilcox's (1982) suggestion that researchers in schools are frequently "nonparticipant" (p. 461), but closely resemble "flies on the wall" observing classroom dynamics. As I wished to focus, for a major portion of my research, on the naturalistic literacy happenings occurring in the kindergarten, my role was most appropriately approximate to the "privileged stranger" role. However, this role was not comparable to a "new set of clothes" thrown on for an occasion! It involved developing the "reflective stance" within my personality and permitting this to be dominant over many months. It also required ongoing self-questioning, continuous communication and, in the early part of the research, careful

explanations to the participants in the study.

When conceptualizing the research I was aware that some degree of role flexibility could be anticipated as I observed in the classroom. A large portion of my time would be spent observing the natural literacy context and classroom interactions, but for two weeks at the beginning and at the end of the study I would be working on the structured literacy tasks with the children. At times, then, my role would range from "privileged stranger" to being a more active participant observer, from observing the behaviours of children as they pursued their everyday literacy engagements to dialoguing with children as informants concerning their own literacy knowledge. I was aware that when these role changes, or movements along the participant observer continuum, occurred then I would be collecting two rather different kinds of data. As a "privileged stranger" I would be observing and describing literacy development and interactions as observed behaviours. Human beings would be described in the process of "acting-out" their literacy knowledge and learning. As a more active participant observer I would be involved in interactions with children and describing their dialogue or their "talking-about" literacy learning. This dual aspect to the data would provide complementary perspectives and internal consistency. (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1980) in that what would be observed in one situation might be checked in the other. Though there may then be advantages in the role changes I was, at the same time, conscious that such movements should be monitored. In the practice of my research, at no time did I radically change in my observational role. My actions totally avoided the role adoption Freilich (1970) described as "going native", which in this study would have involved the adoption of a teacher role, as I believe this may have

significantly affected the data collected.

In addition to evaluating role flexibility in the planning stages of the study I had also considered the impact of my presence in the classroom. Role is clearly developed interdependently with the context of the research and is not the isolated stance of the researcher. I had wondered if the sheer presence of an observer, who was certainly larger than the analogous "fly on the wall" would change the dynamics of the setting being studied. Would the teacher be so conscious of my presence that she might adopt alternate teaching strategies than those usually employed? Would the children enact their everyday lives in natural ways when there was an observer within their life-context? I had developed safeguards to diffuse changes brought about by my presence. Stubbs (1976) had suggested that the researcher's presence may initially make a "natural" classroom "unnatural" in terms of the teacher's and students' reactions to the researcher's note-taking or tape recording. However, if sufficient time was allowed then the classroom members became habituated and gradually flowed back to their normal behaviour patterns. By conducting the pilot study with the same teacher who would participate in the major research, and by pursuing the study for six months, this process of habituation should have been achieved. In addition I decided to enter the school on the first day of class in September. As this represented the onset of schooling for the kindergarten children then my presence was only as "new" as the whole context of school. The teacher, aide, classroom environment and myself were all equally "new" to these children. Thus, there was no opportunity for my presence to create an "unnatural" classroom environment for the children as I was naturally part of the context from the beginning. I had also decided to respond simply and

directly to the children when they asked questions about my role in the classroom, for example, "I'm here to find out what children do in kindergarten". Mystery may be anticipated to create uncertainty but this type of uncertainty might be dispelled through simple explanation.

Thus, thought had focused on minimizing the impact of my presence prior to the study, and strategies for maintaining my participant observer's stance had been developed during the pilot study. However, during the course of the major research the role retention, in practice, required ongoing evaluation. I do not believe that my presence, and my focus on the literacy development of the children, changed the classroom content. Had Mrs. Compton changed her classroom materials the room may well have been "dripping" with print. Such was not the case. Print content in the room only accelerated briefly after the children's introduction to the school library in October, and more consistently during the post-Christmas period. This latter increased exposure to print had been part of Mrs. Compton's agenda since early September (Interview data: September 1st, 1983). In the early weeks Mrs. Compton twice changed her afternoon programme to ensure that I saw activities she "knew I was interested in", namely the calendar routine and an oral language discussion. I had arrived at the school, on these occasions, a little later than the scheduled activities and hence Mrs. Compton re-programmed them for later in the afternoon. I provided minimal feedback for this re-scheduling and this type of teacher-initiated change stopped. Though my nonparticipant role had been explained to the teacher prior to the study, during the pilot study, and again during our September 1st interview, her understanding of the practical implications related to my stance developed over time. In early September I was

permitted my "fly on the wall" role. Towards the end of September, and in the early weeks of October, I sensed Mrs. Compton's confusion and accompanying unhappiness that I, as a researcher who was also a trained teacher, could be present and not become involved in assisting and teaching the children. When this arose I spent time talking with Mrs. Compton, re-explaining how such a role change may both affect the classroom and the results of my research. I knew we had achieved some form of understanding when, in late October, Mrs. Compton introduced me to a substitute teacher who was to instruct the class for the afternoon.

Mrs. Compton: This is Anne -- our researcher. She is doing doctoral research in my room. She has permission from me and the School Board to be in at any time -- and she's observing this afternoon. Now -- she isn't doing any teaching so please don't ask her -- it would affect her study. She is only there to observe.
(Fieldnotes: October 25th, 1983)

In the days following I noted that whenever Mrs. Compton had to leave the room for a telephone call or a parent interview then the vice principal was asked to supervise the class with the aide. Thus, over time, I was perceived as "living furniture", with no pedagogical role, rather than as a "teacher, who could take over the classroom". From November to March the teacher's acceptance of my role became more entrenched and there was little need for further explanation or redefinition.

It is difficult to know how the children perceived my role as an observer. Clearly it did not surprise them! Only three times during the course of the study did children enquire about my continual note-taking. Vanessa, in the twelfth week of my research, was the first child to ask what I was writing. I responded, "I'm writing about the things children do in kindergartens." This appeared to suffice as she turned back to her puzzle activity and did not enquire again. In the seventeenth week

Jonathon asked, and a more detailed response was required.

Jonathon: "What you writing?"
 Me: "I'm writing down what kinds of things kids do in kindergarten."
 Jonathon: "Then what -- do you show it your Mom?"
 Me: "No, I take it to the University."
 Jonathon: "Universiade?"
 Me: "Well, it's called the University and it's a big school for grown-ups."
 Jonathon: "So you show it your teacher then?"
 Me: "That's right." (Fieldnotes: January 20th, 1984)

As I was administering the literacy tasks, at the end of February, the third child, Mark, enquired about my note-taking. I responded, "I'm writing down some of the things you tell me -- so I can remember." He nodded and did not pursue the topic. In retrospect it is amazing how the children seemed to internalize my role in the classroom. Initial requests for my active assistance on projects faded very quickly, presumably because my responses were minimal and non-expanded. The children accepted that my role was different from the teacher's and the aide's roles. Some aspects of my relationship with them was similar to The Little Prince's relationship with the fox (Saint-Exupery, 1962). In the following passage the fox explains to the Prince how he can be "tamed":

"You must be very patient," replied the fox. "First you will sit at a little distance from me -- like that -- in the grass. I shall look at you out of the corner of my eye, and you will say nothing. Words are a source of misunderstandings. But you will sit a little closer to me, every day ... One must observe the proper rites" (pp. 81-82).

In my observations I did sit at a distance and then moved closer to the children. They quickly realized that I was not there to control, criticize, facilitate or interact, but just "to be". Though a few inches separated us they would look to the aide in the hallway or to the teacher at the other side of the room for assistance, bypassing me completely.

They "fooled around" and used forbidden "swear words" amongst themselves, whilst cautiously looking over their shoulders to check if Mrs. Compton or Mrs. Webster, the aide, were in sight or earshot! Clearly my eyes and ears were not the critical kind -- or did they exist at all for the children, as time passed? And yet, when sad they occasionally leaned against me, when engrossed they absent-mindedly twisted the decorations on my shoes, and at the same time accepted the fact that though I adequately tied shoe laces and zipped coats I was not such a good resource for helping them print their names or knowing whether "L" was before or after "M". The children and I "observed the proper rites" and were "tamed": words were never "sources of misunderstanding" and our relationship developed along an almost wordless route of quietness.

Collection of Documents

With the teacher's permission I collected hand-outs, school-home notices and any other print-related work or information sheets. These served to offer background information and records of literacy tasks in the classroom and also offered insight into the print-related relationship between home and school contexts.

The Role of the Collector: My role in this area of the research was that of "privileged collector" of materials pertinent to the literacy context of the classroom and to the bridge between school and home contexts. In early September there was a random quality to this role in terms of receiving hand-outs and documents on a regular basis. However, with Mrs. Compton's agreement, I placed a folder on a room divider close to her desk, as a depository for written materials. This system worked well for the duration of the study, for both the teacher and the aide had a definite place in which to store the documents.

Structured Literacy Tasks

The Environmental Print and Shared Book tasks were constructed in order to identify the six case study children, three of whom demonstrated well developed literacy knowledge and three of whom demonstrated more limited knowledge on these activities. In addition these two tasks, administered towards the beginning and at the conclusion of the study were intended to provide information concerning the literacy knowledge of the whole class in which the case study children were embedded. Both the Environmental Print and Shared Book activities were designed as descriptive instruments to investigate children's literacy knowledge over time. Several factors were considered in the construction of these instruments:

1. This study focused on the growth of literacy knowledge within a cultural context and both tasks reflected this conceptual framework. The Environmental Print activity utilized print from within the immediate community and from the larger geographic area around the school and the children's homes. It was thus print that the children may have encountered as they pursued their everyday lives in the community. The Shared Book task emulated the storybook reading interaction so commonly found in our culture's homes and early childhood programmes (Doake, 1981; Holdaway, 1979; Teale, 1981).
2. Two informal, but rather global activities were constructed as both could viably investigate a wide range of print concepts and strategies and could elicit on-task verbalization from the children. Though both activities were different in format, recent research has indicated that a variety of types of literacy tasks may indeed tap information from a generic pool of within-child literacy knowledge

(Hiebert, 1981).

3. The context of task administration was a key consideration. Many studies have removed young children from their classroom context in order to test them on their print knowledge. Such an approach has allied dangers in terms of the high numbers of non-responses from the children (Denny and Weintraub, 1966), and also because formal testing may produce limited test-related, rather than natural classroom context-related, responses from young children (Cambourne, 1982). Hence these tasks were designed so that they could be informally administered within the classroom context. The Environmental Print task had a game-like quality not dissimilar to many of the activities at the regular classroom centres. The Shared Book task was similarly informal and could be completed in the book corner in a manner that approximated a teacher's or parent's shared book interaction with a child. Though the child's task responses were recorded on an observational record this type of researcher-child record keeping closely paralleled the teacher-child checklisting that occurred within the regular day.

The Environmental Print Task (adapted from Goodman, 1981b): Print found in the environmental context of the school, home and community was photographed. Topics selected included the school's name, road signs, a mailbox, a telephone, newspaper vending machines, the corner store and a local restaurant, all of which were within a two-block radius of the school. Topics from a larger geographic area included the local shopping centres, gas stations, stores and restaurants. When photographing the selected topics, care was taken to preserve the natural context in which the print was presented, e.g. the Gulf sign was photographed embedded

within the context of gas pumps and customers using the self-serve facility. Three sets of cards were prepared for each topic:

Set I: Coloured photographs of print within the natural context were mounted on white card, e.g. the Gulf sign and gas station were prepared as card one; the stop sign with its accompanying roadway context as card two, etc.

Set II: Coloured logos and print were cut out of a second set of duplicate prints. In this set the environmental context was thus eliminated though the topics matched the first set of photographs. The logos and print were mounted on a second set of white cards.

Set III: The names embedded in the contexts and logos of the first and second sets were printed in black on a third set of white cards. Thus the context, symbol and colour cues were omitted. Upper-case or lower-case printing was utilized depending on the type of print found in the original sign, e.g. STOP, telephone and Red Rooster. (Appendix C provides task samples.)

Pilot Study: The task was piloted in the kindergarten classroom in May, 1983. As a result several stimuli were eliminated from the Environmental Print task, e.g. a road sign and a sign from the local community hall, as no child was able to recognize them. The task was thus finalized to include twenty items presented in three different conditions, namely "full context", "logo and print" and "print only".

Task Administration: For both the September and February administrations the task was conducted at a table-top centre within the kindergarten classroom. It was administered during centre times when the children were engaged in a variety of small-group or individual

activities. Children were selected on a random basis, usually when they had completed a specific centre activity. Care was taken to avoid working with children who were deeply immersed in play, or similar group activities, or who were involved in such individual activities as painting. During the final task administration the teacher was operating a similar centre where she was checking various facets of each child's knowledge, e.g. ability to recite telephone numbers, address and birthday.

As each child came to work with me only the first set of cards was visible. I explained to the child that I had some photographs of "places and things" around his school and home and I wanted him to "tell me about them". The Set I cards, with print presented to the child within natural contexts, were shown in random order. As each card was presented three questions/statements were used to elicit information, i.e. "Tell me about this ...", "How do you know?" and "What does it say?" The first statement was designed as a global stimulus to encourage spontaneous verbalization concerning the context, logo and print. The question, "How do you know?" was utilized to elicit strategies that the child may be using in order to make his initial response. The final question was more specific. The print, embedded in the particular sign, was pointed to and the child was asked to specify, "What does it say?"

When the first set of cards was completed it was placed in a folder and the child was shown the second set. Exactly the same procedure was utilized with this "logo and print" set, though modifications were made in the questioning routine. Each child had attempted a response to all three questions/statements that accompanied the Set I cards. When the logo-print set was introduced some children were unable to "Tell me about" several cards and hence "How do you know?" served as a redundant.

question. The question, "What does it say?" was utilized, and if the child attempted a response the "How do you know?" question followed.

Upon completion, the Set II cards were placed in a folder and the final set of "print only" cards was placed on the table. The cards were again presented in random order and the same directions were utilized, though once more modifications were necessary. More frequently now the children were unable to respond to the first statement and, "What does it say?" was reached more rapidly. Again, if an attempt was made the "How do you know?" question was asked. For two or three children, during the September administration, the final set of cards proved to be overtly frustrating. In Marvin's case, for example, his comment, "I can't read these pictures", as he pointed to the print, was repeated for each of the first six cards. His annoyance was manifested in his frown and the tense set of his shoulders. Although we quickly went through the remaining cards his frustration prevented any indepth questioning. Though this type of recognizable frustration was demonstrated by a small group of children during the pre-test administration of the Set III cards, it was not apparent in the late February administration. In this final presentation many of the children were unable to "Tell me about" the "print only" cards in any detail, but they were willing to attempt the task. This may have been due to greater familiarity with decontextualized print, or it may have been due to a greater willingness to risk answers as their familiarity with me developed over the year.

Scoring the Task: The task was scored to provide a basis for selecting the case study children and to provide a global overview of change in literacy knowledge, demonstrated by each child, between September, 1983, and February, 1984. All the children's pre-test

responses, which had been recorded on record sheets, were analyzed in each of the three conditions, i.e. context, logo and print. From this analysis three categories emerged which formed the basis for scoring (Appendix C provides a description of the categories and a sample of the scoring procedure). Each child's pre-test responses were attributed marks according to the categorical scoring procedure. The reliability of the scoring procedure was checked. A fellow doctoral student in Reading at the University of Alberta and I established an interrater reliability of .98 (Arrington Formula: Feifel and Lorge, 1950) on the scoring criteria. The categories could thus be utilized reliably. A composite score was finalized for each child by combining response scores across the three conditions. Each raw score was percentaged and the marks were rank ordered for utilization in the selection process. Exactly the same procedure was used for scoring the post-test results.

The Shared Book Task (adapted from Clay, 1979b; Doake, 1981). In the year of the study a new swimming pool had opened in the community where the kindergarten was situated. This public facility had been well publicized and the pool opened with supporting media coverage and a good deal of local public excitement. Prior to my May, 1983, pilot study I had visited the school and the pool was a major topic of conversation. The kindergarten was to be involved in swimming lessons and preschool swimming classes were well attended in the neighbourhood. Hence, I decided to create a brief storybook narrative, with accompanying coloured photographs, focusing on two children's visit to a swimming pool, i.e. "Going for a Swim". The topic seemed relevant to the life of the community and could be considered an appropriate match with the background knowledge of the children.

The story was designed to have a setting, namely eating breakfast and the children playing near their townhouse, a series of episodes related to preparing for swimming and the activities at the pool, a disagreement with Mother and a resolution, and a conclusion where the children drank hot chocolate in their home. The main character, who was the central focus in all the episodes, was Sally, a five year old girl. A storybook was constructed with each page containing a coloured photograph at the top, relevantly matched to the action described in the print below. One to six lines of print (Geotype lettering: 400-18) were positioned below each photograph. Deliberate form alterations were made on two pages, i.e. the print was upside down on one page and was presented with no word spacing on another, to investigate the children's concepts about print orientation and spacing. (The storybook has been reproduced in Appendix D.) Interwoven in the shared book interaction with each child various questions were interposed to access literacy knowledge.

Pilot Study: In May, 1983, the task was piloted in the kindergarten classroom. No modifications in the text or the questioning format appeared necessary.

Task Administration: For both the September and February administrations this task was conducted in or close to the classroom book corner. The children were selected on the basis of their centre choices, namely if "books" were chosen by the child then part of his centre time would be spent engaged in the shared book task. If children did not select "books" then they were asked to participate following the completion of another centre activity. The popularity of the shared book task frequently meant that it was oversubscribed with volunteers, and on

occasion I and an individual child had to withdraw a little distance from the book corner to ensure that we could engage in a one-to-one interaction.

The administration followed a routine format in that key questions were interspersed with storybook reading. (The questions and format are included in Appendix D.) The task questions were followed, in prescribed order, for each child. The children's responses were recorded on a record sheet and story recalls were tape recorded. Only one deviation was made from the format outlined in Appendix D. In September, Trevor was the first child to work on the Shared Book task with me. My opening comment, "What is this?" was accompanied by me flipping through the pages of the storybook. Trevor did not initially provide a verbal response, but looked at me with surprise and then silent resignation. I could feel the vibrations that said, "Another dumb adult question!" In that moment I felt like a visitor from outer space investigating children's literacy! That thought passed through my mind and gave me the impetus to change directions. I said to Trevor, "Pretend I'm E.T. and I've just landed on earth. I'm visiting your classroom and I need a helper. I've so much to understand." Trevor smiled broadly and picked up the "outer-space-alien-needs-help" game schema immediately. He participated with relish and this "alien" was given a great deal of detail concerning Trevor's literacy knowledge. This play-schema was then utilized for all the children who, without exception, joined in the task with alacrity.

Scoring the Task: Though this task is primarily descriptive, a scoring protocol was developed to provide a basis for selecting the case study children and to provide an overview of general class growth between the September and February administrations. Two items, namely the

independent reading of text and each child's verbal recall of story events, were eliminated from the initial scoring procedure as this information was not considered suitable for the assignment of a numerical score. The pre-test verbal responses to the directed questions and the non-verbal demonstrations, e.g. pointing behaviour and turning pages, were evaluated according to a specified scoring procedure. (Criteria for scoring and a sample response sheet are included in Appendix D.) An interrater reliability of .99 (Arrington Formula; Feifel and Lorge, 1950) was established on the scoring criteria by a fellow doctoral student in Reading and myself. Each child's pre-test score was computed and then percentaged. The marks were then rank ordered in preparation for the selection process. The same procedure was followed for scoring the post-test results.

Selection of the Small Group of Children for Intensive Observation:

The rank order and percentaged scores for each child on the two structured literacy tasks (pre-test) is presented in Table 3.

To finalize the selection the ordered class lists were divided into approximate thirds. Three children, Trevor, Janice and Mark were selected as High Print aware children on the basis of their rank order on both tasks. Belinda, Marvin and Janette were selected as the Low Print aware children on the basis of their performance on both activities. Though Robbie's rank order would suggest his possible inclusion in the Low Print aware group I thought this was inadvisable. His communicative ability was extremely limited and he was progressing through a battery of psychological and medical tests at the beginning of the school year. My involvement with the family may have added stress to an already pressured unit.

Table 3

Pre-Test Results for the Structured Literacy Tasks

Environmental Print Task		Shared Book Task	
*Trevor	80%	*Mark	90%
*Janice	68%	Suzanne	88%
Jonathon	41%	Jeremy	87%
*Mark	40%	*Trevor	85%
Gordon	36%	*Janice	81%
Suzanne	34%	Jonathon	75%
Penny	32%	Ken	73%
Paul	32%	Gordon	73%
Jeremy	32%	Vanessa	69%
Laura	31%	Laura	69%
Jane	31%	Adam	67%
Manuel	25%	Penny	65%
Shawn	24%	Paul	63%
Adam	22%	Gary	62%
*Belinda	22%	Manuel	52%
*Marvin	22%	Shawn	52%
Ken	21%	*Belinda	50%
Gary	18%	Jane	50%
Robbie	15%	*Janette	38%
*Janette	14%	*Marvin	37%
Vanessa	12%	Robbie	25%

Note: Carlos, the twenty-second member of this class, could not participate in the literacy tasks as he was entirely Spanish-speaking at the beginning of the school year.

The Role of the Task Provider: During this phase of the research my participant observational role continued. I collected information from direct observation of the children as they worked on the literacy tasks. I also moved along the participant observer continuum (Freilich, 1970) and took an active participant stance as I dialogued with the children about their literacy concepts.

Interviews

Two types of interviews were conducted in this study:

Informal interviews were a common occurrence and interspersed through each day. These were spontaneous engagements that served to clarify or expand a particular topic or happening related to my exploration of kindergarten literacy development. These informal interviews occurred most frequently with the classroom teacher or aide, though they also evolved with parents as they worked as helpers in the classroom. Occasionally, the principal, members of the teaching staff and school aides were engaged in spontaneous interviews as I explored the school literacy context or had coffee in the staffroom.

Formal interviews were also conducted to explore, more systematically, areas that were directly linked to the specific purposes of the study. These interviews were open-ended in that, though areas for exploration were clustered in my mind, topics that were initiated by the informants were also pursued. Hence, in preparing for a formal interview no detailed list of specific questions was itemized, but broad areas of concern were structured. As relevant information emerged from one interview then this same information provided a grounded for exploration in another interview. For example, Trevor's mother raised the concern that her son should receive a "traditional" reading programme in Grade One

and not the "new language one" that was being taught by two of the Grade One teachers. This topic was then explored with the school principal, two Grade One teachers, the kindergarten teacher and the classroom aide whose children had attended the school. Thus, from a comment raised in one interview it was discovered that there was an area of conflict about how formal reading instruction should be introduced to the present kindergarten children when they entered Grade One. This topic, though never overtly verbalized to me in the early part of the study, was clearly a lively and vital one within the school and community. Hence, the formal interviews "snowballed", in that one engagement may have led to a minor network of complementary interviews exploring overlapping areas and different people's perceptions on the same general topic.

Though a major portion of the study focused on the kindergarten classroom, a second purpose was to explore selected features of the home's involvement in literacy. Formal interviews were conducted with the six case study children's parents. Two main interviews took place with one of Trevor's, Janice's, Mark's, Belinda's and Janette's parents in November, 1983 and in February, 1984. Only one major interview was arranged with Marvin's father, in December, 1983, as subsequently the family moved out of the area. For all of the children's parents communication was not restricted to the formal interviews. There were numerous occasions when these parents were engaged in spontaneous conversations as they served as helpers in the school and classroom, or as we met in the school playground or on the nearby streets. Occasionally telephone calls bridged the intervening time periods between interviews. In Marvin's case, as the father had long and unusual business hours, the telephone was a constant avenue for communication.

Each parent interview was conducted at a home, a workplace or in a quiet room in the school. As a preface I requested if I could record our communication stating that, "I'd like to remember what we said and I don't write fast enough to get it all down." None of the informants objected to the use of a tape recorder. At the beginning of each of the first interviews with the parents I made my general purpose clear by referring to my introductory letter and by explaining that my research involved interviewing kindergarten children's parents to "find out the kinds of things the children were doing and learning during the year". At no time did I suggest that my major interviews were focusing on six parents and that their children had been selected as children with well-developed or limited literacy knowledge. After the general explication of purpose the early parent interviews were all started with the suggestion that I was "getting to know a lot about what the children did in the classroom" but that I did not know what the rest of the day was like for these children. The same descriptive "grand tour" (Spradley, 1980, p. 77) question, namely, "Can you tell me what a typical day is like for --?" was then introduced. From this basic question the interview was guided through a description of the child's day. As topics arose side-avenues were explored, e.g. if storybook reading was mentioned then the child's favourite books, the personnel involved in the occasion and the dynamics involved in the interaction were discussed. Then the interview was guided back to the general framework provided by the original question. Thus, the formal interviews were sequentially guided in terms of the primary question requiring an account of the child's day, but they were also guided by the purposes of the study in that literacy-related activities were selected for expansion. These interviews had

the same "snowballing" pattern as described in the other school interviews, for topics raised by the parents were woven into subsequent engagements so that a networking of interrelated topics and perceptions occurred. The second parent interviews were again open-ended in their pursuit of informant initiated topics, but also guided in that a core of topics emerging from the first interviews were explored on the second occasion, e.g. "home story time", "the school library programme", "helping my child with school-things", "changes I can see in my child", "what my child talks about doing at school" and "how I want my child to learn to read".

The Role of the Interviewer: Parents and school personnel were considered as key informants (Woolcott, 1975) concerning the literacy development of the kindergarten children. My role, as a researcher involved in interviews, was two-fold. It involved establishing a trusting relationship with informants. Secondly, as our relationship developed, it centred on eliciting information concerning early literacy experiences through open-ended questions and the pursuit of informant initiated topics within the guiding framework provided by the purposes of the study (Spradley, 1980). A third dimension emerged in my role as the study progressed. Care was taken to avoid being explicit about the identity of the parents of the six children who had been selected for indepth observation. Hence their names were not revealed, either to each other or to the classroom teacher. Though the life schedules of the six parents and the researcher were somewhat complex, attempts were made to interview each privately. Parent interviews were thus conducted in a variety of locations ranging from work sites, to homes and to the school. The two parents interviewed at the school were the most

vulnerable to identification. These interviews were arranged on the telephone and the informants were met in a small room, distanced from the kindergarten, in the early part of the afternoon. Once the interviews were concluded the parent returned home or to her aide job in the library, and I entered the kindergarten classroom for the first time that afternoon. Also, three additional parents were interviewed, though the resulting data was not used in the study. Every effort was made to engage each of the parent helpers in dialogue so that the case study parents would not greet me with more familiarity than the other parents. Clearly, I have no guarantee that the parents did not discuss their interviews with the classroom teacher, who lived and worked in the same community. Equally clearly I do not know if Mrs. Compton overheard Janice's comment to me in February, 1984, "You talked to my Mommy yesterday"! However, a concerted effort was made to preserve the case study parents' anonymity.

A Researcher's Decisions: Data Interpretation

... if we stand back a little, and look at the phenomenon as a whole, we can see that all is not confusion. For it then becomes apparent that this accumulation of features, bewildering at close quarters, does outline a face ... (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959, p. 33)

Part of the "face" of early literacy development emerged from the data collected through four "windows", namely the naturalistic observation within the kindergarten context, the collection of print-related documents, the observation of children engaged in the structured literacy tasks and the interviews. Micro-analysis of the features, the themes, patterns and differences viewed through all the "windows" was completed against the macro-backdrop of the whole picture. The data collected and analyzed from those sources was influenced by the specific purposes of

the study, and the conceptual framework that provided those purposes.

However, in analyzing my data there was a subtle interplay between initial conceptual thinking and the data observed, in that the data impacted on my original framework and that very framework accommodated and shifted, undoubtedly, in turn, impacting on the data collected. Data analysis was thus perpetual in the sense that information was constantly analyzed and new questions were asked. "Ongoing awareness" (Wilson, 1977, p. 250) was required to sift through the documentation and to be sensitive to patterns of occurrence or key incidents that emerged to illuminate dimensions of the children's growth in literacy knowledge and the literacy transmission process.

Within this research six case study children's literacy development and interactions provided a central focus, and the contexts of the community, home, school and classroom provided information concerning the print-related learning environments within which these children enacted their literacy experiences. Hence, the data clustered into three main categories, namely the holistic contexts of literacy learning, the print-related interactions of the High and Low Print aware children, and the literacy knowledge that they acquired over time. Within each of these major categories, sub-themes emerged which aided in shining a light into the complex world of early literacy learning. The following chapters serve to unfold these categories and themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHILDREN AND THEIR HOMES:

LITERACY LEARNING CONTEXTS AND INTERACTIONS

... an individual must be viewed as a participant in many overlapping and changing contexts. The nature of the context itself - the "ecology" - and the behavior of other participants, as well as the behavior and interpretations of the individual, are all objects of study if we are to understand how behavior and development occur. (Genishi, 1981, p. 110)

Six individuals are the primary participants in this study.

Janice, Mark and Trevor were designated as High Print aware children, and Belinda, Janette and Marvin as Low Print aware children, following the pre-test administration of the structured literacy tasks. Their literacy learning, during the first six months of the kindergarten year, is viewed as being embedded within the interwoven, learning contexts provided by the home, community, school and classroom.

Within this chapter the children and their home environments receive major emphasis. As Janice, Mark, Trevor, Belinda, Janette and Marvin entered their kindergarten year, in September 1983, their learning contexts expanded to include the world of school. However, kindergarten encompassed only their afternoons, for the rest of their days were spent at home or in alternate caregiver contexts. In addition we have to consider that these children have experienced four to five preschool years, prior to school entrance. Thus, the kindergarten literacy learning context, focused upon in this study, involves consideration of "many overlapping and changing" (Genishi, 1981, p. 110) sub-contexts, including the children's prior preschool experiences and their ongoing

experiences in out-of-school contexts. Selected features of the children's preschool and out-of-school worlds, including family structures, substitute caregiver arrangements, and the personal characteristics, abilities, interests and activities of the children, are investigated through interviews with parents. In addition, the home literacy contexts and print-related interactions receive specific focus. Dynamics of familial structure and communication patterns, together with within-child characteristics, provide an interactive groundbed for the growth of literacy learning and the strands that emerge from such a foundation must surely affect literacy engagements experienced in the kindergarten setting.

Introducing the Children

Data for the following section was obtained partially from classroom observations and mainly from interviews with five parents in November, 1983, and February-March, 1984. One interview was conducted with Marvin's father, in December, 1983, as the family left the district shortly afterwards.

The three High Print aware children, Janice, Mark and Trevor, are presented initially, followed by the three Low Print aware children, Belinda, Janette and Marvin.

Janice

Janice is a verbal five year old (September: 5 years 4 months), with a well developed sense of humour and a tremendous interest in communicating with adults. She experiences problems with asthma, bronchial infections, allergies, skin rashes and her weight and is, at times, self-conscious about her appearance. Her mother frequently

reassures Janice that they are "working on" reducing her weight and her health problems and, in general, the little girl is cheerful and friendly at school. Occasionally, in the classroom, Janice seemed to be tired, yawning frequently and rubbing her eyes which may be attributed to ill health or to the fact that she does not like to go to bed before her parents or older brother and sister.

The Family: Janice is the youngest child in the family. She has a fifteen year old sister in High School and a fourteen year old brother in Junior High School. Her mother is a full-time elementary teacher in the local school system and her father is a self-employed truck driver. Mrs. Wengler was a part-time teacher prior to the 1983-84 school year but, due to the family's recent financial problems, has decided to work full-time in order to support the family. Mr. Wengler owns his own truck but has had a decreasing number of jobs during the past two years and frequently stays at home waiting for work-related telephone calls. Mrs. Wengler, though working full days, has not cut down on her other commitments. She is involved in local church activities and is the director of two church choirs. In our November interview, her pressure was apparent as she listed her commitments to her family, work and church and commented, "I've too much on, and I don't think I can cope with it much longer." In our February interview Mrs. Wengler noted that she had not reduced her work load, but indeed had added to it, as she now supervizes Janice's piano practice.

Mrs. Wengler explains that Anna, her fifteen year old daughter, is "very self-centred this year" and so involved in teenage activities that she rarely has time to spend with Janice. Occasionally she plays with her younger sister and "teaches" her how to apply make-up, but Anna's

involvement with Janice vacillates from being "really motherly" to totally ignoring her. Tom, the fourteen year old boy, is also very involved with his teenage friends. Mrs. Wengler describes Janice's and Tom's relationship as one of "love-hate", wherein Tom frequently teases Janice, and she complains bitterly, but she "always goes back for more!" Mrs. Wengler suspects that Janice secretly enjoys her "fights" with her older brother.

Janice spends time with her father. In the evenings, or when he is not working, he occasionally reads to her or takes her skating, but more frequently they go to the stores, the car wash or his trucking garage. Janice is "company" for him, notes Mrs. Wengler, especially as the older children are more interested in pursuing their own social lives rather than accompanying their father (February, 1984).

Although Janice spends time with her father, and to some extent with her older brother and sister, her mother appears to be the primary figure in her life. Mrs. Wengler orchestrates Janice's babysitting arrangements, her school attendance and her out-of-school activities, as well as providing times for incidental teaching and verbal communication within her tight schedule. Mrs. Wengler feels guilty that the necessity for working full-time has meant that there is simply less time available to spend with Janice. She is concerned that Janice is displaying symptoms of separation-anxiety and attention-seeking behaviour this year. For example, Janice always gets up early in the morning to have a quiet time with her mother. Mrs. Wengler suggests that Janice "sleep-in", but, "she makes very certain that she wakes up in time to see me -- she's very emphatic about seeing me before (I go)" (November interview). Janice, according to Mrs. Wengler, is equally persistent in the evenings.

Rather than watching television with the rest of the family, she goes to the kitchen to talk with her mother who is preparing supper. Mrs. Wengler notes that Janice seeks attention in socially inappropriate ways during choir practice at church:

I have a terrible time with her. I have a Junior Choir at church ... We have from kindergarten to about Grade Four or Five, and she won't behave for me. She just fools around. Part of it's the time of the day ... it's like 4.30 in the afternoon and she's tired, but the other day she was there with her socks -- twirling them around her head (laughs) -- lying down with her feet in the air. There's all these nice little kids sitting there (laughs) -- and (then there's) my kid!
(November interview)

Mrs. Wengler says that she realizes that Janice is demanding more time and attention, though such behaviour "bugs" her. She looks forward to the school holidays when she will be able to give Janice more of her time.

Present Caregiver Arrangements: The Substitute Family: Janice goes to a babysitter in the mornings, though the substitute-caregiver arrangement seems somewhat sporadic. It is arranged that one family member takes Janice to her babysitter's home. Whether it is the mother, father or brother, depends on the family's schedule, i.e. "who's busy, and who isn't" (November interview). Sometimes, when Janice's father is not working she stays at home with him.

At the babysitter's home, Janice interacts with two three year old girls, the babysitter's daughter and another child who receives care in that house. Janice appears to have a "helper function" in that setting in that "she'll take the kids to the bathroom or she'll help them get ready" (November interview). Mrs. Wengler is uncertain about the other activities Janice pursues at the babysitter's. She thinks the children play in the basement playroom and watch television:

I think they probably watch Sesame Street -- I don't know -- I haven't asked. She's happy so I haven't

even bothered. She hasn't complained about going -- she would have -- she's very verbal and lets me know when things aren't right. (November interview)

The babysitter has two school-age children who come home for lunch. When they return to the school, in the afternoon, Janice accompanies them.

Preschool Experiences: Janice did not attend the local nursery school programme at the community hall:

I just couldn't work it out. I don't think she wasn't ready for kindergarten because of it. She goes to Sunday School -- the Junior Choir I started her with last year. She's always had lots of attention from reading books and singing songs together. (November interview)

Mrs. Wengler, prior to the 1983-84 school year, has always worked part-time. For the first three years of Janice's life the family employed babysitters in their own home. When an infant, Janice was cared for by nannies. Later the family hired a lady from Jamaica who served in a dual capacity as a child-caregiver and a housekeeper. Mrs. Wengler suggests that the nannies provided Janice with a good deal of stimulation but, "though the lady from Jamaica was very good to her", she seemed "more concerned with keeping the house clean" than with communicating with the child (November interview). Last year Janice had been cared for by a family friend who babysat other children in her own home.

Interests and Abilities: Mrs. Wengler explains that Janice enjoys music. She loves singing and started piano lessons after Christmas. Her mother thinks that Janice's interest in music has been stimulated from being exposed to singing and other musical activities at home and at church.

Janice enjoys playing with other children, but usually with one other child or in small groups. Her special friend is Danielle, a Grade One-aged child, who lives next door. More recently. (February interview)

Janice has been playing with Belinda, a little girl who attends her kindergarten and also goes to the same dancing class. Mrs. Wengler notes that Janice always enjoys imaginary play with her dolls and model "ponies". With Danielle this imaginary play takes full flight:

They make up stuff -- like -- I'm the boyfriend and you're the girlfriend (laughs). They like to play school. They really like that. (November interview)

Occasionally Janice and Danielle conflict about assumption of roles in play, for example, "who plays teacher". Whilst playing school the girls involve themselves in drawing and colouring, and by February the school play centred on writing and exchanging printed notes.

Mrs. Wengler notes that Janice loves storybooks and is fascinated by the shapes of letters. She picks letter shapes out of newspapers and is always commenting on letters and words within books. This year she has developed an interest in spelling and writing words, especially words needed for her notes to Danielle and words that relate to content introduced at school.

During our interviews Mrs. Wengler constantly referred to "Janice-the-conversationalist". Janice loves talking and is very interested in sharing her school-based knowledge with family members. Mrs. Wengler describes Janice as a "very verbal child":

I think having an older brother and sister in the house she's quite mature sometimes -- verbally. What she knows is quite ahead of what a normal kindergarten child would be. (November interview)

Family members, according to Mrs. Wengler, are often surprised by Janice's broadening knowledge base and her ability to communicate new information:

We were in a restaurant the other day and she had one of those little packets that have a towelette in them and she said, "This is germ free. When I open it up --

as soon as I touch it -- it's got germs on it!"
(November interview)

This episode took place during the kindergarten hospital unit. During the dinosaur unit (February, 1984) her older brother and sister were equally impressed when Janice could recite all the names of the dinosaurs:

Dinosaurs coming out of her ears! Oh, she's got all the names down and the older kids have been quizzing her all about these dinosaurs and she knows them all! She knows all the words to all those songs about dinosaurs! (February interview)

Although Janice is interested in paper and pencil activities, Mrs. Wengler notes that she becomes frustrated with them due to her weak visual-motor integration:

(Janice's) small motor coordination is a little bit behind -- like cutting and pasting.
(November interview)

Mrs. Wengler thinks that Janice is weak in this area as she has been unable to devote sufficient time to help Janice to develop this ability. Sometimes Janice is impatient with her manual dexterity as, "what she knows is way ahead of what she's able to do with her hands" (November interview). Mrs. Wengler notes that Janice has limited ability to "concentrate on T.V.", but prefers to talk or read with her mother than watch television.

Personality Variables: Throughout our interviews Mrs. Wengler refers to Janice as "emphatic", "determined" and "definite". Almost ruefully she comments:

She's kind of bossy sometimes and says, "You do this and I'll do that" -- she'll be a teacher like her mother probably (laughs). (November interview)

In play sessions with Danielle, Janice attempts to assert leadership, as her mother says she has "a little stronger personality" than her friend. Janice is described by her mother as "always wanting to know", namely

exhibiting such curiosity that it embarrasses her parents at times. She frequently initiates activities, such as book reading, and also asks countless questions. The comment, "she'll start it", is interwoven through Mrs. Wengler's descriptions of Janice. Although finding her daughter's insistence wearing, on occasion, Mrs. Wengler is clearly proud that Janice does "speak up", is "very verbal" and is "not a dull child". From her mother's perceptions, Janice is a child who enjoys order and structure. Her curiosity and love of organization have helped Janice to relate to the kindergarten experience:

-- you know she's really on top of things in school. She knows what's going on and why it's going on, and who's supposed to be doing this and who's supposed to be doing that (laughs). You know, she's got it all sorted out. (November interview)

Interestingly that very characteristic of appreciating "what is supposed to be" in school, leads Janice into potential trouble in the classroom. Both the aide and the teacher complain, in February, that Janice is rather too eager to "tell-tales" on her classmates for contravening "the way it's s'posed to be".

Mark

Mark is a curious, exploratory child (September: 4 years 9 months) with a well developed verbal ability. He continually explores his environment, taking microscopes apart and examining tape recorders and record players with a meticulous eye for detail. No moment is wasted. Whilst waiting in a line he may grab a magnifying glass and look at the skin on his hand, or re-align scissors and glue into an orderly arrangement. A frown of concentration is frequently seen on his face as he sits working on a task. He socializes and plays with other children but is uncomfortable with conflict. When he cannot use words to resolve

an argument he withdraws by himself. He is a child at ease with periods of solitude and he needs his "own space" in which to work on activities. At times he seems far older than his age group and seems to prefer to converse with adults rather than with other children. Mark is an involved child, deeply enthusiastic about learning new information and frequently absorbed in play and other activities.

The Family: Ms. Turner is a single parent who has provided sole parenting care for Mark since his birth. She has worked since Mark was six months old, firstly as a childcare worker in a daycare setting and then combining part-time daycare work with University attendance. Ms. Turner obtained her Bachelor of Education and for the 1983-84 school year is working in a small rural school approximately fifty miles from her home, in a co-operative housing unit in Skipton Estates. She travels daily to her teaching job. Ms. Turner notes that her life involves "many compromises" in that she had to take the first available job even though it involved extensive travelling. She thus has limited time "left over" for Mark on weekdays.

During the week Ms. Turner drops Mark off at the babysitter's very early in the morning and collects him just after 4.30 p.m. each day.

Their car journeys together are times for shared dialogue:

My weeks are really busy. Well, usually we rush home -- well, in the car I try to talk to him -- what he's done that day and what's been going on and he usually tells me what was exciting that happened at kindergarten. If he doesn't seem to be telling me I'll kind of pump him a bit (smiles) -- because I don't get to see him and I've never seen the kindergarten. That's the only way I can find out what's going on. Now, if he's not interested I'll tell him what I did -- and then I'll get it out in bits and pieces later. (November interview)

Frequently Mark and his mother continue to talk as she prepares supper, or she will respond to his questions as he works on one of his special

projects. As Mark gets up very early he has to be in bed by 7 p.m., and hence there's little time for mother-child dialogue during the week. At weekends Mark and his mother "catch up" on their conversations, visit the downtown library and visit with family and friends.

Ms. Turner philosophically refers to "compromise" as being central in her life. She feels that she serves as both parents for Mark, as the single wage-earner, and as their planner for the future. Occasionally she finds the personal pressure overwhelming, but then she reminds herself that she can cope, and that she is fortunate to have supportive family and friends. Mark's family is extended in the sense that he and his mother frequently visit with her sister and brother-in-law at the weekends. Mark's uncle takes him swimming and to ball games. In addition, Ms. Turner has a girlfriend with three older children, and the association with this family is stimulating for Mark. Mark's grandparents also take an interest in him, visiting often and taking him away on holiday. For example, last summer Ms. Turner worked in the daycare:

I didn't make enough money to get by on ... Well, so I worked in the summer and paid back some debts so he (Mark) went to the daycare and so did I. (November interview)

During that summer Mark's grandparents took him to British Columbia for three weeks and the little boy went fishing and visited all the tourist attractions. A friend had remarked that Ms. Turner was lucky to have parents who devoted time to her son:

I've never really thought of us being lucky, but she's right -- I do have that support.

Present Caregiver Arrangements: The Substitute Family: Mark's babysitter is a lady with "early childhood training" whom Ms. Turner met when they both worked in a local daycare centre. Mark is able to go to kindergarten this year as this lady agreed to babysit him. Otherwise he

would have remained in a full-time daycare programme.

Darlene, the babysitter, has three children of her own, an eight year old boy, a two year old daughter and Adam, a boy registered in the same kindergarten as Mark. Darlene runs a home daycare programme and babysits a two year old child and "quite a severely handicapped little boy" of approximately the same age, in addition to Mark. She also cares for children on an occasional basis, for example David, a kindergarten boy whose family arrived in the area in January.

Mark gets up at 6 a.m. and his mother delivers him to the babysitter's house before 7 a.m. When he arrives:

The other children are still in bed -- so Mark'll play quietly with Lego or something. She usually has blankets and a pillow out on the living room floor and he plays around, and then I think he watches some cartoons for a while -- while she's (Darlene's) getting all the other kids ready for school. (November interview)

The other children Darlene babysits arrive between 8 and 8.30 a.m.

During the morning:

... He's playing with Adam and with these other kids ... It's just a lovely house. That woman has two or three birdcages full of pigeons and she's got cats and a dog -- and there's something going on in every corner, and the kids are, say playing with Lego, or she does some home crafts and drawing (with them). (November interview)

Mark apparently enjoys playing with the small handicapped boy, "feeding him and trying to play toys with him". Mark, Adam and the older boy frequently play together, for example:

... They were playing "office" the other day, and making bookmarks and they were decorating them, and Stephen (the eight year old son of the babysitter) was telling them what to write on those bookmarks. They had pencils, scissors, glue and a little box -- a suitcase or something set up for a desk -- They were doing something. (November interview)

Ms. Turner likes the way Darlene "interacts" with the children and says

Mark, "just loves her and speaks of her. (He says) 'Tomorrow I'm going to show this to Darlene', when he completes one of his projects"

(November interview).

Problems have arisen in the babysitting arrangement in that Adam, Darlene's kindergarten-aged son, was initially quite jealous of Mark "getting his mother's attention". However, Ms. Turner had Adam over to play at their house and "that seemed to be the turning point" in that both children began to play more co-operatively (November). In the February interview Ms. Turner notes that the old problems have re-emerged between Adam and Mark. Adam and his baby sister are quite "physical" and often tease Mark by calling him "crybaby" and punching him. Ms. Turner has tried to "toughen (Mark) up" by suggesting that he "punch back". Darlene has also suggested this to Mark. Mark says he tries but recently cried, "I can't, I just can't!" Ms. Turner is concerned that, to survive, Mark needs to be tougher, but she says she is beginning to realize that Mark can't cope with aggressive, physical interactions and is more adept at "using words not fists" (February interview). She has said to Mark that she doesn't know how he can defend himself. On one occasion Mark responded, "I know what I could do -- laugh at him (Adam)". Ms. Turner is uncertain how this will work out at the babysitter's, but Mark's comment helped her to understand:

He's a kid, I guess, who'll always try to use words and maybe I should live with it and encourage it.
(February interview)

Preschool Experiences: Ms. Turner started to work part-time when Mark was six months old. For the following year she had a succession of babysitters, but none proved to be satisfactory. Eventually she discovered a reliable babysitter with a little girl of her own who was Mark's age.

Mark stayed with this family until he was three years old.

When three, Mark was enrolled in the Hugh Fraser College daycare programme where he remained for the two years prior to kindergarten entrance. This daycare centre is a "demonstration" programme utilized to train childcare workers. Ms. Turner worked there part-time before Mark entered the programme, and then on an occasional basis whilst she attended University.

Mark was enrolled in a "class" of fifteen children of mixed ages and his group had three trained adult caregivers in attendance. The staff was stable and there was little change in caregivers during Mark's time at the daycare. Ms. Turner notes that the programme stresses creativity and encourages the children to self-select activities, to play imaginatively and to verbalize their feelings. She believes that Mark developed his philosophy of "using words not fists" whilst attending the daycare, for it was an attitude encouraged by the childcare workers. Ms. Turner also suggests that the programme fostered Mark's interests in exploratory learning for adults served as facilitators, extending the children's interests and conversations at the self-selected centres. Movement amongst centres was also child-decided:

If they want to work in the sandbox all day long -- fine. Nobody is bothering them to move or to change what they're doing. The staff -- their philosophy would be to move and to encourage play and to stimulate play -- to keep up the interest or develop (it).
(November interview)

Though emphasizing that the daycare provided a very stimulating early childhood programme, Ms. Turner believed that Mark was ready for a change this year. She suggested that, to prepare him for Grade One, he required a more structured programme. The transition was difficult for Mark. The arrangements for kindergarten and babysitting were finalized quite

hurriedly at the end of the summer. At that time Mark expressed concern about his ability to cope with a kindergarten classroom. He repeatedly told his mother that "he didn't think he was a very smart person".

I had a really hard time with him. I was going, "Well I can understand how you feel that way", and I'd talk about the feeling over and over again. Finally I just said (mock angry-teasing voice), "Shut up -- you're not stupid!" (laughs)
(November interview)

Ms. Turner was puzzled about Mark's fears because at the daycare the staff always encouraged him:

You know -- nobody would ever say, "You're stupid", or "you don't get this", or put somebody down for not understanding something -- but (it was) just himself I think. (November interview)

Interests and Abilities: During our interviews Ms. Turner constantly talks about Mark's zeal for knowledge. He becomes vitally interested in certain topics and pursues them with fervor and absorption. He involves himself in talking about his interests and in independent projects:

At present he never stops talking about dinosaurs and last month he talked constantly about Winnie the Pooh. He kept noticing Pooh labels or characters in the stores or newspapers. Now he talks to neighbours -- relatives or me about all different types of dinosaurs and we're all amazed that he knows more than (we) do. At the moment he's drawing dinosaur pictures at home. At the weekend he was making chunks of icy snow and carving them into dinosaur shapes. He wanted to take a dinosaur record to school and (he was) quite insistent about it. (February interview)

Whilst Ms. Turner prepares supper Mark, "often has a little project going -- like he's got paper and scissors and glues and everything -- and Lego -- all over the place" (November interview). Play from the babysitting context provides fuel for Mark's private play:

Like the office -- when they played office (at the babysitter's house) he came home and made his own office and he played office all day. (November interview)

Usually Mark's projects are self-initiated, though he sometimes utilizes materials that Ms. Turner has prepared for teaching her own kindergarten class:

I guess because I'm a teacher, I've got all that junk all over the house, and he's got ideas and he's grabbing pieces of paper and getting stuff going --
Mainly, I'd say it comes from himself. (November interview)

Mark's numerous interests and projects lead him into exploring the world of books. Ms. Turner explains how Mark collected materials on bats and was continually talking about "bat facts". Before "bats" Mark was engaged in a "bugs" project:

This summer he was interested in bugs. He picked up every book -- and every book I ever found (on bugs) -- and at the daycare. He set himself up to study that subject and he did, you know. Like the bats -- that book (from school) -- he might have had something else about bats before that, or something that mentioned bats, and he started that bat investigation.

Ms. Turner explains that since "bats" Mark has moved on to "mice" and has brought home, from school, several storybooks with mice as central characters. There has been a minor diversion from mice recently (February) to dinosaurs and babies. Mark's aunt is expecting her first baby and has "about every book written" on birth and foetal development. Now Mark is avidly engaged in a "baby" project, constantly wanting to feel the baby kick, checking the position of its head and limbs, and requesting that adults "go through" the baby books with him.

Ms. Turner believes that Mark learns quickly from "informal situations". His own curiosity and multiple interests stimulate him into exploring topics alone or requesting help from adults. Ms. Turner has not enrolled Mark in formal lessons or clubs as she finds them "so competitive for young children" (February interview). Mark is currently keen to swim and she and her brother-in-law have been taking him to the

local pool. She comments, "If Mark's interested, say in floating, we'll teach him."

Personality Variables: Mark is described as a very "definite" personality by his mother. He is "insistent", "very persistent", finds resources "within himself" and he is "curious" and self-motivated in pursuing his interests. Mark is capable of long periods of concentration and is at ease with his own company and solitary play. He is described as an enthusiastic learner who is continually excited by new knowledge. When Ms. Turner relates episodes about Mark her voice "changes" to take on her son's speech patterns and intonations. Mark's excitement and enthusiasm are mirrored as she recalls his conversations:

Guess what Mr. P. Moony did today! (High, excited voice)
 -- you know -- he gets so excited and he's so thrilled
 that Mr. P. Moony has a friend called Zoe. (November
 interview: reference to two puppets used in the classroom)

Mark is described as an organized person who loves "the formality of kindergarten" (November interview). He appreciates the structure provided by the programme. Ms. Turner hopes the year will provide a transition into the Grade One year, though worries that the latter programme may stifle Mark's natural creativity and interests. She feels that Mark's "persistence" and his enjoyment of school structure, and his ability "to cope" will triumph over "all the worksheets and formal things in Grade One" (February interview).

During our interviews, Mark is referred to repeatedly as a "talker" and a "sharer of knowledge". Not only does he verbally display his knowledge but he is confident that adults in his life are to be used as resources to expand and clarify his knowledge. In the following episode Mark shares his new knowledge about "blood", learned in the kindergarten hospital unit, with his mother, and at the same time demonstrates

awareness that knowledge provided by his mother should be checked with another resource, namely his teacher.

The other day he told me about platelets. I was talking about a bandaid and he said, "Well you know, you don't really need bandaids", and I said, "Why's that?" He said, "Because your blood has a thing called platelets in it. It's like a net" -- and he has a toy that's a basketball thing with a net that hangs off of it -- so he had that net and he holds it up and he said, "It's like this -- they're platelets and they hold in your blood" -- and he started telling me about red -- red blood cells I think -- and he was a little bit unsure of red -- red -- something red, and I said, "Red blood cells?" and he said, "Yeah! Yeah! That's right!" (excited child-like voice) -- And then he said something about white blood cells and said, "What are they for anyway?" I said, "I think they help you fight away infection -- diseases and things" -- and he goes, "Maybe (doubtful voice). I don't know. I'll have to ask Mrs. Compton."

Thus Mark shares information and obtains knowledge from many sources, and at the same time monitors his sources and cross-checks for validation.

Mark is a mixture of personal confidence and personal doubt. He communicates confidently with adults and is secure about his ability to investigate new interests. His mother describes him as "outgoing" with adults. He is less confident in social engagements with other children. In changing from one social realm, the daycare, to another, the kindergarten, he expressed self-doubt in his ability to cope. In between-child play he is unhappy when games move from verbal to physical modes of expression. He does not relate to the physical bantering that occurs with the children at the co-operative housing development where he lives:

The kids in the co-op think he's a joke because he tries to discuss, "I'm really angry with you for doing that", and they just laugh at him and punch him and take off. Yesterday some boys were bullying him out at our house and he told them he was going to send his bat a [redacted] (during Mark's bat-project stage) -- -- so he's kind of a bit chicken about (November interview)

This dichotomy between the "confident Mark" and the "scared Mark" was apparent during my interviews with Ms. Turner and from my classroom

observations.

Trevor

Trevor is a quiet reflective child (September: 4 years 10 months) who is a careful observer in the classroom. He rarely contributes to class discussions and equally rarely initiates personal conversations with the teacher or aide. In sharp contrast, when his mother serves as a parent helper in the classroom he frequently goes over to talk with her and to discuss his activities. On these occasions he verbalizes confidently and animatedly. Trevor does talk with his classmates, but selects close friends for indepth interactions. He discusses at great length with Shawn and Laura, but is more guarded in his conversations with other children. He enjoys working on his own and is a very purposeful child. He is decisive about his choices for classroom activities and utilizes every moment of his time at the centres. Trevor is single-minded in his pursuit of a task and appears to "block-out" extraneous noises as he works. Occasionally he looks up in surprise to find the class has moved on to a new activity and he has not realized it. Trevor loves to work on the classroom computer and expresses a preference for working alone at the terminal. Sometimes the other children complain that, "Trevor doesn't share" time fairly at the computer.

The Family: Trevor lives in a single storey house about two blocks from the school. He has a one year old sister, Laura, and an eight year old brother, Clifford, in Grade Two. His mother is a housewife and his father is a specialized construction worker trained for work on industrial complexes. During the fall, Mr. Bronson was out of work. He

obtained a new job during the winter, but in February Mrs. Bronson was concerned that this job would soon be completed, and her husband would be out of work once more. Mr. Bronson's present job (February) is located a considerable distance from Edmonton. At first he lived on the site and only travelled home at weekends. However, he missed the family and has arranged a car pool, with fellow workers, to enable him to return home each night. Even so his time with the family is still limited, for he arrives home at 7 p.m. and leaves for work "before 6 a.m." in the morning. Their family life is characterized by periods of financial ease when Mr. Bronson is working and by times of constraint when he is "laid off". In addition to the fluctuations in the family's economic situation, Mr. Bronson's alternating working and "laid off" states create different conditions within the home. When not working, Mrs. Bronson notes that her husband spends a great deal of time with the children. He has ample energy and tries to "burn it up" by continually working on the house, repainting and re-organizing it. Over time, however, he becomes increasingly restless, partially because of monetary concerns and because he desires to hold a job, but also because there is not enough work around their small house to occupy his time. Mrs. Bronson feels ambivalent about the possibility that her husband's job will soon be terminated. She knows that the long-distance commuting is a real pressure for him, and realizes that when "laid off" he spends more time with the family. However, she is equally aware that when not working her husband's feelings of intense restlessness will return. Both conditions seem to offer their own form of stress on the family unit.

Trevor spends the mornings at home with his mother and baby sister, and with his father when he is not working. Mrs. Bronson explains that

Trevor does not get up early but frequently lies in his bed and talks to himself:

He makes up stories -- or he'll be laying there and giving Clifford heck and he's not even around!
(November interview)

His room is close to the kitchen where his mother is often working, and he communicates with her as he lies in bed:

He'll be laying in bed. He'll be talking and stuff like that -- and he'll be laying there and start asking questions on what I'm doing or something -- or what he wants. (November interview)

When Trevor does get up, he and his mother and sister often watch "the game shows on T.V." Trevor also likes to help his mother with the family baking. His time with his mother has been more limited over the past year as the new baby has absorbed a lot of Mrs. Bronson's time. She used to read to Trevor in the mornings but since Laura arrived she simply has not had time to do that. Trevor used to bring books to his mother, continually:

He used to bring them all the time and it just got that I couldn't get anything done because he was always (doing it). That's why we decided -- well, Dad will read the books to (him). You don't keep bringing books all the time -- so their Dad reads the book at a certain time and that's it. You don't keep bringing books all the time -- otherwise you'd be sitting all day reading to (him). (November interview)

By February this rule had relaxed a little. Father was working and had less time to read to Trevor, and hence his mother started reading with him again. Trevor reminds her, "Mummy, you didn't read the book -- better read me the book" (school library book). Mrs. Bronson notes that Trevor will ask her questions as she works around the house. Their home has quite an open design and is compact. Trevor communicates with his mother from his bedroom, from the living room where he watches television,

and from the small dining area which opens on to the kitchen. If Trevor is drawing or writing words, Mrs. Bronson will respond to his requests which centre on the form of certain letters. He often asks, "Will you do it for me?" (February interview), when he requires a model of a particular letter.

Trevor's time with his mother, though generally "relaxed" and unhurried, is not without its tensions. Mrs. Bronson notes that Trevor frequently plays solitary games with his construction toys and on the Intellivision equipment in the basement playroom. However, she suggests that sometimes Trevor's games are very noisy and "too active" for the house. These boisterous activities "get him into trouble":

Just little things like -- he'll start playing around with a ball in the living room, batting it back and forth -- 'cos he's into hockey -- and it just gets on my nerves. First thing in the morning you don't want to listen to a kid banging on the wall with his ball and chasing it all over. (November interview)

In February a new tension emerged that coloured their morning activities with some strain. By this stage Trevor no longer wished to go to kindergarten. Every morning he tried to persuade his mother that he did not have to go to school:

"It's boring," he says -- and "I don't have to go every day and I don't need to go today. There's nothing to do" -- and I say, "Well, if you don't go today you can't play with your friends after (school) -- 'cos you're not going out and playing if you don't go to school". (February interview).

Thus far Trevor has accepted his mother's arguments, but Mrs. Bronson finds their daily "I'm not going to school - You are" dialogue casts a cloud over their mornings. She is concerned that his attitude may be a prelude to further school resistance in Grade One:

He picks things up faster than Clifford did and I figure if he tells me kindergarten is boring -- then he's going to find Grade One boring. (February interview)

When Mr. Bronson is at home he spends time with Trevor. They enjoy playing with the Intellivision computer games. Mr. Bronson takes his son skating, and Trevor likes to help his father with jobs around the house. Although preferring to be with his father, Trevor will play with his little sister when Mr. Bronson is not at home.

He (Trevor) is really good with her -- except for when he figures she's not doing what he wants her to do -- especially when she's walking and she doesn't want to walk to him. She'll walk to somebody else and he'll get mad (laughs) -- and say, "Laura, I told you to come to me!" (November interview)

Trevor also gets annoyed with Laura when he is looking at a book on his own, and she comes and tries to take the book from him:

Trevor gets mad and says, "That's my book. It isn't your book!" (February interview)

Trevor spends a great deal of time with Clifford and his brother's friends. Mrs. Bronson explains that there are few kindergarten-aged children close to their house. After Christmas Trevor became friendly with a boy in his class, Shawn, but prior to that most of his friends were older children. Clifford and Trevor play the Intellivision games together and Trevor is "always fighting with his brother to see if he can get as high (a score) as he" on them. They also enjoy "building things" with construction sets and create stories that usually involve running cars and trucks through their buildings. Mrs. Bronson notes that their favourite print activity is playing school:

They pretend they're writing tests for the teachers and stuff like that -- Cliff's the teacher. He'll bring (math) sheets home -- of adding -- and they'll sit down. Clifford will do the first one and Trevor the second. Both of them'll sit down doing it -- like they're really quiet when they're doing it, but they'll be talking to one another a lot, and then they'll bring it for me to check. (February interview)

At the weekends Trevor and his family visit both sets of grandparents.

They visit each set at least once a month, on their respective farms north and west of Edmonton.

Present Caregiver Arrangements: The Substitute Family: As Trevor's mother is at home he does not require a babysitting service. He has never attended a daycare or a home-based babysitting centre. On rare occasions when Mrs. Bronson does require substitute-caregiver services, Trevor is looked after by a neighbour on their block. He enjoys going to the neighbour's house for she "reads to him a lot". He has a favourite book at the neighbour's house:

It's always this one book -- I think it's a Dr. Seuss book. She has the whole series of them. It isn't "The Cat in the Hat" -- something about "Whacky" -- things are all mixed-up -- "Mixed-up Wednesday" or "Whacky Wednesday". There's shoes on the trees and they have to pick out what was wrong with the pictures. (February interview)

Preschool Experiences: Trevor was described by his mother as a very active infant, in comparison to her older son. Even as babies Trevor and Clifford were "quite different". Clifford has always liked "using his mind", whereas Trevor has always "been into everything -- more the exploring type":

The older one was never one to crawl out of his crib but Trevor (laughs) -- I had to take him out of the crib when he was nine months old because he was crying all the time and crawling out -- but he's always been that way -- over-active. (November interview)

During Trevor's preschool years he enjoyed playing outside, and indeed Mrs. Bronson suggests that she hardly saw him the summer before he started kindergarten:

He got up in the morning and he was out the door -- he'd go and play. You'd have trouble getting him back into the house. In fact usually at lunchtime we'd have to track him down to get him home for lunch. (November interview)

Trevor stayed at home, with his mother, during his preschool years. When Trevor was three years of age, he went with his mother to spend time with his brother in the kindergarten. Mrs. Bronson served as a parent helper and she thought it would be helpful for Trevor if he accompanied her "to get used to (kindergarten) beforehand". Although Clifford attended the community playschool, prior to kindergarten, Trevor was not enrolled in that programme. Difficulty in making arrangements supplied part of the reason for his non-attendance:

I was expecting and I figured I didn't want to take him in the winter and I'd have to dress a newborn baby and take him back and forth all the time. They don't start 'till one -- so he'd be walking to (play) school by himself and walking home after because they get out before school is over -- so I figured that wasn't a very good idea. (November interview)

However, an even stronger reason for not taking Trevor to the early childhood programme was that Mrs. Bronson "didn't care for it". She believed that "it was a bit rough" and "it didn't seem like there was any discipline". Mrs. Bronson felt that Trevor's tendency to be aggressive would be exacerbated in a programme that offered such limited structure. Mrs. Bronson feels that Trevor's progress has not been inhibited by his non-attendance at playschool. She believes that, "nowadays we're moving them (children) so much faster" into formal programmes:

We never had even kindergarten when I was young -- kids are learning faster 'cos maybe they've changed teaching ways. Then we didn't stress as much learning as fast as you can. Now it's "move on", and they more or less do. (November interview)

Mrs. Bronson has mixed feelings about this pressure on preschool children. She would like Trevor to do well in life but has never considered enrolling him in clubs and preschool programmes to accelerate

his development. She is pleased that Shawn, Trevor's new friend in kindergarten, is not "cut-throat competitive" (February interview), but that both boys play co-operatively.

Interests and Abilities: Trevor's interests cluster into two streams, namely active, boisterous play and quiet activities that he may pursue alone or with another person. His mother describes Trevor as shifting naturally, during the course of a day, from strenuous physical play to times of reflection and quietness.

Trevor loves to play outside and enjoys sports, especially hockey. Mrs. Bronson describes Trevor skating tirelessly for a couple of hours or more. She notes his constant activity in building imaginative complexes from play materials and his verbal enactment of an "adventure" with cars and trucks. His mother reports how he can move from a noisy, physical activity into watching television for long periods of time. Trevor is a "T.V. watcher" and likes the game shows and the children's shows on Channel 20, that run from 4.30 to 6.00 p.m. and from 7.00 to 8.30 p.m. He watches "Read Along" with studied concentration and another programme that is based "on the W. Burgess books". He protects his "rights" to watch certain programmes quite assertively. The animal story programme runs at the same time as the news. His father likes to watch the news, but acquiesces to Trevor's and Clifford's claims to their show:

It's on when the news is on and my husband wants to watch the news (laughs ruefully). Usually my husband has to dig out the little black and white T.V. and he watches it and lets the kids watch their show.
(November interview)

Trevor has familiarized himself with the home video equipment. Mrs. Bronson says he has learned to use the clock on the video machine and the T.V. Guide, to enable him to request the videotaping of certain

television programmes. He has distinct viewing preferences, and no longer likes to watch Sesame Street;

He watched it up until this year and he doesn't like it any more because it seems like it's always the same show or something. He gets very bored with it.
(November interview).

Trevor's interest in Intellivision computer games reflects his dual desires for activity and quietness. He particularly enjoys the noisy games such as "Space Invaders" and likes playing in a social group. However, he seems equally happy to engage in a solitary game. Trevor enjoys the world of books and is insistent that his parents read to him, though he is also happy reading quietly to himself. Trevor likes to write but he does not welcome formal instruction in letter formation. He would rather request assistance when he needs a particular letter for a word that he has planned to write.

Trevor likes to be "in charge" of his interests. He likes to ask questions at home, when he needs information, and enjoys writing and playing when he initiates the time and the place. He has learned to control many of the household devices that interest him. Television programmes are of vital interest to him and hence he has learned how to set the video machine and has mastered the T.V. Guide. As he loves Intellivision he has learned how to operate it effectively. He will skate persistently and tirelessly as that skill has an immediate and functional relationship to his hockey interest. There is a strong element of competition with Clifford in Trevor's drives to master his environment. He wants to be "as good as" his brother at the computer games and aspects of school work, and he pursues these activities with fervor to enhance his abilities.

The kindergarten setting is not "an interest" for Trevor. He says .

he would rather stay at home, and Mrs. Bronson notes that he never discusses kindergarten activities with the family. The world of home seems to offer more, in Trevor's perceptions, than the world of school, which he considers "boring".

Personality Variables: Mrs. Bronson describes Trevor as "over-active", "very persistent", "stubborn", "exploring" and curious, "assertive" and "imaginative". In my introduction to Trevor it may seem that I am describing a different child; from classroom observations! Trevor at school is quiet and non-assertive in the group, and a classroom observer rather than an active participant in class discussions. The "over-active" Trevor did not appear in six months of classroom observations. The "exploring", curious, "imaginative" and "persistent" Trevor did appear when he was working alone or with a partner. At home Trevor is an initiator and a very verbal child. At school his initiations and verbal expertise only emerge when his mother serves as an aide in the classroom, or when he is talking quietly with a friend, or to himself. Trevor is a self-verbalizer in that as he pursues activities he explains, to an unseen audience, the steps he progresses through to complete tasks.

Mrs. Bronson repeatedly mentions that Trevor initiates, namely, "he does it on his own". She also suggests that Trevor gets annoyed when somebody provides help that he feels he does not need. For example, Trevor wanted to learn how to print his name at home:

He watched Clifford printing and he wanted to do it too -- so I tried to help Trevor -- he tried to do it his own way. Sometimes he gets upset with me trying to tell him to do it this way and he was doing it his way. I think he more or less put his mind to it. He'd keep practising all the time. He was very persistent with that. (November interview)

Mrs. Bronson notes that Trevor is equally persistent in practically any area that is important to him. If "he's interested", he "wants to do it" (February interview), comments his mother. Mrs. Bronson suggests that Trevor is very "definite" in his plans and interests, and this facet of his personality constantly surprises her, as Clifford is so "easy going". Frequently Trevor will arrive home from school with a definite idea and implement it. Trevor and a neighbourhood friend are already planning an activity for the future:

They've got a plan for the summer. They've been colouring pictures in a colouring book -- Tessa and him, and they're going to sell the pictures out of their colouring book. (February interview)

At times Mrs. Bronson finds Trevor's "definiteness" a concern. When Trevor finds he cannot control the actions of people "he gets mad". This happens with his sister, his brother and his friends. He becomes very upset when a friend does not wait for him after school and when his baby sister does not follow his directions. His "definiteness" about disliking kindergarten is also worrying his mother, for this personality characteristic leads to dissension at home, and may indeed generalize to colour Trevor's perceptions of the whole schooling process.

Janette

Janette is a bilingual child (September: 5 years 0 months) who speaks German almost exclusively at home and English at school. She enjoys talking with adults and frequently approaches the teacher and aide to engage them in conversation. Janette brings them pages from her colouring books, or shows them her new jacket, freshly curled hair, or a doll that she has received as a gift. Janette has one close friend, Jane, in the classroom. At times they seem inseparable as they select

centres and pursue activities together. Janette seems the dominant partner in the relationship, for she often selects centres for Jane and tells her how a particular activity should be pursued. Janette's relationship with the other children is changeable. At times she will engage in group projects, and join in discussions, amicably. At other times her desire to organize the group, and ensure that the other children follow her "rules", causes conflict. At centre time Janette will rarely stay in her selected activity for the allotted period. She often moves to other centres to watch the other children, and goes to the bathroom at least twice during any given activity period. Though a conversationalist in one-to-one interactions with adults and other children, Janette rarely contributes in class discussions.

The Family: Janette has an eight year old brother, Michael, in Grade Three and a two year old brother, Hans. Mrs. Gearhardt is a substitute teacher for the local school board and her husband is a carpenter. During the fall Mr. Gearhardt was unemployed, but in the winter he found a local job on a road improvement scheme. The duration of this job is uncertain. Mrs. Gearhardt, due to her husband's lack of work over the past months, has been trying to obtain as many substitute teaching jobs as possible. She also does book manuscript and thesis typing, largely for German texts. On Saturdays Mrs. Gearhardt is employed as a German teacher in a local private school. Her eight year old son attends this school on Saturdays and Janette will be enrolled in the programme when she is older.

Janette's immediate and extended family seem to provide a large portion of her social world. All members of her family have common bonds in that they belong to the same German-speaking church and speak German

exclusively amongst themselves. Mrs. Gearhardt describes, in addition, a sense of family unity with regard to values and the desire to maintain their cultural and religious identity. The families do not have television in their homes and extended family members serve as a child-care network in terms of babysitting other family members' children. When vacationing, members of the extended family appear to compose the holiday group.

Mr. and Mrs. Gearhardt insist that Janette should only speak German at home:

I always tell her she's supposed to speak German at home, and not English, but when she plays and she's speaking to herself she always uses English. I always have to tell her, "Janette, how are you supposed to speak?" and then she knows. I think since she's been in kindergarten she only speaks German if you tell her to -- when she has to. Now, when she plays with Hans she speaks German and even -- and I find this surprising -- with Michael -- they speak German. I don't know if it hasn't occurred to them yet that they can speak English to each other. I almost think that's it.
(November interview)

When Mrs. Gearhardt serves as a kindergarten helper Janette always addresses her in German, though she hears her mother talking to the other children in English. Hans, Janette's little brother, always comes to school when his mother is a helper, and he communicates only in the German language. Mrs. Gearhardt notes that preservation of Janette's German is not really a problem as all their social contacts are within the church and the extended family, and all are German-speaking. As her own children grow older, Mrs. Gearhardt feels that they may start to communicate in English, between themselves and "with the cousins". She believes that is a normal pattern, for when young herself she and her brother, "to each other we spoke English but to our parents we only spoke

German" (November interview). Mrs. Gearhardt notes that she "really can't say" too much about the quality of Janette's English language, "because I only hear her speak English if she's talking to herself or if she's playing with someone". However, she anticipates that Janette's progress will mirror her older brother's. Michael is "a good student" in school, though recently his teacher has suggested that he is experiencing some difficulty with the vocabulary in his Grade Three reader. Mrs. Gearhardt says that she assumes Janette may be "lacking a bit of vocabulary", in that there, "are some words that she won't know how to say in English".

The children appear to accept their parents' requests that they can only utilize German at home, maybe especially as they have to use German in order to communicate with their little brother. However, they have been rather more resistant to restrictions placed on television viewing. Mrs. Gearhardt notes that their lack of a television is "a religious thing", though in addition, she believes that television is "not beneficial" in terms of its unsuitable content and the amount of time it erodes from family life and pursuits such as reading. Janette and Michael have both asked, "When are we going to buy one (a television)?" Janette, in particular, has been very persistent and asked "every day" over a time period last year. Mrs. Gearhardt says she made it very clear that they were not going to purchase a television, and the "asking" subsequently declined. However, Janette, after visiting her friend June, will sometimes comment rather triumphantly, "Well, I watched T.V.!" and tell her mother about Sesame Street or an animal programme she enjoyed.

Janette spends time with her mother, though the amount of time varies according to Mrs. Gearhardt's work commitments. On Saturdays,

Mrs. Gearhardt is not available due to her teaching job. When substitute teaching or typing manuscripts, her time is limited during the week. When Mrs. Gearhardt is at home, Janette and Hans usually play together and also like to communicate with their mother:

They usually play. If I'm baking something they like to help or they take a little piece of the dough and play with that. Usually they're around wherever I am. If I'm upstairs then that's where they are. If I go downstairs they come downstairs and they're always around me. (November interview)

Mrs. Gearhardt notes that when she isn't substitute teaching she is frequently typing at home:

I just finished a book manuscript. (I do) dissertations and theses for university professors and students -- especially if they're in German. I had quite a bit to do in September and October and they (Janette and Hans) don't like it when I type (laughs) -- because I sit and type all day and I don't have time for them. They're sort of on their own. (November interview)

On these occasions Janette apparently spends a great deal of time listening to tapes and records. The family has a collection of recorded stories in German and English. Janette's favourite is a German recording of Heidi.

She really likes to listen to records and she does that a lot. We have English records that she listens to. She can put them on herself now. We have a little tape recorder and we also have some German ones and they're on tape. We've the story "Heidi" in German and they (Janette and Hans) really like that. It is a story and it tells briefly what happens. It's about a forty-five minute tape and it has songs on it, and they can sing the songs at the beginning, and some of the parts -- one time they're in the Alps and there's a storm and the first time she heard it she was crying because she was afraid something happened to them. She still doesn't like to hear that part -- it's a bit scary.

Me: Is there a little book that goes with it?
Mrs. Gearhardt: No, no, there isn't. (November interview)

When Mr. Gearhardt was unemployed he spent time with the children.

He cared for them when his wife was teaching, and both mother and father were at home with Janette and Hans when neither had a job. Mrs. Gearhardt says she is not aware of the kinds of things her husband does with the children when she is not there. She knows that he started to read school library books to Janette, but she suggested that it would be better if Michael read the books to his sister, "to practise his reading". Her husband agreed, though he still reads an occasional story to the children. I ask Mrs. Gearhardt what kinds of things her husband likes to do with the children at the weekends or in the summer.

Well -- when he was working he didn't have all that much time for them but -- I don't know what he does (pause) -- Well sometimes he reads them stories or -- he likes to goof around with them like fathers do. They usually do that right around suppertime or right after -- then they play around a bit. Well we do things together as a family. For example, on the long weekend in November we went to Calgary for four days and to Banff, and they really enjoyed that. (November interview)

Mrs. Gearhardt explains rather generally about how Janette spends time with her brothers. Janette likes to listen to tapes and records with Hans, and her major interaction with Michael seems centred around the daily story reading sessions, where the older boy reads to his sister. On these occasions Hans quickly wanders off to amuse himself, presumably because the stories are written in English, and also, suggests his mother, because he's "quite a bit younger" than his brother and sister.

Present Caregiver Arrangements: The Substitute Family: The

Gearhardt's extended family serves as a babysitting system. Janette is always cared for by a member of the family. When her mother and father are working, she and Hans are left with Mrs. Gearhardt's aunt who lives in the immediate neighbourhood. The aunt shares the same religious and language convictions as the Gearhardt family. She has no television in

the house and always speaks in German at home. The same aunt comes to babysit the children on Friday nights:

She always reads them a book. Janette always immediately gets a book and then she reads it to them. Sometimes it's a German book and sometimes it's an English book.
(November interview)

On Saturday mornings, when Mrs. Gearhardt is working, her husband often drops Janette and Hans off at his parents' house. The children visit with their grandparents and have lunch with them.

Preschool Experiences: Janette only spoke German until she was three years old. At that age:

She started playing outside and the little neighbour girl (June) was about two and that's when Janette learned (English).

Presumably Janette had experienced some exposure to English before playing with June. When Janette was two years old her older brother entered kindergarten. When Mrs. Gearhardt acted as a kindergarten helper, Janette accompanied her.

She just found it very interesting. When I was helping in kindergarten, with Mike, then I brought her along and she seemed to fit right in even then. She always stayed still and she didn't talk when somebody else was talking, and (she) sat with the group. (November interview)

Mrs. Gearhardt notes that Janette has ended Sunday School since she was tiny, and last year she pleaded with her mother to allow her to start regular school. Janette was "very disappointed" that she was not old enough to enrol in a school programme.

Janette did not attend the community playschool programme for preschoolers, and neither did her older brother:

Well usually when they were three (years old) then I always had another one (child) and then it was kind of difficult -- and I know they have a playschool here but I don't even know where they had it then -- so I just didn't think there was any reason for them to go.

It wasn't very good -- more just a playtime.
(November interview)

During her preschool years Janette played with a neighbour's little girl, and incidentally learned English at the same time. June is eight months younger than Janette but the age gap does not seem a problem in their friendship.

Actually (June's) quite advanced for her age.
I'd say she's probably at the same level as
Janette. (November interview)

The two girls have always played together quite comfortably, either outside in the garden or inside with their toys and dolls. In the last year their relationship has been a little less harmonious. June has started playschool and is more assertive in her play decisions. Janette, suggests her mother, "kind of likes to boss around others" and June seems less willing to receive directions.

Mrs. Gearhardt notes that, other than Sunday School, Janette has not been enrolled in any clubs or preschool organizations. Last summer Mrs. Gearhardt took the children to the local swimming pool and she plans to register them for lessons this summer.

Interests and Abilities: Mrs. Gearhardt was unable to elaborate on qualitative dimensions of her daughter's interests. This may be related to possible weaknesses in retrospective interviewing or to the fact that Mrs. Gearhardt's busy schedule precluded her from knowing about Janette's activities and interests. Quite frequently, during our interviews, her mother comments:

I don't know what (she does) -- I'm not watching
or

I can't think of any (imaginary games) right now.
I haven't seen (Janette and June) together for quite
a while. (November interview)

I asked Mrs. Gearhardt to suggest Janette's favourite activity and without hesitation she selected listening to their collection of recorded stories.

Sometimes she'll sit all morning and listen to them if there's nobody to play with or she can't go out.
(November interview)

Her response may suggest that playing or "going out" may have been a "first choice" for Janette, and the recorded stories a second option.

Certainly it seems that Janette does like to play with June:

A lot of the time they play outside during the summer -- on the swing or in the swimming pool. They like to sit in the swimming pool. Yesterday they flooded the garden so they were playing out on the ice -- before that they were playing in the house. They like to play with Barbies. June -- has started piano lessons and Janette's very interested in it too, so sometimes they'll sit at the piano and teach each other.
(November interview)

Since starting kindergarten Janette has made a new friend, Jane, who only "lives two doors away". Mrs. Gearhardt notes that Janette and Jane rarely play together outside school as Jane's mother is a single parent with a heavy schedule, and Jane is often at her babysitter's during the week. At the weekend, Janette and her family are rarely at home, as the children visit their grandparents on Saturdays and the family spends time at church on Sundays.

Janette's other major interest appears to be kindergarten. She is "very anxious" (November interview) to go each day and, "she asks every day if it's a school day". Since starting kindergarten Mrs. Gearhardt notes that Janette has become really interested in books, writing, and learning the alphabet.

The clearest indication of Janette's abilities comes from her mother's comments about her flexibility in language shifts. Janette

always speaks German at home and addresses her mother in German at school. She has clearly internalized the language rules established by her family. Shawn, another bilingual child in the classroom, frequently utilized German in his conversations at the beginning of the year, and only reverted to English when he realized that his communication produced no response from listeners. I have never heard Janette speak in German to school staff or to the children in her room, and on one occasion when Mrs. Compton requested that Janette count in German she was extremely reluctant to do so. Different contexts carry different language expectations for Janette and yet she competently fulfills those expectations.

In our November interview, Mrs. Gearhardt indicated that Janette has shown a real interest in writing since commencing kindergarten and has picked up key letter formations, i.e. to write her name, within a short period of time:

She has become interested now that they've (she's) been here in school. She writes her name without copying it. That's a fairly new (thing) -- I'd say in the last month -- before that I made no attempt to help (her). She wanted to know how to write her name and I wrote it down for her and the next day she could just write it. (November interview).

Personality Variables: Janette is described by her mother as "independent", "well behaved" and "not aggressive" in a group, and yet somewhat "bossy" in play with another child. When a new experience is introduced she is "anxious" to pursue it and "requests" help from her parents. For example, after visiting her brother at kindergarten she continually requested to be allowed to go to school herself. When letters and words were introduced at school she was persistent in requesting help to do her own writing at home. When Janette realized

that most children had access to television she asked for a set for the family. When that was not forthcoming she sought opportunities to go to her friend's house to watch programmes there.

Janette is "independent" as her mother suggests, in areas where she has experience and knowledge. She operates the home record player and tape recorder and independently spends hours listening to recorded stories. Classroom observations support the mother's views that Janette is "well behaved" in groups. She rarely initiates any contribution to group discussions, but she is attentive in listening to others' views. Observations also support Mrs. Gearhardt's descriptions of Janette's "boss(iness)" with friends, for she does attempt to control the actions of others, and indeed those facets of her life where she feels she is able to assert some control.

Belinda

Belinda is a mercurial child (September: 4 years 7 months) with dancing eyes, an alert expression and a body that is perpetually in motion. She talks animatedly and her sing-song voice reflects her changeable moods. Belinda is a child who expresses great joy and great sorrow, and her mood changes can occur within minutes. She loves social exchanges with her classmates but is more guarded in her interactions with classroom adults. However, after the first two months of school she started to contribute to group discussions and began to initiate conversations with the teacher and aide. Belinda comes alive in musical activities. She sings vibrantly, moving rhythmically in time to the music. In story time her expressive face mirrors the events in the book. When the main character is happy then so is Belinda. When something disturbing happens then Belinda's face shows shock or sadness. Belinda

sobs breathlessly in a corner when the teacher criticizes her behaviour. When her mother corrects her, Belinda pouts, argues and stamps her foot. She is a child of sharp contrasts. Her closest friend is Janice, though occasionally Belinda "fights" with her and goes to play with Laura, Suzanne or Penny. The "fights", from Belinda's view, are quickly forgotten and Janice, either from tact or her easy-going tolerance, welcomes Belinda back as a friend. The world of peer social interaction is Belinda's domain and chief interest.

The Family: Belinda lives with her mother and father, and Wayne, a Grade Four-aged brother. Most frequently Belinda is at home with her mother and brother as Mr. Williams, an oilfield worker of West Indian origin, has jobs that take him away from Edmonton for several weeks at a time. Mrs. Williams does not work for a salary, but she can often be seen around the school working as a volunteer library aide and serving as a parent helper in the kindergarten room. She drops Belinda at the school and picks her up each afternoon. The family has a dog, a cat and fish as pets.

Mrs. Williams sometimes seems very harrassed when she picks Belinda up from school. She explains that occasionally she feels pressured caring for the two children as she does this alone most of the time and "both my kids are a bit hyper" (March interview). The winter is a hectic time for the family as Wayne is enrolled in hockey and they "do a lot of running (around) after school" (November interview). Wayne plays hockey three or four nights a week and also has games at the weekend. Mrs. Williams takes her son to his practices and games and Belinda accompanies them to the ice arena. One night a week, Belinda goes to dancing class

With hockey and she's in dancing -- we don't do that much at home. Thursdays she goes to dancing class and

usually, with the hockey three or four days in the school week, I'm running after supper. (Belinda) plays with kids at the hockey arena -- but they're older children. At the weekends -- (we've) more hockey games (laughs). (November interview)

Belinda gets a choice about whether to go to the arena or to stay at home, only when her father is at home. Then she may stay at home with one parent whilst the other parent takes her brother to hockey. Over the year Belinda has expressed resentment about her continual attendance at hockey games. This was especially true around her birthday in February. She wanted the party on her actual birthday, but it was arranged for another day as the "real" day conflicted with Wayne's hockey game. Belinda verbalized her annoyance to Mrs. Compton and to her mother, who was the kindergarten helper that day. At that time Mrs. Compton intervened and suggested that Mrs. Williams should perhaps just drop Wayne off at the arena and do something special with Belinda during that time, such as visiting the library, or the swimming pool. She pointed out that both facilities were located in the same building as the ice arena. In March, Mrs. Compton reported that Mrs. Williams seemed to have accepted her suggestion, for Belinda had apparently been going to the library in the evenings. She had brought books on the Space theme to show to the class.

Thus, during the hockey season the family's life, in the evenings, largely revolves around Wayne's interests, though there appears to be a prospect for change if Mrs. Williams continues to consider Mrs. Compton's suggestion. Belinda's mother is beginning to realize the inequality of the situation:

I never did as much with her as I did with my son. He was the only one really. I have a feeling, maybe not realizing it -- I did do more with him than what I have with her. I should have done more with her. (March interview)

Belinda spends time with her mother during the mornings. She gets up at 9.00 a.m., "and then she has to have her breakfast -- right now!"

Belinda often plays with her dolls, alone in her room.

She has a great imagination. She talks to her dolls all the time. She'll read to them -- like she'll take a storybook and she'll look at the pictures and she'll tell the dolls a story, and if she figures they've been bad she'll discipline them. If she's been bad and gets sent to her room -- she'll sit with them and tell her dolls more or less why she's been sent there and how she feels. (November interview)

Sometimes Belinda will watch television. "It depends on her moods", but when in the "right mood" she will watch Sesame Street:

Some days she's really into it and some days she doesn't bother with T.V. There are some days -- like on my channel I can pick up Sesame Street, I think, four times a day and some days she'll watch the whole (programme) four different times -- and then other days she may watch it for half an hour and then just walk away from it. (March interview)

The family can obtain the children's shows on Channel 20. Belinda occasionally watches the "Playdoh Puppet Show", but "she's not really into Read Along" (March interview).

During the mornings Mrs. Williams works with Belinda, for a little while, on reading readiness workbooks purchased from a local drugstore. Belinda initially worked quite willingly on the letter and number activities as she considered it was "her own homework" and quite comparable to Wayne's homework that he brought home from school. The workbook activities declined over the year as Belinda began to express an interest in pursuing her own writing. Mrs. Williams bought Wayne a binder for school and Belinda "wanted one too" (March interview). In this binder Belinda likes to write her classmates' names and Mrs. Williams provides her with the "printed kindergarten list of names, and she copies that" (March interview). Occasionally Mrs. Williams takes

her daughter to the swimming pool. She had registered Belinda in swimming lessons but she "dropped them -- because of the winter" and her pressured hockey schedule.

Belinda's time with her mother is not anticipated to be conflict-free. Mrs. Williams notes that Belinda can be difficult due to her "moods" and because she is "hyper", but emphasizes that she is really "pretty good" and has "settled down this year". However, classroom observations reveal that on many occasions Belinda's and her mother's interactions conclude in conflict. Each day they "fight" over whether Belinda should dress herself in her snowsuit, or whether she should wear her mittens, hat and scarf. Similarly, when Mrs. Williams acts as a kindergarten aide, interactions between Mother-the-helper and Belinda-the-learner invariably result in Belinda telling her mother to, "go away and leave me alone".

Family life, for the Williams, changes when the father comes home on leave from his job. Two parents in the home means more flexibility, for the mother's "hectic schedule" can be shared. Belinda spends a lot of time with her father, when he is home. Mrs. Williams notes that, at first, Belinda reverts to being "a baby" to catch her father's attention.

When he's home Belinda becomes very babyish. Her whole attitude is completely (different). She can't put her own socks on -- and she can't do this -- and it usually lasts a couple of days because my husband always calls her his "Daddy's little baby" and she proceeds to put on that for him -- and then after a couple of days I guess she gets tired of acting the baby role (laughs), but then she gets back to normal -- and then sometimes when he leaves she'll -- she gets pouty on me -- like she's more demanding on me. (November interview)

Mrs. Williams explains that when her husband is home he and Belinda "do everything together". She, "helps him in the garage -- and he reads to her" (November interview). In the summer, if her husband has leave, the

family enjoys going camping together and Belinda particularly enjoys this time with her father.

Wayne, Belinda's brother, seems to lead an active life of his own, though he does spend some time with his sister. The age gap between them prevents Belinda from being able to join fully in many of Wayne's activities with his friends:

Like if they're going to play Monopoly or something they'll sometimes let her play but they get so mad at her because she'll only play for so long and then she's finished. (November interview)

Occasionally Wayne will read stories to Belinda:

It depends on his schedule. Sometimes he'll read to her two or three times a week and sometimes he won't read to her for a month or so. It's got to be his idea or you might as well forget it -- they start fighting. Usually they get on pretty good if he's reading -- I'm surprised because he isn't that patient with her usually. (March interview)

Present Caregiver Arrangements: The Substitute Family: Mrs.

Williams does not work and hence Belinda is cared for at home. No babysitting arrangement has ever been mentioned by Mrs. Williams and it seems that she pursues her personal interests, for example the Health Spa, whilst Belinda attends the kindergarten during the afternoons. Evenings are devoted to Wayne's hockey and, on Thursdays, to Belinda's dancing class. Belinda accompanies her mother in the evenings and is not left with a substitute caregiver.

Preschool Experiences: Mrs. Williams describes both her children as being very active, though notes that Belinda, "turned out to be the worst, I think, when she was small" (March interview). Mrs. Williams says that there were no children in her daughter's age group on her street, when she was small. Hence Belinda socialized with much younger or older children. Usually she played with them in the backyard, for it

was only last summer that:

I finally allowed her to play out the front a bit -- so she found it neat to go visit the neighbours -- to walk home with her friends without me going with her -- and I learned her how to watch for cars and stuff, and stay on the sidewalk, and where she was allowed to go on the road. Before, she wasn't allowed out alone. She either played in the backyard or I went with her. (November interview)

Belinda attended the community playschool for two years, prior to kindergarten entrance. Last year "she went twice a week for two hours" and the year before, "she went with the three year olds -- one day a week" (November interview). At the playschool:

They play games and they cut things and put 'em (together) -- and it's called their crafts, and they have a story read. It's kind of to meet friends and have them share. (November interview)

At the end of Belinda's second year in playschool Mrs. Williams felt ambivalent about entering her daughter in kindergarten. Being a "February baby" Belinda was on the age "borderline" for school entrance in September, 1983. Mrs. Williams talked to the playschool teacher about her concerns.

She felt because Belinda had had two years of playschool that she didn't think Belinda would be happy coming back again -- that they couldn't keep her occupied. She figured Belinda would be all right -- but Belinda was very shy in playschool. Last year with the grown-ups -- like she wouldn't ask them a question, or if they talked to her she wouldn't answer sometimes. (November interview)

Hence, Mrs. Williams was worried about Belinda's shyness with adults and about her general maturity:

Well, she's kind of young. I was worried she wouldn't be able to keep up with the kids. I was always afraid she might find she didn't want to go (to kindergarten). (November interview)

At that time Mrs. Williams checked the community resources to see if

there were preschool classes in "gym and skating" offered during the daytime. However, these were unavailable.

I felt she had to do something. She couldn't just stay at home all the time and I didn't think she'd be happy in playschool again. (November interview)

As her husband felt confident that Belinda could cope, and as there seemed to be no alternative preschool activities, Mrs. Williams enrolled Belinda in kindergarten.

Interests and Abilities: Primarily Belinda's interests are driven by social motives. Even when playing alone Belinda is described as conversing with her dolls and sharing her news and sorrows with them. Belinda has a "make-believe friend that she doesn't try and acknowledge" (March interview).

She'll go into her bedroom and you'll hear her talking away. When she started school it got to be that she didn't need it as much. It's just seldom now -- like today I heard her talking in her bedroom so I gathered she was talking to her make-believe friend -- but now she likes to tell it stuff. She had her (model) dinosaur out today -- telling her ("friend") all about the dinosaur. She'll tell it more what's going on in school. (March interview)

It seems that Belinda has less need to pursue her social interests with her dolls and make-believe friend now that she has "real" friends in her age group at kindergarten. During Belinda's preschool years Mrs. Williams notes that she planned activities to try "to keep her occupied", but since kindergarten started "she's really busy":

She comes home and now she wants to play or talk on the telephone. She's always on the 'phone and that's what amazes me -- with the ('phone) numbers. She knows quite a few of the girls' (numbers). She can dial (Janice's) without even asking, and her little friend Chris -- she dials his number too. (March interview)

Mrs. Williams suggests that, at the beginning of the year, the only thing that upset Belinda was her inability to match "faces" to names in

her class.

She got really upset -- like she'll come home and say, "I can't remember the twins", for instance -- "I get the names mixed up -- Gary and Gordon -- I forget what his name is". (November interview)

Now (March) Belinda takes delight in verbalizing the children's names and also in writing them in her binder.

After school, Belinda plays with Laura, and more frequently with Janice. Janice's babysitter lives close to Belinda's house which makes joint-play sessions relatively easy to arrange. Belinda and Janice like to play with dress-up clothes and make-up and re-enact stories. They also enjoy practising dancing steps learned in the jazz-ballet class they both attend. Mrs. Williams says they have, "a few squabbles, but they seem to 'phone each other up later" (March interview).

When Belinda talks about school she frequently mentions the friendships and quarrels in the classroom. She seems vitally interested in the social life within her kindergarten world, and also her role within that realm.

Mrs. Williams and her daughter both seem worried about Belinda's ability to cope with the kindergarten programme. Mrs. Williams' concerns, however, about Belinda's social communication skills with adults, have declined over the year:

Mrs. Compton says she's not having no problems with her -- she hasn't shied away at all. I have neighbours -- they're shocked because when they were in playschool with her she wouldn't talk back if you talked to her -- but it doesn't bother her (now). She'll talk to them. They're very surprised. (March interview)

Mrs. Williams is still worried about Belinda's age and whether she has the maturity to "keep up with the other kids". She is concerned about "whether they'll pass her" into a Grade One programme (March interview).

Mrs. Williams explains that Belinda is also concerned about her age and her ability to do some of the classwork the other children are doing. She notes that Belinda was "relieved" when she had her fifth birthday and delighted that, since a new girl joined the class, there are now two children in the room who are a few days younger than herself. Belinda was upset when Mrs. Compton started checking to see if the children knew their telephone numbers and addresses and she could not remember either. Mrs. Williams notes that she feels both guilty and puzzled about Belinda's school-based abilities. Primarily she believes that she has not put enough effort into working with Belinda, i.e. "I've been really slack with her". Mrs. Williams is puzzled about the inconsistencies in Belinda's learning in that she can remember her friends' telephone numbers and not her own, could write her name last year but now seems confused about it, and could count to twenty last year but now cannot seem to "get above nine" (March interview). Mrs. Williams says that she can only think that Belinda is scared to give answers in the school context.

Personality Variables: Belinda is described by her mother as "imaginative" and inclined to "moods" in that she can be intensely interested and quickly bored, and is quick to laugh and quick to cry. Belinda is "upset" easily and "fights" with her friends, but is quick to "forget" issues and re-engage in the friendship. The sharp contrasts in Belinda's personality, described in the introductory section from classroom observations, are reflected in Mrs. Williams' descriptions of her character. Belinda moves from being "babyish", "pouty" and "demanding" to being assertive and independent. She shifts from being "scared" and "shy" in certain adult interactions to being confident and outgoing in

relationships with her peer group. Belinda can be "hyper" as her mother suggests, though I have seen her stare, with quiet absorption, at a box of jewel-like pebbles. Belinda's personality is definite and intense, though its manifestations are not always comfortable for the people close to her.

Marvin

Marvin is a friendly, easy-going little boy (September: 5 years 3 months) who often has a smile on his face and who talks easily with his classmates. He enjoys socializing and frequently chooses activities where he can engage in conversation, such as the blocks and playhouse centres. Sometimes, with Marvin, quiet play turns into very boisterous play. He enjoys physical contact and the quiet interactions in the book centre are converted into a rough and tumble "play fight" as Marvin provokes a classmate into rolling with him on the floor. Marvin loves to play chase games and enjoys teasing Laura and Belinda when they play in the house. Although Marvin loves to tease and engage in mock fights, his social interactions are good-natured and he does not try to hurt anybody. Marvin is absorbed when he plays with blocks and he happily builds roads for his cars, tracks for his train and a fireplace for a house he may have constructed. When at a centre that focuses on print or a game with specified rules, Marvin is less involved and often stares into space until an adult comes to help him. He contributes to class discussions but does not actively seek help when individual tasks are difficult for him. When adult help is offered he accepts it for a little while, but if demands for his participation increase he dissolves into giggles, rolls his eyes or slides off his chair, to the floor.

N.B. Marvin participated in the study for three months. He entered

kindergarten in September and moved out of the area on December 8, 1983.

All quotations in the following section are taken from my December interview with Marvin's father.

The Family: Mr. Hyde is a single parent and the major caregiver of four boys, Luke in Grade Five, Doug in Grade Three, Marvin in kindergarten and two year old Jessie. Mr. Hyde is Luke's guardian and the natural father of the other three boys. His first wife was the mother of Luke, Doug and Marvin and his second wife was Jessie's mother. Luke and Doug lived with their mother until recently, but then Mr. Hyde obtained legal custody of Doug and then offered a home to Luke, as his first wife was charged with child abuse and was not considered "fit to look after them". Marvin had lived with his mother for only three months of his life:

-- when he was small -- and then she run off to work so left him with her mother which I totally disagreed with so I just looked after him.

When Mr. Hyde remarried Marvin considered his stepmother as his real mother, and he has had very limited contact with his natural mother. A year ago Mr. Hyde and his second wife separated and Mr. Hyde served initially as the caregiver for Marvin and Jessie and then later for all four boys.

The Hydies' family life seems changeable; although the father has been a stable caregiver in the two younger boys' lives. The older boys have visited Mr. Hyde over the years and hence Marvin had experienced some contact with Luke and Doug before they joined the family. The last few months have created many tensions for Mr. Hyde, although during our interview he seemed philosophical and at ease with his suddenly enlarged family. He acknowledges that the older boys require a good deal of attention, as he suggests that their mother provided a poor home

environment and they were not doing well in school. Doug, who received the worst treatment from his mother, is now difficult to handle. Marvin "still misses his mother (stepmother)" whom he has only seen infrequently since she left the family. In addition to the changed structure of the family over the past year, Mr. Hyde notes that the family has moved house four times during the same time period. Marvin is "quite excited" about moving once more and his father comments:

I think he likes moving. There's something different for him. He doesn't mind (changes). He takes everything in his stride. He's been through a lot -- nothing seems to faze him. He likes the idea of moving -- 'cos it's like close to Don (father's friend) -- and we'll be able to get together and play (the guitar).

The move was originally precipitated as the live-in babysitter left her job with the family, towards the end of November. The father, who was then employed as a salesman working long hours, could not find alternate caregiver arrangements and as he suggests, "there's no daycare that opens fourteen hours a day". Mr. Hyde felt that he had no option but to take Marvin and Jessie to work with him, until he could find another babysitter. His "bosses hadn't liked it" and consequently he lost his job. Now, Mr. Hyde plans to move to the north of the city to look for work. His brother-in-law, presently unemployed, will serve as a live-in babysitter for the boys.

Marvin's time with his father is sporadic and it seems that he has spent a great deal of time with substitute caregivers. However, during periods of unemployment and on some evenings, Mr. Hyde likes to play his guitar with his friends. Marvin loves to sing songs and accompany them. Marvin also likes to talk with his father and even though "he doesn't talk too much about" the kindergarten Marvin has mentioned certain centres such as the computer and the flannelboard activity where he likes

to make words from felt letters. Marvin has also talked about the hospital unit in the classroom and the night prior to our interview he was helping his father to pack, and put a small light bulb and wire around his arm, commenting:

"That's to put on your arm to check your blood" -- you know the blood pressure thing. Things like that he picks up.

Occasionally Mr. Hyde suggests that they practise recognizing letters or he provides Marvin with some words to copy. In the last two weeks, since losing his job, Mr. Hyde has read stories to Marvin, on a daily basis. Mr. Hyde suggests that the largest portion of time he has spent with Marvin has been on camping trips. The family did not go away last summer but previously Marvin has accompanied his father, and other family members, "six or seven times a year" on camping trips to the mountains.

(Marvin) loves camping. He likes to go around and look at the animals -- feed the squirrels -- generally hike around and see what's around.

Marvin enjoys playing with his two year old brother and has spent time with his two older brothers since they joined the family several months ago. However, Mr. Hyde suggests that the older boys, "are as thick as blood", usually playing together and not always welcoming Marvin's company. They apparently read stories to Marvin, on occasion, and they play board games with him:

Well, if they play Monopoly or Chinese Checkers -- he tries. He gets cheated blind by his brothers (laughs), but that's what brothers are for, eh?

Present Caregiver Arrangements: The Substitute Family: Marvin's substitute caregiver arrangements change frequently. His most recent babysitter was the one he has, apparently, experienced for the longest period of time. She stayed with the family for three months and then

"quit suddenly". As Mr. Hyde was working long hours and as the younger boys were often in bed when he returned home, then he felt unable to elaborate on the babysitter's activities with Marvin. He suggests that she read stories with Marvin and supervised the younger children's play. When the family moves, his brother-in-law will care for the boys because "he needs a place to stay".

Preschool Experiences: Change predominated Marvin's preschool life. He lived, for a brief period of time, with his mother and then his grandmother, and then came back to live with his father. He was then cared for by a stepmother, though she left the family when he was four years of age. Other than Mr. Hyde, the grandparents seem to have offered some stability. Mr. Hyde suggests Marvin is "really close to my father". Marvin's grandparents sometimes took him to their lake cottage for the weekend. During the last year, the family's changes and moves have meant that Marvin has experienced less time with his grandparents. When the family moves, their new place will be close to the grandparents' house and Mr. Hyde thinks Marvin will benefit from renewed contact with them.

Marvin has not attended a community daycare or preschool playgroup. He has experienced an array of temporary caregivers:

It was a mixture of babysitters. This last one was the one who actually spent time with him. Last year I was taking him over to a girl for a while. I had a couple of young girls when I was in Ringwood but they weren't very good at teaching him anything.

Mr. Hyde suggests that his second wife was good with Marvin and taught him how to write his name. However, he felt that Marvin forgot how to print his name in the intervening year since she left the family.

Mr. Hyde notes that, other than his younger brother, Marvin has played with few children his own age, "because where we lived before

there wasn't many little kids around". His father explains that most of Marvin's preschool:

-- friends were adults -- his buddies. (They were) mostly my friends -- guys who came over to play the guitar and sing -- so they're Marvin's friends -- his buddies. They've always been with him, especially Don, a friend of mine -- and Marvin liked to go over and see him. He's got an organ over there and (Marvin) loves music.

Interests and Abilities: Mr. Hyde suggests that Marvin's major interest is music. His favourite toy is "a brontosaurus piano that he drags everywhere". His father says that Marvin is "a musical boy". He has tried to teach Marvin to play the guitar but at present the little boy's fingers are not big enough to bridge the neck of the instrument. Mr. Hyde hopes to enrol Marvin in music lessons "in a year or two" to enhance his talents. Marvin loves to sing:

He was four (years old) and he knew all the words to "Powderfinger" -- you know, a Young song -- and there's four verses and he still knows them. We played it last night and he'd sing it.

Marvin also enjoys playing with cars and trucks and recently started to complete a lot of "dot-to-dot" books by connecting numbers sequentially. Since starting kindergarten Mr. Hyde notes that Marvin has become interested in "words and letters" and "likes to write his name everywhere". Marvin also likes:

-- to watch Sesame Street. That's probably his favourite programme. He watches it every day.

Mr. Hyde notes that his job change and the move to a new house may make it possible to develop Marvin's interests more fully. He may now have more time to take the boys camping and, as he hopes to obtain a night shift, he may be able to spend more time at home with them during the day. He explains that in Skipton Estates everything is "so distant".

He has not enjoyed living in the area as he was unable to register the boys in any activities close to home. When the family moves, activities such as "Beavers, Cubs and skating" are offered in the immediate neighbourhood and Mr. Hyde hopes to enrol Marvin in several community sponsored clubs.

Personality Variables: Mr. Hyde describes Marvin as a "carefree kid", who "takes everything in his stride", and who "gets along with just about everybody". He is not a child who is demanding or assertive, suggests his father, and "there's not much he dislikes". Mr. Hyde relates Marvin's happy disposition to his upbringing in that, "He's just kind of free (and) does what he likes".

Marvin's father compares his personality to that of the older boys who can be "defiant" and "difficult":

Marvin has never been a problem. Everybody that looks after him just loves him. He's always been an A1 little guy and the younger one's just the same. The two that I had -- I've always had Marvin and Jessie, and they're turning out pretty good.

He suggests that Marvin has experienced, "a completely different life-style" to Luke and Doug and consequently, "he's a much mellower child in every way". Mr. Hyde notes that Marvin is "emotional" in that he is sensitive and responsive to praise and criticism.

I never had to spank him or anything. I just get cross with him and he gets very upset (changes to "childlike" voice), "Oh, you hurt my feelings".

In many ways Mr. Hyde's description of Marvin is unidimensional in that he only discusses "A1" personality characteristics. However, invariably Mr. Hyde compares Marvin's personality to the older boys who seem to have been somewhat traumatized by their life experiences. It is conceivable that we are viewing Marvin's personality "coloured" by such comparison.

Overview of the Children

Though this study groups the six children into two groups, namely High and Low Print aware, Clay's (1979a) comment, "How different children are, even at 5 years old" (p. 27), seems salient at this point. Clearly these children are complex people and have individual life experiences that cannot be duplicated by another child. The particular dynamics of each family, and each child's engagements within that family, are as unique as fingerprints. Yet, the transmission of learning to the young is "exclusively associated with the human condition" (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959, p. 28) and human threads and patterns of commonality may be seen embedded within the child's individual enculturation.

Family Pressures: One common thread is immediately apparent in the data. All the families are experiencing pressures and stress and have limited time to spend with their children. We live in a hurried and stressed society (Elkind, 1981) and these families appear to reflect the society as a whole. Each parent describes pressures on the family unit, with the recent economic depression exacting an added toll on the life experiences of several of the families. Trevor's father is only sporadically employed and accepting distant jobs that frequently remove him from a full involvement in family life. Janice's father has few trucking jobs and the mother serves as the major wage earner and as the homemaker. In addition she has commitments to her church that she feels constrained to fulfil. Mark's mother is a single parent and worried by economic pressures. She has been forced to take a job fifty miles from her home, and to work during her "holidays" in order to support herself and her son. Janette's father only has short-term work assignments and has experienced lengthy periods of unemployment, and hence the mother

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works at three part-time jobs to maintain the family. Belinda's father is away on oilfield assignments for many months at a time and the mother feels pressured as the sole parent of two children during most of the year. Marvin's father is the single parent of four boys and lost his job and his company-owned house during the course of the study. He is constantly pressured by financial concerns, babysitting arrangements and seeking a place to live. It is impossible to evaluate each family's pressures and to ascribe relative weights to the worries and fears experienced by each unit. Folklore may suggest that unpressured families have more time and energy to devote to the transmission of literacy to the young. However, such "mythical" families do not exist in this study. The High Print aware children, Janice, Trevor and Mark, do not emerge from families with unlimited time and minimal stress. The Low Print aware children, Janette, Belinda and Marvin, do not come from families that appear more harried and distressed than the High Print aware families. All the families, in this research, demonstrate that they are very pressured in terms of economic factors and in terms of the time available to spend with their children. In addition, all expressed some degree of concern and guilt in that they were simply unable to allocate more time to their kindergarten-aged children. Interwoven in the latter commonality is the caring and interest in their children, expressed by all the parents. At the conclusion of her first interview (November, 1983), Janice's mother verbalized, "There's nothing I like better than talking about my kid". This was an unexpressed, but apparent feeling that underpinned all the parent interviews.

Single Variables: Single factors of home or within-child characteristics have, "limited utility", in describing relationships

amongst, "effective or ineffective educational settings for children", suggests Kifer (1977, pp. 6-7). The data collected on these six families support Kifer's contentions. Factors such as socioeconomic status, educational level of the parents, parenting by one or two adults, presence of older siblings, daycare attendance, preschool enrolment in a nursery programme, membership in community sponsored clubs and organizations, television viewing or within-child personality variables cannot be singled out and simplistically related to effective or ineffective literacy learning. These factors could, indeed, be extremely misleading if related to literacy acquisition or translated into predictive variables of school success or failure in teachers' expectations. For example, Mark, an only child with a single parent, living in subsidized housing and having spent much of his early childhood in a daycare or with a variety of babysitters may, via utilization of such factors, be considered "at risk" for literacy learning in particular and school learning in general. Having a parent as a teacher may be offered as a mitigating variable, though her job circumstances preclude time available for spending with her son. However, Mark's literacy knowledge, at school entrance, was well developed and throughout the study he demonstrated an insatiable curiosity about learning in the context provided by the kindergarten. Janette, with an older brother considered as "a good student", a mother as a teacher in both regular and bilingual programmes, never having attended a daycare but always cared for at home or by close relatives, may be anticipated to have well developed literacy knowledge and a sound preparedness for schooling. However, such was not the case at the beginning of the kindergarten year. At this point, it is interesting to note that Mrs. Compton, possibly

considering these extrinsic factors, did perceive Janette as a child with enriched literacy knowledge (Interviews: October, 1983 and February, 1984). However, the data did not support a relationship between individual family-characteristic or status variables and the early acquisition of literacy knowledge.

Similarly, this research does not suggest that within-child personality variables are related to literacy learning in themselves. All the children are described as demonstrating curiosity about their world and as reconstructing meaning from their environments. Five out of the six children are described as "persistent" about certain facets of their lives. Marvin is the only child whose parent does not mention any aspect of persistence or determination in his character. However, his very survival as "a carefree" child (Interview with father, December, 1983), must indicate some degree of inner strength and persistence in the face of continual house changes, the loss of two "mothers" and the addition of two "brothers" into the family structure. Hence, I may suggest that all the children have some degree of determination and persistence, though it is apparent that the focus of their doggedness varies. It differs in the content of the tasks and goals pursued. The most noticeable difference is that Janice, Trevor and Mark demonstrate persistence about print. They demand print interactions with relevant caregivers, and remind them to read stories and to provide assistance with writing tasks that they initiate. Their intents and motives may well be different. Mark seeks information from texts in order to pursue his numerous "projects" and "investigations". Janice seeks time with her mother and the obvious enjoyment of a story shared and story content enjoyed by both participants. Trevor seems equally motivated by content

gleaned from stories that match his interests and also by the shared enjoyment of a storytime with a parent. He also seems spurred into reading by his older brother and a certain competitiveness he feels with Clifford. Belinda focuses her persistence on social goals and Janette is similarly motivated. Both girls, during the course of the study, transferred some of their persistence towards seeking print information from caregivers. This transfer may be perceived as having social intent in that Belinda and Janette requested print information that related to their social milieu, for example the printed names of classmates, addresses and telephone numbers. In addition, both girls perceived the literacy demands of the classroom and requested help with tasks that were "tested" in the kindergarten, namely the alphabet, printing one's name and knowledge of home addresses and telephone numbers. Marvin may be viewed as focusing his persistence on making sense of a revolving world of homes, family and babysitters. His pursuit of music was also a focus for his determination, though whether this was motivated to ensure time with a music-loving father or whether it was a demonstration of Marvin's intrinsic musical interest, is unclear. Hence, curiosity and persistence appear to be demonstrated by all the children, but the directional flow of the energy invested seems qualitatively different for the High Print and Low Print aware children.

As the data suggests that all the families are heavily pressured units with limited time to spend with their children, and as the single status and family-characteristic factors seem to offer little insight into early literacy acquisition, then it would appear that home-based literacy learning seems related to the qualitative dimensions of multiple variables and the interactive patterns of communication within the family.

structures. Selected themes from the interview data, related to home literacy contexts and print-related interactions, will now be explored to provide further information regarding home literacy learning.

Home Literacy Contexts and Print Interactions

In the initial interviews the parents were asked to describe "typical days" experienced by their children. As they discussed the central topic, literacy engagements were mentioned and I then explored these in more detail with the parents. Literacy themes that emerged during the first interview were then re-investigated during our second interview. (Marvin's father only had one interview session due to the family's move.) In analyzing the interview data, one feature became immediately apparent, namely the relative sparsity of the literacy information, and most noticeably the storybook information, in the Low Print aware children's parents' descriptions of their everyday lives. In comparison, the parents of the High Print aware children provided a wealth of information concerning literacy engagements in their homes. Initially I wondered whether the Low Print aware children's parents were simply less verbal on all aspects of their children's lives. Further investigation suggested that this was not the case. Belinda's mother provided indepth information about her concerns related to her daughter's potential success in school and her social interactions with friends. Janette's mother focused on family dynamics and her daughter's second language acquisition. Marvin's father described, in detail, the family's lifestyle and his son's developing interest in music. It would seem that few literacy interactions were described by these parents as other activities were more important, or intrinsically part of their children's days, than print. Hence, at times, there may be a quantitative imbalance

in the following theme exploration, an imbalance that is dictated by the data itself.

I. Literacy for Life versus Literacy for School Success

All the parents suggest that their children pursue a variety of print-related activities at home. However, the High Print aware children seem to have been involved in literacy activities since infancy whereas the Low Print aware children's pursuit of print seems intimately related to the onset of formal schooling.

For example, Mrs. Bronson, Mrs. Wengler and Ms. Turner describe their children as entering kindergarten knowing how to print their names and recognizing all the alphabet letters. None of these parents is aware of a distinct time wherein these skills were acquired. Instead they suggest that name printing and alphabet learning occurred "just around" home (Ms. Turner, November) in the course of playing with magnetic letters or "practising" printing whilst "playing school" (Mrs. Wengler and Mrs. Bronson, November) or "playing office" (Ms. Turner, November). Trevor's mother did note that her son had requested to be taught to write his name when he was two, but she quickly abandoned the task when he lost interest. A little while later he could print his name but Mrs. Bronson is unsure how he learned. Alternatively, the Low Print aware children's parents were quite aware when their children learned to print their names. They also knew that their children entered kindergarten with little knowledge about the alphabet. During the first months of kindergarten these parents escalated their attempts to teach their children how to print their names and how to recognize letters. It appears that Mr. Hyde, Mrs. Gearhardt and Mrs. Williams knew that these skills were base requirements for school success and hence they became anxious to teach them, and felt

"guilty" (Belinda's mother, February) if they failed to find time for formal print lessons in their families' busy lives. Belinda was taught to write her name in the formal workbooks Mrs. Williams utilized to teach her daughter "reading readiness skills". This teaching occurred during the summer before Belinda entered kindergarten. As the months passed it became clear to Mrs. Williams that the teaching had not been successful as Belinda was still unable to print her name accurately by February. Mrs. Williams attributed this to Belinda's "stubbornness". Similarly, Mrs. Williams started to teach Belinda the alphabet just prior to kindergarten and "she almost gets all the alphabet right at home now" (March interview). However, Mrs. Williams doubts that Belinda will be able to demonstrate this knowledge at school as she believes that her daughter "refuses" to display knowledge in the classroom. Mr. Hyde suggests that Marvin's stepmother taught him how to print his name. However, he "forgot it" and hence his father re-taught him in the early months of kindergarten. In odd moments away from a hectic work schedule Mr. Hyde also commenced to teach Marvin the alphabet during the fall, using commercial letter cards. Janette learned to write her name when name printing knowledge was tested in the kindergarten. Mrs. Gearhardt responded to her daughter's urgent requests to teach her how to print her name in October, and Janette learned in two or three days. Mrs. Gearhardt realizes that she needs to "teach" Janette the alphabet (February interview) and plans to spend some time "working on it" prior to Grade One entrance.

Although there is an intimate relationship between school success in reading and adjustment to living and working in our culture (Bond, Tinker and Wasson, 1979), it seems apparent that the High Print aware children's

parents in this study have a more global conception of the importance of literacy than the Low Print aware children's parents. Mrs. Bronson, Mrs. Wengler and Ms. Turner involved their children in print-related activities from early childhood and though they had some concerns about their children entering the formal world of schooling they had few apparent worries about their children's literacy learning over time. The High Print aware children's parents seemed to view literacy as part of a life-long process in which the home took a primary responsibility. When they talked about reading success, they adopted a long-term view. For example, Mrs. Wengler and Mrs. Bronson hoped their children would be "recreational readers" (Mrs. Wengler, February) as adults. These parents hoped that the school literacy programme would not "stifle" their child's creative self-learning strategies (Ms. Turner, February), or "bore" their children (Mrs. Wengler and Mrs. Bronson, February) in the course of the literacy acquisition process. The Low Print aware children's parents appeared to have a more limited conception of literacy learning. Stimulating print knowledge in their children was related to the immediacy of the onset of formal schooling, and hence tasks such as letter recognition and name printing were reserved for the time period prior to, or following, kindergarten entrance. Mrs. Williams, Mr. Hyde and Mrs. Gearhardt were motivated to "work on" print activities with their children when they perceived literacy knowledge was required. They had a short term conception of literacy and viewed it as "something" their children needed to display successful learning in school.

II. Integration versus Separation of Literacy Activities

The degree of integration of literacy activities in the lives of the children is closely related to the latter theme. Previously cited

examples of name printing and alphabet recognition strongly suggest that the High Print aware children experienced such activities interwoven with other facets of home-based learning, whereas the Low Print aware children were trained in the tasks during formal teaching periods separated from other activities. As the parents described their children's print-related experiences it became clear that this "integration versus separation" pattern related to many of the High and Low Print aware children's literacy activities. It seems consistent that the High Print aware children's parents, who believe in literacy as a lifelong process, are prepared to integrate literacy activities into the everyday worlds of their children, whereas the Low Print aware children's parents, who react to the immediacy presented by the onset of schooling, decide to initiate formal literacy training sessions in order to hurry their children into "reading readiness".

Integration of Literacy: The High Print aware children all experienced print-related activities that were embedded within their home lives. Interestingly, for these children, it is virtually impossible to separate such activities into "writing", "spelling" or "letter recognition" as various print-related foci are integrated within each engagement. Janice, for example, has interrelated interests in writing, spelling orally, letter sounds, and the rhyming patterns of words. Mrs. Wengler explains that Janice has been interested in writing since before she started school. Writing first emerged from Janice's school-play with her friend, June, as writing notes became part of their imaginary play. This note-writing appears to have escalated during the kindergarten year, especially as Janice gained more motor control over her pencil, and felt the communicative need to respond to notes from her mother and her friend. During the year, Janice has increasingly requested that her mother provide

spelling for words:

She likes this hospital study (at school). She wants to write the hospital words. One day she had a paper and, "How do you spell hospital and how do you spell nurse and how do you spell doctor?" So I had to spell (them) for her. (November interview)

Mrs. Wengler sometimes writes requested words for Janice to copy and sometimes spells the letters aloud and Janice writes them down, and then proceeds to copy them out once or twice more. After Christmas, Mrs. Wengler notes that Janice was spelling words aloud more often than writing them down:

She wants to spell words all the time. She doesn't want to write them down so much but she wants to spell them and she'll say, "I know how to spell such-and-such. How do you spell this?" So I'll say, "It says d (sound). What's that letter?" (It's) usually little three letter words. She starts with one she thinks of and then she'll think of all the ones that rhyme with it. (February interview)

Janice's new interest in spelling words aloud, and generalizing from known words to new words, appears to link with her growing interest in the sounds of letters and letter combinations and in rhyming words. Janice, even prior to kindergarten, was picking out letters and associating sounds to them.

I read the (news)paper all the time and she'll come and sit beside me and say, "Those letters say 'da' or those letters say 'o' or 'u' (long sound or letter name)," or whatever she knows. (November interview)

Around Christmas, Janice began picking out words, rather than letters or letter sounds from the newspaper:

I always lie down to read the paper. She'll come when I'm reading. Well, if she's sitting beside me she just points out something and says, "This is what the words says." I say, "Yeah, that's right." (February interview)

Over the course of the study, Mrs. Wengler reports Janice's interest in

rhyming words. Janice started piano lessons in January and Mrs. Wengler reports that her daughter can read all the words to the songs she is learning to play, and is especially interested in the songs that rhyme. Janice listens to the radio, and her mother was surprised in February, when she declared, after hearing a song on CHED:

"I kinda like that song. It's got lots of good rhyming words in it." She said, "A lot of those songs don't have any in." She likes the rhyming words. (February interview)

Mrs. Wengler believes that Janice's interest in rhyming words has really been long-term in that she has always enjoyed books, poems, records and songs that rhyme. Thus, she was not surprised that Janice liked the radio song that rhymed but because, "she hasn't really verbalized it before ...you know, why she liked (a) song" (February interview). In November, Janice's mother suggested that her daughter was vitally interested "in letters", and was "close to being able to read". She also explained that Janice knew "different letters and what they sound like" and had started to "put two letters together and knows what they sound like". By February, Mrs. Wengler explains that Janice was attempting to read everything, the newspaper, words in her environment, notes in her home, the songs related to her piano lessons and books. It is interesting that Mrs. Wengler also describes a decline in Janice's writing at this stage, and an increase in her "spelling aloud" activities. Mrs. Wengler does emphasize that, though her daughter's visual motor integration improved over the first half of the kindergarten year, it was still frustrating for Janice in that, "she couldn't get her pencil to go the right way" (November interview), a variable that may well be linked to her decline in writing. As Janice's knowledge about print escalated rapidly, her fine motor control could not keep pace, and hence she

selected oral modes for displaying her new knowledge.

Trevor's print related interests, other than shared book reading, are linked to writing and to television. Trevor's pre-kindergarten printing seems to have been stimulated by his older brother's interest in writing, i.e. "He watched Clifford doing printing, and he wanted to do it". He sought help from his mother, but he "got bored" with copying the letters she suggested. Mrs. Bronson explains that she then tried a different approach. She waited until her son requested certain letters himself, letters that he wanted for a word or a note, and then she provided the model. She discovered that Trevor learned letter forms more willingly and quite rapidly when he had a personal interest in a particular letter. Mrs. Bronson reports that Trevor is vitally interested in children's television shows and uses the T.V. Guide to plan his viewing. Though now "bored" with Sesame Street, he loves to watch Read Along. On this programme stories are presented with accompanying print. Apparently Trevor joins in and reads the story aloud. In another part of the programme, isolated words in "balloons" are presented and the children are expected to verbalize the words before the "balloons" touch the ground. Trevor loves to name the words. He frequently does so on his own, but also requests his mother's help for unknown words so that he can say them before the television announcer intervenes.

Mark's print activities seem to be closely linked with other activities. During his numerous projects, printing words and sentences are related to his pictures, models and diagrams. Ms. Turner notes that she does not initiate writing activities but that she responds to Mark's requests for help. If Mark requests a model letter or word to copy, then she will provide it. Mark's projects frequently seem interwoven with

content emerging from stories read to him. He makes bookmarks of story characters. He carves ice statues of dinosaurs observed in books. He plays "office" and "Star Wars" and integrates print activities into his imaginary play. His mother suggests that any interest in the sounds of letters emerges from the spontaneous "sound games" that they play, such as verbalizing the sounds of consonants and looking around for objects that start with that sound. Ms. Turner suggests that she believes that Mark's vocabulary has expanded through story reading activities. She has noticed him using "book words" and ideas in conversation and in play.

There is an integration of print activities in the lives of the High Print aware children and an indication that caregivers respond to and expand their children's print-related initiations. There is also an overt indication that these parents do not formally teach print-related skills but rely on incidental strategies. Mark's mother verbalizes that she does not "formally teach" her son. She states that she does not "believe in that ... fat -- cat -- mat -- stuff" (February interview) and declares that preschool workbooks that focus on "initial and final sounds" are "too formal". Janice's mother suggests that she avoids formal teaching.

I've never done really anything consciously because I really didn't want her to be too far ahead when she got to school. A year ago I could have taught her to read if I really wanted to, but I didn't want her to be too far ahead. (February interview)

Fear that Janice would be bored in school if she could read motivated Mrs. Wengler in her decision to avoid formal instruction in print activities. Dual motives made Mrs. Bronson decide to avoid any formal print instruction. She shares Mrs. Wengler's fears that Trevor will be bored if he has an abundance of print knowledge when he enters Grade One. In addition, Trevor himself, has guided his mother into adopting informal

strategies. Trevor was not interested when Mrs. Bronson attempted any formal teaching and hence she has found it more productive to respond to his interests and needs and to provide him with information on print when he requested it.

Separation of Literacy Activities: Information from parent interviews suggests that though print activities are pursued in the homes of the Low Print aware children, they are less integrated into everyday activities than in the High Print aware children's homes. Also such activities are likely to be initiated by the parents rather than the children and frequently dwell on isolated print "skills", e.g. letter sounds or features.

For example, Belinda, in the early part of the kindergarten year, was involved in writing and in letter forms and sounds. These print activities were invariably introduced by her mother. Mrs. Williams notes that she introduced Belinda to a readiness workbook that her daughter pretended was "her homework":

I have these pre-beginner's little books. They've just got little things like to learn how to write your numbers and then there's like the letter "b" with pictures underneath -- and there's like everything that begins with the letter "b" -- and I'll sit down and help her -- and there's a bumble bee and, "Does that start with a b" -- the sound -- and we'll go through all the little pictures and she'll pick out the ones that start with "b" and she'll colour. (November interview)

In March, Belinda was less involved in the workbooks as her mother had ceased to set aside daily time for the activity. Mrs. Williams expressed guilt and said that she would have to start again with the "letters in the (work)book", and, "really get on to reading again". Though, in the intervening months, Belinda had been attempting her own writing, there is no indication that Mrs. Williams supported this activity. In fact she

suggests that she noticed Belinda getting "frustrated" trying to form letters and had seen her resort to "scribbling". It seems that Mrs. Williams considers the workbooks as "real" print practice and Belinda's own writing as "play".

Marvin's print activities also reflect an air of formality. Mr. Hyde notes that, since starting kindergarten, Marvin has developed an interest in "words and letters". Mr. Hyde suggests to Marvin that they both work together to practise printing:

I'll write down a word and then he'll copy it -- like a horse and he'll draw a picture of a horse. He likes letters. He likes seeing how they go together to make different words. (December interview)

The suggestion for writing appears to be initiated by the father:

"Well, I say, "Marvin, do you want to do some letters?" and he'll say, "Yeah". I'll get the paper and write a couple of words and he'll copy them. (December interview)

Marvin has initiated a word-building activity that seems to have emerged from his interest in letters.

He's got cards with pictures on them -- like through the alphabet -- like "B" -- they'll be a picture of a boat and on the back they'll be three or four other words starting with a "B". He likes those. He brought them to school one day, I guess, and the teacher was telling me that he took the cards and went over to the feltboard and he made the words on the board. (December interview)

Marvin thus works with words suggested by his father or outlined on his alphabet cards. Mr. Hyde does not suggest that Marvin, himself, has requested his own words to copy.

Janette's mother notes that her daughter did not express any interest in writing before she started kindergarten, but over the last months she has demonstrated both an interest in print and in requesting her mother's involvement in print activities.

She has become interested -- now that they've been in school. Every night she asks me to write something for her and then she writes. That's fairly new -- I'd say in the last month. (November interview)

Janette has requested help with writing her name, address and telephone number and more recently with writing sentences about special events in her life. The former three activities are directly linked to school expectations though the latter may offer some prospect for integrating written language with Janette's world experiences.

It does seem that the Low Print aware children were less exposed to print activities in preschool years than the High Print aware children. It also seems clear that the High Print aware children, over the course of the study, experienced literacy activities that were interwoven into their home lives, and were attempting to integrate school-based knowledge into home-based learning. For the Low Print aware children, the kindergarten programme activated their parents into providing print activities at home, though such tasks appeared to be somewhat formal and separate from their other learning experiences.

III New Supplies of Books and Stable Collections

The six parents all report that their children have personal supplies of home-based books and, in addition, each child's collection is supplemented by the daily library books from the kindergarten classroom. The major difference between the homes of the High and Low Print aware children is that the former contexts provide an ongoing supply of new materials whereas the latter rely almost exclusively on the children's personal collections and on the kindergarten books that are brought home.

The High Print aware children have opportunities to explore a wide range of printed materials, for their parents actively seek new books for

them. Janice appears to have rich resources of books. She has a large collection of home-based books, such as the Sesame Street readers and Dr. Seuss books, bought by her parents or given as gifts by friends and relatives. She visits the public library and in addition her mother brings home books from her own school library. Mark also seems to have his own collection of storybooks and informational texts, and these are supplemented by public library books and books that his mother selects from the library at the school where she teaches. Mark also has his aunt's and uncle's book selections that he frequently utilizes. Trevor has a home-based collection of books that he shares with his older brother. His family does not visit the public library, but he often requests that his brother's school library books are read to him. His parents subscribe to a children's bookclub and new storybooks arrive monthly. Recently they have joined a new bookclub that supplies children's informational texts focusing on natural science themes. The family also has a collection of books and tapes at home. They often order video cassettes that match the books and tapes, for example "Pete's Dragon" and "The Return of the Jedi".

The Low Print aware children, although having access to relatively large personal collections, seem to have limited opportunities to explore new books. Janette's mother notes that they have a collection of both English and German storybooks at home, though they do not visit the public library or subscribe to children's bookclubs. On occasions during Janette's preschool years they have subscribed to "Highlights", a children's magazine. Belinda's mother explains that they have "about a hundred books" at home (March interview), largely collected when her son was younger. This collection includes, "little children's encyclopedias"

and sets of books on themes, "like eight books on Pollyanna or Raggedy Ann or something" (February interview). The family used to subscribe to a children's bookclub but cancelled their order when duplicate books began to arrive. Marvin's father describes a collection of "about sixty to seventy books" in their home (December interview). The family does not visit the library, nor do they have subscriptions to magazines or bookclubs.

Thus, in the High Print aware children's homes there are stable book collections but, in addition, new books are constantly introduced into the family contexts. In Janette's, Belinda's and Marvin's cases, the book flow is not as obvious. At the beginning of the study, these children largely depended on their present stock of home-based books and had few resources for obtaining new materials. It is conceivable that Belinda's book world may expand if her mother continues to adopt Mrs. Compton's suggestion (February) to visit the public library. In general, however, these Low Print aware children's only new print supplies were obtained from the kindergarten library programme, whereas for the High Print aware children the school book programme added a supplementary resource for new books. It is interesting to consider the hidden messages that may be transmitted to the children concerning a supply, or lack of supply, of new print materials. All the families have time constraints in that their family lives are pressured, and all have some degree of economic stress. Within these constraints, two out of three of the High Print aware children are taken to the local library and the third child has regular subscriptions to a bookclub. It may be suggested that, by spending time or money on locating new print materials, these families are implicitly demonstrating to their children that books are important and worthy of being priorities even when the family units are under pressure.

IV Long Term, Short Term, or No Favourite Books

In this study, differences between the High and Low Print aware children were noted in terms of their favourite books. The Low Print aware children's parents did not describe, in any detail, trends in Janette's, Marvin's or Belinda's book choices, though the parents of the High Print aware children described Janice's, Mark's and Trevor's preferred books at some length.

The parents of the Low Print aware children largely suggest that their children have no well-defined favourite books that they select for re-reading. Marvin's father notes that his son likes all kinds of books and in fact, "doesn't dislike" (December interview) any of them. Janette's mother suggests that she has not "really noticed" (November interview) if her daughter has any favourite storybooks, possibly as Janette's older brother is her regular story reader. She has only noticed Janette asking for the re-reading of one story, "The Three Billy Goats Gruff", a book that Mrs. Gearhardt read to the children with "all the sound effects" of different "tramping sounds as each animal crossed over the bridge". Janette does have a favourite taped story, "Heidi", though the cassette has no accompanying storybook. Belinda's mother notes that her daughter "picks all different" (November interview) books each day. She recalls that Belinda did have one favourite story at home, but was unable to remember many story details:

It had to do with a little girl dancing and stuff.
I thought it was kind of cute. (November interview)

In contrast, the parents of the High Print aware children report that their children have definite book preferences. Interestingly these parents also recount in detail the stories they have read and re-read to their children. Janice and Trevor appear to have two types of favourite

books, i.e. long term and short term favourites, whereas Mark has only short term favourites. Long term favourites are books from personal collections or from libraries that are read and re-read on countless occasions and eventually become texts that the children memorize. Short term favourites are books that support current interests of the children, and are selected from the ongoing supply of new books that flow into the High Print aware children's homes.

Janice's long term favourites include library books that she selects and re-selects, e.g. John Burningham's "Shirley" books, and books from her home collection, e.g. "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr. Seuss. Mrs. Wengler suggests that such long term favourites are created for three reasons. Firstly, Janice likes to re-read books when the main character has "got a good imagination" (February interview), and where she can picture herself in the story. Secondly, she loves books with rhythmic language and with rhyming words and quickly memorizes the poems from "Alligator Pie" and the key lines from Dr. Seuss books. Rhymes from these books also become fuel for verbal rhyming games Janice enjoys playing, and for spelling words that she requests from her mother. Thirdly, Janice selects books for constant re-reading that she knows her mother also enjoys. When Mrs. Wengler describes Janice's favourite stories she frequently comments, "we like that one" and suggests, "as long as I seem to enjoy it she'll like it" (November interview). Shared enjoyment with the story reader thus provides Janice with a clear reason for re-selecting a book. Mrs. Bronson suggests very similar reasons for Trevor's establishment of long term favourite books. Trevor, like Janice, enjoys identifying with the main character and "Blueberries for Sal" is a perennial favourite as Trevor is "a blueberry fiend" (November interview). "Cricter", the story

of a boa constrictor, was also a favourite book for Trevor over the entire course of the study, because his mother notes, he "likes snakes". The rhyming patterns, the rhythmic language and the humorous absurdities in the Dr. Seuss books attract Trevor as they engage Janice. Both children memorized Dr. Seuss books over the course of the research. It is interesting to note that whereas Janice and Trevor established long term favourite books prior to, and during, the study, Mark was not described as having any hard-core favourite books that he constantly requested being re-read, and that he memorized. It may be suggested that the establishment of long term favourites requires willing and regular story reading sessions. Clearly Janice and Trevor experienced consistent storybook engagements with primary caregivers over the course of the study. Mark's storybook reading with his mother declined in the post-Christmas period (February interview) and hence from late December to the beginning of March he had limited access to shared book experiences at home. It may also be suggested that Mark had different purposes than Janice and Trevor, in selecting books for sharing with his caregiver. Mark enjoyed books that provided new information and hence was intrinsically less likely to choose texts for constant re-reading.

All three of the High Print aware children are described, by their parents, as having short term favourite books that supported current interests. These books frequently related to school-based topics or to personal projects and hobbies. For example, during January's Winnie the Pooh theme at school, a Winnie the Pooh storybook, given by an aunt as a Christmas gift, was Janice's short term favourite book. In February, Mrs. Wengler brought dinosaur books home from her school library and Janice requested that these books should be read nightly. In this case,

the kindergarten dinosaur theme infected Janice's interest and her mother, in responding to this interest and in providing relevant reading materials, created a situation for the establishment of short term favourite books. Trevor's long term favourite book, "CriCTOR", provided impetus for him to investigate books on snakes. The family's new natural science books were short term favourites for the duration of this personal interest. In February, with the dinosaur theme at school, Trevor "connected" with the topic and went "through all of his books" (February interview) to find dinosaur-related materials. Again, these materials became "favoured" for the time period of his interest span. At the end of February, Mrs. Bronson noted that Trevor had a new type of favourite book, namely one that he could read by himself. He started to read books from home and from the kindergarten library collection that had "got colours in and things like that", as he could reconstruct the print messages with independence. During the research period, Mark had a vast range of short term favourite books that related to his current interests. Ms. Turner suggests that Mark "collects books together in binges" (February interview), and over six months he amassed collections thematically related to bugs, bats, mice, dinosaurs, Winnie the Pooh, Star Wars, planets and pregnancy. During the time of his interest, Mark asked for repeated re-readings of key books, such as "The Little Brown Bat" during his bag investigation and "Frederick" during his mouse project. It is difficult to know whether such books remained short term favourites due to Mark's desire to move on to new topics, or whether they could have become long term favourites had his mother continued to read regularly to him over the six months of the study.

Thus, in the High Print aware children's homes there seem to be

qualitative, interactive variables that are related to the establishment of favourite books. Janice's and Trevor's attachment to long term favourite books may be linked to parental interest in storybook content, regular shared book engagements with primary caregivers, parental willingness to re-read stories, and to the children's self-identification with storybook characters and their own growing interest in the rhythmic quality of written language. In the latter case, access to rhyming, rhythmic and predictable books seems important, for both children quickly memorized such texts. Memorization of text seems intimately related to emerging self-regulation in reading (Clay, 1979a; Doake, 1981; Holdaway, 1979). The establishment of short term favourites seems to be related to parental sensitivity to children's concerns, in that the High Print aware children's parents provided access to a flow of new materials that developed their children's thirsts for information on current topics of interest. This type of sensitivity embodies a "transcendent" quality (Feuerstein et al, 1980) wherein the parents of the High Print aware children stimulated their children to link their interests to the world of written language.

In the Low Print aware children's homes, it seems less likely that these children experience the type of literacy context that fosters the establishment of favourite books. Although the parents describe regular story reading sessions at home, this regularity seemed to be a pattern established only after the birth of the kindergarten library programme in October. Even then, Marvin and Janette received few storybook interactions with primary caregivers, but with babysitters (Marvin) and an older brother (Janette). With all three parents there is little evidence of their active interest in storybook content, as rarely could they recall

titles or details from books they had read to their children. Also, with such a limited flow of new materials entering the Low Print aware children's homes, short term favourite books did not seem to be established, presumably as the relatively stable home collections could not be expected to support a range of current interests.

V Storybook Interactions: Co-operative Dialogue and Sitting and Listening

Co-operative Dialogue: High Print Aware Children's Storybook

Experiences: Janice's mother provides a wealth of details concerning their shared story sessions. She suggests that her daughter almost always initiates the storybook reading. Often she returns home from kindergarten and her mother reads the library book immediately as Janice is asking, "What does it say?" Though Janice prefers to have her new story read "right now" (November interview), Mrs. Wengler explains that she will wait until after supper if her mother is busy. Usually the school book is read first and then Janice will ask, "Can I have one of my own tonight?" Mrs. Wengler suggests that Janice "usually picks" the books for her mother to read, and they often share books by lying down together on the sofa or on Janice's bed. Janice is described as liking to "spend time" in storybook interactions.

What she really likes to do if we have lots of time -- she has this series of Sesame Street books and if we have lots of time she likes to read those because they take lots of time ... (November interview)

It seems that Janice and her mother first overview a new book together, i.e. "Well, first time through we try to talk about the pictures and what's going on" (November interview). The second time through the book, Janice's mother "reads the words", talks about events and responds to her

daughter's questions. Mrs. Wengler notes that she sometimes tries to avoid the discussion if she is "in a hurry", and focuses on just "read(ing) the words", though she rarely does this as Janice "doesn't like that as well" (November interview) and verbally objects to hurrying through a book. Mrs. Wengler explains that she and Janice frequently laugh together when the story is amusing and they often talk about the story afterwards, for example, "Well that was a funny book. What was funny about it?" (November interview). There appears to be a feeling of warmth, closeness and responsive sharing during the storybook interactions. Mrs. Wengler responds to Janice's questions and concerns and is sensitive to her daughter's ability to make sense from a story. She provides one example of a school library book that was too difficult for Janice, and explains how she modified the storybook session to ensure that her daughter benefitted from the experience and was able to display competence:

There was one book that she brought home that had too much in it. It had some good pictures and we talked about them. It was about heavy machinery. It had a truck in it and I think that's why she brought it -- her Dad's a truck driver. There was just too much technical stuff in it for us to read it all so we just looked at the pictures and talked about them. (November interview)

Mrs. Wengler notes that Janice has started, since the beginning of the school year, to utilize certain strategies that she has encouraged. During storybook reading Janice has asked her mother to point to certain words, firstly in the title:

She'll ask me to do that -- especially on the title. She wants to know what the title says and all the words in the title. I haven't started doing that in the context of the book or I'd be doing that all the time, I'm sure. (November interview)

By February, Janice had begun to ask for words in the context of the story and had started to point to, and identify, words that she knew:

She'll say, "How come that says up to?" You know, she's picked it out ahead and I'll say, "Wait till we get to that -- then you'll see". (February interview)

Mrs. Wengler noticed that Janice began to pick out words consistently, when she had listened to repeated re-readings of a Winnie the Pooh storybook she received as a Christmas gift.

Well, with the Winnie the Pooh book that was really the first time she began picking out -- "Well this word says that -- What does this word say?" and the names of the different characters -- she could pick them out. (February interview)

By February also, Janice started requesting that she and her mother take turns reading pages, i.e. "I'll read one page and she'll try and read another". By this stage, Mrs. Wengler was aware that Janice was beginning to read with some degree of independence. She had started to read notes from her friend, June, and notes that her mother left for her in the mornings, e.g. "Ask Daddy to fix the zipper on your blue coat", as well as several storybooks. If Janice does not know certain words then her parents immediately supply them. It seems that they do not correct any miscues that Janice makes in her oral reconstruction of texts.

She still doesn't have much word attack -- it still has to be pretty much from memory. She gets a lot from context -- like what the pictures are and especially if she's read the book before -- like sometimes she won't say the right words but we don't worry about that too much. (February interview)

Mrs. Wengler notes that they are "uncritical" about exact wording, and believe that Janice will develop more exactitude "in Grade One next year". As Janice has started to utilize increasing portions of the shared book sessions as times to demonstrate her own reading ability she "is not as interested in the same book over again" (February interview). Janice has, by the end of February, become more interested in reading new books, rather than requesting repeated re-readings of favourite stories. At

this stage Janice started to become increasingly "disgusted" with her older brother's re-reading of stories, for his practice of "chang(ing) the words" to make "a silly story" irritated Janice.

Trevor enjoys the same sense of close sharing in the storybook interactions with his father. Mrs. Bronson notes that her husband "enjoys" the sessions and this sense of pleasure seems to be transferred to the children. In the November interview she provided few details concerning the qualities embedded in these interactions, noting:

He'll (father) read it along and then he'll ask them (Trevor and Clifford) sometimes -- you know -- what's in the picture. He uses different voices -- All I know is -- he enjoys doing it.

Mrs. Bronson suggests that Trevor usually selects the books, i.e. "He usually goes and digs them out himself" and was so persistent about his father reading to him, i.e. "Daddy, when are we reading the book?" (November interview) that a time was allocated for story reading prior to bedtime.

Mr. Bronson appears to support Trevor when he chooses to listen to stories and tapes.

He'd get his Dad to sit with him and he'd say the words he knew and his Dad read the words he didn't know. (November interview)

By February, Mrs. Bronson notes that Trevor was beginning to read some words and texts on his own. She had used a strategy to encourage his participation and also to check on his word recognition ability:

Well, he has been picking up words. I've noticed if I've been reading a book to him -- if I sometimes skip a word, just to see, he knows. (February interview)

She also explains that Trevor, like Janice, becomes annoyed if the text is changed, namely, "he wants it really exactly" (February interview).

Mrs. Bronson also describes Trevor selecting books that "he'll be reading

to her. If Trevor does not know a word in the text he will look up and his mother notes, "I just tell him what it says and then he repeats it again -- what I said to him" (February interview). Again, as with Janice, these parents support their child's increasing independence and are uncritical of Trevor's contributions, though as with Mrs. Wengler, Mrs. Bronson notes that greater exactitude in text reconstruction is expected in Grade One. She then wants Trevor to learn "the proper sounds" (February interview).

Mrs. Bronson suggests that engineering shared storybook reading has been somewhat problematic in the last few months as the older brother increasingly wants to read Trevor's stories aloud himself, during the sessions. The parents have discussed this and have worked out certain strategies:

They both want to read the book (Trevor's library book) but Clifford doesn't want somebody reading 'cos he says, "I know how to read it already", so we let him read it to Trevor. It isn't that often that Cliff wants to sit down and read Trevor's book -- but if he does, one of us sits in the middle and the two of them -- one either side -- and we turn the pages and Cliff reads. (February interview)

Hence, if the older brother decides he wants to read the book one of the parents remains involved in the session. Also, the parents respect Trevor's requests that they, and not his brother, read stories to him.

Trevor says, "I don't want Clifford reading. I want you to read it to me. So I'll read it to him and if Cliff doesn't like that we tell him he can read the book after. (February interview)

Thus, it appears that the parents are sensitive to Trevor's needs during storybook reading.

For both Janice and Trevor the parents provide the major storybook interactions, and the sessions are conducted as warm interactions wherein

the parents display flexibility and sensitivity to their children's needs and requests. For both children there is a sense of uncritical acceptance of their growing attempts in reconstructing texts and supportive strategies utilized to stimulate print learning: Such strategies include supplying words at the children's requests, "skipping" words and encouraging the child's monitoring and corrections, the acceptance of turn-taking in reading, and response to the child's comments on text, pictures or style preference in reading stories. In addition, the child's "picking-out" of words in context is accepted and valued.

Though, as pointed out previously, Mark's shared storybook sessions with his mother were less frequent in the second half of the study, when they did occur, the same degree of warm involvement was described by Ms. Turner:

Usually well -- he's in bed and he's kind of sitting beside me. I'm probably about lying down on the bed beside him or sitting on the couch and I'll put my arm around him -- cuddle him up and read the book.
(November interview)

Mark's mother, like Janice's mother, demonstrates interest in the content of Mark's stories. She suggests, "I would say that I'm interested and enthusiastic when I'm reading most of the time" (November interview).

Ms. Turner explains that she does not ask "formal" questions about the story.

I don't formally (ask questions) but I suppose I do just as a matter of course or like with that bat book I'd say, "Say do you think that looks like a mouse?" or "It says it looks like a mouse" or "Did you ever see one?" or "What do you think those kids are looking at?" I suppose I do it even unconsciously. (November interview)

Ms. Turner suggests that more frequently she responds to Mark's story-related questions:

I'd say he'd be the one. I respond to him. He's very interested in what he's reading about. He notices

little bits and pieces on the picture, like, "Ooh how come her boots are off?" -- so more or less I think I'm probably answering his questions more than asking them. (November interview)

In a similar manner to Janice and Trevor, Mark is insistent in his demands for storybooks to be read to him. Ms. Turner says that Mark invariably brings a book to her.

I'm usually saying, "Yeah, just a minute. I'm too busy -- just wait! -- I will! -- I will!"

Mark's insistence declined in the post-Christmas period possibly, as Ms. Turner suggests (February interview), because she has not been able to fulfil Mark's requests and he may have stopped asking. However, in the February interview, Ms. Turner does note that Mark has been pointing out words in the text of a story and asking what they are. Ms. Turner suggests that Mark is following the print quite carefully and she runs her hand, left to right, under the lines of print "the odd time" to bring his attention to it. Ms. Turner explains that Mark was not picking out many of the words in his stories in November and hence she started to point to words to focus his attention on the print:

I've started -- trying -- "This says" (points with finger to a spot on the table) -- you know -- I'll explain each one (points left to right along an imaginary line of print on the table) and point to them -- in other words -- say the sentence -- "This" and I'll point, "This is the word 'this' and this says 'name' and this says 'Robbie'" (points on the table). (November interview)

In February, in addition to picking out occasional words in the text, Mark had started to "pick out beginning consonants" in words. Ms. Turner suggests that this started because she and Mark "play silly games -- like p-p-p (letter sound). What starts with p (sound)?", and they take turns with various letters. Thus, though the storybook interactions occurred less frequently for Mark, than for Janice or Trevor, the data

suggests that strategies were utilized when story reading did happen.

It also suggests that Mark, like Janice and Trevor, initiated shared book interactions, though his initiations seemed to decline when they did not result in promoting the desired outcome. When story reading did occur, Ms. Turner, in a similar manner to Mrs. Wengler and Mr. and Mrs. Bronson, conducted incidental teaching episodes within a warm, shared engagement and was responsive to expanding her son's interests.

Sitting and Listening: Low Print Aware Children's Storybook

Experiences: Unfortunately, far less data is available on the Low Print aware children's story reading interactions. Though the same areas were probed, the three parents interviewed frequently "hadn't noticed" (Janette's mother) or "didn't know" (Belinda's mother and Marvin's father) what occurred during storybook sessions. In Janette's and Marvin's cases, their parents "don't know" was possibly a reflection of the fact that they were not present, or at the margin of the storybook interaction, when the story was read. In Janette's case, her older brother read her daily story and the mother served in a supervisory role. Babysitters most frequently read Marvin's story when Mr. Hyde was at work. Belinda's mother served as the primary story reader for her daughter but seemed to have minimal metacognitive awareness of her actions or Belinda's role in the engagement. Some details are available from the interview data that provide glimpses into the home-based story reading interactions experienced by the Low Print aware children.

There appears to be a formal structure to Janette's daily storybook interactions with her older brother. Janette and Michael enact a ritual of pre-formulated expectations. Janette is expected to bring home her library book, daily. Michael, "usually as soon as he comes home from

school -- looks at her book -- and reads it" (February interview).

Thus, Michael practises reading the book and, immediately before or after the evening meal, reads it aloud to Janette and the younger brother, Hans.

One sits on either side. Then he reads. She's very interested in it and wants him to read it to her. Usually I don't have time to read it so I have him and I think that's very good for him. That way he practises his reading and they all -- sit and listen. (November interview)

"Sitting and listening" is required of Janette, though Hans who has not yet learned English is permitted to wander away as he loses interest.

Janette appears "interested" in the story though it seems that the engagement focuses on reading the text rather than on aspects of interactive questioning and discussion. Though Michael is Janette's primary story reader, the parents do occasionally read her a story themselves, although they appear to initiate the event. The only time the mother mentions Janette self-initiating a story reading session is when Mrs. Gearhardt's aunt babysits on a Friday night. Then Janette has a book ready for her relative to read to her.

Marvin's father acknowledges that he is not aware of the story reading strategies utilized by babysitters. However, when he reads Marvin's library book:

I usually tell him to bring his book and we'll read it. He just likes to sit and listen. I usually ask questions. We'll look at the pictures and I'll ask what he thinks they might be doing -- nothing too complicated. (December interview)

This brief passage does demonstrate that the father principally initiates the story reading and that Marvin's role is somewhat passive. Father does ask questions but appears to focus on the pictures rather than on any message conveyed by the print.

Belinda's mother suggests that she just "usually reads" her daughter's

library books. However, she does indicate that she has changed her style since the school library workshop. At this session the school librarian demonstrated storybook reading strategies and Mrs. Williams has incorporated several into her story reading engagements with Belinda.

We usually read it -- then sometimes she wants to pretend she's reading so I'll sit there after and she'll tell me the story -- (and) we talk about it. Before, basically I read the story to her and we looked at the pictures but she really didn't have her eye on the story. If there's a book with something repeated a bunch of times -- I'll have Belinda join in now. I never did before. Now what she likes -- she likes me to read the page and then she likes to take it and try to read it back and see if she can get all the words right.
(February interview)

Thus, in the post-library workshop period Mrs. Williams attempted to change rather passive storybook interactions into events where Belinda could participate and "join in".

In the brief data on the Low Print aware children's book interactions it may be misleading to attempt to generate any major strands or patterns. The co-operative, warm interactions with accompanying informal strategies so apparent in the High Print children's data is largely unavailable by omission from the Low Print data. I would suggest that the sparse data on story reading in the Low Print interviews does seem to indicate a rather functional quality to the Low Print aware children's storybook experiences. Each of the High Print aware children's parents mentioned enjoyment and pleasure as integral parts of book engagements and each mentioned their child's initiations and their own responsiveness in considering the child's contributions. Each parent was also able to recall strategies they utilized to provide a framework to support their child's emergence into reading. The storybook interactions of the High Print children and their parents seemed sensitively "co-authored" with

the caregiver's provision of a mediational bridge between the text and the child. This type of interpretational "co-authoring" is not a focus in the Low Print children's book experiences, at least in the verbal reconstructions of these engagements offered by the parents. Janette's storybook interactions contain the element of "a reading performance" for the older brother and "a time to listen" for Janette. It is difficult to conceive of an eight year old boy being able to provide the richness of interaction that a mature caregiver may be able to provide. It is unlikely that he was able to provide the print focusing strategies, and the strategies that linked story content to the child's world in a manner that emulated Janice's, Trevor's and Mark's parents. In Marvin's case, Mr. Hyde's descriptions indicate that Marvin played a somewhat passive role in the engagements and that "nothing too complicated" was expected from him. Belinda's early story reading experiences seemed similarly non-interactive, with the mother playing the key role and Belinda only expected to follow the pictures. However, it appears that there may have been a considerable change in the mother's strategies following the library orientation, for then Belinda was encouraged to take a more active role in the story reading sessions.

Expectations: Bridges from the Home to the Community and School.

In the preschool years, the child's world grows from the nucleus of the family to encompass the larger social spheres of the community. As the child moves into the social world, the parents structure and guide his or her emergence. In this structuring of the child's new experiences, the parents, themselves, are guided by networks of internal expectations and linking intentions. The parents in this study reveal expectations concerning their children's behaviour, religious beliefs, socialization

patterns and education. These expectations may be viewed as hidden messages that are implicitly transmitted to the children. For example, Belinda, in the fourth summer of her life, was overtly instructed in road safety and permitted, "to play out front and -- go visit the neighbours" (November interview). Implicitly the message was transmitted to Belinda that increased freedom requires attendant responsibility. All the parents similarly describe how they verbally transmit limits and structures to their children, though none, quite naturally, describes their underlying messages. Mrs. Wengler notes that she is "unconscious" of the incidental literacy teaching strategies she utilizes with Janice. That she focuses on so many print activities in her interactions with her daughter, transmits the underlying message that she considers literacy important. It may be suggested that Janice "hears" both messages, namely the surface content focusing on print, and the hidden message that print is important in her life. Thus, as the children enter kindergarten, into an ever-broadening world of experience, they carry with them the overt messages from home and the hidden expectations.

During the course of the interviews the parents' expectations of the kindergarten year were investigated, as these hidden messages are viewed as potentially influential on the lives of the children. Interestingly, all the parents view the expansion of the child's world into formal schooling, with some ambivalence. All consider the kindergarten experience as valuable, and yet all have concerns or even trepidation about the year, even though five out of the six parents have older children who had attended kindergarten.

All of the parents expect that the kindergarten will provide a transitional year between preschool experiences and the formal world of

schooling. They all hope that the children will acquire school-socialized behaviour and learn the organizational patterns of the classroom, appropriate work habits and suitable socio-communicative styles for interactions with teachers and peers. Trevor's mother hopes that her son will "get to play with other kids more or less his own age -- so he'd get used to school" (November interview). Janice's mother expects that her daughter will "learn the organization of the school and how to behave in a class situation" (November interview). Mark's mother hopes that kindergarten will prepare her son for the "awful shock" of Grade One when:

All of a sudden you're supposed to sit down and get your math book out and go ahead and do your math when, "Oh, I feel like colouring right now", so I think that the kindergarten eases the children into that -- like (it) doesn't have the structure that a Grade One class does but it has some structure so the children are getting used to the idea and will be more ready for Grade One. (November interview)

Janette's mother also expects that kindergarten will prepare Janette for Grade One, "when they get down to more serious work". She anticipates that Janette will learn to "sit for that long and be quiet and pay attention to what's being told -- and (get) into a routine of like, 'I have to do this'" (November interview). Marvin's father also hopes that kindergarten will help Marvin to prepare for Grade One which he considers is "probably the heaviest year in school -- to go from total freedom to total schooling". He notes that such a transition "is a big job" and, "it's very hard on a kid". Even though babysitting arrangements have been difficult to arrange, Mr. Hyde did not consider keeping Marvin out of kindergarten as he expects that this year will "get (him) into the discipline frame of school". Belinda's mother hopes that kindergarten will stimulate her daughter's social maturity and make her more willing to risk communication with teachers and other adults. She anticipates

that the year should provide Belinda with good grounding for Grade One.

For all the parents, "Grade One" looms like a mountain to be climbed or a challenge to be overcome in the lives of their children. It has an overwhelming centrality in the parents' expectations, their hopes and fears, and the kindergarten year is viewed as the training ground for the Olympic event, namely "passing" Grade One. However, the trepidations of the parents, although focusing on the Grade One event, emerge from different sources. Trevor's and Janice's mothers are concerned that their children will know too much for Grade One. They fear that their children will be reading before Grade One entrance and hence "be bored" with the programme. To dampen Trevor's rapidly growing literacy development Mrs. Bronson has deliberately avoided adopting any of Mrs. Compton's suggestions about stimulating Trevor's word recognition ability, "because then he'd be further ahead of the Grade One stuff in reading" (February interview). Janice's mother has also constrained her print interactions with her daughter and avoided "teaching" her to read as Mrs. Wengler, "really didn't want her to be too far ahead when she got to school" (February interview). As both Janice and Trevor were beginning to read independently by the end of February, parental fears were being realized, and in spite of some attempts to limit literacy teaching both parents were unable to stem the tide of their children's literacy learning. By that stage, Mrs. Wengler and Mrs. Bronson independently decided that they were going to request that Janice and Trevor be placed in a split Grade One-Two class in the fall. Personal boredom, the parents considered, may be alleviated if their children could tune in to aspects of the Grade Two programme, after they had completed the Grade One curriculum. Mark's mother is concerned about Grade One for different reasons. She is worried

that Mark may not be able to accept all the "worksheets and formal things in Grade One" (November interview), and the high degree of structure in the Grade One day, after his experiences with self-initiated activities in the daycare centre. She hopes the "formality" of kindergarten will form a transition from self-selected learning to being able to follow teacher-directed tasks. Marvin's father hopes for a similar transitional experience for his son, in the movement from the "freedom" of home to the tight structure and order of public schooling. The kindergarten year should provide Marvin with the "discipline" necessary to make this change. Janette's mother fears that her daughter has some learning gaps and that, as she "didn't have time to sit down with her" and teach her letters and numbers, the kindergarten will fill these gaps. Belinda's mother has similar fears, and is already concerned that her daughter will fail kindergarten or Grade One. She believes that Belinda, as one of the youngest children in the class, may not be able to "keep up with them in reading and stuff" (March interview). She hopes "she's not going to start falling back and finding it really hard to keep up with the pace of the rest of the class" (November interview). Mrs. Williams, by March, is really concerned that Belinda will fail the year. She does not want her to go into a Readiness Room in the fall, "where she does Grade One in two years", as she has seen neighbours' children in such a programme, "and it hasn't helped". "They're in Grade Three and Four now and still having problems learning at school." Thus, it seems that all the parents expect the kindergarten programme to offer a bridge between home experiences and the "serious work" of formal schooling. This bridge seems somewhat shaky and overwhelmed with multiple expectations, for it has to offer a programme that is "just right" for each child to benefit from the major

event, Grade One.

All the parents mention some degree of literacy expectations from the kindergarten programme. However, Mark's, Trevor's and Janice's parental expectations seem rather global in that they expect to be involved in the school book programme and anticipate that their children's "interest" in print will be enhanced during the course of the year. Belinda's, Janette's and Marvin's parental expectations encompass the global anticipations of the High Print aware children's parents, but also include specific print expectations. Each of the Low Print aware children's parents expect their child to learn the alphabet and how to print during the year. Janette's mother suggests, "I think they learn a tremendous amount in kindergarten -- the writing, the printing, the alphabet and the counting" (November interview). Marvin's father anticipates that his son will learn "just the basics you know -- like learn the alphabet" (December interview). The following extract between the teacher aide and Belinda's mother illustrates Mrs. Williams' literacy expectations and her surprise that these are not being fulfilled:

Mrs. Williams: So they don't learn to print letters and numbers. My son went to St. Alfred's kindergarten. They had desks for that -- I wondered when I saw the tables (in the classroom).

Aide: Well, over the year they learn to recognize and print letters and numbers but we don't push it. We have two children in the morning class who write their own stories now.

Mrs. Williams: Oh! Don't they learn the alphabet?

Aide: Well, we don't actually teach it. By the end of the year they seem to know it. Last year we only had two or three children who didn't.

Mrs. Williams: So really this is only like playschool, isn't it?

Aide: Well, we try to develop things from playschool. We don't push things.

Mrs. Williams: (Does not verbally respond. Raises her eyebrows in surprise.) (From Fieldnotes: November 10th)

Thus, it seems that parents have expectations about schooling in

general and about literacy development in particular. These expectations are interwoven into home interactions and implicitly transmitted to the children. The children and parents carry these expectations into the community, school and kindergarten classroom. It is conceivable that expectations from home may contrast with expectations of the other contexts experienced by the children. It also appears that the kindergarten year serves as a bridge between home and community life and "real" school life, marked by the transition into the Grade One classroom. As Janice, Trevor, Mark, Janette, Belinda and Marvin tread over the bridge between home and formal schooling it is now imperative that we walk in their footsteps and investigate the literacy experiences offered by the expanded worlds of the community, school and classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COMMUNITY, SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM:

LITERACY LEARNING CONTEXTS

The Community

Skipton Estates is a multiracial, high density housing district in Edmonton. Although it is part of the urban area, residents frequently describe the rest of Edmonton as "the city", implying that they perceive that they have a separate identity, not quite integrated into the urban whole. Possibly, their "sense of separateness" has arisen from long standing disputes with City Hall wherein Skipton Estates' residents have sought to obtain local facilities. Certainly the area has mushroomed in population over the last decade and farmland has rapidly given way to lines of single-family dwellings, townhouses and apartment complexes. The provision of such accommodation has triumphed over the establishment of communal resources for the residents in that recreational, educational and medical centres have been slow in emerging to serve local needs. Though the dearth of such facilities has always been resented, the active and creative petitioning for resources may indeed have promoted "the sense of local community" that was mentioned by many of my informants, during the course of the study. Though Skipton Estates is multi-ethnic in population, the fervour to establish schools and needed community resources has provided a unifying outlet for joint energy. For example, over the years a network of small community agencies has joined forces and been instrumentally involved in the emergence of a new recreational centre, providing library services and sports facilities for resident use.

Within the larger district, small communities are jigsawed together. Malham is one such community and the residential area in which Janice, Trevor, Belinda, Janette and Marvin live. Although Mark lives in the adjacent Gargrave community, he goes to a babysitter and attends school in the Malham area. This sub-community is one of the older areas, but is typical of many of the small communities in Skipton Estates in that its needs are served by the local elementary school and a cluster of neighbourhood stores and fast food outlets. Malham Elementary School is the "heart" of the community and within its environs the major non-commercial facilities for the neighbourhood are provided. In the school grounds stands the local community hall, an ice arena and the only close children's play area. The building supplies a meeting place for group sports and educational pursuits. Like a prairie school in the past, Malham School in the present is the centre of community life. For the five children who live in Malham community, the school provides a natural expansion of their home worlds. Several of the parents noted that the logical extension of play areas, outlined for their children, was the movement from playing in the street to "going only as far as the school" (Trevor's mother, November interview). Thus, for these children, the school was both a focal point and "a safe place to be" in the community prior to kindergarten entrance.

The Community's Literacy Context

The Environmental Print Task utilized in this study, taps the print resources available for the children in Malham community and the larger geographic area surrounding this neighbourhood. In Malham itself there is a limited fund of environmental print. The "permanent" local print is provided by the street and traffic signs, bus stops, mailboxes, newspaper

vending machines, the school and community hall signs, and the wooden boards announcing housing complexes. "Semi-permanent" print is found in the small shopping centre, though two businesses changed during the study lending an air of change to the commercial print the children were exposed to in the neighbourhood. The limited "temporary" print in the community may be related to a scattering of "House for Sale" signs and the brief proliferation of political posters that emerged during the City elections.

In the larger Skipton Estates' district, environmental print appeared constrained to public signs in the residential areas, and commonly exploded into a dense forest of advertizing in the shopping areas. Portable signs were the most common and these bright yellow boards winked from every corner, parking lot and grass verge. The spellings on these signs had an individualistic quality. For example, four signs clustered together on a busy commercial street announced, one week in February:

Valintine's Dance
 Vallentines Lunch
 Valantine's Special
 Sun taning studio special

Semi-permanent neon signs were strewn down main consumer thoroughfares, announcing restaurants, stores, gas stations and car dealerships.

Although the main outlets retained their neon identities during the six months of the study, there was a noticeable change in the signs of the smaller stores as businesses changed hands. Thus, on the Environmental Print Task, an emphasis was placed on community signs that seemed more permanent and on larger commercial outlets in the district, in the hope that these would remain stable over the course of the research.

There is quite limited access to print materials in Malham community

and in Skipton Estates. The one central shopping centre in Skipton Estates has a small bookstore, but residents have to travel to larger shopping malls, over a mile distant, to obtain a wider selection of books. Other than magazines, newspapers and a few adult paperbacks at the corner grocery store, there is no commercial book outlet in Malham itself. In nearby small shopping centres, located in adjacent communities, drug-stores provide a limited range of children's books and workbooks. On a main road that links Skipton Estates with larger Edmonton there is an "educational store" with materials for teachers and parents. This outlet, again, has a limited range of books and rather more workbooks and formal print activities. Until a year ago there was no public library in Skipton Estates. Residents obtained library books from mobile vans that travelled around the neighbourhoods, or from public libraries in the city. The new library in Skipton Estates is part of the recreational complex and is located in a relatively remote corner of the building, reached by following long hallways and climbing a narrow flight of stairs. It is small and very busy. When I visited the facility, I talked with two librarians and they both expressed concerns about the inadequacies of their programme in coping with a population composed largely of families with young children. All the four year old, preschool story classes were full with no openings anticipated. The library shelves for young children were half empty, partly because the year old library is still building a basic complement of books and partly because of heavy subscription. One librarian explained that it was difficult to keep pace with the requests for "board books", stiff-paged books that were loaned to families with toddlers. Also, both librarians seemed concerned about catering to older children's needs in that reference books are in short supply and there is

no room to place study carrels in the library area. Hence, within a year of opening residents' needs have far outstripped the expectations of the original designers of the library.

Although Central Skipton Estates' Public Library is heavily subscribed, none of the children in the Malham kindergarten class do not seem to use the facility. As noted previously, only two of the six case study children utilized any public library at the beginning of the study. Janice is a member of the Skipton Estates' Library, whilst Mark visits the downtown branch with his mother. Belinda joined the library towards the end of the study, but the other three children are not members. On the September registration form, the kindergarten parents in general were asked to report on local library membership. Only nine out of twenty-two families noted that their children regularly visited a public library.

For many of these kindergarten children it seems that print resources are not provided by the larger district but by their own community. The community, however, appears to have restricted resources. They seem constrained by whatever materials can be provided by individual families, by the school library and school bookclubs. The kindergarten registration form supplies the following information concerning the families' print resources and book interactions with their children:

- 14/22 families subscribe to newspapers and periodicals.
- 4/22 families state that they subscribe to children's magazines.
- 19/22 families say that their children watch print-related programmes, e.g. Sesame Street, Electric Company and Read Along, on television.
- 9/22 families report that they read daily to their children:
8/9 of these families are library subscribers.
- 4/22 families say that they read "more than twice a week", but less than daily, to their children.
- 9/22 families state that they read less than twice a week to their children.

It seems that, within the community, the one print resource available to

all the children is provided by the school. Classroom materials and school library books are accessible for all school-aged children and, indirectly, for preschool children with older siblings registered at Malham Elementary School.

The School

I think -- to enhance life, diversity is important and you have to look at that whole idea of quality other than from the view of "sameness" being the only way of ensuring quality, and I don't think that's true.
(School Principal, February, 1984)

John Firth has been the only principal of Malham Elementary School since its hurried opening just under a decade ago. Had he valued "sameness" and casting children and teachers into a mainstream mould of expectations it is doubtful whether his liaison with community, staff and students would have been a relaxed one. However, philosophically and in action John Firth prizes diversity and the "quality of life".

The school has an "open door policy" (Interview with kindergarten aide, February) for the community, and parents are welcomed as helpers. In the staffroom, hallways and classrooms, parents mingle with children and teachers and volunteer to help with the library, the snack programme, bazaars, teas, sales, sports, classroom jobs and the "absentee 'phone-home service". The school serves as a meeting place for the community, a place where people of many racial backgrounds intermingle for a purpose, namely to support the educational process of their children. It represents communal integration-in-action, without downplaying the diversity of the contributions of the individual. It is not, however, a showplace to display cultural integration. Realistically the "quality" of school life would be seriously hampered without community support. John Firth acknowledges "differences" in the community and also

diversity in teaching styles amongst his staff, and his acceptance of such variations. He suggests that:

The school's big enough that you can offer lots of choices and what's even more interesting to me is that though there's a lot of variance in the ways in which teachers deliver programmes in the school -- that diversity seems to be picked up on very healthily by the majority of parents.

Mr. Firth notes that he respects parental requests to place children with a specific teacher for, by doing this, the family and teacher are placed "in a mix where they will tend to be mutually supportive" over the course of the school year. If this mutual home-school support is created then John Firth "strongly suspect(s)" that the parents "can accept a fair amount of variance in the way that the programme is delivered. After all, he reflects, "I'm not sure that anybody has come up with exactly the one right formula" for educating children. Mr. Firth notes that acceptance of diversity in the community and in the teaching styles of the staff moves in tandem with his acknowledgment of differences in children.

It would be misleading to suggest that there were no tensions between the community and school, and that Mr. Firth has not struggled over the years to establish a school that seems to blend with the community it serves. Possibly the tensions have been minimized because the parents were deeply involved in petitioning for the initial construction of the building, have always utilized the facilities for personal meetings and for recreation, and are still welcome through its "open doors".

In the early days of the school there was a high transiency rate but now the population is quite stable (Interviews with Mrs. Compton, Mrs. Webster and Mr. Firth, February, 1984), and the same parents revisit the school as helpers when younger family members enter the programme. The

multiracial composition of the school population and surrounding community has not changed over the years, though there is an indication that there is more similarity in multi-ethnic educational expectations for their children, than was apparent in the early days of the school.

Initially, several ethnic groups objected to their children's participation in certain activities, such as camping trips, but, as Lorna Webster, the kindergarten aide, suggests, over the years all racial groups have learned to trust the school. They have gradually begun to "feel comfortable" (Mrs. Webster) with the staff and have come to understand "the system".

For example, in September, Vanessa, a kindergarten child from an East Indian background, was brought to school on the first day by her grandfather, a stately man with a flowing white beard, a turban and a booming voice. When his first grandchild entered the programme, "there were problems because they (the family) didn't understand some of the things that were going on" and, "Grandpa used to come with the children every day" (Mrs. Webster). This time he brought Vanessa into school and formally entrusted her care to Mrs. Compton, requesting that the school "look after her because she (is) the youngest (grandchild) -- the littlest one". Lorna Webster suggested that Grandpa had "mellowed" over the years and now felt secure in the fact that the school would care for his grandchildren. John Firth notes that differences in educational expectations of parents has not been eliminated, but rather that such diversity is common amongst all the parents and is not restricted to those from different cultural backgrounds. He explains that some parents feel that school is "pressing too hard" in academic areas:

There hasn't tended to be a lot of professional people in this area. A lot of people have, and are, probably making a lot of money. It tends to be money made with their hands -- very saleable, usable skills -- and it's

interesting in those cases -- there's not a great deal of formal education. They've made it without seeing school as really important -- and there's a good number of occasions when you get the response from people that maybe school is expecting too much -- in concern for academic development -- in reading -- well reading primarily.

Though this view has been expressed by some parents, John Firth notes that he has heard the opposite view with equal regularity, namely "the feeling that maybe not enough is expected" (February interview).

Mr. Firth explains that the parents and the school enjoy an informal relationship. Attempts to formalize that bond have not been very successful. Home and school groups have waxed and waned over the years, though occasionally such groups have arranged workshops and speakers for the community. Initially the parents were united in political activity to activate the construction of the building, and then to meet to promote recreational facilities.. However, over the years the issues have seemed less insistent and the parents have settled into a "comfortable" (Mrs. Webster), informal liaison with school personnel. In the last year a small nucleus of parents has been active in reformulating a parent group with the seeming purpose of tackling curriculum issues, especially in reading. A few Grade One parents objected to the relatively new whole language approach used by two teachers and requested a return to a phonics programme utilized by a third teacher. John Firth feels that the "sting" has now gone out of this issue:

There was concern about spelling and standard word lists and things like that, and it wasn't until much of the year was over, and people saw the evidence -- In fact the people who put up the biggest stink also said that although they still didn't agree with much of it (whole language approach) they couldn't argue because their son had learned to read. (February interview)

Lorna Webster suggests that this issue has not "died", as the parent group was still unhappy that their survey of local Grade One reading

programmes received little response from the school, i.e. the principal did not legislate a uniform Grade One return to a phonics approach. My interviews with the case study children's parents suggest that the issue is "alive and well" in the community. No Low Print aware children's parents suggested any preference for the type of Grade One reading strategies they wanted for their children. All three of the High Print aware children's parents expressed a preference. Mark's mother dislikes formal phonics and is supportive of a language experience approach to reading. Trevor's mother expresses a strong antipathy towards "guessing", which she feels is the main strategy in a whole language approach. She definitely wants Trevor registered in a Grade One classroom that teaches "the proper sounds" (February interview). Mrs. Wengler also is planning to request that Janice is enrolled in a Grade One room where phonics is advocated. (N.B. After the conclusion of this study, Trevor's mother visited Grade One classrooms and changed her mind. She requested that her son be placed in a classroom with a language experience approach to reading: conversation with Mrs. Compton, August, 1984). Undoubtedly the role of the parent group, the official liaison between the home and school, has changed over the past years. As a political action group it commanded, and seemed to obtain, community support. Now involved with curriculum issues, it seems to be supported by only a small nucleus of parents. The issues it raises are of current concern in the neighbourhood, but it seems that individual parents prefer to raise these points informally with school personnel, rather than joining a formal organization. As John Firth suggests, "so much of the community has such a good feeling for what the internal workings of this school are really like" and feel sufficiently relaxed to contact the school on an everyday, informal basis:

I just say thank God for the fact that there are so many people through this building so much of the time -- and it generally is a way, I think, of kind of keeping in touch with the pulse of the community.
(School principal, February interview)

The School's Literacy Context

Environmental Print: Over the course of the study, the environmental print displayed on doors, windows, hallways and other structural features, was observed and changes were recorded. Special emphasis was placed on observing the permanent and changing print along the routes that the kindergarten children travelled. Over the six months I watched directive or instructional print, e.g. notices directing the children's attention to place boots in certain places or to return library books, give way to "enrichment print", i.e. visual art, poetry and story work created by the children. I collected observations of the rich sources of environmental print in the school in the anticipation that it may influence the literacy development of the kindergarten children. As I followed the children down the hallways and observed them in the classroom, I waited for comments or non-verbal behaviour that indicated that they may have incorporated this literacy resource into their experiences, but this did not seem to occur.

During the research only once did children comment on a selection of this environmental print, and that was in the hallway directly outside the classroom door. I suspect that, on this one occasion, as I was looking at the wall whilst waiting for the classroom door to be unlocked after lunch, my "looking" may have influenced the cluster of children around me to glance in the same direction. I was looking at the large "I" charts on the wall. Each white "I" shape had a kindergarten child's name on it. Pasted on this background, each poster had a variety of coloured shapes such as cakes, telephones, caterpillars, houses and cubes with accompanying

letters, words or numbers. Shawn and Mark, obviously attuned to my interest, attempted to explain the symbols, which each child received after proving efficiency in certain areas:

- Shawn: The cake's for your birthday.
 Mark: If you know it.
 Shawn: (Points to the cube on his chart) Well, if you get that you count to twelve.
 Mark: If you have a telephone you know your number. If you don't have a telephone you don't. (Mark has a cluster of symbols on his chart, but not a telephone.)
 Mrs. Webster: (Walking up with the classroom keys) You count to twenty to get that (points to the cube). There'll be a caterpillar for writing their name, a big "A" for recognizing capital letters and a little "a" for small letters -- and a shoe for tying shoelaces -- and a house for knowing your address.
 (Fieldnotes: January 18th)

No other sections of my fieldnotes indicate that any print knowledge, or any verbalization, may be linked to the school's environmental print in the hallways. Several reasons for this may be hypothesized. Firstly, it may be suggested that the print was generally too high on the walls for the kindergarten children to pay it any close regard. Secondly, it is possible that the children did look at the print but that their discoveries were never reflected in overt actions or verbalizations during six months of classroom observations. Though this may be one possible hypothesis I doubt its veracity. I started to watch the children's non-verbal behaviour as they followed their regular routes around the school. Few eyes ever glanced at the wall displays and the children far more frequently were involved in watching the social interactions of their peers. I think my inadvertent "looking" at the kindergarten charts, and the resultant interaction, offers the best clues for a reasonable hypothesis, though as it was the only interaction involving the school's environmental print, such a hypothesis can only be regarded as a "hunch". The children looked at the charts when I looked at them. These charts were intrinsically

meaningful to the children as they signified achievements, even though Shawn underplayed his success for to attain his numbered cube he had counted to twenty rather than twelve! Thus, it may be suggested that school environmental print has to have some meaning association for the children in order for it to be noticed. In addition, an adult who considers the print important enough to be noticed may be a helpful model for drawing children's attention to environmental print. The latter point may be significant in that, during the course of my research, I noticed no caregiver pointing out, or stopping to look at, the visual displays whilst the kindergarten children travelled on their journeys around the school.

The Library: If the school may be considered the "heart" of Malham community, then surely the school library is the "heart of the literacy context". The tentacles of its influence creep through every classroom in the school, including the kindergarten, and its influence is felt in every home containing school-aged children. The library, together with its librarian Joanne Windsor, has formed a subtle network of literacy promotion that pervades the whole community.

Possibly a key dimension in the influence of the library in the community, is the librarian's belief in "making contacts", or networking the school library with other community and school facilities. "Library" in this school, is not an isolated place nor a separate slot in the school curriculum. Joanne Windsor runs the library with a committee composed of "four or five people on staff" (October interview), including the principal, the vice-principal and Mrs. Compton, the kindergarten teacher. With this group, and with the aid of central office consultants, a list of library objectives has been co-ordinated for the

early grades and is planned, for the older grades. Co-operative planning between the librarian and each teacher is an option in the school library system. The focus of such planning is to enable the teacher to discuss thematic units from the curriculum that may be linked to library resources. During this planning period, the teacher's needs and present library resources are checked. If limited in certain areas, Joanne Windsor will put her external networking system into action and contact public libraries for additional materials. In addition to utilizing city libraries for curriculum-related materials, the school librarian obtains current copies of Alberta Book Award and Young Readers' Choice Award selections, and also books written by authors who are invited to visit the school and talk to the children, for example, Alan Garner, Elizabeth Cleaver and Charles Keephill.

I believe strongly in networking so I have contacts --
just about at all the public libraries.
(School librarian, October interview)

Though Joanne Windsor has introduced herself to a new contact at Skipton Estates Library she notes that most of her resources still come from the more established Edmonton libraries, as the local library's collection is "very sparse".

The librarian's philosophy of "making contacts" has extended into Malham community. Parent helpers, as human resources, are a daily feature in the library. Ms. Windsor trains these volunteers to assist children in using the cataloguing system and in selecting books:

I have trained the parents, amongst other things, in how to help children choose books and I've explained to them if a child comes in and looks puzzled they're to say, "Can I help you?" smilingly -- and then if the child says, "Yes, I want a book on dinosaurs", they'll say, "A true book on dinosaurs or a storybook on dinosaurs?"
(October interview)

Joanne Windsor affirms that she is aware that young children seem to require an adult's help in choosing a book, even if they know how the system works. The parent helper frequently supplies this helpful presence:

I see they need someone there, so I think the parent is fulfilling a variety of things and one is that someone's there -- and I've had Susan Markam (Grade One teacher) say to me that children have come in to return their library books and they've come straight back with no books and she said, "Well, what happened?" and they've said, "There wasn't anybody there" (plaintive voice), and so even though they know exactly how to change books they seem to feel more relaxed just because there's someone else there, which I find very interesting.
(October interview)

Parents who serve as "someone else" in the library, or who are in the school for other volunteer purposes, appear to feel relaxed enough to approach the librarian for informal help in selecting magazine and book subscriptions, and in finding follow-up books for their children on favourite authors or on themes:

One of the kindergarten parents said that she and her child were really enjoying the "Curious George" books and she had only been able to find four, and she'd looked on the little flyleaf and it had said seven, and I said, "Well you know what you can do. Phone up one of the public libraries. Put a request by phone, on that, and they will line them up for you, give you a call when they're ready, and you can go and pick them up. And you can do the same thing if you want to follow through with one particular author or illustrator." So they didn't seem to realize that they could make these requests and these demands.
(October interview)

Other than these informal conversations to encourage parents to "network" themselves, the librarian makes official suggestions to families via the school newsletter, for example in the pre-Christmas edition:

From our Library: We're coming up towards Christmas, and it might be a good idea to think of buying your child a gift subscription to a magazine. Somehow when a magazine arrives addressed to your child they have to read it. We have a good selection of magazines in our

library so do stop by and have a look at any, or discuss with Ms. Windsor your child's interests, and likely she can suggest a magazine.

Also do remember books make great presents for everyone, especially children. You may want to make a special visit to a good bookstore such as the Village or Audrey's and pick out some paperback books, so your child can have a book as part of their Christmas present. (School newsletter, November, 1983)

Due to the librarian's emphasis on networking, there is a sense of interrelatedness amongst the school library and the classrooms, community and public libraries. Books and their distribution are the focus of this implicitly interconnected structure of contacts. The quality of book choices and choosing "the right book for you" are stressed, as is the presence of an adult in the book selection process. A second aspect of interrelatedness was also observed, namely that authors are writers and writers provide the books that we read. Writing, reading and illustrating were integrated in the "Young Authors'" section of the library, wherein children were encouraged to produce their own books for other readers, and in the "Famous Authors'" project, where children's writers were invited to talk to the children about their writing and, in some cases, the illustrative processes interwoven through their books.

The Library and the Kindergarten: The overview of the school's library system provides a backdrop for the investigation of the special relationship between the library and the kindergarten. Some details concerning the whole system, and the librarian's philosophy, provide a necessary foundation for understanding how the kindergarten book programme dovetails into a planned structure. This structure appeared to have a four-fold purpose, namely to draw parents into the library network, to educate parents into providing qualitative early reading experiences for their children, to provide a system for daily book exchanges for

kindergarten class members, and to enhance shared book experiences via a weekly story and poetry reading session in the library.

Parent education and the incorporation of parents into the library chain, was stimulated both formally, through library sponsored presentations, and informally, through everyday dialogue with the teacher or the librarian, and via the parent library helper system. At an initial kindergarten registration meeting, Joanne Windsor gave a talk to parents, to encourage them to read regularly to their children during the year. She suggested that there was a vital relationship between parents' reading to their children and literacy development, and a further relationship between being an able reader and "doing well at school". Ms. Windsor advocated that parents could assist in the literacy process by "reading to your children", re-reading books and demonstrating enjoyment in sharing stories:

Learning to read takes place just as naturally as talking when children are read to by their parents and they're allowed to handle books. It's important you have fun together and enjoy them.

She emphasized that "the two big enemies" of reading were television, "because if a child is watching T.V. they're not reading", and also "non-reading parents". In the latter case, parents who do not read themselves and yet "are very interested in the child learning to read" are sending mixed messages to their children. They are implicitly transmitting the thought that, "reading is not important or fun. If I thought it was, I'd be doing it myself."

On October 11th, the initial talk was followed-up with an afternoon workshop on story reading with children. In the intervening period between the registration talk and the workshop, parent volunteers under Mrs. Compton's supervision, made bright blue, sturdy book bags for each child,

with yellow rope ties. Each book bag was labelled with the child's name and the name of the school. The book bag was to be the official carrier of library books between home and school. Book bags were distributed to the children on the day of the workshop and each contained a bookmark with directions on the care of books, and several pamphlets on choosing books, and the values of reading aloud to children.

On the afternoon of the workshop, twelve parents out of a possible twenty-two sat in a semi-circle in the library story area. Two preschool children had come with their parents. A large pile of books was stacked on the floor and Joanne Windsor entered and sat by the books. When the parents introduced themselves I discovered that Janette's father was there with young Hans. Janice's father was also present as were Belinda's mother and Mark's babysitter. There were no caregivers for Trevor and Marvin. For ten parents of kindergarten children, including Mark's mother, their major information received on storybook reading would be from the pamphlets in the book bags.

Joanne used the selection of books at her feet as vehicles for the messages and strategies she wished to impart. One group of messages was delivered more strongly than the others. This group may be considered as "strong recommendations" or "firm expectations". They included the recommendations to read nightly to children, to join the local public library, to consider giving books and magazine subscriptions as gifts, to read suggested texts on home-reading experiences and to reinforce the care of library books at home, and on the journey from home to school.

Two other groups of messages were observed during the workshop, and both were interwoven in the demonstrations of story-reading. One cluster of advice centred on book choices for children. The librarian recommended

the utilization of narratives or "complete stories" with illustrations:

Picture books are valuable for reading to little children. They contain pictures and accompanying words. Really they are excellent to read. I would, at first, avoid those books that change topic on every page, or that are just lists of facts, say, on trains. The child may get the idea that you can walk away halfway through the book. With stories the child gets a book experience he doesn't want to leave -- wanting to know what happens next.

She also suggested that books should be chosen, not only on the basis of story content, but for the quality of their illustrations. Caldecott Award winning books, with their distinctive silver and gold stickers, were also shown to the group and commended for the power of their illustrations. In their book choices, the librarian recommended that parents should look for books that encourage their children's participation. She demonstrated how the children could join in the repeated refrains of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" and "The Gingerbread Boy". Books that were written by a favourite author were also suggested, as were alternate versions of the same favourite, to aid children in building a repertoire of comparing strategies. Hence, the librarian transmitted overt messages about the criteria that could be used in helping children select books, and implicit messages that the quality of reading materials was important and that parents could exert some influence on the types of books they read to their children.

The final cluster of messages transmitted to the parents related to strategies they might utilize whilst sharing books with their children. These techniques were all demonstrated to the parents. The librarian recommended strategies that focused children's attention on print, such as reading the title and the author, underlining the print with a hand, and then right pages, holding the book in a position

where the text could be seen by the child, and pointing out unusual lettering forms or word arrangements on a page:

(Holding the book, "The Little House" by Virginia Lee Burton, by her left shoulder) Always say the title -- "The Little House", written by --. Look carefully and note the inner cover of the book. It may say something about the whole -- the title page -- whether it gives clues -- and the word arrangement. The words in this book were arranged as a path to the house -- so that pictures and words complemented each other.

(Holding up "The Three Bears" by Paul Galdone) You may occasionally point to the words (points to lines of print by running a finger below in a left to right direction). You may show the children differences in print size -- the little bear talks in little print -- the middle bear in medium-sized print and the big bear in big print.

Utilizing exact wording, suggested the librarian, assists children in noting textual details. Participatory strategies were also recommended, such as encouraging the children to predict story events, to join in repeated phrases and sentences, to re-read books to provide opportunities for the children to comment on new details they have noticed, and to avoid rushing to ensure that children could participate. "Letting the child tell the story" was recommended for "books that only contain pictures".

It was difficult to assess how many parents had integrated the "strong recommendations", the advice on book choices and the suggestions for print focusing and participatory strategies, as they initiated no questions during the group session and only contributed when directly asked. The parents were then asked to choose six books for their child, and to encourage their child to choose one of these to take home. When the children entered the library they moved towards their parents and differing interactive styles were immediately apparent:

Belinda: sits at the same table with Paul and his mother. She cuddles on her mother's knee and snuggles close. She looks through the pile of books her mother has selected, flips hurriedly through the pages, and loudly rejects each choice. Her mother's face flushes. Belinda jumps off her mother's knee and walks across the library. Her mother quickly follows. They both approach Ms. Windsor and stand still. Belinda's mother says with some note of apology in her voice, "She wants a book about a dog". The three move off to the library shelves.

Janice: stands by her father's side. He has the books arranged on the table, front covers upwards. Janice quickly selects a book. Her father stands and takes the card to the librarian. She tells him to sign the card. He goes back to the table and starts to read through the informational sheets in the book bag. He then puts Janice's book choice in her bag. Janice stands quietly by the table, pretending to play the piano on the tabletop.

Janette: stands next to her father. Her brother is sitting on a chair at the other side of her father, who is turning the pages of a picture book silently. Occasionally he looks around the room and then glances back at the book pages he is turning. On occasion the three converse (or is the father reading parts of the book?) in German.

Mark: sits on the floor with Adam and his mother. Adam suddenly sits on his mother's knee and Mark remains on the floor. Darlene is reading the storybook. She reads expressively and both children are attentive. Darlene occasionally asks questions, such as, "What do you think he gives the boy?" Mark always responds rapidly and accurately. Adam, more frequently, asks his own questions, such as, "Look! What's he doing?" Mark invariably answers, for example, "Getting the newspaper". Adam's mother elaborates, "Like we do, Adam". Darlene leaves out occasional words at the end of sentences. Mark is always the first to supply the words. As the session concludes, Adam says he wants two books. His mother says, "Choose one, Adam" quietly and evenly. He chooses one and puts it in his bag. Mark chooses a book and places it in his book bag.

Mrs. Compton, Mrs. Webster and the librarian helped the nine children who had no caregivers in attendance, to choose their books. Trevor and Marvin were part of this group.

It is acknowledged that book reading with children in a school

workshop session may not reflect interactive patterns between parent and child that take place in the home setting. However, it is equally possible that some aspects may be constant in both contexts. Certainly, Belinda and her mother's interactive swings between warmth and conflict were observed as stable dynamics in the classroom setting, the hallways and the playground. During this fifteen minute story-reading session, they never did read a book together, as Belinda's demands for the "right book" consumed the entire period. So, some dynamics of the parent-child relationship may have been present in the workshop story-reading. It is interesting to observe, from the brief data available, the differences in the parent-child shared-book dynamics. Several parents, who demonstrated some anxiety during the librarian's presentation and the book choices, relaxed as soon as their child entered the library, and became involved in a storybook interaction. Janice's father's anxiety concerning the library's organizational rules persisted throughout. He did not read with Janice, but then the mother is the major storybook reader at home. Janette's father interacted minimally with his children, and Janette, like Janice, stood at her father's side rather distantly during the engagement. Watching this interaction made me wonder how easy it may be to interact with an English storybook when one of the participants only speaks German. The potential for conflict between Adam and Mark, mentioned as a problem by Ms. Turner, was certainly present in their storybook interaction. Adam "claimed" his mother by sitting on her knee, but Mark's ability to answer all story questions was clearly a source of some tension for Adam. In the book interactions we see a range of physical intimacy, from parent and child cuddling close to enjoy a book, to parent and child distance. We also view a range in interactive

dialogue, from the sensitive questioning and expressive reading of Mark's babysitter (Adam's mother), to the limited dialogue of Janette's father and virtually no interaction at all, i.e. Janice and her father.

When considering these differing styles, in the immediate post-workshop period, I could suggest that the librarian's attempt to link home, school and kindergarten classroom in qualitative book reading experiences may not have achieved overall success. One workshop may not influence some parents to change their interactive story reading styles. For example, undoubtedly Mark's babysitter, with her early childhood training, was an elaborative story reader prior to this afternoon. Her demonstration of qualitative techniques could be viewed as the repetition of old patterns which, in this case, matched the strategies recommended by the librarian. Change and "success" are relative in human dynamics, in that individual parents may have been influenced in different ways and to differing extents over varying time periods. Thus, one workshop cannot immediately overhaul years of ingrained patterning, but it could open doors over time. For example, Belinda's mother, following this afternoon, volunteered her services as a library helper and incidentally exposed herself to further opportunities for book-related dialogue. In the High Print and Low Print aware children's parents' interviews, Mrs. Gearhardt mentions reading "The Three Billy Goats Gruff", with "sound effects", to Janette, and this book was demonstrated during the workshop. Mrs. Williams notes that she later incorporates participatory strategies in her story-reading sessions with Belinda, explicitly stating that she learned these strategies at the librarian's presentation. Mrs. Wengler reports that she influences Janice's book selections by suggesting Caldecott Award winning books. These books were suggested at the workshop and a large

wall chart, hanging in the area, illustrated current winners. It is possible that Janette's and Janice's fathers, although not actively engaged in story-reading at the workshop, did carry "messages" home that were implicitly or explicitly transmitted to the children. Hence, the initial talk and workshop, with their accompanying purposes, should possibly be related to the subtle tentacles of their influence over time, rather than the perceived initial impact. For the twelve parents at the session, the workshop provided the potential for engagement in qualitative storybook interactions, and sowed the seeds for the development of a literacy bridge between home and school. For the ten parents who did not attend, this potential for growth, and the development of literacy connections, is less clear. For Trevor and Marvin, who viewed other home-caregivers interacting with their children, it is possible that they received the underlying message that home-related and school-reading were separate entities in the eyes of their families. The literacy bridge between home and school was not demonstrated personally for these children. In fact, the concrete demonstration of the bond between home and school literacy was not available for the nine kindergarten children whose caregivers did not attend the workshop.

One of the most important facets of the initial library talk and the subsequent story-reading workshop, is that they set the stage for the kindergarten book programme which, in itself, provided concrete literacy links between home and school and embodied the potential for the promotion of daily story-reading interactions. The programme was a co-operative enterprise amongst the school library, the kindergarten classroom and the home. Each sub-context was integrated within its structure, though each had rather differing roles. Like any human structure the people engaged

in the programme provided the foundation for successful operation, in that the organizational framework required human expectations to be fulfilled in order that the circle of cross-contextual literacy promotion should be unbroken.

The school librarian has both a philosophical and a practical role. Several years ago she concluded that literacy in the kindergarten needed to be broadened to other contexts in the children's lives.

Well, I gradually started to realize that you have a lot of influence not just with the school population -- the children themselves -- but you have a wider sphere of influence if you can involve the parents and if you can involve the teachers, and I also started to think you have to start right at the beginning -- the parents are very keen at that stage and sort of anxious to be involved ... I just started to think that that was a logical time to really begin focusing on the parents reading to children and start, I suppose, getting them trained and the children trained to experience continuous stories. (October interview)

Initially, an introductory talk was given to the kindergarten parents, and the children were involved in weekly book exchanges. However:

Noreen (Compton) started to feel it would be a good idea if we did it more frequently and so we sort of together came up with the following solution. I think that was a couple of years ago -- the daily exchange. The exact way it was handled was a sort of mutual decision. (October interview)

Hence, the teacher was involved in the gradual evolution of the book programme. Practical considerations suggested that a daily exchange would be most effectively conducted in the classroom. Joanne Windsor's role involved the selection of books for the kindergarten library.

... usually continuous stories -- the books we want parents to be reading to the children rather than -- you know how children -- Grades One and Two in particular still can be choosing the wrong kinds of books, that are not appropriate -- that they can't read or are not of interest to them -- so this way we are virtually guaranteeing success with parents reading to them. (October interview)

This book selection role now seems flexible as Noreen Compton and Lorna Webster, the aide, select books also. Joanne Windsor assists when special theme books are required, such as the animal books for the kindergarten zoo unit in September. In October, the initial books for the kindergarten library were provided by the parents' book choices during the workshop, though the range of choices available was largely pre-selected by the librarian. It seems that many people are involved in the pre-selection role, though ultimately the process is guided by the librarian's belief that "continuous stories", or narratives, offer the most success for home-book interactions. Thus, consideration of alternate literacy contexts and dynamics is a guiding principle in the pre-selection of books. A secondary principle is clearly motivated by the librarian's desire to "tie in with what they are doing" (October interview) in the classroom. This is effected through co-operative planning with Mrs. Compton. For example, in October, the kindergarten teacher met with Joanne Windsor and suggested that she would like the children to be involved in:

... something special about once a month, so this Friday we're going to work on -- I suppose you'd call it a bookmark -- a little Frederick (a mouse: main character in a book). I read Frederick to them last Friday. Noreen'll have a copy of the book (in the kindergarten library).

Hence, Noreen's and Joanne's roles, though different in some practical aspects, seem to be really mutually interdependent philosophically. Both appear to be motivated by an underlying belief in the necessity of literacy promotion across contexts. The librarian initiates the cross-contextual book programme, aids in the selection of books, and runs the weekly story-reading session with the kindergarten class, implementing "something special", or memorable, once each month. The kindergarten teacher makes her literacy needs known, assists in book selections, and operates the

practical machinery for the book exchange in the classroom. Both the librarian and the teacher, in fulfilling their roles, expect the parents to complete the circular structure by reading the books with their children and following the "messages" transmitted at the library presentations, and via newsletters to the home.

Success of literacy development, over time, was mentioned previously as a possible outcome of the library's role in the promotion of story-reading practices with children. Again, success is "relative" in terms of individual children's interests and abilities and due to the fact that the library works in harness with home and classroom contexts. However, the librarian has been sufficiently encouraged to continue with the programme. She notes that the Grade One teachers have been enthusiastic in their promotion of its continuation:

"Hey, what is it that's been happening? What exactly is this kindergarten programme, because whatever it is we like it!" I know Susan Markam (Grade One teacher) was saying to me, "My children are arriving with those book bags -- We've brought our book bags. When are we going to change our books?" And she had to do something for them and so she would send in little groups of children ... and it was having an impact on them, and the teachers seemed to be saying that the children were more ready to listen to stories ... they had very positive feelings about books and seemed more ready to be looking at them and be picking out words, and just be more ready generally -- so they've (Grade One teachers) been very positive about it. (October interview)

Parents have also responded positively towards the book programme. At one Kindergarten workshop this year, one mother:

... stuck her hand up and said, "I came this time last year, Ms. Windsor, and I'd just like to tell everyone how beautifully it works", and she was saying it encouraged her to read to her child and it helped make a lot of difference to her child -- so I am getting quite positive feedback, and I had a father who said I had encouraged him to read to his child. It was just his wife who was doing the reading before. (October interview)

Joanne mentioned, in March, that several parents had told her that they had ordered magazine subscriptions, or had asked her about suitable magazines, "as a result of (the) talk to kindergarten parents". Vanessa's mother had also reported to the librarian that when she reads to her youngest daughter, "the other children listen and want their books read to them" (March interview). Maybe, one of the important functions of the library context, and its network of literacy connections, is that it establishes an awareness in the children to ask "the right questions of (their) environment" (Torrey, 1969, p. 556). Questions such as, "When are we going to change our books?" (Interview with librarian, October) can only be asked when children sense the importance of books and know that there is a context for such an exchange. Rather than such questioning being considered "natural" curiosity, I suggest that literacy inquisitiveness arises from children's emerging awareness of the value of print in their lives. A qualitative library context promotes such enquiry.

The Kindergarten Classroom

Mrs. Noreen Compton's kindergarten classroom is located in a modular structure that is attached to the main core of the school. The potentially trailer-like quality of the rectangular room, with its vinyl panelled walls, is diffused by the posters and artwork on the walls, the circular children's tables and by the centre equipment that breaks the room into sub-areas. The people who regularly inhabit this domain are twenty-two young children, their teacher and a classroom aide. A stream of parent volunteers supplements the regular caregivers from Monday to Thursday each week.

The Children

The children in the kindergarten are as complex and individualistic as all human beings. They may be grouped as eight girls and sixteen boys, as newcomers or established residents in the neighbourhood, as English as a first or second language users, as younger or older children within the group, or within the social groupings they selected for themselves during the course of the study.

Changes in Classroom Members: Over the six months, the class had a relatively stable population. Marvin moved to a new area in December and Andrew and Sally joined the group during the post-Christmas period. The children appeared to accept the loss and new entrance of class members without any classroom comment. However, in the last few days of the study, when I was interacting on informal word recognition tasks with the High and Low Print aware children, it was apparent that the absence and presence of these children had been noted. Belinda, when shown word cards of all the class members' names, was interested to know if the "new girl" had been included:

- Belinda: Did you get the new girl?
 Me: I didn't because I didn't know about her until today.
 Belinda: Ah.
 Me: Do you know her name?
 Belinda: (Frowns) I forgot it.
 Me: (Pause whilst I think) Oh I know -- Sally.
 Belinda: (Face lights up in a smile) Yeah! ~~She~~'re going to have to get one (taps name cards).
 Me: We are -- you're right. (Fieldnotes: February 28th)

Janice, when shown the same words, was curious to know whether Marvin's name could be anticipated:

- Janice: Did you make Marvin 'cos he's away still?
 Me: Ah. Marvin's left the school. No, I didn't make Marvin.
 Janice: (Grins) Good! (Fieldnotes: February 22nd)

Janice thought that Marvin was "away still", though he had left the school

over two months prior to this engagement. As his "leaving" was hurried and had only been mentioned briefly in class, Janice seemed to be expecting his return. Her "sorrow" that he was not returning was not overpowering, presumably because Janice had suffered from Marvir's teasing on occasion! Andrew's inclusion in the group was not mentioned overtly by any child, either in the classroom or during the word recognition activities. Janice, Trevor and Mark recognized Andrew's name amongst the others, though Mark's recall was not immediate. He struggled for a while and then recaptured the name from associating Andrew's name with a centre that both boys liked, i.e. "Yeah -- he was at books. I even saw him back there" (Fieldnotes: February 27th). Janette and Belinda did not recognize Andrew's name nor checked to see if he had been included in the name-card array.

First Language: Amongst the classroom members, seven of the children spoke other languages than English, in part or totally, at home, though nine of the children's parents reported a first language other than English. German was the first language for Janette and Shawn, Spanish for Carlos and Manuel, Chinese for Penny, and Punjabi for Vanessa. Robbie apparently spoke a mixture of Fillipino, Punjabi and English in his early years. Thus, approximately a third of the class came from families where the parents' first language was preserved, at least partially, in the home. Belinda's father originally came from the West Indies and though both parents spoke English as their native language the little girl's speech patterns contained the lilting, musical intonations characteristic of the residents of these islands.

Age: A wide range of ages was apparent in the classroom. The oldest children, the twins Gary and Gordon, had been born in March, 1978. The youngest children, Belinda, Jane and Sally, were born in February,

1979. Hence, almost a year in age separated the oldest and youngest children in the classroom. Amongst the High and Low Print aware children, Janice and Marvin could be placed in the oldest third of the class, Janette in the middle age range, and Trevor, Mark and Belinda in the youngest third. Age was clearly a concern to the teacher, parents and children. Mrs. Compton expressed concern about the maturity level of the younger children (October interview). Belinda's mother was constantly worried that her child was "too young" for school entrance (November interview). Mrs. Wengler expressed relief that Janice was a "May baby" and hence old enough to benefit from the kindergarten programme. She noted that:

... if Janice's birthday had been in January or February I wouldn't have sent her, I don't think. It's a real advantage to them to be the older ones in the class. (November interview)

For the children, "being five" had as much status value as Pacman shoe-laces, Strawberry Shortcake runners, owning a watch, or having a Cabbage Patch doll. "I'm five" delivered with pride carried social clout, and demanded some form of acknowledgment from individuals:

Jonathon: "Teacher! I'm five!"

Aide: "You are! Did you have a birthday?"

Jonathon: "Yes." (Grins broadly and stands "tall") "It means I'm five!" (Fieldnotes: November 1st)

"Turning five" carried attendant magical properties for the children. It meant you were "not a baby", but were "smarter" and generally more able than classmates who were still four years of age. In the following extract, observed in the classroom library corner, Paul asserts his superiority, having been five "months ago", over Mark who has "just turned five".

Mark: (To Paul) "Do you know how to read?"

Paul: "Yep -- I can write too."

Mark: "I can write names."
 Paul: "Whose?"
 Mark: (Quietly) "Mine."
 Paul: (Laughs)
 Mark: "-- And I can write some first letters. I know the first letter in your name. It's P."
 Paul: "What's next?"
 Mark: (Quiet voice again) "I don't know."
 Paul: (Confidently and loudly) "It's P-A-U-L." (says the letters)
 Mark: (Pauses) "Do you know how to spell my name?"
 Paul: (Points to Mark's name on the library chart and spells out the letters) "Yes, it's here -- M-A-R-K."
 Mark: (Surprised voice) "That's right!"
 Paul: "Did you just turn five today?"
 Mark: "Yes."
 Paul: "You'll probably have five candles on your cake."
 (Suddenly Paul rolls over Mark. Both boys laugh. Mark sits cautiously on Paul's chest and then gets off.)
 Paul: "Doesn't hurt. Do it again." (Mark does and then gets off again.) "Doesn't hurt. Do it again."
 Mark: (Sits still)
 Paul: (Gets up and punches Mark in the stomach)
 Mark: "It didn't hurt." (Paul punches harder.) "It didn't -- that hurted me."
 Paul: (Rolls over and grabs a book) "Just read books. You know why I'm strong?"
 Mark: (Dejectedly) "Why?"
 Paul: "I turned five months ago."
 Mark: (Low thoughtful voice) "-- And I just turned five."

Age seemed extraordinarily important to these children though in the competition-stakes it presented a "no win" situation. As Belinda's mother commented, in February, as she looked at the cluster of girls by the kindergarten door all dressed-up in party finery and ready to attend Belinda's party:

Well, am I glad she's five. For the last few months she's been saying, "I'm only four-and-a-half. I'm a baby" (imitates Belinda's "baby voice"), or else it's been, "I'm only four-and-a-half and everyone's five" (plaintive voice). This morning it was, "Tomorrow I'm five. I'm a big girl now." They make such a big thing of it -- though I worry 'cos next year it'll be the same thing again when the other kids turn six.
 (Fieldnotes: February 2nd)

As I watched Belinda twirling on the spot, her purple and blue taffeta dress and her ringletted hair trying to catch up with her body, I wondered

how long she would be dogged by the age shadow. "Turning five" had started, in the classroom, to have assumed far less importance than being five "for months". It seems that young children, echoing their caregivers' fears about age and maturity, pay a disproportionate amount of attention to how many years they have lived. From classroom observations, Gary, the oldest child and Robbie, in the middle age range, seemed far less socially mature in classroom interactions and less able in centre activities than some of the younger children such as Jane, Mark, Shawn and Trevor.

The Social Groupings: The social groupings in the classroom were complex and changed over time. Centre groups were initially composed of random clusters of children. As they learned the organizational structure of the room, and as friendships were formed, then the children began to barter centre cards so that they could be at the same activity as friends. In addition, some children selected two sets of centre cards, namely ones for themselves and a duplicate set for a friend. Janette frequently followed the latter pattern, selecting an extra set of cards for Jane. Initial friendships crossed sexes, for example Trevor's close friend was Laura, a little girl whom he had known prior to kindergarten entrance. Over time friendships shifted and became uni-sexual either through natural selection or because lining-up in separate "boys" and "girls" lines several times each afternoon enhanced awareness of the sexual division. Trevor affiliated himself with Shawn, Janice with Belinda in what Mrs. Webster described as "a gruesome twosome" (February), Janette maintained her friendship with Jane, and Marvin allied himself with Paul. Mark did not establish a close friendship with any child during the course of the study. He had uneasy alliances with Adam, Paul

and Marvin but, probably because of his reluctance to be involved in the physical rough and tumble of their play, these relationships did not develop into friendships. However, Mark did not seem an isolate, for he played with a wide range of class members without selecting any for intimate friendship. Mark's apparent self-containment, in that he seemed perfectly at ease with his own company, seemed to prevent loneliness, as did his interactions with classroom caregivers which occurred with some consistent frequency.

As the months passed the social structure became increasingly complex and the established friendship pairs and groups aligned and re-aligned into "clubs". The "club" structuring started in January and seemed to embody the same social characteristics as a university sorority! The children were politically active in gaining access and achieving leaderships of clubs. Trevor and Mark appeared to ignore the club structures, though Janette and Belinda were keen competitors in the membership and leadership stakes, for example:

The children collect their outdoor clothes and dress on the rug in the group discussion area.

Janette: "Today is just my club. I'll decide on Suzanne and Jane."

Belinda: "No you won't. It's my club today. I'm having Janice and -- and Penny" (Penny smiles excitedly and Belinda smiles back. Janette frowns).

Suzanne: "I can't come Janette -- 'cos it's my club today."

Janette: (In a quiet voice) "Can I be in your club?"

Suzanne: (Hesitates) "We're doing something very special."

Janette: (Plaintive voice) "I'll listen."

Belinda: (Loudly and animatedly) "We're doing something very special too!"

The social structure in the kindergarten classroom, thus, became increasingly sophisticated over time. This structure was enacted not only on the playground but in the classroom itself. It influenced centre selections especially, wherein social friends became learning partners or associates.

The Caregivers

Two adults provide the central caregiving functions in the classroom. Mrs. Noreen Compton, the kindergarten teacher, lives in the community within easy walking distance of the school. For Noreen, community and school life merges in that she personally knows many of the parents of the kindergarten children. The parents may be neighbours, like Trevor's family who lives across the street, or people met at local social functions. Almost half of her present class is composed of younger siblings of students previously taught, and hence Noreen has met the parents as they served as kindergarten helpers, and the preschool brothers and sisters as they accompanied their parents. Noreen is thus a neighbour and a teacher, with a dual role which bridges the community and school worlds. In September, 1983, Noreen approached her fifth year of kindergarten teaching at Malkin School. Prior to moving to this school she had previously taught in a Grade One classroom. Due partially to the "open door" policy at the school, and also because Noreen is well known to parents, many families volunteer their services in the kindergarten. On four days a week, a volunteer parent helper assists in the classroom. Once "cooking" started as a classroom activity an additional parent helper came on Tuesday afternoons to supervise the activity. Other parents provide classroom snacks and rotate the duty. There is no shortage of assistance when major projects are announced by the teacher. During the study, parents sewed book bags, saved and delivered craft materials, provided a driving service for fieldtrips, loaned a television until the computer monitor arrived, and repainted the playhouse furniture. Noreen orchestrates all the helpers and their activities for two kindergarten classes. Each Friday she has no aide or

parent volunteer as she notes; "I need time by myself with the children" (Fieldnotes: October 17th).

The second adult regularly in the room is Mrs. Lorna Webster. She is the paid kindergarten aide from Monday to Thursday, though for a half-hour each afternoon she works on a language development programme with a Grade One boy. Lorna, like Noreen, lives in the community. As noted in the previous section, Lorna and her family moved into the area prior to the construction of Malham School. Once the local school was built, and her children were in attendance, Lorna and her husband became involved in the Home and School group, and the political action necessary to stimulate the building of district secondary schools. Presently, she serves on the parents' committee at the Junior High School and, during the course of the research, spoke on a panel to provide views on racial tolerance and understanding for school administrators. Hence, Lorna's world spans the local school, the larger Skipton Estates' educational structure, and Malham community. Mrs. Compton suggests that she and Lorna have compatible views in the classroom, namely, "Lorna and I think alike -- same ideas on discipline -- same approach" (Interview, September 1st).

The Kindergarten Programme

No official curriculum guide provides a structure for the kindergarten classroom. The programme organization is the teacher's domain. The organizational structure demands intents or purposes on the part of the programme provider, a body of content to be described to the learners, and a form, or system, wherein to enact the describer-learner interactions. Within the kindergarten classroom the teacher provides all three aspects which, when intertwined, form the programme.

The Teacher's Intents: Mrs. Compton suggests (Interviews,

September 1st and October 19th) that she has definite purposes underlying her programme. Her first aim, which largely covers the pre-Christmas period, is one of school socialization wherein she focuses on teaching the children how to work with a group and how to operate the activity centres and kindergarten routines. During this phase of the school year, the children learn "how the kindergarten is organized -- (how) to put away toys -- (and) line up" (September 1st interview), and "by November" are anticipated to have achieved independence in following the organizational framework. In the early months, Mrs. Compton's allied purpose is also to observe the children and note variables that may interfere with the child's immediate ability to engage in the kindergarten programme and future progress in formal schooling:

I guess for September and October, I'm really looking at how they're interacting with other children -- whether they're able to adapt to the routines in the classroom. I focus in on if there's anything that I consider -- disruptive for the child -- whether there's any problems that have to be sorted out psychologically -- speech problems, hearing, vision. The very first day of class (I) start listening to speech and start sort of watching their behaviour -- like Robbie and Jeremy -- (and) Paul who's really starting to get pushy-shovy in here, and starting to become a dominant personality -- and starting to clue in to who is starting to come out dominant in the class and how do we sort of get them to pull their horns in so that they still work on an even keel with the rest of the class. Basically -- socialization skills. -- Also, I'm looking at any physical difficulties -- let's say with cutting, with being able to print -- if there are any children in here that are not printing their names -- like Belinda can't print her name, but she's young, so it's something that's coming so we print out her name for her in dots. Also -- we're starting to make them independent ... The first day of school they chose cards to go to a centre, and now they're totally independent as far as choosing cards, and then the sort of second step is book bags -- they're doing book bags -- they're getting their running shoes on. We have a system for getting running shoes on -- all those sorts of things. We're starting to work on independence. -- Also looking at fine motor things, for example children not holding scissors correctly.

Before we have parent-teacher interviews next month those kids who are having fine motor difficulties -- packages will be printed out for the parents so that their parents can do it with them. (October 19th)

In the latter extract, Mrs. Compton emphasizes her initial intents, namely the transmission of socialization patterns, the stimulation of independent performance and the observation of children's behaviours, and also provides glimpses of her second major intent, the preparation for Grade One entrance.

Mrs. Compton notes that she has an advantage in pursuing this second purpose in that she has taught Grade One and hence knows "what's needed" for success in that programme. After Christmas, she suggests, specific activities related to Grade One "readiness" are promoted, including literacy activities. When interviewed in September and October, Noreen Compton notes that at that stage of the year she does not "consciously sit down and think -- this child is print aware" (October 19th). Classroom print tasks are informally included in the activity centres and the children are welcome to use them to "go on from where they are", but the deliberate stimulation of literacy awareness is proposed for the second part of the kindergarten year:

I'm setting up a printing centre here tomorrow that they'll be able to print with the letters -- with the printing set. It's there, I guess -- the thing is I don't push it. The opportunity's there for them, all right, but I'm not pushing it. After Christmas I will start having each of the kids to go up to -- say that leaf (points to a wall chart of a leaf with three words on it) -- and spell -- say the letters to me, but we'll have hundreds of words on there. Like in February we're doing dinosaurs and so we'll have stegosaurus -- we'll have brontosaurus -- we'll have triceratops -- we'll have the word dinosaurs -- we'll have the word fossil -- we'll have the word extinct, and they'll be able to identify all those words -- maybe it's only by the colour coding that they are, but there'll be the kids that can spell the words. They can identify every letter. So we start hitting on those sorts of things then, but

you see it's more deliberate, I guess. (October interview)

In summary, from my interviews with Mrs. Compton, it becomes clear that:

1. Socialization and the promotion of independence are primary intents.
2. Preparedness for Grade One is a second purpose and intimately related to learning school social patterns and independent work habits as well as to academic "readiness".
3. Literacy learning occupies a place in the agenda but is reserved for the second part of the year. There is an indication that literacy is to be developed within the parameters of teacher-provided classroom content, e.g. the dinosaur letter and word identification activities in the October interview.
4. Literacy learning activities may be perceived as vehicles for the transmission of the basic intents, namely independent ability to follow the routines embodied in the school socialization process, e.g. "doing book bags", and the necessary skills for Grade One entry, e.g. "printing their names".

The Teacher's Programme Content: The teacher's intentions suggest why a certain organization is pursued in the kindergarten. Mrs. Compton's programme content provides an overt manifestation of what subject matter is introduced in the classroom. As noted previously, the kindergarten content is the teacher's prerogative. Mrs. Compton develops overall content largely through themes, each one lasting a month. In September "The Zoo" was the theme, in October a mixture of "Fall", "Safety" and "Hallowe'en", in November "Hospitals", in December "Christmas", in January "Winnie the Pooh", in February "Dinosaurs", and in March, just as my research was finishing, "Space" was introduced.

The order of the thematic subject matter was decided co-operatively between Mrs. Compton and a part-time kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Morrison, who worked afternoons in a nearby classroom situated in the main core of the school. Both teachers planned and executed themes in the same order:

Like we sat down for "Fall" -- and all the things we wanted to do in our rooms -- we divided up the work -- like I mixed the paint for the hand tree (art activity) and gave her some of that paint, but she xeroxed the (tree) trunks -- and I got them all cut up ready to go. (October interview)

So that content preparation could be shared, Mrs. Compton re-ordered certain units of themes. For example, Mrs. Morrison had booked a hospital fieldtrip for November, and hence Noreen Compton switched her hospital unit from the summer to November. This change of order meant that content had to be modified. As print activities planned for a summer unit were considered too difficult for the early part of the year, change was required:

Like last year I did Hospital at the end of the year -- the last month. That Hospital unit from last year is going to be totally different from the coming one (in November) because we're not going to do the experience charts (because) the group language development those children had (at the end of the year) -- the sentence structure and the way they were able to express themselves -- we're not going to get that at this time of year, except (with) some of the kids. (October interview)

Mrs. Compton suggested that print worksheets involving matching words such as "thermometer, bandaid (and) stethoscope", with pictures would also have to be removed from the unit as, "these kids aren't capable of doing that now". During the course of the study, it was noted that other modifications occurred in the classroom content planned for the month. Spontaneous changes in content were motivated by the teacher on the basis of new information received at educational workshops and conferences, and

due to the arrival of new equipment in the school. For example, in the fall, Lorna Webster and Noreen Compton went to an early childhood conference and as a result made the Blocks Centre a focal point in the classroom, for a period. In November, computers arrived in the school and hence the content expanded to include computer activities. Mrs. Compton attended a mathematics workshop and new math patterning and classification activities were added in the post-Christmas period. At the Teachers' Conference in February, Mrs. Compton attended a lecture on whole language approaches to literacy development, and predictable books and patterned poems were introduced in the classroom towards the end of the study. These content additions resulted from external influences on Mrs. Compton's thinking, though subjects changes could consistently be integrated with her two basic intents, socialization and academic preparation for schooling. At no time did spontaneous changes in basic group content emerge from child-initiated subject matter, though, on occasion, individual teacher-student interactions elaborated a child's topic, for example, when Mark announced that he was about to have his tonsils removed in September, Mrs. Compton discussed hospitals with him and read him a hospital book in the library corner.

The rationale for selecting specific content was investigated in my October interview with Noreen Compton. She suggests that she has built up "complete themes -- over the years" wherein "lots of activities" have been integrated around the central content. Topics are the teacher's choice, and Mrs. Compton notes that once the focus is decided upon, she plans "language arts -- centres, math -- ideas, art, music, dramatic play, things to do in gym -- (and) science types of activities" "brainstorms" and writes down film titles, puzzles and "any hifty games"

that could be "adapt(ed) to the theme". Thus, Mrs. Compton develops an original idea for a theme and it mushrooms to encompass a wide range of activities. However, I did not receive explicit information concerning why particular theme topics were chosen for study in the first place. It may be hypothesized that certain content was selected, out of an endless array of possible options, because supportive materials initially attracted the teacher's attention, and because the topics were considered to be likely to interest the children. It is apparent that "Fall", "Hallowe'en" and "Christmas" were selected as seasonal themes. Noreen had completed a graduate project on children's fears and did state that hospitals were focused upon because many young children experienced anxiety about visiting hospitals for treatment. However, for "Zoo Animals", "Dinosaurs", "Winnie the Pooh" and "Space", the reasons for selection seem less clear, and the previous hypotheses seem to offer the most salient explanation for their inclusion.

The literacy context in the kindergarten is partially provided by the programme content. The classroom had a pool of "permanent print" that was constantly accessible to the children during the course of the study. Commercial cut-outs of pictures with accompanying colour words were spaced over the built-in cupboards. A black cat was labelled "black", a ghost "white", a banana "yellow", a plum "purple", a raindrop "blue", a flamingo "pink", a pumpkin "orange", a tomato "red", a bear "brown" and a tree "green". A large collage of red objects and the word "red" were fixed to the cloakroom wall. Additional teacher-made colour posters and labels were permanently affixed to the counter cupboard doors. Commercial number cards with a picture, a number, the relevant number of dots and the number word were pinned to the wall above the counter (zero to six) and to the

back classroom wall (seven to nine). As well as the colour and number words, the children's printed names were permanent fixtures in the room. Coat pegs, shoe storage units and an attendance chart were labelled in the cloakroom area. Book bags each had a child's name printed on the front and were hung on the named coat hooks. In the classrooms, names were printed on the pockets of the centre choice chart and on the library chart. Names, usually written by the teacher or the aide during the first part of the year, were printed on the children's work hanging on the walls. Monthly calendars also had names on them, though these names were invariably printed by the children themselves. Mrs. Compton's book and storage area, around her desk, contained a variety of labelled materials. Two notices at adult eye-level were pinned to a wall and a cupboard door, providing directions for fire drill and a list naming left-handed children and students with allergies. Thus, the permanent print reflected the classroom organizational and socialization intent, for the names functionally directed the children to tidy away shoes, coats and book bags, to announce their presence in the social group and to file centre and library cards into relevant storage locations. Named work on the walls assisted adults in their distribution of artwork to the children, to be carried home in book bags, and named calendars facilitated the daily calendar routine. The colour and number words were the only other examples of constantly available print, possibly because they matched the teacher's academic intent, as isolated words for both topics are an early teaching emphasis in many Grade One classrooms.

A large part of the classroom literacy context was provided by the monthly theme. The start of a new month heralded print context changes in noticeboards, charts, centre games, listening centre materials, worksheets,

books read to the children, and the supplementary books added to the classroom library. On the following pages the literacy context for September to February has been summarized (Table 4). A few examples of non-print activities have also been included in the Centre Time columns as some months included few or no print tasks in this area.

An Overview of the Content: The descriptive summaries of each month's programme content, with special emphasis on print materials, is presented in a theme-by-theme or month-by-month manner, as the order of exposure to such materials represents the form of exposure experienced by the children and planned by the teacher. The summaries do not provide "total pictures" of the programme content, or even of the print content, for the computer software available from mid-November to the conclusion of the study, the daily calendar routine, the ongoing exposure to cooking cards and the oral language sessions based on a commercial language development kit, were all regular activities in the classroom and all contained varying degrees of print. However, the thematic context has received major focus in my summaries for its primacy in the classroom was apparent from observational data. In addition, though descriptions emphasize print materials in the classrooms, clearly literacy may be viewed in broader terms, for strategies and processes utilized in dramatic play, in games and in language activities, can be linked to the development of "disembedded" (Donaldson, 1978, p. 75) or decontextualized thinking, which may make a vital contribution to literacy learning. These aspects will receive attention in the section on classroom interactions (Chapter VI). In overviewing the literacy context partially provided by the programme context, several general aspects seem apparent. Firstly, it is suggested that the teacher's intents are mirrored in the print

Literacy Context: September to February

Group Time

Centres

Stories Read to the Children
Library

Classroom Library

Noticeboards

I. September (Zoo Animal Theme)

- 1. Posters of zoo animals
- 2. Front notice-board:
 - commercial cut-out pictures of zoo animals
 - printed labels for each picture of e.g. picture of a monkey and word "monkey"
- 1. Twenty books related to the zoo theme, i.e. descriptive accounts of the Zoo and narrative tales of animals
- 2. Animal's puppets. Children encouraged to "read a book with your puppet. -- Let the puppets help you to look at a book" (Sep. 27)

- 1. "The Gorilla Did It": tale of an imaginary primate who supposedly messed up a little boy's room
- 2. Pictures shown from "Zoo City" to stimulate a craft activity

- 1. "Harry the Dirty Dog"
- 2. "Curious George"
- 3. "The Three Bears"

- Non-Print:
 - animal jigsaws
 - animal models to construct
 - plastic animals in sandbox and water area
 - animal classification games

- 1. One activity focusing on word identification of zoo animal labels on the front notice-board. Focused on letter identification, counting the number of letters in each word and matching the word to the picture.

- Print:
 - None included except * (See p. 265)
- 2. Zoo filmstrips
- 3. Animal riddles read to the class i.e. Guess the animal (print not shown).
- 4. Animal poem i.e. "I'm a bear, hear me growl!" (print not shown)
- 5. Worksheet: pasted the zoo

Noticeboards Classroom Library Stories Read to the Children Centres Group Time
 Classroom Library

animals onto a zoo train.
 Directions on the worksheet e.g. "Name" and "paste here" not mentioned to the children.

*Mark was given an opportunity to dictate a language experience story on hospital, prior to his tonsils being removed.

II. October (Fall, Safety and Hallowe'en Themes)

1. First half of the month:
 Fall display:
 a) Coloured figures raking leaves
 b) Large laminated leaf with "leaf", "fall" and "autumn" printed on it
 2. Second half of the month:
 Hallowe'en:
 a) Coloured Hallowe'en figures, objects: e.g. cat, bat, gravestone

1. Prior to October 11 Library Workshop September's zoo books remained in the library.
 2. After Oct. 11 the book corner was filled with over 100 storybooks selected by parents and children at Workshop
 3. A new chart, depicting a bear holding a book, was placed in the library corner. Caption: "I like to read"

1. "The Bird and the Stars": chained event story moving from bird context to more remote contexts e.g. U.S.A., world and galaxy (Oct. 4)
 2. "The Old Woman and her Cherries" Fall theme (Oct. 18)
 3. "The Rain Puddle" farm story (Oct. 19)
 4. "Georgie and the Pumpkin": Hallowe'en story (Oct. 25)

1. "Frederick" story of a mouse: Follow-up activity was constructing a mouse bookmark

Non-Print: Hallowe'en crafts, Fall number games, art work and science activities
 Print:
 1. Two alphabet games:
 a) leaves and nuts: capitals matched to lower-case
 b) ghosts, cats, witch hats: match capitals to capitals

1. One activity focusing on the oak leaf chart.
 Word identification, spelling the words by letter naming and counting letters received emphasis.
 2. Music charts entitled "Let's Ride in a Car", "Let's Swing in a Swing". Music symbols pointed to, though print not mentioned.

Noticeboards

Classroom Library

Stories Read to the Children
Classroom Library

Centres

Group Time

b) Commercial

print titles,

i.e. "Trick

'n Treating"

and "October

31st"

3. A list of

class members'

names on chart

plus question,

"Can you button

up your sweater?"

4. Zoo animal puppets
retained until the
week before Hallowe'en.
Then they were

replaced with

Hallowe'en puppets,

e.g. a cat, a witch

and a ghost

2. Listening

centre:

books and

tapes:

"Scruffy the

Tugboat",

"Robin Hood"

"Rumpelstilts-

skin"

3. Classifica-

tion games with

labels, "small",

"smaller",

"smallest",

"jagged", and

"smooth", "rain"

and "snow"

4. Printing

centre: asked

to print given

words using

commercial

printing set.

Words: bat,

Jack-o-lantern,

witch, cat

and pumpkin

*

* Three children dictated individual stories for their paintings,
to a parent, i.e. Belinda, Gary and Laura.

Noticeboards	Classroom Library	Stories Read to the Children	Centres	Group Time
<p>Classroom Library</p> <p>Classroom</p>	<p>Library</p>	<p>Library</p>	<p>Centres</p>	<p>Group Time</p>
<p>1. Samples of hospital equipment stapled to the front noticeboard.</p> <p>2. Each piece of equipment had a print label: mask, bracelet, forceps, medicine cup, stethoscope, surgery hats, scissors, swabs, gauze, oxygen mask, intravenous and throat swab.</p> <p>3. Box of word cards to match the words on the noticeboard.</p> <p>4. Side walls covered with hospital pictures and posters. X-rays mounted on windows.</p>	<p>1. A series of descriptive books on a health theme was read to the class, i.e. "Listen to My Heart", "Eyes", "Sleep", "A Drop of Blood" and "Your Skin and Mine".</p> <p>2. "What's So Funny, Katu?": African folk-tale.</p> <p>3. Selection of poems from "Alligator Pie"</p>	<p>1. "Peter's Chair": story about a little boy sharing old toys and baby equipment with an infant sister.</p> <p>2. "What's So Funny, Katu?": African folk-tale.</p> <p>3. Selection of poems from "Alligator Pie"</p>	<p>Non-Print:</p> <p>1. House converted to a hospital with gowns, bed & hospital equipment</p> <p>2. Hospital puzzles, classification and memory games</p> <p>3. Filmstrip: "Germs"</p> <p>Print:</p> <p>1. Printing centre. Words given: swabs, blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, gauze, otoscope, needle, swab, cotton balls</p> <p>2. Flannelboard activity, building hospital words from felt letters.</p>	<p>1. Activities focusing on word labels on the noticeboard, e.g. clapping words in segments "in-tra-ve-nous", naming the letters in words, and matching labels to labels.</p> <p>2. Several film-strips on the hospital theme. Print emphasized on frames depicting charts and hospital bracelets.</p> <p>3. Worksheets: a) counting hospital objects b) matching words e.g. thermometer matched to another label and picture. (Putting names on worksheets introduced to the class)</p>

III. November (Hospital Theme)

1. Samples of hospital equipment stapled to the front noticeboard.
2. Each piece of equipment had a print label: mask, bracelet, forceps, medicine cup, stethoscope, surgery hats, scissors, swabs, gauze, oxygen mask, intravenous and throat swab.
3. Box of word cards to match the words on the noticeboard.
4. Side walls covered with hospital pictures and posters. X-rays mounted on windows.

1. Same collection of storybooks as in October.
2. Collection of descriptive books on a hospital-health theme, e.g. "The Five Senses", "My Friend the Doctor". (Books arranged on the counter for school reading only.)

1. "Peter's Chair": story about a little boy sharing old toys and baby equipment with an infant sister.
2. "What's So Funny, Katu?": African folk-tale.
3. Selection of poems from "Alligator Pie"

- Non-Print:
1. House converted to a hospital with gowns, bed & hospital equipment
 2. Hospital puzzles, classification and memory games
 3. Filmstrip: "Germs"
- Print:
1. Printing centre. Words given: swabs, blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, gauze, otoscope, needle, swab, cotton balls
 2. Flannelboard activity, building hospital words from felt letters.

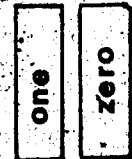
1. Activities focusing on word labels on the noticeboard, e.g. clapping words in segments "in-tra-ve-nous", naming the letters in words, and matching labels to labels.
2. Several film-strips on the hospital theme. Print emphasized on frames depicting charts and hospital bracelets.
3. Worksheets: a) counting hospital objects b) matching words e.g. thermometer matched to another label and picture. (Putting names on worksheets introduced to the class)

Noticeboards Classroom Library Stories Read to the Children Centres Group Time
Classroom Library

- 3. Classifying words by initial consonants. Hospital words to be arranged in alphabetical order.
- 4. Two menus with pictures and print labels of food items were placed in the hospital play centre.
- 5. Listening Centre: "The Three Little Pigs" with accompanying felt figures for a flannel-board activity

During November, interviews were held with the children's parents. The following word recognition activities were suggested for home implementation:

- 1. Word matching (number and colour words)
- Charts should be constructed at home, e.g:

(Sample from a sheet given to the parents. Fieldnotes, November 17th)

2. Making letters into words.

The chart words could be cut into letters, and then arranged into words again, e.g.

e d r : r e d

3. When colours and numbers had been learned, parents could select words related to "Christmas -- animals, food, furniture, bees, etc". Function words and verbs could also be taught from flashcards, e.g. "the, A, a, is, was, are" (Fieldnotes, November 17th).

Noticeboards	Classroom Library	Stories Read to the Children	Centres	Group Time
	Classroom	Library		
IV. December (Christmas Theme)				
1. Commercial and teacher-made Christmas cut-out figures and objects were pinned to all the noticeboards.	1. Same collection of storybooks as in October, and November.	1. "Noel for Jeanne Marie"	Non-Print:	1. One activity centred on Santa's list.
2. Four charts in the shape of a bell, a stocking, a candle and a tree, were pinned to the front noticeboard. The teacher cut Christmas scenes from cards and stuck them on the charts. Each picture was labelled, e.g. The Bell, Bethlehem, Shepherd and Three Wise Men (not used	2. Several Christmas books were added, e.g. "Rudolph" and "Frosty the Snowman". (These were reserved for school reading.)	2. "The Christmas Bunny"	boys, tissue paper designs, Christmas stockings, angels, table centres, template designs.	Children's requests were printed on the laminated charts, e.g. Trevor - a car, Marvin - a Snoopy toothbrush, Mark - a Rough Rider 4 X 4, Janette - a Tippy Toes, Janice - a Mickey Mouse Telephone (Dec. 6th)
		3. "Little Bear's Christmas"	1. Alphabet matching game on holly leaves (lower case letters).	2. Children asked to write their names, o
		4. "The Shepherd"	2. "Wrapping" mock gifts, classifying and memory games.	
			Print:	

Noticeboards

Classroom Library

Stories Read to the Children
Classroom Library

Centres

Group Time

for teaching purposes).

3. A laminated chart entitled "Santa's List" was also pinned to the front board. The children's requests were printed on this chart by the teacher.

4. As the children completed crafts, they were pinned to boards, e.g. tissue paper stars.

prepared gift labels, e.g. "Merry Xmas, Love --"

3. Carols projected on gymnasium wall for school carol singing.

V. January (Winnie the Pooh Theme)

1. Front notice-board: cut-out Pooh characters with accompanying print labels. Duplicate set of labels for matching.

2. Pooh pictures (teacher-made) displayed around the room.

1. All the book corner storybooks were changed by the aide, Mrs. Webster. A new set of storybooks was obtained from the school library.

2. A collection of Golden Books on a Pooh theme was added to the library. These were reserved "to be read in school" (Jan. 9th).

1. "Winnie the Pooh and Tigger"
2. "Winnie the Pooh Meets Gopher" (Both Golden Books)

1. "Katy No Pocket": the story of a kangaroo - linked to Kanga via a stuffed toy.

2. "The Three Bears" (Paul Galdone) was reread; linked to Pooh.

Non-Print:

1. Puzzles, memory and classification games on Pooh characters.

2. Number games on Pooh theme.

3. Animal shapes for painting Pooh characters.

1. Whole class activity on naming the Pooh characters; print labels used.

2. Counting and naming letters on Pooh character labels.

3. Learning a Pooh song: rhyming words emphasized.

Noticeboards	Classroom Library	Stories Read to the Children Classroom	Centres Library	Group Time								
<p>3. Children's work displayed e.g. xeroxed outlines of "dresses for Kanga" and "a dish for Pooh" were coloured by the children and hung on the walls.</p> <p>4. Alphabet sequence displayed on cut-out pictures of Eeyore.</p>	<p>3. Pooh puppets and stuffed toys were placed in the library corner.</p>	<p>3. A rhythmic, narrative action poem, "The Three Bears" was modelled. The children repeated the poem and joined Pooh words on in increasingly front board to over three weeks.</p>	<p>Print:</p> <p>1. Matching number words to number cards (picture clues provided).</p> <p>2. Matching Pooh words on front board to word cards.</p> <p>3. Building letters into Pooh words e.g. <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>o</td><td>P</td><td>o</td><td>h</td></tr></table> = Pooh</p> <p>4. Constructing Pooh words from popsicle sticks e.g. <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>P</td><td>O</td><td>O</td><td>H</td></tr></table> = Pooh</p> <p>5. Classifying Pooh words into columns on the basis of the number of letters each contains, e.g. Pooh = column 4</p> <p>6. Arranging Pooh words into alphabetical order on the basis of initial consonants.</p>	o	P	o	h	P	O	O	H	<p>4. Four work-sheets on Pooh. One included print, i.e. an alphabet dot-to-dot puzzle.</p>
o	P	o	h									
P	O	O	H									

Noticeboards

Classroom Library

Stories Read to the Children
Classroom Library

Centres

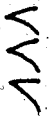

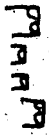
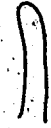

Group Time

7. Board games with print directions:
- a) Game played with coloured chips. Sample directions: "Any player to next yellow" and "Piglet and Rabbit to next green".
 - b) Game requiring the matching of initial consonants (pictures provided) with an alphabetical sequence.
 - c) Another game requiring placing pictures on an alphabetical road on the basis of initial consonants. Game also included print directions e.g. "Move ahead to P" or "Go back to C".
8. Listening Centre:
- "Winnie the Pooh",
 - "Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too" and
 - "Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day" (books and tapes).
- Record of a Pooh story with a flannelboard activity.

VI. February (Dinosaur Theme)

<p>1. Front notice-board: cut-out dinosaurs with accompanying print labels, i.e. brachyosaurus, Tyrannosaurus Rex, Stegosaurus, Ankylosaurus and Trachodon.</p> <p>2. A blank dinosaur chart: words written during the month, e.g. dinosaur, fossil, extinct.</p>	<p>1. Same collection of storybooks as in January.</p> <p>2. A nucleus of 15 dinosaur books was placed in one section of the library shelving. Blue tape was placed on the shelves to show that these books should remain in school. This collection grew during the month as the children added dinosaur books that they had brought from home.</p>	<p>1. "The Story of Dinosaurs"</p> <p>2. "More About Dinosaurs"</p> <p>3. "The Big-Little Dinosaur" plus 5 other descriptive dinosaur texts</p> <p>4. "King Kangaroo" a predictable book was read to the class after the teacher attended a work-shop on such materials.</p>	<p>1. "Dinosaurs" (McDonald Starter Series): announced as "a true book about dinosaurs"</p> <p>2. "If the Dinosaurs Came Back": a rhythmic predictable fantasy tale</p> <p>3. The narrative poem, "The Three Bears" was done once more with the children</p> <p>4. "I know an old lady who swallowed a fly": told with a puppet and animal cards.</p>	<p>Non-Print: Dinosaur plastic figures at centres. Memory, classification games, mazes and puzzles all on dinosaur theme. Plasticene modelling of dinosaurs. Painting of dinosaur pictures encouraged.</p> <p>Print: 1. If dinosaur pictures were painted then they could dictate, to an adult, a personal language experience story.</p> <p>2. Printing Centre:</p>	<p>1. Several activities focusing on identification of dinosaur words on front board. Activities focused on clapping word segments, identifying letters and spelling out words, and counting letters within words. Once, a word chunk, "saur" was pointed out in several words.</p> <p>2. Two language experiences were written with the whole class, e.g. Triceratops:</p>
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Dinosaur words were provided for copying, i.e. Triceratops, Brontosaurus, Tyrannosaurus Rex, Stegosaurus, Ankylosaurus

Triceratops
He has 3 horns 
He has a frill 
He has 4 legs 
He has 1 tail 
He has a beak 

3. Word building activity wherein children had to unscramble letters and rebuild a modelled word, e.g. triceratops

He eats plants
He has a big body (Feb. 27th)

4. Building dinosaur words from popsicle sticks.

3. A chart was presented on cards i.e. Dinosaurs here Dinosaurs there Dinosaurs, dinosaurs everywhere! (Feb. 28th) Children were encouraged to substitute words that were written on card, e.g. Fighting here Fighting there Fighting, fighting everywhere!

Noticeboards

Classroom Library

Stories Read to the Children
Classroom Library

Centres

Group Time

4. Worksheets:

a) Dinosaurs'

"Habitat": glueing foliage etc. on a sheet (print not mentioned).

b) Making a jigsaw with relational words printed on pieces of paper, i.e. in front of, on, above, beside, behind and under.

5. Children requested to read A.M.A. posters during a safety presentation. Approximations rejected, i.e. "only tell me if you can really read them" (Motor Association's representative).

content provided, in that print materials escalated in the post-Christmas period when Mrs. Compton suggested that she intended "to push" literacy development (October interview). An exception may be found in November's proliferation of print materials, which seemed inconsistent with September, October and November's patterns. However, this hospital theme had been re-ordered and transposed from an "end of the year unit" to an earlier theme. As Mrs. Compton preserved thematic files, the abundance of "year-end" print was presented earlier than originally anticipated. Some modification of the print materials, in the hospital unit, was planned (October interview with Mrs. Compton), though clearly many of the original materials were still utilized. Thus, there may be an indication that previously planned thematic content can take precedence over intents to modify the programme.

Secondly, it seems quite clear from the observational data, that the teacher's content, in its pre-planned form, provides the agenda or ground-bed for classroom life. This programme agenda is planned and put into operation by the teacher for the children to learn from. In February, it is interesting to note a change in the primacy of the teacher's agenda, for, in my classroom observations, it was only during this month that children's contributions to the programme content were apparent. Even then, the children's contributions were accepted and encouraged only when they maintained thematic congruence with the dinosaur theme. As the children caught interest in the content and could relate school dinosaurs to dinosaurs, books, models and records in their home contexts, then the theme permitted the transference of "teacher's content" to "children's content contributions". This was facilitated, it seems, by Mrs. Compton's attendance at a language experience workshop, wherein the children's

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contributions to the literacy learning process were presumably emphasized. During February, the first two group language experience charts were completed. One previous, largely teacher pre-written chart, was presented in October, but no group story where the children provided the total content had been introduced before the two dinosaur charts. Also, the children were encouraged to be authors in composing their own dinosaur charts, and some children were invited to dictate individual language experience stories. Underlying purposes may well have transmitted content requirements implicitly to the children, for it was only children who had painted dinosaur pictures who accessed a personal language experience story. Only during three previous occasions had I observed language experience stories being elicited from the children and written beneath their pictures. These three occasions occurred in September and October, once when Mark was due to be hospitalized and he was invited to paint a picture and dictate a hospital story, once when Paul's mother was encouraged to write stories with the children, and once when a sentence was written under Penny's flower picture, a painting she seemed to show to everyone in the classroom. Another interesting facet of the "teacher's agenda" compared to the "children's contributions" may well be apparent in the group language experience chart when related to individual language experience stories. In the group chart on dinosaurs, the children listed "dinosaur facts", e.g. "He has three horns", whereas in the individual stories the children themselves used a narrative genre. For example, Mark's account of Tyrannosaurus Rex preparing to spring on Stegosaurus, and the potential of a volcanic eruption (Fieldnotes: February 17th), leaves the reader with a wide array of prediction and story-closure possibilities, i.e.

Tyrannosaurus Rex is coming to Stegosaurus. He's gonna eat Stegosaurus. The volcano is going to blow up.

In the group, the children seemed to sense that description, or a public display of dinosaur knowledge was required, whereas individually their self-chosen task involved the mystery of imaginative narratives. Maybe they subconsciously realized that description and "safe" facts provide a mutual ground for group participation, and the narrative world of imagination is a very personal area. Thus, it seems that making connections with the teacher's agenda, her content and allied intents, appears to be important for kindergarten programme participation.

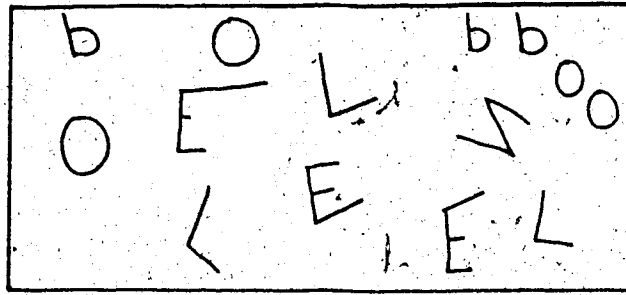
Janice provides a lovely example of how some children are able to make these connections with the teacher's programme, and at the same time make personal sense of their world. On March 1st the children are told that the Space theme will start the following Monday. On March 1st and 2nd dinosaurs would be concluded. Janice paints a picture on the first day of March, and the language experience story she dictates reflects her attempts to conceptualize the agenda and to make sense of the old and the new:

Janice: (Dictates) "It's a spaceman. His suit is all different colours. He likes dinosaurs. He lives in a tent." (Just erected that day as a "spaceship" for next week.) "He's happy and he takes care of little kids, and he plays with them. He loves them."

Thirdly, the literacy content of the teacher's programme suggests an emphasis on letter and word level print activities. There is an indication in our October interview, that Mrs. Compton believes that language experience stories are better placed at the conclusion of the year when the children are able to "express themselves". Logically, it appears that Mrs. Compton conceptualizes that letter and word tasks are

easier for children than language experience sentences and stories. Classroom letter and word activities ranged from single letter identification to the recognition of complex words such as "otoscope" and "intravenous" though I suggest that the children may have limited meaning associations for such words. Alphabet games and charts were a constant part of the programme. Word recognition activities focused on spelling letters within words, identifying initial consonants, forming words by re-ordering letters, printing teacher-supplied words, and constructing words from popsicle sticks. The oral segmenting of words was apparent in word-clapping activities, and in February, print segments were also introduced to the children, e.g. "dino saur". Connected discourse was not greatly emphasized. Stories and poems were not read daily to the children, though a greater number of books was read to them in February than in September. The overriding dimension of "the theme" was apparent in the classroom story sessions for the quality of the story material seemed subservient to the fact that the story content matched the theme. Classroom story reading was supplemented by weekly sessions in the school library. Here, the theme did not take precedence over quality, for all the materials read by the school librarian could be described as "fine children's literature". In the classroom, the children were not encouraged to produce their own writing until February, when the creation of a personal dinosaur poem was suggested. Printing with the lower-case letters from the printing set, and the written production of "my name" with a primary pencil, were the only "writing" activities selected for attention during my classroom visits. In the initial months, the children themselves attempted to contribute their own free writing through the only medium readily available, paint. Several children

Painted their names and patterns of individual alphabet letters:



(Facsimile of Laura's painting, September 16th)

It is difficult to know whether these attempts came from the children's intrinsic interest in names and letters, or because the classroom literacy context focused on these print aspects. Martha King would undoubtedly suggest that when classrooms do not provide emphasis on the function of print then the children rely on form reproduction (Lecture at the University of Alberta: Creating Word Conference, October 29, 1983).

Thus, in summary, three trends were apparent in the literacy dimensions of the programme content:

1. The amount of print materials and activities increased in the post-Christmas period, which seemed consistent with the teacher's plan to promote literacy learning prior to Grade One entrance, and to offer an initial emphasis on socialization.
2. The teacher's programme content took precedence over the children's contributions, though in February, the children themselves began to provide some of the literacy content, when their ideas related to the theme.
3. Print activities, in the classroom, largely focused on letter and word level tasks and frequently emphasized form over function.

Connected discourse and the children's own writing did not receive major emphases.

Two points seem salient at this stage. Firstly, the programme content describes what is provided for the children and does not suggest whether the children interacted with the materials or learned from them. The chapter on classroom interactions describes this major facet of literacy learning. Secondly, the content materials are not lifeless objects lying around in a classroom. They mirror the teacher's intents. They suggest what receives focus, but they do not supply information about how the teacher's programme is organized to facilitate their utilization. Thus, the following section describes how the materials related in time and space within the organizational framework of the kindergarten.

The Teacher's Classroom Organization: Time and Space: Time and space seem rather abstract concepts to describe an organizational framework, but the classroom data strongly suggests that the two intertwine to formulate an underlying structure in the kindergarten. Both concepts may be rather concretely related to the classroom life in that the day occupies a portion of time that is spent in a physical structure we label a classroom. How that time is spent and how that physical space is planned and used are pertinent to classroom learning. In more abstract terms, time and space bridge contexts for the children and caregivers, for time in home and community spaces may be different or similar to time spent in school and classroom spaces. In addition, we may conceptualize that each classroom participant brings her or his own cognitive and emotional "time and space" into the classroom, for the child and caregiver's own personal experiences, in other "times" and "spaces", surely influence classroom learning and teaching. In the following section, descriptions and discussion focus on the organizational patterns of time and space in the kindergarten, with particular attention to these concepts as they relate

to the literacy context.

Time: The concept of time has a pervasive quality in the kindergarten classroom, for "day", "month" and "year" exert a subtle influence on the programme. Over the year there are different expectations for kindergarten students. In the early part of the year, socialization patterns are taught, and over time increasingly sophisticated social behaviour is expected of the children. Academic content increases after Christmas, with the anticipation that next year will be "time to start the Grade One programme". "The time I was born" is another key concept, for if the time was in January or February the child may be considered to be developmentally at risk for schooling, according to adult caregivers. If the child was born in March, April or May he may be considered to have sufficient maturity to benefit from school experiences. Monthly time is significant in the classroom for the children may anticipate transitions to new content and classroom materials. Seasonal times, such as Fall, Hallowe'en, or Christmas, signal their own dimensions of change in classroom activities. It may be suggested that the time pattern embodied in a day, i.e. "How I spend my day", has the most immediate impact on a kindergarten child. "Today" has a concrete immediacy for the young child.

To describe the sequence of "a typical day in the kindergarten" may reduce the individual characteristics of each day to a generalization. To describe each day is hardly practical in a research study of six months' duration. I am conscious that though yesterday is never mirrored in today, there are certain key components or routines within the kindergarten day which have characteristic dimensions, or predictable aspects, over time. In the following section, these components are described and

extracts from fieldnotes are utilized as examples of characteristic features.

"School Entry and Book Exchange Time"

These times are interwoven in that the daily book exchange was completed during the organizational procedures for entry into the classroom. School entry and book exchanges were predictable events and the routines only varied in the order of completion and if a child forgot one or more aspects of the procedure. When the "second bell" rang the children came in from the playground, removed muddy footwear and placed it on shelves in the hallway, and walked down to the classroom. Upon entry to the cloakroom area there were four routines to be followed, though they could be completed in any order. Each child had to remove outdoor clothes and hang them on a coat peg, change into indoor shoes, acknowledge his presence by turning round his coloured photograph in the attendance chart, and select a new library book.

Exchanging a library book contained sub-routines in that the child had to remove his old book card from the library chart, file it in the returned book, place the book on the rack, choose a new book and file the new card. At the same time the child was required to remember not to take theme-related books home. These could be identified as they had either a pink card in the back or no card, and were positioned together on shelves outlined in blue tape. Once the book routine was completed, the child had to place his new book in his book bag and hang it by his coat.

Example: "Exchanging my book"

Belinda takes her book out of her bag and reclaims the ticket from the chart. She holds the book high over her head. It is a brightly coloured pink book with a picture of a sleeping cat on the front. Its title is, "The Christmas Cat".

Belinda: (As she walks towards the book rack with her book held high) "My Mom forgot to read it to me."

Belinda returns the book to the rack. She spends a full five minutes wandering around the book rack. She picks books out and slides them back without comment. She selects a large storybook, "Sylvester and the Silver Pebble".

Belinda: "It's too big!"

She returns it to the shelf and selects a bright orange book.

Belinda: "I'll pick this one."

She looks in the back for the card, which is a pink one. Janice has just entered the area. She holds up her book.

Janice: "Wild Baby!" (title of the book)

Janice looks over at Belinda.

Janice: "You're not s'posed -- it's got a pink card."

Belinda snaps the book shut, returns it to the rack and continues to look at the shelves. Janette enters the book corner. She returns her book and takes the book immediately to the right, "The Wild Baby" that Janice has just returned.

Janette: (To Jane) "Which one did you pick?"

Jane: (Holds up her book) "I don't know what it is."

Janette: (Looks at the front cover of her own book) "I don't know it."

Both girls move to the library chart to file their new cards. Belinda and Janice are still examining books. Marvin and Trevor come in to the book corner. Both exchange their books rapidly. Trevor selects "Grandfather and I", which is a brightly coloured green and red book with stylized drawings of an older man and a little boy on the front. Marvin takes the book to the right of his returned book and quickly walks away with "Henny Penny", which has a bold, colourful picture of a chicken on the front. Mark enters the area. He returns his book and stands still. His eyes scan three sections of the book rack. Suddenly he moves forward.

Mark: "This one!" (selects "The Shy Little Girl" and flips through the pages) "Uh uh" (rejects it and returns it to the rack. He grabs "The Christmas Cat" that Belinda has just returned). "Kitty! Kitty! Kitty!" (Mark goes to file his new card.)

Janice has been watching other children select books. She now moves forward and takes down a large thin picture book with a moose on the front, "The Gnats of Knotty Pine". She smiles and moves away with her new book. Belinda is still looking. She picks up another orange book, "Hearing and Senses". She looks at the pink card in the back.

Belinda: "I want this one!" (fingers the pink card) "Gee!" (Sounds exasperated but is smiling) "-- Oh not a pink card again -- dear -- dear -- dear" (smiles).

Belinda puts the book back. The centre is now deserted. She quickly moves back to her first selection, "Sylvester and the Silver Pebble" and moves to the library chart. Noreen Compton enters the library and notices that several children have no cards in their library chart pockets and some have two or more cards in their pockets.

Noreen: (Smiling) "I wonder why we do this?"

Noreen traces one card back to its owner and finds several of the cards in the books are wrongly filed. She changes several and smiles. (November 15th)

Thus, school entry and book exchange routines are expected to be learned "over time" by the children.

"Group Time"

Invariably the major group time session followed the entry and book exchange routines, though a second group time could be held later in the afternoon. For group time the children sat cross-legged on the rug and faced the front noticeboard and the teacher, who sat on a small chair by the side of a low table and a screen. Group time required that the children listened to the teacher, raised their hands to speak, and observed turn-taking-question and answer conventions with the teacher. Group time was thus a period when all the dialogue was filtered through the teacher. It was not an occasion for peer dialogue.

One constant, daily component of group time was "calendar time", wherein the current date was verbalized and a numbered sticker was placed in a calendar square. Monthly time was reflected in the calendar routine by activities focusing on the printed label of the current month, and by the shape of the stickers on the daily squares. In September the stickers were red apples, in October witches' hats, in November band-aids and then nurses' caps, in December bells, in January Pooh's honey pots (each labelled "hunny"), and in February dinosaurs. Hence, the stickers largely reflected the themes. Birthday time was also a feature in the calendar routine in that, on each child's birthday, he or she received an orange paper birthday cake badge and the class sang "Happy Birthday". In the post-Christmas period, printed labels of the days of the week were hung by the calendar. As each day passed a label was turned over. In February,

a pocket chart was added to the calendar routine. Three pockets were labelled "yesterday", "today" and "tomorrow", and the relevant numbered dates were changed daily. Calendar time in the group was also a prelude to personal calendar time, wherein the children left the group to fill in the date on xeroxed calendar sheets. Personal calendar time had its own sub-routines, in that calendars were placed downwards on the table with only the child's name showing. The children were required to locate their calendars, find "today's box" with the coloured dot beside it, trace over the dotted number, and return the calendar to the box with the blue tape edging placed by the teacher's low table. The first day of each month carried additional routines in that the theme-related picture on the calendar had to be coloured before it was returned to the box.

Example: "Doing our calendar"

Noreen turns to the calendar pinned to the screen. She asks the children to join in and count the numbers on the calendar squares. The children chant rhythmically and count from one to twenty, though some of their voices become more hesitant after nine. Noreen points to the word "Sunday":

Mrs. Compton: "Is it Sunday?"

Children: "No!"

Mrs. Compton: "Is it Monday?"

Children: "No!"

Mrs. Compton: "Is it T-T-Tuesday?"

Children: "Yes!"

Mrs. Compton: "Today is Tuesday, September 20th -- Say it."

The children chant the sentence.

(September 20th)

An optional part of group time was "show and tell time", which occurred quite infrequently in the classroom. There was no schedule for which child should present an object to the class, but the children signalled that they had something to talk about by placing the object on their laps at the beginning of group time. Having an object did not guarantee accessing a personal "show and tell" for Mrs. Compton did not

always call upon the children to talk about it. The fact that there would be no "show and tell" on a particular occasion was signalled by the teacher at the end of group time. Mrs. Compton would tell the children to put away their toys in their book bags. The following two examples illustrate two children who did access personal "show and tell" times.

Example: "His name's Exhibition"

Noreen asks Janice to come forward and talk about her toy snake. Janice stands beside Noreen and faces the class.

Janice: "His name's Exhibition."

Noreen: "How come he has that name?"

Janice: "I got him at the Exhibition. My sister went with me -- we won him. My sister won one and he's called Lucky. Mine's called Exhibition 'cos I got him there."

Noreen thanks Janice and asks her to sit down. Several children have their hands up and some are calling.

Mark: "Mrs. Compton -- Mrs. Compton."

Noreen: "I don't answer people who don't have their hands up."

(January 17th)

Example: "I got Carla"

Belinda's mother is today's helper. She is putting calendars out on the tables. The children gather on the rug. Belinda is clutching her new doll.

Noreen: (To Belinda) "What have you got?"

Belinda: "A cabbage doll and she's got real Pampers."

Belinda comes to the front. Noreen unsnaps the doll's sleeper to reveal the diaper.

Noreen: "Where did you get this? -- You don't have a little baby at home."

Belinda: "I do too!"

Belinda's mother looks up quickly. She looks startled and frowns.

Noreen: "You do?"

Belinda: "Yep -- I got Carla!" (picks up her doll and hugs it)

Noreen and Mrs. Williams realize that Belinda's "baby" is her doll. Their eyes meet and they both smile. Noreen tells Belinda to put her doll away "safely".

(March 1st)

The content of group time varied widely. It may have included songs, poems, riddles, a filmstrip, a taped story with picture cards, a language activity with puppets from the Peabody language kit, an introduction to a worksheet or colouring activity, a story-reading session or an explanation of new materials and centres. Common features of all the group time

activities were that they were teacher-initiated and the teacher did a large proportion of the talking.

Example: "Teacher-talk"

Noreen Compton calls all the children over to the hospital-playhouse area and seats them on the rug.

Noreen: "This area's going to be our hospital. We have uniforms, white gowns, doctor's jacket and pants -- They have fasteners and zippers so get other people in hospital to help you dress."

Noreen shows the children a range of realistic uniforms "cut down from real uniforms". She then shows them stethoscopes and asks them to hang them up carefully after use, "because they're real ones from a hospital". Noreen asks Jane to stand up. She demonstrates how to use a stethoscope.

Noreen: "Don't talk into it, anybody. It'll hurt your ears -- it's for heartbeat listening." (Puts the stethoscope on Jane's chest) "You could listen to the heartbeat." (Puts the ends in her own ears) "Boom -- boom -- boom. Jane, breathe in" (Jane breathes in). "Breathe out" (Jane breathes out). "You can hear her lungs fill with air and breathe out. You can hear it on her back too" (Turns Jane round and listens). "Now when you are finished with your stethoscope, you hang it up right away." (Jane sits down.)

Noreen demonstrates how to attach the nurses' caps with little combs, how to dress up in front of the mirror and how to use each of the pieces of medical equipment in the boxes on the table.

Noreen: (Holding up bandaids) "They're to put on a patient, not to plaster over ourselves. One bandaid for each patient. There's a garbage bag by the couch for your bits." (Holding up a face mask) "So your germs can't get on the patient" (puts the mask over her face). "When you talk you spit a little -- or you may have a cold -- don't want to get it in the patient's cut."

Noreen shows the children paper and cloth masks, and then puts on an operating room hat.

Noreen: "Patients and nurses and doctors put hats on in surgery -- it's to cover all your hair" (puts on a mask in addition to the hat. The children laugh). "Why do we put hats on?"

Gordon: "Germs."

Noreen: "Right, we don't want germs and hair floating around. Put all your hair inside. Do I look like me any more?"

Class: "No!" (laugh)

Noreen: (Takes off hat and mask) "But it's still me."

Noreen demonstrates medicine bottles and cups.

Noreen: "To take to the patient and to put right away afterwards" (picks up surgical gloves and puts them on). "These are surgical gloves that doctors and nurses wear in the operating room -- I'll bring baby powder from home -- they're a bit sticky to put on. Why do they wear gloves?"

Cary: "So they don't get blood on their hands."
 Noreen: "Well really, it's to stop germs getting in cuts."
 Now yesterday these things were all over the floor.
 I don't like to see that -- so that people walk over
 them -- oh syringes."

Noreen explains and demonstrates the five types of syringes
 they have for the hospital.)

"Now getting back to the floor. If I see all these
 things lying on the floor I'll make you clear all the
 centre up and you'll have to sit on the rug. We put
 everything away in the boxes as soon as they're used.
 After all nurses and doctors don't leave things in a
 mess, do they?"

Class: "No."

Noreen demonstrates two types of oxygen masks. First she shows
 the children one with a set of tubes and two tiny holes at the
 end of them.

Noreen: "Now these are two holes. Where would they go? In
 your mouth?"

Vanessa: "In your ears."

Mark: "No, in your nose."

Noreen: "Right, in your nose" (demonstrates, and then takes
 down a face mask). "You need oxygen to live. Taking
 deep breaths of oxygen is hard for some people. They
 can't get enough -- so we need to help them by giving
 them oxygen in a mask" (holds the mask to her face).
 "The mask is attached to tubes and then to a big
 oxygen tank."

Marvin: "My Grandpa died."

Noreen: "Oh dear -- That's where we put the things away and
 this is how we hang things up. Now turn around to look
 at the bed and cooking area ..." (November 2nd)

The latter explanation lasted for just over thirty minutes, though only a
 brief portion has been utilized to illustrate the dominance of "teacher
 talk" during certain components of group time.

In the following episode a song is sung, a story is listened to, and
 the class engages in a brief follow-up activity based on the story. Hence,
 possible group components of "song", "story" and "language activity" were
 included in this extract.

Example: "A song, a story and a good sentence"

Noreen: "How many of you went home and practised, 'Open,
 Shut Them'?"

Children: (Laugh, nod) "I did! I did!"

Noreen: "Let's sing it."

They sing the song and do the finger actions:

"Open shut them, Open shut them
 Give a little clap, clap, clap.
 Open shut them, Open shut them
 Put them in your lap.
 Creep them, creep them,
 Right up to your cheeks.
 Cover up to your little eyes.
 And then say a BOO!" (etc.)

The children join in with vigor and enthusiasm.

Noreen: "We're going to do a story about how P. Moony gets his magic stick. I want you to listen especially for three things: What was P. Moony looking for at the beginning? -- How P. Moony got his magic stick? -- And how did the tree say, 'Thank you'?"

Noreen puts on the record player and as the story evolves she shows the children picture cards of the key events. A "beep" on the record player indicates a change of picture.

Noreen: (At the conclusion of the story) "What was he looking for -- Suzanne?"

Suzanne: "A forest fire."

Noreen: "In a sentence -- forest fire doesn't tell us much. Say, 'He was looking for --'."

Suzanne: "He was looking for a forest fire."

Noreen: (Smiling) "Good sentence! How did he feel when he saw the tree?"

Janice: "Sad."

Noreen: "In a sentence --"

Janice: "Sad."

Noreen: "Say, 'He felt sad'."

Janice: "He felt sad."

Noreen: (Smiles and nods) "How else did he feel?"

Mark: "Sick."

Noreen: "In a sentence."

Mark: "He felt sick."

Noreen: "He felt sick. Good sentence!" (Smiles)
 "How did he help him?"

Laura: "He watered it."

Noreen: "Good sentence! How did the tree say thank you to P. Moony?"

Penny: "He growed a stick."

Noreen: "Yes, he grew a stick. What did it look like?"

Children: (Delightedly) "P. Moony!"

Noreen: "It looked like P. Moony. What did P. Moony do?"

Shawn: "He sawed it off."

Noreen: "Good sentence." (September 19th)

In this group time the children did contribute verbally. The structure for the dialogue, however, was controlled by the teacher.

There is one aspect of group time when "child-talk" was acceptable, and this we may describe as group time extensions. Really such extensions

were periods of transition in the afternoon wherein children moved from group time structure to other activities. Extensions were periods when follow-up activities, from topics introduced in group time, were pursued at the tables in the room. In the following extract the children received directions on how to construct a zoo animal puppet in group time. They selected their animals from a collection of xeroxed sheets, and then moved to the tables to pursue the extension activity.

Example: "Child-talk: group time extension"

Belinda, Janice and Adam sit at a table near the library corner. Belinda and Janice have chosen zebras and Adam has selected an elephant. Adam colours the elephant's ears green.

Belinda: (Surprised voice) "A green elephant!"

Adam: (Stops and curls up the edge of his paper)

Belinda: "I hate green. I like orange or purple."

Janice: (Surprised voice) "You hate colouring?"

Belinda: "No, I hate green."

Janice: "I love green."

Adam: "I got an army shirt." (He is wearing a green commando shirt.) "I got one ear" (one ear is coloured on his elephant).

Janice: "Naw."

Belinda: "All of us got two of everything, you know."

Adam: "Two ears, two eyes --"

Belinda: "Two hairs -- two heads" (All laugh).

Janice: "Two noses" (All laugh). "Adam, you're copying me!" (Looks at his elephant and her own zebra)

Adam: "I am not. I hate purple."

Belinda: "Who cares?"

Adam: "You guys love purple."

Belinda: "Don't love it -- like it." (September 20th)

In extensions, even this brief example illustrates that these children were using time to express preferences, create humour, test hypotheses and compare. Sentences "happened" in the context of the language situation.

"Centre Time"

Centre time occurred daily in the classroom in every month except December. In the latter month, group time extensions, namely follow-up activities from group time, predominated. These extensions focused on Christmas crafts. In general, however, there were delineated sub-routines

for centre time. Firstly, there was the decision concerning who would choose centres first. This was Mrs. Compton's decision and she used three main techniques. "Quiet" children were permitted to select centres first, or children wearing specific colours, or those whose name began with certain letters, e.g. A or R. Centre cards were arranged in margarine tubs, on the radiator shelf below the front noticeboard. Centres were symbolically represented on cards, e.g. a stylized sandcastle = sandbox, a card with letters on it = printing centre. Each tub contained cards for one centre, though the cards may have been green, orange, yellow or purple. The children were told how many cards to collect, and they had to decide on both the content and order of their selections. The colours denoted the order of centres, e.g. green card = first centre and orange card = second centre. Numbers at each centre were limited by the number of cards available; for example the water centre was restricted to two children and hence two cards were available in each colour. When the children had selected the correct number of cards in the right colours, the cards were filed in named pockets on the centre chart. Occasionally choices were delineated by the teacher, for example in January each child was asked to make games one choice, due to the large number of games in the Pooh unit. Explicit rules governed centres in that the child had to go to the centre selected and stay there for the allotted time period. Card changing was not permitted, so that once a decision was made, the child had to remain with the choice. The teacher or aide decided when centre changes occurred. When they were announced, the children were required to tidy up their areas and move to the next centre. In the first two months of the year the piano was used to announce changes, and the children sang as they cleared up, i.e. "It is time to tidy up, tidy up. It is time to

tidy up and put our cards away". However, the piano was moved out of the room, to produce more space, and this singing declined over time. At the end of centre time all cards had to be re-filed in the correct tubs.

Centre time periods varied. The shortest recorded centre lasted for approximately seven minutes and was squeezed between the conclusion of group time and the onset of gym time. The longest centre was fifty minutes. Longer centres invariably occurred on cooking afternoons or when art projects, structured by the teacher, ran at the same time as centre time. Within the chronological span provided by centre time, the children created their own imaginative time, which bridged into the world of a story or the fantasy world of play.

Example: "The Three Little Pigs"

Trevor and Laura have listened to "The Three Little Pigs", with the accompanying book, at the listening centre. Now they are quite absorbed re-enacting the story with felt figures at the flannelboard. Each child manipulates the characters and "props" as they retell the story. Laura has the pigs and Trevor has the wolf. Trevor moves the houses, sticks, straw, bricks and fireplace as he needs them.

Trevor: (Holding the wolf to the door of the house of sticks, whilst Laura holds the pig inside) "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down" (Deep "wolflike" voice).

Laura: (Squeaky voice) "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

Trevor: (Knocks on a nearby shelf) "Little pig -- little pig, let me in -- little pig, let me in" (coaxing voice).

Laura: (Squeaky voice) "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

Trevor: (Wolf voice) "Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down" (Blows and blows).

Laura: (Squeals and "runs" her pig from the house)

Trevor: "Right -- we need this brick house" (Moves the brick house on to the board).

Noreen: "Tidy up time!"

Trevor: (Continues to arrange the cooking pot in the brick fireplace)

Laura: (Disappointed voice) "Oh no, Trevor. It's time to tidy up."

Laura leaves the area. Trevor moves the wolf to the top of the chimney on the brick house. He drops the wolf into the cooking pot. He then leaves the board as it is, gets up and walks slowly to the group time area. (November 16th)

Example: "We make potions".

Mark and Andrew are playing at the sandbox which is filled with dry rice. Both boys are filling bottles full of rice grains and are talking.

Mark: "There's some medicine. Let's pretend we like having a hundred things."

Andrew: "And we have to leave it for a hundred years."

Mark: (Blows down the neck of a funnel and then a bottle. He does not make any noise. He picks up a bottle, half-filled with rice, and shakes it vigorously using both hands.) "Let's pretend I make potions."

Andrew: "I make potions too."

Mark: "We make potions." (Pours rice from his hand into a bottle) "-- to get people. Somebody put a spell on one of our friends."

Andrew: "We're bad people."

Mark: "We make potions."

Andrew: "To poison people."

Noreen announces a centre change and Mark moves to the games area. (January 20th)

At times chronological time interferes with imaginative time!

The three major time components in the classroom were "entry and book exchange time", "group time" and "centre time". These primary components usually occurred during the course of an afternoon in the kindergarten, though the order of the latter two, and the allocation of time to each, were not duplicated on successive days. Other times were also interwoven into an afternoon, and these periods encompassed their own sub-routines. Time to line-up involved the formation of girls' and boys' lines, "no pushing or talking" and waiting at the classroom door for a caregiver to supervise the proposed journey to another part of the school. Snack time required that a line be formed by the counter, that teacher's directions to "just take one or two items" were followed and that children sat at tables, cleared up crumbs, and tucked chairs beneath the tables at the conclusion of the routine. Gym time occurred for two half-hour periods each week, and required a combination of the lining-up routine and sub-routines for following directions in the gymnasium.

Library time, on Friday afternoons, required similar lining-up patterns, the formation of a seating group in the library and responsive listening strategies. Recess time required routines related to the donning of footwear and outer clothing, the use of the correct door to the playground, and listening for the bell to signal a return to the classroom. Home time involved the same clothing routines as recess time and sometimes required lining-up for a "note for home" to be pinned to each child's sweater. It also necessitated remembering to take home book bags. Gradually most children internalized the schooling routines. Forgetting the sub-routines resulted in reminders from caregivers. Forgetting the sequential order of major routines was sometimes considered a serious offence:

Gordon walks over to Mrs. Compton.

Gordon: (Quiet voice) "Now what do we do?"

Noreen: "Stand on your head?"

Gordon: (Blushes) "No" (tiny voice).

Noreen: "Well, you ask a silly question and you get a silly answer. What do you think you do?"

Gordon: "Don't know."

Noreen: "What do you think?"

Gordon walks hesitantly to the centre cards and looks back at Noreen.

Noreen: "Ri-ight! You go to your orange centre."

(October 20th)

The time factor woven into the Kindergarten programme may have implications for learning in general and for literacy development in particular. It is possible that some children may learn the sequential routines more rapidly than others, and hence differential programme participation may be anticipated. It is also possible that some children may be able to cope more effectively with a sense of task incompleteness, for centre changes could be expected to interrupt activities. The anticipation of centre changes may also influence attention within activities. Possibly the most important implications of "time" in the classroom are that the major components involved different interactive

dimensions and different communicative expectations from children. Teacher-talk predominated in group time and the children were required to pick up the teacher's communication patterns, to connect with her intents and to display knowledge appropriately. Child-talk received the major focus in centre time, book exchange and group time extensions. It may be suggested that children had to recognize the attendant switch in communication patterns between teacher-talk and child-talk times, in order to engage fully in the "times" provided in the kindergarten.

Space: At the beginning of the school year the parameters of kindergarten space were defined by the rectangular room unit and by the sub-areas created by the centre arrangements within the room. Over the year, time and programme content influenced the utilization of space, and conversely, space, or lack of it, had an impact on programme content.

Conferences and workshops attended by Mrs. Compton and Mrs. Webster, and the arrival of new materials and equipment provided catalysts for change in the spatial arrangements in the room. These room changes invariably occurred whilst the class was in progress and hence spatial changes happened before the children's eyes. Space, like the programme content and scheduling, was the teacher's domain and changes in classroom arrangements were not discussed with the children. They occurred and the children spent the following few days re-orienting themselves to new classroom spaces.

Figure 7 represents the initial spatial arrangement within the classroom in September, 1983. However, by the end of September, the classroom was no longer confined to the room. Large block play took place in the hallway outside the classroom. Kindergarten space was indicated by the placement of blue tape on the hallway carpet. This tape

s:shelves
t:table

c:cupboard/counter
f:foam pad

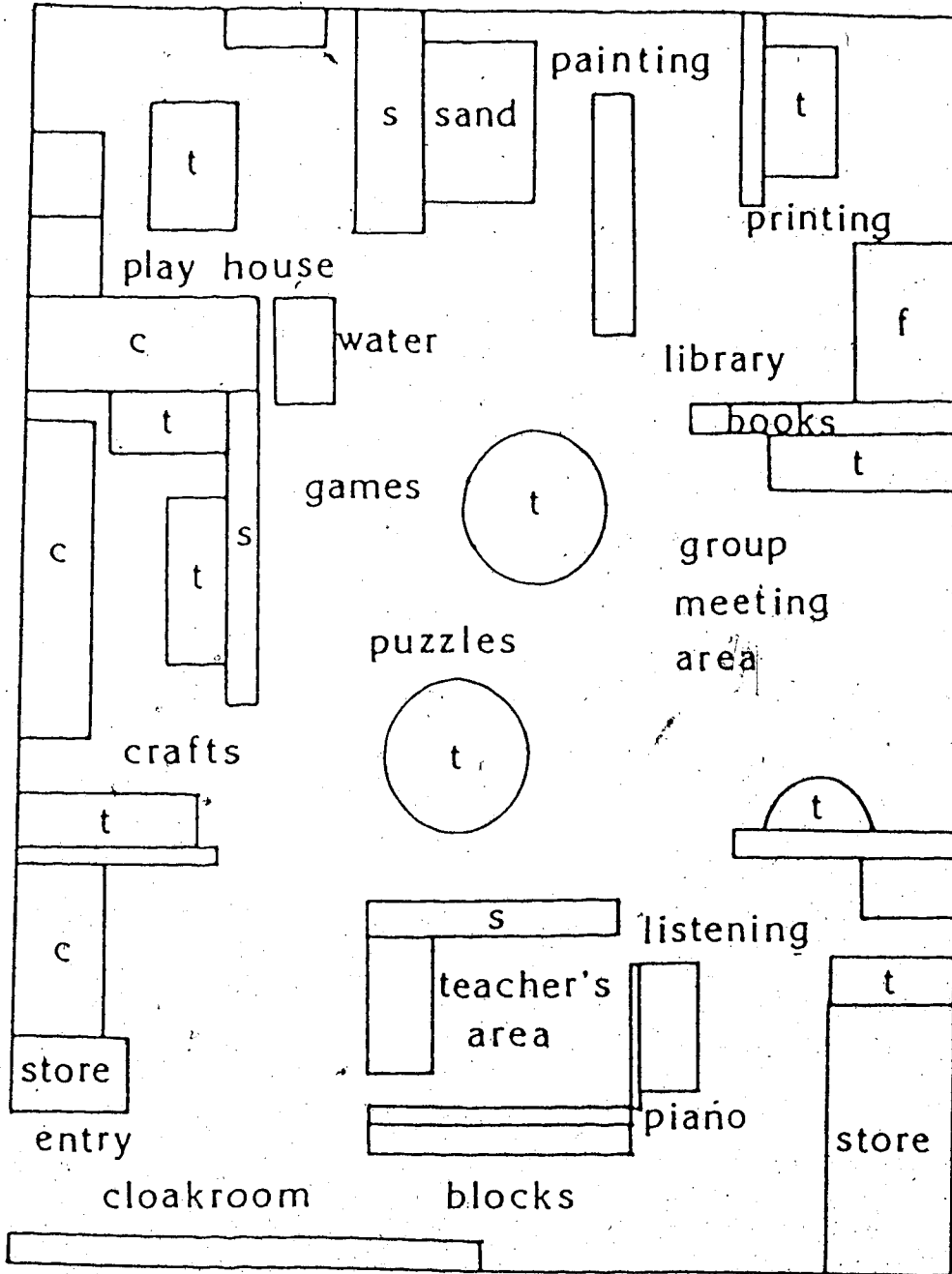


Figure 7: Classroom Arrangement, September

line cut the corridor in half; leaving one portion of the hallway for block play and the other part for regular hallway traffic. On October 24th, in the week following Noreen Compton's and Lorna Webster's attendance at an early childhood conference, major spatial changes took place. Figure 8 illustrates the second room arrangement. On October 25th, Lorna Webster explained why the spatial plan had been changed and suggested that the new arrangement was "not right yet".

Lorna: "Well, at the conference we found we had it all wrong. You see the library corner, listening centre and writing should be all together, so that kids can flow from one to another. Like we've moved the listening centre to the library -- the printing is for writing really -- but now they're together we have no room for sand. We've ordered a counter top for sand -- so it'll need more room. We may have to change this" (points to the library area).

Me: "How did you decide you wanted to change the room?"

Lorna: "It started with the blocks. They had to be in the room. At the conference they told us that blocks should be near the house so that the kids could build things for the house."

Me: "So you think you still may have some changing to do?"

Lorna: "Yep -- the piano's in the hallway" (laughs).

Thus, the first major spatial change occurred because the conference lecturers had stated that block centres should be integrated with other activities, and that literacy-related areas should be placed together. This promoted the transfer of blocks into the classroom and resulted in the relatively close clustering of literacy-related activities. However, in the process, other areas received less emphasis in the spatial plan, e.g. the piano was removed from the classroom and eventually resided in a locked storage room, insufficient space was left for sand and the house-hospital was fragmented, being partially in the cloakroom and partly in the main classroom.

Minor modifications were made during the following weeks, and on November 21st and 22nd another major room change occurred (Figure 9).

s : shelves

c : cupboard/counter

t : table

f : foam pad

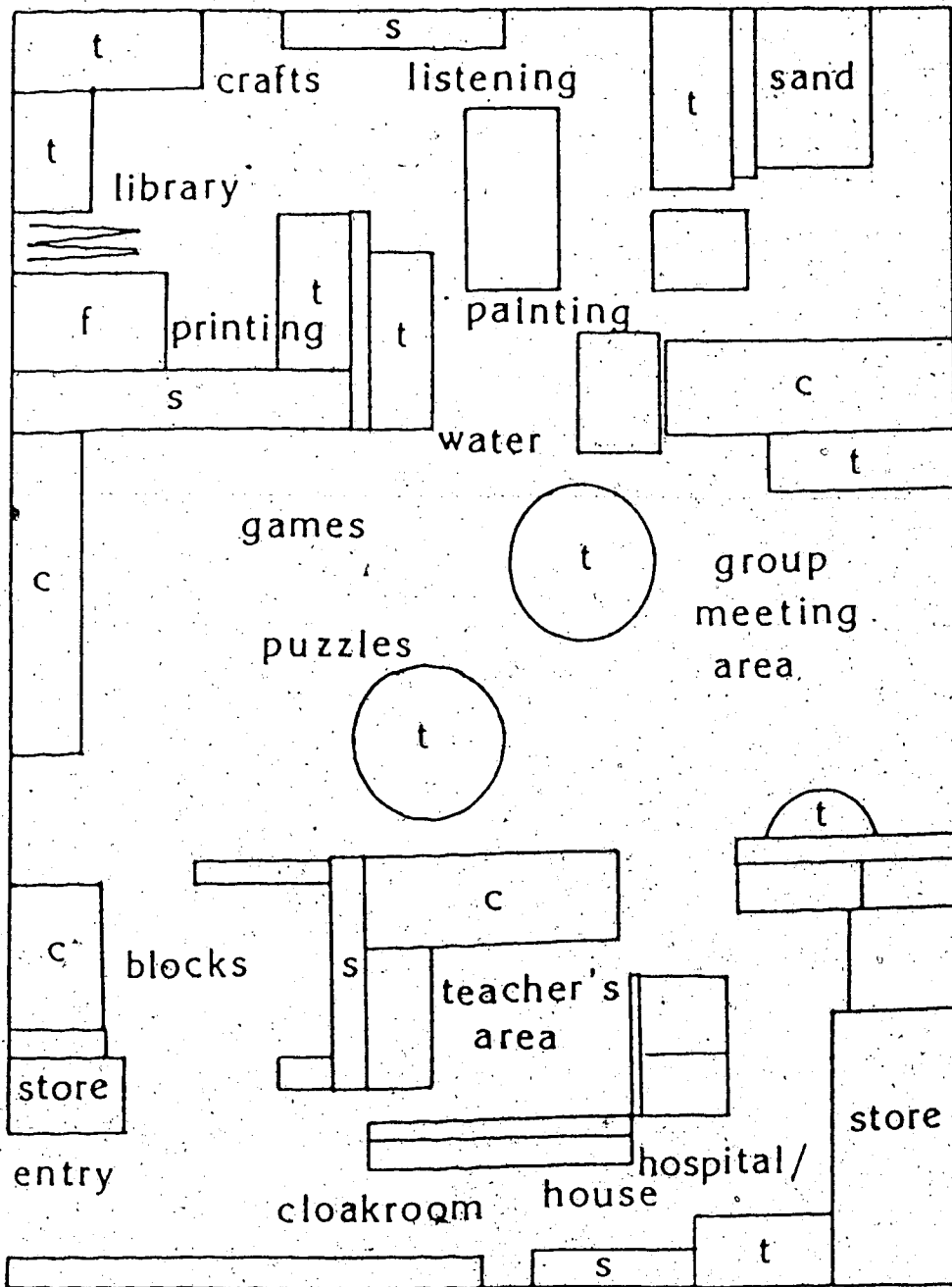


Figure 8: Classroom Arrangement, October 24th

s : shelves

c : cupboard/counter

t : table

f : foam pad

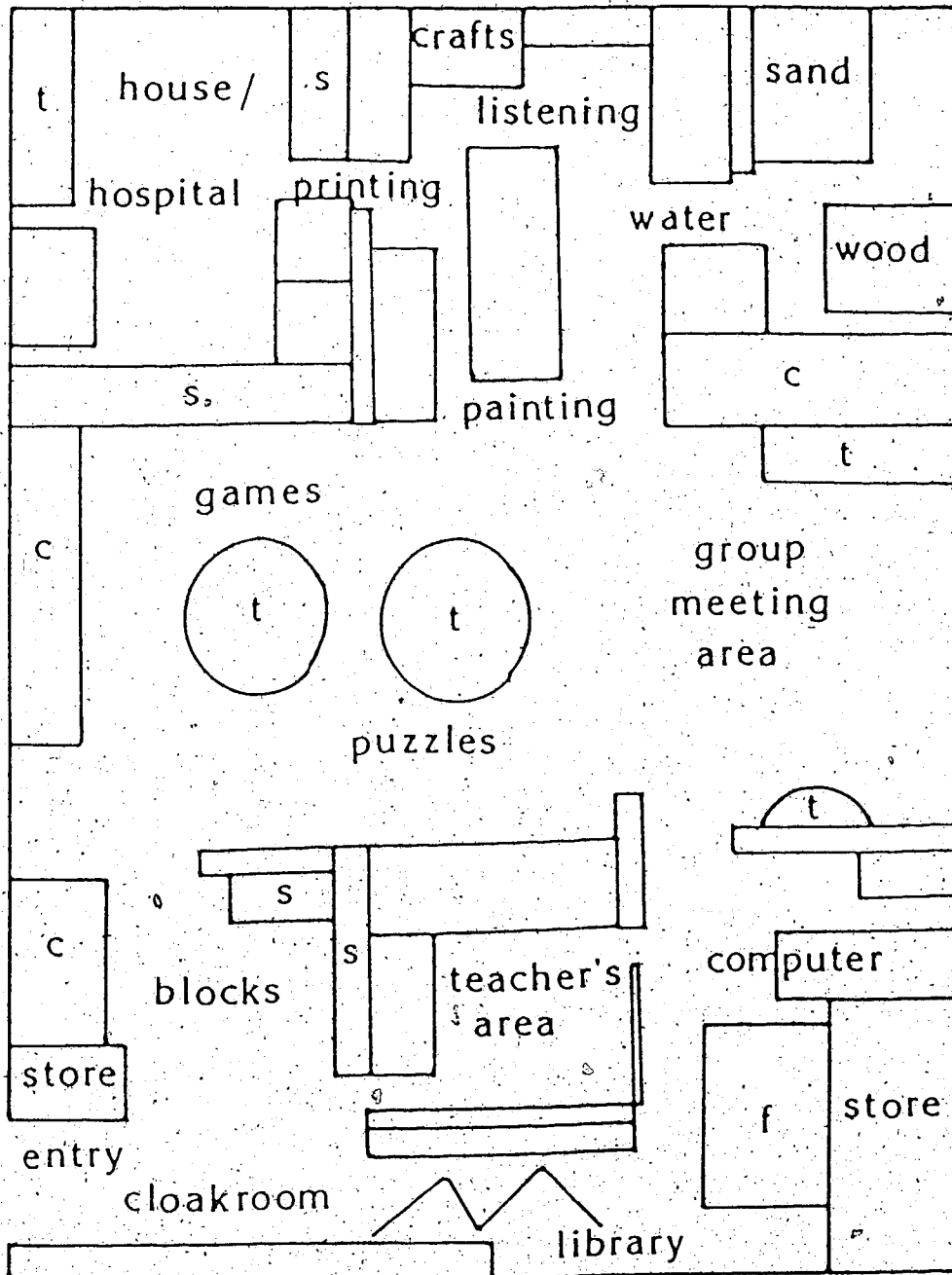


Figure 9: Classroom Arrangement, November 22nd

This spatial change was primarily motivated by the arrival of a computer, and secondarily by the erection of a new carpentry bench. The computer was initially placed in the block centre, but, due to overcrowding, was quickly transferred to the house-hospital area. The house-hospital was then placed in the hallway, but then transposed back into the classroom in its original, September, position. It is suggested that the house-hospital possibly could not remain in the hallway as there may have been some caregiver dissonance involved in having the focal point of the month's hospital theme out of the classroom. The movement of the hospital centre necessitated splitting the literacy-related centres around the room. The library occupied three positions over the course of two afternoons.

Initially it was moved into the group discussion area, then into the hallway, and finally into the cloakroom area, where it remained for the duration of the study. During the course of this second major move, Noreen Compton began to express some disquiet about the impact of the space changes on the children.

I enter the classroom at 1.05 p.m.

Noreen: "Welcome to the disaster!"

Me: "Disaster?"

Noreen: "It's all changed again -- the library's moved" (presently in the group discussion area) "-- and the parent couldn't come for cooking and I forgot to pick up the food." (Noreen moves a long table into the library area. Mark has been choosing a book. He is now trapped between the table and the counter.) "Excuse me, Mark." (Mark squeezes out and scuttles away to put his book in his book bag.) "I'm starting to feel guilty about these moves -- it's taking time away from the children."

Me: "Sometimes you feel like pushing out the walls to make the room bigger."

Noreen: "How right -- It's dreadful. It was okay before the computer -- but now I think blocks will have to go in the hallway again -- the hospital's back in that corner." (November 22nd)

However, other changes occurred in the room arrangement in mid-December,

in January and in February. These changes seemed related to the addition of new theme-related materials, and new equipment suggested in the math workshop and whole language lectures attended by Mrs. Compton (January and February). In December the change involved moving the large blocks into the hallway. This was largely due to overcrowding, and may also have been related to the fact that as the house was now distant from the blocks, the original reason for having blocks in the classroom, i.e. to encourage interconnections across centres, was now redundant.

From the observational and interview data, several themes related to the spatial organization of the kindergarten emerge:

1. "Competing demands for content space".

Centre changes were spontaneously and rapidly effected, though were so frequent that one spatial change seemed to flow into the next. The powerful insistence of "change" seemed to dominate the teacher's basic Fall intent, namely socialization routines. On afternoons of furniture removal the children were left to pursue their own patterns. Bathroom tag systems and centre routines were not utilized for as centres "disappeared" the children moved on to other activities.

Noreen Compton, at the conclusion of the study, provided some clues concerning the spatial re-arrangements. On March 1st, she expressed concern that she had "introduced the kids to too much this year":

I haven't covered as much material as last year -- maybe because there's been so many new things -- the computer -- the math lab stuff -- patterning -- the new blocks after Calgary (the conference) -- and now the whole language."

Noreen also noted that there had been more "outside" intrusions this year, "the Christmas Concert; the craft sale -- the new discipline (a new school scheme) -- assemblies -- the school going into computers". Noreen's

comments suggest an underlying unease with the competing demands on her programme. It may not be a far leap of inference to propose that change and "hurrying" to embody new technology, new content and up-dated educational methodologies were subconscious influences underlying Noreen Compton's multiple spatial changes in her classroom. The subtle impact of "do more", "achieve" (Elkind, 1981) and "hurry" into the new age of sophisticated technology, combined with human need to find secure ground in a time of transience and uncertainty, may well have influenced Noreen's attempts to find the "right" room arrangement amidst the apparently competing demands of the society and educational world. Each educational "voice" demands precedence for computers, for language development, for cognitive development through play, for numeracy, for music and fine arts and for literacy. Community "voices" appear to demand "basic education" and discipline and the school system, with larger classes and more delineated curricula, requires the inculcation of strong school socialization patterns. The kindergarten teacher has the complex and somewhat overwhelming task of integrating all these "demands" into a cohesive programme. Subconsciously, the most recent demands or voices may have the most immediate impact on the teacher. Noreen Compton heard many strong "voices" demanding change during the year, and it is suggested that she reacted to those with immediacy, resulting in many changes in the classroom's content and spatial arrangements.

2. "Personal space"

The general spatial arrangements in the classroom included both group space and personal space. Group space was provided by the centre arrangements and the group discussion area, which had a border of blue tape on the carpet to delineate the children's seating area. Centre group space

changed frequently whereas group discussion space remained constant, possibly because of its proximity to the front noticeboard which, in lieu of a classroom blackboard, was used for instructional purposes. Personal space, for the teacher, was the only other space in the main classroom that was not changed during the study. The children's personal space was provided by the named coat pegs, shoe boxes and wall pockets. Children's space was thus related to "my name" being in a particular location. An interesting personal space for the children was their book bags. These provided a mobile space that travelled home and back to school. "Book bag" was possibly a misnomer as it was used, not only to provide space for a book, but also to store finished work completed in school, unfinished tasks to be taken for home completion, notes for the teacher, greetings cards, toys, gloves, scarves and sometimes unfinished snacks. It was used as a swing when hanging on a classroom peg and sometimes as a weapon outdoors. Twirled over the head it proved a powerful deterrent or missile in an argument!

Personal space for the children may also be viewed in more abstract terms than coat pegs, chart space and book bags. An aura of self-confidence in relating "self" to classroom space is an intangible entity in observable terms, though glimpses did represent themselves implicitly in classroom dialogue and non-verbal behaviour. For example, Belinda frequently visited the house centre and appeared confident and absorbed in this setting. During some time periods the house space was not available. In February Belinda commented on the loss of "her space", "House is closed. I wonder why we don't have house anymore?" (February 28th). The loss of the playhouse was important to Belinda, and also inexplicable. Not knowing the teacher's plan to fade centres "in" and

"out" meant that she could not conceive that the disappearance of one of her centres may only be temporary.

During the physical changes to the room, some children reacted differently to others as they watched the loss or gain of various spaces. In the following extract Belinda and Penny display anxiety about the possible loss of favourite space. This episode took place during the October move:

Belinda is at the water sink with Penny. Belinda's water play becomes splashier and splashier as the moving furniture passes her. She squirts water over the cupboard doors.

Belinda: "Wow! Wow! They're taking the piano away."
(The piano is pushed into the middle of the room.)

Penny: "Wow! They're taking our toys away" (high, excited voice).

Belinda starts to make choppy waves in her sink. The water sloshes back and forth and some splashes on to the floor drenching Belinda's feet.

Belinda: (High voice) "Look what they're doing!" (as another bookshelf leaves the room and one doorway is blocked by a room divider). "I think they're taking everything away, so we can't play with it."

Penny: "Yeah."

Belinda: (Plaintive voice) "What they doing?"

Penny: "I don't know" (picks up a water container and pours water over Belinda's head).

Belinda: (Grabs a container and pours water over Penny's head)

They stare angrily at each other and then suddenly burst out laughing. The floor is swimming with water. (October 24th)

Mark did not display concern but appeared to treat moves as a natural part of the classroom environment. The spatial changes were intrinsically interesting to him and he was always close to the action as a thoughtful observer:

Mark kneels on the floor with his elbows leaning on a chair. He watches Noreen unscrew shelves in preparation to dismantle a bookcase. Noreen holds out the screwdriver to Mark.

Noreen: "Would you please take the screwdriver to the caretaker's office."

Mark: "Caretaker's office? Caretaker -- the guy who sweeps the floors?"

Noreen: "Yeah, that's right."

Mark: (Eagerly) "Okay -- I know."

Noreen: "Walk with it -- be careful, Mark."
 Mark: "I will." (October 24th)

Mark retained his own "space" and did not seem to experience a sense of loss when physical space changed around him. Rather, it seemed to offer him an opportunity to explore this space as it emerged in the classroom. Some children seemed unsure that they had retained a personal space even when a move seemed completed. Vanessa could recognize her name and always filed her centre cards correctly in her named pocket. The day after the October move she seemed uncertain about her pocket.

Vanessa stands uncertainly by the centre chart.
 Vanessa: (To Janice) "Where's my name?"
 Janice: (Points to Vanessa's name) "Right here."
 Vanessa: (Suddenly smiling) "You're right."
 (Files her centre cards) (October 25th)

3. "Literacy space"

One of the most interesting aspects of the October move was the underlying rationale of clustering content to enable the children to integrate across areas. The concept of clustering the library corner, the listening centre and the printing area was based on a theoretical viewpoint espoused at an early childhood convention. Printing seemed to have been included in the classroom literacy cluster because of its presumed relationship with writing, i.e. "-- the printing is for writing really" (Lorna Webster, October 25th). However, writing involves the author's communication of meaning in print, whereas printing centre occupants largely focused on the form of letters and were authors of letter pictures or designs rather than print meaning-makers. In addition, the theoretical aspect of literacy clustering could not be accomplished, for the children were unable to "flow" from one print medium to another. No accommodation was made in the centre routines whereby such flow was permissible. As centre movement was not allowed then "flow" amongst

literacy areas was unlikely to happen.

The second interesting feature of the spatial changes that involved print content, was that clustering of the literacy-related areas was short-term. As soon as new material was introduced then previous priorities were abandoned. Hence, new programme material received primary focus in spatial arrangements. The computer received special focus in November and hence other areas were re-shuffled to accommodate to its presence. When the math material and new theme content surfaced in January, and when the new intent was to share the machine with the other kindergarten class, the computer was moved out into the hallway. The library corner seemed embedded in the core of the room from September to November. Though it changed position in October, it still remained in the room, clustered with the other literacy centres. In the November move it was transferred into the cloakroom area. Within two afternoons it resided briefly in the group table area, and for a short time in the hallway, before it came to its permanent resting place in the cloakroom.

From the view of a researcher focusing on early literacy, but it seemed that the removal of the book corner from the main classroom to the cloakroom resulted in a loss of status for the library area. However, this may never have been the intention of the caregivers nor may it have been perceived as such by the children. Logically the cloakroom library space seemed a choice of location that was consistent with the daily book exchange being part of the school entry routine, for both could now be completed in the same space. Practically, observations revealed that it resulted in overcrowding in the area, especially during the cold weather when snowsuits and bodies trapped the book rack on either side.

The children enter the cloakroom. They are indistinguishable from each other, bundled up in snowsuits, hats, mitts, and

scarves. As they start to peel off the layers, the individual children become recognizable. It is difficult to move in the cloakroom due to the bulk of winter clothing, the mass of bodies disrobing and the bookrack snaking down the middle. The children squeeze around each other and drag their book bags through and over bodies.

Janette: (Drags her book bag over Jeremy who is sitting down to take his ski pants off. Jeremy flinches as the bag knocks into his face.) "Here's this heavy sack again. Oh, I forgot to change my book."

Janette files her old book. She struggles through the incoming crowd to get to the bookrack. She steps on the foam pad and glances around the back of the rack. Her way is blocked by a record player on a trolley. Janette pushes through to the front. She puts her book into the rack and reaches out her hand to take a new one. I cannot see the title but it seems that it was chosen as it could be reached. (November 29th)

Gradually the children accommodated to this spatial change by pulling off snowsuits in the classroom doorway or in the main classroom area. When the weather became warmer and clothing got lighter, movement around the library space became somewhat easier. When considering the library area in its new position, overcrowding may be viewed as one constraint placed on book selection. However, it also may be suggested that books were physically isolated from the main body of classroom life. Reading a book in the library necessitated a distance from the social milieu, and may implicitly have carried a message of "separate activity" to the children.

In summary, the data suggests that "space" was an important dimension in the kindergarten context. It reflected the relative importance placed on specific content areas, demonstrated the competing demands of new content vying with old content, and suggested how the children coped with changing spaces and with loss of favourite spaces. Clearly the "space" dimensions of the context were not isolated variables, but interacted with organizational scheduling and routines, the programme content and with the teacher's intents, to create a framework for kindergarten life. Literacy materials seem to be embedded within this network of organizational

strands. The preceding descriptions indicate the teacher's print-related purposes, the print content in the classroom and the organizational aspects of time and space wherein such content was available for child utilization. However, intentions, organization and accessibility of literacy materials do not suggest how children interacted with the print-related context, nor what literacy learning was accomplished. In the following chapter the children's literacy-learning interactions receive primary focus, for I suggest that literacy development emerges from the child's qualitative interactions with the dimensions offered by the print context.

From Contexts to Interactions

Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?
I see complexity looking at me ...

(Apologies to Bill Martin Jr.)

Whilst writing this chapter I revisited the kindergarten classroom. During the visit I sat in the cloakroom library corner. Janice offered to read me her favourite book of the moment, "One Elephant, Two Elephants". She read the story to Shawn and me with practised ease and obvious enjoyment. She re-read it and Shawn began to join in with the repeated refrains. Janice, caught up in the joy of the story engagement, proceeded to read to us where the book was published and how it should be coloured, only stalling at "soluble markers". I realize the complexity of Janice's literacy world, the home, community, school and classroom contexts and interactions that are interwoven in her developing reading ability. Janice realizes, with elegant simplicity, that she is a reader.

The home data suggests that there were similarities and differences between Janice's and the other High Print aware children's home contexts

and the Low Print aware children's home literacy contexts. Potentially the community, school and classroom literacy environments were available for Janice, Trevor, Mark, Janette, Belinda and Marvin. They provided access to print materials and organizational frameworks wherein such resources could be utilized. However, as Janice and I experience her reading of "One Elephant, Two Elephants" in different ways, so the case study children may experience their contexts in different ways. Their literacy experiences clearly develop in multiple, though interlocking, contexts and I suggest that such development is conducted via social channels. It is these socio-communicative dimensions that build literacy bridges between the contexts and the child.

CHAPTER SIX

LITERACY-RELATED INTERACTIONS IN THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

First Steps into Kindergarten

How big was the leap from preschool experiences to the world of formal schooling for Janice, Trevor, Mark, Janette, Marvin, Belinda and the other kindergarten members? Recent research in early childhood programmes has somewhat set "the stage of expectation" for anticipating that children experience discontinuity in communicative interactions when they "leap" from their preschool world to the environment provided by educational programming (Heath, 1982a, b; Mehan, 1982, 1979; Rist, 1973; Suransky, 1982). Undoubtedly researchers have noted dichotomy between preschool and early school experiences, but in this research there was little evidence to suggest that the children felt any social isolation in their first interactions in kindergarten.

The case study children's parents considered that the "big leap" occurred between kindergarten and Grade One, and their worries about kindergarten performance were related to "next year" rather than the present school year. Only Mark, reported his mother, was anxious about coping in the kindergarten year. However, Mark did not have older siblings, whereas the other case study children had older brothers and sisters who had perhaps "coached" them on the kindergarten programme, prior to their entrance. Mrs. Compton anticipated a period of transition for the new class, and before school commenced she noted that she expected the children to learn the major aspects of group participation "by November" (September interview).

By September 19th, the children seemed to have accomplished the transition. On that day, Noreen Compton expressed pleasure concerning how quickly the class had learned the communicative routines of Group Time and the independent work at centres. She suggested that there were two basic reasons for the class "settling" so quickly. Firstly, Mrs. Compton believed that her heavy emphasis on teaching group participation strategies was "paying off". Secondly, eleven members of the present class had older siblings who had previously attended kindergarten in that room. Thus, almost half of the current class had "seen (the) room when they came in with their brothers and sisters" and had also "been told about kindergarten".

I suggest that the move into kindergarten was a step, rather than a major leap, for these children as 1) the school's "open door" policy encouraged family members to participate in classroom life, 2) the school's educational intents and expectations largely reflected the intents and expectations in the community as a whole, 3) all classroom caregivers were members of the community, and 4) the children had experienced a variety of communicative contexts prior to school entrance.

Patterns of Interaction

Over the timespan of each afternoon, in the kindergarten classroom, the children experienced a variety of human interactions. Observational data reveals that such interactions varied in terms of the participant arrangement, the situational context, the form of the social dynamic, the content, and the intents and expectations of those engaged in communicative exchanges.

The Participant Arrangement

Three basic types of interactive arrangements were identified,

relating to the arrangement of participants involved within an interaction.

Type I: Describer-learner(s)

Type II: Learner-learner(s)

Type III: Learner-stimuli

In a Type I engagement an adult interacted with a child or with a group of children. Usually the adult describer was the teacher, though the aide or parent helpers also served as describers on occasion. Type II interactions occurred when child communicated with child or with a group of peers. Type III engagements involved a child interacting with stimuli without overt social communication with others.

The Situational Context

The classroom largely provided the interactive context, though the context of the library should also be included, as the children attended weekly story sessions with the school librarian. The kindergarten's organizational framework clearly influenced classroom interactions in that the programme content and the "time and space" dimensions, described in the previous chapter, provided interrelated sub-contexts wherein qualitatively different types of interactions predominated. Three basic organizational components have been identified as representing key elements within the programme, namely "Entry and Book Exchange", "Group Time and Extensions" and "Centre Time". In each of these components, specific types of interactive patterns could be described as most or least likely to occur, i.e.

	Most Likely	Least Likely
a. Entry and Book Exchange	Types II and III	Type I
b. Group Time	Type I	-
Extensions	Types II and III	Type I
c. Centre Time	Types II and III	Type I

Thus, in Group Time, Type I interactions occurred exclusively, wherein the teacher communicated with the whole class. In the other components, Types II and III communicative engagements were observed to occur the most frequently. If Type I interactions were involved in "Entry and Book Exchange", "Extensions" and "Centre Time" then they invariably either occurred as teacher-whole group communication related to functional organization, e.g. "Put your gym shoes on", or happened when the teacher engaged with a small group or one child. The former type of functional interaction occurred more frequently than the exchanges with individual or small groups of children. Though it is suggested that the context largely influenced the types of interactions experienced, the flow of influence should not be viewed as entirely uni-directional, as indeed the teacher's communicative intents may also have influenced the situational context. One example of such influence may be obtained from the data on the classroom furniture moves that occurred quite often during the fall and sporadically in the post-Christmas period. During these moves the only teacher-child(ren) space that was not relocated was the group discussion area utilized for Type I interactions between Mrs. Compton and the whole class. I previously suggested that this area remained inviolate as it contained a physically immovable structure, a noticeboard, that was used for teaching purposes. However, it is equally possible, as there were room dividers and other boards that could have been used for wall charts, that the static group discussion space reflected the teacher's valuation of this Type I, teacher-whole group interaction. As Group Time occupied a consistently central part of each day's activities, reflecting the teacher's intents to provide school socialization procedures and preparation for the Grade One programme which presumably required group

instruction, then it warranted a permanent location in the classroom. In addition, this classroom area was the only within-room space that was delineated by a blue tape line on the carpet, which further emphasized its relative importance and reflected the teacher's belief in the value of Type I, adult-whole group instruction.

The Form of the Social Dynamics

The form of the social exchanges varied in each type of interactive pattern:

Type I: In Type I communication with the whole group, "teacher talk" predominated. The teacher initiated the interaction and orchestrated its form. At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Compton explicitly transmitted the "form" rules for this type of engagement:

Mrs. Compton holds the P. Moony puppet in her right hand. The children are sitting on the rug facing her.

Noreen: "Remember to put your hands up and don't shout out. Marvin, what's different?"

Marvin: "No ears."

Noreen: "We say the whole thing -- 'P. Moony has no ears.' Can you say that?"

Marvin: "P. Moony has no ears."

Noreen: (Nods) "What's on his head?"

Children: (Call out) "Hat -- baseball cap."

Noreen: "Remember -- put up your hands. Okay, Suzanne."

Suzanne: "A hat."

Noreen: (Children call out) "Just Suzanne -- remember I'll ask. Say the whole thing, Suzanne."

Suzanne: "A hat."

Noreen: "That doesn't tell me much. Whose hat? You have to tell me in a sentence."

Suzanne: "P. Moony has a hat."

Noreen: "Good." (September 14th).

Access into the teacher-initiated interaction thus required "hand raising" and Mrs. Compton's approval to speak. A correct response required both accurate content and an appropriate linguistic form. Other group members were expected to be silent whilst one child responded. By the end of September the explicit form rules for hand-raising and turn-taking became

largely unnecessary as the children had internalized the social dynamics of such exchanges. Only occasional reminders were necessary, and Mrs. Compton usually addressed these to particular children who had momentarily forgotten the conventions. There were certainly some inconsistencies in the form rules, for at times it appeared appropriate for the whole group to respond to Mrs. Compton's question and then sentence answers did not seem to be a requirement.

Noreen Compton stands in front of the bulletin board which contains pictures of zoo animals. Each animal has a word label by it.

Noreen: "What have I added to our board?"

Children: "Names."

Noreen: "I've added names. This one says bird (points to the word). This one says zebra. This one says alligator (points to each word). This says dog? (points to the word "monkey")"

Several

Children: "No! Monkey!"

Noreen: "Right! It says monkey." (September 26th)

Production of sentence responses seemed to be the least consistent requirement. In the following exchange, Marvin was not asked to provide complete sentence answers, though such responses were demanded from Penny and Adam.

Noreen Compton is eliciting recall of a P. Moony story the children have just heard. The story was accompanied by coloured picture cards.

Noreen: "How did he help Mr. Nobody?"

Marvin: "Gave him blue medicine."

Noreen: (Nods) "What colour eyes did he have? Penny?"

Penny: "Blue."

Noreen: "In a sentence."

Penny: "It was blue."

Noreen: "Right! What colour were Mr. Nobody's shoes?"

Adam: "Yellow."

Noreen: (Quietly shows the picture) "Look."

Adam: (Smiles) "Green."

Noreen: "Give a sentence."

Adam: "They were green."

Noreen: (Smiles) "What colour's his mouth? Marvin?"

Marvin: "Black."

Noreen: "Look again." (On the picture the mouth is red, and outlined in black.)

Marvin: "Black."
 Noreen: "What's this colour?" (Points to the red)
 Marvin: "Red."
 Noreen: "Right! Red." (October 12th)

Though some form rules were inconsistent, the turn-taking requirements were more regularly reinforced by Mrs. Compton than the "good sentence" responses. From all the teacher-whole group exchanges two stable social dynamics were observed. In all episodes the teacher initiated the engagements, and in all interactions a consistent form of "teacher initiation - student response - teacher evaluation" was identified (Mehan, 1982, 1979). For example, to take one illustration from the previous teacher-whole group episodes, i.e. the September 26th word identification engagement with the zoo animals:

Teacher's Initiation: Noreen: "What have I added to our board?"
 Children's Response: Children: "Names."
 Teacher's Evaluation: Noreen: "I've added names.
 This one says bird (points to the word). This one says zebra. This one says alligator (points to each word). This says dog?" (Points to the word "monkey")
 Teacher's Initiation:
 Children's Response: Several
 Children: "No! Monkey."
 Teacher's Evaluation: Noreen: "Right! It says monkey."

Sequential chains of such three-part exchanges provided consistent interactive forms in group-time social interactions.

Some Type I, teacher-whole group interactions became so ritualized in content and form that they embodied the qualities of "routines" (Snow, 1983), wherein the teacher initiation - student response - teacher evaluation exchange developed a predictable format. All participants recognized the routine and engaged in filling "slots" in the social dynamic. "Doing our calendar" in group time represented a typical routinized interaction following a teacher initiation - student response - teacher evaluation format:

Teacher's Initiation:	Noreen:	"Is it Sunday today?" (points to the abbreviation Sun. on the calendar)
Children's Response:	Children:	"No!"
Teacher's Evaluation:	Noreen:	(Nods)
Teacher's Initiation:	Noreen:	"Is it Monday today?" (points to Mon.)
Children's Response:	Children:	"No!"
Teacher's Evaluation:	Noreen:	(Smiles)
Teacher's Initiation:	Noreen:	"Is it Tuesday today?" (lighter questioning tone as she points to Tues.)
Children's Response:	Children:	"Yes!"
Teacher's Evaluation:	Noreen:	(Nods)
Teacher's Initiation:	Noreen:	"What month is it?"
	Children:	(Silence).
	Noreen:	(Points to the word November)
	Noreen:	"This is N -- N" (sound).
	Children:	(Silence)
	Noreen:	"Nov -- Nov --"
Child's Response:	Jonathon:	"November."
Teacher's Evaluation:	Noreen:	"Good!" (November 1st)

In the latter episode the teacher provided "pseudo-questions" (Barnes, 1969) to stimulate the students' display of knowledge (Bloome, 1983), and evaluated responses with non-verbal nods and smiles. A verbal "good" evaluation followed a more difficult question and an accurate response from a child. Embedded within such exchanges were the teacher's provision of clues to assist the children in filling the "slots" appropriately. Thus, when the form of the dynamic, and the content, were familiar to the children, teacher-whole group interactions became predictable routines.

During the study, these Type I interactions, with their attendant social forms, were recognized as major communicative patterns in group time engagements. Though most describer-learner interactions, in this classroom, occurred in teacher-whole class exchanges, other Type I communication was also observed in "Centre Time", "Entry and Book Exchange" and "Group Time Extensions". On these occasions, miniature teacher-whole group interactions could take place, though basically they served as interruptions to the flow of the children's activities. For

example, during Book Exchange, a typical Type I "interruption" may have been the teacher stopping the activity to discuss an aspect of organization.

The children are clustered in the book corner exchanging books and discussing their choices.

Noreen: "Boys and girls, please stop. Come to the boot rack right away, please."

The children all walk out of the room, following the teacher. They move to the boot rack in the hallway.

Noreen: "Take your boots and stand by the wall quickly."

Noreen calls each child's name, checks that the boots are named, and with a felt marker writes their initials on the outside of the boots, e.g.

Noreen: (To Janice) "I guess yours are well enough marked. Let's put a 'J' here so that you can see it."

Janice: (Nods)

Noreen: "Always put your boots toe in." (Marks a 'J' on the boots and demonstrates how to put them on the shelf.) "Okay?"

Janice: (Nods)

Noreen: "You can go back to the room now." (November 1st)

These organizational interactions, interposed within other activities, invariably were teacher-monologues wherein the children responded minimally, i.e. the teacher initiated them and also "held the conversational floor" throughout the exchange.

Finally, some Type I engagements took place within the context of a classroom activity and were conducted between Mrs. Compton and one child or with a small group of children. Such interactions had different social forms than the teacher-whole group or teacher-monologue engagements. The following episode illustrates an interaction at Centre Time. The teacher initiated the activity but the exchange unfolded into co-operative dialogue (Grice, 1975):

Mark is playing noisily with plastic dinosaur models.

Noreen Compton calls him over to a table.

Noreen: "Mark, I have something really interesting here."

Mark looks up and reluctantly leaves his dinosaur models.

Mark: "Oh" (Sees the new activity and responds with more enthusiasm) "Oh, okay!"

Mark is given a laminated picture of a swamp scene and a

box of dinosaur stick-on figures. He removes the animal shapes from the box.

Mark: "What's this?"

Noreen: "It looks like a duck-billed dinosaur -- a Trachodon."

Mark: "Yeah. Oh -- here's a volcano!"

Noreen: "What happens when a volcano erupts?"

Mark: (Pauses) "I -- I don't know."

Noreen: "Hot rock spills out, and dust. It's hard to breathe near it."

Mark: "Dinosaurs could breathe near it, couldn't they?"

Noreen: "No, they'd have difficulty breathing."

Mark: (Nods) "What's this -- a turtle?"

Noreen: "It looks like one, doesn't it?"

Mark: (Nods) "Yep."

Adam calls from the floor where he has built a dinosaur word from popsicle sticks.

Adam: "I've done it."

Noreen: "Great! What does it say?"

Adam: "Triceratops."

Mark: "Triceratops." (Nods vigorously and rifles through his box of dinosaur figures.) "This is him" (holds up a sticker).

Noreen: "No, Triceratops has three horns. That's Protoceratops. He's only got one horn."

Mark: "Oh. These don't stick too good." (Dinosaur stickers are starting to curl away from the background.)

Noreen: "No, 'cos we've had them for six years -- twelve kindergarten classes have used them." (February 27th)

Though Mrs. Compton initiated the exchange she did not maintain the initiative throughout the engagement, as Mark began to ask questions himself. Then Mrs. Compton became the "responder" and Mark occasionally evaluated her answers in terms of his own knowledge. The interaction was "collaborative":

... firstly in the orderly sequencing of speaking and listening turns; ... secondly, in relating the meanings expressed in each turn to those in the turns that precede and follow; ... (and) finally, in agreeing on the objects and actions in the shared situation to which these meanings are intended to apply. (Wells, 1981, p. 26)

Interestingly, in the teacher-whole group interactions, Adam's contribution may have violated the "one speaker at a time" rule, whereas in Type I exchanges with fewer participants, his "interruption" was

interwoven as a welcomed addition to the communication, and led to further added elaboration. There was also a difference in the teacher's strategies between Type I, teacher-whole group engagement and Type II, teacher-small group interactions. In the former, questions in the initiation-response-evaluation form, were utilized to monitor turn-taking and to encourage the display of knowledge. In the latter, the teacher's questions related to expanding Mark's knowledge into new areas. This type of elaborative interaction is intrinsically similar to the parent-child scaffolded dialogue (Ninio and Bruner, 1978), where the describer provides a communicative framework to permit the child to maximize his explorative contributions. In addition, this Type II elaborative describer-learner interaction appears to be qualitatively related to Feuerstein's description of a mediated learning experience (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1983), wherein the mediator intentionally decontextualizes learning from the "here and now", interprets meaningful content, regulates the child's activity and ensures that the child is able to demonstrate competence. One aspect of Mrs. Compton's and Mark's interaction, namely "transcendence from the here-and-now", was somewhat more fragile than Feuerstein's description of this characteristic. Certainly the topic of the activity had a historical context, and Mrs. Compton did provide a time-related response to Mark's concern about the animals not sticking to the sheet. However, several verbalizations were abbreviated and did not expand Mark's horizons in any depth, for example Mrs. Compton did not explain why dinosaurs would experience difficulty breathing during a volcanic eruption, when Mark seemed to be implicitly noting that we might not be able to breathe, but dinosaurs should be able to do so.

It would be misleading to suggest that these Type I elaborative, teacher-child(ren) interactions occurred with frequency in the kindergarten classroom. In fact, elaborative interactions were never observed during "Entry and Book Exchange", "Group Time Extensions" and several "Centre Times". However, when they did happen they were the most likely to occur in Centre Time. Seventeen elaborative exchanges were noted in the puzzles and games centres during the six months of the study. Thirteen occurred when Mrs. Compton served as the describer and four were conducted by the aide, Mrs. Webster. In the printing centre, two elaborative interactions were observed with Mrs. Webster acting as the describer. In the library corner, six of these interactions happened. Five occurred when Mrs. Compton read stories to the children, and one when Janette's mother was involved with a group. In the painting centre, Mrs. Compton stimulated two elaborative exchanges. None was identified at the listening centre, blocks, sand, water, playhouse or the computer. Naturally, my observations were focused on the case study children, and hence other elaborative engagements could certainly have occurred with other children in the class. Thus, in total, twenty-seven elaborative describer-learner interactions were observed to involve the case study children over six months. They were distributed over the six children in the following manner:

	Print-Related Interactions	Others	Total
Janice	1	0	1
Trevor	1	1	2
Mark	5	8	13
Marvin	4	0	4
Belinda	1	0	1
Janette	6	0	6
	—	—	—
Totals:	18	9	27

These totals indicate that Mark was the recipient of almost half of the total elaborative interactions, though he experienced less print related exchanges than interactions focusing on other content, e.g. puzzles.

Janice, Trevor and Belinda received very few elaborative describer-learner engagements. Marvin only engaged in four print-related exchanges during my observations, but his participation in the study was restricted to three months. Janette experienced six print-related elaborative interactions over the course of the research, rather more than Mark or Marvin and considerably more than Janice, Trevor and Belinda. Overall, the data suggests that twice as many print-related elaborative exchanges occurred than communications on other content, e.g. numeracy concepts.

Perhaps the most significant aspects of this information are that, firstly, few elaborative Type I interactions occurred with individual children, or small groups, over a six month time period; secondly, that such exchanges were not evenly distributed over the case study children; and finally, that Janice and Trevor, who were independently reconstructing meaning from text at the conclusion of the study (see Chapter 7) were the recipients of a minimal number of this type of engagement.

It is apparent that elaborative Type I engagements did not occur with any major frequency, whereas teacher-whole group interactions happened on a daily basis within the classroom. Type I exchanges between the teacher and child(ren) that were of a functional nature occurred with greater frequency than elaborative interactions, and, like the teacher-whole class engagements, happened each day. These Type I functional interactions focused on "let's get the job done" or "let's observe the rules". As in the elaborative exchanges, it was quite appropriate in functional interactions for the child to initiate exchanges. However, such

initiations did not result in expanded or explanatory, transcendent dialogue. The following episode illustrates a Type I functional interaction where the describer's intent was task completion rather than understanding.

Mark and Penny stare at the computer screen. They have pressed several keys but the programme remains immobile on the screen.

Penny: "S not working."

Mark: "Okay, I'm going to ask the teacher."

Mark goes over to Mrs. Compton and brings her back to the centre.

Noreen: "Have you tried Enter?"

Mark: "Yes."

Noreen: "Have you tried a number?"

Mark: "Yes."

Noreen: "Well, there's a two there" (points towards the screen where a 2 is displayed with other numbers, e.g. 7, 4, 1). "Try a two."

Mark: (Presses two, and the computer "beeps". The programme moves on to the next frame.) "Oh, -- it works!" (surprised voice)

Mrs. Compton leaves. Mark turns around.

Mark: "I --" (stops speaking when he realizes that the teacher has left). (November 22nd)

The task was accomplished though the children were not left with the feeling of competence wherein they were armed to utilize new information to interact independently if the same problem emerged once more. Expedience predominated over elaboration in this communicative initiation-response form, for the adult describer focused on finalizing the encounter by resolving the immediate problem, without connecting co-operatively with the nature of the children's dilemma.

Type II: These interactions were peer communications that most frequently occurred in "Entry and Book Exchange", "Group Time Extensions", "Centre Time" and in transitional periods between activity changes in the classroom. On these occasions of "child talk", three basic communicative forms were observed:

1. Interactions initiated by a child, to other children, sometimes

"faded out". At these times the child would make a comment that seemed like an invitation to converse. As no child co-operated by responding, then the original initiation "died".

Examples:

Janice is moulding plasticene with Trevor, Belinda, Suzanne and Robbie. Suddenly she stops and lifts the hem of her shirt.

Janice: "I've had this (blouse) a long time and it still fits me."

She looks around the table. Nobody responds. (December 7th)

Trevor is playing in the blocks centre with Tim, Marvin and Jonathon.

Trevor: "Oh, guess what happened?" (All three boys stare at Trevor.) "This guy fell right in here" (points in the wooden box). "He's dead!"

The three boys turn away and continue their play. (November 29th)

Shawn and Mark are in the library corner. Shawn shows Mark his new book, "Mouse Soup".

Shawn: (To Mark) "Hey Mark -- I took this kinda book."

Mark: (Glances up and then down at his book. He doesn't comment.) (November 29th)

In the first two examples it is difficult to know whether the other children perceived these initiations as self-verbalizations and hence requiring no social response, or whether the group chose not to engage in an extended conversation on Janice's blouse or Trevor's "dead" man. In the final example, clearly a social dialogue was being initiated as Shawn addressed his comment to Mark. We must assume that Mark chose not to engage in a social exchange.

2. Communication with other children could be brief and non-expanded.

Usually this occurred when one or more of the participants had little background knowledge about a topic, and hence the conversation was terminated quite quickly.

Examples:

Trevor and Laura are in the library corner. Trevor has selected "The Gorilla Did It", a book previously read

to the class.

Laura: "What is it?"
 Trevor: "The Gorilla Did It."
 Laura: "I never took 'The Gorilla Did It'."
 Trevor: "Which book are you taking?"
 Laura: (Looks at the front cover of the book in her hand) "I don't know." (November 21st)

Trevor and Robbie are in the library centre. Trevor is seated reading a book, "Time to Get Out of the Bath, Shirley". He bounces up and down as he tries to read the book as Robbie is trampolining at the other end of the foam pad.

Trevor: "What's your birthday?"
 Robbie: (Stops jumping) "26."
 Trevor: "Of what?"
 Robbie: "26."
 Trevor: (Looks puzzled) "Of what month?"
 Robbie: "Monday."
 Trevor: (Frowning) "You could be lots of 26's but not the same month."
 Robbie: "Like Jason."
 Trevor: "How much is he?"
 Robbie: "Two." (The conversation ceases.) (November 1st)

3. Interactions with other children could be expanded and informative, wherein participants co-operatively involved themselves in following the sequential flow of dialogue, negotiated shared meaning, awaited turns and contributed and evaluated contributions. Invariably these collaborative dialogues occurred when the children contributed their own content and were not conversing about the kindergarten programme's content.

Example:

The children are removing their snowsuits after recess. They look hot and red-cheeked.

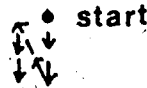
Mark: "I'm so hot -- hot as the sun."
 Suzanne: "Or the desert (laughs). The desert's hotter than the sun."
 Trevor: "No. The sun's hotter."
 Mark: "Well, I feel like I'm in the sun (starts to remove his snow pants) "-- like a big fireball."
 Jeremy: "It's as big as the world."
 Mark: "It's bigger -- it's bigger than -- a -- a -- book."
 Trevor: "Or a cloud."
 Mark: (Warming to the subject) "It's bigger than an ocean."
 Paul: "Or a big tall building."
 Mark: "Or the world." (January 20th)

Type III: These interactions are exactly similar to Feuerstein's (1980) descriptions of child initiated-direct interactions with stimuli. In the kindergarten such interactions occurred during "Book Exchange", "Group Time Extensions" and "Centre Times". Two forms of these interactions were observed.

1. The child interacted with the content stimuli whilst silently manipulating the materials and attempting to solve the particular task alone.

Example:

Marvin is lying on his stomach looking at the flannelboard. He appears to be attempting to construct the chart words with felt letters. Presently he has "SYRT" beside "SYRINGE". Marvin takes the yellow felt "N's" out of the box. He traces his finger over an "N", i.e.



Marvin then examines the plastic syringe on the chart. He tries to pull out the stopper but cannot manage it. Marvin takes down the "R" and "T" from the board. He puts the "T" correctly in the "T" box. He then places the "R" in the "C" box, hesitates and then puts it in the "R" box. Marvin begins to file away the letters. He piles "Z's" in the "N" box and then "Y's" on top of the "Z's". He picks up a "W" and places it by "SWAB" on the chart. He selects an "S" and puts "SW" by "SWAB". Marvin then sweeps the letters off the board. (November 1st)

2. The child mediated his own performance through self-verbalization, commenting on his own strategies and dialoguing with himself to assist performance.

Examples:

Trevor is at the water sink filling plastic containers.
Trevor: "This is magic -- I fetched it -- I went like that" (pours water from a pan into a honey container). "-- I went like that -- I scooped it" (scoops up more water) "and poured" (pours the water into the sink). (November 16th)

Trevor verbalizes to himself as he sets the table in the playhouse:

Trevor: "For dessert -- a pie -- now knives and forks"
 (sets them on the placemats). "Spoon here --
 knife here -- now I'll tell Laura it's her turn
 to be a patient." (November 16th)

Janette is painting and talks quietly to herself.

Janette: "Now what shall I do? I have nothing to do
 -- Oh -- look -- they are the same colour
 -- great idea" (takes the yellow paintbrush
 and draws a yellow zigzag line inside a purple
 one). "Yikes! Then -- and then another man
 came running down and saw the -- the -- er --
 er" (stares at the painting and then takes it
 down). (November 21st)

Though the silent and self-verbalized forms of Type III interactions do not have a social function, they certainly could be reliant on prior social engagements. Vygotsky (1978) and Feuerstein (1980) both suggest that independent task performance, with self-mediation being an intrinsic part of such performance, could be modelled on Type I interactions, wherein the child utilizes strategies experienced in describer-learner relationships to enhance his own explorations.

Content

Content provided the topics for the kindergarten interactions. Type I interactions in Group Time, and even at Centres, emerged from the teacher's programme content. Communicative exchanges centering on literacy related materials also largely emanated from the teacher's agenda. Type II interactions either focused on the teacher's content or emerged from the children's knowledge base. Type III interactions involved the teacher's programme content as the children directly engaged with provided materials. However, such content was flexible in that children could use the materials in personal ways. For example, Belinda was provided with plasticene to form her name, in January, and yet utilized it for making models and patterns. Several centre activities, such as the playhouse, sand, water, painting and blocks, provided opportunities for interactive

flexibility, for the children could utilize these content resources in a variety of creative ways. Thus, topics for interactions were generally provided by the teacher's content, though some activities and materials permitted the children to provide their own content. Though this content flexibility was apparent in the play areas, it did not apply to materials with print content. The children rarely contributed their own print content. For example, individual language experience stories were only solicited on four afternoons during six months of observation. The children's interactions with print materials focused on attempting the teacher provided content, or on bypassing the print to utilize the materials for other purposes. In the kindergarten classroom, content played a key role in all interactions, for its complexity and adaptability to change influenced the qualitative interactions experienced by the High Print and Low Print aware children. The role of content in the literacy-related interactions in the classroom is discussed at further length in the comparison of the High and Low Print aware children, later in this chapter.

Intents and Expectations

Intents and expectations played an interdependent role in the interactive dynamics observed in the classroom. Clearly, intent implies motivation or purpose on the part of the communicative initiator and an expectation of reciprocity from other participants. Intents and expectations can either be implicit, as is usual in informal co-operative dialogue, or explicit, as was commonly demonstrated in classroom dialogue in specific areas.

The teacher's basic intents, as described in Chapter Five, were implicitly interwoven into classroom interactions, though these underlying purposes were frequently manifested in explicit expectations required

of the children. Socialization intents, for example, were translated into overt requirements such as "raise your hand", "one speaker at a time", "line up quietly" and "tidy up properly". The teacher's intent to prepare children for the Grade One programme revealed itself in the school socialization procedures, and also in the specific expectations related to classroom content:

Noreen: "Colour them in your best colouring -- your very best colouring. Keep in the lines. When you've finished colouring put up your hand -- I'll check and then you can cut them out. You cut out very carefully. One rule about walking with scissors" (takes a pair and walks with the points out).
 "What might happen? You might hurt someone. Hold the points in your hand and the handles out. When you've cut out, you can glue. There's something special about glueing in this room -- you must use a glue sheet."
 (Making paper bag puppets: September 20th)

Noreen: "Today is the 15th. 15 is made with a 1 and a 5. How do we make 1? Do we start at the top or the bottom?"

Mark: "Top."

Noreen: "Right, we start at the top of the 1 and go down" (draws with a blue crayon). "Now a 5. We have a stick here" (draws |) "and a circle" (draws 5). "We pretend it's a man. He has a big neck" (traces over it) "and a big fat tummy" (traces) "and a hat" (adds the top stroke). "Now you must start at the top of the neck and go around the big fat tummy and stop. Then you put his hat on."
 (September 15th)

The teacher's intents and resultant expectations were embedded within the Type I, teacher-whole group interactions. To engage in these communications the children were required to match the teacher's implicit intents and explicit requirements by engaging in the form of the social dynamic and its content. Developing facility with form and content was necessary for the children, for difficulty in following either dimension could be anticipated to result in communicative breakdown in Type I interactions. In Type II interactions, intents and expectations arose

from pursuit of the teacher's content, or from the children's own purposes and expectations. Frequently, Type II interactions moved naturally from one intent to another, in that children initially communicated about the teacher's agenda and then moved on to their own. For example, in the following episode, Mrs. Compton instructed the children to colour a xeroxed picture of Santa Claus on their December calendars.

- Noreen: "Now you mark a 1 for December 1st and then I want you to colour the Santa in your very, very best colouring. I don't want messy colouring. I want your very, very best colouring."
- Janette, Jane, Marvin and Jonathan sit together at one table and start colouring.
- Jane: "I'm doing my very, very best colouring."
- Janette: "Vest?"
- Jane: "No, best." (Both laugh.)
- Janette: "The sack's brown. Jane, the beard isn't black. It's white. You have to get a new calendar."
- Jane: "Doesn't matter. Looks like I've an 'n'" (points to the 'n' in her name).
- Janette: "It's a 'w'."
- Jane: "No, an 'n'. You have an 'n'."
- Janette: (Looks at her own name) "You and me have an 'n'. Santa Claus is going in the house. You're a silly-billy, Jane." (Both laugh.)
- Jane: "You're a silly-billy Janette -- Janette -- Jan."
- Janette: "I have a friend in playschool -- Jan."
- Marvin: "I hate her."
- Janette: "She'll beat you up."
- Marvin: "My brothers'll beat you up."
- Janette: "My sister's bigger than your brothers."
- Marvin: "Mine's ten years old."
- Janette: "She's eight -- my sister is."
- Jonathan: "Well, ten can beat up eight."
- Janette: "No -- eight's bigger."
- Marvin: "My brother's ten. He could beat you up."
(December 1st)

In this interaction, Janette and Jane started with the teacher's agenda of "best colouring". Janette apparently felt that the teacher also intended an accurate reproduction of the traditional Santa, for Jane's Santa's black beard may have meant that she had not matched the teacher's expectations and may need to begin again on a new calendar sheet. Jane then moved the conversation, maybe to distract Janette from criticism,

into her own agenda by raising the print similarity in both their names. In the second part of the exchange the children definitely pursued their own intents by discussing friends, the relative strength and age of siblings and who could "beat up" whom. As they developed their conversation, the children continued to follow the teacher's agenda, i.e. "colouring Santa", though the emotional heat of the exchange meant that such colouring was somewhat less than their "very, very best". Thus, in Type II interactions, the children appeared to be motivated by social intents, namely the need to communicate and share meaning with peers. At times their social expectations of engaging in collaborative dialogue were not realized, when initiations "faded out" and were not picked up by other children. At other times, communicative connections were made and the children's social intents were fulfilled in extended dialogue with peers. In Type III interactions, the children appeared to be motivated by the desire to explore material and to engage in making sense of content. Whether expectations were realized in Type III exchanges depends on one's perspective. The teacher's intent in providing content material for independent interaction was presumably linked to her basic purposes of preparation for schooling in both academic and social areas. Linking with the teacher's agenda involved pursuing an activity or game in a prescribed way, e.g. Adam's production of the word "Triceratops" formed from popsicle sticks. In the latter example, Mrs. Compton's praise embodied support for fulfilling the content of the task (academic agenda) and also approval for independent task completion (school socialization agenda). However, if the content was too difficult, or not meaningful, or if the child chose to utilize the material in his own way, then the teacher's requirement of independent performance was fulfilled, but not

her academic intents. For example, Marvin, in an episode utilized in this section, independently engaged in a word building activity on the flannelboard. Reconstructing the hospital words, "SYRINGE" and "SWAB" was difficult for him, and not meaningful as he could not read the words and also must have had limited meaning associations for the concepts embedded in the words. Hence, though he interacted with independence, he was unable to fulfil the academic intents and changed the task to permit some degree of personal involvement and sensemaking. From the children's perspective, if the task made sense to them, and they could engage in either independent activity or a satisfying social exchange, then both their meaning-making intents and task-engagement expectations appeared to have been fulfilled. At some centres, Type III interactions involved play where the contributions were anticipated to emanate from the children. Hence, involvement and independence in creating a fantasy world of play realized both the children's and teacher's intents and expectations at blocks, sand, house and water centres. However, at these centres the children also had to fulfil the teacher's socialization expectation of "tidying up properly".

Summary of the Communicative Patterns

Thus, the following findings can be summarized regarding the general interactive patterns in the kindergarten classroom:

1. Interactions were diverse and varied along dimensions that included the arrangement of participants, the content, the form of social dynamics and the intents and expectations of the caregivers and children.
2. The number of participants involved three types of human arrangements,

namely describer-learner(s) interactions (Type I), learner-learner(s) engagements (Type II), and learner-stimuli interactions (Type III).

3. Type I interactions were most likely to occur in teacher-whole group situations, and these followed a teacher initiation-student response-teacher evaluation format. Less frequently, such interactions could involve teacher-small group or teacher-individual child social arrangements. These communicative exchanges could be elaborative and permit the child to initiate contributions. Elaborative Type I interactions encapsulated scaffolded dialogue and were intrinsically similar to mediated learning experiences (Feuerstein, 1980), though the transcendent characteristic was not well developed. With elaborative interactions it was observed that:

- a) Only twenty-seven occurred between the caregiver and the case study children over a six month period.
- b) Almost half of these exchanges were accounted for by adult interaction with one child, Mark.
- c) Two children, who were independently reading at the conclusion of the study, were the recipients of only one print-related elaborative interaction each.
- d) Out of eleven elaborative interactions experienced by the Low Print aware children, all were print-related. Out of sixteen elaborative engagements that involved the High Print aware children, seven were print-related.

Elaborative, teacher-child(ren) interactions occurred less frequently than functional interactions that focused on organizational procedures.

4. Type II interactions were most often part of "Entry and Book Exchange", "Group Time Extensions", "Centre Time" or transitional periods.

- between activities. They emulated the form of co-operative social dialogue. "Child talk" could fade quickly or develop into extended conversation, depending on the shared knowledge base of the participants and the personal motivation to engage.
5. Type III interactions occurred in "Book Exchanges", "Group Time Extensions" and "Centre Times". They involved the child's silent or verbally-mediated direct interactions with stimuli. The success of the engagement could be evaluated according to the teacher's intentions and expectations, or according to the children's purposes in making sense of the engagement.
 6. Within the kindergarten, there was a subtle reciprocity amongst the communicative patterns and the programme content and organization. The organizational dynamics of time and space meant that some interactive forms were more likely to occur in certain programme components, for example Type I, teacher-whole group exchanges within "Group Time". The programme content meant that some children were able to engage more or less effectively with all types of interactive forms, depending on their personal abilities and background knowledge.
 7. All interactive patterns demonstrated intent on the part of the initiators and responders, and, interrelatedly, some form of expectations. Communicative expectations revolved around the participants' utilization of content and social forms.

Similarities and Differences in the Literacy-Related

Interactions Experienced by the High Print

and Low Print Aware Children

When the six case study children were selected they were chosen as three children who demonstrated well developed literacy knowledge, and three children who had more limited literacy knowledge, on the basis of performance on two print tasks. At that stage, and during the course of the study, it seemed quite apparent that though their knowledge about literacy was different, they were indistinguishable in their ability to understand the Types I, II and III forms of classroom interactions. Bremme and Erickson (1977) suggest that children who do not connect with the network of socio-communicative rules in the classroom may be considered at risk with regard to learning in schools. Conversely, children who demonstrate ability in adapting to the forms of classroom interaction may have a learning advantage. Certainly, as Chapter Seven reveals, the High Print aware children demonstrated more adept literacy knowledge than the Low Print aware children at the conclusion of the study, as well as in the initial stages, but no differences were identified between the groups on the basis of socio-communicative rule learning.

All the six children effected the transition from the social interactions of home and community to the communicative patterns of the classroom. They were all able to pick up the subtle cues that signalled changes in interactive style from "Entry and Book Exchange" to "Group Time" and to "Centre Time". Within the early days of September they learned to raise their hands and wait for access into the teacher initiation-student response-teacher evaluation routines. These children quickly internalized the organizational patterns embedded in the room and the explicit and implicit rules and directions. They learned when it was appropriate for "child talk" and when to be silent or to respond in "teacher talk", and they knew when not to take library books with "pink

cards or no cards", to "keep in the blue line at Group Time", to "do calendar", to "line up" and to file centre cards.

As all the case study children learned the forms of the various interactions so rapidly it is hypothesized that school based communicative forms could not be widely divergent from social interactive forms experienced in preschool contexts. Many of the reasons for the hypothesized continuity between home and school communicative styles may possibly be related to the suggestions made at the conclusion of the initial section in this Chapter, on the smooth transition from home to school life. The parents were welcomed into the school's classrooms and hence there is a possibility that they were influenced by the interactive patterns observed in the classroom, and over time incorporated these strategies into home-based communication. Janette and Trevor and their mothers had been regular visitors to the kindergarten when older children in the family had been class members. Thus, both parents and children had been previously exposed to the kindergarten's social dynamics. Three of the children, Janette, Janice and Mark, had mothers who were teachers themselves, and hence it may be anticipated that these children had experienced the "teacher style" of initiation-response-evaluation in their homes. Mark had attended a group daycare programme and Belinda a preschool play group, and had experienced teacher-large group interactions before entering kindergarten. Janice, and more especially Marvin, had been exposed to a variety of communicative contexts in their own homes and in the homes of substitute caregivers, over the years. Thus, it seems entirely likely that previous experiences facilitated the transition from the interactive dimensions of the home contexts to the school-based forms of communication.

MacLure and French (1981) offer an additional insight that is salient

to discuss at this point. From their research in the Bristol Longitudinal Study of Children's Language Development, focusing on the transition from home to school, they suggest that there is no basic discontinuity between communicative structures at home and at school:

... there is much continuity in the nature of the interaction occurring in each setting despite differences in situation, purpose, participant groups, etc. From the point of view of the child participants, from whatever social background, there is little in the nature of the interactional demands which will be made of them in school that they will not already have become familiar with at home, at the level of conversational structure (p. 237).

MacLure and French (1981) thus emphasize the structural similarity in interactive dynamics at home and at school, though they do suggest, as does Wells (1983), that both contexts differ in the frequency of interactive engagements, e.g. "display of knowledge" interactions occur more frequently at school than at home, and in the relative contributions of participants, e.g. children contribute more consistently in home communication than in school dialogue. Though quantitative differences, then, have been identified in home and school-based interactions, the Bristol research indicates that children experience a nucleus of school-based communicative forms in preschool years. These findings offer some support for my observation of the High Print-Low Print aware children's immediate social ease in engaging in classroom interactive forms, in that the children were able to relate a core of old socio-communicative knowledge with the new interactive context. Had the patterns of classroom interaction been entirely new to these children then the transition to the school social forms may have been anticipated to be a lengthy business, in spite of Mrs. Compton's undeniable emphasis on transmitting them.

Background Knowledge

Communicative engagement not only demands competence in understanding the social patterns within the classroom, but also requires ability to contribute and utilize content. The High Print and Low Print aware children demonstrated similarity in their knowledge about the conversational forms within the kindergarten, but could be distinguished on the basis of the quality of their background knowledge. The High Print aware children displayed more print knowledge than the Low Print aware children, at the beginning, during, and at the conclusion of the research. However, over time, it became apparent that Janice, Trevor and Mark had more world knowledge, in general, than Janette, Belinda and Marvin. The elaborate knowledge bases possessed by the High Print aware children, compared to the Low Print aware children, were apparent in all the Types I, II and III interactions. Whereas the Low Print aware children knew how to engage in the forms of the communicative exchanges, the High Print aware children demonstrated that they could both engage in the forms and also the topics or content of interactions. Janice, Trevor and Mark could thus display their knowledge in socially appropriate forms, could engage in extended child-child dialogue when fellow participants related to their topics, and were able to interact with classroom materials with independence. Janette, Belinda and Marvin experienced difficulties in relating to the teacher's content. When interactions were based on their personal knowledge bases, they were able to demonstrate competence in group engagements, in conversations with peers and in direct interactions with stimuli. However, when broader spheres of background knowledge, and when specific print information were required, then they had difficulties with communicative interactions.

In the following sections, the differences in the High Print-Low

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Print aware children's background knowledge are explored. Interactions focusing on print content are utilized, though this study is also concerned with print- or literacy-related communication. Hence, interactions that may be viewed as related to literacy development, in that they may enable its growth, are also used. Such enabling interactions may be related to formal reading instruction, for example, the ability to engage with the teacher's agenda or more specifically to produce linguistic forms that are used in written language, e.g. sentences. These interactions may be viewed as preparatory for Grade One formal reading instruction within our school system. Other enabling interactions may be more closely tied to reading itself, rather than to reading instruction, such as the child's ability to decontextualize thoughts across situational contexts (Dyson and Genishi, 1983), e.g. the transposition of a story heard in one context, to play demonstrated in another.

In this study, background knowledge has been abstracted as a feature that distinguishes High Print-Low Print aware children. As the children's possession and utilization of prior knowledge, in interactive engagements, has varying impacts depending on the situational context of occurrence, then the findings are grouped into two major interactive contexts, namely Group Time and Play Time. The latter situational context occurred most frequently during centre periods wherein Types II and III engagements could be anticipated to occur.

Group Time: During this time period in every kindergarten afternoon, Type I, teacher-whole group interactions occurred almost to the exclusion of other interactive forms. Ability to demonstrate knowledge about communicative forms and the teacher's content was required of the children.

Janice and Mark were vigorous participants in Group Time interactions. They possessed sufficient background knowledge to engage with both the social forms and the content. Trevor was a quieter group member and rarely volunteered to display knowledge, though when requested to contribute he invariably responded accurately. Janette and Belinda loved to participate in group engagements and often raised their hands to signal that they wished to speak. Frequently, when asked to respond by Mrs. Compton, they lowered their hands and replied, "I don't know", or remained silent, or provided answers that were not considered "on topic" by the teacher. Marvin did not initiate contributions to group time exchanges very often, but tended to stare ahead in a distanced manner during the interactions. When asked to respond he did proffer an answer though was rarely "accurate": For example, in a previously cited episode, Marvin suggested that a character in a picture had a black mouth. Mrs. Compton corrected his response and indicated the red mouth. However, it seems that Marvin was focusing on his own detail, rather than on the teacher's expectation, for the red mouth was outlined in black.

In comparing the High Print and Low Print aware children's background knowledge in Group Time, fieldnotes provide examples of the differences. It is suggested that the Low Print aware children knew the appropriate form of responses, and yet had difficulty engaging background knowledge with the teacher's agenda. From some interactions it is not clear whether this was a performance difference, i.e. difficulty in producing a response, or a cognitive difference, i.e. difficulty because they did not possess the required information in background knowledge or had problems in accessing appropriate schemas.

Example: "What month comes next?"

Noreen: "What month comes after October -- Janette?"
 Janette: (Hand up) "Christmas."
 Noreen: "Not Christmas, Janette. That comes later."
 (November 1st)

Example: "Joining in"

Substitute
 Teacher: "Let's say the days" (points to each word on
 the calendar: abbreviations listed, e.g. Mon.).
 Children: (Chorus rhythmically) "Sunday - Monday -
 Tuesday - Wednesday."
 Belinda: "Scranpin - Tunip - Scranpin - Tunip."
 (October 27th)

In these two segments from "doing calendar", Janette and Belinda utilized the interactive forms appropriately, but did not provide "correct" content responses. Janette was clearly accessing a calendar schema, but provided a seasonal holiday rather than a month, which was the anticipated answer. Noreen Compton's explanation seemed unlikely to clarify Janette's schema confusion between months and holidays. Belinda's desire to "join in" the group chanting seemed to provide the motivational force for her rendition of the days of the week. Social at oneness with the group predominated over accuracy, in that she would rather contribute something than nothing, even though the content presented difficulties for her.

When the Low Print aware children had personal knowledge of the content then they could engage in a group interaction more successfully. This would suggest that the differences between the High Print and Low Print aware children rested in the area of possessing or accessing background knowledge, rather than in production problems. For example, in the following exchanges, Belinda contributed by utilizing appropriate forms and salient knowledge:

Example: "Santa's List"

Noreen: "Janice, what would you like (for Christmas)?"
 Janice: "A Mickey Mouse talking 'phone."
 Noreen: (Looks to where Belinda is waving her hand wildly)

"Belinda?"
 Belinda: "It breaks so easy -- I wouldn't get it."
 Noreen: "How do you know, Belinda?"
 Belinda: "My friend has one and you just wouldn't believe how easy it breaks."
 Noreen: "Janice, you want to change your mind?"
 Janice: (Firmly) "No, I want a Mickey Mouse talking 'phone."
 Belinda: (Shaking her finger) "You better not drag it on the ground then!" (December 6th)

Thus, whenever a group topic matched the Low Print aware children's concretely experienced realm of knowledge, they were able to display such knowledge in group engagements. However, rarely did their contributions result in teacher elaboration, for example "Good" or "Lovely" were frequent comments from Mrs. Compton when these children provided comments drawn from personal knowledge stores, e.g.

Janette: "My Grandpa and Grandma have been to Hawaii and seen pineapples."
 Noreen: "Good."

Such contributions may have been viewed as problematic in Group Time as they centred on knowledge grounded in the individual child's experiences, rather than on common group-shared knowledge. Thus, interactions wherein Belinda, Janette or Marvin could contribute personal knowledge were rare occurrences in Group Time, Type I interactions. Invariably Group Time exchanges focused on a wider and more abstract scope of knowledge. The Low Print aware children experienced severe difficulties in engaging with the content on such occasions:

Example: "Sunflowers, peanuts and almonds"

Mrs. Compton shows the children sunflower seeds.
 Noreen: "Where do these sunflower seeds come from, Janette?"
 Janette: "The sun."
 Noreen: "Gee -- the sun produces lots of things but not these ... Ken?"
 Ken: "Sunflowers."
 Noreen describes sunflowers and then shows the children peanuts.

Noreen: "Where are peanuts from? We know sunflower seeds come from flowers -- what about peanuts, Belinda?"

Belinda: (Silence: Looks around)

Noreen: "Well they come from warm places. Do they grow on trees?"

Belinda: (Silence)

Suzanne: "They're grown in the ground."

Noreen: "Yes, they're grown in the ground. And here's another nut" (holds up an almond). "Janette?"

Janette: (Silence)

Noreen: "Do you know it, Janette? Your Mom puts it on her cookies at Christmas."

Janette: (Silence)

Noreen: "Mark?"

Mark: "Almonds."

Noreen: "Yes, almonds. Now what colour do you think they are inside? Janette?"

Janette: (Silence) (February 6th)

Janette and Belinda could not relate background knowledge to "sunflowers, peanuts and almonds", even though Noreen Compton attempted to link Janette's home knowledge to the school content. Silence was a frequent retreat for the Low Print aware children when asked questions that required breadth of world knowledge. More noticeable by omission, I did not observe a group print interaction wherein Janette, Belinda or Marvin voluntarily contributed observation.

The High Print aware children experienced few difficulties when the content relied on them accessing general knowledge about their world. In the following interaction Janice and Mark seemed to dominate the group exchange as they displayed knowledge with ease:

Example: "Vegetables, fruit and drinking water"

Noreen Compton has just read a nutrition poster listing the four food groups. The children are being encouraged to discuss the foods pictured in the poster.

Noreen: "What's this?" (Points to a pepper)

Mark: "Pepper."

Noreen: "Yes, green pepper and red pepper -- and -- " (points to a pear).

Several Children: "Apple."

Mark: "Pear."
 Noreen: "Not apple -- it's a pear -- and --" (points to celery).
 Mark: "Celery."
 Janette: "Mrs. Compton, my Mom eats celery."
 Noreen: "Good. It's celery."
 Noreen Compton then holds up a carrot figure with moving "arms" and "legs".
 Noreen: "And where do carrots come from?"
 Paul: "In the garden."
 Mark: "In the ground."
 Noreen: "Yes, they grow in the ground because they're roots and we have to dig them up. What about this apple? Where do apples grow?" (Points to a picture of an apple)
 Jonathon: "In a tree."
 Noreen: "Yes -- so we dig them up?"
 Janice: (Laughs) "No -- pick them."
 Noreen Compton tells the children that they are going to eat an orange for today's snack.
 Noreen: "Now what shape is an orange? It's round like a --"
 Mark: "Ball."
 Paul: "Like a tyre too."
 Noreen: "No, 'cos a tyre's flat like a doughnut. An orange is all round like a ball and it has a special name -- a sphere. Can you say that?"
 The children practise saying "sphere".
 Noreen: "What other fruit is like a sphere?"
 Trevor: "Apple."
 Noreen: "Good -- and grapefruit. Where do we get oranges from? Where do they grow, Belinda?"
 Belinda: (Hand up: Silence)
 Janice: (Whispers to Belinda) "A tree."
 Noreen: "No -- Belinda."
 Belinda: "A orange tree."
 Noreen: "Yes, do we grow them here?"
 Several Children: "No."
 Noreen: "Why?"
 Ken: "Too cold."
 Belinda: "No trees."
 Noreen: "It's too cold here." (Tells the children that oranges are grown in Florida and California)
 "What's it like where they grow oranges, Robbie?"
 Robbie: (Silence)
 Janice: (Whispers to Robbie) "Sunny and warm."
 Noreen: "I didn't ask you, Janice -- Robbie?"
 Robbie: "Sunny and warm."
 Noreen: "Good. What other fruit grows on trees, Belinda?"
 Belinda: (Hand up, but no response)
 Janice: (Whispers) "Peaches."
 Belinda: "Peaches."
 Noreen: (Nods) "What others -- Janice?"

Janice: (Hand up) "Plums"
 Noreen: (Nods)
 Noreen Compton shows the children a cup of water and explains that the children will receive water during snack time. She notes that we collect water to drink "because we need water to live."
 Noreen: "What else do we drink?"
 Trevor: (Hand up) "Raindrops."
 Noreen: "Do we go out and drink raindrops?"
 Trevor: (Looks down and shakes his head)
 Janice: "Sometimes I do."
 Noreen: "Now listen to my question. What else do we drink?"
 Mark: "Orange juice."
 Noreen: "Yes -- now where do we get our drinking water from?"
 Mark: "From the river -- and it goes in pipes --"
 Janice: "To a big tank --"
 Mark: "And then to pipes --"
 Janice: "And to our taps." (January 23rd)

In this interaction, Mark and Janice "carried" the exchange, in that they demonstrated a great deal of knowledge about the topics. In fact the "discussion" relied so much on their knowledge of the subject matter that the engagement almost qualified as a teacher-small group, rather than teacher-whole class, interaction. Most of the class did not attempt to contribute. Interestingly, Janice broke the social form rules for whole group discussion when she gave answers to other children. Clearly she realized that she was breaking rules for she whispered her answers. Also Mark and Janice, in this interaction, rarely waited for permission to speak. It seemed that accurate knowledge of content pre-empted the usual hand raising rule. This interaction is one of very few teacher-whole group exchanges when children were allowed to engage in collaborative dialogue. It is difficult to know whether Mrs. Compton was surprised that Janice and Mark knew so much about our drinking water supply and forgot to correct their structural communication error in that they addressed remarks to each other rather than to her, or whether she simply could not get a word in when the two children enthusiastically engaged in

reciprocal dialogue. Trevor was a rare contributor to Group Time. However, on this occasion, he made one accurate response and one that was considered "silly". His response to, "What else do we drink?" was, "Raindrops". Janice felt it was a reasonable response as she sometimes drank raindrops. However, it is conceivable that Trevor was accessing his schema for "our drinking water", wherein rain provides a useful resource. Belinda clearly desired to be involved in the communication, but was unable to supply accurate responses without help. When Janice told her that oranges grew on trees, she was able to make some connections and answered, "A orange tree". One of Belinda's responses was ignored by Mrs. Compton as Ken's answer that it was too cold for orange trees here, was more "logical" than Belinda's response that we could not grow oranges as we have "no trees". In her final contribution, Janice supplied the answer, and Belinda repeated her friend's whispered suggestion exactly. Janette's only contribution was a remark related to personal experience, i.e. that her mother ate celery. As Janette later collected her orange segments at snack time, she also observed that her mother cut up oranges just like the teacher. Janette appeared to be making sense of the interaction by grasping any of the information that related to her personal knowledge. Belinda seemed to be attempting sensemaking by engaging with the social form of the interaction. Neither of these two girls could relate to the content of the agenda. That was left to Janice and Mark.

On countless occasions in the classroom, Janice, Mark and Trevor demonstrated well developed background knowledge in Group Time, not only on topics that required abstract concepts from general world knowledge, but also about print itself.

Example: "November"

Noreen: "Let's say the letters in November. Say them after me -- N-O-V-E-M-B-E-R." (Children repeat each letter.) "What does that spell?"
 Children: (Chorus) "November."
 Noreen: "There's a little word in November."
 Mark: "No."
 Noreen: "Right, no." (November 1st)

Example: "Leaf"

Noreen: (Points to the word "leaf" written on a leaf-shaped chart) "Now what does this word say?"
 Mark: "Leaf."
 Noreen: "How did you figure it out?"
 Mark: "Because it's on a leaf."
 Noreen: "Right!" (October 12th)

Example: "Computer"

Noreen Compton is demonstrating the new computer. One programme focuses on letter recognition. Capital letters appear sequentially on the screen. When the correct letter is pressed an object with that initial letter flashes on the screen, e.g. J = a jar. As a group, the children are invited to name each letter as it appears on the screen. The following letters and responses occurred in this order:

F	Janice: F
G	Trevor: G
H	Janice: H
I	Trevor: I
J	Trevor: J
K	(Other child): K
L	Janice: L
M	Janice: M

Janice and Trevor account for seven responses out of a possible eight. (November 21st)

Example: "Tuesday"

Noreen: "How many Tuesday's, Trevor?"
 Trevor: "Three."
 Noreen: "A sentence."
 Trevor: "We've had three Wednesday's."
 Noreen: "Wednesday's? What's this, Trevor?"
 (Points to Tuesday on the calendar)
 Trevor: (Smiles) "Oh -- it says Tuesday."
 (October 19th)

Example: "Pooh Words"

Noreen Compton demonstrates building Pooh words with
popsicle sticks.

Noreen: (Builds P) "What letter's that?"

Children: "P."

Noreen: (Builds O) "What letter's this?"

Children: "O."

Noreen: "Yes -- and we're going to be spelling what?"

Mark: (Leans forward, eyes shining) "Pooh!"

Mrs. Compton demonstrates four other words, i.e. "Owl",
"Piglet", "Tigger" and "Roo" and requests that the children
name them. Mark names "Tigger" and "Roo" and Janice
identifies "Piglet" and "Owl". (January 9th)

In four out of five of the latter print interactions, the High Print aware children virtually monopolized the Group Time responses. In the "Tuesday" exchange Trevor quietly used the print to enable him to correct his response. During the same calendar routine, Marvin and Janette made errors on days and the words were pointed to by Mrs. Compton, but the two children were unable to use the print to correct their answers. In the other four interactions the High Print children responded to the letter and word level responses with such rapidity and automaticity that the other children did not have time to reflect and respond. Only once during the five exchanges did the teacher ask, "How did you figure it out?" Mrs. Compton sought this metacognitive information from Mark and he was able to provide an answer that suggested that he had utilized the context rather than the print itself. As Harste, Burke and Woodward (1982) observe, literacy development involves the utilization and integration of a "pool" of resources. However, in the other interactions this type of "how do you know?" question was not asked, though it may well have provided strategy clues for the other children, e.g. distinctive features of letters. In these, as most Group Time print interactions observed, knowledge was tested not taught. As Janice, Trevor and Mark already possessed the necessary print knowledge they could engage in the testing display.

Belinda, Janette and Marvin could not contribute successfully as they did not possess the prerequisite knowledge.

Over time, Janice and Mark adopted some restraint in their contributions, a similar restraint that Trevor had demonstrated throughout the study. By February, all three of the High Print aware children no longer rushed to provide "instant" answers. It is possible that they had been "tamed" by the socialization procedures, or that their competent displays of knowledge received minimal evaluations in Group Time when the teacher was presumably intending to involve all the children. Also, their responses did not result in elaborated conversation which Janice and Mark particularly enjoyed, and hence the children may have considered that their initiations did not have "interesting results". In the following episode many of the children seemed confused by the print activity. Janice and Trevor were not puzzled, but they waited to be asked before they offered contributions:

Example: "Yesterday, today and tomorrow"

Mrs. Compton has introduced a new pocket chart with the words "Yesterday", "Today" and "Tomorrow" printed above the pockets. Noreen Compton identifies each word and points to it, asking the children to count the number of letters.

Noreen: "So which word is biggest or longest?"

Children: (Variety of simultaneous responses) "Yesterday
-- 5 -- 8 -- today -- tomorrow"

Noreen: "Janice?"

Janice: "Yesterday."

Noreen: (Nods) "Which is the smallest word?"

Children: "5 -- 5"

Noreen: "Trevor?"

Trevor: "It's today."

Noreen: "Good. Which is the longest -- has the most letters -- Shawn?"

Shawn: "9."

Noreen: "What's the word?"

Shawn: (Long pause) "-- Yesterday?" (quietly)

Noreen: "Right. Which word is in the middle -- not the longest and it's not the shortest -- Gary?"

Gary: "7."

Noreen: "Which word is that?"
 Gary: "Don't know."
 Noreen: "Janice?"
 Janice: "Tomorrow." (February 17th)

Three things are interesting to note in this interaction. Firstly, the new strategy of "wait" adopted by Janice, a strategy that had always been utilized by Trevor, seemed inconsistent with her earlier enthusiastic contributions. Secondly, Trevor and Janice demonstrated immediate understanding of the task at hand, in spite of undoubted confusion the other children were experiencing. Thirdly, Mrs. Compton recognized that Janice and Trevor could be useful resources for supplying correct answers. When confusion was most apparent she actively sought out children whom she knew could demonstrate competence. This raises a new dimension to the "wait" strategy, for it is possible that the High Print aware children had internalized the print situation. They, after five and a half months in school, may have begun to realize that they would be provided with many opportunities to display their knowledge when other children failed to do so. Thus, they felt safe in their competence and did not need to actively initiate in order to demonstrate it.

As noted previously, Janette, Belinda and Marvin (prior to December 8th) did not make voluntary individual contributions to Group Time print exchanges. However, they did contribute to the sentence production activities which may be included under the teacher's "intent umbrella" of preparation for formal reading instruction in Grade One. From observations of the Low Print aware children's "sentence interactions" it became apparent that they experienced problems, once more, meeting the teacher's content expectations:

Example: "Describe my sweater"

Noreen Compton tells the children that they are going to learn to describe things, "which means say what they

look like". She asks them to describe her sweater:
 Mark: "It has a pocket." (Noreen nods)
 Jeremy: "It has buttons."
 Noreen: "Are they real buttons?"
 Mark: "No, snaps."
 Noreen: "We can describe them better than that."
 (Silence) "What colour are they?"
 Children: "White."
 Noreen: "And how many are there?"
 Children: "Four."
 Noreen: "Give me a sentence about the snaps -- Belinda?"
 Belinda: (Hand up) "They're hard to snap up."
 Noreen: "Yes, but I want you to put together all the
 things we said."
 Belinda: "There are four snaps."
 Noreen: "But I need more -- all in one sentence. 'There
 are --'."
 Belinda: "Four --"
 Noreen: "White --"
 Belinda: "Snaps."
 Noreen: "Yes. Tell me about the stripes, Janice."
 Janice: "They are going round."
 Noreen: "Tell me more. What colour are they?"
 Janice: "Blue."
 Noreen: "In a sentence."
 Janice: "The blue stripes go round."
 Noreen: "Okay -- what else have you missed? What does
 my shirt have -- Janette?"
 Janette: (Hand up) "White."
 Noreen: "White what -- board -- paper? Say it in a
 sentence. 'Your shirt is --'."
 Janette: (Silence)
 Noreen: "What colour is it?"
 Janette: "White" (quietly).
 Noreen: "It's really off-white and that colour's between --"
 Mark: "The blue stripes."
 Noreen: (Nods) "What does describe mean -- Jonathon?"
 Jonathon: (Silence)
 Mark: "It means tell it -- what it looks like."
 Noreen: "Jonathon. It seems we have two Jonathons!
 Well -- it's what it looks like." (January 18th)

Mrs. Compton's voice displayed increasing impatience during this exchange, which continued for a further ten minutes. Trevor avoided making any response during the interaction. Mark opened the "discussion". Though the production of sentences for description had not been mentioned by Mrs. Compton, he assessed the agenda and produced accurate information within the appropriate linguistic form. Belinda was requested to provide a

sentence to describe the snap fastenings. She produced the correct form but did not match the teacher's content expectations. Belinda responded from her own personal world, where undoubtedly she found snaps difficult to fasten. (I can verify this as frequently she asked me to fasten the top snap on her snowsuit!) Her answer was perfectly sound on the basis of her knowledge about snaps and the teacher's expectation of sentence answers. However, it "failed" as Belinda had not included the content from the sequential flow of the preceding dialogue and incorporated the ideas previously suggested. She had responded to Mrs. Compton's shirt, as if it was her own, by providing an answer that was personally contextualized. An answer that disembedded the teacher's shirt from Belinda's personal experience, and that included "all the things we said" before, was required. Just as Janette related celery and oranges, in the nutrition interaction, with the world of home rather than the abstract schematic categories of fruit and vegetables, Belinda related the shirt to her world and hence did not fulfil the teacher's expectations. Janice, on the other hand, was able to produce an accurate sentence incorporating several ideas within one answer, with minimal cues from the teacher. She moved out from her own personal world and viewed Noreen Compton's shirt as an object to describe, within definite linguistic and social structures. Janette, in this exchange, initially provided an inappropriate linguistic form, i.e. a word not a sentence, and was unable to provide a response that met the teacher's content agenda. It is difficult to imagine that she gained knowledge from the interaction as her final response was an exact duplicate of her first answer, though more tentatively delivered. She seemed confused about the expectations, and even her one word response, identifying the colour, was considered inaccurate. During this interaction,

Mark slipped in accurate answers that Mrs. Compton accepted, presumably because they matched the content expectations that other children were not fulfilling. However, his final "slot-filling" was rejected, even though the content was again accurate, and was a response that was utilized almost verbatim, a few seconds later by the teacher. I suspect that Mark had not gauged the teacher's impatience wherein so many of the children were unable to match her expectations. Also, his response involved an interruption, for Jonathon had been identified as the "speaker", though he was unable to respond. Hence, Mark was criticized for breaking social rules.

In summary, the Group Time interactions support the hypothesis that the High Print aware children demonstrated a greater depth of background knowledge than the Low Print aware children. They displayed their knowledge effectively in group engagements, though there were definite risks involved in displaying too much knowledge! Janice and Mark obtained some tacit permission for breaking form rules by being catalysts for continuing the dialogue in a manner that matched the teacher's content criteria. At times the classroom content was so sophisticated that they were the only children who seemed to be able to match content expectations. However, both children were on "dangerous ground" when their knowledge displays involved feeding answers to other children or interrupting others' turns. Group Time clearly demanded ability in the independent display of knowledge rather than in co-operative child-shared knowledge and hence prompting other children's performances was not appreciated. Trevor, either from natural reticence, or from an early ability to know when it was wise to contribute safely, only displayed his well developed knowledge on rare occasions. In Group Time exchanges, the Low Print aware children did not demonstrate a wealth of abstract world knowledge. Marvin withdrew when

"displays" were demanded whereas Janette and Belinda were anxious to participate. Frequently, these girls' responses involved long silences, "don't know's" or answers that did not fulfil the teacher's content expectations.

Clearly, all the High Print aware children were able to connect with the teacher's print content, and could also contribute to print communications. When print was the focus of an exchange, the teacher utilized these children to provide correct answers. Conversely, the Low Print aware children did not contribute in group print interactions unless specifically asked to do so, or unless their tentative answers could be masked by a whole-class response. In group print interactions, the children's print knowledge was invariably checked rather than taught and Janette, Belinda and Marvin were placed at a disadvantage for they did not have the prerequisite knowledge to engage in the content.

Qualitatively, there appeared to be different dimensions to the High Print-Low Print aware children's knowledge. The Low Print aware children demonstrated personal knowledge that was intimately tied to their own situational experiences in the home and community. They attempted to make sense by relating questions to concrete experiences in their lives. When all else failed, they attempted to relate to the form of the social dynamics, even to the point of "raising hands" when they did not have prepared answers. These children knew the social structure and "raising hands" provided a way of demonstrating competence at one level. The High Print aware children were able to abstract or decontextualize knowledge in that their responses described how objects related schematically in the world "outside", rather than how objects related to them personally. Thus they could relate "oranges as spheres" with "apples as spheres"

(Trevor, January 23rd), rather than "oranges" with the object that "my Mom cuts up in the same way as my teacher" (Janette, January 23rd). Janice, Mark and Trevor demonstrated the ability to deal with abstract properties, though presumably at earlier stages of their lives these properties had concrete, personal meaning for them. This qualitative difference is interesting for it may well link with the High Print aware children's comparatively well developed literacy knowledge. Discrimination of print's graphic features requires abstract comparison and analysis, and reading text requires an ability to decontextualize from personal experience to the world of the author. Most of the classroom group interactions, with the exception of the language experience stories at the end of February, concentrated on the abstract graphic features of print, e.g. naming letters within isolated words or identifying isolated words provided by the teacher. It is suggested that the High Print aware children may have derived some benefit from Group Time print interactions as they were able to engage in the abstract content and fine-tune their utilization of orthographic cues. These children already knew that print had a purpose and a meaning in their lives (see Chapter Seven) and thus could make sense of the tasks provided and integrate the finer details of orthographic information with their "old" knowledge. The Low Print aware children had comparatively less well developed literacy knowledge and the group interactions with print were too de-personalized and abstract to meet their "growing edge". Their background knowledge was highly personalized and, as most print in Group Time emerged from the teacher and not from themselves, it had little personal meaning. Thus, as abstract displays of letter and word knowledge were required, these interactions prevented the integration of old print knowledge with new knowledge, for

the new information was too removed, or schematically abstract, to gel with prior personal information.

Play Time: Trevor, Mark and Janice's play incorporated dimensions that were qualitatively different from Belinda, Janette and Marvin's play. It is difficult to comment on Janice's social play as she rarely selected house centre where most imaginative group play was enacted. When she chose blocks, sand or water, her play was frequently silent and self-absorbing. The other five children, however, were fervent actors in play with others, and Trevor, like Janice, enjoyed solitary play. There was no demonstrable difference between the High Print-Low Print aware children in their enthusiasm to engage in play, but there were differences in how they engaged.

The High Print aware children were script initiators whereas, in the early weeks of kindergarten, the Low Print aware children were script followers, though they did contribute sub-plots within the play schemas created by others. Trevor and Mark, in social play, frequently generated "Let's pretend" suggestions, though these initiations were not always accepted by the other children. The development of these "Let's Pretends" into expanded play really depended on all the participants' ability to negotiate a shared schema for engagement. For example, Mark attempted eight different "Let's Pretend" initiations in the house centre, when playing with Belinda and two other children. His generation of new suggestions was due to the group's difficulty in elaborating on previous ideas. Whatever the suggestion for shared-play, Belinda always developed her own personal conflict theme. Belinda recycled a "you're bad - I'll punish you" sub-plot in all her play during the first two months of school, e.g.

Belinda is "Mother" and Laura is "Baby".

Belinda: (Grabs Laura's arm and pulls her up with a jerk) "You're bad -- I'll spank her if she doesn't smarten up." (She pushes Laura under a table.) "You stay here in the changing room. I'm locking you in" (pretends to turn a key). "You can't get out!" (yelling)

Laura crawls out. Belinda pushes her back.

Belinda: (Yells) "You're locked in. You're wet -- Don't come in. It's closed."

Laura starts to crawl out. Belinda grabs her feet and drags her across the floor. (October 27th)

At this point, as on every occasion when physical conflict emerged, Mark suggested a new sub-plot, in this case "Let's pretend it's our bedtime". He asked the children to pretend that it was night time, but again the new "Let's pretend" was disrupted when Belinda re-played out a new version of conflict, i.e. "You're bad at night time -- I'll punish you". Mark then initiated "Let's pretend my baby met your baby in their strollers", "I have a pet cat" and "Let's pretend we have supper", in quick succession, but each suggestion "died" in a conflict scenario between Belinda and the other children. In seeming desperation to evolve a shared schema for expanded play, he attempted to structure a story with Adam:

Mark: "Pretend my cat came over to you -- Meeow -- pretend my cat -- you didn't know him" (grabs a toy cat and moves it towards Adam). "Pretend you didn't know I had a cat. You heard some meowing -- meow. I got you out of bed. Meeow."

Adam: "What's that noise?"

Mark: "Meeow -- meow."

Adam: (Long silence)

Mark: (Coaching) "Pretend you say, 'That's what it is --'."

Adam: (Turns away) "The police are coming to arrest your cat."

Mark: "Don't arrest her. Pretend I'll tell the Sheriff to forget it."

Adam gets up, pushes Belinda and runs away.

Belinda: (Yells) "Now you stay here!" (Runs after him and whirls him to the ground.) (October 27th)

Again, Mark's attempt to negotiate a schema for elaborative play evaporated as Adam triggered Belinda's conflict theme. Such interactions represent

other play engagements involving the High Print and Low Print aware children. Trevor and Mark frequently attempted to develop elaborate story schemas in play but the Low Print aware children did not engage in their content. Instead they preferred to relate to the overall schema, i.e. "house and family" and develop short sub-plots wherein physical engagements or familiar home activities could be re-enacted. In another play interaction, Trevor and Marvin and two other boys played "delivering goods to a new house". Trevor built weight-lifting equipment and offered to deliver it to the occupants of the house. The other boys rejected his sub-plot stating that they did not know what "bar bells" were and hence Trevor developed his own story schema alone. It is suggested that the High Print aware children's schemas and concepts were more abstract than the Low Print aware children's and hence Janette, Belinda and Marvin experienced difficulty in sharing meaning in co-operative play with Trevor and Mark. The Low Print aware children developed personalized scripts or engaged in short physical episodes, whereas the High Print children desired to engage in developed, sustained story schemas in a verbal mode.

Interestingly, when Mark and Trevor communicated in play with other story-makers, their interactions involved elaborate story schemas sustained over long time periods. Mark and Suzanne, for example, developed a "We're at War" scenario at the water centre. They arranged ships and sailors and enacted a naval battle involving continual verbal exchange. On the following day, they selected to play together at the blocks centre and continued the "war" on land, shooting enemy 'planes (the classroom lights) from behind a blockade (the teacher's desk and an intricate arrangement of blocks with peepholes for guns). Mark and Trevor created elaborate play by delineating characters, establishing settings, and by

enacting episodes and resolutions within a holistic story schema. For example, in one "farm scene" Mark spent a great deal of time arranging fields, farm trucks and animals. Once the initial setting was ordered he defined the main characters and provided potential sub-plots for his playmate:

- Mark: (Picks up a pig and makes "oinking" sounds)
 "Let's pretend this is our baby pig."
 Jonathon: "And this is our farm" (runs a truck over to Mark's fields).
 Mark: (Arranges his animals once more) "We have a horse -- (neighs) -- and a cow in the house."
 (Puts the cow into a farmhouse picture on a floor mat.) "This house is a hospital -- and the cow's in the hospital -- Moo -- Moo. This guy's dead. He was one of our cows. He's dead now" (puts the hospitalized cow on its side).
 "Oink --" (moves three pigs into a field).
 "Oh! Oh! One of our pigs is running away."
 (Breaks a fence and puts the pig on to a road)
 (October 25th)

Jonathon engaged with Mark's plot and the boys subsequently rescued the pig, built a safe pighouse and created better fencing. Thus, when other children could bring background knowledge to bear on the High Print aware children's schemas, then fully developed stories emerged. Two further points arise from the latter, and other elaborated play interactions. Firstly, the High Print children were "controllers" in that they invariably engaged in story schemas that they initiated themselves. They enjoyed taking the lead in play interactions and liked to be in control of structuring their environment. In play they attempted to persuade fellow participants to enter their ideational world and, as noted previously, this schematic world was sometimes too remote from the other children's experiences to result in collaboration. Secondly, the High Print aware children demonstrated ability to glean conceptual resources from a broad background knowledge base, to utilize in framing story schemas for play.

They decontextualized experiences. For example, Mark, in the farm interaction, utilized previously learned information about farms, e.g. "Animals die or run away" and "animals need safe environments", to apply to the new play situation. As Mark lives in a densely populated co-operative housing unit with not a pig or a cow in sight, he must have abstracted a farm schema from trips with the family, conversations with his mother, television, films and books. Mark was undoubtedly interested in animals (interview with Mother, November), and read several of the animal-theme books from September's selection in the book corner. A week prior to this interaction, Mrs. Compton had also read the children a farm story, "The Rain Puddle". Hence, Mark was able to integrate background knowledge from multiple resources, abstract this information into a farm framework, and apply it to a new context, i.e. play at the blocks centre.

Trevor, like Mark, demonstrated that he liked to control play and that he could develop abstract story schemas. When Mark failed to negotiate shared schemas with others he attempted to initiate new "Let's pretend", but Trevor rarely pursued this path. If his initiations failed to produce an elaborative play interaction, he withdrew from the group and developed his story schemas alone. Trevor was a story spinner at home (interview with Mother, November), and at school, and wove his plots whether there were others to engage in social exchange or whether he was by himself. He and Janice demonstrated the ability to stay apart and become totally absorbed in re-enacting stories alone. Both Janice and Trevor engaged in many Type III, child-stimuli interactions in play. They could engage in a story directly, without benefit of other participants to elaborate on their plot. Mark's mother suggested that he engaged in solitary play at home, though at school Mark's play was social.

In the following interaction, Trevor did not verbalize but his non-verbal behaviour illustrated that he was acting out a story schema with main characters, plot episodes and a resolution. Parts of the action were clearly pre-planned as he positioned props to provide a setting, in the same manner as Mark's pre-positioning of farm materials in social play.

Trevor is alone at the blocks centre. He lifts the dolls' house from the shelf on to the rug. He tries ringing the doorbell which "pings" loudly. Trevor gets down two plastic "people" and places them by the front door in the house. He then gets down a model dog and puts him by a truck. Trevor loads the truck with train tracks and puts the dog in the cab as the driver. He makes "truck noises" as he guides the vehicle towards the dolls' house. When the truck arrives he moves the dog out of the cab and trots him to the front door. Trevor rings the doorbell several times. He then moves the two people out of the house. They then go with the dog to the truck and "help" unload the train tracks. Trevor sets the model people down as he builds a circular train track. He balances the people on the carriages. They tend to topple off and he has to keep re-positioning them. The dog is placed on the engine as the driver. Trevor steers the train around the track replacing the people as they fall. He then moves the people off the carriages and "walks" them back to their house. They "watch" as the dog drives the engine around the track.

(November 1st)

Trevor's story had a holistic quality. You could almost "hear" the story evolving in his mind. It started, "Once upon a time dog decided to give his friends a ride on his train" and concluded, "and they thanked him for a lovely trip". Trevor transcended into an abstract story schema that could be written as the plot of a child's book.

This level of abstraction, decontextualization and elaboration of holistic story schemas was not observed in the Low Print aware children's play. Their play exchanges evolved around short episodes and scenes were sparked by physical engagements with others and by the immediate materials in the environment. For Marvin and Belinda, play was a time for dramatic "rough-housing" and for Janette it was a time for re-enacting personal

home events such as washing dishes and serving food. At no time were these three children observed silently enacting story schemas like Trevor or Janice. Janette's housework was brief and interspersed with short periods of social exchange and long periods of observing other children. Belinda's and Marvin's play centred on "action with others" and often did not develop into any kind of sustained story. Marvin's house episode follows, as a representative illustration of the Low Print aware children's episodic play, wherein stimulation was obtained from the physical trappings of the environment and from un-storylike social exchanges with others.

Marvin is at the house centre with Laura. Marvin "hides" in an open cupboard. He jumps out at Laura and yells, "Adios", waving his arms in the air. His blond hair is flying in all directions and he looks excited. He repeats his "Adios" trick six or seven times. Each time he jumps out, Laura runs away giggling. Marvin jumps out a final time. Laura collides with him and they roll on the floor laughing.

Noreen: "When we play in the house we don't fight. We may set the table -- the placemats are here -- but we don't horse around."

Noreen Compton leaves.

Marvin: (Smiling) "I'm ticklish."

Laura: "I have to go to the bathroom."

Marvin: "Okay, I'll tickle you."

Laura leaves. Marvin wanders around the house. Suddenly he runs to the counter and hoists himself up so that his feet are off the floor.

Marvin: (To Paul who is working at a nearby centre)
"Hi Paul!"

Paul: "Hi chicken."

Marvin: "I'm not a chicken."

Paul: "Why'd you pretend you were a chicken?"

Marvin: (Thinks a second) "Hi Paul. I am a chicken."

Paul: "Hi Marvin. I'm a paintbrush."

Marvin: "Hi Paul. I'm a cat, -- I'm a washer and dryer -- yeah!" (Yells) "Paul?"

Paul: "I'm not talking to you any more. I'm busy."

Marvin: "Okay. (Stands on the counter) I'm biggest 'cos I am -- I'm big."

Laura returns to the house. Marvin leaps down and puts the toy sink drainer on her head. She laughs. He pretends to squeeze washing-up liquid over her head. She gives a little scream.

Marvin: "It's got soap in it" (laughs).

Laura: (Suddenly serious) "Let's play house."

The tidy up tune is played. Laura puts away the dishes. Marvin does not help as he is busily trying to unthread his fingers which are stuck in the dish drainer.
(October 20th)

This interaction was similar to many play engagements experienced by the Low Print aware children in that social exchanges did not "take off" into developed story schemas. Over the first weeks of kindergarten these children enacted scenes concerned with "how to take care of a house" (Janette), "how to punish bad children" (Belinda) and "how to have fun with available materials and people" (Marvin). I suggest that they were basing play on concrete personal experiences, i.e. "helping my Mom" (Janette), "conflict with my Mom" (Belinda), and "fighting with my brothers" (Marvin). As their play depended on "personal variants of typical role play activities" (Corsaro, 1983, p. 17), script expansion with other participants was limited. These children attempted to control their environment through re-enacting the familiar, rather than through the negotiation of shared, and more abstract, schemas with other interactants.

Over time, differences were noted in the Low Print aware children's play strategies. By the end of November, Belinda and Marvin demonstrated the ability to develop expanded and shared play schemas with others. Classroom content and broader environmental resources began to be interwoven into play by these children, and hence more elaborate and co-operative play episodes could be evolved. The following episode represents this type of decontextualized thinking that was developing:

Belinda is dressed in a nurse's uniform in the hospital centre. She has a stethoscope fixed to her ears and is attempting to listen to Trevor's heart as he lies stretched on the bed.

Suzanne: (To Trevor) "You look bad."

Belinda: (Crawling over Trevor's legs) "Excuse me, Doctor" (talks to Suzanne as she puts the stethoscope to Trevor's chest). "Just wait. I can't hear nothing. Is your heart on the other side?" (to Trevor)

Trevor: (Weakly shakes his head)
 Belinda: (To Suzanne) "What does a sound mean?"
 Suzanne: "Like bump, bump, bump."
 Trevor: (Weak voice) "I need a needle."
 Belinda: (Kneels beside him and mimes giving him a
 drink) "Dear, dear -- here, drink some
 ketchup" (soft, soothing voice). "He's
 drinking some ketchup." (November 22nd)

Belinda was moving away from her conflict theme in play and was integrating new classroom information into her scripts. A few days earlier, Mrs. Compton had read the children a descriptive book about the workings of the heart, and Belinda, in this episode, was trying to utilize this knowledge in her play. By integrating common knowledge into play she could share more elaborate schemas with fellow participants. In this interaction, Belinda preserved her role as "caring nurse" illustrating that she could transpose "I am Belinda" into the role of another, i.e. "I am nurse", a role that was conceptually distanced from the familiar experiences at home. Marvin, similarly, demonstrated an increasing ability to link his play with others. For example, in the blocks centre, Marvin joined in with Paul's schema of building a new house, by delivering wood to the new occupants and constructing an outside fireplace for them. Fireplaces were already part of the familiar for Marvin, when camping and visiting his grandparents at their lake cottage (interview with Father, December), but by utilizing his knowledge in Paul's story, he showed that he was able to abstract relevant "fireplace knowledge" to apply appropriately to a "new house" schema. Though this type of ability to in shared plots, and to move from personal experiences to broader concepts, was demonstrated by Belinda and Marvin, it was not observed in Janette's play. She continued to be involved in the familiar house materials and brief social exchanges. It is possible to suggest that Janette, as an English as a second language user, was more constrained in group play engagements due

to unfamiliarity with the vocabulary in use or by lack of confidence in utilizing English in the social dialogue. However, there is no evidence from any other data source to suggest that she found general verbal expression in English a problem. There is a possibility that she may not have had key words in English available for displaying her knowledge at Group Time, e.g. when asked to name the sound a duck makes she did not respond, although all the other children helped her by "quacking" and then she joined in. Even in such an example it was difficult to know whether Janette did not have the concept for "quacking" or did not have the word label in English. Observations at Centre Time and Group Time support the view that labelling was less of a problem than Janette's rather limited background knowledge. She interpreted situations literally and concretely and rarely demonstrated engagement with the world of imagination. For example, in one play exchange Adam attempted to draw her away from her solitary "supper cooking" by bringing her a posy of plastic flowers, saying, "Let's pretend I found some flowers for you". Janette immediately expressed interest in where he found them and, rather than accepting Adam's flowers, rushed to look for her own in the play materials. Adam stood, looking disappointed that she did not pick up his initiation and develop it into an imaginative plot. In play with her friend at the sand centre, Janette focused on controlling actions by instructing Jane to line up equipment and fill specific containers. When Jane hid a dinosaur figure and introduced a possible rescue scenario, Janette did not engage in the story, but expressed concern that the hidden dinosaur was "out of line". Thus, it seems more likely that Janette did not engage in elaborative play exchanges, not because of second language usage, but because she had somewhat limited resources to draw on for imaginative play. Certainly her

home data suggests the insularity of the family unit in that their social world was largely limited to family and church and reading and visual materials were censored by the parents.

In summary, two of the High Print aware children, Trevor and Mark, started the kindergarten year with the ability to initiate story schemas in social play, to extend and elaborate play interactions, to share story schemas with other interactants who shared a common knowledge base, and to utilize a broad range of background knowledge in play exchanges. They could decontextualize thinking to incorporate selected information from diverse sources to integrate into social schematic play. Though Janice was rarely involved in social play at school, she and Trevor engaged in solitary play wherein they silently re-enacted holistic stories. The plots for solitary engagements incorporated the same concepts of setting, main characters, episodes and resolutions that could be anticipated in children's books. The children's overt play strategies reflected their thought processes and such cognitive processes are utilized not only for play but also for all activities, including literacy interactions. Independent reading requires a direct interaction with text, a perception of another's viewpoint, and an ability to share meaning with the author. These very qualities are embedded in the High Print aware children's play. Though print was not directly involved in these children's free play, their strategies reflected the abstract decontextualized thought necessary for a reading interaction. In Janice's and Trevor's cases, independence in creating story meaning in direct interaction with stimuli may well relate to their increasing ability to interact with story meaning in texts. These children demonstrated that they were controlling the world of abstract thought and such control seems a necessary prerequisite for reading (Segal .

and Adcock, 1980; Snow, 1983). The Low Print aware children demonstrated highly personalized knowledge in play, at kindergarten entrance, and were less apt to share meaning in social play and create schemas by abstracting knowledge from diverse sources. Over time Marvin and Belinda began to decontextualize thinking in play and utilized background knowledge to construct expanded shared schemas. This development was not apparent from observations of Janette. Such ability to abstract appropriate background information, from a personal world, to share meaning with others is surely important, for selective attention to the particular, i.e. print features themselves, to the schematic world of stories, e.g. the predictability of story schemas, and to the independent conceptualization of another's viewpoint, i.e. the author's, make key contributions to literacy development.

Independence and Competence

In the Types II and III engagements in Centre Time, independent performance could be distinguished from competent performance. Mrs. Compton's intent was that the children should demonstrate increasing independence at the centre activities, namely that they should be able to work at them without adult supervision. Competence, however, could be viewed as the children's fulfilment of the particular task demands. Thus competence on centre tasks often required the children to relate to the teacher's content agenda, as many activities had teacher-prescribed usage. In the classroom, independent performance was more highly valued than competent performance. If the children seemed involved and were interacting with materials independently, then rarely did adults approach to check that tasks were being completed appropriately, i.e. in the teacher-suggested way. If the children were "daydreaming", or if the centre behaviour was noisy, then the adults did not consider that independence

was being demonstrated, and on these occasions they intervened to stress the expectation for unsupervised work, and also to offer suggestions for pursuing competent performance.

The High Print-Low Print aware children demonstrated similar independence and competence in several centres. They could all engage with ease in the painting centre, the plasticene area and in puzzles and crafts. In these centres, independent performance relied on following the teacher's organizational rules. For example, in painting the child was expected to don an apron, paint using the colours and brushes available, return the paintbrush to the appropriate tub of coloured paint, place paintings on a counter to dry, and pin up new paper for themselves or the next painter. None of the High Print-Low Print aware children experienced any problems in demonstrating independence in following these types of routines. The demonstration of competence in such centres required the children to produce their own content contributions. The teacher's competency expectations were thus fulfilled if the children generated personal creative content with the available materials. Again, there were no High Print-Low Print aware differences in the demonstration of competence at such centres, possibly because all the children were able to create their own content.

However, there were marked differences between the independence and competence of the High Print and Low Print aware children when they pursued tasks that involved the teacher's specific content rather than their own. These differences were the most apparent when centres contained print materials. In the listening, printing, computer, games and library centres, the High Print aware children were able to work without adult supervision on many tasks and could also engage in the activities in a

manner that fulfilled the teacher's competency expectations. The Low Print aware children were often able to work independently at such centres, though accessed adult admonitions to stay on task more frequently than the High Print aware children. However, they rarely utilized the materials, especially those containing print, in the way that the teacher suggested. Instead they developed their own competency criteria by using the tasks in a manner that made personal sense, when they were unable to engage meaningfully in the teacher's print content.

The "independence and competence" theme is explored within key situational contexts provided by the classroom centres, as these centre contexts influenced the interactive dynamics.

At the Listening Centre: Books, tapes and a tape recorder were provided at the centre. As described in Chapter Five, the books and tapes changed monthly and their content was often, but not always, related to the current theme. Flannelboard activities were sometimes incorporated into the centre and certain stories could be reconstructed after the children had listened to the recorded texts. In interacting with the centre materials, differences were noted between the High Print and Low Print aware children.

Firstly, the High Print aware children always tried to claim the middle seat in a three-seat arrangement, and if this chair was not available they attempted to negotiate with the other two children in the group to obtain it. According to the centre's rules the middle child was permitted to hold the book and turn the pages. Janice, Trevor and Mark liked to control the storybook-listening engagement and learned rapidly how to operate the tape recorder, for example:

Mark, Marvin and Laura are seated at the listening centre.
Mark occupies the centre seat and turns the pages steadily

and evenly.

Mark: "We don't want to listen to the music, do we?"
(Loud voice as all three children are wearing headphones)

Marvin: (Shake their heads)

Laura:

Mark: "Off -- okay?"

Marvin: "I'll do it" (moves towards the record player).

Mark: "I'll do it" (presses the red star: stop).

"I didn't forget anything. How about this one?"
(Picks up 'The Scrawny Tawny Lion' and takes the book and tape out of its plastic bag)

Marvin: (Moves again to help)

Mark: "I'll do it."

Marvin: "Okay."

Mark: (Removes the old tape from the machine. Looks at the tapes and selects the one labelled 'The Scrawny Tawny Lion' and puts it in the machine.)

Laura: "I've got that book at home" (points to the dragon book and tape that Mark is starting to put away). "I'll do it."

Mark: "I'll do it. I don't forget." (Presses the green start button for the lion story.)

(September 15th)

At times these children seemed to be quite controlling in their desire to operate equipment efficiently in order to listen and read the accompanying story. The Low Print aware children, like Marvin in this interaction, often attempted to participate, but Janice, Trevor and Mark rarely permitted them to take charge of the book or to operate the machine. In terms of deriving maximum benefit from a story listening interaction, the High Print aware children's insistence in controlling seemed understandable, as they clearly were able to utilize print to select the correct tape and also to monitor the page turning. Such accuracy was not a characteristic of the Low Print aware children as, for example, Janette, a regular attender at this centre, always required an adult to rewind the tape, often matched the wrong tape to a book, and rarely turned the pages accurately.

Secondly, the High Print aware children always utilized the text to accompany the recorded story, even when alone. The Low Print aware children used the books more sporadically when alone or when participating

with other children who had somewhat more limited literacy knowledge. Marvin and Belinda, in fact, rarely went to the listening centre after September. Janette, presumably because she had been involved in listening to taped stories at home, visited often, but in the post-Christmas period she rarely utilized the book unless other children were present at the centre.

Thirdly, Trevor, Mark and Janice used the flannelboard follow-up activities as a natural part of the centre's experiences. They rebuilt the stories on the board, using the felt characters, and sometimes retold the story aloud when reconstructing it with another child. For example, Trevor and Laura, in an interaction previously cited, retold the story of "The Three Little Pigs", using appropriate voices for the characters and quoting sections of the story verbatim. Even when alone the High Print aware children reconstructed the stories on the flannelboard. On separate occasions, Janice and Mark listened to a Winnie the Pooh story and then replayed it. On the second occasion they built the story using the Pooh characters. Mark's Type III interaction demonstrated both competence and task independence:

Mark is alone at the flannelboard. He takes each felt shape out of the box and arranges each one on the board. He places all the Pooh shapes together and all the Christopher Robins, etc. He removes them and replaces them in the box in their character piles. He presses the green "on" button and the tape plays the song, "What a Nice Time for a Party". Mark bobs in time to the music and sings the chorus. The story starts on the tape. Mark sets up the "pensive Pooh" figure looking into Rabbit's hole. The story announces the tea party and Mark leaves the outside view of the hole up and places the party scene at the side. He picks up Pooh and "pushes" him through the hole to join the party. As Pooh is preparing to leave Mark pretends to wriggle and push Pooh through the rabbit hole. He then replaces the big Pooh with the "puzzled head and shoulders of Pooh". As the story tells of Rabbit trying to pull Pooh out, Mark produces Rabbit and models "pulling". He chuckles as he does this. He introduces the other characters as they are announced on the tape and models their actions. He

superimposes the "pleased head and shoulders of Pooh" over the "puzzled Pooh" when Christopher Robin appears. Mark echoes, "Is something wrong, Pooh?" as the taped voice emulates Christopher Robin's voice. Mark produces the characters and models "pulling" Pooh. The tape announces "On top of them came Winnie the Pooh", and Mark echoes the words. Mark takes down the "head and shoulders of Pooh" and produces the "whole Pooh". He arcs him through the air to land on top of the other animals. The songs come on again and Mark sings quietly. (January 25th)

Mark, as did Janice and Trevor on such flannelboard story constructions, interacted with total absorption, and repeated key story lines aloud. All three children, like Mark in this interaction, always checked their characters and setting before they commenced. This was a strategy noted also in Trevor and Mark's free play. They all demonstrated "a sense of story" and equally importantly perceived themselves as active participants in the story engagement. Thus, Mark, Janice and Trevor were able to control not only the mechanics of the tape recorder, but also the story content. During the six months of the study the Low Print aware children were never observed in reconstructing a taped story on the flannelboard.

Fourthly, the High Print aware children revisited the books and taped stories in the listening centre, and often reconstructed the stories on the flannelboard several times. For example, Trevor was observed to listen-read "The Three Little Pigs", and rebuild the story, on four separate occasions over a ten days' timespan. It is interesting to note that these children must have monitored the books and tapes at the listening centre. Even if new materials were not announced to the class and yet had been placed in this centre, Janice, Trevor and Mark invariably visited the centre shortly after the emergence of new books and tapes. As Marvin and Belinda rarely visited the listening centre then they did not relisten to previously heard stories. Janette frequently reheard stories but, as noted previously, only used the text on occasion and never

constructed flannelboard stories.

Fifthly, there was a qualitative difference in the degree of task engagement between the Low Print and High Print aware children. The High Print aware children were absorbed in the books and stories and their on-task dialogue focused on the content. However, the Low Print aware children often diverged on to non-story related topics in the middle of listening to a story. For example, in the following episode, Trevor's interaction represents the type of engagement invariably experienced by the High Print aware children.

Trevor, Paul and Suzanne are seated at the listening centre. Trevor is in the middle and has "The Three Little Pigs" open in front of him, a new book in this centre.

Trevor: (Whilst listening) "And I'll blow your house down."

Paul: (Laugh)

Suzanne:

Trevor and Suzanne start blowing and Paul joins in. Suddenly all three start tapping their feet as if running on the floor.

Trevor: "Oh that wolf! He's mean -- right?" (turns page)

Paul: (Nods)

Trevor: "Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?"
(Sings and the others join in)

Suzanne: "Tra la la la la. You can feel him" (Shivers).

Trevor: "I'll huff and I'll puff."

All growl and snap like wolves.

All: "I'll blow your house down" (intensely).

November 9th)

In the latter interaction, Trevor initiated the story joining-in and the other children followed his lead. After this listening-reading episode Trevor and Suzanne, both children with well developed literacy knowledge, re-enacted the story with the same intensity that they demonstrated listening to it. Janette's interaction is presented as an example of a Low Print aware child's task engagement at the listening centre. Her fellow interactants include Manuel and Carlos, who speaks little English.

Janette, Manuel and Carlos are listening to a Mickey Mouse story. Manuel is seated in the middle but Janette, at his right, holds the book. She leans forward on one elbow and the other children cannot see the text.

Janette keeps flipping forwards and backwards through the story. She seems unsure about the page she should be on. Manuel leans forward to attempt to look at the book. Janette leans backwards and talks to Carlos.

Janette: "Let's see your teef (teeth)." (No response from Carlos) "Aha -- let's see your teef" (models showing teeth to Carlos and he copies).
"Do this" (wrinkles her nose and Carlos copies).

Janette turns back to the book and closes it. Manuel yawns and puts his head on the table. All listen.

(December 7th)

Thus the data indicates that the High Print aware children were more active interactants with the taped books and also more attentively engaged with the story content.

Finally, the High Print aware children demonstrated that they desired a holistic story experience at the listening centre. They liked to listen to a whole story and frequently grumbled when the tape was switched off mid-story at the conclusion of a centre period. Trevor especially seemed to demand a sense of closure, for he frequently stayed to complete his flannelboard activities, after the other children had moved to new centres. Janice illustrated that she was aware that listening to a whole story was necessary for a satisfying experience. For example, Janice was alone listening to a story on one occasion, and I slipped on a pair of earphones to monitor her performance. She stopped the tape immediately and said, "I'm going to start over again from the beginning. It's no good unless you get the beginning" (February 2nd). She completely rewound the tape and smiled as the story started once more. This characteristic was not observed in the Low Print aware children's behaviour, possibly because they rarely "sat in the middle" and controlled the tape recorder and book and also, of course, because they were not observed in reconstructing stories, and hence could not be "interrupted".

Thus at the listening centre, the High Print aware children

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demonstrated independence and competence. The Low Print aware children worked there with some degree of independence, though their adeptness as "tape recorder operators" was somewhat underdeveloped due to the High Print aware children's "We'll do it" stance. The High Print aware children were competent in their listening centre interactions and utilized all the materials in a teacher-suggested way. Perhaps most significant was their total absorption with the content, their utilization of story schemas and their ability to monitor the page-turning and story reconstruction activities. The Low Print aware children did not utilize the text with any frequency, were often confused by the page-turning and did not rebuild the flannelboard stories. Most importantly for their literacy growth, they did not access adult help at this centre for their relative degree of demonstrated independence, i.e. listening to stories in an unsupervised way, precluded them from caregiver competency checks.

At the Printing Centre: All the children were able to work with independence at this centre, but none of them followed the teacher's prescription for material usage and hence could not be considered as "task competent" by classroom standards. At the printing centre the children were asked to copy the teacher-provided words pinned to a screen, but at no time did I observe any of the six children pursuing that activity. Instead, the children engaged with the form of print as they inked the rubber letters and stamped them on white paper. All the children created patterns with the letters and commented on their forms:

Belinda: "Look at my B's" (points to a row of six P's and then takes a coloured crayon from the craft centre and colours inside the letters in red). (November 9th)

Mark: "A 't'" (prints a 't'). "Now I need an 'x'."

Adam: "'x'?"

Mark: "X-ray" (prints an 'x' over his 't'). "Hey,

Adam, my 't' has had an x-ray." (Both boys laugh.) (October 27th)

In creating such designs, differences were observed between the High and Low Print aware children.

The High Print aware children labelled the letters accurately and were able to find and replace the letters in the alphabetically arranged box. These children occasionally created mini-stories about the letter forms. For example, Mark's x-rayed 't' had a story or joke-like quality and may have emerged from a hospital schema following his own hospital experiences at the end of September. Trevor, Janice and Mark created form tasks for themselves, e.g. "I'm doing six million W's" (Trevor), "I'm making a clear one" (Mark) and "It's 's' time" (Janice). They also attempted to branch into the communicative aspects of print, but invariably this was restricted to printing their names. During the six months of the study I only observed one occasion when a child initiated a printing centre task that demonstrated the knowledge that communication was a basic intent underlying written language. In November, Mark decided to write his mother a letter. He stamped out his name at the bottom of a piece of paper and then looked for a pencil in order to write the main body of the letter. Failing to find one he commented, "I'll do it at home then", as he rolled up the sheet and put it in his book bag.

The Low Print aware children experienced difficulties labelling and identifying letters, and arranging them in alphabetical order. Quite often the High Print aware children became annoyed when Janette, Marvin and Belinda were their printing partners and placed letters "out of order" in the box. Usually the Low Print aware children made letter patterns and printed the beginning letters of their names. Also, Belinda and Marvin sometimes broke centre rules about moving to another centre and either

borrowed crayons from the craft centre or moved over there to colour in their printed letters. On one occasion a Low Print aware child, and incidentally a High Print aware child, accessed adult help at this centre. Marvin was sitting at the printing centre staring ahead and making rhythmic engine noises. Mrs. Webster came over to him and pointed to the hospital words on the screen, suggesting that he print one.

Mrs. Webster: "You print the words here" (points to them).

Marvin: (Looks at the array of words) "I'd like ambulance."

Mrs. Webster: "Oh dear -- that's a word we don't have here. Well, you need an 'a' -- and then an 'm'."
(November 3rd)

The aide guided Marvin through the letter selection process and corrected his print directionality, for he was originally attempting to print the letters from right to left. He completed the word though had to be shown every letter except 'm' and 'a' (letters in his own name). Janice was sitting beside Marvin and she watched the exchange. She started to print "ambulance" herself.

Janice: (Has printed "ambu" on her own) "Marvin, what comes after 'u' on yours?"

Marvin: "X, O and S."

Janice: (Peers at his paper) "Looks like an 'l' to me."

Marvin: (Starts to punch in the air) "I got that robot -- I got him."

Mrs. Webster: (Passing) "Spell 'needle' on your paper, Marvin" (points to the word).

Marvin: (Giggles, slides off his chair and on to the floor under the table). (November 3rd)

Thus Marvin was able to engage in printing words if he provided them, and if he was guided in the letter selection and printing. Without that closely structured framework of adult support he could not complete the task. Once the adult left he was clearly not intending to "risk" a new word -- though I suspect had that word been "robot" his motivation may have returned! Janice, when reminded of the purpose of the task and when

given a word with a meaningful association for her, could competently select the letters and print them sequentially.

It is suggested that all the children concentrated basically on letter forms as few purposes were established that involved using the printing set in other ways that made sense to the children. Clearly the teacher-provided words were often so conceptually remote from the children's experiences (see Chapter Five) that they had limited meaning for the children. If provided with an opportunity to contribute their own words, then the task embodied some meaning for them. Though all the children demonstrated some degree of independence and limited competence in engaging with the teacher's content agenda in this centre, there were some performance differences. These lay in the area of "fine tuning" of graphic information, in that the High Print aware children displayed knowledge about the letter features and names, alphabetical order and the left-right directionality of print. The Low Print aware children required assistance in all these aspects of the task.

Working on the Computer: Type II interactions were the most likely to occur at the computer centre, wherein one child partnered another. The computer entered the classroom in November, and by January and February its popularity had somewhat waned. During those months Trevor experienced frequent Type III interactions where he worked alone, in direct contact with the terminal. The software programmes contained print directions. However, Mrs. Compton taught the children to bypass these:

Noreen: "If you can't read it press the Enter key -- the one with the yellow dot. If it doesn't change you press a number. If that doesn't work you press a letter -- Now, can you read all these?" (Points to the screen where "Early Learning Fun" is shown, and four possible programmes are listed below)

Children: "No."

Noreen: "What do you do?"
Trevor: "Press the yellow key." (November 21st)

Most of the children learned to press the "yellow dot", but became quickly confused if the same frame remained on the screen. Usually they called an adult to attempt the next steps, i.e. "press a number and then a letter". Also, these directions did not cover the variety of print instructions that actually appeared on the monitor.

There were some similarities in the interactive patterns experienced by the High Print-Low Print aware children. Firstly, the "child talk" for all the children tended to be functional rather than expanded in nature. When dealing with the content of the programme, or the operation of the machine, it was restricted to brief comments, e.g. "Your turn", "Press one" or "Press for H". When divergencies occurred, and the children chose to ignore the computer and pursue their own social topics, then "child talk" was often expanded rather than functional. Secondly, none of the children experienced elaborative interactions with adults at the centre. Caregiver-child interactions were brief and functional.

The High Print aware children demonstrated more independence and competence than the Low Print aware children. Janice, Trevor and Mark learned to operate the computer more rapidly than Belinda, Janette and Marvin, possibly because the High Print aware children utilized a variety of visual clues, including print, and monitored their attempts. Over time the High Print aware children focused on the content of the software programmes, whereas the Low Print aware children centred on the forms of turn-taking, social dialogue, or on the operation of the machine itself.

Janice, Trevor and Mark learned to operate the basic routines on the machine quite quickly and then focused attention on the programme content. At that stage differences emerged in the High Print aware children them-

selves. Mark became tired of the repetitive programmes for he mastered the letter and shape matching, and number activities with ease. He then went through the programmes making deliberate mistakes to examine the "reaction" of the machine:

Mark: "Let's make a mistake."

Penny: (Giggles)

Mark: (Works through all the shape matching options during his turn, leaving the correct response until last. He laughs)

Mark continues this strategy through the programme, though Penny strives to obtain the correct answer immediately.

After several minutes another shape design appears.

Mark: "I don't believe it!" (Loud voice) "It's never, never different." (November 22nd)

Clearly the machine's lack of "reaction" to his mistake strategy did not interest Mark for long as the programme content provided too many similar examples to engage his interest. Thereafter, Mark only moved towards the computer when a new software programme was announced. Janice and Trevor persisted, and as the weeks passed they appeared to realize that, to engage successfully with the content, required understanding the print directions. For example, Trevor demonstrated frustration when three objects and then two objects appeared on the screen with the question, "Which number is greater?" Jeremy, his partner, noted that they should either press three or two. Trevor's voice tone announced his impatience with this type of trial and error approach:

Trevor: (Points to the question and swings his finger left to right below the print) "What does this say?"

Jeremy: (Shrugs) "Try --" (presses 3). "Yep, it was 3."

Trevor: "It's no good! We have to know what it says!"
(January 23rd)

In January, Janice and Trevor co-operated to attempt to overcome the major barrier to accessing all the content information, i.e. print. Both children were particularly frustrated by one direction, "WANT TO PLAY

AGAIN? IF NOT PRESS THE SPACE BAR". Clearly if they did not "want to play again", non-action on their part meant that the programme would be recycled anyway. Somehow both children realized that understanding the print was vital to accessing a new programme.

Janice: "I wanna change."
 Trevor: "Me too."
 The screen announces, "WANT TO PLAY AGAIN? IF NOT, PRESS THE SPACE BAR".
 Trevor: (Excitedly) "This is it -- now -- WANT --"
 Janice: "TO PLAY -- uh? -- PRESS --"
 Trevor: "PRESS -- SPACE -- BANNER."
 Janice: "PRESS SPACE BANNER? Uh?"
 The time has elapsed for a decision and the game recycles.
 Trevor: (Throws up his hands) "Here -- you do it!"
 (January 12th)

Though still frustrated by the print on that occasion, two weeks later Trevor demonstrated that he could understand the previous print instructions and variants of it. He pressed the space bar confidently to access new programmes, responded accurately to "Press the space bar. Then press enter" and understood, "Do you want more? Press 1 = Yes, Press 2 = No". In the latter case Trevor commented, "If I press 1 -- it'll be very long" (January 25th). It was also clear that it took him two days to work out the print messages, "Which number is greater?" and "Which number is less?" On January 23rd this question puzzled him. On January 25th I watched Trevor complete these problems and asked him how he knew what to do.

Trevor: "I was here before and this says 'higher'"
 (points to 'greater') "-- and this says 'less'"
 (points to 'less' as the next problem appears).
 (January 25th)

On February 2nd I observed Trevor playing alone at the computer. Once more the direction, "Want to play again? If not press the space bar" appeared. He pointed to "bar" and said, "I know how to spell 'bar' -- b-a-r." Hence Trevor learned to control the key print directions on the screen, though I never observed an adult providing him with this

information, and his Intellivision game at home had no keyboard or similar print. His print, and incidentally his numeracy, knowledge were a surprise to his teacher. In early February Mrs. Compton put a "harder" numeration programme in the computer. As the first problem came on the screen, i.e. $0 + 6 =$, Mrs. Compton commented worriedly, "Oh, this is hard". Trevor quickly pressed 6 and "Press enter" appeared on the screen. Trevor pressed enter just as Mrs. Compton was saying, "You have to press enter". She gasped, "Oh!" as she realized that Trevor had already done so. I can think of no other explanation than suggesting that Trevor largely taught himself to read the print directions. He had an immense motivational desire to glean information from the programmes. Though Mark liked to engage with the content he did not attempt to enrich his computer interactions by working out the print directions. This, of course, may have alleviated his boredom with repeated content for such directions would have aided him to access new programmes. Janice was prepared to tackle the print when with another High Print aware child, and when sufficiently frustrated with trying to move on to new programmes, but she did not demonstrate Trevor's extraordinary perseverance.

The Low Print aware children did not comment on the print in their computer engagements, and often the programme content seemed subservient to the social occasion, unless they were partnered by a High Print aware child. For example, Marvin and Carlos enjoyed computer time as a period for engaging in turn-taking.

Marvin and Carlos are engaged in counting the number of objects that appear on the screen and then pressing the appropriate number.

Marvin: (Counts) "8." (Presses 8)

Carlos: "Your turn -- 3" (Presses 3)

Marvin: "Your turn -- 1" (Presses 1)

When the sound beeping and visual "approval" emanates from the screen both boys laugh.

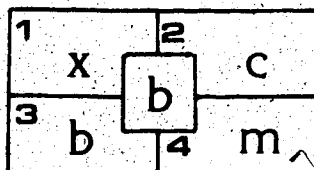
Carlos: "Your turn -- 4" (Presses 4)
 Marvin: "Your turn -- 3" (Presses 3)
 (November 22nd)

(Note: It is possible that Carlos, with his limited English, confused "your turn" with "my turn" and Marvin followed his pattern, in the latter interaction.) Janette also engaged in turn-taking strategies and she also seemed more interested in social dialogue than in the programme content, on many occasions.

Janette and Laura are playing a shape matching game.
 Janette: "All right -- your turn."
 Laura: (Presses)
 Janette: "Now my turn."
 Laura: "Do you know what? I go to dancing class and gym on the same day."
 Janette: "You do? Do you like dancing?"
 Laura: "I used to just go to dancing but my Mom said, 'Why don't you go to gym?'"
 Carlos walks down the hallway.
 Janette: (Stern voice) "Where are you going, Carlos?"
 (February 2nd)

Janette then left the computer centre and went to check to see if all the children had turned their "faces round" on the attendance chart. Similarly, Belinda became involved in "my turn - your turn" and social exchange at the computer. She demonstrated difficulty with operating the machine and became panicky when the frame did not move on, first attempting to press a variety of numbers and letters on the machine and then accessing adult help. When partnered by Janice, Belinda focused more consistently on the content, presumably because Janice had that intent. However, Janice and Belinda's joint interactions were sometimes disruptive as Belinda was unsure of the content and was reluctant to accept Janice as the "helper", especially when she did not understand Janice's brief explanations:

The girls are working on a letter matching programme, e.g.



Belinda: "What do I push?"
 Janice: "b -- no -- 3."
 Belinda: "How come?"
 Janice: "'Cos it's b -- and 3's b."
 Belinda: "It's my turn. I go first!" (Shouts)
 Janice: (Evenly) "It doesn't matter who goes first."
 Belinda: "Well, I'm changing (programmes). God, I hate
 this -- and I'm playing first!"
 (January 17th)

Belinda, not understanding the task, experienced some personal fragility in dealing with Janice's competent knowledge. Thus, she resorted to "turn-taking" procedures, anger and avoidance, i.e. getting out of the programme. The next problem quickly emerged as only Janice knew how to get out of the programme!

Thus the High Print aware children engaged more readily with the computer operation and with the programme content, than the Low Print aware children. Print as a facilitator for content comprehension and machine operation was utilized by Janice and more particularly by Trevor. Mark did not utilize the print and hence became quickly bored with the repetitive programmes. In reality reading ability or the presence of an adult was necessary at this centre, in order for most of the children to competently engage with the programmes. On many occasions interaction at this centre was frustrating for the children as the programme feedback targeted on "competence" and "incompetence", whereas in the other print centres the Low Print aware children could create their own sensemaking from the available materials without realizing that they were not fulfilling the teacher's content expectations. Janice and Trevor were metacognitively aware that personal competence at the computer relied on them being able to obtain meaning from the print directions, and Trevor, especially, rose to the challenge. Mark knew he was frustrated but had not sorted out what aspect of the interaction was really blocking his

interaction. Belinda, Marvin and Janette experienced difficulties with competent performance as the tasks themselves, e.g. letter identification, were a problem, as were the print directions.

At the Games Centre: A variety of games was stored on the classroom shelves and played on the central tables and on the carpet. They invariably focused on manipulative materials, science and mathematics concepts and on print. Many of the games changed each month as their content matched the current theme. Some games were used for Type II engagements, e.g. board games and variants of a memory game, that were played with a partner, and others for Type III interactions, e.g. word and alphabet activities, peg-boards, puzzles and block designs. In addition, the games centre provided the best opportunity for accessing a Type I elaborative interaction with an adult. The spatial arrangements within the room maximized the latter possibility. The games centre occupied the main tables in the classroom and these were often used by the caregivers for administrative tasks, the preparation of materials and the informal testing of such knowledge as, "Do you know your address?" As the adults were often located in the same area as the games centre, then the children in this area had the most available access to their time.

On the non-print games, that were utilized with other children or alone, all the children demonstrated some degree of independence and competence. Indeed all these children could competently construct jigsaw puzzles, models from plasticene and flannelboard shape designs on their own and could play, with others, board games that relied on colour identification or memory games that necessitated matching pictures. However, even on such group and individual tasks there were some different strategies utilized by the High and Low Print aware children. Engaged in

solitary (Type III) interactions, Janette, Belinda and Marvin completed these games in the teacher-prescribed way. Janice, Trevor and Mark invariably completed them once in the expected manner and then added their own competency agendas. For example, Janice, when given horizontal puzzle strips to complete people designs, constructed one "person" in the prescribed way and then went on to build "funny people" by combining heads, torsos, legs and feet from several puzzles. Trevor, being provided with a dot and number matching game which was extremely easy for him, matched the cards very rapidly twice and then offered to teach a friend the numbers. Mark often built jigsaws once and then on the second occasion either reconstructed the puzzle with his eyes closed, or tried to complete it as rapidly as possible. Thus, it is suggested that some of the non-print games were extremely easy for the High Print aware children and hence they added complexity, whereas the Low Print aware children were personally satisfied by fulfilling the teacher's competency criteria as it matched their performance.

Working on group non-print games another strategy difference was also noted, in that the Low Print aware children often focused on the rules of the game and the competitive nature of the enterprise, whereas the High Print aware children centred on the content of the activity itself and on social co-operation. When the High and Low Print aware children played games together the most frequent dialogue incorporated, "It's my turn" and "I win" from the Low Print aware children and "It doesn't matter really about who wins" from the High Print aware children. For example, on the same day in January, Janette played with Suzanne and then Trevor played with Laura, on the same Winnie the Pooh board game. The object of the game was to select a coloured chip from a bag and move a Pooh

character to the next matching coloured square along a trail outlined on the board. , Janette and Suzanne did not complete the game as their interaction concluded in conflict. Janette was so determined to win that she invented a rule to prevent Suzanne moving ahead of her character on the board, and also always looked in the bag to ensure that she picked a chip that matched a square in front of Suzanne.

Janette: "My turn" (looks and then selects) "-- a black. I'm going to win" (moves her shape to the black square ahead of Suzanne).

Suzanne: (Picks) "Blue --" (moves her shape to the blue ahead of Janette's black).

Janette: "'S not allowed in this game. You can't go past me."

Suzanne: (Looks surprised) "Yes!"

Janette: (Definitely) "No! And you're not s'posed to peek!"

Suzanne: (Indignantly) "I didn't!" (January 12th)

The conflict was unresolved and the game abandoned. Trevor then moved over to the Pooh game with Laura. On the first turn Trevor looked in the bag, but Laura reminded him that he wasn't "s'posed to look" and Trevor apologized and agreed that was the rule. The two children then played co-operatively, taking turns with no comment, but talking about the pictures they passed on the route such as, "That's Winnie the Pooh's birthday party" (Trevor). Trevor finished the journey and then Laura, in the next throw, also finished. Trevor laughed and said, "We both won!"

When new non-print games were first introduced, a third strategy difference was noted between the High Print and Low Print aware children. Janice, Trevor and Mark engaged with new materials immediately and eagerly, whereas Janette, Belinda and Marvin were more hesitant, especially if specific task purposes were unclear to them. For example, in the following episodes, the children were to complete a craft activity. Black background paper and sticky coloured paper shapes were provided.

Mrs. Compton, in a brief comment embedded in a lengthy explanation of the new theme materials, told the children that they could make hospital scenes with the paper. From observation it became clear that none of the children had understood the purpose of the activity, but Mark, Janette and Belinda handled "not knowing what to do" in different ways:

Mark cuts a Pacman shape out of yellow paper and colours a black eye. He sticks it on the background and then cuts out and sticks down several semi circles. Pacman's "mouth" appears to be swallowing the circles. He carefully folds a concertina to form stairs and sticks them below Pacman.

Mark: "This Pacman is going to gobble up all the candy -- Pacman saw the ghost" (cuts out a white ghost and sticks it on his picture)
 "-- and follows it up the stairs -- 'Where's that ghost?' -- and he jumps up and he sees it and he jumps on the ghost and ZAP!" (Sticks a yellow circle on the top of the paper) "This is the moon." (Centre change is announced.)
 (November 1st)

Belinda and Janette sit next to each other and look at the black and coloured paper on the table. They sit silently.

Belinda: (Suddenly and loudly) "What do we do?"

Janette: "Don't know."

Noreen: (Turns around and brings them each a white piece of paper with hospital equipment and people drawn on it. She tells them to cut round the dotted lines and demonstrates how to fold back the tabs and mount each to form a hospital scene.)

Belinda: (Sings to herself as she cuts) "Ah ha he, ha he."

Janette: (Has difficulty cutting. She struggles and frequently her scissors slip off the lines.)
 "This is silly cutting."

Belinda: "Which are you doing?"

Janette: "Little boy with crutches."

Belinda: "I'm doing the bed. I try to get on the line, but my scissors go off."

Janette: "Mine do too."

Belinda: (In horror as she looks at Janette's cutting)
 "Oh! Don't cut off the bottom part! Oh, Janette, no! That's to stand it up!"
 (November 7th)

These two interactions are representative of the High-Low Print aware children's different task approaches with new materials. The Low Print

aware children, like Belinda and Janette in the latter interaction, were reluctant to engage independently until the task purposes had been clarified. Indeed, in the craft interaction, the purposes seemed to have changed from the teacher's original explanation for work at crafts, for the two girls were given a new activity. Once started on the task, Janette and Belinda seemed anxious to conform to the teacher's competency expectations of "cutting on the line" and "avoiding cutting off the tabs". Their dialogue focused on displaying competent form. Mark, conversely, seemed quite unworried that the teacher's task purposes were unclear and proceeded to define his own competency criteria. In his solitary interaction, he focused on personal content and meaning. Cutting and sticking actions were subservient to his picture and accompanying story. Thus, Mark confidently approached the new materials and engaged in meaning-making, whereas Janette and Belinda were hesitant to pursue their own agenda and ultimately connected with the form-competency requirements.

Engaging confidently with new, and sometimes complex, non-print games was a characteristic of the High Print aware children, though their strategies were different. Mark overtly sought the new games at the centre. His eyes constantly scanned the classroom context and you could virtually "hear" him asking himself, "What's new for me?" Via this active curiosity, Mark accessed most of his elaborative Type I engagements. Either he asked questions about new equipment or else he started to play with it and accessed adult attention to ensure that he played with it appropriately. Both approaches were likely to access him an elaborative engagement as, firstly, teachers may be anticipated to enjoy engaging with children who are excited by provided materials and, secondly, they desire to preserve equipment for future users. As Mark was an inveterate "taker-

aparter" the latter reason provided strong motivation for adult scaffolding

of initial interactions with new materials! For example:

Mark is at the counter, playing with the new balance scale. He is adjusting a blue knob at the top and trying to twist it around completely. Mrs. Compton approaches.

Mark: "Where's the new games?"

Noreen: "On this table. Do you want to play with that balance scale?"

Mark: (Excitedly) "Yes! Do I use this bucket?"
(Picks up a bucket full of objects and the balance scale)

Noreen: (Nods)

Mark puts his equipment on the rug and takes the objects out of the bucket, arranging them in a line.

Noreen: "You have to hold one thing in one hand and one thing in the other to see which is heavier."

Mark: (Holds a tub of paint in one hand and a bottle in the other) "I think this is heavy" (drops the paint tub hand down a little).

Noreen: "Try it now."

Mark: (Balances an object in each scale pan) "I'm right!" (Paint tub pan dips)

Noreen Compton leaves. Mark continues his comparisons and checks his guesses on the scale. Then he starts to add more items to each dish to balance the scales. He has four items in one pan and five in the other. They balance evenly.

Noreen: (Returns) "Er -- Mark -- only one thing in the bucket at a time."

Mark: (Removes the objects) "This is heavy" (holds the plasticene in one hand).

Noreen: "Which one has about the same mass?"

Mark lifts up several objects and selects the paint tub.

Mark: "This one" (weighs both. The plasticene tips the scale).

Noreen: "Are they the same?"

Mark: "No, this is heavier" (points to the plasticene).

Noreen: "You play with these and see if you can find two the same" (turns to leave).

Mark: "I know -- the can and this -- I think" (picks up a pine cone).

Noreen: (Turns back) "How can you tell they're the same?"

Mark: (Puts them on the scale) "They balance the same." (The empty can dips the scale a little.)

Noreen: "They" (points to the pans) "have to be the same difference from the ground." (Both look under the scale.)

Mark: "I think I know now. How about buttons and marbles in here? You should put more marbles in here."

Noreen: "Didn't have any" (smiles).

Mark: "You can find them all over the house, you know."

Mark adds the pine cone and the can to the marbles.
Noreen: "Pretty close. What else could you add?"
(January 25th)

Mark became an expert at accessing the teacher's time for interactions centering on new games' equipment. In the latter engagement he initiated by requesting the location of new materials, and then in co-operative, elaborative interaction with Mrs. Compton he learned new concepts and labels. He "captured" the teacher's attention via his interest and relevant questions and comments. Mrs. Compton became caught up in Mark's enthusiasm and even condoned the use of multiple objects in the pans, an action that she had previously censored. In the final part of the interaction, Mrs. Compton followed Mark's own agenda in an example of semantically contingent dialogue (Snow, 1983), wherein she encouraged him to continue his adopted balancing strategy. Though rarely capturing Mrs. Compton's time for elaborative interactions, Janice and Trevor were equally enthusiastic about new activities. They quietly sought out new equipment and began to use it. For example, on the day following Mark's interaction, Trevor played with the balance scales and "weighed" objects in his hands before checking them on the scale. Janice, during the same week, approached the pegboards and found sample design cards at the bottom of the box. She proceeded to use the cards as patterns for her own pegboard designs, without instruction from the teacher. Thus, it seems that by closely watching others' interactions (Trevor) and by investigating all provided resource materials (Janice) these two children engaged with new materials competently and independently.

The Low Print aware children rarely sought out the new games and appeared to be somewhat less effective in scanning the teaching-learning interactions of others than the High Print aware children. Janette and

Belinda, after initial hesitation, often asked about new equipment but they did not access as many elaborative engagements as Mark. They tended to ask, "How do you do it?" or "What do we do?" and received functional responses from classroom caregivers. Mark's, "Where's the new games?" demonstrated curiosity and an intent to engage whereas Belinda and Janette's questions may have been viewed as potentially illustrating lack of independence and initiative. Mrs. Compton provided elaborated content help for Mark as he asked the right questions and also had sufficient background knowledge to initiate pertinent comments. Janette and Belinda were given assistance with form-competence as they asked for "How do you do it?" help and rarely followed up their initial question with content-based questions or comments. Janice, Trevor and Marvin's interactive communication with the teacher was low-key in that none of these children actively sought help with the games' equipment. The difference was that Janice and Trevor could interact alone with new materials whereas Marvin was unable to competently engage with many of the games without adult help.

Working on games that involved print, the differences amongst the children were even more strongly delineated. Such differences were apparent between the High-Low Print aware groups and also within the groups:

Janice and Trevor demonstrated adeptness at all the print games and moved towards new print activities with initial enthusiasm. However, a pattern developed in their interactions in that both children only completed the letter and word level print tasks once, before reverting to the other games. Thus, Janice and Trevor did not repeat these print activities in the same way that they revisited the stories at the listening centre and the books in the library. Their interactions with the print games were "one shot affairs". Sometimes help was offered to these children

but it became apparent that it was not often needed:

Janice has the Pooh words and pockets on the floor. She takes out the sample words and individual letters and quickly builds each word, always sequencing the letters from left to right, e.g.

O W L
1 2 3

Belinda's mother, today's parent helper, sits down on the rug next to Janice.

Mrs. Williams: "What are you doing, Janice?"

Janice: "You know -- make a word."

Mrs. Williams: "Oh I see -- what is it?" (points to Piglet)

Janice: "Piglet, and Owl -- Tigger, Roo -- Kanga, Rabbit and Winnie the Pooh" (points to each word).

Mrs. Williams: (Surprised) "Oh, you know them!"

Janice: "Uh huh." (February 2nd)

Clearly Janice knew the purpose of the task and it had some meaning for her as she could read the words. Similarly, Trevor engaged in word building tasks independently. However, there was a fine-tuning in his competence.

Initially, he built words starting at the final letter, moving to the middle and then filling in the gaps, e.g.

P I G L E T (January 17th)
6 5 2 3 4 1

No adult intervened but by the end of February Trevor had self-corrected his print directionality strategies, e.g.

B R O N T O S A U R U S
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Though he did not verbalize the words he constructed, I informally checked his word recognition at the end of February and Trevor was able to read all the Pooh and dinosaur words rapidly. Hence Janette and Trevor could interact with the print games and display their knowledge, and in Trevor's case they may have provided some opportunity to fine-tune his orthographic strategies. I suggest that both children only completed the games once as they offered little challenge and no meaningful communicative message when finished.

Mark demonstrated different interactions in the games centre. He was intrinsically curious about the new manipulative, science and mathematics

materials but his curiosity did not extend to the alphabet and word games. During my observations, Mark never selected the word and letter tasks. However, he was entirely enthusiastic about print activities in February, when language experience stories were introduced. In time at the games centre he read and re-read the two group language experience charts that the children had dictated during Group Time. Also, he was the first child to choose to write his own dinosaur chant. When dictating dinosaur stories was announced as a possibility, he rushed towards Mrs. Compton and told her two stories in short order. Thus, Mark avoided all the print games that focused on isolated letters and words, but actively selected print activities, in the games centre, when the print was meaningfully embedded within context. For Mark, then, the print activity had to make communicative sense before he would engage in it. Janice and Trevor's "once only" strategy with the print games may be linked to the same reasoning, in that "once was enough" on tasks with limited challenge and sensemaking. Certainly Janice and Trevor enjoyed constant re-engagement with narrative stories and the "once only" approach was also not a pattern when language experience stories were introduced in the classroom, for both children went "back for more" when dinosaur stories were suggested. For example, on the final day of my research (March 1st) I relaxed my non-interactive observational stance rules and engaged more freely with the children. Janice, on her own initiative, asked me to write down four separate language experience stories, suggesting that when the print contributions emerged from the children's own imaginative language then print engagements were not "one shot affairs".

The Low Print aware children adopted rather different strategies when involved with the print games. In the early months of the year,

Marvin and Janette attempted to interact with the print activities, though over time they developed avoidance strategies. Belinda, like Mark, largely avoided the print games in the pre-Christmas period, but then tried to interact with them after Christmas with a limited degree of success.

In November, Marvin repeatedly visited the flannelboard activity wherein children were expected to reconstruct hospital words with felt letters:

Marvin is placing felt letters on the board and appears to be attempting to rebuild the words on the chart. He either places letters in a right to left direction to form a "word" or positions isolated letters:

B A N E D 2
T E 7 E T

⊖ S
T A P E
G A U Z E
S Y R I N G E
S W A B
B A N D A I D
B R A C E L E T

Marvin lines up three "X's" on the rug. He places two "X's" on top of each other.

Marvin: (To himself) "There's a C" (places two "X's" on the board).

Suddenly he runs his hand through the felt letters and muddles the pile on the floor. He looks at the flannelboard and removes an "E" from his "BRACELET" attempt, i.e. T E T ~~E~~ T. He tears the bottom bar off the felt letter, placing it back in position, i.e. He then adds a "J" at the end of the word. Marvin repositions the letters on the board, i.e.

⊖ B A N D 2
T E 7 F

T TAPE
E GAUZE
L SYRINGE
SWAB
BANDAID
X BRACELET

Noreen: (Addresses me) "Marvin's been choosing this every day and I don't know why. I can't help him every day. As soon as I leave -- he stops -- I'm not sure what he gets out of it."

Mrs. Webster: (Sits down with Marvin) "How would you like to tidy up the letter box with me?"

Marvin: (Sighs deeply)

Mrs. Webster: "Such a chore! Let's get these organized. Can you figure out where these go?" (Holds up the sectioned box. Each section has a capital letter printed on the bottom.)

Marvin: "No."

Mrs. Webster: "Well, where does this go?" (Gives him a Q. Marvin places it on G.) "No, that's a G." (points in the box) "and that's a Q" (points to Marvin's letter).

Marvin: (Places a Q correctly and then muddles all the remaining letters on the floor with both hands)

Mrs. Webster: "Don't do that, Marvin. Let's try F."

Marvin: (Places F on F)

Mrs. Webster: "Where does E go?"

Marvin: (Places E on F)

Mrs. Webster: "That's not E. That's F" (points to the E section). "That's E."

Marvin scoops up a pile of letters from the floor and tosses them in the air. They rain down on Marvin and Mrs. Webster.

Mrs. Webster: "Don't do it that way -- you'll ruin them. Sort them nicely."

Marvin is then asked to place each letter in the box and name them as he puts them away. The routine follows this pattern:

Mrs. Webster: "What's this?" (holds up K)

Marvin: "Don't know."

Mrs. Webster: "It's K" (puts it in the box herself).

"What's this?" (holds up X)

Marvin: "Don't know."

Mrs. Webster: "It's X." (Marvin files it correctly.)

"What's this?" (holds up T)

Marvin: "Don't know." (etc.) (November 10th)

Several things seem apparent in this and several other similar word building games selected by Marvin. Firstly, Marvin desired to interact with print. Secondly, he attempted to demonstrate competence by following the teacher's injunction to build the words. Thirdly, the activity was too difficult for him as he could neither match the letter forms nor sequence them to reproduce the words. Hence, even at a "form level" the task was too hard. Mrs. Compton suggested that Marvin was unable to demonstrate independence or competence at this task. However, in this case, Mrs. Compton was

judging competence rather than independence as Marvin continued his activity when no adult was present but he did not reconstruct the words in the teacher-expected manner. The aide changed the "game" into a letter level activity, and possibly moved Marvin farther from understanding the communicative basis of print, when she directed him to identify and match letters. Even when the emphasis was placed on form, Marvin was expected to compare and abstract graphic features himself as similarities and differences were not demonstrated. That Marvin found the activity frustrating was evidenced by his attempts to distract the adult. By the end of November, Marvin stopped his engagements with word building games, though, as he left the school in December, it is impossible to know whether he would have revisited such activities later in the year.

Janette accessed one elaborative engagement, concerning print in the games centre, in October. Mrs. Compton asked Janette to read the patterned chart that they had completed in Group Time:

Janette is given a pointer.

Janette: "Small is a --" (swings pointer left to right).

Noreen: "An ant."

Janette: (Moves pointer to the third line. Noreen Compton takes her hand and moves the pointer to the second line.) "Small is a butterfly" (short swing).

Janette moves the pointer to another line, further down the chart. Mrs. Compton moves her hand over Janette's and takes the pointer back to the third line. She taps the pointer below each word still holding Janette's hand.

Janette: "Small is a frog." (Pointer guided beneath

"Small is a beetle." each word)

"Small is a fleck."

"Small is a snail."

Noreen: "You point."

Janette: "Small is a leaf" (points and swings and then misses the next line).

Noreen Compton goes back and re-guides Janette's pointer. She taps below each word as Janette reads.

Janette: "Small is a cherry. Small is a raindrop.

Small is a stone. Small is a worm."

Noreen: "Well done! Good reading."

Janette's face lights up in a smile. Mrs. Compton hugs her and Janette snuggles close. (October 20th)

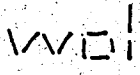
(N.B. Nouns represented by pictures on the chart)

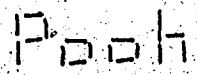
This was clearly a positive experience for Janette. With the teacher's scaffolded help in line sequencing and word-voice matching she was able to demonstrate competence in reading the chart. Mrs. Compton provided just enough assistance to permit Janette to experience success. Unfortunately there were no repetitions of such patterned charts or group language experience stories until February and Janette received no opportunities to enact similar engagements during the course of the study. She did attempt to interact with other print games on her own, but rarely accessed further adult help. By November she had developed two basic strategies in dealing with the provided print games. Firstly, when the print task was too difficult she re-designed it. For example, when she selected the flannel-board activity focusing on constructing the hospital words, she spent time ordering the letter box. On one occasion (November 16th) Janette spent an entire twenty minutes of games' time arranging and sorting the felt letters in the trays. She demonstrated that she could group the letters accurately but frequently had the wrong orientation, e.g. \exists stacked on E and \mathcal{S} on S. Secondly, Janette developed an avoidance strategy in that when such tasks became too difficult, or presumably made little sense to her, she took the bathroom tag from the hook and left the room. This latter behaviour accelerated over time, so that by February she often left the classroom three or four times during each centre time. Janette rarely claimed the bathroom tag when she was occupied at painting, water, sand or house, but limited her bathroom visits to occasions when she was at games, computer, the listening centre or the library. Frequently, she did not actually visit the bathroom but wore the tag as permission to walk down the hallway or go to the water fountain. It is therefore suggested that Janette, without adult help, first tried to reorganize print tasks to focus on an

area where she felt she could demonstrate competence, i.e. letter forms, and then sought to avoid them if this was not possible or if this proved too limiting an activity.

Thus, for Janette and Marvin, reorganizing print tasks to fit personal competency criteria and avoiding print games, were strategies that developed over time. For Belinda, the latter avoidance strategy was most usually employed during the early part of the year. However, she simply avoided selecting print games rather than developing a separate agenda during a print engagement. In January, Belinda began to select print games though gave limited attention to each activity. For example, when involved with a word building activity, making Pooh words from letter cards, she spent a few minutes on it and then moved on to a non-print game playing with coloured acrylic shapes. On another occasion Belinda converted a plasticene name-building task into a modelling activity. Hence, Belinda attempted to engage with the print activities four months after Janette and Marvin's initial encounters, but once she selected them she immediately began to utilize the same task adaptation strategy as the other children. She also revisited her avoidance pattern in that when she was frustrated with the game she abandoned it. Belinda did access one adult intervention whilst pursuing a print game.

Belinda is building Pooh-character words with popsicle sticks. She copies a stimulus card which also contains a picture of the labelled animal, e.g.

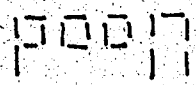
Card:  picture Belinda's version: 



Belinda begins to work on Pooh, i.e. 

She is making the P, e.g.



Belinda: "What about that part? What do I do?" (Moves the offending stick into the right place.) "Now another one -- now another" (continues to build the word, whilst glancing at the stimulus card. The final letter



a. b. c. d. e. 

causes her some difficulty and she rebuilds it several times.)

"That's better" (Design d).

Gordon: (Looks over) "That's not s'posed to look like that."

Belinda: (Changes it slightly: e)

Gordon: "Wrong again. It's not an h."

Belinda: (Corrects again and makes an h)

Mrs. Compton comes over and sits on the floor opposite Belinda.

Noreen: "What does the word say you've written?"

Belinda: "Winnie the Pooh."

Noreen: "Does it say all that?"

Belinda: (Nods)

Noreen: "Count all the letters there" (points to the Winnie the Pooh flashcard on the noticeboard).

Belinda: (Goes over and counts) "Twelve."

Noreen: (Doubtfully) "Are there? Let's count."

(Moves over and guides Belinda's hand. Belinda counts aloud as each finger is tapped under a letter. Belinda has difficulty counting 6, 7 and 9 and Mrs. Compton prompts her.)

Belinda: "Thirteen."

Noreen: "How many letters are there?" (points to the word on the rug)

Belinda: (Runs over and counts) "Four."

Noreen: "So this word is bigger than yours" (points to the flashcard). "Which does it look like?" (taps Winnie and then Pooh)

Belinda: (Points to Winnie)

Noreen: "What do we call him?"

Belinda: "Pooh."

Noreen: "Right, and it says Pooh" (underlines the word on the noticeboard with her finger).

Belinda: (Repeats) "Pooh." (January 20th)

This interaction continued with the correction of Belinda's "wol" into "owl". Mrs. Compton focused on emulating the form of the popsicle stick letters. She pointed out that the first letter, O, was "two sticks high", and then helped Belinda formulate a W. Belinda, though building the letter accurately in her first rendition of "owl" experienced difficulties reformulating it. She first attempted "\/" and then "└". Mrs. Compton encouraged Belinda to follow her model as she placed sticks in the correct orientation. Belinda was able to do this, and could position the final "l" when Mrs. Compton suggested that she finish the word on her own. The

teacher then left Belinda to find Janette, who had reportedly left the room. As soon as Mrs. Compton left, Belinda bundled together the sticks and cards and moved to a table to construct a design with coloured elastic bands. During this interaction, Belinda, aided by Gordon and then Mrs. Compton, demonstrated a great deal of perseverance, though did not continue the activity when her helpers left. Mrs. Compton focused on the exact reproduction of text and correct letter forms. It was clear that Belinda had meaning associations for the words she was building, but she appeared confused by the teacher's insistence on exactitude, and comparing the words via counting letters. This comparison of letter length was unlikely to be a successful strategy for Belinda, as she was unable to count accurately above five, the "magic number" associated with her forthcoming birthday. The counting technique and the concentration on letter forms may well have delivered "mixed messages" about reading words, to Belinda. Initially she reproduced a sensemaking response to "What does that word say?", but was indirectly told that text exactitude rather than meaning was necessary. It was interesting to observe that Belinda did not approach this activity again. It may well be considered a pivotal interaction for Belinda, for after two to three weeks of tentative encounters with print games, she was not observed tackling such tasks alone following this encounter. However, Belinda did begin to engage in print board games with Janice (Type II interactions) and incidentally was exposed to Janice's print knowledge. In the following episode both girls play a Pooch board game. Print directions control their movement around the board.

Belinda rolls a five on the dice and moves five squares.

Janice: "Oh, you have to go back to C."

Belinda: "How come?"

Janice: "It says, GO BACK TO C" (points to each word as she verbalizes).

Belinda: "Oh no -- you go by the arrow" (points to a black arrow that indicates a backward movement).

Belinda moves back to the C square.

Janice: (Throws one, moves to D: no verbalization)

Belinda: (Also throws one and moves to D: no verbalization)

Janice: (Throws four and moves accurately)

Belinda: (Throws and again lands on GO BACK TO C)

"I have to move back to C." (January 10th)

Playing with Janice thus provided Belinda with opportunities to conceptualize the function of print on their games and to attend to graphic cues. In the latter interaction the arrow utilized originally by Belinda indicated a gross directional movement, but clearly she was using the Janice-provided print cues at the conclusion of the interaction. Janette, in comparison, had few opportunities to learn from peers with well developed literacy knowledge, for at the games centre she either played with Jane or became involved in conflict interactions with High Print aware children. Janette liked to control engagements. Jane permitted her to take control. The High Print aware children rejected her control as it invariably involved following Janette's somewhat inconsistent rules. Over time, Janette increasingly played games with Jane, but as Jane had little more print knowledge than Janette, the two girls were frequently confused.

Both girls look at the Pooh letter board game.

Janette: "What do we do?"

Jane: (Shrugs)

Janette: (To Mrs. Webster) "What do we do? Where do we start?"

Mrs. Webster: "Right here, where it says START" (points to the word).

Mrs. Webster leaves and both girls look at the board again.

Janette: (After a lengthy silence) "Well -- I wonder how you play this?" (January 10th)

Janette and Jane were attempting to play the same game as Belinda and Janice, but were experiencing little success. Because Janice possessed knowledge concerning the print on the board, Belinda was able to engage with the content of the game. As Janette and Jane were unable to engage with the print, and because Janette asked a form-question that resulted in

minimal adult help, then the interaction was unlikely to result in acquisition of literacy knowledge.

In summary, the interactive patterns at the games centre were complex, and involved basically Types II and III interactions, with opportunities provided for functional and elaborative Type I encounters with caregivers. On the manipulative and familiar non-print tasks, the High-Low Print aware children demonstrated both independence and competence, though observations revealed that the High Print aware children were more likely to increase task complexity by building their own competency criteria in Type III interactions. In non-print, Type II, engagements the Low Print aware children tended to focus on form rules for play whereas the High Print aware children centred on game content. Observations revealed that Janice, Trevor and Mark engaged eagerly with new materials but Belinda, Marvin and Janette approached them more tentatively. It is suggested that background knowledge may have been intimately linked to task approach as Mark knew the "right" content-based questions to seek further information from caregivers. Janice and Trevor appeared to be able to relate old knowledge independently to new equipment, and to learn indirectly from observation of others and from careful examination of resources, to apply to Type III interactions with new stimuli. Janette and Belinda seemed to ask non-content based, functional questions of caregivers, and all three Low Print aware children experienced difficulties in solitary interactions with new stimuli. This leads to the suggestion that, in order to create a personal independence and competency agenda, as well as to fulfil the teacher's expectations, then the children required a well developed bank of prior knowledge to apply to interactions with new games materials. This latter suggestion is clearly reflected in the data on print games.

The children who possessed a range of print knowledge at kindergarten entrance were able to interact alone with the print tasks at the games centre. Janice and Trevor displayed independence and competence on the letter and word level tasks, whereas Janette, Marvin and Belinda always required adult help on these activities. Such help invariably focused on the form of print rather than on its communicative intent. Interestingly, Mark's rather individual strategies with print games provide insight not only into his own interactions but also into Janice and Trevor's lack of re-engagement with the print tasks, and possibly into Belinda's, Marvin's and Janette's avoidance and re-design of them. Mark only interacted with print, in the games centre, when it was embedded in a meaningful context and when the source of the print emanated from himself or his peers. It is hypothesized that the "one shot" print interactions of Janice and Trevor, and the unsuccessful attempts at print engagements by Janette, Marvin and Belinda, would not have occurred on such a regular basis had the print content in games emerged from the language bases of the children themselves.

Interactions with Storybooks

The organization of the kindergarten programme provided three major opportunities for the children to interact with storybooks. Firstly, the "Entry and Book Exchange" time period created the opportunity for the daily, personal selection of a book to take home. Secondly, the classroom library corner was always available as an activity choice during "Centre Time". Thirdly, the whole class listened to stories read by classroom caregivers and, on a weekly basis, to stories and poems read by the school librarian. Each of these occasions provided settings wherein different human interactive arrangements predominated. During the book exchange

period the focus was on Type III interactions as each child directly engaged in making book choices, though the possibility for Type II communication with peers was also embedded into the book choice encounter. During the storybook interactions in the library corner, Types II and III interactions occurred with equal frequency, though Type I, teacher-child(ren) interactions happened sometimes. In the whole class story listening occasions, Type I interactions occurred exclusively. In the following section, data from each of these three organizational contexts is examined to explore the similarities and differences of the storybook interactions of the High Print-Low Print aware children.

Book Choices: From the start of the kindergarten book programme in October (See Chapter Five) to the conclusion of the study, the children's book selection process was observed. During the daily book choice period, the children were intent on selecting a storybook to be read at home that night and on following the classroom routines for filing their book cards. During the first week of the book programme there was little noticeable difference between the interactions of the High Print and Low Print aware children, in that all the children focused on the carding system and perfecting the routines. Over time, however, distinct interactive patterns emerged, and by the end of February these patterns were so frequently re-enacted that the book choice period became quite predictable. Differing interactive patterns were characteristic of the High Print and Low Print aware children.

Proximity: "It's near my old book"

Physical proximity between a returned book and a new choice seemed to be a similar basis for book selection for all the children in early October. As they concentrated on the routines, and as all the books were

new and "untried", all six children focused on taking a new book that was close to the book they returned. Over time this pattern remained largely characteristic of the Low Print aware children but was abandoned by the High Print aware children.

- Janette: returns her book. She chooses "Sydney". Again the book is next to her returned one. She looks at the cover and takes out the card to place in the chart.
- Marvin: follows the same pattern. He chooses "3 x 3", the book next to his returned one.
- Belinda: returns her book. The one next to her returned book is placed upside down on the rack with its cover to the back. She chooses it ("Two Reindeer for Christmas").
- Trevor: selects his book. He glances at the books in one section of the rack. He chooses "Crictor" from the bottom shelf and sits on the foam pad. Trevor looks inside and flips through the pages. It is a snake story. Several of the pages have letters and numbers formed from snake shapes.
- Mark: comes in last. He returns his book and then looks carefully at both sides of the book rack. Mark selects "The Ant and the Caterpillar". The book has a similar cover and the same illustrator as his old one. He sits on the pad. Mark gets up and takes his old book out of the rack. He looks down at the cover of the old book and then at the cover of the newly selected one. Mark re-returns the old book and flips through a few pages of the new one. He takes out the card and pops "The Ant and the Caterpillar" in his book bag. (October 19th)

Though Janice was not involved in the latter book choice episode, her strategies were intrinsically similar to Trevor's and Mark's in that she started to spend time in making her selections, and rarely chose the book nearest to her returned book. Janette's choice of a book close to her old storybook remained constant throughout the study. This strategy seemed linked to a second pattern that Janette developed and continued during January and February, namely that she rushed through the book choice process, often stating that she wished to be first to finish. Being

"first" necessitated a rapid book selection and hence it became expedient for her to take the nearest book. Marvin also preserved his "proximity strategy" until he left the school in December, though of course it is possible that he may have changed his approach had he remained in the classroom after Christmas. Belinda, throughout the study, often reverted to a "fast choice" pattern, but other strategies developed to rival her initial pattern.

Size: "It's so big!"

This strategy for book choice seemed to be exclusively Belinda's. It certainly could have been implicated in the other children's decisions but Belinda was the only child to verbalize about the relative size of storybooks:

Belinda scans the library books. She picks out a large book, "The Funniest Storybook Ever" (Richard Scarey) and says, "It's so big!" Her eyes widen as she attempts to put it in her book bag. The string won't draw and the book sticks out of the top.

Belinda: "I can't -- oh, there's a gap!"

Belinda laughs, hangs up her bag and runs into the classroom.
(December 6th)

Belinda holds her storybook against Paul's.

Belinda: "Mine's bigger -- way bigger!"

She skips into the classroom, smiling.

(February 15th)

Thus, it appears that Belinda valued the size of a storybook and equated "largeness" with a potentially good storybook interaction. However, "largeness" was favoured only from December onwards, for in November "smallness" was valued by Belinda, as then she rejected books as being "too big" (November 15th).

The Cover: "First clues about the book"

The colourfulness and novelty of the cover appeared to influence all of the children in that dull, linen bound books were rejected frequently

by the children, and bright, colourfully bound storybooks were more likely to be selected. The children invariably looked at the front covers of books, although Janette, Marvin and Belinda were all observed making fast choices wherein the cover seemed subservient to proximity. Janice, Trevor and Mark were rarely observed making such choices for all three children always examined front covers. The children appeared to be drawn to front covers that matched the current theme, e.g. hospitals, Christmas and dinosaurs, but choosing books on this basis lead to disappointment. Theme books were not permitted to be taken home and hence, though placed on the book rack, were not available as daily book choices. Thus attraction to a cover depicting Santa Claus and reindeer in December, with the embargo that such a book should not be taken home, may have demonstrated to the children that front covers were not reliable bases for selection, i.e. you may be very attracted to the cover but the book may not be available to take home. Without an explanation of why such books should remain in school it may also have transmitted, implicitly, a dichotomy in reading, i.e. books for reading at home and books for reading at school.

Over time, the High Print aware children utilized front cover details to aid their book choices. Mark, especially, seemed to take time comparing book covers and often selected books by the same illustrators. Janice and Trevor, in January and February, became interested in book titles, and focused their attention on the print.

Janice picks up "The Runaway Bunny". She flips through the pages. Trevor joins her at the book rack. He returns "Hooray for Pig". He looks for several seconds at "The Bear Hunt", laughs and picks it out. He looks through the first few pages and then closes it.

Trevor: (To Janice) "I got 'The Bear Honey'" (points to each word in the title) "-- 'Bear Honey'" (repeats and Janice laughs): "I got 'The Bear Honey'" (To Gary: points to each word again in the title).

- Janice: "I got 'Run Bunny'. It says, 'Run Bunny'."
 (Swings finger under 'The Runaway Bunny')
- Trevor: "I had 'Run Bunny'." (January 25th)

Both the children were thus utilizing the graphic features and were attempting to make sense of the title's communicative intent. Janice and Trevor increasingly used the print in the titles in the book choice period.

Trevor watches Manuel place cards into the pockets of two books. Manuel places the "Crictor" card in "Excuse Me" and vice versa.

Trevor: "That's Crictor" (points to the word "Crictor" on the card). "It goes in there" (removes the "Crictor" card from "Excuse Me" and places it in the correct book).

Manuel: "No!"

Trevor: "Yes -- That one goes in 'Excuse Me'" (files it correctly). (February 6th)

Janice: "I'll take 'Up -- the -- Big -- Mountain'" (reads the title word by word). "I never read that." (February 27th)

Mark's comparison of illustration details and Janice's and Trevor's utilization of print in titles, were not strategies observed to be used by the Low Print aware children.

Inside the Book: "I'll check inside to see if I'm going to like it"

This strategy was consistently adopted by the High Print aware children. Janice, Trevor and Mark usually explored the inside pages of the book as well as the front cover. It was not an approach utilized with any frequency by the Low Print aware children. Janette and Marvin were never observed viewing the inner pages of the books they selected.

Belinda, in the post-Christmas period, did occasionally look inside a book, especially if Janice recommended the book to her.

Janice: (To Belinda) "You're taking my old book. You'll like it."

Belinda: (Smiles and looks through the pages of the book she has picked off the shelf)
 (January 25th)

Prior Experiences: "I've read it before -- or something like it"
 "I like books with this character"
 "My Mom'll think it's funny"

Prior experiences with the same books, with similar story content and previously experienced storybook interactions, appeared to be a major influence on the High Print aware children's book choices.

All three children read books that centred on themes. Though there was little overt dialogue amongst Janice, Trevor and Mark, concerning their thematic interests, all three children read four groups of books, i.e.

1. Ant theme: "The Ant Elephant", "The Ant and the Caterpillar" and "The Way of an Ant"
2. Rabbit theme: "Too Many Rabbits", "The Runaway Bunny" and "The Country Bunny"
3. Bear theme: "Take This Bear", "Arthur's Honey Bear" and "The Bear Hunt"
4. Pig theme: "Too Many Pigs", "Treeful of Pigs" and "Hooray for Pig"

They may well have been attracted by thematic or pictorial similarities and, in Janice's and Trevor's cases, by the graphic overlap in the titles, i.e. having read one pig story could aid in reading a new story with "pig" in the title. The latter factor may well have been influential for Janice and Trevor as both children were motivated by a desire to control print details.

Trevor and Mark were less verbal about their book choices than Janice, and hence the reasons for the boys' book choices were largely elicited from non-verbal behaviour, e.g. recording book titles and observing Type III interactions wherein the boys silently interacted with books. Janice frequently "talked to herself" and addressed remarks to me, as an adult standing in the book corner. My lack of any elaborative response did not seem to inhibit her flow of remarks. Such verbalizations

revealed Janice's intents.

Janice gets "Treeful of Pigs" from her book bag.

Janice: (To me) "My book was fun. I got it from the other library too -- this is two times -- I like it!"

She takes her book to the chart to get her card. Janice replaces the book in the rack and looks slowly along the shelves. Suddenly, she runs to the end portion of the rack and grabs a thin, rectangular book.

Janice: (Excitedly) "Ooh! Ooh! This is a Shirley book. Yeah! Oh, I so like Shirley books. I had one before -- this is different. I got a Shirley book!" (January 18th)

Prior experiences with "Treeful of Pigs" and "Shirley books" had stimulated Janice to re-read the former and to read a new story in a favourite series. Janice had read "Time to Get out of the Bath, Shirley" on two occasions in October. On the first occasion, she read the book out loud to herself and then turned to me and said:

"I haven't it at home, you know" (pats "Time to Get out of the Bath, Shirley"). "I got it from the library and again from the cafe (?) library. I've read another Shirley book" (Turns to the front of the book and points to "Printed in Italy by A. Mondadori Editori, Verona"). "It's that one, 'Come out of the Cold Water, Shirley'." (At the top of the same page it says, 'By the Same Author, Come Away from the Water, Shirley'.) "It isn't here" (points to the book rack). (Janice stands up and points to another book, "Broderick".) "I've seen the movie of that. They sleep in shoes" (points to the Caldecott Medal on 'Make Way for Ducklings'). "That means it's a good book. My Dad told me last night. He said, 'Pick good books'. That one doesn't have one" (sadly, as she points to 'Time to Get out of the Bath, Shirley'). "That isn't a good one -- it doesn't have one, but I like Shirley books." (October 12th)

Janice's October verbalizations illustrate that she used a variety of strategies to select library books, and all were guided by her prior experiences. Clearly, she liked books and characters that she had encountered previously, knew that other stories by the same author were listed at the front of books, realized that films were sometimes based on books, and that "good books" were identified by special stickers. Her

father had defined "good books" by the Caldecott sticker, whereas some of the books she enjoyed had no such seal of approval. The January interaction, wherein Janice pounced on the new Shirley book demonstrated that her prior experience of enjoying Shirley triumphed over the Caldecott seal. Janice thus defined "good books" by the quality of a remembered book engagement and by enjoyment of story meaning, rather than by external features defined by others. Janice made it quite clear that prior experiences of storybook engagements influenced her book choices. On January 25th she searched the shelves for a "funny book for me and my Mom". The quality of a shared storybook experience with her chief story reader, her mother, was important to Janice.

The Prospect of a Storybook Interaction: "I need a reader"

All the children selected their daily books for the purpose of engaging in a home storybook interaction. Of the six children, only Janice verbalized that she wished to select a book to share with her mother, and hence her mother's "likes" should be considered as well as her own. The prospect of the future home book interaction was "alive" in Janice as she made her book choice.

The teacher had recommended that the children change their books every day. Janice, Trevor, Marvin (to December 9th) and Janette were regular "book changers", though Janice and Trevor were also children who sometimes took home books that they had previously read. Janice selected books that she had read in other libraries. Trevor took books that he had previously taken home from the class library. Hence, both children must have anticipated that the home story reader would be quite willing to re-read books. Mark and Belinda were quite regular in their book changes before Christmas. Both children, however, sometimes took books home twice,

stating "My Mom never read it" (Belinda, November 15th). In the post-Christmas period, Belinda complained that her mother "never reads my books any more" (January 18th), though she continued to take home new ones, once or twice a week. During one week, Belinda dragged "The Little Lion" back and forth from home to school every day. Rather than forgetfulness in changing this book, it seemed that Belinda really liked it, calling it her "Garfield book" (main character was a cat). Mark made strong verbal complaints in January and February, and seemed dispirited that his home reading had declined. During those two months he rarely brought his book bag to school, almost as if he realized that the prospect of a home story-book interaction was remote.

Mark: "I didn't get to read my book again."

Noreen: "Maybe -- could you read it or look through the pages yourself if Mommy doesn't have the time?"

Mark: "No, -- I need a reader." (February 7th)

Mark was aware that he required a mediator to interpose between the printed world of the book and himself, and without "a reader" there seemed little point in selecting new storybooks.

Thus, in summary, the High Print aware children were book searchers in that they took time to make book choices. They selected books on the basis of 1) story meaning, i.e. enjoyment of particular themes or characters, 2) sharing a story with others, i.e. Janice considering the prospect of sharing a book with her mother, 3) details from the front cover, i.e. similar illustrator to a previous book (Mark) or print cues (Janice and Trevor), 4) looking inside the book, and 5) on the strength of prior knowledge, e.g. previous enjoyment of the same theme, author, illustrator or story character. The Low Print aware children appeared to select books largely on the basis of 1) proximity to returned books (Janette, Marvin and Belinda), 2) size (Belinda), and 3) front cover

illustrations (Janette, Marvin and Belinda). External features seemed to motivate their choices.

One aspect of Janette's book choices should receive some attention, as it was entirely different from any of the other five children's interactions. In January and February, Janette adhered to a rigid pattern that never wavered and indeed seemed to provoke anxiety in the child. She tried to ensure that she was the first to exchange her book. Indeed her book choices were so rapid during this time period that it is doubtful whether any variable other than proximity was involved in her selection.

Janette is a few seconds later than usual entering the room. She looks flustered. Janette grabs her book from her bag and rushes to the library chart. She reaches over Suzanne for her card. Janette pushes past Belinda and runs to the book rack. Belinda says, "Hey -- you!" angrily as Janette's elbow hits her shoulder. Janette jams her old book, "Come Away from the Water, Shirley", into the rack and in one flowing movement removes the book next to it and heads back to the library chart. She only slows down once she has carded her new book and put it in her book bag. Janette has not looked at the front cover or inside the new book (title towards the back of the rack when chosen). (March 1st)

Thus, Janette, unlike the other children, developed a book selection strategy that focused entirely on form, i.e. the organizational mechanics of book exchange. If the form of the selection process was at all disrupted she became tense and anxious. It is difficult to understand why she focused on this pattern. It is conceivable that it was a strategy that provided her with success, i.e. she could achieve being "first" in book exchange though success in some classroom activities was more remote for her to achieve. However, I suspect that the rigid routinization of book exchange was more closely linked to the rather fixed ritual of story reading at home. When Janette arrived home each day she was supposed to present her Grade Three-aged brother with a new library book. He then

pre-read it to practise, and following this Janette was expected to listen to him reading the book to her (Interviews with Mother, October, February). In many ways Janette's life operated on fixed routines, with storybook interactions being an example of one such pattern. I suggest that she transferred this life-programming strategy into school book exchanges.

Time in the Library Corner: Over the course of the study, the children's centre choices were recorded. The six children's three major choices are listed below.

Mark:	1. blocks	2. <u>books</u>	3. playhouse
Janice:	1. games	2. <u>books</u>	3. water
Trevor:	1. games	2. <u>books</u>	3. playhouse/computer
Janette:	1. <u>books</u>	2. games	3. puzzles
Belinda:	1. playhouse	2. games	3. blocks
Marvin:	1. playhouse	2. blocks	3. water

Thus, as a group, the High Print aware children selected to go to the book corner more frequently than the Low Print aware children. The book corner was a second favourite choice for Mark, Janice and Trevor, a first choice for Janette, and lower on Belinda's and Marvin's lists of priorities for centre selection. The High Print aware children selected the library corner quite consistently over the six months of observation. With the Low Print aware children, Janette's attendance pattern at this centre was quite different from Belinda's and Marvin's. Firstly, Janette went to the book corner extremely regularly during October, but sporadically over the other months. Secondly, though Janette actually registered the library as her centre choice it should not be assumed that she actually spent a great deal of time there, e.g.

Janette has just come back from the bathroom. She returns the bathroom tag to the hook and then wanders over to watch Jane doing a jigsaw puzzle. She walks over to the sand tray which is presently deserted and starts playing there. Janette chose the book corner.

(November 7th)

Janette walks quietly around the room. She does not go to her book centre for the first ten minutes. Belinda sees her walk into the blocks centre.

Belinda: "What's your first card?"

Janette: "Books."

Belinda: "Then go to books!"

Janette ignores her and continues to walk around the centres. (November 17th)

In comparison to Janette, Belinda rarely selected the book corner. As Belinda commented, "Books is borin' -- I can't read and that's all there is" (February 28th). As books were the main feature of the book corner, and as Belinda quite clearly realized that she could not read them alone, then attendance at that centre held little attraction for her. Belinda made her objection to this centre even clearer when she stated that it was not "worth goin' -- now that Winnie the Pooh's gone" (February 28th), indicating that she was only stimulated to select the library when the stuffed toys were available. Marvin, though choosing the book corner less regularly than Janette, certainly visited the area more often than Belinda though he did not engage in sustained book interactions.

All the High Print aware children engaged in Type III engagements wherein they demonstrated their capability to interact with books for lengthy periods of time, without adult support or social dialogue. From the beginning of September, Mark, Janice and Trevor could be totally absorbed in books. They often interacted silently with storybooks, though over time Janice and Trevor increasingly verbalized to themselves during personal book interactions. For example, Janice, in October, demonstrated that she could partially reconstruct text and wholly reconstruct story meaning from a favourite book. In the following episode Janice read a "Shirley book" ("Time to Get out of the Bath, Shirley" by John Burningham) to herself in the book corner.

Text

Are you listening to me
now, Shirley?

You had the soap in
the bath, didn't you?

You really ought to have a bath
more often, Shirley.

Some people don't even have
baths.

Have you been using this towel,
Shirley, or was it your father's?

Look at the clothes all over
the floor.

This was clean on this morning
and now look at it now.

I wish you would learn to fold
up your clothes nicely.

Janice

Shirley, are you listening
to me?

I hope you didn't lose the
soap in the bath again,
did you?

Shirley, you ought to have
a bath more often.

Some people don't even have
baths.

Shirley will this -- you'll
-- using this towel or was
it your father's?

Look at this. Now your
clothes are all over the
floor.

This was -- just clean this
morning. Now look at it.

I wish you'd learn how to
fold your clothes -- nicely.
(October 18th)

Trevor was never observed reconstructing a whole text like Janice, but he frequently talked to himself as he read stories, asking himself questions and commenting on the story. Mrs. Compton suggested that the children could utilize puppets in the book corner and talk to their puppets about the story. In reality almost all the children used the puppets for social exchange and books were rarely involved in such interactions. Trevor was the only child observed utilizing puppets to "talk" about a book. In the following episode Trevor seemed to use his snake puppet as an extension of himself in verbally mediating the storybook encounter.

Trevor sits alone in the book corner. He is wearing a snake puppet on his right hand. He talks quietly as he turns the pages of the book.

Trevor: "Is this a good book for us?"

Snake: "No."

Trevor: "Then let's change it."

Trevor chooses a new book, 'Nothing to Do'.

Trevor: "What's this 'bout?"

Snake: "Something for sure."

Trevor looks at the back page and takes out the library

card and examines it. He then gets up to choose a new book. Trevor piles cushions in the corner and settles comfortably with the snake puppet and his new book, "Little Gorilla". Each page has a line of text and brightly coloured illustrations. Trevor reads from front to back. One page has an illustration of a boa constrictor. Trevor slides his snake over the picture. On other pages he uses his snake to attack the other illustrated animals. He pretends to fight with a monster pictured in the book.

Trevor: "Eat you" (as he launches an attack on three hippos with his snake puppet). (October 19th)

In the first part of the interaction, Trevor used the snake as a monitoring voice in his book choices, though towards the end he began to use it as a supplementary story character. Mark was not observed verbalizing stories to himself. Any book-related comments he did make were always focused on accessing social interaction. However, just like Janice and Trevor, he was able to concentrate on solitary book interactions for sustained time periods. In comparison, the Low Print aware children's Type III, direct encounters with storybooks, were noticeable by omission. Janette, Belinda and Marvin looked at books alone for very short time periods and invariably flipped through the pages rapidly or looked at the first few pages and then changed their books. They were not observed in engaging in solitary, sustained storybook interactions.

All the six children engaged in Type II interactions at the book corner, though the High-Low Print aware children's social interactions were qualitatively different. The Low Print aware children invariably regarded the book corner as a place for free play. Consequently they received many admonitions from the classroom caregivers on the appropriate use of the book corner. Marvin used time at the library area for re-enacting his favourite "mock fight" play themes, and books became objectified as "weapons".

Marvin is lying on the foam pad with no book. Paul is looking at a hospital book at Marvin's side.

Marvin leans forward and looks at Paul's book. He points to a picture of a doctor.

Marvin: "I'd kick him."

Paul: "No, you wouldn't -- kick this fat guy" (points to a cartoon character). "He's a cartoon."

Marvin: (Loudly) "He's a monster!" (grabs at Paul's book and hits Paul's leg with it)

The book is thrown aside as both boys wrestle on the foam pad.

Noreen: (Loud voice) "You are not here to be fooling around. You're here to read books!"

Both boys separate. Paul picks up his book. Marvin lies back on the pad and stares ahead. (December 1st)

Belinda also utilized book time for play, on the rare occasions that she selected this centre. For example she enjoyed playing "hide and seek" around the book rack. In November, she rather skilfully changed library time into playing house, centred on a variant of her usual family-conflict theme.

Belinda, Laura and Gordon are sitting on the foam pad in the library, each holding a book. Laura is verbalizing a story to herself in a rhythmic sing-song voice.

Belinda: "No, Laura -- wead it for weal!" (Read it for real)

Laura: (Giggles)

Belinda: (Serious voice: stilted) "The ball was on the table. The ball ate the doggie. The doggie ate the skin."

Laura giggles. Belinda jumps up and moves to sit in the middle between Gordon and Laura.

Belinda: "Don't laugh! Wead it weal!" (hits Laura on the head with a book)

Laura: (Turns to the first page: serious voice) "Once upon a time there was a little boy and he ate --" (bursts into laughter).

Belinda: (Grabs the book, looks down and then looks at Laura as she "reads") "Once there was a big baby -- no -- there was a mother had a baby. This baby had to sleep in a crib. The mother looked -- she'd snucked away. She looked in the chair and in the toilet -- no baby there." (Laura and Gordon laugh) "She's dumb. There's no baby there -- I don't wanna -- Where did the baby go?"

Laura: "Mommy cried --"

Belinda: (Quietly) "Let's play house here." (Crawls to the edge of the book corner and looks furtively around the room)

- Laura: (Eagerly) "I'm the mother -- you're the father" (to Gordon). "Where did the baby go? She's all brown spots. She couldn't do anything -- she's had chickenpox."
- Belinda: "And she's bad --" (bounces on the pad on her knees). "I wanna play house -- 'bout the chickenpox."
- Laura: "Pretend we're two babies."
- Belinda: (Lies on the pad and cries plaintively)
"M-o-mmy!" (November 1st)

In the latter interaction, Belinda, following Laura's lead, "talked like a book" (Clay, 1979, p. 59) and attempted to "wead for weal", though in early November such reading was an attempt to emulate the characteristic voice tones of reading a narrative. However, Belinda also understood aspects of story structure for she clearly tried to build characters and a setting and initiated a plot episode. Though the book was open on her knee, Belinda "talked out" her story without reference to it. Belinda's book verbalization was different from Trevor and Janice's "book talk". Belinda enacted a story for a social purpose whereas Trevor and Janice were engaged in solitary book interactions. Thus, Belinda utilized her "story reading", not for mediating a personal encounter with a book, but in an attempt to encounter or share meaning with others. Her story provided a springboard away from books into the preferred world of play. Janette, though less boisterous in her efforts than Marvin or Belinda, also used the book corner as a place for social exchange and play.

Janette, Jane and Gordon are at the library corner. Janette sits and quickly flips through a farm story (front to back). She closes the book and selects a ghost puppet to wear. Janette props an owl puppet against the radiator. She takes the ghost over to the owl.

- Janette: "Wake up, owl -- wake up, owl." (To Gordon) "He won't wake up."
- Gordon: "Do it louder."
- Janette: "Wake up, owl! Wake up, owl!" (louder)
"He still won't wake up."
- Gordon: (Shrugs and smiles)
- Janette: (Very loudly) "WAKE UP, OWL!"

Jane: (Looks up, drops her book and picks up a pumpkin puppet)

For the rest of the centre time (2:00 to 2:15 p.m.) neither girl removes a book. They spend a few minutes playing with puppets and then go over to children at a nearby craft table and talk to them. (October 27th)

(N.B. Janette is re-enacting Mrs. Compton's ritual of asking the children to wake up the P. Moony puppet in Group Time.)

Thus, the three Low Print aware children largely engaged in Type II interactions at the book corner, and such engagements focused on general conversational dialogue and play scenarios. Such social encounters were only very tentatively linked to the books provided in the library area, though Belinda's attempt to build story schemas and to emulate story reading may well be linked to developing understanding of aspects of literate behaviour.

The High Print aware children also communicated with peers at the book corner, though the focus of their engagement with others was different from the Low Print aware children's. Janice, Trevor and Mark attempted to talk about books with other children. The extent and elaboration of such peer interactions often depended on whether the participants could negotiate a common meaning base, and indeed on whether their intents to share a book coincided. For example, in the following episode Janice verbalized a story to herself but, seeming to be aware that Janette was watching and listening, attempted to include her in the story encounter.

Janice is verbalizing a story. Janette leans forward and looks at Janice's book. She listens as Janice talks.

Janice: "'My Grandmother and I'" (looks at the book title). "This is the book I picked last night." (To Janette, but Janette does not respond. Janice turns to the title page.) "'Grandmother and I'" (turns to the text) "Mother's lap is good." (Text: Mothers' laps are good.) "Dad's lap is soft -- Grandmother's lap is soft if you have measles. Grandfathers' laps are good." (To Janette) "Oh, the cats went down -- our cat has run away for five days." (Looks up at Janette again)

Janette: "Your cat?"
 Janice: "No, in the book" (points to the picture).
 "There's the cat coming back."
 Janette: "Oh" (turns away to talk to Manuel who is
 discussing a Hallowe'en commercial he has
 seen on the television). (October 24th)

Janice and Janette's book-related dialogue faded quickly as Janette appeared to be confused about "our cat". Janice was speaking from her book's frame of reference whereas Janette considered that the cat episode emerged from her classmate's personal world. Thus, though undoubtedly the girls desired to communicate, their social venture faded as they were unable to share meaning. On many occasions Janice demonstrated a willingness to talk about her book but, in a similar manner to the previous interaction, such book-centred dialogue "faded". If Janice did not provide enough story clues, and if the other children had not previously read the book, then sharing story meaning was not possible. Mark had little more success than Janice in sharing books with others. Mark, in the pre-Christmas period, was an active teacher and rarely lost an opportunity to share his storybook knowledge with others. However, Mark's sharing rarely connected with the other children's intents or, perhaps, their knowledge base.

Mark opens his book, "The Little Brown Bat". He shows the title page to Marvin.
 Mark: "I know what this says -- 'Little Brown (Bat)'."
 (Swings his finger beneath each word)
 Marvin: (Picks up his own book, hits Mark on the head with it and laughs)
 Mark: "Stop it! Look -- 'Little Brown Bat'" (re-points beneath each word).
 Marvin: (Points to Bat) "Bat?"
 Mark: "Yes! That's bat! -- a 'Little, Brown, Bat'"
 (emphasizes the words and points to them).
 Marvin: (Grabs "The Little Brown Bat" and hits Mark with it)
 Mark: (Grabs the book back and lies on it. Marvin tries to get it but can't. Mark picks up a new book, "Blueberries for Sal".)
 Marvin: (Points to a picture in Mark's book) "My mother."

- Mark: (Looks with interest) "Might be yours -- mine doesn't look like that." (Points to the next picture) "This bear's lost in the bushes -- look."
- Marvin: "Ya! Ya! Ya!" (hits Mark with another book)
(November 2nd)

Over time, Mark's overt teaching strategies declined. This may well have been related to his lack of success or to the fact that Mark experienced little home-based reading after Christmas, and therefore was unable to relate book reading information from home to storybook interactions with others at school. The "Little Brown Bat" was clearly a short-term favourite book (Interview with Mother, November), and just as Janice re-read at school books that she had experienced at home, then Mark, in the latter interaction, was prepared to share home-based knowledge with Marvin. As home book reading decreased, then Mark simply had less information to share with others. Trevor, like Janice and Mark (before Christmas), demonstrated that he transferred storybook knowledge learned in home book interactions to the school context. Like the other children he was prepared to share this knowledge with others. However, whereas Mark focused on overt "I can teach you" strategies, Trevor waited to be invited to share his knowledge. Invitations to join book-related Type II interactions proved to be more successful than direct initiations or purposeful teaching approaches.

Gary takes down "Crictor" from the book rack. Trevor glances up from reading his book, "The New Friend".

He is interested in Gary's choice for Trevor has taken "Crictor" home on several occasions.

Gary: (Shows Trevor an illustration of a long snake inside the book) "It's called a boa constrictor."

Trevor: "I know. This is a snake called Crictor."

Gary: (Leaps up and points to a hospital word on a nearby chart, i.e. "stethoscope") "What's this, Trevor?"

Trevor: "Stethoscope." (Trevor is looking at "Crictor" and has the book open at a page where letters, outlined in snakes, are accompanied by pictures and words.) "E is in elephant, S for snake,

E for elephant, O for tree (oak tree), G for grasshoppers --"
 Gary: "That's ants."
 Trevor: "It says grasshoppers" (points to the word).
 Gary: (Takes his book) "What's this -- S for S?"
 Trevor: "No, S for snake."
 Gary: "E is for elephant -- N is for --?"
 Trevor: "Nothing" (blank picture square).
 Gary: "O is in tree (oak tree). L is in lion. M is in man. G is in cup --"
 Trevor: "That says glass" (points to the word).
 Gary: (Flips through the book and back to the title on the front) "What is that?"
 Trevor: "Cric-tor, Cric-tor." (November 7th)

When invited, Trevor provided Gary with a print resource. Trevor was constrained by graphic features, e.g. grasshopper, glass and Cric-tor and attempted to reconstruct meaning, e.g. "tree" (picture of a tree and print indicating "oak tree"). He demonstrated an intent to share meaning by modifying his knowledge to meet Gary's, e.g. the segmenting of "Cric-tor", and pointing to specific words.

In the book corner, limited opportunities for experiencing Type I storybook interactions with caregivers were provided. All the children, except Belinda, experienced at least one storybook engagement with Mrs. Compton over the course of the research. The focus of such teacher-child(ren) interactions seemed to change depending on the participants. For example, Mrs. Compton focused on labelling in a storybook encounter with Janette. Mrs. Compton did not read the text of the story but discussed each of the coloured illustrations with Janette.

Mrs. Compton: "What's this?" (points to the picture)
 Janette: "Elephant."
 Mrs. Compton: "And this?" (traces the outline of a camel's hump on a picture)
 Janette: (Pauses) "Camel?"
 Mrs. Compton: "Right -- a camel. Good!" (September 16th)

On the one observed storybook engagement between Mrs. Compton and Trevor, the emphasis was placed on story meaning. On this occasion the teacher

read the text and encouraged Trevor to predict words, e.g.

Mrs. Compton: "The gorilla climbed up the --"
Trevor: "Tree."

and to respond to questions, e.g.

Mrs. Compton: "What's happening?"
Trevor: "He's having a shower."
Mrs. Compton: "You ever had an elephant give you a shower?"
Trevor: (Laughs) "Not like that!" (October 19th)

During this storybook interaction, Mrs. Compton also drew Trevor's attention to the print by occasionally swinging her finger beneath the lines. Thus, when interacting with individual children, Mrs. Compton appeared to modify her strategies depending, presumably, on the perceived needs of the child.

When High Print-Low Print aware children were together for a storybook interaction, it proved to be more difficult to negotiate shared meaning and indeed shared involvement. For example, Mrs. Compton offered to read Mark and Marvin a story. Mark quickly selected a descriptive book on hospitals. Mrs. Compton partially read the text, more frequently paraphrased the content, and also used the pictures for discussion. Mark engaged in the storybook interaction but Marvin quickly lost interest and physically distanced himself from Mrs. Compton and Mark. Occasionally, Marvin tried to connect with the content by adding personal comments. At other times he sought to distract Mrs. Compton and Mark from their interaction.

Mrs. Compton: "Right, Mark -- it is an operating room light."
Mark: "I know -- I saw that -- but what's this?"
Marvin: "Mrs. Compton -- I chose this book before -- I did."
Mrs. Compton: (Ignores Marvin) "A picture of what the inside of a person looks like. There's his heart and lungs."
Mark: "These bones?"
Mrs. Compton: "Yes, that's his skeleton -- bones."
Marvin: (Leaps up and points at the book) "That's my Grandpa. He's dead."

Mrs. Compton: "Do you miss him?"
 Marvin: "He was sick and died."
 Mrs. Compton: "That's what I mean -- do you miss him?"
 Marvin: (Puzzled) "He's dead."
 Mrs. Compton: "That's sad. You must miss him. Did you used to visit him?"
 Marvin: (Nods slowly)
 Mark: "You know what? -- I had pet frogs and they died."
 Mrs. Compton: "Did you bury them then?"
 Mark: "I had a proper funeral. There was a grave and flowers on it. I had prayers."
 Mrs. Compton: "Do you miss them?"
 Mark: "Yes."
 Mrs. Compton: "Marvin misses his Grandpa and Mark his frogs."
 Marvin pulls his upper lip down to cover his teeth.
 Marvin: "Mrs. Compton, my teeth are cut off."
 Mrs. Compton: "Oh no! Where are Marvin's teeth?"
 Marvin: (Smiles)
 Mrs. Compton: "They grew back fast."
 Mark: (Points back to the book) "She's a nurse, right?"
 Mrs. Compton: "Yes, and she's helping to change this lady's bed."
 Mark: "Does she serve lunch?"
 Mrs. Compton: "Yes, she does."
 Mark: "You know what? There was a boy in hospital with a patch on his eye" (covers one eye with his hand). "Why?"
 Mrs. Compton: "Maybe he had an eye operation and the patch was there to protect it."
 Mark: "Yes, that could be it. And it's Hallowe'en here" (points to a picture).
 Mrs. Compton: (Surprised) "How can you tell?"
 Marvin starts to squeeze each of Mark's toes gently. He looks up to see if Mark is reacting. Mark ignores him.
 Mark: "There's a witch and a ghost."
 Mrs. Compton: "So there is -- Well boys, I have to leave now. You read the book, Mark."
 Mark: (Grabs her arm) "No -- please don't go. Read me another."
 Mrs. Compton: "Sorry, Mark, I have to go. You read it."
 (Leaves)
 Mark turns back to his book. Marvin suddenly rolls his body over Mark and his book and laughs. (November 2nd)

In the latter interaction, it is clear that Mark desired to engage in a storybook interaction and had sufficient background knowledge to ask, "the right questions of the environment" (Torrey, 1969, p. 556). As in other caregiver-Mark interactions, the dialogue was co-operative in that Mrs.

Compton and Mark observed implicit turn-taking rules and shared a sufficiently common knowledge base to engage in question-answer routines. Marvin engaged in ways that were characteristic for him. He initiated by associating a picture with his personal world, i.e. his Grandpa, and distracted by enacting a joke, i.e. "my teeth are cut off" and by squeezing Mark's toes. When Mrs. Compton and Mark were discussing the book, he removed himself from the interaction. Mrs. Compton attempted to link the book illustration to Marvin's personal world by discussing his feelings about his Grandpa, but meaning was not shared as the connection between the "dead Grandpa" and "missing him" was not understood by Marvin. It was, however, understood by Mark, who demonstrated knowledge of a schema for death. The conclusion of the interaction illustrates Mark's realization that he was losing a storybook mediator when Mrs. Compton left. The loss was important to him, though it provided Marvin with the opportunity for engaging in the real business of the book corner -- play! Thus, in storybook encounters with adults, the same interaction could fulfil one child's needs and result in limited engagement for another child. It is suggested that even when groups were small, child-caregiver storybook interactions, in the kindergarten, varied in their ability to build conceptual bridges between the child's world and the world of books. The teacher could not have the same intimate knowledge of the child's world as the parents, and hence mediating across contexts, or transcending knowledge from the child's knowledge base to the story, raised problems. If the child had a pool of knowledge to share with the mediator, in this case the teacher, then the opportunity for building conceptual links between the child and the story was maximized. In the latter interaction, Mark demonstrated that he had this type of common knowledge to share with his storybook describer.

Marvin's knowledge was more personally contextualized and hence it was more difficult for Mrs. Compton to involve Marvin in the shared storybook interaction.

The interactive quality of decontextualizing events across contexts has been suggested as a vital aspect of literacy development (Snow, 1983; Wells, 1983). Similarly, Feuerstein (1979) maintains that transcendence is a necessary component in learning interactions. However, within group learning situations, this very quality of "broadening horizons", or crossing contexts, is the most difficult to achieve. To cross contexts in storybook reading the caregiver has to be equally aware of the world of the book and the personal world of the child. Awareness of the latter, within a classroom full of children, may be somewhat difficult and certainly requires extended time spent with the children. For example, a storybook interaction amongst Janice, Janette and Mrs. Compton illustrates the fragile quality of "transcendence" in the kindergarten classroom.

The teacher is seated on the foam pad in the library with Janice and Janette cuddled close on either side of her. She has an arm around each child and has asked Janice to turn the pages of the book. "The Lonesome Colt" is concluded and Janice leaps up to choose a new book, "Hooray for Pig".

Mrs. Compton: "What's this?" (taps the front cover)

Janice: "It's a pig."

Mrs. Compton: "How do you know?"

Janice: "It's a pig picture."

Mrs. Compton: "Is there another way of knowing it's about a pig?"

Janice: (Points to the word "pig" in the title)
"It says pig."

Mrs. Compton: "Good! Janette, can you point to pig?"

Janette: (Points halfway between "For" and "Pig".
The teacher moves Janette's finger until it is under "Pig".)

Mrs. Compton: "How do we spell it? Do you know the letters?"

Janette: (Smiles and shakes her head)

Janice: "P-I-G and that --" (points to the exclamation mark).

Mrs. Compton: "That's an exclamation mark. It shows surprise."

Mrs. Compton starts to read the book. Janice turns the pages.

The story is about a pig and his trials in learning how to swim. The pig, raccoon and otter are read with different voices.

Mrs. Compton: (Text) "I slipped, he said" (picture of a pig standing in the water, looking upset).

Janette: (Laughs and points to the picture) "That's not even deep."

Mrs. Compton: "It goes up to his nose. How deep have you been?"

Janette: "At a pool."

Mrs. Compton: "Was it up to your nose?"

Janette: (Laughs) "No!"

Mrs. Compton: "Have you been at a pool, Janice?"

Janice: "Yes -- the wave pool."

Mrs. Compton: "Oh, we're going to have swimming lessons -- all of us -- at that pool in April -- that's lots of days from now."

Janice: "At the wave pool?"

Mrs. Compton: "Yes."

Janice: "We won't -- well, we won't swim in deep water, will we?" (quiet voice)

Mrs. Compton: "No, we won't."

Janice: (Cheerful voice) "Good."

Mrs. Compton: "You don't like getting your face wet?"

Janice: "No, not much."

Janette: "I swim backwards."

Janice: "Oh."

The teacher continues to read. There is a picture of the pig trying to swim.

Mrs. Compton: "Looks pretty funny, doesn't he?"

Both girls laugh. Mrs. Compton continues to read. She leaves a gap for prediction.

Mrs. Compton: "And two peanut butter --"

Janette: "Sandwiches."

Mrs. Compton: "And what's he doing now?" (picture of pig swimming and blowing bubbles)

Janice: "Swimming!"

Mrs. Compton: "Can you blow bubbles?"

Janice: "In my bath."

Janette: "My Mom bought me bubbles for a present -- pink, blue and white ones for my bath."

Mrs. Compton: "You lucky girl. Now you read books on your own. You can tell what the story's about from the pictures." (January 17th)

Within Feuerstein's conceptual framework (1980; 1979) the latter story-book interaction may well be considered "a mediated learning experience in action". The teacher intended to share books with the two children, to expand their knowledge and to involve them in story meaning. She regulated the interaction and permitted them to feel competent on the

whole, though Janice was able to engage more effectively with the teacher's intentions. The activity was both meaningful to the girls and meaningful in the larger context of literacy development, i.e. attention to graphic cues and story content. Transcendence was apparent in that the teacher expanded the story's framework to link the pig's swimming experiences to the girls' personal swimming experiences in the past and the projected swimming lessons in the future. The last part of the interaction provides an example of questionable bridge building from the story content to the children's personal knowledge base. The teacher showed the girls a picture of the pig blowing air bubbles as he swam. Janice responded to the teacher's question, "Can you blow bubbles?" with, "In my bath". Janette expanded by mentioning the gift of bubble bath she had received. The interaction concluded at this point and the children's responses did not provide conclusive evidence that the "bridge" had been successfully constructed for either. In fact, Janette's response would suggest that, though transcendence had been attempted by the teacher, the child did not establish the expected relationship of ideas, i.e. she related bubbles made whilst breathing in swimming to bubbles made by a commercial bubble bath. Janette had cued in to Janice's comment about her "bath" rather than the concept of bubbles from the story. Janice's response does not permit me to ascertain whether she transposed "bubbles-whilst-breathing-in-swimming" from the story context to a related concept in her personal world or whether she, like Janette, was building an alternate concept for "bubbles". From observation in other contexts I may hypothesize that, as Janice rarely experienced any difficulty in relating ideas from stories to appropriate schemas, her comment, "In my bath", referred to blowing air bubbles like the pig. However, the interaction does not provide definitive

evidence to support this hypothesis. Hence, I may suggest that mediated learning experiences in storybook interactions may be attempted by the teacher, and their success or failure can only be evaluated via the reciprocity of the child, namely the child's ability to engage in shared meaning with the teacher and the story. This reciprocity may or may not be observable by the researcher. I can only infer that the final portion of this interaction, like Marvin's entire "hospital book" engagement, was unlikely to build relational concepts for Janette. As Belinda was not observed engaging in a Type I, teacher-small group, storybook interaction then such inferencing was not required. She clearly did not have a kindergarten-based opportunity to share books with Mrs. Compton, and one or two other children, during the course of the study.

In summary, the High Print aware children spent more time in the book corner than the Low Print aware children. The High Print aware children's time there was frequently spent in Type III solitary engagements with books wherein Janice and Trevor, especially, were observed to verbalize as they self-mediated their personal reading experiences. Additional time was also spent in Type II encounters where the High Print aware children attempted to dialogue about books with their classmates. The success or failure of such enterprises depended on fellow participants sharing common intents and a mutual core of knowledge, and also on the High Print aware children's approaches to interaction, i.e. invitational approaches being more successful than direct instructional strategies. The Low Print aware children did not engage in sustained Type III book interactions but invariably utilized book corner materials for springboarding into social dialogue or play.

ed opportunities for Type I, caregiver-child(ren) book

interactions were provided. The caregiver utilized different strategies when interacting with specific children, i.e. labelling with Janette and prediction and comprehension techniques with Trevor. When storybook interactions were shared with other children, then Mrs. Compton attempted to build conceptual bridges amongst the story and the children's personal experiences. Such interactions were similar to Feuerstein's (1980;1979) description of mediated learning experiences. However, the quality of transcendence was only tentatively incorporated into teacher-small group interactions as "crossing" contexts by transposing knowledge from the world of the story to the children's worlds was rarely smoothly effected for the Low Print aware children. Sharing a common knowledge base with the teacher, concerning the book's content, served to maximize the effectiveness of a book area storybook interaction.

Listening to Stories: All the children were participants in Type I, caregiver-whole group storybook interactions in the classroom and in the library. The children were not read stories on a consistent basis in the classroom; over the six months I observed eighteen story sessions, with a third of those occurring in February. Stories were always selected by caregivers, and in the classroom half of the stories chosen were narratives and half were descriptive books. Fifteen of the eighteen books were directly related to the monthly themes. In the library, I observed the librarian reading eleven narrative stories, one descriptive book and numerous poems.

During the classroom storybook engagements, differences between the High-Low Print aware children were not apparent. On many occasions little verbal interaction was sought from the children and hence it was difficult to explore the six children's interactive patterns or story understanding.

The constraints imposed by the teacher's control of the storybook interactions neutralized the possibility of observing differences amongst the children. Thus, the High Print-Low Print aware children seemed to interact in similar ways during classroom reading, in that all seemed attentive on most occasions and all were responders rather than initiators.

When descriptive books were read to the class, the focus was placed on teaching new vocabulary and information, and on checking or testing knowledge. For example, when "Your Skin and Mine" was read to the children, during the hospital unit, the new concepts and vocabulary taught included "dermis", "epidermis", "follicle" and "melanin". Emphasis was placed on the pronunciation of words. Though the children were encouraged to utilize magnifying glasses to look at their skin, little time was provided for personal exploration, and it became clear that the teacher's agenda, i.e. completing the text and transmitting new vocabulary, was paramount.

Mrs. Compton: "Quickly -- come over here, boys and girls. I have a really neat story to read you. I have a book here called 'Your Skin and Mine'."
(Shows the front cover)

Mrs. Compton reads the text more rapidly than usual. The text mentions that you can use a magnifying glass to see the hairs on your arms. The children are given individual magnifying glasses to look at their hairs. Mrs. Compton continues to read the text. She pauses at "follicle" and the children are asked to say the word. She reads again until the book mentions fingerprints. The children are asked to examine their fingerprints with their magnifying glasses.

Mrs. Compton starts reading again.

Trevor: (To Laura, excitedly, as he looks at his fingernails) "Mine is that big, Laura!"

Mrs. Compton: (Sharply) "Excuse me!" (Trevor looks up, startled, and Mrs. Compton continues reading.)

When the two layers of the skin are introduced the children are asked to repeat "dermis" and "epidermis". They are then asked to remember what causes scabs to form on wounds. Nobody responds. Mrs. Compton reminds the children that it is blood platelets. The reason for different skin colour ("the production of melanin") is mentioned in the text and the children repeat the word "melanin". As the last page is finished the magnifying glasses are collected and the children are asked to move to centres. (November 29th)

Thus, such book interactions only provided hints that individual children were cognitively engaged in sensemaking. Trevor, in his momentary excitement of the personal discovery of his fingernail beneath a magnifying glass, forgot the social form rules that implicitly accompanied classroom storybook interactions, i.e. children should silently listen and respond only when asked.

At times, responses were requested from the children. Mrs. Compton used a prediction strategy wherein pauses were left in the text and the children, as a group, were expected to supply the answers. Exactitude in answers was expected and this insistence on accuracy created an atmosphere of "testing knowledge" rather than stimulating reasonable syntactic-semantic hypotheses:

<u>Mrs Compton</u>	<u>Children</u>
(Reads the book "Dinosaurs") "His back is protected by bony --	"plates"
He had spikes on his --	"tail"
Stegosaurus was a --	(variously) "plant eater -- meat eater -- dinosaur"
Plant eater -- because he stood on how many legs?	"four"
Any dinosaur walking on four legs was a --	"plant eater"
Ankylosaurus ate --	"plants"
Triceratops was covered with --	"plates"
The biggest dinosaur was --	"Tyrannosaurus Rex"
We know all about dinosaurs from f --	"museums"
Listen to the sound. We know all about dinosaurs from f-- f--	"fossils" (some children)

(February 22nd)

Thus, "museums", an excellent hypothesis, was rejected as it was inconsistent with the initial sound provided by the teacher. Two literacy-related aspects emerged from the observation of the teacher's use of prediction techniques in descriptive book interactions. Firstly, as the books were "factual" in nature their very emphasis on "what is real" may

have influenced Mrs. Compton to demand exact answers. However, as half of the books read to the children were factual, this strategy may have transmitted to the children that reconstructing text requires graphic exactness and that "making sense" is not involved in the process. Secondly, the "prediction" strategy seemed to offer interactive control in a group situation in that it provided a structure for whole class responses and general participation. On rare occasions Mrs. Compton did encourage the children to predict events, e.g. "What comes next?", though the lack of cohesion in the descriptive texts, and the difficulty of their content, precluded group responses to that type of prediction. For example, Mrs. Compton read the class a chained account of an egg in a nest, a nest in a tree, a tree in a garden, a garden in a town, a town in a state (New York), a state in a country, a country in a world and a world in a galaxy. After the "tree in a garden" many of the children began to shuffle quietly or stared distantly ahead. Maps were introduced in the text and after the map of New York state was shown, Mrs. Compton asked, "What's next?" There was silence in the room. Eventually Janice responded, "The world -- the whole world" (October 4th). Mrs. Compton explained that the country came before the whole world, and showed the children the text's map of the United States. Thus, again exactitude was demanded though Janice's response seemed amazing in its careful logic and abstract understanding of larger and larger contexts for the egg.

When narratives were read to the class, two trends were apparent in the storybook interactions. Firstly, when the children had sufficient background knowledge to relate to a story then they engaged in the prediction strategy and responded to questions with ease and obvious enjoyment. Secondly, when the stories contained elements of abstractness

or conceptual remoteness from their world experiences, they either distanced themselves from the engagement by staring ahead dreamily or shuffling feet and bodies, or they made verbal responses that indicated their cognitive confusion.

An example of the former trend, wherein the children clearly engaged in the storybook interaction, occurred on the last day of January. Throughout that month the children had been exposed to Winnie the Pooh and his associates and they had garnered a great deal of information about the world of Pooh to bring to a storybook encounter. Mrs. Compton read the class "Winnie the Pooh Meets Gopher", and it was obvious that the class was utilizing a pool of commonly experienced "Pooh knowledge" during the interaction.

Mrs. Compton starts to read the text. She holds the book up to her right side and open towards the class. Each page has half a page of text and a half-page coloured picture. Noreen Compton reads with animation and provides each character with a "different" voice. When she reaches a little verse in the text she reminds the children that they've heard this "as a song". They all sing it through twice, i.e.

"Up down, touch the ground (repeated)
When I'm in the mood
Up down, touch the ground (repeated)
I'm in the mood for food."

During the story reading, Noreen stops to encourage prediction on four occasions:

Noreen/text: "Doing his fitness exercises made Pooh very --"

Children: "Hungry!" (Laugh)

Noreen/text: "For a long time Pooh ate and ate and --"

Children: "Ate."

Noreen/text: "Pooh started to climb out of the --"

Children: "Hole."

Noreen/text: "You are in a predicament -- no eating until you're --"

Children: "Thin!"

and association with pictures on one occasion:

Noreen/text: "Christopher Robin, Piglet and --" (points to each animal in the picture)

Children: "Pooh -- Eeyore -- Rabbit."

The children respond enthusiastically. At the conclusion of the story, Pooh is pulled out of the hole and lands in a tree, surrounded by bees.

Noreen: "Where did he end up?" (points to the picture)
 Suzanne: "Honey."
 Children: "In a tree."
 Noreen: "Why is he happy?"
 Suzanne: "'Cos of the honey."
 Belinda: "He likes to eat it."
 Suzanne: "And bees make it."
 Noreen: "So is he happy to be stuck in the tree?"
 Children: "Yes!" (January 31st)

Though Mrs. Compton still initiated the agenda and framed the subsequent episode, the children were able to engage with the story meaning and verbally interact with some ease. They were utilizing their "Pooh schemas" to sing the song, predict, associate and to respond to story-related questions.

The second trend, listening to conceptually remote narratives, occurred with some frequency in the classroom. Five of the nine narratives read to the children featured concepts that were abstract or indeed confusing. There was little or no discussion concerning the abstract concepts but, instead, story questions focused on vocabulary or pictured events.

Example: "The Shepherd"

Noreen: "I have a little story I want to read to you. The book is called 'The Shepherd'" (points to the title). "A shepherd is a man who looks after sheep."

She reads the text and holds the book up so that the children can see the brightly coloured illustrations. One line seems to be repeated often, i.e. "The star led him on". The story describes how the shepherd and his sheep visit a variety of palaces, castles and houses to see the Christ Child. They discover him in a poor stable. It concludes, "the Christ Child was not poor at all".

Noreen: "Who's the Christ Child?"

Several Children: "Baby Jesus -- Jesus."

Noreen: "When he was born he was put in a manger. Do you know what a manger is?"

Children: (Pause) "No."

A manger is explained.

Noreen: "Now we're going to make angels this afternoon." (December 6th)

The concept of "the Christ Child was not poor at all" was the "punch-line" of the story and surely both a complex concept and remote from the children's experiences. Maybe explanation was not incorporated due to the differing religious backgrounds of the children, but without discussion the children may be expected to have been mystified. When the "angel-making" activity was announced and the children asked to gather around a table for a demonstration, several children remained seated, almost as if they were waiting for the story to finish, for the story lacked a sense of closure for them. This story raises another feature of storybook interactions, for though the stories related to themes there was no linked transition to build schematic bridges, e.g. angels were not a focal feature of "The Shepherd" and yet were linked to the next kindergarten activity. "Shepherds" would have been more appropriate, or the stable scene, wherein the children could have integrated knowledge across contexts.

Abstractness of "punch-lines" or key concepts occurred in other storybook interactions.

Example: "Winnie the Pooh and Tigger"

In the story, Tigger falls from a tree and lands on Eeyore. Christopher Robin asks Eeyore if he would like to say something.

Noreen/text: (Eeyore) "Just thank him for me."

Children: (Stare ahead as Mrs. Compton closes the book. "Sarcasm" of Eeyore goes unregistered.)
(January 10th)

Example: "The Gorilla Did It"

Mrs. Webster reads half the class the story of a boy who pretends an imaginary gorilla always messes up his bedroom.

Mrs. Webster: "Can Mom see the gorilla?"

Children: (Variously) "No, he's behind the door -- he's on the cupboard -- under the bed."

Mrs. Webster: "Isn't that a funny story?"

Children: (Silence as she closes the book)
(September 20th)

Example: "The Rain Puddle"

Mrs. Compton reads a story about the farm animals' confusion upon seeing themselves reflected in a puddle.

Noreen: "What can you see in a puddle?"

Paul: "A manhole."

Belinda: "Animals fall in there."

Noreen: "Maybe -- but something else."

Suzanne: "Sky."

Noreen: "Wouldn't you see yourself -- your own face in a puddle -- reflections?"

Adam: "You could see a worm." (October 19th)

Without discussions of "imaginary gorillas", or Eeyore's character, or experience of "reflections", it is suggested that many of the children may well have experienced difficulties connecting with story meaning. On one occasion, when Mark's background knowledge about "cherry picking" conflicted with the teacher's, he voiced his confusion.

Mrs. Compton reads a story about an old woman who has a yard full of cherries that are ready to pick.

Noreen: "What time of the year is it when the fruit is ripe?"

Jonathon: "Fall."

Mark: "Summer."

Noreen: (Sharply) "I don't know what you mean -- summer. What do you mean?"

Mark: "I thought cherries were picked in -- I forget" (frowns and looks down).

Noreen: "Well, it was Fall!" (definitely)
(October 18th)

Mark's schematic knowledge about cherry picking in Canada suggested that summer was the appropriate time. He was left with confusion and doubt about his own knowledge, as the story had been selected by the teacher to fit into the Fall theme. Mark did not listen to the rest of the story with his usual rapt attention and did not risk another storybook-time response for over a month.

The storybook interactions in the classroom were rarely occasions where children were invited to share story meaning. The agenda was the teacher's and the children were not encouraged to initiate questions or

relate story events to other contexts. The story listening times stood as rather isolated activities. Though the content was invariably related to the monthly theme, the storybook engagement itself did not link directly or immediately to other activities. Transcendence, a fragile aspect of teacher-small group storybook encounters, was virtually omitted in teacher-whole class interactions. Broadening horizons to link the world of the story to personal knowledge bases is problematic in the early childhood classroom, as with large groups it is difficult to bridge from stories to each child's world of knowledge. Only during the Winnie the Pooh story wherein Pooh was stuck in a tree, and during one dinosaur story where the book was linked to a recent museum visit, did the decontextualization of knowledge occur in classroom storybook interactions. On those occasions the children had developed a common pool of experiences for some degree of transcendence to happen. For "crossing contexts" to be an integral part of the interactive patterns of storybook listening, it is suggested that stories have to be selected that build on some common core of knowledge and move from the "known" to the "new". In addition, the learner's initiations and participation must be valued for the children are active members in a storybook encounter. Following Mrs. Compton's attendance at a "whole language" lecture, the first predictable book, "King Kangaroo" was introduced to the class and the children were invited to "join in". "Joining in" was a new strategy in the classroom and hence Belinda's resultant self-doubts were not surprising.

Noreen: (Goes back to the beginning of the story)
 "This time I want you to help with the story.
 Do you think you can?"

Belinda: "No."

Noreen: "You don't think you can do it?"

Belinda: "I don't think so." (February 28th)

The library story sessions were held once a week. Again there were no observed differences in the interactive patterns of the High-Low Print aware children, but the similarities were "stronger" than in the classroom storybook interactions. The librarian, Ms. Windsor, conducted invitational sessions with books, and as invited members of a storybook encounter, the six children were responsive listeners.

In the library, Ms. Windsor's obvious personal enjoyment of the books and poems was transmitted to the children, explicitly as she declared a story was by her "favourite author", and implicitly, as her expressive story telling voice suggested, "I like this book". She invited the children to join in refrains and to repeat poems. Ms. Windsor asked the children to predict words within story or poem contexts and all words that "made sense" were accepted. The children were also asked to hypothesize story events from front covers of books, title pages or decorated book linings and frequently they were asked to suggest, "What might happen next?" during a story reading. The children's own initiations were listened to and related back to the story, e.g.

Janice: (Looking at a long dog on the cover of "Peter's Chair" by Ezra Jack Keats) "It's a long dog" (laughs).

Ms. Windsor: "It is a long one. This dachshund stretches right around the back cover of the book" (shows the children. They laugh).

Books selected by the librarian seemed to be meaningful for the children. They engaged with "Curious George", "Corduroy" the teddy bear, "Harry the Dirty Dog" and "Peter" who was jealous of a younger sibling. Fairy stories, such as "The Three Bears" were read to the children and, on occasion, re-read. All the six children were similarly captivated and absorbed by the library storybook interactions. The following storybook interaction demonstrates the range of strategies utilized by the

librarian and the obvious involvement of the children.

Ms. Windsor asks the children to repeat a "dog" poem after her. The children repeat each line enthusiastically. Belinda's animated voice soars above the others. Her face shows pure enjoyment as she echoes the words in a lilting voice.

Ms. Windsor tells the children that she has a new story to read to them. It is written by one of her favourite authors. She shows the children the front cover of the book and points to each word in the title as she reads, "What's So Funny Katu?" She then points to the author and reads the name. Joanne Windsor shows the children the inside cover, which depicts an African village scene, a snake, a cow and presumably Katu.

Librarian: "What do you think the story's about?"

Jeremy: "A snake."

Librarian: "It could be, couldn't it?"

Paul: "A cow."

Librarian: (Nods) "Well, we can see a snake and a cow -- what's going to happen, do you think?"

Belinda: "The cow's going to be bitten by the snake."

Librarian: "That's a good idea."

Janice: "The boy's going to find a cow and the snake'll bite them."

Librarian: "That's another good idea. Let's read it and see."

Joanne Windsor reads the text in an expressive voice. She holds the book up so that the children can see the vibrant pictures. She sometimes leaves words for prediction, e.g. "And he left with his tail beneath his --" (legs). She uses different voices to portray the snake and Katu. The baby's "crying" causes Belinda and Janice to laugh. Mark is totally absorbed and so is Trevor. Marvin's whole attention seems devoted to the story. Janette sits still. Her mouth hangs open as she listens. Janice listens with care and laughs at key humorous incidents. Belinda is totally expressive during the reading. Her facial expressions change constantly. She is excited when Katu is excited and bites her nails when the baby is upset. She looks shocked when the rat appears and is happy when Katu recovers from "death". The story describes how Katu's "laugh burst out between his fingers". Ms. Windsor models a hand over her mouth and asks the children to laugh that way "so it bursts out from your fingers". The children practise their laughs.

(November 30th)

The latter story continued with further miming of story actions and gaps left for prediction. Though no questions were asked about the story it was clear from the non-verbal behaviour of the children, their participation in the mimes, their laughs in appropriate places and their rapt absorption,

that they had "connected" with the story meaning. Though the setting of the story was remote from the children's experiences, the characters were recognizable in their lives and the theme of "keeping a secret" was pertinent to all the children. In addition, possible "character" and "action" schemas had been activated in the introduction to the story.

Though the librarian knew little of the personal backgrounds of the individual children, transcendent qualities were built in to many of the storybook interactions. For example, the children's experiences with teddy bears were discussed in "The Three Bears", and visits to Santa and trimming "your tree at home" were talked about during "Mole and Troll Trim the Tree". The world of home was frequently linked to the world of the story, e.g.

Joanne Windsor holds "Peter's Chair" in her hands.

Librarian: "How many of you have a baby brother or sister?" (Several children, including Marvin and Trevor, raise their hands.) "How many of you have something that was 'specially yours, like a crib or a high chair, from when you were babies?" (Half the class raise their hands.) "Now that special thing that was yours -- if it was given to a baby brother or sister -- how would you feel?"

Trevor: "Happy."

Librarian: "You're a very nice boy -- would some of you feel other things?"

Suzanne: "Unhappy."

Librarian: "Why?"

Suzanne: "'Cos it was yours and you really might still want it."

Librarian: "Yes, and that's how this little boy, Peter, felt in this story, about his chair --"

(November 30th)

When such home schemas were activated, the six children were already engaged, before the first word of the story was read! Utilizing strategies to link experienced contexts with story contexts, thus, not only served a literacy stimulating function, i.e. decontextualizing thought, but also promoted attention to the story itself and activated key prior knowledge that could enhance story meaning for the children.

Ms. Windsor utilized five kinds of prediction strategies within the context of the story. One technique involved prediction of subsequent events on the basis of prior information. It required the children to synthesize the portion of the story read and to hypothesize the next event. All the six children were able to generate suggestions for future story episodes. Trevor was particularly vocal in offering hypotheses in library story readings, though was quite reticent in classroom group interactions. Belinda would also initiate comments in the library, and such verbalizations occurred in the excitement of the moment. For example in "Mole and Troll Trim the Tree" she declared, "The tree -- it'll fall on them!", predicting aloud how she thought the next episode would occur. The other four prediction strategies occurred within sentences in the main body of the story. Ms. Windsor asked for predictions based on 1) the children's experiential background, 2) the story content, i.e. tied to the text, 3) picture clues, and 4) mimed clues. For example, the following predictions were requested in "Mole and Troll Trim the Tree".

- 1) "Christmas was coming and -- was falling. What was falling?"
- 2) "Mole was wearing ear --" (points to the picture).
- 3) "Mole and -- came to the pine forest. Who came to the pine forest?"
- 4) "I want ----" (puts up three fingers) "Christmas trees. How many did he want?"
- 5) "Let's share a --" (points to a picture of a tree).
- 6) "So Mole covered his --" (mimes covering eyes with her hand)
"peeking through his --" (wiggles her fingers).
- 7) "He walked slap into a --" (points to a tree picture).
- 8) "He came closer and --"
- 9) "Troll, let's trim our tree, said --"
- 10) "He took off his --" (takes off her shoes).
- 11) "I always have a -- on top of my tree. What does he have on top of his tree?" (Trevor = angel, Laura = star) (December 19th)

In sentences 1) and 11) responses from experiential background were

requested, though of course such predictions had to take into account semantic and syntactic cues. In sentences 3), 8) and 9), predictions based primarily on story information, when combined with appropriate syntactic-semantic forms, were required. Picture clues were utilized for sentences 2), 5) and 7) and mimed clues for 4), 6) and 10). Though four types of cues were utilized none of the six children experienced any difficulties in predicting appropriate answers.

One other aspect of the library storybook interactions warrants attention. Ms. Windsor accepted the children's initiations and sometimes utilized them to expand an interaction. For example, after reading the children an imaginary tale, "If the Dinosaurs Came Back" and encouraging the children to join in the repeated refrain, Belinda was bursting to talk.

Belinda: "If the dinosaurs came back it wouldn't be true!"

Librarian: "Why?"

Belinda: "They'd not be real -- only puppets."

Librarian: "And we'd be pretending --"

Belinda: (Nods and smiles)

Ms. Windsor asks the children to pretend that the dinosaurs came back. She suggests that they describe what they think might happen, e.g.

Mark: "If they came back they'd die again."

Janice: "If the dinosaurs came back I wouldn't let them in my house!" (laughs)

Belinda: "If they came -- they'd wreck the whole world!"

Janette: "They might eat you -- or all of us!"

(February 17th)

There is a strong element of semantic contingency (Snow, 1983) in the latter interaction in that the caregiver picked up the child's initiation and clarified her feelings, and then permitted the other children to expand on Belinda's agenda.

Interestingly, Belinda's classroom comment that she did not think she could help her teacher read "King Kangaroo" did not apply to her library storybook interactions wherein she frequently joined in and

"helped". Belinda's satisfaction with the library story sessions was expressed with her usual vocal honesty, after she had heard two Christmas stories read by the librarian:

Belinda: "You know what I want for Christmas? I want a long, long book about Santa."
(December 19th)

Thus, in summary, no differences were noted between the High Print-Low Print aware children's interactive styles within each storybook context. However, there were clearly differences across contexts for all the children. In the classroom, all the children were "low key" participants. They were not initiators but responders. As the storybook interactions were closely structured by the teacher, the children's interactive patterns seemed to be submerged within the caregiver's agenda. In the library, the similarity in interactive patterns, between the High-Low Print aware children, was more clearly observed. All the six children were able to engage in story meaning, to participate in questions and prediction techniques, and were free to initiate story-related comments.

Therefore, the situational contexts for storybook encounters created differing frameworks for interactions. The teacher's and librarian's agendas seemed disparate. In the classroom, books were frequently selected to match themes and their qualities as "read aloud" books were not controlled. Frequently, the children's interactions were limited, not only by the teacher's intent to transmit and check exact knowledge, but also because the texts lacked cohesion and contained abstract concepts that appeared to constrain the children's ability to engage in story meaning. In the library, all the six children were similarly interactively involved as the librarian invited them to share books that she enjoyed, accepted their initiations and approximations, engaged the children in a

variety of participatory strategies, selected cohesive books that could be conceptually linked to the children's worlds, and expanded on the children's contributions. The qualities of transcendence (Feuerstein, 1980; 1979) and semantic contingency (Snow, 1983) were identified in the librarian's storybook interactions.

Monitoring

The child learns to regulate, or self-mediate, his own learning processes via social interactions with caregivers who initially monitor his performance externally and over time decrease the control to permit the child to take over the process (Brown, 1982a; Feuerstein, 1980, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978). Within the adult-child mediational relationship the child builds a conceptual network of strategies which he utilizes to move from dependence on the adult towards increasing independence in filtering his own perceptions and in controlling his own learning via internal, representational thought (Vygotsky, 1978). Children who do not learn to self-monitor their own educational processes may be considered at risk with regard to schooling (Feuerstein, 1980, 1979), and in jeopardy with regards to reading development (Brown, 1982a).

The observational data in this study reveals that all the six children were able to monitor their own performances on many classroom activities and during most social interactions. All the High-Low Print aware children were self-regulators in that they knew when activities were "working out" and when they were not, and on many occasions they knew what to do to "fix things" when problems arose. However, there were major differences in print monitoring between the High and Low Print aware children. The print content provided the Low Print aware children with a seemingly insurmountable barrier, for the monitoring strategies they

utilized so readily in play, sand, water and painting, appeared to seize up when these children were provided with the classroom print tasks.

The Low Print aware children, thus, monitored their own learning when tasks were within their world of experiences, but as background knowledge is closely linked with self-monitoring, then activities wherein these children were presented with content that was outside their spheres of knowledge, presented difficulties. The children, on such tasks, knew that "they did not know", but because of limited background knowledge, did not "know what to do about it". In fact, Janette, Belinda and Marvin generated creative strategies to bypass "not knowing what to do". Belinda knew that she could not read, and experience had undoubtedly taught her that there was only a limited chance that an adult would be available to read her a story in the book corner, and hence she avoided going there, declaring "Books is borin'." Janette and Marvin, after preliminary attempts to engage with the print content "independently" at the games centre, appeared to realize that they did not "know how to interact with the materials" and hence chose alternate activities. Janette, at five years of age, had generated her bathroom-escape strategy to avoid such tasks. Marvin resorted to his "let's have fun" techniques in a move to avoid the incomprehensible. Thus, these children were developing avoidance strategies for print prior to the onset of any formal reading instruction. I would suggest that they "knew they did not know" how to make sense of the print content and knew that they could not control or monitor their own on-task performance. In addition, of course, the bypassing of print had been sanctioned by Mrs. Compton when the computer programmes had been introduced to the class in November. However, when print activities did make sense to them, then these children were able to monitor their own

performance. For example, Belinda:

Belinda is holding a pointer and is reading the "Small is a --" patterned chart out loud to herself. I sit down beside her.

Belinda: (Turns to me) "I can read it!"

She stretches on tiptoes and points to the words on the top line of the chart.

Belinda: "Small is a -- I forgot" (looks at me).

Me: "I don't know either --"

Belinda: "Don't you know how to read?" (points to the picture that appears to represent an insect-like creature).

Me: "Yes -- but I don't know what that is."

Belinda: "I think a beetle. That's a beetle, isn't it?"

Me: "Looks like it -- doesn't it?"

Belinda: "Yes. Small is a beetle" (points to "small", "is a" and the picture representing "beetle").

"Small is a butterfly. Small is a frog -- I -- answered a lot -- Smell -- not smell -- Small is a fleck. Small is a -- small is a -- small is a snail. Small is a -- small is a leaf."

(Belinda always treats "is a" as one word when she points. Belinda moves her pointer down, missing one line.)

"Small is --" (corrects and moves her pointer back to the previous line). "Small is a raindrop."

Small is --" (moves down two lines and then back to the correct line). "Small is a wock (rock).

Small is a worm." (October 20th)

In the latter interaction, Belinda was metacognitively aware that she could read the chart and that adults were print resources (albeit poor ones in this case). She worked out a word that made sense to her (beetle), and self-regulated her line-movement down the page, and her reading of "small" (not "smell"). Belinda had yet to work out that the rebus pictures were not words and was treating "is a" as a one word unit, but she did have eye-voice matching for "small" and the rebus pictures that represented each noun. A great deal of print monitoring occurred in this interaction because the print made sense to Belinda and the content was within her realm of knowledge. Unfortunately, for Belinda, no other patterned or language experience chart occurred in the classroom until the second half of February and hence her print monitoring strategies on

such tasks could not continue.

With the general letter and word level print activities in the room, the Low Print aware children had insufficient background knowledge in order to self-regulate their own learning. For two of the children, Belinda and Marvin, printing their own names was also a difficult task for them to monitor. They "knew something was wrong" with their print renditions of their names but had only the sketchiest ideas about how to rectify it.

Belinda: (Prints) **BEI** (Starts at the right)
 "Oh god, I forgot -- a stupid mistake."
 (Changes the "i" to an "l" and continues)
BEIL
 "I'm glad I didn't make a bad mistake."
 (December 8th)

Marvin: (Has printed **NIVRAM** starting at the right)
 "Looks -- Gordon -- what is it?" (Frowns)
 Gordon: "It's upside down."
 Marvin: (Pauses) "Mine doesn't start with W" (traces the "M" with his finger). "It's M" (sketches a "W" over his "M"). "I don't." (Doubtful, then quickly turns his page over and starts to colour the xeroxed picture)
 (December 1st)

Thus, Belinda and Marvin had doubts about the printed forms of their names. Belinda monitored and corrected one error but the "larger" problems were left. Marvin knew that something was wrong but had difficulty accepting Gordon's suggestion that his name was upside down. He monitored to realize that the "M" would then be a "W" and noted that his name did not "start with W". Belinda was left, apparently satisfied with her name whereas Marvin was still confused.

In these children's print experiences, the supportive adult, to provide external regulation, was not frequently available to aid them in producing print-scaffolded learning interactions. The Low Print aware

children required an adult to support their growth into literacy for without mediational interpretation they could not be anticipated to monitor their own performances on print tasks. Well developed monitoring strategies evidenced on some tasks, could not transfer effectively to the print tasks provided as firstly, the content was too remote from these children's experiences and secondly, they required print mediation from adult caregivers. Print was within the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 78) for the Low Print aware children, which may be defined as:

... those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 78)

At this stage, these children required "problem solving under adult guidance" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) before they could internalize strategies and monitor their performance on print tasks.

For Janice and Trevor, print monitoring was a different experience, for these High Print aware children entered school with a wide range of literacy knowledge accrued from preschool experiences. Thus, they had a pool of background knowledge to draw upon in monitoring their performance on print tasks in the classroom. From examples previously cited in this chapter, it was clear that both children were able to monitor their story-book reading, their performance at print-related centres, and their display of knowledge in print-focused Group Time activities. The classroom content did not prevent their utilization of monitoring strategies, but provided some opportunities for self-regulating their behaviour and fine-tuning their orthographic knowledge. Trevor, especially, demonstrated that, with some perseverance, he could monitor the print presented on the computer. In spite of lack of adult mediation in that centre, he drew

from his print resources and taught himself to read the directions. Janice, by reconstructing books from memory earlier in the year, developed control over print so that by February she was able to demonstrate some independence in reading. The data suggests that content familiarity aids in monitoring, i.e. if children have some knowledge in an area then they can monitor and learn some more in a cyclical interaction.

Mark resided in a "halfway house". He clearly demonstrated expert monitoring on non-print tasks and also developed some self-regulatory strategies with print itself. However, like the Low Print aware children, he avoided print tasks when they seemed difficult and non-meaningful. Mark was conscious that he could not engage in storybooks fully without "a reader", or mediator, indicating that he "knew he could not read". When print tasks made sense to him, he monitored his performance.

Mark has dictated a dinosaur story to Noreen Compton.

He reads it to her, and is on the last line.

Mark: "The volcano is gonna blow up."

Noreen: "Good."

Mark: "That says 'blow' -- right?" (points to 'blow').

Noreen: "Right there."

Mark: "It says 'blow'."

Noreen: "'Blow' -- and what does that word say?"

Mark: "'Up'."

Noreen: "Good. Terrific!" (February 17th)

With adult support and meaningful content, Mark was beginning to self-regulate his interactions with print. He sought information about words in context from his caregivers, information that could well be utilized in future independent print engagements.

In summary, all the children were able to monitor their own learning on many tasks. However, on print tasks particularly, the content and inconsistency of adult support limited the Low Print aware children's self-regulated task performance. Thus, content knowledge and adult mediation is required for effective monitoring to take place. Two High

Print children, Janice and Trevor, had sufficient literacy knowledge to engage in a cyclical interaction in which prior knowledge aided monitoring, and monitoring resulted in further literacy knowledge acquisition. When the literacy content was meaningful to the children, and within their spheres of experience, then the Low Print aware children and Mark could also monitor their print interactions.

The "How?" and "What?" of Literacy Acquisition

This chapter has explored the process of interaction within the kindergarten classroom, wherein children and caregivers were described enacting literacy-related events. The network of communicative patterns has been explored and the interrelated threads of similarities and differences between the interactions of the High Print-Low Print aware children. Though specific patterns of "sameness" and "difference" have been delineated within the situational contexts of occurrence, a more global synthesis would suggest that two factors produced varying degrees of influence on the interactions of the High Print and Low Print aware children. Firstly, the role of content seemed important in the literacy-related interactions in the kindergarten, for it influenced the display of knowledge, the independent and competent pursuit of print tasks, and the quality of the caregiver-child(ren) interactions. The High Print aware children, because of the possession of a wide range of background knowledge including literacy knowledge, could more frequently engage with the teacher's content than the Low Print aware children who were immersed in personally contextualized experiences. Secondly, mediation in the classroom influenced child involvement in literacy-related activities. The "supportive adult" was often required by the children to read and interpret content, but was inconsistently available as a resource. The

High Print aware children could engage in many activities without external regulation, but the Low Print aware children often "drifted at sea", as they sought to connect meaningfully with tasks. As much of the literacy content emerged from the teacher, and not from the children's contributions, then the Low Print aware children, especially, were sometimes faced with "the incomprehensible" without mediational support.

In the following chapter, the children's literacy knowledge is the focus of exploration, with the assumption that the literacy-related interactions experienced by the children are intimately related to knowledge acquired over time. Clearly, as the literacy knowledge of the High-Low Print aware children is discussed there is no presupposition that the kindergarten classroom was the only resource for acquiring knowledge. Though the present chapter has dwelled upon literacy-related interactions in the classroom, these children were also involved in literacy-related engagements at home and in the community that may be related to knowledge acquired. Thus, from viewing the complex process of how literacy related interactions took place in one realm of the children's life-worlds, what literacy knowledge has been acquired now receives attention, recognizing that this body of knowledge has been accumulated from across socio-communicative contexts experienced by Janice, Trevor, Mark, Belinda, Marvin and Janette.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHILDREN'S LITERACY KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

In this study, Janice, Trevor and Mark were defined as High Print aware children and Belinda, Marvin and Janette as Low Print aware children, following the administration of the structured literacy tasks. With the descriptive terms of "High Print" and "Low Print" aware, it was clear that 1) such "labels" were relative in that they only applied to the upper and lower levels of performance on the literacy tasks in that classroom, 2) there could be no assumption that they were at all long-term in that a child described as "Low Print" aware in the early part of the study may well have a wealth of literacy knowledge at the conclusion of the research, and 3) the tasks that assisted in the provision of the descriptive groups, though intended to tap a pool of literacy knowledge (Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1982; Hiebert, 1981), were not all-encompassing and hence information would also be utilized from classroom observational data.

The previous chapters foreshadow the results in this chapter, in that information concerning the home contexts and interactions (Chapter Four), the school, community and classroom contexts (Chapter Five), and especially the detailed dynamics of the process of literacy related interactions in the kindergarten (Chapter Six), provides strands of data about the literacy contexts and the social interactions wherein literacy learning took place. This chapter focuses on what literacy knowledge was acquired by the six children over the six months of the study. My intent is to emphasize two aspects of literacy knowledge, namely environmental print knowledge and

storybook knowledge, though there is an underlying premise that all literacy knowledge acquired is interrelated.

Knowledge About Environmental Print

The children's knowledge about environmental print refers to their awareness of print around the community as well as their knowledge of print within the classroom context.

Environmental Print Around the Community

The Environmental Print Task (see Chapter Three) was administered to the children at the beginning and at the conclusion of the study. For five of the children, the post-testing occurred in February, whereas Marvin received his post-test in December, just prior to his movement to a new neighbourhood and school. Using the criteria described in Chapter Three, the children's individual scores were totalled and percentages calculated. In Table 5, the September and February rank orders and percentages are presented. Marvin's December score is also included for information, though his results were obtained, of course, two months before the other children's. The High-Low Print aware children's results are noted with asterisks.

With regard to the overall scores of the High-Low Print aware children, several features are noteworthy:

1. There was little pre-post test difference in the rank order of either the High Print or Low Print aware children when compared with the rest of the class. Janice, Trevor and Mark were positioned close to the top of the list in pre-testing and occupied the first three class positions in post-testing. Belinda, Janette and Marvin were in the lowest third in the class and again in that position after the

Table 5

Environmental Print Task Scores (Pre-Post)

<u>Pre-test</u>		<u>Post-test</u>	
Order	Score (%)	Order	Score (%)
*Trevor	80	*Trevor	97
*Janice	68	*Janice	91
Jonathon	41	*Mark	51
*Mark	40	Shawn	49
Gordon	36	Jonathon	46
Suzanne	34	Suzanne	46
Penny	32	Laura	44
Paul	32	Gordon	43
Jeremy	32	Jeremy	39
Laura	31	Paul	39
Jane	31	Penny	36
Manuel	25	Jane	31
Shawn	24	Adam	30
Adam	22	Manuel	29
*Belinda	22	Ken	29
*Marvin	22	Vanessa	29
Ken	21	*Marvin	28
Gary	18	Gary	24
Robbie	15	*Belinda	20
*Janette	14	*Janette	20
Vanessa	12	Robbie	13

final task administration.

2. There was a greater similarity amongst the Low Print aware children's scores than amongst the High Print aware children. Overall, Janice and Trevor possessed more environmental print knowledge than Mark at pre- and post-testing. In February, Janice's and Trevor's scores

approached the test's ceiling whereas Mark scored approximately half marks. The Low Print aware children's scores were, in comparison, quite similar on both testing occasions.

3. The three High Print aware children made greater score gains than the three Low Print aware children. Trevor gained 17%, Janice 23% and Mark 11%, whereas Janette gained 6%, Marvin 7% (September-December) and Belinda dropped 2%. Thus, the environmental print knowledge "gap", as reflected by the test scores, widened over time, with the High Print aware children acquiring knowledge more rapidly than the Low Print aware children.

Strategies: The scores and relative class positions of the children suggest a widening knowledge gap, over time, between the High and Low Print aware children. Scores present one aspect of difference, but the children's on-task verbalizations and non-verbal behaviour provide a broader landscape for exploring the children's knowledge strategies. In the following section, patterns of strategic behaviour are described.

I. Pictures, Symbols or Print?

On the Environmental Print Task, the children were provided with three opportunities for responses in that the same label or print sign was firstly presented within the context of occurrence (coloured photograph), secondly, with the context removed so that only the coloured logo and print were available, and thirdly, the print was presented alone, in black and white script. Each child's responses were allocated a score on the basis of specific criteria, i.e. category 3 = complete, print-exact response, category 2 = incomplete or over-extended response, category 1 = meaningful association, and category 0 = vague or irrelevant response. Within the whole class, a definite pattern emerged in that the children provided more

responses (categories 3, 2 and 1) to the contextual condition than to the logo condition, and more responses to logos than to the "print only" presentation. The following examples illustrate the percentages of class responses within each condition, to four stimuli.

		Context	Logo	Print ^x
Stimulus: "Dairy Queen"	Pre	67%	38%	5%
	Post	65%	55%	20%
Stimulus: "Stop"	Pre	81%	48%	38%
	Post	70%	60%	45%
Stimulus: "Canadian Tire"	Pre	67%	14%	0%
	Post	55%	30%	15%
Stimulus: "Sears"	Pre	38%	33%	19%
	Post	30%	30%	25%

(Category 3 responses)

Interestingly, from these whole class results, there was also a frequent slight decline in the exact responses (category 3) in the contextual condition during post-testing, with an attendant movement towards more exact responses for logos and for print itself. Thus, the children were utilizing pictorial cues most effectively, logo cues secondly, and graphic cues least frequently, but over time a decline in pictorial cues and an increased reliance on symbols and print were noted.

A second interesting facet of the overall class responses was the perceived importance of several signs and labels, to the children. For example, 95 percent of the children gave exact responses to the McDonald's sign (contextual condition) in both pre- and post-tests; 86 percent of the children also gave accurate responses to the corner grocery store, the Red Rooster (contextual condition) at pre-test, and 95 percent at post-test. However, when "print only" was presented few of the children produced exact responses (category 3), incomplete or expanded responses (category 2) or meaning associations (category 1), e.g.

		Category 3	Category 2	Category 1
"McDonalds"	Pre	24%	0%	0%
	Post	35%	5%	5%
"Red Rooster"	Pre	14%	0%	0%
	Post	25%	0%	0%

It would seem that a convenience store and a fast food outlet were important to these children, but linked more to the occasion of going to them (contextual condition) and noting general visual forms, rather than to the abstract forms presented in logos and print.

The general strategies of the whole class, in generating more information from contexts than from symbols or decontextualized print, provide a foil for discussion of the strategies of the High-Low Print aware children who are the focus of my study. Figures 10 to 15 diagrammatically present the six children's pattern of responses to the Environmental Print Task, across the three conditions, i.e. context, logo and print, and over the two testing occasions, i.e. pre- and post-tests. Categorical responses, i.e. categories 3, 2 or 1, are also delineated on the graphs to provide an indication of the quality of the children's answers.

Figures 10 to 15 demonstrate that:

1. The High Print aware children produced far more print-related responses (categories 3, 2 and 1), on both the pre- and post-tests, than the Low Print aware children.

a) Janice's and Trevor's profiles were remarkably similar. By

February, both children were reconstructing environmental print messages from graphic information with a high degree of accuracy.

In September, Janice was able to utilize print to provide 50 percent of her answers (category 3) whereas in February she used print accurately for 90 percent of her responses. In addition, in

February she made a "no response" to "Canada Post" and supplied "Woodwards" for "Woolco" in the "print only" condition. The latter response was scored as a meaning association though it is acknowledged that she was clearly utilizing graphic cues, i.e. "Woo--", to make her response. Trevor, in comparison, produced print-exact responses for 70 percent of his "print only" presentation in September, though in February he scored 95 percent in the production of accurate responses in the print condition. Trevor also scored in the expanded response category (2) for one answer, when he replied "Canada Post Office" for "Canada Post". Like Janice, he was obviously using graphic information to cue his response.

b) Mark was far less print-exact in his responses (Category 3: September = 20%, February = 30%) than Janice and Trevor, though he was able to produce more print-exact responses and more print-related meaning associations in February than in September.

c) Clearly, the Low Print aware children experienced more difficulty with the "print only" category. None was able to produce a category 3, print-exact response, in pre- or post-testing, and meaning associations (category 1) or incomplete/over-extended responses (category 2) were minimal on both occasions.

2. The overall trend, in the kindergarten, was the production of more responses in the contextual condition than in the logo condition, and the least responses in the "print only" condition. This trend was not followed by all six children.

a) Janice's and Trevor's patterns in utilizing context, logos and print were, again, very similar. In pre-testing they obtained marginally more cues from the contextual and logo conditions than

from print itself. However, in February, cues from graphic information equalled or surpassed information from pictures or symbols. Both children, over time, were placing an increasing reliance on decontextualized cues, i.e. print, for reconstructing meaning from environmental signs.

- b) Mark's pattern was different. In both pre- and post-testing he relied on contextual and logo cues more than on print information, though print cues were becoming a little more important to him in February.
- c) Janette, Belinda and Marvin appeared to follow the trend observed to be common in the class. Contextual cues, for these children, provided more information than logos, and logos provided more cues than print, in both pre- and post-test conditions.
- d) Meaning associations, rather than category 3 or 2 responses, were clearly importantly featured in the Low Print aware children's, and Mark's, answers in the contextual and logo conditions. For Janice and Trevor, exact responses were emphasized as the major strategies in these conditions.

Thus, in summary, on the Environmental Print Task, the High Print aware children utilized print information more frequently and with more accuracy than the Low Print aware children. Janice and Trevor used print strategies with more adeptness than Mark, in that they clearly started the year with a wider range of print knowledge and fine-tuned their print strategies over the course of the study to demonstrate print exactitude by February. Their print knowledge moved from being contextualized, to some degree, to being decontextualized, and from demonstrating the harnessing of general cues (categories 1 and 2) to differentiated cues from print itself

(category 3). Print as a source of information, for Janice and Trevor, was both important and reliable in reconstructing meaning from environmental print, at the conclusion of the study. Mark, though utilizing more print cues than the Low Print aware children, still sought a great deal of information from context and logos, in February, and was less exact than Janice and Trevor. He tended to produce more meaning associations than print-exact responses in his favoured contextual and symbolic conditions, at post-testing. However, it is entirely possible that such meaning associations are precursors to increasing exactitude, for Janice and Trevor produced several such associations in pre-testing and declined in their utilization of them in post-testing. The Low Print aware children demonstrated greater similarity in their strategies in that they obtained more cues from context and logos than from print. Their responses suggest that they utilized graphic information minimally. However, in the post-test, they demonstrated an increased ability to use contextual information, and Janette and Marvin were rather more adept at utilizing cues from logos than during the pre-test. Belinda's overall score dropped from pre- to post-testing and, though in February she increased her meaning associations in the contextual condition, her exactitude declined as did her meaning associations for logos and print.

II. "Environmental Print Makes Sense to Me"

For Janice, Trevor and Mark, the task presented opportunities for sensemaking across contextual, logo and print conditions. They related the signs and labels to visual information observed in pursuing their everyday lives. Trevor, for example, indicated that he knew "Edmonton Journal" (print) because, "we get the paper there -- an Edmonton Journal paper" (picture of a vending machine: September). Janice noted that she knew

"Gulf" because, "we get gas there and Daddy told me it" (September), indicating that a parent had adopted the describer role in interpreting environmental print. Mark demonstrated that he knew the function of print in his life but was still working on developing print exactitude. In the logo and print conditions, he labelled "Gulf" as a "gas station" (September and February). Thus, he had a meaning association for "Gulf" even without the benefit of context, and was possibly utilizing the initial "G" graphic cue. In the contextual condition he referred to this gas station as being close to his home and focused on visual cues in the photograph, i.e. "I live around here -- near this gas station -- there's a store that way -- I see it often this one -- it's Shell". Thus, when the context was presented this visual association with home was strong, and Mark paid less attention to the initial graphic cue. When the logo and print were presented, the task "forced" attention to graphic information and Mark appeared to utilize that in addition to his meaning association. Thus, at pre- and post-testing, the High Print aware children demonstrated that environmental signs were meaningful to them. For Janice and Trevor, especially, and for Mark to some extent, the purpose and visual forms associated with the context and the logos became integrated in that print itself assumed centrality, i.e. print made sense alone. In February, Janice responded to the "Gulf" context by telling me that the print said, "Gulf". When I asked, "How do you know?", she swung her finger left to right beneath the word and proclaimed, "It says Gulf". Similarly, in February, when Trevor was shown the Edmonton Journal vending machine, he stated, "An Edmonton Journal paper". When I again asked, "How do you know?", he said, "It says right here -- Edmonton Journal", and pointed to the two words painted on the green metal box.

Thus, Janice and Trevor indicated that print made sense to them and they expected print to make sense to me! Using the graphic cues was a way of "proving" to me that print was viable evidence for a response to "How do you know?" In September they had used more personalized knowledge as evidence, namely knowledge of purpose (how environmental print related to their lives) and knowledge of form (visual cues interrelated with purpose). In February they used the more abstract graphic system shared by most of the culture, print, and knew that this made sense, in a decontextualized way, to all of us.

To Janette, Belinda and Marvin, the context of occurrence, and the relationship of such a context to their lives, made the most sense at pre- and post-testing. Environmental print embedded in context clearly did have meaning for them, though that meaning was personally contextualized, e.g. Stimulus: "Malham Elementary School" (contextual condition)

- Belinda: (September) "Our school -- this is our school." (How do you know?) "It says our school:" (What does it say?) "This is a school."
 (February) "It's my school." (How do you know?) "We came in that door from our field trip." (What does it say?) "Our school."
- Marvin: (September) "Our School." (How do you know?) "'Cos -- our school." (What does it say?) "School."
 (December) "Our school." (How do you know?) "'Cos there's numbers -- doors -- and windows on it." (What does it say?) "School."
- Janette: (September) "It's school." (How do you know?) "'Cos I saw it." (What does it say?) "School."
 (February) "This is our school." (How do you know?) "'Cos it's built from bricks and there's that green door at our school." (What does it say?) "School."

The visual cues of bricks, windows and doors offered form clues and the personally important knowledge that the building served the purpose of

being "our school" related to their pronouncements that the graphic display meant "School", "Our school" or "This is a school". "School" was one word actually included in the graphic information, but it is suggested that the context offered more cues than the print itself for these children. When presented with the "print only" category, wherein the form of print provided the only cues, then Belinda and Janette stated that they did not know what the print meant (September and February), and Marvin declared that he could not "read these pictures" in September, and started to spell out the word in December, i.e.

Stimulus: "Malham Elementary School"

Marvin: "S-C-J-zero-zero-one" (What does it say?)
 "I don't know -- er -- S-C-J-zero-zero-one."

By December, Marvin treated most of the "print only" stimuli in a similar manner. When presented with print he perceived that his task was to identify individual letters. This letter identification was not accurate and this presented him with further difficulties, though at times he achieved partial success, e.g.

Stimulus: "Red Rooster"

Marvin: "There's letters in it -- R -- e -- I can't
 know this letter." (points to 'd') "--t?
 It says -- red paper."

Thus, partial letter identification on this item did not prevent him from making a meaningful prediction. However, most frequently this strategy did not lead to the sensemaking apparent in the previous example, but to a succession of isolated letters and numbers that were not synthesized into meaningful responses. Thus, for the Low Print aware children, environmental print made sense in context, but decontextualized print offered few cues for sensemaking. Marvin's perception of reading, as a fragmented letter identification task, may have been a detrimental strategy, for it moved him away from the reconstruction of meaning.

Marvin left the school and hence it was not possible to determine if this strategy was short or long-term. Certainly though, it could be related to his continual exposure to isolated letter tasks in the kindergarten, between September and December. As Janice received the message from her father that "Gulf" meant the gas station they visited, then Marvin presumably received the message from Mrs. Compton that reading meant spelling words and identifying solitary letters.

In summary, all the children were aware that environmental print in context was meaningful, and cues for reconstructing meaning emerged from visual forms and from the interrelated purposes of such environmental stimuli in their lives. The High Print aware children realized that print itself made sense and were attempting to control graphic information. The Low Print aware children had not yet learned to harness print for sense-making purposes, although there was no indication that Janette and Belinda did not perceive that print could be meaningful. The following section on "Meta Awareness" rather suggests that they knew it embodied meaning but that meaning would be revealed when somebody taught them to read. Marvin, also, may well have considered that print should make sense, e.g. "Red paper" for "Red Rooster", but by December had "mixed messages" about reading in that he perceived letter identification was related to sense-making.

III. Meta Awareness

Metacognition refers to the deliberate conscious control of one's actions ... Self-interrogation concerning the current state of one's own knowledge during reading or any problem-solving task is an essential skill in a wide variety of situations, those of the laboratory, the school or everyday life. (Brown, 1982b, pp. 453-454)

1. All the children demonstrated that they had conscious control over their performance, on many occasions, though there was a greater specificity

in the High Print aware children's "self-interrogations" than the Low Print aware children's. The High Print aware children self-corrected responses, whereas there was no instance in pre- and post-testing wherein a Low Print aware child self-corrected, e.g.

Mark: (Stimulus, "Malham Elementary School", context)
 "-- a school -- James Wapiti School" (nearby elementary school). "No! -- Malham School" (points to the word 'Malham' on the picture).
 (February)

Janice: (Stimulus, "Esso", context)
 "---S.O.S. -- no -- E-S-S-O" (spells the word aloud). "It says Esso." (February)

Trevor: (Stimulus, "Canada Post")
 (Context) "I put letters in there -- I seen them -- Canada --" (points to 'Post' next)
 "-- I can't get that word."
 (Logo and Print) "It's Canada Post Office."
 (February)

Brown (1982b) suggests that humans can "proceed merrily on automatic pilot until a triggering event alerts them to comprehension failure" (p. 455).

For Mark and Janice, the "triggering event" seemed to be embedded in perceived incongruity between their responses and the graphic information and context of occurrence. It clearly did not make sense to Mark that a "James Wapiti" sign should be placed on a photograph of his school, especially when he checked the print and discovered that it said "Malham". Thus the contextual picture had generated Mark's schema for "school", but the specific visual cues, including print, permitted him to correct his prediction. Similarly, I may presume that "S.O.S." seemed non-meaningful to Janice when placed on a gas station sign. She then checked the graphic information, when this inconsistency was noted, and self-corrected her hypothesis. Trevor "knew he did not know" the word "Post" in the contextual condition. He knew specifically what was blocking his reconstruction of the message. In the logo and print conditions, Trevor

sought the missing link and made sense by stating, "Canada Post Office". It is difficult to know whether the form demands of the logo and print presentations forced him to "slow down and allot extra processing capacity to the problem area" (Brown, 1982b, p. 455), or whether, in the intervening period between presentations, Trevor had effected a form of sensemaking closure on "Canada-plus-a-mailbox". However, I suggest that the High Print aware children demonstrated that they both "knew" when comprehension was failing and could generate strategies to rectify their problems, on many occasions. Invariably such strategies arose from their knowledge about print for this knowledge permitted them to ask the right questions of themselves in "self-interrogation".

The Low Print aware children did not self-correct any responses because, I suggest, error detection required attention to graphic information and discrimination of key print features. Thus, the Low Print aware children could generate hypotheses for environmental print messages, but were unable to check their predictions, as knowledge about print itself was required for the type of specific self-corrections engaged in by Mark, Janice and Trevor.

2. All the children knew when they "did not know". During pre- and post-testing, each child stated, "I don't know" on at least one occasion. However, there was a greater exactitude in the comments of the High Print aware children than the Low Print aware children.

For the Low Print aware children there was a general "I don't know-ness" wherein few supporting or qualifying comments were added during pre-testing. Only Marvin, in September, suggested that "not knowing" was related to the fact that he could not "read those pictures" (print). During post-testing, Janette, Belinda and Marvin provided more clues

concerning their "I don't know" responses:

Belinda: (When presented with "print only")
 "This is much harder when you can't have
 colour." (What does it say?) "I don't know
 'cos I don't know how to read." (February)

Janette: ("print only")
 "They're too hard for me -- I can't read --
 It's too tiny -- I don't read." (What does
 it say?) "I can't read it 'cos I can't read
 -- I don't know 'cos I can't read -- too
 tricky for me -- I can't know that -- I can't
 read that." (February)

Marvin: ("print only")
 "I don't know any of these. They're too
 hard -- It has letters -- and I don't know
 this letter." (What does it say?) "It has
 letters on it -- I can't say 'cos I don't
 know this letter (U) -- but it has letters
 -- S -- (Sun)." (December)

Thus, in the intervening period between pre- and post-testing, the Low Print aware children developed more specificity about why and what they "did not know". Janette and Belinda suggested quite strongly that they "did not know" about the print messages as "knowing" required ability to read. They had discovered that they could not read and hence when "print only" was presented there was a predetermined sense of "defeat" built into the task. Belinda realized that, with only print on the card, she could no longer rely on general visual information to aid her predictions and stated that without "colour" the task was very difficult. Janette also commented on form when she suggested that the print was "too tiny" for her to understand. In their responses both girls indicated that they were consciously aware of form, but that print form was, as yet, little help to assist in making predictions. Marvin concentrated on form also, in his comments, and he was clearly attempting to utilize print form rather than colours or general visual cues. His range was, however, limited in that Marvin's conception of reading focused on letter identification. Thus,

he consciously attempted to monitor graphic information, but when his letter identification strategy broke down he could not generate additional strategies. Marvin's "I don't know" thus referred to "I don't know this letter", implying that if he had done so then he could have "read" the message.

None of the High Print aware children qualified their "I don't know" responses by suggesting that they could not read. In pre-testing, Janice and Trevor seemed aware of exactly what they did not know, though at this stage Mark's "not knowing" was more general, e.g. "I know it but I can't think". By post-testing, all three children specifically stated what was blocking understanding, e.g.

- Janice: (Stimulus, "Malham Elementary School")
 "Malham School -- I don't know what that says" (points to Elementary). "Malham -- er -- School."
- Trevor: (Stimulus, "Canada Post", previously cited example) "Canada -- (points to "Post" next)
 "-- I can't get that word."
- Mark: (Stimulus, "Canada Post")
 "A mailbox -- Canada -- Canada -- something."

These children were sufficiently aware of print that they "knew what they knew" and "knew what they did not know". They knew that environmental print was meaningful and that the graphic information could be usefully employed in reconstructing meaning. They also knew that they were active participants in the meaning seeking process, for they were attempting to control graphic information before formal reading instruction. Janette's comment, "I can't know that" (print), for these children could be reflected in a statement, "I want to know that". The High Print aware children were developing print precision, over time, and what they "did not know" was as helpful as what they "did know", for it suggested

specific focii for ongoing discovery. Ann Brown (1982a) suggests:

If we "know we don't know", this knowledge can lead to self-questioning routines such as, "What do I know that might help me figure it out?" "What specifically do I not understand?" "Where can I go to find out?" (p. 27)

The High Print aware children in this study were developing sound "self-questioning routines" concerning print, and knew the right questions to ask of themselves. On the "print only" condition of the Environmental Print Task, the print content, like many of the print activities in the classroom, was too abstract and decontextualized for the Low Print aware children to engage in "self-questioning routines". To add a caveat to Ann Brown's comments on "knowing we don't know" (1982a), I suggest that unless the print content is meaningful to the children, and embedded in their "growing edge", then meta awareness of errors or suitable strategies, and "self-interrogation" is an unrealistic expectation. It is likely that, if print content in the kindergarten emerges from the language and personal life experiences of the children "self-questioning" may be realistically anticipated from children (see Chapter Eight).

Environmental Print in the Classroom

During the study I very rarely observed the children attending to, or commenting on, the charts, pictures and labels on the classroom walls and room dividers. Of course, some of the labels, e.g. the months, days of the week and the theme words, were utilized in Group Time and pointed out to the children. However, there were few occasions when the children moved towards these environmental messages, spontaneously. On one occasion I did observe Janette and Jane attempting to emulate a Group Time activity by matching hospital word cards with labels on the front noticeboard, but they quickly abandoned the activity.

Janette and Jane stand by the noticeboard. Janette looks down at the word card in her hand.

Janette: (To Mrs. Webster who is nearby)
"What's this?"

Mrs. Webster: "Intravenous. Can you say that big word?"

Janette: (Shakes her head)

Jane: "No."

Mrs. Webster: "Sure you can."

Both girls leave the area, giggling. (November 29th)

On another occasion, in January, Janice matched the Pooh word labels she had just verbalized, to the word cards on the display on the wall.

However, it was an extremely rare occurrence for the children to demonstrate that they were attending to the classroom environmental print. In February, I decided to present selected items from this environmental print to the High-Low Print aware children to check if, indeed, they could recognize any of the labels.

Some items were selected as they had been identified by the teacher during lessons, and some were chosen as, though they were present in the classroom, they had not been interpreted for all the children, by adults. Names of all the classroom members, for example, had not been pointed out to the children, though the child's own name had been indicated if the child was unable to recognize it. Directions for games fell into the same category, wherein print instructions were only explained if a child directly requested this information from an adult. Theme-related words and the days of the week had been described to the children in Group Time. Hence, a set of labels was printed on white card, clustering around five themes, i.e. classroom members' names, print directions, the days of the week, "Pooh" theme words and "dinosaur" theme words. Within each cluster individual cards were presented randomly but the same procedures were used for each child. Firstly, I presented a cluster of labels, e.g. names, and asked the child to "tell me about them". Secondly, if words were

unrecognized, I provided the children with schemas, e.g. "These are names of people in your class", "These are boys and these are girls -- and these are grown-ups". Thirdly, with words that were still unidentified, I invited the children to move to the context of occurrence, e.g. the wall charts for the children's names or the calendar for the days of the week. Table 6 provides a summary of the children's accurate word identification with "no help", "schemas provided" and "context provided".

Trevor required no assistance on this task, and completed it in less than a minute. He was enthusiastic as he rattled through his responses and chuckled gleefully when I had difficulty in keeping up with him. He suggested that he should slow down to help me! Trevor clearly had automaticity in word recognition on all the classroom environmental print items. My classroom observations of his overt behaviours suggested that he certainly knew his name, print directions for games, and some theme words and days of the week, but I had not realized that he could recognize all these labels.

Janice, also, had developed automaticity on most of the classroom labels selected for presentation. She read them aloud confidently though at a slower pace than Trevor. On two occasions Janice spontaneously self-corrected, i.e. "Janette -- no -- Jane" and "Sunday -- no -- Saturday". She was cueing, initially to word beginnings but utilized graphic cues across the words to check her responses. As on the community Environmental Print Task, Janice was "self-interrogating" and asking the "right" questions to monitor her performance. Again, the specificity of what was not known, as demonstrated in the Environmental Print Task, was apparent. Clearly, Janice had a concept for "word" and utilized this in her verbal qualification of what she did not know, e.g. when Janice was shown "START"

Table 6

Environmental Print in the Classroom (Children's Responses)

	Janice			Trevor			Mark			Janette			Belinda		
	nh	s	c	nh	s	c	nh	s	c	nh	s	c	nh	s	c
Mrs. Compton	X			X			X			X			X		
Mrs. Webster	X			X			X			X			X		
Manuel	X			X			X								
Andrew	X			X				X							
Gary	X			X				X			X		X		
Gordon	X			X				X			X	X			
Jonathon	X			X											
Janice	X			X				X		X					X
Janette	X			X					X						
Jane	X			X					X						
Jeremy	X			X											
Carlos	X			X											
Adam	X			X											
Ken	X			X											
Laura	X			X					X						
Mark	X			X			X								
Belinda	X			X			X		X			X			
Penny	X			X					X						
Robbie	X			X			X		X						
Suzanne	X			X						X					
Paul	X			X			X		X						
Trevor	X			X			X		X						
Vanessa	X			X					X				X		
Shawn	X			X				X							
Names' Total:	24			24			6	2	5	9	4	2	2	4	1
Sunday	X			X					X						
Monday	X			X			X								
Tuesday	X			X				X					X		
Wednesday	X			X				X					X		
Thursday	X			X											
Friday	X			X			X						X		
Saturday	X			X				X					X		
Days of Week Total:	7			7			0	2	4	0	0	0	0	4	0

Table 6 (Continued)

	Janice			Trevor			Mark			Janette			Belinda		
	nh	s	c	nh	s	c	nh	s	c	nh	s	c	nh	s	c
dinosaur	X			X					X			X			X
fossil	X			X							X				
Tyrannosaurus Rex	X			X			X				X				
Stegosaurus	X			X			X				X				X
Brontosaurus	X			X					X		X				
Dinosaur Total:	5			5			2	0	2	0	0	5	0	0	2
Winnie the Pooh	X			X					X		X		X		
Tigger	X			X					X		X				
Roo	X			X			X				X				X
Kanga	X			X					X		X				X
Eeyore	X			X					X		X				
Pooh Total:	5			5			0	1	4	0	0	5	0	1	2
START			X			X									
FINISH			X			X									
press the space bar			p*			X									
Instructions Total:	.5	2	0	3			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Key: nh = no help
 s = schema provided
 c = context provided
 p* = partially correct response
 i.e. "press the separate bar"

N.B. Marvin is omitted as this task occurred in February and he left the school in December.

and "FINISH" she paused and said, "I don't know those words". When I provided a schema for these items, i.e. "You find them on games in the classroom", Janice immediately provided accurate responses. The schema permitted her to recapture the context of occurrence, albeit removed concretely from the context of presentation, and to predict words on the basis of past experience and present graphic information. Janice, on her final response, did not hesitate but said, "Press the separate bar" for "press the space bar". This direction had created difficulties for Janice and Trevor when they worked on the computer in January. "Bar" was the word that had frustrated both children, but in the intervening period they had learned to recognize the word. This offers support for Brown's premise that "know(ing) what we don't know" helps us to ask the question, "What specifically do I not understand?" (1982a, p. 27), though clearly background knowledge is required in order to specify what is "not known". Janice and Trevor had employed their self-questioning strategies and their print knowledge to discriminate this key word. In Janice's response to the computer direction, she substituted "separate" for "space", though she retained most of the graphic cues from the original word and lost no meaning in the process, for Janice undoubtedly perceived that the "bar" was "separate" from the letters and numbers on the keyboard as she operated the machine.

Mark, in comparison to Trevor and Janice, recognized few of the classroom print labels without assistance. When schemas were provided he was able to generate more accurate responses. Four things were interesting about Mark's strategies. Firstly, he predicted names of classmates on the basis of shared initial consonants, e.g. "Janette" for "Jeremy" and "Janette" for "Jonathon". His mother (February interview) suggested that they had been playing informal "I spy" games with initial letters, which

may be related to Mark's adopted strategy. Also, on occasion, Mrs. Compton had emphasized initial letters in words, e.g. "W--W--Wednesday". Secondly, Mark appeared to realize that this strategy was rather unreliable. He self-corrected, "Gary -- no -- Gordon" and "Gordon -- no -- Gary", suggesting that he was also using cues across the word to monitor his word recognition. Confusing Gordon and Gary was not unusual in itself as most of the children muddled the twins' names, but self-correcting was, as it required observation and discrimination of other graphic information than initial letters. Thirdly, Mark, like Janice and Trevor, was keen to engage in the task, and though he identified few of the labels in the "no help" and "schema" presentations, his self-confidence was not daunted. Fourthly, Mark demonstrated that he was a resourceful initiator. When he could not identify some of the words he suggested that he knew how to find out about them. Mark spontaneously moved to the contexts in which the labels were embedded, before I had an opportunity to suggest this strategy. He did find the contexts helpful and identified a further fifteen words by utilizing contextual cues.

Janette identified nine of her classmates' names without assistance, though she was unable to recognize any of the other classroom environmental print items in the "no help" condition. Schema provision was only helpful for Janette with regard to further name identification. When invited to utilize the classroom context, Janette was able to identify another twelve labels, thus contextual cues assisted her word recognition. What Janette recognized and what she did not, is interesting. Clearly, her active interest in social engagements was reflected in the fact that she identified class members' names more readily than other words. Janette did not recognize the more abstract "concept words" such as the days of

the week and the print directions. She did, however, identify most of the "dinosaur" and "Pooh" words when presented in context. It is suggested that Janette connected meaningfully with the Pooh and dinosaur characters. Certainly she loved to play with the Pooh stuffed animals and puppets and engaged joyfully in the dinosaur action songs. The dinosaur words were current for Janette when the task was presented to her. When provided with a dinosaur schema, she attempted meaning associations, i.e. "Triceratops" for "dinosaur", "Stegosaurus" for "fossil", and "Brontosaurus" for "Tyrannosaurus Rex". Janette was attempting to make sense by predicting from her dinosaur repertoire, but she was not constrained by the graphic information. When she saw the words in context, with their accompanying illustrations, Janette verbalized accurate responses, demonstrating that she was able to associate words to pictures and match print labels. I am not at all sure how Janette recognized "fossil" as there was no picture on the noticeboard. However, this word had recently been introduced during Group Time and the children had seen fossils on a field trip to the museum. Hence, it may have had strong meaning associations for her. Janette could have utilized the word's constant position on the board, or graphic cues, for her response. In comparison with Janice and Mark, Janette did not demonstrate any self-correction strategies, though, as in the Environmental Print Task, discrimination of print features seemed necessary for error detection on this task. Of equal interest, was that Janette did not once qualify her responses by suggesting that she could not read. Presumably the schemas activated and presented on this activity were closer to her world of experience than the print in the community-based Environmental Print Task. When a word was unknown then Janette could concretely check the resources in her classroom context.

Belinda, like Janette, did not self-correct on this activity and did not suggest that the task was too difficult as she was unable to read. Belinda engaged enthusiastically, and though her responses were rarely accurate she certainly attempted to provide answers. In the "no help" condition, Belinda recognized her own name and Gordon's. According to Mrs. Williams (October interview), Belinda had been upset that she could not remember the twins' names and had focused some attention on learning them at home. In February, she could recognize Gordon's printed name but not Gary's. At times Belinda's responses to class members' names seemed random, and it is difficult to assess whether she was utilizing any specific strategies. She seemed to view the task as one where she could confidently respond and one that involved telling me all the names in the class, seemingly irrespective of graphic information. On two occasions (other than "Gordon" and her own name), Belinda did select names that had matching initial consonants, e.g. "Janice" for "Jeremy" and "Penny" for "Paul", but as there was little graphic similarity in the major proportion of her predictions, e.g. "Laura" for "Suzanne", "Mrs. Compton" for "Jane" and "Mrs. Webster" for "Jeremy", I hesitate to suggest that she was utilizing graphic cues as an on-task strategy. On the other word clusters, Belinda was not able to generate predictions until a schema was provided. Once she had activated a schematic framework, then she continued to make meaningful predictions. In this "schema condition", Belinda recognized four days of the week and "Winnie the Pooh". The days of the week had been utilized daily in Group Time, and "Winnie the Pooh" had been the focus of one elaborative print engagement with Mrs. Compton. In the contextualized condition, Belinda recognized four more theme words and her friend Janice's name, but she did not find the context of occurrence

as helpful as Janette and Mark had done. Although Belinda's print strategies, as reflected on this task, seemed non-specific, it is suggested that her responses indicated that she perceived the classroom environmental print to be meaningful and the task within her capability. She certainly generated schema-specific answers, e.g. "Extinct" for "fossil", "Friday" for "Monday" and "donkey" for "Eeyore", but had not yet moved from meaningful associations and approximations to hypothesis-checking via the utilization of graphic information.

Summary of Classroom Environmental Print Task and Synthesis of Literacy Knowledge and Strategies over Both Tasks:

The classroom environmental print task, designed to check the children's knowledge and strategies, emphasized literacy knowledge and strategies observed in the community-based Environmental Print Task, and provided an opportunity for the perception of additional information concerning some of the children. The High Print Aware Children

The classroom print task underlined strongly that Janice and Trevor were escalating into independent reading in that they were reconstructing meaning, with a high degree of graphic accuracy, from print information. Neither child required concrete contexts on this, or the Environmental Print Task, in order to comprehend major portions of print in their environment, for they could transcend the concrete and engage with decontextualized print. Both children monitored their performances and were quickly gaining control over written language. In addition, Janice and Trevor perceived themselves as capable readers-in-progress.

The two environmental print tasks supported the previous suggestion that though three children had been delineated as High Print aware, there were clear differences between Janice's and Trevor's knowledge and

strategies and Mark's. Mark's literacy awareness was less developed than the other two children's. He still relied on cues from situational contexts in order to reconstruct meaning, whereas Janice and Trevor largely relied on decontextualized print. However, Mark was beginning to utilize graphic information by cueing in to initial letters and, in some instances, to graphic cues across words. Certainly, Mark had sufficient print knowledge to "self-question" his predictions, to error-detect and, on some occasions, to self-correct hypotheses; strategies that were also utilized by Janice and Trevor. Like the other High Print aware children, Mark approached both tasks confidently and also perceived himself as a reader-in-progress, rather than as a non-reader. One comment of Mark's, delivered with some personal feeling during the classroom environmental print task, indicated that print cognitive connections were being built, but he had some difficulty integrating and accessing them as yet:

"I know what it is in my brain but I don't know what it is in my mouth!"

That feeling has surely been experienced by us all, as we "think we know", but have not yet integrated our conceptions in order to frame a verbal answer or argument. Thus, I suggest, Janice's and Trevor's literacy knowledge was sufficiently well organized in order to permit their "brains" and "mouths" to work in tandem, whilst Mark was still orchestrating that process!

The Low Print Aware Children

Marvin had already left the school before the informal classroom environmental print task was conceived, and hence Janette's and Belinda's responses provide the data for exploring literacy knowledge and strategies across both environmental print tasks. As with the High Print aware children, certain knowledge and strategies remained constant over the

Environmental Print Task and the classroom environmental print activity, and the latter task served to emphasize patterns observed from the former.

Janette and Belinda were generally more successful in providing accurate responses when a concrete context or knowledge schema was provided, than when only print was presented, on the classroom task. This pattern was directly similar to their performance on the Environmental Print Task, wherein the Low Print aware children accessed more cues from contextual photographs than from logos, and more information from logos than from print itself.

The two girls utilized graphic information quite minimally on both tasks. However, on the classroom print task, Janette identified nine classmates' names which suggested that she was using graphic cues for the identification of some words during this activity. There seemed to be a relational link between Janette's lively interest in her social context and her attention to the print that embodied her class members' names.

Janette and Belinda did not self-correct responses on either the Environmental Print Task or the classroom environmental print activity. As previously indicated, error detection and self-correction required the ability to discriminate key print features and neither girl had, at that stage, developed fine-tuning of orthographic information.

In addition to similarities over both tasks' performances, Janette and Belinda demonstrated a major difference in their approaches to the classroom environmental print task when compared to the community Environmental Print Task. Both girls perceived their roles as readers differently on each task. Janette and Belinda, on the Environmental Print Task, suggested that they were unable to tackle the "print only" condition as they could not read. Hence, they perceived that there were "readers" and "non-

readers" and they fitted into the latter category on that occasion. Their knowledge of themselves as "readers" or "non-readers" seemed to be both situation specific and changing over time. It could also be described as learned behaviour. In the September pre-testing, neither girl had suggested that she could not approach print until she could read. In October, both girls had been proud that they could read the "Small is --" patterned chart in the classroom. At that time Belinda had declared, "I can read it" (October 20th). Between September-October and the February post-testing, Janette and Belinda appeared to have learned that they were basically "non-readers" but that "reading" and "non-reading" were states that sometimes depended on the context and the content. The girls transmitted mixed messages about themselves as readers in that they expressed doubt that they could engage with print on the Environmental Print Task, but confidently "read" on the classroom environmental print activity. The girls' ambivalence about their roles as readers may partly be attributed to the tasks themselves and partly to the "mixed messages" they received in the classroom context.

In some ways the tasks presented opportunities for this ambivalence to be verbalized. The community-based print may have stretched the background knowledge resources of these children in that it was possibly more remote than the classroom context which they experienced daily. Therefore they may have perceived that they were more capable on classroom labels than community print. In addition, the print was presented in a different manner on both tasks. On the Environmental Print Task, the context was presented first, and then the logos and the print, whereas on the classroom activity the print was shown first, and then a schema was provided, and then the concrete context. Hence, on the classroom print task there were

two dimensions that may have encouraged the children to perceive that they were capable. Firstly, a concrete rather than a photographic context was available, and secondly "more and more" clues were provided (print, then schema, then context) rather than "less and less" on the Environmental Print Task (context, then logo, then print).

Interwoven with the task-specific variables, that may have induced the children to perceive the activity and their roles differently, were other aspects from their world of experience. I suggest that these children had developed ambivalence about their self-perceptions of "readers" from the classroom learning context. They had learned implicitly that many print tasks were too difficult for them and they had been told explicitly to avoid print directions, e.g.

Mrs. Compton: "Can you read it?"
 Children: "No."
 Mrs. Compton: "What do you do?"
 Trevor: "Press the yellow key."
 (Working on the computer: November 21st)

and hence Belinda's confident, "I can read it", had become a shaky self-perception over time, e.g.

Mrs. Compton: "This time I want you to help with the story. Do you think you can?"
 Belinda: "No."
 Mrs. Compton: "You don't think you can do it?"
 Belinda: "I don't think so."
 (First predictable book: February 28th)

On the classroom environmental print task, Belinda and Janette, presumably perceiving that classroom schemas and contexts were concrete and immediate when compared to community print, tacitly reasserted their perceptions that "they could read". This suggests that content, the method of presentation, the interactive dynamics of the classroom and the children's perceptions of themselves as readers, are intimately interrelated. For the children who had well developed literacy knowledge, and who entered

the school with secure perceptions of themselves as readers-in-progress, such factors seem less influential in their learning, e.g. Trevor, though responding in the November computer interaction, previously cited, by stating that he knew how to bypass print, took little notice of this directive and focused his attention on controlling the print on the computer. For children with less well developed literacy knowledge and strategies, and who depended on adult support, classroom "messages" about literacy, and "readers" and "non-readers", were more influential and were incorporated into personal self-perceptions.

Knowledge About Storybooks

The children's knowledge about storybooks was explored through a structured Storybook Task (see Chapter Three), an informal shared storybook interaction with me, and through classroom observations.

The Structured Storybook Task

This task was administered in September and February to the whole class, excluding Marvin, who was post-tested in December. The task is described, together with administration and scoring procedures, in Chapter Three. In Table 7 the children's percentaged results are presented. The High and Low Print aware children's scores are marked with asterisks. The scores indicate that all the High-Low Print aware children made gains in storybook knowledge over the course of the study. The Low Print aware children made greater gains than the High Print aware children though that information, taken at face value, is somewhat misleading. The High Print aware children had little demonstrable "growing space" in that all scored above 80 percent at pre-testing. In comparison, the Low Print aware children had plenty of "space in which to grow" in that Belinda scored

Table 7Percentaged Results on the Structured Storybook Task (Pre-Post)

	<u>Pre-test</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
*Mark	90	92
Suzanne	88	96
Jeremy	87	92
*Trevor	85	92
*Janice	81	100
Jonathon	75	79
Ken	73	85
Gordon	73	85
Vanessa	69	62
Laura	69	90
Adam	67	65
Penny	65	73
Paul	63	83
Gary	62	69
Manuel	52	81
Shawn	52	75
*Belinda	50	73
Jane	50	69
*Janette	38	65
*Marvin	(Sept.) 37	(Dec.) 71
Robbie	25	31

50 percent, Janette 38 percent and Marvin 37 percent, at pre-testing. On post-testing, the High Print aware children all scored 92%+, with Janice scoring 100 percent. The Low Print aware children had clearly grown in their knowledge about storybooks for all three scored in the 65-73 percent range on post-testing, with Marvin's gains being particularly noteworthy (37% to 71%) as his final administration occurred a full two months before the other children's testing. Though considerable gains were made by the

Low Print aware children, Janette's and Marvin's (December) scores still placed them in the lower third of the class, a position they had occupied in September. Belinda, in February, moved into the lowest section of the middle third of the class. Janice, Trevor and Mark were in the upper third of the class in September and in the same portion of the class in February.

Examination of item responses provides more insight into the literacy knowledge of the children in the kindergarten. Table 8 provides an overview of the entire class's scores on each item of the Storybook Task, and is presented as background information prior to a more detailed exploration of the High and Low Print-aware children's storybook knowledge growth.

Table 8

Pre-post Results on Each Item of the Storybook Task (Whole Class)

	Percentage of children producing accurate responses (see Appendix C for scoring procedures)	
	<u>Pre-test</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
<u>General Concepts About Books</u>		
1) The label "book"	95	100
2) Concept: "Read it"	81	90
3) Inside a book (print)	29	75
4) Concept: "title"	29	95
<u>Book Handling and Print Awareness</u>		
5) Front of a book	100	100
6) First page of a book	95	100
7) Where to start reading	86	85
8) Turning a page	90	100
9) Left page/right page	62	80
10) Left-right print directionality	76	90
11) Line movement	57	70
12) Upside-down print	43	65
13) Word spacing	0	15
14) Word matching	0	25
<u>Print Terminology</u>		
15) Top of a page	52	80
16) Bottom of a page	57	85

(Table 8 continued)

	Percentage of children producing accurate responses	
	<u>Pre-test</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
17) One letter	76	80
18) One word	48	60
19) Two letters	81	85
20) Two words	43	60
21) First letter: word	62	90
22) Last letter: word	48	65
23) Capital letter	38	10

Thus, all the children entered the school knowing how to identify the front of a book. Most children had well developed understanding of the first page of a book, the label "book" or "storybook" and turning pages in a book. By the sixth month of kindergarten this knowledge had been refined and consolidated, so that all the children possessed these concepts.

The most dramatic increase in knowledge occurred in two areas, namely concepts about what may be inside a book and how the title or picture on the cover could provide clues concerning story content. In September, 29 percent of the children noted that some aspect of print, e.g. letters, words or stories, could be anticipated in books, and a further 31 percent only referred to pictures. In February, 75 percent of the children mentioned print in books and a further 11 percent talked about pictorial content only. Similarly, in pre-testing 29 percent of the class indicated that the content of the book may be predicted by the title or the picture on the cover, whereas in post-testing 95 percent of the children noted that the title or picture may be useful indicators of story events. I suggest that these changes may be related to multi-contextual learning. During the library orientation in early October (see Chapter Five), the librarian emphasized to the parents that they should always read the story title and point to it, and that attention should be drawn to visual cues on the cover.

and book lining. She encouraged parents to utilize these cues to stimulate the children's predictions about possible story events. Also, the librarian read a "model story" to the parents, pointing out picture and print details that could be discussed with the children. During the study, the children experienced story reading in the library and the classroom, and presumably in the homes as parents and children engaged in the kindergarten book programme. In the library, and more often than not in the classroom, the title, front picture, and print and pictorial details from the body of the story, were indicated to the children. If I may assume that many of the parents learned these strategies during the library orientation (and during previous orientations, as half the class had older siblings who had attended this kindergarten) and transferred them to the home context, then the children would experience them in three micro-contexts, i.e. library, classroom and home. Clearly, cross-contextual learning may be viewed as effective.

In February, 90 percent of the children had established the left-right directionality of print (September: 76%) though there was no noticeable difference in the percentage of children who knew where to start reading (September: 86%, February: 85%). It seems that several children had learned to sweep along the lines in a left to right direction, but did not consistently start at the first word on a line, nor necessarily commence on the left page before the right page (September: 62%, February: 80%). The data also indicates that movement to a new line, noting print aberrations (upside-down or poorly spaced print), and word matching by pointing to words as I read, are literacy behaviours that may be projected to develop further over time for many of these children. Though Clay (1979b), in her "Age Expectations for Items" (p. 19) suggests that word matching develops

commensurately with knowing about the front of a book and left-to-right directionality, the data from this-kindergarten classroom suggests that "pointing and matching" words is a behaviour that is developed later.

The children had certainly grown in their knowledge about print terminology, which may be anticipated to be required for "the language of instruction" in the Grade One reading programme. The differences between letters and words was the major aspect of knowledge that was still unclear for some children, with letters being identified more readily than words, a pattern that seems common across many children (Clay, 1979b, p. 19). First letters of words were identified more easily than last letters, which may be related to home-based practices involving "I Spy-type" games or drug-store workbooks that stress initial letters. It may also be linked to school-based practices, where I observed initial letters pointed out by the teacher and emphasized in Group Time activities. An interesting facet of the print terminology responses, is that less children knew the concept-label "capital letter" in February than in September. Certainly this term was not used in the classroom, though Mrs. Compton mentioned that she planned to teach the children "adult and baby letters" (March 1st interview) during the last third of the year. Other than the term "capital letter", the literacy terms covered in the Storybook Task were commonly used in the classroom. Over the course of the study I have observational data for 56 activities where letters and words were identified, where letters were counted in words or initial letters were emphasized, and where words were segmented and clapped. The terms "letter" and "word" were utilized frequently, as were "sentences" and "stories". Thus, increase in the children's understanding of print terminology may well be related to the classroom emphasis on such concepts and labels.

Against this backdrop of the whole class's literacy knowledge, demonstrated on the Storybook Task, the High and Low Print aware children's knowledge assumes focus and Table 9 presents the six children's particular responses to the Storybook Task items. The pre- and post-test responses indicate that all the children gained new concepts, and refined others over time. Janice, Trevor and Mark started the kindergarten year with a great deal of knowledge about books, print and print terminology. Mark only had "space to grow" on three of the listed items, i.e. knowledge about "capital letters", pointing-matching behaviour, and in noting poor word spacing. Over the course of the study he refined his pointing-matching strategy, identifying word boundaries and tracking print as it was read to him, and hence his inability to note artificially prepared "squashed up words" (Suzanne, February) really seemed immaterial. As Goodman (Y., 1981a) suggests, "even good readers may miss those because they don't expect such aberrations" (p. 448). Trevor and Janice demonstrated growth over time on the items checked on the task, so that by February Janice scored 100 percent and Trevor only omitted the term "capital letter" and the observation of "squashed up words". Like Mark, as Trevor could recognize word boundaries by pointing and matching in a story reading interaction with normally spaced print, I considered this lack of noticing aberrations irrelevant (and, incidentally, would eliminate the item from any further task administrations!). Interestingly, at post-testing, Trevor and Mark displayed identical item profiles, and yet Trevor was able to utilize decontextualized print to read somewhat independently and Mark's print strategies were not so well developed. Hence, I must infer that book concepts and handling, print tracking and possibly print terminology are intimately connected with independent reading behaviour, but are not sufficient in themselves for

Table 9

Storybook Task: High and Low Print Aware Children's
Responses (Pre- and Post)

	Janice		Trevor		Mark		Belinda		Janette		Marvin	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
<u>General Concepts</u>												
<u>About Books</u>												
1) The label "book"	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	0
2) Concept: "Read it"	X	0	P	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0
3) Inside a book (print)	P	0	X	0	X	0	P	0	P	P	-	0
4) Concept: "title"	X	0	X	0	X	0	P	0	P	0	P	-
<u>Book Handling and Print Awareness</u>												
5) Front of a book	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0
6) First page	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0
7) Where to start reading	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	P	X	-	X	0
8) Turning a page	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	0
9) Left page/right page	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	0	X	0
10) Left-right print direction	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	P	X	0	-	0
11) Line movement	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	P	-	-	-	P
12) Upside-down print	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	0	-	0	-	-
13) Word spacing	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14) Word matching	-	0	-	0	P	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Print Terminology</u>												
15) Top of a page	-	0	-	0	X	0	X	0	-	0	-	0
16) Bottom of a page	-	0	-	0	X	0	X	0	-	0	-	0
17) One letter	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	-	X	0
18) One word	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
19) Two letters	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	0	X	0
20) Two words	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	-	-	0	-	-
21) First letter: word	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
22) Last letter: word	X	0	X	0	X	0	-	0	-	-	-	0
23) Capital letter	-	0	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

*Key on p. 501.

Table 9: Key: X = Pre-test
 O = Post-test
 P = Partial response, e.g. Concept 2) "Look at the pictures" (print not mentioned)

understanding the transition from contextualized reconstruction of meaning to decontextualized reading. In comparison, the Low Print aware children were not at that transitional stage related to Mark, but demonstrated growth over time in their knowledge concerning general concepts about books, print strategies and print terminology. The intervening period between pre- and post-testing, for these children, was a time to refine general concepts and a time to develop more specific print awareness strategies and more concepts and labels about "the language of reading instruction". A qualitative description of the children's responses suggests the types of knowledge growth demonstrated by the High Print-Low Print aware children.

Global to Specific Knowledge: The whole class, and specifically the High-Low Print aware data, indicates that these children acquired global concepts about books, i.e. the label "book" and "books are for reading", and labeling concepts, i.e. "front of a book", "first page" and "turning page" by the conclusion of the study. In fact, most of the High-Low Print aware children had acquired these concepts by school entrance. Only Marvin did not demonstrate the forward movement of turning pages in September. He suggested each time a page was to be turned that it would be necessary to go backwards to the beginning of the book. Although Marvin did not label "book" on this Storybook Task, in September, classroom observations revealed that he utilized this term in the library, at this stage, and hence had developed the concept and label irrespective of his task performance on this item.

Although these global concepts about books had developed prior to

Kindergarten entrance and been refined by February, there was a great deal of difference amongst the children concerning their knowledge about specific graphic information and strategies.

I. "Tracking Print"

All the High Print aware children knew where to start reading, the left-right directionality of print, and how to move on to a new line of print, in September. Also all these children developed specific pointing and matching behaviour by February. I can only assume that these strategies were learned at home as three were already developed by September and the pointing-matching strategy, over lines of print, was rarely demonstrated at school; one instance was noted in October ("Small is" patterned chart) and three instances in mid-February (dinosaur language experience charts).

At pre-testing, Marvin and Janette knew where to commence reading, though Belinda hovered between selecting to "read" the picture and the last word on the line. At post-testing, Marvin retained his previous strategy whereas Janette had changed to pointing to the third or fourth word on each line, and Belinda hesitated between the picture and the first word on the line. Thus, Marvin's concept of where to begin reading stories was consistently accurate over time, Belinda's was inconsistent but refining, and Janette had exchanged a sound strategy for an inaccurate one, indicating that the first tracking pattern she displayed was not an entrenched behaviour. Janette consistently displayed knowledge about the left-right directionality of print at pre- and post-testing, whereas Marvin developed this strategy between September and December. Belinda steadily tracked print from right to left in September, but by February was zig-zagging up and down pages with her finger, alternately tracking right to left and left to right. Line-movement was not accurately developed, for

these children, by post-testing. Marvin and Belinda alternated pages so that they proceeded down the lines on one page and up the lines on the next, in an economical but inaccurate way. Janette consistently tracked from the bottom to the top of each page. None of the Low Print aware children demonstrated pointing-matching behaviour by post-testing.

Thus, the High Print aware children displayed knowledge concerning both global book concepts and specific print tracking strategies so that by February these behaviours were consistently demonstrated. The Low Print aware children refined some of their global concepts between pre- and post-testing and the data suggests that they were beginning to develop more specific print tracking techniques.

II. "Pictures or Print"

In the Environmental Print Task, there was evidence to suggest that the High Print children's awareness of graphic information was more developed than the Low Print aware children's, in that Janice, Trevor and Mark processed print information, whereas Janette, Belinda and Marvin relied largely on logos or pictorially contextualized cues. This pattern was also repeated on the classroom environmental print activity. On the Storybook Task, clearly all the children attended to print as they attempted to track it, though Belinda had some doubts about the story message being in pictures or print, and the High Print aware children demonstrated more print-specific tracking strategies, e.g. pointing and matching, than the Low Print aware children. During the task there were other observational incidents that suggested that Janice, Trevor and Mark were cueing in to specific print, in addition to picture clues, more readily than Janette, Belinda and Marvin.

1. When asked, "How do you know what the book may be about?", all of

the children referred to the front cover picture in September. Four of the children commented on the general topic, e.g. "It's about swimming 'cos it shows swimming" (Trevor), though Janette and Marvin personally contextualized the pictorial content, i.e. "I was in a pool" (Janette), "I was at the hot springs" (Marvin). At post-testing the Low Print aware children again focused on the picture, though responses were less personal, e.g. "I see a picture of swimming" (Janette). At that stage, Mark also described the picture on the front cover, though Trevor pointed to "Swim" in the title and said, "Swimming", and Janice read the entire title, "Going For a Swim".

2. When the children were asked what they may expect to find in a book, their responses were illuminating:

- Janice: (Sept.) "Pictures -- lots of them."
(Feb.) "Pictures -- words, paper and pages."
- Trevor: (Sept.) "Swimming pictures -- people's names and words."
(Feb.) "Pictures -- funny ones and words."
- Mark: (Sept.) "Pictures and letters."
(Feb.) "Writing and pictures -- and spelling words."
- Belinda: (Sept.) "Pictures -- lots."
(Feb.) "Pictures -- letters -- pages."
- Janette: (Sept.) "People and a swimming pool."
(Feb.) "Pictures are inside to look at -- that's all."
- Marvin: (Sept.) "I don't know -- I didn't go there."
(Dec.) "Pictures, people, letters -- chairs."
(My underlining)

Clearly, all the children expected pictures though, at post-testing, all the High Print aware children anticipated specific print information too, in the form of "writing", "words" and "spelling words". The Low Print aware children had rather different expectations. Janette still stated that she only anticipated pictures, but Marvin and Belinda expected "letters" as well. Thus, Marvin and Belinda knew that there would be specific print information, but the print they selected to mention was

non-linguistically meaningful, i.e. letters. This conceptual link between reading and isolated letters had previously been mentioned by Maryin on the Environmental Print Task. On this Storybook Task and during a library centre visit in January, Belinda demonstrated that this concept of reading was consistently applied by her:

The children discuss "reading".

Suzanne: (To Jane) "You read."

Jane: "I don't know how to read."

Suzanne: "I do."

Belinda: "I do. I know how to read every letter in the book" (opens her book and stares at the page). "No, I don't" (giggles). (January 18th)

Interestingly, Mark had mentioned a reading-isolated letter relationship at pre-testing, though his responses "writing" and "words" were more meaningfully related reading concepts (February). Mark's post-testing response, "spelling words" may be directly linked to classroom practices in that words were frequently spelled out, letter-by-letter in the kindergarten. It is entirely possible that Marvin and Belinda also selected to focus on letters in books, as letters received emphasis in classroom activities. Thus, though two of the Low Print aware children noted specific print details, their letter-focusing strategy was unlikely to be a meaningful specific detail with regards to reconstructing messages from print.

3. During the Storybook Task, the children were asked if they would like to read the story to me, and this question provided additional insight into the children's cueing strategies. During pre- and post-testing, Marvin and Janette stated that they could not read, but on both occasions Belinda pointed to the picture and started to tell me a story, e.g. "She's eating cereal" (Picture 1), "She's sitting on the stairs" (Picture 2), "She's riding a bike" (Picture 3). Hence, Belinda told me about the pictures and

"talked like a captioned book". Her voice was rhythmic as she "talked like written language", but rather than embroidering a holistic story, Belinda stated "the facts", as she saw them, utilizing picture clues. I asked Belinda how she knew what the story was about and she responded, "You can tell from the pictures". Thus, Belinda viewed her "reading" as meaningful and felt capable in approaching the task, just as she had done with the classroom environmental print activity. Belinda perceived that she could not read on the "print only" condition of the Environmental Print Task, but when picture clues (Storybook Task), or the concrete context of occurrence (classroom environmental print activity), were available she viewed herself largely as a reader-in-progress. However, doubts were present, as when reading picture books in the library, Belinda listened to her new "message" about reading, that she had learned in the classroom, i.e. "reading means identifying letters". Janette and Marvin did not attempt to reconstruct the story from pictures. It is possible that they perceived that stories were for others to read to them.

In September, Mark also stated, "I don't know how to read", but in February he demonstrated that he was focusing on the graphic information and the pictorial clues. Mark pointed to each word on the one line of print on the first page, and verbalized:

Mark: "Sally is eating her breakfast."
 Text: "Sally is eating her breakfast."

On the next page Mark viewed the three lines of print and hesitated:

Mark: "Sally is going outside -- and does that say
 'and'?" (points to a word on the next line)
 Text: "She goes out to play. Mom says, 'Let's go
 for a swim. Go and tell Kathy.'"

Mark did not feel that he could read any more of the story and hence I read it to him. Mark used pictorial cues and specific graphic cues on the first

page. On the second page he preserved the character ("Sally" for "She") and story meaning, possibly also cueing in to graphic features. Certainly his pointing to "and" emphasized that he was utilizing print information, but the print did not offer him sufficient clues to continue with the story meaning. Trevor produced similar strategies to Mark, in that in September he noted that he could not read the story. In February, he was more hesitant, i.e. "I don't think I can read it", and pointed to the word "is", verbalizing, "That's 'this'." Thus Trevor attended to "is", though did not risk a further attempt to read the rest of the story. In September, Janice pointed to the picture and said, "That's Krispies" (the book said "Rice Krispies"), but then suggested that she was unable to read further. In February, Janice read me the story.

Janice

Text

Sally is eating her cereal.

Mom said, "Let's go for a swim.

Go and tell -- (looks at me.

Me: Kathy) -- Kathy."

Kathy is Sally's sister. She is

er -- I don't know -- er --

riding her bike -- Sally er --

tell me (Me: runs) over to Kathy

and tells her, "Mom said we can

go for a swim." "Let's go" --

(looks up at me. Me: shouts)

shouts Kathy.

Sally is eating her breakfast.

She goes out to play.

Mom says, "Let's go for a swim.

Go and tell Kathy."

Kathy is Sally's sister. She

is riding her bike. Sally

runs over to Kathy and tells

her, "Mom says we can go for

a swim."

"Let's go," shouts Kathy.

Janice hesitated on the next page and I suggested that I read a page and then she read a page. She agreed with alacrity. We continued co-operatively.

Janice invariably attempted to self-correct, though when her self-corrections did not make sense she utilized me as a resource, e.g.

Janice: "She tells Sally, 'Walk do not -- er -- do not -- walk -- do not walk - do not run in the pool -- do not run the pool -- What is that?" (points to 'safety rules')

Me: "The pool has safety rules."

Janice: "The pool has safety rules."

Text: She tells Sally, "It says 'WALK! DO NOT RUN'. The pool has safety rules."

Frequently Janice substituted meaningful words to preserve the sense of the story, e.g.

Janice: "Sally swims in the warm water with her water ---- floaters."

Text: Sally swims in the warm water wearing her water wings.

On other occasions, she monitored the graphic information and "self-interrogated" to ask herself, "Did that make sense?" e.g.

Janice: "Mom makes Kathy and Sally some hot chocolate. 'I love hot chocolate too Sally' -- no -- said Sally."

Text: Mom makes Kathy and Sally some hot chocolate. "I love hot chocolate too," says Sally.

Hence, the children's responses to reading the story to me offered a wide range of outcomes. The Low Print aware children responded in very similar ways at pre- and post-testing in that Marvin and Janette stated that they could not read, and Belinda retold the story from the pictures, on both occasions. The High Print aware children similarly felt that they could not read the book in September, but by February their strategies were different. All attempted to utilize graphic cues at that stage, though Trevor was more hesitant about his ability to reconstruct meaning. Mark and Janice utilized graphic and pictorial cues, and clearly Janice displayed ability to read large portions of the text independently, though still needed an adult resource in addition to utilizing her own range of strategies. Janice's personal range of specific strategies, prior to the onset of formal instruction, was impressive. She was motivated by an underlying desire to control written language by making sense of it. In order to do this, she incorporated pictorial cues, interrelated background knowledge, and graphic cues. She knew how to access and integrate these

resources, and when graphic information and pictures offered little help she knew how to ask the right questions of myself.

Understanding Story Meaning: After the story reading had been completed, and prior to the print terminology items, I asked the children to tell me about the story. Their recalls of events, at both pre- and post-testing, indicated that all the children had understood the story. None of the children supplied erroneous or extraneous information, though the characters' names and some story details were not included in all recalls. However, there was no demonstrable difference between the High and Low Print aware children's recalls of the story, e.g.

Mark: "Sally was eating her breakfast -- oh -- Sally went out to play -- let me see -- Mother said, 'Let's go for a swim -- go out and tell Kathy to go for a swim.' Sally and Kathy took off their clothes -- Kathy blowed up her water wings. Sally and Kathy pushed the door and went to the pool. Sally and Kathy got out of the pool. When they got home their mother made them hot chocolate -- there."
(February)

Marvin: "Sally, Kathy and their Mom go swimming. Sally runs to the diving board. She tells her Mom she's going to jump -- and she says no -- she's asking if she can jump off the side. Then she jumps off -- her mother catches her. They go home -- Their mother makes hot chocolate."
(December)

I suggest that the "children swimming" theme of the story matched all the children's background knowledge. These children had been to the new community pool and "swimming" provided a shared schematic framework for them. Hence they were able to engage in the story, cognitively and emotionally, and share meaning with the author (myself). From the classroom observation of High and Low Print aware children's differences in world knowledge, I suggest that had the story embodied a more abstract theme, i.e. one more removed from the children's experiences, then there may have been greater differences in the children's understanding of story

events. For example, when these children listened to classroom stories such as "The Egg in a Nest", a chained story with increasingly remote contexts that moved from "the nest" to "United States" to "galaxies", the High Print aware children were able to predict events and answer questions on story meaning more effectively than the Low Print aware children. However, when story schemas matched the children's own knowledge bases, as in "Going For a Swim", then all the children were equally capable in engaging effectively with story meaning.

The Language of Instruction: Terms such as "top of the page", "letter", or "first letter in a word", are utilized in classroom contexts wherein reading is taught. Observations revealed that, though there was no systematic or formal reading instruction in the kindergarten, these terms were also interwoven through classroom activities. Thus, the terminology items checked on the Storybook Task may be related to engagement in the language of reading instruction. Two aspects of these items are relevant to mention. Firstly, the items "top of the page", "bottom of the page", and "capital letter" are concepts and labels that I believe, from experiences with the children, are strictly limited to the child's understanding of classroom directions, e.g. "Find the word at the top of the page". Knowing these three terms, and possibly "first" and "last letters", helps the child in a teaching-learning interaction. This knowledge has little to do with print awareness itself, in that children who initially could not indicate "tops" or "bottoms" of pages, e.g. Janice and Trevor, certainly knew where to start reading at the top of the page and could track lines of print down to the bottom of the page. Thus, they had the concepts but not the labels. An exactly similar situation was revealed with the identification of a "capital letter", in that few children knew

the term and yet all were conscious of attempting to write a capital letter for the first letter of their names and lower case letters for the rest. Hence, again, the concept was established even if the label was unknown. The second aspect of the task is that the final testing occurred in February (Marvin, December). As the children's knowledge of print terminology grew so rapidly it is anticipated that this knowledge will continue to be acquired prior to Grade One entrance. Thus, I cannot assume that lack of print terminology knowledge may present a problem for any of the children as they approach Grade One reading instruction. Indeed, growth in this area for Marvin (September to December), would indicate the converse in that I may reasonably expect that the "language of instruction" may present few problems for him at that stage.

The High Print aware children had well developed concepts about "words", "letters" and "first and last letters in words", by school entrance. The concepts about "letters" and "words" seem to be intrinsically related to literacy awareness itself, rather than to only the language of instruction, and these children could readily distinguish word and letter boundaries early in the school year. Mark knew the terms "top" and "bottom" of the page in September, and Janice and Trevor acquired these concepts by February (as noted, their print tracking behaviour indicated that they already possessed the concept). Janice knew "capital letter" by February, and as Trevor and Mark could distinguish lower and upper case letters, I may anticipate that they will learn the label rapidly once it is utilized regularly in communication. (N.B. Trevor used the label in September, but not in February.)

There was considerably more disparity in the Low Print aware children's understanding of print concepts and labels in September.

Janette did not identify any of the items. Marvin only possessed knowledge about isolated letter items and Belinda knew the same letter items and the terms "top" and "bottom" of the page. Clearly these children's understanding of print terms developed rapidly, for they responded accurately to many more items at post-testing. The major print awareness concepts that the children still had to develop at that stage, focused on the differences between "letters" and "words". Marvin and Belinda always showed isolated letters when words were requested. Janette showed a word when I asked for a letter and a letter when a word was requested, but she could accurately display two letters and two words. Marvin and Belinda could indicate the first and last letters of words, whereas Janette consistently showed the second letter when asked for the last letter. In terms of the language of instruction all the children knew the "top" and "bottom" of the page by February, and Marvin, like Janice, knew the label "capital letter".

Thus, though the children's learning experiences were not closely observed after March 1st, I would suggest that the data indicates that the language of instruction will provide few difficulties for any of them by Grade One entrance. However, I would be more hesitant when I consider their concepts about print and reading. Janice, Trevor and Mark clearly have developed sound print concepts and the perception that reading involves meaning-making via the utilization of graphic information and personal background knowledge. Janette, Belinda and Marvin appear to perceive reading, on some occasions, as a skill in which they cannot, as yet, engage. Belinda and Marvin, especially, focus on the "letter" as the key unit of meaning that may unlock the mystery. For example, on the print terminology items, words were not identified by these children, but described as letters. Downing (1979) describes such misconceptions as "cognitive

confusions" but I suspect, from observing these children's classroom learning contexts, and talking with parents, that rather than "within-child" confusions, Belinda and Marvin have learned rather well the literacy messages that have been transmitted to them. Mrs. Williams worked with Belinda, almost to the exclusion of any other print activity, on preschool workbooks that focused on individual letters. Marvin's father described the alphabet cards that he utilized with his son, whenever he had the time. Classroom activities reinforced the concept that letters were "meaningful", as the context abounded with letter-building and matching activities.

Belinda and Marvin "heard" the message, and unless the message changes we may infer that their well-taught "confusion" may continue. In comparison, Janice's, Mark's and Trevor's home contexts dwelled on a more holistic concept of reading, with story reading, responses to the children's literacy questions and no formal teaching with alphabet cards or workbooks. By school entrance these children already knew that graphic information was meaningful and that words could be distinguished from letters, as words "said" something to a reader and isolated letters did not. Thus, the classroom context's focus on isolated print had less impact on their perceptions of reading, for these were firmly established before kindergarten entrance.

Informal Shared Storybook

Towards the end of February I decided to share a storybook with the five children. Though the structured Storybook Task had provided valuable information concerning the children's acquisition of literacy knowledge I thought I might gain further insight into their strategies by engaging in a predictable book interaction with each child. I selected "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See?" (Bill Martin, Jr., 1983, 2nd edition), a book that I had not observed being read to the children and which had never

occupied a place in the classroom library. In the final family interviews, the book was shown to each parent. None of the parents recognized it and stated that they had not read this particular book to their children.

"Brown Bear" seemed a good vehicle for stimulating child interaction. Its language was rhythmic, its format was predictable and its animal characters were within the background knowledge realm of all of the children, e.g.

"Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?
I see a redbird looking at me.
Redbird, redbird, what do you see?
I see a yellow duck looking at me.

The first two lines, in the above example, are presented with an accompanying picture of the brown bear, and hence the redbird itself could not be predicted from a pictorial context. The same format continues throughout the book, until the final page when the animals are reviewed with pictures. This storybook interaction provided an opportunity to invite each child to engage with the book and to join in the story reading when they felt comfortable.

Emotional Engagement: As the informal storybook interaction was "scaffolded" (Ninio and Bruner, 1978) in the sense that I read the story, encouraged "joining in", and withdrew support when the children felt comfortable to engage independently, its interactive pattern was intrinsically similar to the "supportive adult" structure described as occurring in "literate homes" (Doake, 1981; Snow, 1983; Wells, 1981). Uncritical acceptance of the children's attempts to reconstruct meaning was also part of the interactions (Doake, 1981) in that, for example "orange fish" was accepted for "goldfish" (Janice) and "Mum" for "Mother" (Trevor). During this "Brown Bear" interaction, there were differences amongst the children's storybook strategies, but the most overwhelming pattern that emerged was one of affective similarity. It was a joyful

experience for all five children. They laughed at the "purple cat" and the "blue horse", compared the animals, stated animal preferences, commented on vibrant illustrations and joined in with the story reading when they were confident. On the second reading of the story, all the children participated with the rhythmic language of the text. Janette and Benjamin, who displayed initial hesitance about participating, eventually spoke in strong, confident voices as they verbalized the story. This final storybook interaction reinforced my growing conviction that literacy materials and the quality of adult support are key variables in the literacy learning of young children. With scaffolded support and materials that engaged the children's background knowledge, all these children were able to demonstrate emotional engagement and competence with print materials. They "felt" like readers-in-progress and indeed displayed behaviours to suggest that they were able to interact with stories.

Using resources: Though there was a close similarity amongst the five children's engagement in a storybook, when the event was supported and when the text was rhythmic and predictable, there were differences in their utilization of available resources.

1. The front cover and title of the book: When shown the front cover of the book, in the introductory part of the storybook interaction, and asked, "What's our story about, do you think?", they responded in the following ways:

- Janice: "Brown -- Bear -- Brown -- Bear" (points to each word in the title, and then pauses).
 Me: "What do you see?" (Janice echoes my words.)
 Janice: (Smiling) "I like this one -- this is a song."
 Trevor: "Brown -- Bear -- Brown -- Bear" (pause).
 Me: "What do you see?" (Trevor echoes my words.)
 Mark: (Points to the title) "No." (Quietly voiced; pauses and looks at me)

- Me: "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?"
(Mark joins in and verbalizes a split second after me.)
- Janette: "I don't know. I don't know how to read."
(Pause)
- Me: "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?"
(Pause) "Would you like to join in and I'll say it again? Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?"
- Janette: (Verbalizes each word a split second after me)
- Belinda: "A bear!"
- Me: "Why do you think it's about a bear?"
- Belinda: "'Cos there's a bear in front" (turns the book over) "and in back!"
- Me: "And you know what this might say?"
(Point to the title)
- Belinda: "This-is-a-book."
- Me: "And you know this special book says, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?"
- Belinda: "Oh."
- Me: "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?"
(Pause) "You can join in any time you like."
(Turn to the title page) "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?"
- Belinda: (Mumbles quietly: only "see" is intelligible)

Janice and Trevor responded in exactly similar ways in that they immediately started to use the graphic cues (maybe in conjunction with the picture of the bear), and began to read the title. They also, similarly, anticipated that I would be a resource, for they paused when "stuck" and as soon as I offered support they echoed my words spontaneously. Interestingly, Janice also demonstrated that she was searching her background knowledge reserves, for she declared, "This is a song", and expressed pleasure. Her mother noted that Janice loved songs and poems and, presumably, the rhythmic quality of the story caused her to access a personal "song schema". Thus, graphic information, an adult mediator, possibly pictorial cues, and certainly for Janice, knowledge of similar linguistic structures, were resources for capturing initial story meaning for these children.

When responding to my rather general introductory question, Mark and

Janette declared that they did not know what the story could be about. Janette stated that she could not read, indicating that she felt reading ability was necessary in order to discover what the story was about. Mark was more specific in that he pointed to the title and indicated that he was unable to read it. Both children appeared to think that print exactitude was required and neither verbalized about the large brown bear on the front cover. Belinda initially used the pictorial cue to provide information about story meaning, though when I asked about the title, she reverted to her labelling routine that had been observed during the structured Storybook Task. Belinda, in a "written-language" voice "talked like-a-captioned-book" by stating, "This-is-a-book". Belinda seemed to perceive that the question, "What's our story about?" demanded a general answer stimulated by the front cover picture, whereas the question about the title required a "reading-like" voice and a label response.

Thus, all five children perceived that graphic information was a necessary part of story understanding. The differences amongst the children were that Janice and Trevor could utilize graphic resources to attempt to read the title, whereas Mark and Janette appeared to be at a stage wherein they desired to use print but felt they were unable to do so, and Belinda drew from her background knowledge of reading-like behaviour, but did not link the title's content with the picture she described.

From the "front cover" dialogue it was apparent that Janice, Trevor and Mark viewed adults as story book resources. The three High Print aware children spontaneously joined in as I read part or the whole of the title. These children did not need to be reminded that "joining in was okay"; it seemed an intrinsic part of their storybook expectations. Janette and Belinda did not "join in" of their own spontaneous volition, but at first

seemed hesitant about their participation. Adults as resources and personal participation did not appear to be built-in to their tacit expectations of storybook interactions.

2. The main body of the story: Similar patterns of resource utilization were noted during the main story reading. Janice and Trevor used graphic cues, linguistic-semantic cues from the rhythmic pattern of the story, and then me as a further resource. They also added pictorial cues after I had suggested this strategy once, e.g.

Janice: "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?
I see a" (pause) "redbird looking at me.
Redbird, r-redbird, redbird, what do you see?
I see a yellow -- black (doubtful voice)
yellow -- brown?" (Looks up at me and frowns)
"What?"

Me: "I wonder." (I flip ahead to the next page
quickly, revealing the duck picture, and then
back to the original page.)

Janice: (Grins) "Yellow duck looking at me.
Yellow duck, yellow duck, what do you see?
I see a blue horse looking at me.
Blue horse, blue horse, what do you see?
I see a green fig -- (Frowns and flips over to
the next page and back). "Oh yeah -- green
frog, -- green frog, looking at me."
(First reading of the story, February 22nd)

Trevor: "Yellow duck, yellow duck, what do you see?
I see a blue house looking at me. Oh --"
(Looks up at me and smiles when he turns the
page and sees the blue horse) "Blue horse,
blue horse, what do you see? I see a purple
cat looking at me. Purple cat, purple cat,
what do you see? I see a white dog looking
at me. White dog, white dog, what do you see?
I see a black sheep looking at me. Black
sheep, black sheep, what do you see? I see
a --" (pauses and looks to me).

Me: "Shall we take a look?" (I flip over the
page to reveal a goldfish and then flip back.)

Trevor: "Yellow fish looking at me. Gold -- fish --
what? -- goldfish, what do you see? I see
a --" (pauses and flips over the page). "Mum
looking at me ..."
(First reading of the story, February 28th)

Both children were thus alternating between independent reading, with

attendant monitoring strategies, and seeking adult support. Though an integration of graphic and semantic-syntactic cues were their major resources, they quickly incorporated the "flip a page to view the picture" technique into their repertoire to confirm or reject their print predictions i.e. as an additional monitoring strategy.

Mark was utilizing less graphic cues than Janice and Trevor, though throughout the story he used adult support. Without a reminder Mark echoed what I read and we quickly established a pattern of co-operative reading without any verbal negotiation. I read the page that introduced the new character, e.g. "I see a yellow duck looking at me" and Mark spontaneously picked up the next page, e.g. "Yellow duck, yellow duck, what do you see?" The rhythm and pattern of the repeated language structures provided sufficient clues for Mark to read his portion after only two characters had been introduced. Clearly Mark had internalized the language patterns for later in the afternoon I saw him sitting on the floor, staring ahead, and verbalized, "Mark, Mark, what do you see?" Mark responded, "I see you looking at me!" and laughed (February 27th). Thus he was able to generate new information based on the storybook's language patterns. On occasion, during our co-operative story reading, I paused as a new character was introduced, to see if Mark could "step in" and utilize graphic cues to verbalize the animal, e.g.

Me: "I see a green frog looking at me."
 Mark: "Green frog, green frog, what do you see?"
 Me: "I see a purple --"
 Mark: "Pig?"
 Me: (Turning the page) "-- cat looking at me."
 Mark: "Cat!"

Mark could predict semantically acceptable words that preserved the "animal schema" of the story, but was not necessarily constrained by the graphic information. This was further evidenced on his second reading of

the story when he predicted animals in the story, though the predictions bore little graphic similarity to the text, e.g. "blue horse" for "green frog". In the main body of the story, therefore, Mark utilized the language structure, background knowledge, pictorial cues and myself, as his major resources.

Janette and Belinda, like Mark, did not appear to use the graphic cues as resources. They were initially more cautious than the High Print aware children in using the adult as a resource, and took longer than Mark, Janice and Trevor to pick up the patterned language in the story and the format of chained events. Belinda and Janette, as in the "front cover" dialogue, initially were reminded that it was fine for them to join in the story reading. Over the first few pages both girls were hesitant about verbalizing and quietly mumbled as I read. Gradually their voices became clearer as they first voiced the first and last words on a line, and then increasingly verbalized more of the story. Janette, during the first reading of the story, gained sufficient confidence to tell me that she was ready to read certain lines on her own.

Me: "I see a blue horse looking at me" (pause).
 Janette: (Mumbles quietly as I read and then when I have finished:) "I see a blue horse looking at me" (page is turned). "Mm!" (laughs and points at the blue horse)
 Me: (Laugh also)
 Janette: (Spontaneously, for the first time) "Blue horse, blue horse, what do you see?"
 Me: "I see a green frog looking at me" (pause).
 "Green frog --"
 Janette: "Green frog, green frog, what do you see?"
 Me: "I see a white dog looking at me."
 Janette: "I see --" (mumbles) "looking at me."
 Me: (Pause) "White dog, white dog, what do you see?"
 Janette: " -- dog, white dog, what do you see?"
 Me: "I see a black sheep looking at me."
 Janette: "Now I can go -- Black sheep, black sheep, what do you see?" (confidently)
 (First reading, February 27th)

Thus, Janette, when the seventh animal character was introduced, felt sufficiently competent to "take over" part of the story reading on her own. Over the course of the interaction, then, Janette increasingly used the rhythmic, repeated language patterns and cues from myself, as resources. Belinda also demonstrated increased confidence and the ability to utilize language pattern cues, though she required more adult scaffolding than the other children. During the first story reading she commented enthusiastically about the pictures, though largely "mumble-read", only joining in the occasional final word with verbal clarity. On the final two pages Belinda and I read co-operatively:

Me: "We see a brown bear, a redbird, a green --"
 (pause).
 Belinda: (Very quietly) "Frog?"
 Me: "A black --"
 Belinda: "Sheep."
 Me: "A gold --"
 Belinda: "Fish" (increasing voice level and confidence)
 Me: "A yellow --"
 Belinda: "Duck!" (loudly)
 Me: "A blue --"
 Belinda: "Horse!"
 Me: "A purple --"
 Belinda: "Cat!" (February 28th)

Belinda had internalized the language pattern cues by halfway through the second reading of the book, and confidently read the response lines in a vibrant, loud voice. Over the two readings, Belinda used picture cues, myself and gradually the language patterns of the story as resources.

Monitoring: All five children monitored their behaviour on the shared storybook interaction. Differences in their performances lay not in monitoring ability itself but in the cueing systems that they used to monitor or self-regulate their performance.

1. Repeating the adult's reading and "joining in"

As noted previously, the High Print aware children spontaneously

echoed my words and joined in with the reading. This type of repetition and immediate joining in were not characteristic of Janette's and Belinda's performance. I suggest that this monitoring strategy, wherein the children emulate independent reading under the umbrella of adult support, is not a "natural" within-child difference between the High and Low Print aware children, but part of a learned behaviour. The High Print aware children appeared to have experienced encouragement to interact in home book engagements. Their parents, in our interviews, emphasized that the child's participation in storybook interactions, was stimulated. In comparison, there was little evidence of participation in Janette's and Belinda's home story engagements. (Though Marvin had left the school before "Brown Bear" was read to the children, this limited child participation was also evident in his father's description of the boy "just listening" to stories). As Janette's eight year old brother gave an oral reading performance on the daily story, it is difficult to imagine that Janette's joining in would have been appreciated or encouraged. Belinda's mother noted that she had learned about encouraging child participation at the October library workshop, and though she had never used this strategy previously, she had tried to incorporate it in post-October book interactions. However, Belinda's home reading declined between December and February and hence it may have occurred infrequently. In addition, Belinda and her mother's interactions were so full of conflict that it may be anticipated that "inaccurate joining in" on Belinda's part could have created tension between the mother and daughter. Mrs. Williams was a "stickler" for accuracy when she assisted in the classroom and tended to over-scaffold Belinda's performance. Though not focusing on a storybook interaction, the following episode is illustrative of the type of Belinda-Mother "learning" engagement observed

several times in the classroom.

Belinda is doing a rather complex hospital jigsaw puzzle. She tries to place pieces by sliding them around the wooden edges of the puzzle.

Mrs. Williams: "Look at what you're doing, Belinda!"

Belinda: (Tries a piece) "Up -- down there."

Mrs. Williams: "No -- try it here -- look, it goes here. Always look at the edges."

Belinda: "It goes there" (fits the piece).

Mrs. Williams: "Maybe here, Belinda" (points).
"-- the other way up -- move it round" (guides Belinda's hand until the piece fits). "Now here's the hair" (gives Belinda a new piece).

Belinda: (Baby voice) "Dis hair -- where it go, dis hair?"

Mrs. Williams: (Guides Belinda's hand until the piece fits) "There."

Belinda: (Looks at a new piece)

Mrs. Williams: "Look at it, Belinda -- really look" (impatient). "It's blue and green. Where does that go?"

Belinda: "Dis go here."

Mrs. Williams: "Somehow I think it goes there" (points).

Belinda: (Pouting) "Doesn't go dere."

Mrs. Williams: (Folds arms) "Okay, we'll wait and see. Put an arm in here."

Belinda: (Puts it in upside down)

Mrs. Williams: (Very impatient now). "Did you ever see an arm like that?"

Belinda: "Where did it go?"

Mrs. Williams: (Louder) "Did you ever see it like that? It's upside down!"

Belinda: (Turns and yells at her mother) "LEAVE ME ALONE!" (November 10th)

In the latter interaction Belinda clearly felt non-competent and regressed into her "baby talk" reserved for occasions when insecurity was experienced. Her mother, insisting on exact performance, over-corrected her and provided too much information, until Belinda rebelled. If this type of heavy control and criticism was utilized in home book interactions, I may infer that Belinda's freedom to make approximations to print, and to join in with stories, would be severely limited. Thus Mother would attempt to control Belinda's actions rather than providing opportunities for Belinda to monitor herself. Clearly Belinda is initially cautious of my encouragement to join

in with the reading, and I suspect that her prolonged mumbling and very quiet voice may have been indications that she was unwilling to expose herself to possible criticism about "mistakes". Her confidence and trust grew when I did not intervene, and during the second reading she repeated my words and joined in without reminders. I may hypothesize that given gentle and tactful adult support, Janette and Belinda would utilize the repetition and spontaneous joining in strategies demonstrated by the High Print aware children. It was not really possible to observe these strategies in the classroom as joining in was not encouraged until the latter part of February, when a dinosaur chart, two patterned stories and a predictable book were introduced to the class. Hence, it must be assumed that the spontaneous monitoring strategy of echoing words and joining in was a home-based storybook behaviour that had been acquired by the High Print, but not the Low Print, aware children in the study.

2. Self-correction, monitoring for meaning and "risking"

Self-correction requires, initially, "knowing that you do not know" and then "knowing how to fix it". It also requires risking predictions and monitoring for meaning, i.e. if meaning is not monitored then there is no cognitive inconsistency which provides the basis for self-correcting behaviour. All the children "knew when they did not know". Mark's and Janette's indication that they could not read the title, Janice's, Trevor's and Mark's applications to me for help, prolonged pauses, mumble reading, frowns and puzzled exclamations, were all examples of doubt and the monitoring of personal meaning. However, "knowing how to fix the problem" was an area of difference amongst the children, as well as pinpointing the cause of cognitive inconsistency.

In Janice's and Trevor's cited examples of story reading (main body

of the story) they clearly used multiple resources to generate strategies for "fixing problems": Primarily, these two children were monitoring for meaning for their "risked" predictions had to make sense to them at the sentence level and also across the story. As they read each section of the text they compared new predictions with an ongoing synthesis of prior information. Thus, when Janice predicted, "yellow -- black" and "yellow -- brown" for "yellow duck", her responses triggered a puzzled exclamation. She had noted the inconsistency in meaning. Clearly, she was also using graphic cues, i.e. "black - duck", but realized that there was a semantic-syntactic problem with her prediction. In this case she attempted to fix the problem, but failed, and hence looked at me to provide a new strategy. When provided with the picture she could reject previous hypotheses and correct to align the story into a meaningful whole. Later in the story, Janice predicted "green fig" for "green frog", and checked the picture herself to correct her hypothesis. Trevor, similarly, predicted "blue house" for "blue horse". Initially this prediction did not conflict with meaning as it was semantically and syntactically acceptable to him, and retained a large portion of the text's graphic information. It was only when he moved to the next page and saw the blue horse, that he noticed the inconsistency and self-corrected, laughing to himself. Trevor also self-corrected "yellow fish" to "goldfish", and this monitoring surely emerged from comparing his prediction with the graphic cues as "yellow fish" made sense, was syntactically sound, and fitted with the pictorial information. Thus, without formal reading instruction Janice and Trevor had built an amazing repertoire of strategies, could generate them in an integrated manner, and also could monitor their effectiveness. From the data concerning these two children it seems evident that their utilization of

graphic, semantic, syntactic and pictorial resources and their monitoring strategies of echoing, joining in, and self-correcting, were "servants" of their main purpose, reconstructing meaning from text.

Clearly, Mark, Janette and Belinda also monitored for meaning though without utilizing specific graphic information. Their reaction to the pictures illustrates the most typical type of monitoring they displayed. They laughed at the blue horse, the purple cat and the black sheep for they perceived them as humorous inconsistencies when compared to their animal schemas stored in background knowledge. (Presumably they had not encountered a black sheep previously, either literally or figuratively!) In "reading" the final two pages of the book, these children were also using pictures, as well as patterned language cues, in order to monitor their performance in reviewing the animals. Each child could "read" the list of animals, with their accompanying pictures, by the second story reading and could self-correct on the basis of pictorial information, e.g.

Janette: "A blue horse and a purple -- white --
purple cat."

All three children also utilized the language patterns of the story to monitor for meaning, though Mark developed this strategy more rapidly than Janette or Belinda. For example, Belinda still had doubts that she had picked up the rhythmic pattern, even at the conclusion of the second story reading.

Me: "I see beautiful children --"
Belinda: "I see -- beautiful children looking at me.
Children -- " (looks up, startled).
Me: (Smile) "That's fine, Belinda."
Belinda: (Confidently) "Children, children, what do
you see?"

At times it was almost as if Janette and Belinda feared that they had risked too much and would be corrected for inaccuracy. Thus, their

monitoring of semantic-syntactic patterns may well have been inhibited by their lack of self-confidence in making print approximations and retaining story meaning, i.e. they had developed the concept that stories required exactitude and "real reading" and hence there was internal dissonance in declaring that you could not read and yet finding yourself joining in with a story. Mark seemed to experience no such worries or doubts. Once he had been shown the "flip ahead to check the picture" strategy, he "read" the story independently. He confidently used the language patterns and risked predictions, laughing as he self-corrected after seeing pictorial inconsistencies, e.g.

Mark: "Brown -- I mean -- redbird, redbird, what do you see? I see a " (flips page to check) "yellow duck looking at me. Yellow duck, yellow duck, what do you see? I see a green frog --" (flips page) "look --" (laughs as it is a blue horse pictured) "-- er -- blue horse looking at me."

Thus, Mark used the language structures and pictorial cues to self-correct and monitor for meaning, but unlike Janette and Belinda, he was unafraid to risk himself. In fact, as demonstrated by his performance on computer tasks, Mark loved to make deliberate mistakes in order that he could self-correct, which makes interpretation of his storybook data a risky business in itself! I do suggest that "risking" is strongly linked to monitoring in that a reader needs to risk hypotheses in order to confirm or reject them on the basis of new information. The High Print aware children were "riskers", but once more I doubt that we can attribute this to some innate personality variable. As noted in home interviews, their parents stated that they did not expect exact print reproduction, though Janice's and Trevor's mothers did suggest that such accuracy would be anticipated at the onset of formal reading instruction in Grade One. Though leeway in predictions and acceptance of approximations was part of the weekly story

experience in the library, the kindergarten literacy materials and interactions focused on print exactitude in the classroom. I suggest that the High Print aware children had learned to be "riskers", "approximators" and "self-correcters" prior to kindergarten entrance and they continued with their monitoring strategies during the year. Belinda and Janette had experienced few opportunities to "risk" and "self-monitor" print prior to school entrance and the kindergarten environment did not stimulate or promote self-monitoring strategies, as literacy tasks focused on exact reproduction of graphic information which was outside the competence realm of these two children.

Synthesis of Literacy Knowledge and Strategies over both Storybook

Tasks: The structured Storybook Task provided information about the children's concepts about print and their knowledge of the language of reading instruction, as well as giving opportunities for the observation of literacy strategies. It was a "guided tour" of literacy knowledge in that the agenda was pre-set, though of course the children provided a wide variety of responses. In contrast, the informal sharing of "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See?" provided a rather different storybook interaction. Other than the initial introductory questions concerning story meaning, the majority of the engagement was individually tailored to the child's needs in that sufficient support was provided to ensure that the children experienced success in the co-operative reading of a patterned, predictable book. When I thought of sharing "Brown Bear" with the children, it was conceived because I was monitoring my own sensemaking and perceived inconsistencies. Mark and Trevor, for example, demonstrated exactly similar profiles on the structured Storybook Task post-test, and yet from observations I knew that Trevor was independently reading some storybooks

and Mark was not. Thus, it seemed that, though the Storybook Task provided a good deal of information concerning literacy knowledge and strategies, it was somehow incomplete in that it did not capture the difference between a child who required more adult support in order to reconstruct meaning. The informal storybook interaction thus "filled that important gap", which is surely significant in an exploration of the literacy growth of young children.

The High Print Aware Children

Janice, Trevor and Mark demonstrated that they had acquired all (Janice), or almost all (Trevor and Mark), of the print and language of instruction concepts surveyed on the structured Storybook Task, by February, and indeed had learned many of these concepts prior to kindergarten entrance. Possibly, the only significant print concept acquired between September and February, for these children, was pointing-matching behaviour. All other important concepts, tapped by this task, were entrenched before they entered school. Thus, the differences between pre- and post-testing on the structured Storybook Task were relatively unnoticeable, except in their approach to reading the text of "Going For a Swim". In September, all three children felt that they were unable to read the story. In February, Janice read the text with support, Mark attempted to read it, and Trevor was still very hesitant, pointing to one word on a page and suggesting that it was the only word he could read. For these children, the informal reading of "Brown Bear" provided an opportunity to observe a "shady area", namely their movement into independent reconstruction of meaning. Following this storybook interaction it was clear that when provided with a predictable text, and a patterned language, Trevor and Janice could read with a great deal of independence,

whereas Mark required far more adult help. There were differences in their strategies in that Janice and Trevor integrated graphic, semantic, syntactic and pictorial cueing systems and monitored all resources in order to preserve the meaning. Mark, in comparison, was less adept, at this stage, in harnessing graphic cues with the other strategies. Thus, the difference between Mark and the other two children appeared to lie in attention to graphic information. Certainly, all these children anticipated that adults would support their reading endeavours and all actively solicited my help and integrated my cues into their own strategies. The High Print aware children's monitoring strategies and active participation were perceived as related to their home-based book interactions wherein parents suggested that they valued participation and were uncritical of approximations in the reconstruction of stories. Undoubtedly these attitudes may also be related to the library workshops at school, as the messages to encourage interaction and acceptance of the child's participation were promoted by the school librarian. Trevor's mother had attended a workshop when her older boy was in kindergarten, Janice's father came to the October, 1983, session, and Mark's babysitter also attended on the latter occasion. However, it is not suggested that the same attitudes were promoted in the kindergarten classroom wherein print exactitude was stressed in Group Time and in Centre Time activities, and exact "predictions" largely dominated group story sessions. As noted in Chapter Six, the stress on exactitude may indeed have assisted to fine-tune Trevor's and Janice's graphic cueing system, though clearly these children integrated graphic cues with previous, firmly established strategies, themselves. The home data in Chapter Four, suggests that Janice and Trevor had long-term favourite books that were re-read

frequently. This repetition of texts may also be associated with their increasing attention to graphic cues. As Doake (1981) suggests:

In their early attempts to retrieve their favourite stories for themselves, the children involved in this study concentrated on reproducing meaning and were not overly concerned with accurately reproducing the text at the verbal level. As they engaged in co-operatively re-reading a story however, their control over its reproduction at the surface level of the words seemed to grow. Once semantic confidence and completeness for the story had been achieved it seemed that they were ready to learn to reproduce it more accurately (p. 467).

As books in the classroom were not revisited I can only assume that the possible association between increasing text exactitude and the repetition of favourite stories must be related to home-based practices in Janice's and Trevor's cases. Mark largely avoided the print-exact tasks in centres, and his home-reading declined in the post-Christmas period, and hence he continued to rely on syntactic, semantic and pictorial cues. It was only when his own language was utilized in the language experience stories promoted in late February that he began to engage more attention on graphic information in stories.

The Low Print Aware Children

Janette, Belinda and Marvin clearly gained a great deal of knowledge about book concepts and the language of reading instruction between pre- and post-testing on the structured Storybook Task, though equally clearly their knowledge was still less developed than two-thirds of the kindergarten class members in February (Marvin: December). Specific print tracking concepts and the distinctive features between letter and word units were possibly the most significant concepts that still had to be developed. Perhaps of most concern with these children, were their perceptions of themselves as readers and their understanding of reading itself. The Low Print aware children's, "I can read", "I can't read",

self-perceptions seemed very situation-specific, and were linked to the task they were attempting, their conceptions of the reading process, and the amount of support they received. For example, Belinda felt she was "a reader" on the classroom environmental print task, and both storybook interactions, but not on the structured Environmental Print Task. In the classroom, she was "a story reader" on a patterned language chart in October, but felt she was not "a story reader" in the library corner nor when invited to join in with the first predictable book she had experienced in the kindergarten (February 28th). Both Belinda and Marvin felt that they might be readers if they could identify individual letters, and Janette increasingly insisted, over the course of the study, that reading was a skill that she would be taught later. During the kindergarten year, then, these children had developed shaky self-perceptions about their competence in engaging in reading interactions and mixed messages about reading itself. During the "Brown Bear" storybook interaction another message, to add to their "mixture", was promoted, i.e. they could interact with stories if the conditions were right. Belinda surprised herself and was momentarily shocked to find that she was "reading" portions of "Brown Bear" alone, presumably in spite of her self-perception that she was a "non-reader", and in spite of not being asked to identify every letter.

I suggest that the data indicates that these children entered school without firmly established print concepts and without confident perceptions of themselves as readers-in-progress. Their parents expected that the kindergarten year would teach knowledge about letters and general print concepts that they associated with preparedness for Grade One reading instruction. Home literacy activities had rarely included re-reading of favourite books (Chapter Four) but had dwelled on workbooks that stressed

initial consonants (Belinda), alphabet cards (Marvin) or solitary listening to taped stories (Janette). Belinda's mother had focused on sound-symbol relationships and only introduced story participation after it was suggested in the library workshop. Marvin's father and Janette's mother, with their multiple job and family responsibilities, acknowledged that literacy activities did not proliferate in their homes. Marvin, when he did listen to stories, "just listened" (Father's interview, December), and Mrs. Gearhardt had assigned family story-reading largely to her eight year old boy. The kindergarten experience did not develop these children's perceptions of themselves as active participants in holistic literacy events. The stress on print exactitude in activities reinforced their view that reading was a skill, and a skill that was beyond their present scope. As at home, stories were not re-read in the classroom, and on the relatively infrequent occasions when stories were read to the children (Chapter Six), the story content was often removed from Janette's, Marvin's and Belinda's worlds of experience. Thus, by February, the Low Print aware children experienced confusion about the reading process and inhibition about their role in its dynamics. The "Brown Bear" storybook interaction demonstrated that Janette and Belinda could develop the concept that reading was an interactive process and that they had a vital role as active participants. Both girls eventually became more confident "readers" in this storybook engagement and asserted some control over their own performance. It offered a glimpse of "what might be" in contrast to the reality of their present literacy knowledge and strategies and their learned confusions about reading and their involvement in the process.

Summary of the High-Low Print Aware Children's
Literacy Knowledge: Independence to Confusion

So I will eat them in a box.
 And ~~it~~ will eat them with a fox.
 And I will eat them ~~in~~ with a house.
 And I will eat them with a mouse.
 And I will eat them here ~~and~~ or there.
 Say! I will eat them anywhere.
 I do so like
 green eggs and ham!
 Thank you! Thank you!

Sam - I - am! (Janice reading from "Green Eggs and Ham",
 Dr. Seuss, 1960: February 28th)

Coding: ~~o~~ self-correction
 a repetition
 + omission
 and/or substitution

In the above extract Janice read me "Green Eggs and Ham" utilizing monitoring strategies of self-correction and repetition on the basis of semantic, syntactic and graphic information. Janice, like Trevor, was integrating literacy strategies from a fund of prior experience and, by February, pursuing a clear path towards independent reading. For both children there was a movement towards controlling written language that moved from global pictorial, semantic and syntactic strategies towards increased differentiation of graphic cues. Largely due to home-based print interactions these children developed multiple strategies to make sense of print, firm perceptions about the reading process and a strong sense of their active involvement in reading engagements. With this knowledge they were able to filter the kindergarten literacy activities and add selected print information to the repertoires of strategies that they had acquired in preschool years. Both children created personal sensemaking from kindergarten tasks by incorporating new graphic information into their

battery of other strategies. They knew, at kindergarten entrance, that reading was meaningful and the isolated print activities during their school day did not shake this strong conviction.

Mark was at a transitional stage at the beginning of kindergarten. Like Janice and Trevor, he knew that reading involved sensemaking and knew that he needed an adult to support his literacy learning. However, he had not begun to focus a great deal of attention on specific graphic information. Throughout the study, he preserved his knowledge of semantic, syntactic and pictorial resources though made limited progress in his utilization of graphic cues. When literacy activities did not conform to his personal view of sensemaking, he avoided them and thus was able to retain his perceptions of reading and his role in the process. With the decline in home-reading and his avoidance of the isolated print tasks at school, he had little opportunity to incorporate graphic cues into the strategies he had developed during preschool years. In addition, Mark's pattern of requesting that home story reading should supply new information for his numerous interests meant that he had established few long-term favourite books, and re-reading seems intimately linked to increasing attention to graphic details (Doake, 1981). As the opportunity for creating personal language experience stories was only provided once in September and twice more in late February, again Mark had little chance to integrate the print details he noted during these activities into his cueing strategies.

For Marvin, Belinda and Janette, the literacy situation was more critical. They did not have a bank of literacy strategies at kindergarten entrance and hence classroom activities could not be filtered for new information to be incorporated into existing strategies. These strategies

had not yet developed and their schemas about reading were similarly at a foetal stage. Their preschool home contexts had not provided the rich literacy contexts experienced by the High Print aware children, and most of the kindergarten literacy activities were too difficult for Janette, Marvin and Belinda. They experienced few stories in the kindergarten classroom and repetitions of stories were limited to the weekly library sessions. Even the classroom library corner offered few literacy learning opportunities as only rarely were adults present to interpret stories. The library workshop attended by Janette's father and Belinda's mother illustrated strategies for enhancing story meaning and book handling concepts. The library story sessions and the classroom group story engagements consistently reinforced the book handling knowledge, though story meaning was more frequently enhanced in the library than in the classroom. Interestingly, the Low Print aware children increased their knowledge about books over the course of the study (see results on the structured Storybook Task), which provides some evidence for the possible success of multi-contextual learning. Though the Low Print aware children developed new book handling knowledge, they unfortunately also learned confused concepts about reading and their role. They learned that they had limited competence on many literacy tasks, that reading was "a skill" that they did not possess, that letter identification directly related to reading, and that reading was something somebody else would teach them, i.e. that they were not actively involved in learning literacy knowledge as ongoing readers-in-progress. This self-knowledge acquired over time may indeed suggest that the Low Print aware children may be "disadvantaged" even prior to Grade One entrance. Disadvantaged, not because of within-child variables, in this case, but because of learned literacy confusion. Thus, as Janice makes

sense of "Green Eggs and Ham" and reconstructs print with independence, Janette, Marvin and Belinda still need to develop confidence in their perceptions of themselves as competent literacy learners, and still require the knowledge that reading is a process that involves active personal participation. Thus far their cultural context has not stimulated the development of this knowledge.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LITERACY CONTEXTS, INTERACTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE:

A CULTURAL CHAIN

Nothing has been broken
though one of the links of the chain
is a blue butterfly.

Here he was attacked.

They smiled as they came and retired
baffled with blue dust.

(Cohen, 1969, p. 184)

Educational research focusing on children's successes and difficulties in learning to read has sometimes "baffled" us with "blue dust" over the years. All too often we have focused on "one of the links of the chain", namely within-child factors or reading programmes, and the "blue butterfly" has remained somewhat elusive. This study could add to the "blue dust", but hopefully recognizable patterns emerge as I trace my finger through the particles. My patterns, indeed, may not be generalizable as I have focused on the literacy experiences of only six children in one kindergarten environment. However, the study may offer some insight into cross-contextual literacy learning as it does not focus on "one link in the chain" but on multiple variables. In its complexity, each link serves as a "blue butterfly" to be explored rather than "attacked" or controlled.

The study was initially conceived due to continual sifting through available "blue dust" to elicit factors that may make a difference to successful or distressful literacy learning. As a teacher, a reading specialist and a researcher, I had encountered many children in reading distress in our elementary and secondary schools. "Blame" was a frequent aspect of teacher and parent talk. Teachers emphasized within-child

variables, home environments and previous reading programmes as factors that contributed to children's reading failures. Homes focused on reading methodologies and teacher characteristics as key variables in their children's lack of success. More recently, both parents and teachers resorted to the catch-all term "learning disabled" to explain reading difficulties. In the midst of the "blue dust" I was dissatisfied with "answers" that promoted one factor or another. Literacy learning seems so complexly interwoven in the chain of living that one link must interlock with another. The dust, though neater in individual piles, required mixing and then re-sifting. In this study, the home and school contexts have been "mixed" to explore the variables that make a difference in the literacy learning of six children, prior to the onset of formal reading instruction. The literacy context and the interactive dynamics of the kindergarten classroom have received primary focus, though the other links in the chaining of the children's literacy knowledge, namely their homes and community, have also been descriptively preserved so that "nothing has been broken" within the investigation.

Literacy Knowledge Acquired

The children's performances on the structured literacy tasks suggested that there were differences between Janice, Trevor and Mark, and Belinda, Janette and Marvin's literacy knowledge at the beginning of kindergarten. The designation of High Print aware to the former three children, and of Low Print aware to the latter, were conceived as descriptive terms of convenience with no initial assumption that they could be applied to all six children by the conclusion of the study. However, my data indicates that early differences between the High and Low Print aware children were even more pronounced when the research was finalized. The literacy knowledge

"gap" between the two groups had widened over the course of six months of the kindergarten year.

By the end of February, Janice and Trevor were independently reconstructing meaning from print utilizing a wide range of strategies. Mark was ready to "take off" (Tough, 1983, p. 65) into independent reading. The Low Print aware children had, by post-testing, developed some, but not all, of the literacy knowledge possessed by the High Print aware children in September. In the intervening period they had also acquired key misconceptions about the reading process and their roles as readers-in-progress. Thus, in the first six months of kindergarten some of the variables that may make a difference in literacy acquisition appeared to be already in operation, working favourably for the High Print aware children and less optimally for the Low Print aware children. From my pool of data, patterns emerge to suggest what has made a difference to these six children's literacy learning.

What Makes a Difference in the Six Children's Literacy Learning

The Children Themselves

The six children and their literacy experiences provide the groundbed for this study. From the related literature I may have anticipated that the High Print aware children, and most especially Janice and Trevor as early readers, would display definite personality characteristics that were not apparent in the Low Print aware children. For example, early readers have been described as perfectionistic, persistent, competitive, eager (Durkin, 1966), independent, "self-sufficient" (Clark, 1976, p. 54), initiators (Cohn, 1981), self-regulated (Sulzby, 1981) with "personal drives" (Sutton, 1969, p. 61), good memories and sound concentration

(Clark, 1976). My data confirms that Janice, Trevor and Mark embodied all these characteristics within their personalities. However, it clearly demonstrates that the Low Print aware children also had these qualities. For example, nobody was more self-initiating, persistent, eager, self-regulated and perfectionistic than Belinda when she was painting pictures or dressing her Cabbage Patch doll. All the children were initiators and "personally driven" to make sense of their world, and all could monitor and self-correct their performances on many occasions. What may make a difference in terms of these children's acquisition of literacy knowledge does not emerge from personality traits, but from factors in environmental contexts that focus these qualities on different facets. The High Print aware children's characteristics, in this study, were focused on literacy as one aspect of cultural learning and hence, for example, they were persistent about print. The Low Print aware children had more limited literacy exposures interwoven in their home lives and hence directed such persistence in other directions.

Equally clearly, within the broad parameters of kindergarten age requirements, the relative age of the six children does not seem to make a difference to their literacy acquisition. Like Morphet and Washburne (1931) linking a magic mental age to literacy development, the adults in this study considered chronological age a major key in learning. Due to the caregivers' intense emphasis on the importance of "being five" early in the kindergarten year, the children themselves perceived that "older means more knowledgeable" (see Chapter Five). However, "being five", or four and a half, at kindergarten entrance could not be related to literacy knowledge acquired in this research, i.e.

Chronological age: (HP = High Print aware, LP = Low Print aware)

Oldest third of the class: Marvin (LP), Janice (HP)

Middle third of the class: Janette (LP)
Youngest third of the class: Mark (HP), Trevor (HP),
Belinda (LP)

Thus, relative age does not seem to make a difference to the literacy learning of these children, though it is acknowledged that the caregivers' strong beliefs about the relationship between chronological age and learning ability may have indirectly affected the children's perceptions of their own competence. For example, Belinda's mother, often within her daughter's hearing range, frequently expressed the concern that her daughter was "too young" to benefit from schooling. I never heard this view expressed about Trevor or Mark though they also were amongst the youngest children in the class. As with the personality variables, the environmental context seems more important than age itself, for that context can send implicit messages that may influence the children's perceptions about their role and competence in the learning process. These learned self-perceptions may well be powerful inner voices that influence literacy knowledge acquisition.

Homes Make a Difference

"Blue Dust": Research has suggested that various home-based factors such as socioeconomic status, educational levels of parents, presence or absence of siblings, single or joint-parenting, daycare attendance and parental time available, are related to literacy acquisition (see Chapter Two). To summarize these variables for the six families in this study:

1. All the families had similar socioeconomic status. They all resided in the same district and, though parental incomes were undisclosed, all expressed similar concerns about economic struggles to survive in the present time of widespread unemployment. Janette's and Janice's mothers felt constrained to work due to their husbands' frequent

periods of unemployment. As single parents, Mark's mother and Marvin's father were the only wage earners in the family. Monetary concerns related to preserving lifestyles, with attendant emotional worries, provided some stress to these families.

2. Educationally, Janette's, Janice's and Mark's mothers had similar backgrounds, as all three had teaching degrees. Janette's, Trevor's, Belinda's and Janice's fathers were skilled manual workers and Marvin's father was a salesman.
3. Five of the children had older siblings and Trevor and Janette each had a younger brother or sister. Mark was an only child.
4. Mark's mother and Marvin's father were single parents, though Trevor's and Belinda's mothers functionally adopted this role when their husbands worked away from home. Janette and Janice received ongoing care from both parents.
5. Janice, Mark and Marvin had regular substitute caregivers and this had been a common pattern since infancy. Janette, Trevor and Belinda had been cared for at home, with only occasional babysitting provided by relatives and neighbours.
6. Due to economic constraints and family and community commitments, all the parents suggested that they had extremely limited periods of time to spend with their children. All expressed guilt feelings about "short-changing" their kindergarten-aged children.

The data indicates that there is no simple relationship between any of these variables and the children's acquisition of literacy knowledge. Clearly, whether a child emerges from a single parent family, with a working mother, attends daycare for years and has no stimulation from older siblings (Mark: High Print aware), or whether she is cared for in

the home by two parents, with both parents trading off work commitments to minimize babysitting, and has a younger and an older sibling (Janette: Low Print aware), seems to bear little relationship to literacy learning in this study. These variables in isolation, or when combined, are "blue dust". Far more important are the interactive dynamics within the homes and the attitudes and intentions of the caregivers during the limited times that they all have available to spend with their children.

Parental Attitudes and Intentions: The home interview data revealed similarities and differences in parental attitudes and intentions with regard to education in general and literacy development in particular:

1. All the parents suggested that they valued schooling. They cited this value as the central reason for placing their children in kindergarten. However, though global intentions were the same, their specific purposes varied. The High Print aware children's parents intended that the kindergarten year would expose Janice, Trevor and Mark to school organization procedures, to co-operative peer exchanges and to the independent pursual of activities. The Low Print aware children's parents had similar purposes for Belinda, Janette and Marvin, but also hoped that the year would provide "the basics" (Marvin's father, December interview) in letter recognition, printing techniques and numeracy skills. Thus, all the parents had expectations that the kindergarten programme would teach their children school socialization patterns, but the Low Print aware children's parents also anticipated that the year would provide specific literacy groundwork for the Grade One reading programme. None of the High Print aware children's parents expressed the latter expectation.

2. All the parents faced the prospect of their children's Grade One year with trepidation. They had established the perception that it was

the "make or break" year in formal schooling and were anxious that their children could cope with it. The kindergarten was thus valued as a transition or training ground for Grade One. Though these parents all experienced a similar global anxiety about Grade One their reasons were, again, different. Mrs. Bronson and Mrs. Wengler were worried that Trevor and Janice would be bored with the Grade One curriculum, especially in reading. In the autumn, both parents had tried to "cool" their children's interests in literacy learning and had deliberately not adopted Mrs. Compton's suggestions for teaching isolated words (see Chapter Five: November's literacy context), in the fear that their children would become independent readers prior to the Grade One programme. They "failed" in their attempts to "stop" Janice and Trevor from reading, for both children were controlling print with independence by February. By that stage, Mrs. Bronson and Mrs. Wengler were increasingly anxious about their children's progress through the traditional Grade One programme, especially as Trevor was already reporting boredom with kindergarten. Ms. Turner was also concerned about Mark's entrance into Grade One. She was not anxious about the reading programme or Mark's academic abilities, but more generally worried about his own attitudes towards change and his very definite self-initiating learning style. Mark had been worried about his own capabilities prior to kindergarten entrance and Ms. Turner wondered if these fears would re-emerge when Grade One loomed closer. Also, Mark was an intensely curious child who loved pursuing his own projects and tended to reject formal activities introduced by adults. Hence, she hoped the "formality of the kindergarten" (November interview) would be a halfway step into the workbooks and handouts of the Grade One year, wherein Mark would learn to follow the teacher's directions for learning rather than focusing on his

own. Marvin's, Janette's and Belinda's parents were all concerned about the academic demands of Grade One. For example, Mrs. Williams was worried that Belinda's young age and supposed immaturity would be a handicap in following the Grade One curriculum, and especially in learning how to read.

From these concerns about the Grade One year, it seems that the parents had underlying perceptions about the onset of the formal schooling process:

- a) The curriculum is "fixed" and emerges from external sources rather than from the children's needs and interests.
- b) Children "fail" or "succeed" by their relative ability to complete the external curriculum.
- c) In formal schooling success is enhanced when the teacher's directions for learning are followed. Hence, there is an expectation for external control over children's learning rather than the development of fine-tuning the children's own control.
- d) Learning to read is a major focus of the Grade One programme and children's progress will be hampered if (i) they can already read and (ii) if they cannot "keep up" with the reading programme, i.e. the children have to be "just right" to fit the reading programme.

Though these were central attitudes in all the parents' perceptions about Grade One we must assume that they were not limited to parents, but like all learned attitudes emerged from cultural messages. They may well have been learned from personal school experiences and certainly from messages that schools have transmitted to parents, over time. As these attitudes were common to all the parents then we must also assume that such messages were delivered strongly and with frequency by the formal arm of schooling.

in our culture.

Even though these basic attitudes related to the Grade One year were common to all the parents in this study, there was one major attitudinal difference between the High Print and Low Print aware children's parents. The parents of the High Print aware children implicitly transmitted the attitude that their children would be "readers", and although the Grade One year may present some difficulties in terms of curriculum demands or organizational procedures, their children would undoubtedly be literate and indeed were well advanced on the literacy trail even now. These parents had no doubts that their children would be successful readers, but rather had concerns that their children would learn within the prescribed parameters of formal schooling. They had doubts about the system, not their children. These doubts motivated Mrs. Bronson and Mrs. Wengler to check the available Grade One classroom options to find the best programme for Janice and Trevor. The Low Print aware children's parents were concerned primarily with academic success, and believed that if their children "listened" to the teachers (Marvin's father, December; Janette's mother, November), then they would undoubtedly make good progress. At best they reserved judgement about whether their children would be successful readers, and felt that they would be more able to comment when the "teaching of reading" commenced in Grade One (Marvin's father, December; Janette's mother, November). At worst they doubted that their child would be "a reader" (Belinda's mother, November and February) due to within-child factors (age and maturity) and programme deficiencies, i.e. the minimal number of literacy skills taught in kindergarten.

Thus, though there were commonalities in their attitudes towards the Grade One year, and towards its reading programme, it seems that the High

and Low Print aware children's parents differed in their own beliefs in their children as learners/readers-in-progress. These beliefs appeared to be reflected in the children's perceptions of themselves in kindergarten. Janice, Trevor and Mark believed that they were readers-in-progress, whereas Belinda, Janette and Marvin had doubts about their roles as readers and largely conceived that reading was a skill that they would learn in Grade One (see Chapter Seven).

3. Entwined with the latter difference in attitudes, the High Print and Low Print aware children's parents differed in their perceptions of the role of literacy in their lives. For the High Print aware children, print activities were interwoven into their family lives. These children discussed environmental print with their parents, shared stories with them and wrote and read notes in the course of their everyday activities. Literacy was one thread of a fabric of cultural knowledge mediated to Janice, Trevor and Mark, though their parents were not metacognitively aware of their promotion of literacy learning, sometimes stating that they felt they had "done nothing" (Trevor's mother, February interview) to help. For the Low Print aware children literacy activities, when conducted in the home, seemed formal and somewhat separate from their everyday lives. "Working" at literacy skills appeared to be a common attitude of the Low Print aware children's parents, whereas "weaving" literacy activities into daily lives was common for the parents of the High Print aware children. Thus, the Low Print aware children in this study seemed to have grown in home environments where "times for print work" were formally engineered, and these times were relatively sparse. For the High Print aware children, all times were potential literacy promotion occasions.

Home Literacy Contexts and Interactions: In this research, the home

literacy contexts and interactions are viewed as being enmeshed within the parents' attitudes, beliefs and intents in that the former provide rather overt reflections of the latter. Although, in the current section I am focusing on the home-based literacy dynamics I acknowledge the interdependence of all the sub-contexts within the family setting. These families were influenced by community resources and values, by the school's messages and by the kindergarten's expectations and they, in turn, exerted a subtle influence on the larger contexts, e.g. parental support of the kindergarten book programme stimulated its continuation (see Chapter Five). No family, in this study, existed in a vacuum and the children received literacy messages from many resources during my six months of observation. I do suggest, however, that the home exerted the most powerful influence on the literacy learning of these children. From the research data it is clear that some variables in the home literacy contexts and interactions made more difference than others in the literacy knowledge acquisition of the children.

"Making a Difference in the Home Literacy Contexts"

1. In general, the number of books in the home did not seem a significant factor in the difference in literacy knowledge acquired by the High and Low Print aware children. Though no official book count was conducted, all the parents reported that their children had a large nucleus of books within their homes.
2. From October onwards, the daily library book, available from the classroom library, may have made some difference to the literacy contexts of all the children in that it provided a source of new storybooks for the home. This may have been especially important for the Low Print aware children in that such books provided the only regular source of new stories in their homes.

3. Possibly the most important factor that distinguished the literacy contexts provided by the High and Low Print aware children's homes was that Janice, Trevor and Mark had ready access to a pool of new print materials, in addition to the kindergarten library resources, whereas Belinda, Marvin and Janette's new books came solely from the school. The provision of "old books" (personal library) and "new books" (from other resources) may well have been linked to several facets of the High Print aware children's knowledge acquisition in that "old books" appeared to be necessary, although not sufficient, for the establishment of favourite stories, and "new books" related to the expansion of knowledge about the world, including the world of printed language.

a) Janice and Trevor had long term favourite stories selected from personal libraries. These stories could be linked to their growth of global to specific print strategies in that constant re-reading over time aided in text memorization and the gradual focusing on print details such as rhyming words, initial consonants and eye-voice matching as they pointed to words and read them aloud. That all the other children also had personal libraries but few long term favourite books must indicate that the possession of such collections was infinitely less important than the literacy interactions that occurred with the books (see the following section, "Home Print Interactions").

b) The flow of new books, other than school library books, into the home was limited to the High Print aware children's literacy contexts. Janice and Mark were the only two case study children who were long-time public library members. In addition, both of their mothers obtained supplementary books from their own school libraries. Trevor

received new books from book club subscriptions (see Chapter Four). I suggest that the acquisition of a steady stream of new books into the home was important for two major reasons. Firstly, this regular supply of new books transmitted to the children that their parents valued these materials sufficiently to seek various print resources in spite of their heavily committed life schedules. Secondly, the belief was transmitted that "reading to learn" was valued. The new books sought by the parents frequently matched their children's interests. For example, Mrs. Bronson expanded their book club subscriptions to include natural science texts as Trevor was vitally interested in animals and phenomena such as volcanos and icebergs. Mrs. Wengler actively hunted for books on dinosaurs to support Janice's quest for information on this school-stimulated topic, and Ms. Turner utilized family and library resources to feed Mark's requests for knowledge related to his numerous projects. "Reading to learn" was an attitude that could be closely associated with the High Print aware children and I believe that their home literacy contexts stimulated this through providing ready access to new materials and more specifically by building a literacy-bridge between the children's world of interests and the world of written language. Interconnected with the latter point, is the observation that a major qualitative difference between the High and Low Print aware children in the classroom was the depth and breadth of world knowledge possessed by Janice, Trevor and Mark when compared with Janette, Belinda and Marvin. The High Print aware children were simply more able to engage the teacher's agenda, in group discussions and in classroom activities, and their play reflected intimate knowledge of written language story.

schemas. In fact, their sophisticated vocabulary and general knowledge sometimes precluded their classmates from engaging in mutually satisfying co-operative play with them (see Chapter Six). This wealth of knowledge may well be related to their parents' provision of books that expanded current interests and their implicit transmission of the value of the "reading to learn" philosophy. As book-related knowledge, stimulated by the new print materials in the literacy contexts of the High Print aware children, emerged from the children's own interests, then there was every opportunity for these children to connect the known to the new and hence acquire a well organized body of world and literacy knowledge. As the Low Print aware children had such limited access to new materials then the same opportunities to acquire an ever-expanding, though integrated, knowledge base through print were not as available for them in their home literacy contexts.

"Making a Difference in Home Print Interactions"

The provision of literacy materials in the home may be viewed as necessary though not sufficient for the development of print-related knowledge. The quality of the caregiver-child interactions with print seems a more significant variable in the acquisition of literacy knowledge. As noted in Chapter Four, there was an imbalance of data in the information concerning home literacy engagements, with the High Print aware children's parents supplying far more details than the Low Print aware children's parents. It was suggested that the former group was more actively involved in the promotion of literacy than the latter, and hence could recall more literacy related activities in their homes. Key variables, identified in the home-based literacy engagements of the High Print aware children, were

less apparent in the print interactions experienced by the Low Print aware children. These variables may well have made a difference to the advanced literacy development of Janice, Trevor and Mark even prior to kindergarten entrance, and as they were employed consistently over the course of the study with Janice and Trevor, specifically, they may indeed have been influential in these two children's movement into independent reading.

1. Literacy interactions: regularity of occurrence and integration into everyday contexts.

As the High Print aware children lived in homes where literacy events were interwoven into their everyday lives they may be assumed to have experienced literacy interactions with greater frequency, and in a more integrated manner, than the Low Print aware children whose parents perceived that the school would teach reading, and who allocated separate times in the day for formal print interactions. For example, Janice, during the course of her day, may have received a note from her mother, written a note to her friend, requested spelling words, "helped" her mother to read the newspaper, discussed rhyming words from a song on the radio, asked for help in reading the words of a song she was learning to play on the piano, shared a storybook with her mother and asked another family member to re-read the same book. As print was entwined in her life, then her literacy interactions occurred with regularity and also offered the opportunity for the integration of new knowledge in a meaningfully experienced context.

Janice's regular print exposures may be compared to Belinda's wherein the latter girl engaged in far less consistent or integrated literacy engagements. On a typical day for Belinda, she may have experienced a brief, solitary exposure to Sesame Street, ten minutes with a workbook that focused on initial consonants, a time period copying a list of her classmates'

names without adult support, and a storybook session with her mother. Though Janice and Belinda have been selected as examples, the regularity of print interactions and their integration into the daily lives of the children were stable variables for all the High Print aware children, and, similarly, the lack of such variables was consistent for the Low Print aware children.

Although storybook interactions may flow from other activities, there is a separate quality to these interactions in that they represent an occasion, "a time for our story". However, regularity of occurrence and integration into the children's worlds are still viable variables to consider when examining the home interaction data. All the High Print aware children's storybook interactions were integrated in the sense that they were free to select their own books and new books matched their current interests. However, the reality of the schedules in their homes meant that books were less consistently integrated into their days than the children themselves desired. Janice, Trevor and Mark persistently requested that more and more stories should be woven into their home lives, though their wishes were not always gratified immediately. The difference between Janice and Trevor's and Mark's environment was that the former two children knew that they would eventually access a storybook interaction, i.e. persistence was rewarded; when Mark's mother decreased storybook reading to him from December to February his persistence declined commensurately. All the High Print aware children had experienced consistent shared book interactions with caregivers prior to kindergarten entrance. Although Mark's story reading sessions declined, Janice and Trevor were provided with daily storybook engagements throughout the study. This information may be related to these children's acquisition of literacy

knowledge (Chapter Seven) wherein all three children demonstrated adept knowledge on the Structured Storybook Task in September. Whereas Janice and Trevor gradually refined their control over print so that by February both children were reading independently, Mark largely remained at the transitional stage of being ready to spring into independence at post-testing, a stage he had been at in September.

For the Low Print aware children there was some evidence to indicate that some storybook interactions had occurred in preschool years (Chapter Four), but they had certainly accelerated in regularity after the school library workshop in October. Thus, these children experienced more regular story reading sessions as a result of the school's influence. There is no evidence to suggest that these children were not permitted to select their own books for shared reading, though the data does indicate that their literacy contexts exerted a form of external control over their choices. As new books were limited in supply, then old books from personal libraries may not have matched their current interests as effectively as the High Print aware children's new print materials. Also, these parents could not recall any favourite books that their children selected and when storybook interactions were mentioned in interviews they were frequently limited to discussions related to reading the daily library book from school. Thus the requirement to "read a new book a day" in the kindergarten book programme (Chapter Five) influenced the children's choices for storybook interactions and had an impact on these parents in that the library book was the primary selection for reading. Though the book choices may have been less integrated into the children's interests, especially as the Low Print aware children selected books on the basis of external features (Chapter Six), these children did have exposure to more regular book

interactions during their kindergarten year than in earlier years of their lives. Again, this information may be linked to the Low Print aware children's acquisition of literacy knowledge (Chapter Seven), where at pre-testing they had far less book-related information than the majority of their classmates. Although they still had fewer book concepts, as measured by the Structured Storybook Task, than many of their peers at post-testing, the Low Print aware children had made considerable pre-post test gains. Hence, regularity of storybook interactions may well be linked to gains in literacy knowledge acquisition, and integration of stories with the child's interests may be viewed as an enhancing variable in literacy development; a variable that was incorporated into the High Print aware children's homes.

Weaving literacy into the home context is viewed as one of the key enhancing variables in the High Print aware children's acquisition of literacy knowledge, in this study. Though all of the Low Print aware children experienced more consistent storybook interactions during kindergarten than during their preschool years it must be remembered that they had still acquired less print concepts at post-testing than the High Print aware children possessed at pre-testing. Though factors in the kindergarten classroom undoubtedly contributed to the widening of the literacy gap, home variables are also clearly implicated in that the High Print aware children entered school with abundant print-related knowledge whereas the Low Print aware children had acquired far less literacy information. Major differences in parental perceptions of literacy have already been discussed, and these are clearly reflected in the degree of integration of literacy events within home contexts. If parents perceive that literacy is one aspect of cultural knowledge to be transmitted to the young, together with other knowledge, then there seems to be a greater possibility that print-

related engagements will be threaded through a child's home experiences. When literacy knowledge is transmitted in an integrated way then the children can capitalize on new information by making sense of it in the context of occurrence and by linking it schematically to other contexts. It thus both aids literacy sensemaking by linking new ideas to old in a meaningful context and assists the children in organizing knowledge, e.g. "the 'E' in Esso that Daddy told me about is like the 'E' in my name Janice and the same as the 'E' in the Edmonton Journal that my Mommy and I read".

Exposure to masses of information does not necessarily differentiate learners in terms of the availability of this knowledge for use. What usually distinguishes the efficiency with which knowledge may be used is the manner in which knowledge is organized. (Fagan, 1984, p. 3-1)

The High Print aware children could be distinguished, in this study, even at kindergarten entrance, by the degree to which they had organized their literacy knowledge. In the classroom it was always available "for use". I suggest that this characteristic is intimately linked to their home environments that had presented literacy information in an integrated manner to permit them to synthesize knowledge in a way that made sense to them. In contrast, the Low Print aware children, in this study, appeared to be clutching at "sensemaking straws" over the observational period. Their preschool environments had provided limited print exposures and even those experiences had been separated from their other activities. Their parents operated under a seemingly external locus of control with regard to literacy, largely conceiving that it was a "subject" to be taught at school and only accelerating print-related activities into the home at the direct suggestion of the school. Thus, the Low Print aware children had received far less opportunities than the High Print aware children for

integrating literacy knowledge into organized schemas.

2. Caregiver involvement in literacy interactions.

A second variable that may have made a difference to literacy knowledge acquisition was the degree of involvement demonstrated by the High and Low Print aware children's parents in their children's literacy experiences. The interview data revealed that all the High Print aware children's parents were interested in their children's literacy explorations, and they all received a sense of personal satisfaction from their print-related involvement with their children (Chapter Four). Shared book occasions were times for cuddling close with the child, a time for release from the day's pressures and a time for enjoying the child's reactions. These parents were clearly involved with their children's print interests, for they knew the content of favourite books, knew which characters or topic appealed to their children, and demonstrated interest in the story themselves. Each of the High Print aware children had the opportunity to enjoy a close feeling of sharing with a parent during story engagements, knowing that the parent was receiving as much enjoyment as him or herself. Such parental involvement seemed important for three major reasons. Firstly, the children shared stories with primary caregivers which, I believe, aids in the establishment of favourite books. Having primary adult caregivers reading books, in an involved way, may stimulate requests for repeating an enjoyable experience and consequently re-reading the same book on subsequent occasions. Secondly, parental involvement in storybooks encourages child involvement, e.g. "Mommy finds this book funny so I'll bring it home for us again" (reconstructed thoughts of Janice: Mother's interview, November). Thirdly, when the parent is involved in print interactions the child feels sufficiently relaxed to participate, knowing

that the caregiver will respond to questions and support "joining-in" behaviour. This type of co-operative involvement seemed characteristically a part of the High Print aware children's storybook sessions and their other print activities. Responding with interest to the children's literacy questions, and sharing books in an involved manner may well be vital dynamics in the interactions between the primary caregivers and the High Print aware children. Mutual involvement in literacy events can be stimulated by parental interest. As Mrs. Wengler noted, "As long as I seem to enjoy it, she'll like it" (November interview: discussion centering on Janice's storybook sessions).

With the Low Print aware children, parental involvement was definitely less apparent in their home literacy interactions. Marvin rarely had the opportunity to build a shared book relationship with any primary caregiver in his preschool years. His father's work hours and the constant changes in his family life and babysitting arrangements precluded the chances of establishing stable shared book experiences with one adult. Interestingly, between September and November he had a regular babysitter who lived in his home. Mr. Hyde asked this lady to read the daily kindergarten library books with Marvin, and between September and early December Marvin's knowledge about books increased in leaps and bounds (Structured Storybook Task: Chapter Seven). However, a general pattern in Marvin's early life was that whoever was around might read to him from whatever books were nearest (Interview with Mr. Hyde, December). His father stated that Marvin had not established definite book preferences but enjoyed all books, and that his son invariably "sat and listened", without overt participation, as they were read to him. This functional quality seemed common to many of Marvin's literacy activities. Mutual involvement was not a quality that could be

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glimpsed in the interview data, for even in alphabet or word recognition activities at home it seemed that the father always initiated the events and Marvin agreeably copied samples. The same degree of functional expedience was present in many of Janette's and Belinda's literacy interactions. Janette's eight year old brother was her primary story reader and the emphasis was placed on her listening silently as Michael read aloud. Books were not re-read and clearly a Grade Three child could not be expected to be involved in a close sharing, co-operative storybook exchange with his sister, especially when he was concentrating on his own oral reading performance. Michael himself was reportedly experiencing some reading comprehension difficulties at the time due, his mother suggested, to English language acquisition, which may have further limited mutual involvement. Though Mrs. Williams was Belinda's primary story reader, it seemed that she was hardly more involved in the event than Mr. Hyde or Mrs. Gearhardt who both assigned the role to others. Mrs. Williams knew only sparse details from the books that she had read to Belinda, and like Marvin and Janette, Belinda was expected to be a passive participant. Only when the librarian specifically suggested "joining in", did Mrs. Williams permit Belinda to participate. (I can only imagine the conflicts that must have emerged prior to this permission, for Belinda was definitely a "joiner-in" child in every other aspect of her life!) Only on one occasion did any of the Low Print aware children's parents mention any personal involvement with storybook interactions, namely when Mrs. Gearhardt discussed her dramatized reading of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff", a story that had been demonstrated at the library workshop. In general, reading the daily library book appeared to be linked to an expected duty in fulfilling the school's expectations. In the same vein, other print interactions in the home were

also related to the parents' duties to prepare their children for Grade One. All these parents felt guilty that they had not spent sufficient time in formal teaching of the alphabet and name writing. The kindergarten's emphasis on testing letter recognition and name writing for the "I can do" charts stimulated the parents into active teaching to enable their children to achieve these school expectations. In contrast, the High Print aware children could recognize the alphabet letters and print their names at kindergarten entrance, though none of their parents was quite sure how this happened. They referred to incidental episodes at home and at daycare wherein their children may have learned this information (Chapter Four). Thus, the Low Print aware children did not seem to have been engaged in co-operative, shared, involved print interactions with primary caregivers. None of these children had established favourite books (Chapter Four), and as daily story reading focused on rather functional renditions of school library books that had to be changed each day, then they had limited opportunities for re-reading, and thus for focusing attention over time on global and then specific print details. As Mrs. Williams commented:

I read the story to her (Belinda) and we looked at the pictures but she really didn't have her eye on the story. (February interview)

3. Strategies of the supportive adult.

The third cluster of variables that seem linked to literacy development in the home, in this study, are the strategies utilized by the caregivers. In Chapter Two, I combed through available research and synthesized five major home-based literacy strategies that may well make a contribution to knowledge acquisition, i.e. Strategy I, maximizing the child's contributions; II, scaffolding; III, routines; IV, transference of learning across contexts; and V, uncritical acceptance of the child's

literacy behaviours. In the following section I relate home-based strategies quite closely to the acquisition of knowledge, especially with regard to the High Print aware children. It is not my intention to exclude the influence of the kindergarten, which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, as the study progressed I became increasingly aware that the homes exerted a far more pervasive influence than the classroom on at least the High Print aware children's acquisition of literacy knowledge.

There was evidence in the interview data to suggest that all the High Print aware children's parents utilized the five strategies synthesized from current research, though I discovered that these strategies had considerably more overlap than I initially suggested in Chapter Two, namely that they were densely integrated within the caregiver-High Print aware children's interactions and, thus, when one occurred there was a great likelihood that most, or all, would be incorporated into literacy communications. Hence, these parents maximized the children's contributions by encouraging them to be participants in literacy events and by picking up on the children's interests and questions for expansion (Strategy I), and by relating story content and literacy activities to other facets of the children's lives (Strategy IV). Through encouragement of child participation they also established a fertile groundbed for re-reading stories and, in Janice's and Trevor's cases, for the routinized re-enactment of text which leads to story memorization (Strategy III). They scaffolded print interactions (Strategy II) by focusing their children's attention on print (pointing to words and indicating the left-right directionality of print), and by regulating the "child's impulsivity in gathering ... information" (Feuerstein and Hoffman, 1983, p. 57), e.g. Mrs. Wengler:

She'll say, "How come that says 'up to'?" You know, she picked it out ahead, and I'll say, "Wait till we

get to that -- then you'll see."
(February interview: Chapter Four)

As the children demonstrated increasing competence in their control over print, Janice's and Trevor's mothers reduced the support required. A first indication of these children's gradual focusing on specific print details was that they both demanded exact wording when a story was read to them and became annoyed with readers' changes. At this point exact renditions of the text were provided by primary caregivers and new "lightening of the scaffolding" procedures were utilized. For example, Mrs. Bronson started to skip textual words for Trevor to supply, and both parents encouraged co-operative turn-taking in story reading. During this type of reading, both parents also unhesitatingly supplied unknown words at their children's requests. As Janice and Trevor progressed into self-regulation (Feuerstein, 1980; Vygotsky, 1978) of their own reading then Mrs. Wengler and Mrs. Bronson explained that they accepted their children's approximations (Strategy V), e.g. Mrs. Wengler: "... like sometimes she won't say the right words but we don't worry about that too much" (February interview: Chapter Four). By February, many of the scaffolds had been removed for Janice and Trevor. Both children were then less interested in routinized re-reading of favourite books and were requesting new stories wherein they could practise their recently acquired reading independence. If the High Print aware data revealed that all the parents used the five strategies then I must question why Janice's and Trevor's progress into independent reading seemed so similar and yet Mark remained at the transitional "take off" (Tough, 1983, p. 65) stage throughout the study. Clearly there are several possibilities. Firstly, Mark did not experience regular storybook interactions throughout the research, and hence was exposed to such strategies less consistently than Janice and Trevor. Secondly, Mark's

own interests in reading to learn new information seemed contributory to his lack of long term favourite books. The third strategy, routines, did not appear to be utilized at home in terms of continual re-reading of favourite books and hence he did not memorize texts. The memorization of stories seemed to be linked to Janice's and Trevor's increasing attention to specific print details. Thus, four strategies, rather than the five experienced by Janice and Trevor, seem to have been characteristically employed in Mark's home book interactions. A third possibility in Mark's less advanced literacy development than Janice and Trevor at post-testing, is that there were strategies in the latter homes that have not yet been identified, or strategies in the kindergarten that influenced Trevor and Janice, but not Mark. The latter possibility will be discussed in the kindergarten section within this chapter. The former suggestion merits immediate attention.

Two other variables did emerge from the High Print aware interview data, though both were complexly intertwined with the five strategies already delineated:

a) Sensitive awareness of the child's needs.

This awareness incorporates features of Strategy I (maximizing the child's contributions) and Strategy V (uncritical acceptance of the child's literacy behaviours) but is more generally pervasive than either.

Sensitivity to the child was a characteristic that emanated from the High Print aware data. For example, Mrs. Bronson knew when to "back off" and flexibly change from a formal technique to Trevor's preferred incidental learning. She was also sensitive to the situation of storybook reading by recognizing that Trevor had different needs than her older son. Although Clifford was anxious to read Trevor's stories, Mrs. Bronson recognized

Trevor's needs for a parent to take a key role in such engagements. Both Mrs. Wengler and Mrs. Bronson were sensitive to their children's requests for stories to be read to them, and made sure that they had the security of knowing that they could anticipate a daily story time, even if it was not always convenient "right now". Mrs. Wengler demonstrated that she was aware when a text was too difficult for Janice, and thus adapted her usual story reading techniques, by summarizing the content and discussing the illustrations with her daughter. Ms. Turner seemed similarly sensitive to Mark's literacy needs by responding to his questions. However, she was somewhat less responsive in providing the regular storybook interactions that Mark desperately desired, e.g. "I need a reader" (Mark, February).

b) Focusing on print.

Although all the strategies outlined seem intimately linked to literacy development I would suggest that such learning is enhanced if they are harnessed not only to story meaning but to print itself. All the parents of the High Print aware children did ask and respond to questions on story content but also incorporated scaffolded print techniques into literacy activities. Over time, Janice and Trevor, without abandoning comprehension, became increasingly interested in the graphic form that encapsulated the story's message. Their parents, undoubtedly because of their children's demands, provided more and more detailed print information, though circuitously I must question whether these children would have been so persistent about print had their parents not previously demonstrated its importance. Here again, we see a slight difference in Mark's pattern in that he seemed more interested in textual meaning than print itself and also he had less opportunities for regular story reading and re-reading, wherein print focusing strategies could be developed.

Hence, it seems that Janice and Trevor benefitted from literacy interactions that incorporated the five strategies and also from parental sensitivity to their needs and increasing attention to print itself. Mark certainly had four strategies utilized in home interactions, though routinized re-reading was less obviously woven into his experiences. His mother, though generally very sensitive to his needs, was less responsive to Mark's pleas for the provision of a secure time for regular story reading. Through lack of re-reading and, I suggest, through irregularity of storybook interactions Mark had more limited opportunities to focus on detailed print information. To add to this complex situation, Mark's own thirst for new knowledge meant that "new books" were more likely to be read than "old books", hence focusing his attention on new content rather than consistently viewed graphic information.

With the Low Print aware children it is simply more difficult to know what type of supportive adult strategies were occurring from the interview data. Janette's mother stated that she did not know what occurred when Michael read to his sister, other than the fact that Michael read aloud and Janette listened. However, it seems likely that Janette's major storybook sessions followed that pattern, for incorporation of strategies requires a mature caregiver and one who is concerned with the other's needs rather than his own performance. When Janette began to request literacy information, e.g. a printed copy of her name and help in writing sentences about special experiences in her life, Mrs. Gearhardt did seem to be sensitive in responding to her child's requests (Strategy I), regulated the activities to enable Janette to demonstrate competence, e.g. writing down one sentence out of a multitude for Janette to copy (Strategy II), and by relating written language to her daughter's lived experiences both focused

on print and attempted to transfer learning across contexts (Strategy IV). She also uncritically accepted Janette's verbal approximation of the alphabet (Strategy V). Mrs. Gearhardt established routines (Strategy III) in terms of ritualizing the context of occurrence of storybook reading though there was little evidence of routinization of the storybook interaction itself in that the re-reading or scaffolding the predictable format of a familiar book rarely occurred. Thus, these strategic qualities were potentially available in the Gearhardt home but seemingly very infrequently utilized until Janette herself initiated requests for literacy information. These requests, suggested Mrs. Gearhardt, arose from Janette's literacy exposures in kindergarten, which seems to affirm my previous suggestion (Chapter Eight: The Children Themselves) that initiation is not a personality characteristic limited to High Print aware children, but that it is related to environmental contexts wherein the child needs to know that print is important before questions are asked.

Mr. Hyde, like Mrs. Gearhardt, noted that he was unaware of occurrences during Marvin's major storybook interactions. As these were conducted by substitute caregivers then Mr. Hyde was invariably absent for these occasions. However, when he described the stories he read to Marvin on an occasional basis, it was clear that the boy adopted an overtly passive stance and rarely initiated any verbal communication. The father did ask questions about the pictures in books, but "nothing too complicated" (December interview: Chapter Four). There seems to be frugal evidence to suggest that Mr. Hyde utilized any of the strategies that were revealed in the High Print aware children's parents' interview data, as both story reading and other literacy activities seemed somewhat functional and formal. At best, Marvin's literacy activities were regulated (Strategy II) and some

sensitivity was shown to his needs, e.g. the father instructed caregivers to read the daily library book to Marvin, and he asked questions of Marvin about book illustrations which he felt were within the ability level of his son. However, the sensitivity displayed in the latter example maybe underestimated Marvin for it contained no expectation that the printed text could hold meaning or interest for him.

Belinda, like Marvin and Janette, appeared to have adopted a passive role in her main storybook interactions, though when Mrs. Williams learned about participatory strategies she did begin to encourage her daughter to join in refrains and take turns in reading (Strategy I). However, the interview and classroom observation data suggests that Belinda's and Mrs. Williams' interactions were inhibited by a continual power struggle. Mrs. Williams attempted to over-regulate her daughter's activities, on some occasions, and Belinda alternated between demonstrating extreme dependence and outright rebellion. Mrs. Williams did not capitalize on her daughter's contributions but frequently coerced Belinda into following her agenda, e.g. filling in "pre-reading" workbook pages. When Belinda requested assistance for her own literacy projects, Mrs. Williams considered them "play" and not "real work" and hence offered little support, e.g. Belinda asked for help in printing some of her classmates' names and her mother gave her the comprehensive list provided by the kindergarten to copy alone. Thus, the scaffolding Belinda received alternated from being rigid steel bars constructed around her by her mother's plans, to almost no structure at all when Belinda wished to pursue personal literacy plans. In addition, Mrs. Williams was openly critical of her daughter's performance. She appreciated exactitude and not approximations and frowned at Belinda's "scribble writing". Thus, in Belinda's home life there was little evidence

of any of the literacy strategies incorporated into the High Print aware children's homes, other than glimpses of attempts to encourage participation in story reading (Strategy I) and inconsistent scaffolding (Strategy II). It seemed that Mrs. Williams cared deeply about Belinda and was constantly anxious about her, but had little conception of the types of parenting techniques in general, and literacy strategies in particular, that would be helpful for stimulating her daughter's development.

Summary of Variables that Make a Difference in the Homes: As the data in the latter section on homes emerged largely from formal interviews and informal conversations with parents, in addition to some classroom observational data, the variables that made a difference to the literacy development of the children must be somewhat tentative. Observational studies of print interactions as they occur in the home (Juliebo, in progress) and analyses of parent-child storybook interactions focusing on favourite and new books (Hayden, in progress) will undoubtedly provide enriching insight into the variables elicited in this study, and may provide new variables to add to these. This would be especially helpful in capturing dynamics embodied in the homes of children with limited literacy knowledge at kindergarten entrance, for this research found few strategies operating regularly in these homes, partially due to the fact that two out of three of the Low Print aware children's parents were minimally involved in literacy interactions with their children, and maybe because my data did reveal what literacy engagements were actually occurring in these homes, i.e. very few. To summarize my findings on the home variables that seemed to have made a difference in the literacy growth of these children, it appears that:

1. Data on parental attitudes, home literacy contexts and home inter-

actions provide far more fertile ground for exploring home-based variables that relate to literacy knowledge acquisition than "surface" factors such as the relative age of the kindergarten child, general personality characteristics and variables connected to the number of children in the family, birth position or the socioeconomic or educational levels of the parents.

2. Although there were similarities in the parental attitudes, e.g. all valued education and all had the same expectations of the Grade One programme, there were also major attitudinal differences between the High and Low Print aware children's parents.

a) The High Print aware children's parents conceived that they had an important role in the development of literacy and consequently wove print-related experiences into their children's lives. They believed that their children were readers-in-progress and were concerned that school reading programmes would stimulate their literacy growth.

b) The Low Print aware children's parents basically believed that reading was a skill encompassed within the school's realm of responsibility. They acknowledged that their role was to assist the school by promoting the children's "readiness" for reading, and perceived that they could best do this by allotting separate literacy "work times" into their children's day, and by following the kindergarten's directives. As separate times for print activities were difficult to engineer within their busy schedules, they seemed to occur only irregularly resulting in some parental guilt feelings. These parents believed that they could only evaluate their children's reading by their progress in the Grade One programme. Presently, in the kindergarten, their children were viewed as "getting ready to be readers".

Classroom observational data revealed that the High Print aware children, and most especially Janice and Trevor, also believed that they were readers-in-progress, and able to take an active role in the learning to read process prior to formal school instruction. The Low Print aware children demonstrated that they were confused about their role in reading, and largely believed, together with their parents, that reading was a skill that a teacher would provide for them at a later date.

3. The home literacy contexts of the High and Low Print aware children only differed in that the former group had access to "old books" in addition to school library books and a current supply of "new books" obtained from other sources, whereas the latter group only had personal and school library books for use. This difference was related to the advanced world knowledge possessed by the High Print aware children, and to the implicit message of the value of the "reading to learn" philosophy which appeared available only for Janice, Trevor and Mark.

4. An exploration of the interactive variables in home literacy engagements revealed that:

- a) The High Print aware children had received more regular literacy interactions than the Low Print aware children during preschool years.
- b) In the High Print aware group, Janice and Trevor received more consistent storybook engagements than Mark during the study, and in the Low Print aware group, all the children received more regular book interactions during Kindergarten than in preschool years.
- c) Regularity of print-related interactions was more likely to occur in High rather than Low Print aware children's homes as the former group experienced ongoing literacy engagements interwoven through their days whereas the latter group's were somewhat limited to formal

occasions. The degree of integration of literacy experiences was viewed as related to the organized body of print-related information possessed by the High Print aware children.

d) The High Print aware children's parents were more actively involved in literacy interactions than the Low Print aware children's parents. The former group had personal interests in literacy and assumed the responsibility for literacy transmission to their children. The latter group were less physically or emotionally involved with literacy interactions with their children for two assigned storybook reading to others and one viewed literacy activities as times "to occupy" her daughter.

e) Strategic differences between the groups and amongst the children could be glimpsed in the interview data on caregiver-child literacy interactions. Janice's and Trevor's caregivers utilized the five strategies delineated in this section and in Chapter Two. They were sensitive to their children's literacy needs and focused increasing attention on print itself during interactions. Mark's home interactions embodied four of the strategies though lacked "routines". Possibly due to this lack, he had less opportunities to focus on specific graphic details than the other two High Print aware children. Also, it was suggested that his mother was not particularly responsive to her son's desires to gain access to regular storybook interactions. With the Low Print aware children, all the strategies appeared to be potentially available in Janette's home, but were rarely utilized by caregivers. In Marvin's and Belinda's homes, few of the strategies were apparent and the parents seemed largely unaware of techniques that could stimulate their children's literacy development.

Community and School Make Differences

Several variables in the community and school appeared to be related to making a difference in the literacy knowledge acquisition of the children (Chapter Five). Again, it is only possible to focus on these variables, rather than to single them out, as all are "links of the chain" of literacy promotion and, hence, all interact with other factors.

The Community: The larger district of Skipton Estates presented a somewhat bleak literacy context for the children:

1. Although there was a central library, it had only been open for a year, was spatially inadequate for the population, and had a limited number of print resources and literacy promotion programmes for young children. In one way the staff may have been nervous to promote too many programmes as they clearly could not fulfil the needs of the district if more people elected to use the library's resources. Less than half of the parents of the kindergarten class were subscribers to this library and only Janice, from the case study children, was a regular visitor. (Mark's mother used another public library.) Thus, other than for Janice, I would suggest that the local public library had very limited impact on the literacy knowledge acquisition of the children, though clearly, with more materials, space and programmes its influence could have been more powerful.

2. Other supplies of printed materials for young children, in the community, were similarly limited. There was one bookstore and several commercial outlets that focused on the promotion of workbook materials and Golden Books. Bookstores with excellent materials for children were all several miles distant from this community. Hence, in an area with such limited literacy resources, the caregivers become key variables in literacy promotion for they have to be aware of the need to provide print materials

in spite of the prevailing conditions. In this study, the High Print aware children's parents demonstrated this awareness and actively sought resources within and outside the community.

3. The environmental print in the community varied between being sparse to escalating into jungle proportions along commercial thoroughfares. The data in this study suggests that research may have over-emphasized a seeming "natural" relationship between environmental print's presence and acquiring literacy knowledge. Goodman (1980) indicates that because, "the environment of three and four year olds ... is filled with the settings, signs and implements of a print oriented society", then children begin, "to discover how print is organized" (p. 1), and Smith (1981) suggests that, "learning is usually effortless ... like breathing" (p. 12). However, the research data indicates that the presence of environmental print in the community does not, in itself, guarantee that learning is in any way "natural" "like breathing", nor do the children necessarily "discover" it on their own. There was every indication that the kindergarten children indeed ignored environmental print in the school until an adult (myself) addressed attention to it, and the High Print aware children in this study had far more advanced knowledge of community print than the Low Print aware children (pre- and post-testing) whether it was presented in context, within symbols or as print (Chapter Seven). Knowledge of environmental print in the community appeared to be linked to two major variables, namely the relative meaning the print had for the children in their lives, e.g. McDonalds, and to the caregivers' mediational strategies, e.g. "Daddy told me" (Janice). A primary difference, I suggest, between the High and Low Print aware children in this study, concerning their knowledge of community print, was the quality of their mediated experiences with caregivers (see

previous section on home attitudes and strategies). The High Print aware children's parents may be viewed as "thick describers" (Suransky, 1981, p. 14) of this print, focusing their children's attention to its features and relating it to their experiences, to permit them to make further cognitive discoveries and interconnections on their own. Learning environmental print is thus as "effortless" as the human conditions in the children's environment permit.

The Community and School: The community and school had established a close liaison, which appeared to make a difference in the lives of the children. As many of the local parents had been involved in promoting the construction of Malham School, had used the facilities for community events, had been invited to engage in the school's ongoing activities via the school's "open door" policy, and had a principal who valued diversity in the community and school, then the conditions for mutual support amongst the parents and staff members seemed excellent. I suggest that the children's rapid integration into the school's socialization and communication patterns was assisted by the physical flow of community members in and out of school, and by the close emotional ties between the school and the community it served. Although literacy transmission in the kindergarten could well have been inhibited for some children because of widely divergent communication and socialization patterns between home and school (Heath, 1982a, b; Rist, 1973), such was not the case in this study, in spite of the class members' multicultural composition.

The School Library: Although it appeared that the school's environmental print had little impact on the literacy development of the children, the school's library must be considered a leading variable that made a difference to the literacy knowledge acquisition of the children.

1. The school's librarian, Joanne Windsor, made a major contribution to the children's knowledge growth. Her belief in the importance of establishing a network of contacts ensured that the school had outstanding literacy resources, that parents and staff were involved in the library programme and that her sphere of influence extended throughout the community. She was undoubtedly the major link that chained the school and community together in joint literacy promotion. Her positive attitudes and actions were so overwhelmingly important in the lives of the children because the larger community offered so few print resources. Malham School was the focal centre of the community and its library was the main distribution point for books and literacy messages. Without a librarian who believed so fervently in networking literacy across the school and community, and a programme that put these beliefs into action, then the prospects for the literacy development of some of these young children would have been as bleak as the larger literacy contexts in which they resided.

2. The librarian's programme was viewed as especially important for the Low Print aware children, in this study, who had been exposed to limited literacy resources and interactions during preschool years.

- a) For the Low Print aware children, the kindergarten library programme offered the only major resources for new print materials in the home.
- b) These children had experienced few regular storybook interactions prior to kindergarten entrance and the daily book exchange maximized the opportunity for consistent story reading during their final year before the onset of formal reading instruction.
- c) As the Low Print aware children's parents operated under external

directives, believing that literacy promotion was largely the school's domain, then school messages concerning regular storybook interactions were likely to be translated into action in their homes.

d) The library workshop promoted sound strategies for inclusion in story reading sessions, and demonstrated these to the parents in attendance. Mrs. Williams utilized some of these strategies in subsequent book interactions with Belinda. Unfortunately, nobody attended this workshop from Marvin's home, and as Janette's father, who did attend, almost never read stories to his children, then the transferral of such strategies for these children may have ranged from non-existent (Marvin) to minimal (Janette).

e) The librarian's weekly story sessions in the library, with the kindergarten class, provide all the Low Print aware children with opportunities to interact with books and reader in a competent and confident manner; a participatory experience they did not always enjoy in the classroom (Chapter Six) nor in their homes (Chapters Four and Eight). Thus, they had at least one experience a week of what it was like to share quality literature with an adult, albeit that this experience was conducted in a group wherein maximum linkage between their worlds and the world of written language could not be effectively promoted as in small caregiver-child settings.

3. The library programme was important as an enriching experience for the High Print aware children.

a) The daily book exchange created an additional source of new books for their homes.

b) The storybooks provided in the programme established opportunities for the children to make literacy links in that Mark pursued series

of books with similar illustrators, Janice with authors that she had discovered at home and the public library, and Trevor with topics such as snakes.

c) The programme also provided opportunities for me to discover, and the High Print aware children to experience, the complementarity between their home-based book interactions and their library-based storybook engagements. Strategies and attitudes elicited from the High Print aware children's parents' interview data seemed intrinsically similar to the belief system of Ms. Windsor and the techniques she used in library sessions. Thus, for these children, home experiences with books were reinforced by their library experiences, but not necessarily their classroom book engagements which were irregularly provided and encompassed rather functional strategies (Chapter Six).

"The Human Factor": Summary of a Variable that Makes a Difference Across Community, School and Home Contexts

Hence, within the community and school, as well as in the homes, what makes a difference to the literacy development of these children is the "human factor". A person who takes the responsibility to integrate community with school (the principal), people who accept primary responsibility for literacy transmission to their children in preschool years (High Print aware children's parents), and a person who acknowledges that, especially in a community with limited resources, the school has an active role in literacy promotion prior to formal reading instruction (the librarian), collectively make significant contributions to the literacy growth of children. All the children in this study received some benefit from the school and library sub-contexts, though only the High Print aware

children had access to a parental belief system that incorporated literacy into their everyday lives.

The Kindergarten Makes a Difference

As in the other sub-contexts involved in the children's lives, I view the "human factor" as being primarily important in the classroom context. The success of the kindergarten programme largely depended on the teacher's intents, content and organization. Ambivalently that was its greatest strength and its greatest weakness. Ideally it optimized opportunities for building on the children's worlds by expanding knowledge from their contributions, and dispensed with the invariable pressure, expressed by many teachers, of "getting through the curriculum" sometimes at the expense of children's individual needs. However, the freedom for teacher decision making could also be viewed as a vulnerable aspect in the kindergarten agenda, i.e. the teacher's autonomy in the planning and execution of the programme may be based entirely on personal feelings for what may be a "good thing to pursue". Without a clear personal philosophy of young children's learning, the teacher could present a programme that lacked cohesion and clear messages. Thus, the teacher, as the main programme planner and caregiver, was a key variable in the kindergarten classroom in terms of making a difference to the literacy knowledge growth of the children. Clearly, the teacher did not make a difference on her own. The children's contributions, acquired through past and present experiences with home caregivers and the community, were complexly involved in making differences to their own literacy learning.

The Goldilocks' Syndrome: In the following sections the emphasis focuses rather heavily on the teacher's role in the kindergarten programme. Many of the summarized variables do not seem to be positive in relation to

the learning experiences of the children, though I must stress that Mrs. Compton was motivated by a great personal interest in the development of the children in her class. As Elkind discussed The Hurried Child (1981), I have to raise "The Hurried Teacher" or the Goldilocks' Syndrome. Goldilocks was happy when she discovered the chair that was "just right" in the three bears' house, though the same chair collapsed just after her discovery and hence she quickly found a bed to rest on that was also "just right". Even that had problems, as she discovered when the house's occupants returned home! In many ways teachers are being pressured by societal demands to create the classroom that is "just right" for the promotion of academic success in schools, just as parents are pressured by schools to create children who are "just right" for Grade One or Grade Four, and just as provincial governments advocate that children have to be "just right" for test performances. In a way, am I not also suggesting that Mrs. Compton's programme has to be "just right" for literacy promotion? Mrs. Compton may be viewed as being caught in a cultural vicious circle. As earnestly as she tries to incorporate all the new ideas into her classroom, to make it "just right" then her "chair" collapses and new content and methodologies emerge that have to be dealt with. Being in this position is not enviable and possibly can only be counteracted by a strong personal philosophical conception of how learning takes place and a subsequent filtering of "the new" to incorporate changes that may make a contribution to children's development. As researchers, from a multiplicity of perspectives, are still gathering information on variables that make a difference to young children's learning then it is not surprising that Mrs. Compton was caught up in the Goldilocks' Syndrome as she pursued the path trodden by many cultural members to discover what was "just right" for

her children. 1

Congruence of Intent:

1. Mrs. Compton's intents to weave the community into classroom life mirrored the school's philosophy. As a community member herself, and as a believer in the "open door" policy, she welcomed parents as helpers in the kindergarten. As previously suggested, this intent to incorporate community resources was translated into action in the kindergarten and facilitated the transition of all the children into the socio-communicative patterns of schooling.
2. Mrs. Compton's previous experiences as a Grade One teacher influenced her planning of the kindergarten programme. Her primary intent was school socialization and a secondary intent was preparing the children academically for Grade One entrance. In the socialization purpose her views were entirely congruent with all the six parents interviewed in this study. In the secondary purpose, Noreen Compton's intents more nearly matched the Low Print aware children's parents' expectations, for the High Print aware children's parents were not overly concerned with specific academic preparation. Undoubtedly they realized that their children possessed a great deal of this "preparedness" prior to kindergarten entrance. Although there may have been similarity in intents between the teacher and the Low Print aware children's parents, there were some differences between them in terms of how these intents were translated into action. Also there were periods of incongruity in the classroom wherein Mrs. Compton's belief system about literacy appeared to change for short timespans. Both these internal changes and the differences between parental and teacher expectations resulted in confusion for the Low Print aware children.

a) Mrs. Compton believed that literacy promotion should be reserved

for the second portion of the school year, though some print activities could be included in the pre-Christmas period for children who were "ready" to benefit from them. Thus, her views on literacy seemed to be intrinsically similar to the Low Print aware children's parents, i.e. (i) literacy involved skills that could be developed in allotted time periods rather than being informally interwoven through experiences, and (ii) there were children who were "ready" for reading and those who were not. However, there was divergence in the parents' and teacher's views concerning the role of responsibility for literacy preparedness. Mrs. Compton transmitted the message that literacy skills would be "worked on" after Christmas, but this was inconsistent with what occurred in the classroom. Though isolated print activities increased in number during January and February there was no commensurate increase in the adults' mediation of print in the classroom. Rather, print knowledge was tested more consistently but not taught more regularly. This incongruence caused distress for Belinda and confusion for her mother. Mrs. Williams had assumed that the school would formally teach print skills and that her role would be to review such skills with Belinda. Her confusion was not surprising when we consider the November newsletter that had been sent home to the parents, wherein it was explained that the kindergarten would "work on" specific facets of knowledge, i.e.

"I can do" Charts:

We will soon be putting up our "I" charts in the hallway. Each time we work on them (about once a week) and your child knows how to do or say one of the following:

1. telephone number
2. address
3. birthdate
4. ABC's (say or sing)
5. tie shoelaces
6. count to 20
7. print first name (capital 1st letter and lowercase)

8. identifies uppercase letters in isolation
 9. identifies lowercase letters in isolation
- an addition will be made to his/her chart ... Any help you can give your child ... would be most helpful. (November newsletter)

It was thus suggested that the school would "work" on the skills and the parents would "help", but during my observations the "work" involved a caregiver testing the child on this knowledge, and hence the real purpose seemed to have been for the parents to teach these items at home.

As the High Print aware children possessed all the knowledge to complete the literacy items before they entered kindergarten then this inconsistency between purpose and practice was not at all worrying for them. At the most, they had to refine their name printing to incorporate lowercase letters. For Janette and Belinda the incongruity was of more concern, though Marvin was barely affected by it as he left the school before the testing became in full operation. Janette, a rather perceptive learner of the kindergarten's organization and hidden agenda, seemed to capture the testing routine's intents and each time a new item was being checked she rushed home and asked her mother for instruction. Mrs. Gearhardt reported her surprise concerning Janette's sudden requests for name, address and telephone samples to copy (February interview), though I suggest that the specific impetus arose from the kindergarten's testing programme. Belinda, marginally less worldly-wise about hidden agendas, was distressed by the checking programme and her mother was left feeling both inadequate and guilty. In November, Mrs. Williams had discovered that the kindergarten may not actually teach the basic literacy skills, but by February events really convinced her that the home was expected to teach them, not the kindergarten.

... Noreen asked us to make up some words and stuff and the kids to recognize these words (colour and number words. November's literacy context: Chapter Five) ...

and I haven't done any of those -- same with her phone number and stuff -- I never taught her -- I never got into it and they started testing and she came home and she was really upset -- she came home crying -- I felt really bad because I hadn't bothered to learn her. (March 1st interview: Mrs. Williams)

Thus, this incongruence between implied and actual intents had more impact on the Low than the High Print aware children. For Belinda this ambiguity resulted in distress and feelings of incompetence, matched by her mother's feelings. For Janette it provided a performance pressure, though also an opportunity to ask literacy questions at home that resulted in prompt action. Also, for both children it increased the possibility that formal print interactions would occur at home and that such engagements would focus on name printing and isolated letter activities (items 4, 7, 8 and 9 on the newsletter). For Janice, Trevor and Mark it provided no literacy pressures or concerns, but rather opportunities for competent displays of knowledge that they had learned in informal meaningful contexts and which they had possessed for a long time.

b) Although Mrs. Compton's intents demonstrated that she perceived literacy promotion as not necessarily integrated as a process into the daily lives of the children, there were occasional actions and time periods wherein her actions reflected that literacy may be a process rather than a skill. However, her infrequent forays into more holistic conceptions of literacy were short-lived and she eventually moved back into her basic 'skills' framework:

(i) Mrs. Compton was involved with the librarian in the kindergarten book programme. The teacher's alliance with the librarian and her explicitly stated beliefs in the value of the programme suggested that Mrs. Compton shared Ms. Windsor's conceptions about weaving literacy into the lives of the children. However, there was

little evidence of the presence of Ms. Windsor's conceptions within the classroom. For example, daily storybook reading was an expectation for the home but not the classroom in that books were read irregularly to the children in the kindergarten context. In addition, the librarian suggested the value of holistic storybook engagements via the utilization of narrative story schemas, and the values of re-reading books. In the classroom, books were equally likely to be descriptive as narrative and none were re-read during the observational period.

(ii) Occasionally Mrs. Compton encouraged the children to dictate stories for their paintings and to construct language experience charts (three times in six months). Though the children were extremely involved in these activities they were short term and never consistently pursued. After a brief period, Mrs. Compton reverted to her emphasis on isolated letter and word activities.

The latter incongruities were probably more confusing for the Low rather than the High Print aware children. The High Print aware children entered kindergarten knowing that reading involved sensemaking and that it was interwoven into their lives. Experiencing this in preschool years their basic conceptions of reading were not changed by these inconsistencies. They developed coping strategies by either avoiding print activities they did not find meaningful (Mark) or by utilizing them once to check information they largely possessed already (Janice and Trevor). For the Low Print aware children the incongruities were more serious as they had no well formed literacy knowledge base to fall back upon. Their homes had implicitly taught them that print activities were separate elements in their lives and depended upon learning skills. The kindergarten classroom mainly

reinforced the view that literacy was separate and, as yet, out of their reach (Chapter Six). However, it occasionally gave them new glimpses, i.e. language experience activities, wherein Janette and Belinda believed that they were readers-in-progress. By February their self-perceptions reflected their environmental learning in that they largely conceived that they were non-readers (e.g. performance on the Environmental Print Task), but still had some flexibility in conceiving that they may be participants in literacy learning (e.g. "Brown Bear" book interaction).

Content: Integration and Contributions: In the kindergarten programme there was one major content variable that influenced the children's relative acquisition of literacy knowledge, namely that the print-related content emerged almost entirely from the teacher's agenda. Invariably that resulted in a programme where emphasis was placed on the transmission of informational content related to the selected topic rather than on underlying concepts and strategies, and where the children's contributions were minimized.

1. Integration of topic versus integration of concepts.

The year's literacy topics were largely pre-planned by the teacher, and the main criterion for the inclusion or exclusion of materials centred around their degree of match with selected topics. Thus, many letter or word tasks that featured, for example, dinosaurs, were potentially available for inclusion in literacy activities in February, whereas other content, however valuable for literacy promotion, was less valued as it presented no topic congruence. The monthly theme topic was almost tyrannical in its power over content selection. Presumably the concept of integrating activities under a topic umbrella was intended to present an organized body of knowledge to the children. However, though the topic content presented

a unified front, the teacher's perception of integrating knowledge was problematic in that the concepts transmitted within the umbrella's shelter were not organized or holistic. For example, in February, the names of the dinosaurs provided the basic informational content in Group and Centre Time activities. These isolated words were repeated in a multitude of activities so that the children could construct their form with popsicle sticks and letter cards, could count the numbers of letters in each and could match the name cards with duplicate samples. On occasions, language experience charts, focusing on dinosaurs, were constructed and the children were permitted to dictate stories for their own dinosaur paintings. Thus the informational content relating to dinosaurs was interwoven and unified across activities, but the literacy procedures, and messages transmitted about reading itself, were fragmented. On many days the view that reading involved counting or identifying isolated letters was communicated. On other occasions, albeit infrequent, the message was delivered that reading involved reconstructing meaning from holistic written language. Hence, topic congruence may seem a sound technique for presenting integrated knowledge to children, but if the teacher does not communicate a cohesive message about reading itself, then there seems little advantage to be gained from topic congruence in literacy activities.

The only literacy content to 'escape' from thematic dominance, in the kindergarten, was the books in the library corner. Though, in September, these texts had all focused on the zoo animal theme, from October to February storybooks were chosen due to the librarian's belief in the value of narratives in caregiver-child interactions (Chapter Five). Hence, in the kindergarten library, storybooks, with their informational content, were vehicles for the transmission of an organized body of literacy concepts

that had been explained to the parents at the orientation meeting, the library workshop and in newsletters. In this case, the concepts about reading were cohesive and though the storybook vehicles were pre-selected, a vast range of informational content was incorporated within the books that circulated between the school and home. Thus, the kindergarten book programme operated in a diametrically different manner than the classroom. For the book programme, conceptual messages about the learning-to-read process were organized and informational content was diffuse. For the kindergarten, the opposite was true in that topics for literacy activities were integrated and concepts about reading were not cohesive.

2. The teacher's contributions versus the children's contributions.

As most of the literacy materials emerged in conjunction with the informational content planned by the teacher, then there was little opportunity in the kindergarten for the children to make personal contributions. A topic per se does not rule out children's contributions but the provision of pre-planned, structured tasks that are expected to be completed in specific ways does minimize what children can actually create for themselves. For example, words to be identified or spelled out in Group Time were all provided by Mrs. Compton, and hence the children's input was controlled not only by socio-communicative expectations but also by her teaching procedures that focused on isolated letters and words, and by the informational content. Similarly, in Centre Times, words to be constructed or printed were controlled by expectations for task completion and by the print samples provided for the children to copy. A well planned unit translated into action meant that all literacy samples emerged from what the teacher perceived to be important content rather than from the children's perceptions. In addition, books read to the children at Group

Time were invariably selected for their thematically-related information and differences in the children's background knowledge influenced the degree of possible child involvement.

There were rare occasions when the children were permitted to make contributions to the literacy content. During Mrs. Compton's forays into language experience the children were encouraged to participate. However, as the main language experience acceleration occurred in February, some children had doubts about their ability to contribute after five months of being asked to follow the teacher's agenda. For example, in a previously cited episode (Chapter Six), Belinda felt that she could not be "a helper" in joining in with the first predictable book she had experienced in the classroom. Over the course of the study, very few children had opportunities to dictate stories for their paintings. For Belinda this opportunity occurred once, for Mark twice, for Janice once (with me on the final day of the study: March 1st), and for Trevor, Marvin and Janette, not at all during my classroom observations. Marvin was the only case study child that I observed demanding his own print information. He surprised the aide, in November, by rejecting the hospital words provided in the printing centre and requesting "ambulance", a word that was more personally meaningful for him than the teacher's samples. The word was verbally spelled out for him and interestingly Janice, his printing partner, also elected to print "ambulance". Janice's action was linked to a clear pattern that was repeated endlessly at the printing centre, i.e. that as the sample words were too conceptually difficult for the children then they elected to concentrate on form and stamp patterns rather than to copy the words. Janice, on this occasion, abandoned her patterns and stamped "ambulance", as the meaning of the word and the function of the activity suddenly made

sense to her.

I have suggested that the major content variable identified in the classroom was that most of the literacy information emerged from the teacher, and that Mrs. Compton's emphasis on topic-related, content integration was pursued at the expense of the transmission of an organized, holistic body of literacy concepts and resulted in both possible confusion for the children and the minimal use of their contributions. The central variable with its two interrelated results clearly had some impact on all of the children.

For the High Print aware children, I suggest that the impact was not strongly deleterious but presented some feelings of unrest in the children. Janice, Trevor and Mark were used to their literacy contributions being considered important at home and being interwoven into their lives. This situation changed when they entered kindergarten, partially because the caregiver-child ratio was larger than Janice and Trevor, though not Mark, had experienced, and also because they were now expected to follow the teacher's literacy agenda, rather than co-operatively evolve their own with an adult. These changes, I believe, were related to Trevor's increasing sense of boredom with kindergarten (Interview with Mrs. Bronson, February) wherein most of the teacher's print-related tasks were well within his capabilities and he accessed few adult interactions with new content that may have "stretched" his growing edge. The boredom may also have been linked to frustration in that the major literacy activity that offered Trevor a challenge was the print on the computer software and on this task he rarely gained adult support. The general feeling of unrest or disquiet observed in the High Print aware children was illustrated by Janice's and Trevor's "one stop" literacy experiences wherein they completed each Centre

Time literacy task once and never revisited it. The difference between "Janice the follower of the teacher's agenda" and "Janice the personal contributor" was observed during the final few days of the study. During these days I had changed my role by encouraging the case study children to interact with me as they chose. Janice grasped the opportunity to read me stories and to ask me to write dictated stories for her paintings. Her absorption was apparent. Mark displayed a similar literacy involvement when he worked with Mrs. Compton to create a dinosaur chart and two stories during the same time period. These observations provided me with glimpses of "what might have been" had these children been encouraged to contribute their own content over the rest of the study.

Such moments of literacy-related absorption were not common experiences for these children, though were most often displayed in the classroom when they re-enacted story schemas in play or at the listening centre, or when they were engaged in solitary book engagements, i.e. when they were the major contributors. The lack of personal print contributions in the classroom may well have had a neutralizing effect on Mark's literacy knowledge growth. He was a child whose primary learning occurred through the self-initiation of projects wherein print was interwoven through his activities (Chapter Four). This exploratory approach was not open to him during most of the classroom centres, and he ignored the teacher provided print tasks to tackle the materials where he could engage with maximum creativity. With the decline in home storybook interactions and a school environment that did not maximize his print contributions, Mark had few opportunities to fine-tune his orthographic strategies and hence his literacy knowledge acquisition remained relatively stable over time. Although Janice's and Trevor's contributions were rarely utilized at

school, they continued with co-operative book and print activities at home throughout the research, and hence the kindergarten had little negative impact on their growth. In fact, the teacher's activities that focused on print's distinctive features may have assisted them in refining their knowledge about form. Also, for all the three High Print aware children, the teacher's content agenda was not threatening for they possessed a wealth of world knowledge and could engage in the topic-related information. Their knowledge about literacy had been holistically acquired at home and daycare (Mark) and hence the lack of organization of literacy concepts did not confuse their long-standing comprehension of the reading process.

For the Low Print aware children, the teacher's agenda may have been a major stumbling block in that it severely limited their contributions in Group and Centre Time activities. As their knowledge bases were personally contextualized, and as they had less general background information on topics than the High Print aware children, then Janette, Belinda and Marvin did not experience a great deal of success in class discussions and specifically in group communicative exchanges that demanded literacy displays. They could count letters in words but could not identify all the letters in order to spell words aloud, and consequently were unable to participate fully on the numerous occasions when this knowledge was required. During Centre Time print activities these children were unable to complete tasks. Many of the sample words used in the literacy activities had few meaning associations for the children, and several times they were observed matching or constructing words that they could not identify. Over time, the Low Print aware children demonstrated behaviours that suggested they felt incompetent in tackling the Centre Time print tasks. Marvin displayed attention-seeking behaviours, e.g. yelling and flinging felt letters into the air,

Belinda carefully avoided them and Janette resorted to "bossy", controlling verbalizations with friends in order to exert some control over social behaviour when intellectual engagement seemed impossible. The Low Print aware children were particularly susceptible to classroom messages about literacy as they had limited conceptions about print prior to kindergarten and what messages they did possess were intrinsically similar to the ones Mrs. Compton was promoting. Thus, over the course of the study they learned that reading was a difficult task, that it involved identifying the distinctive features of letters, and that it should be avoided until "the subject" was taught them or until an adult requested that they learn a specific skill, e.g. printing their names.

Though the children echoed these messages as I observed them attempting to say each letter in a storybook or commenting on the difficulty of a print task, I was amazed by their flexibility. Not only did Janette, Belinda and Marvin attempt to make sense of the teacher's literacy content by developing alternate coping strategies but they also demonstrated that they had developed a nucleus of different concepts about literacy that seemed to lie incompatibly next to the former set. In situations where the conditions were "just right" these children displayed a sensemaking approach to print. For example, Janette and Belinda confidently read a language experience chart and vigorously participated in the co-operative reading of "Brown Bear". On those occasions they believed that they were active and competent participants. Thus, though they received somewhat confused conceptions about reading from many of the tasks at home and in the kindergarten, their attitudes were not yet core beliefs, but situation specific. These children, with careful adult support that maximized their contributions, were still open to receive the message that print has a function, makes

sense and requires active participation on the part of the reader-in-progress. At the conclusion of this study these Low Print aware children were vulnerable in that if two major sub-contexts in their lives (home and school) continue to minimize their contributions then how long will it be before they adopt their passive literacy role as a core belief?

Organizational Time and Space: During this study, I observed a restless quality underlying the programme's organization. This restlessness stemmed from the classroom caregivers and was linked to external messages that they were receiving from conferences and workshops which promoted new ways of providing "just right" content and methodologies. Mrs. Compton and Mrs. Webster frequently acted upon these outside messages which resulted in organizational changes in the classroom (Chapter Five).

1. Space

The literacy centres in the classroom, throughout the spatial changes that occurred, were not interrelated with each other, and the restricted range of materials in each area did not stimulate the children to collect an organized body of literacy knowledge. Firstly, due to information received at a conference, both classroom caregivers decided that certain areas should be clustered to maximize opportunities for knowledge integration. However, the interrelated pursuit of literacy knowledge could not take place for, though the spatial arrangements altered, the organizational procedures in the classroom did not change, i.e. no movement amongst centres was allowed. Hence, having the library corner next to the printing centre and close to the story listening table made no difference to literacy integration as the children were not free to move from one activity to another. Secondly, there was a further separation within literacy events in that resources were limited within each centre. For

example, in the printing centre, no crayons or pencils were incorporated. Hence, Mark abandoned his letter writing activity as he found printing letters frustratingly slow and could not find a pencil to complete the task. Marvin, attempting to create a meaningful activity in the same centre, by cutting out his letter patterns was told to return his scissors to the craft centre. Thus, integrating print with other experiences was not encouraged within or between centres containing literacy materials despite the new spatial arrangements that had been provided for this purpose. Thirdly, the spatial plans to stimulate literacy cohesion were short-term. The library corner was soon moved to a separate location in the classroom and was thus physically removed from both the other literacy activities and all other centres. In the cloakroom, the library was literally separated from the main stream of classroom life and on no occasions did I observe a child carrying a book to another area of the classroom though a reasonable place for books would have been the playhouse where the children reconstructed scenes from family life.

Although Mrs. Compton tried to act on new messages concerning the cross-contextualization of literacy learning the concept did not succeed, possibly because such integration would have interfered with her primary purpose, school socialization. She had spent time and energy on training the children to use the centres in a specific way and permitting movement amongst areas would have broken basic rules that were transmitted to the children at the beginning of the year. Also, I must question whether new messages can immediately override established beliefs in that Mrs. Compton's excursions into holistic literacy activities were brief and her spatial changes to encourage the integration of literacy learning were equally short term. It would seem that in the flip-flops between conceiving

literacy as skills' learning and conceptualizing it as a process interwoven through experiences, the former approach more nearly matched the teacher's belief system.

2. Time

The sense of change within the classroom also influenced the literacy context in that what was here today may not be available for use tomorrow, and Centre Time periods varied so much in duration that the children could not predict whether they might finish activities that they had started.

In the previous section, and in Chapter Six, I suggested that Janice and Trevor moved from one print activity to another until they had tried each one once. I inferred that these children did not revisit them as the activities were not particularly meaningful and also because there was no intrinsic need for them to continually display knowledge that they already possessed. I wonder, however, if their purposeful movement around each activity at the beginning of each thematic unit was not also linked to these children's increasing awareness that if they did not approach the activity immediately it might not be available later. Noreen Compton, herself, worried that she had introduced too many new things into the kindergarten context during the year (March 1st interview). Certainly, the introduction of new ideas did both result in the constant spatial changes and the fact that little time was spent in consolidating old information before new knowledge was introduced. At times there was a frenetic pace to classroom life to ensure that the computer was introduced, the hospital unit clarified, the mathematics equipment incorporated, the shape blocks utilized effectively and the carpentry bench established. In the movement to the new, loose ends were left untied in that unfinished work was put in book bags to be completed at home, dictating stories for

paintings commenced in the fall and this was not engaged in again until late February, and help with printing names was always intended to be provided but the time never materialized. New content thus triumphed over the consolidation of concepts and monopolized time in the classroom. Amongst all this change, presumably initiated to stimulate the children, Belinda complained, "I wonder why we don't have house any more" (February 28th). The old and familiar, the place where competence could be demonstrated and where personal contributions were maximized, was what Belinda desired more than anything.

In addition to the global time constraints placed on the programme by the influx of new content, each afternoon may have had some limiting aspect on literacy development as the centre timing was unpredictable. As no area movement was permitted until the teacher's signal was heard, then the children had no concept of how long they were likely to be permitted to engage in each activity. Centre timing could vary from a few minutes to almost an hour in length (Chapter Five) and thus there were possibilities that time allowed could be too long, too short or "just right" to effect task closure. Thus, a library book could be abandoned halfway through or a child could be left in this centre, which accessed little adult time, for so long that she developed the concept that "Books is borin'" (Belinda, February 25th). With teacher, rather than child, controlled time only luck was on your side in effecting a sense of completion. All too often literacy activities were too extended and promoted boredom, or too short so that stories were half-heard and words were partially constructed. It is difficult to know why Centre Times were controlled by the teacher. Mark's mother offered a clue in that she suggested that her son had attended a day-care wherein centre movement was permitted. Mark liked the kindergarten's

teacher's timing of centres because it was like "real school". Could it be possible that timed centres were part of school socialization where children may be anticipated to leave one activity unfinished because a new subject was about to commence? This raises new questions. Do we permit our children to effect closure on literacy activities in kindergartens or in our elementary grade based system? Could such lack of closure be linked to limited task absorption and reported "short attention spans" in some children?

Such questions require longitudinal investigation and within the scope of this study I can only address short term concerns. I do suggest that the classroom's organizational structure had an impact on all the children.

Janice, Trevor and Mark expressed non-verbal and verbal frustrations with leaving incomplete activities and with the lack of a range of print centres within literacy centres. Janice faithfully followed the teacher's injunctions to avoid cross-contextual movement and to move to new centres on command. Trevor delayed leaving centres and almost always effected his own form of closure, e.g. he quickly finished his flannelboard enactment of "The Three Little Pigs" before he moved on. Mark, though verbally expressing pleasure in the space and time controls, rarely followed them. Some materials would catch his interest and he would move to a new centre, invariably escaping the teacher's notice. Mark's movement to new activities seemed to be quite subconsciously driven by his curiosity rather than motivated by any plan to circumnavigate "the system". As with the content variable, however, I would suggest that the classroom organization did not greatly interfere with the High Print aware children's literacy development, though neither did it enhance it. These children

had experienced years of integrated literacy activities at home and six months of kindergarten did not change their basic approaches to tasks or to literacy. Also, within the kindergarten system, they were aided by their own sound literacy knowledge in that as it was integrated and available for use, they were able to complete many of the print tasks rapidly and hence achieve their own closure within others' time constraints.

As with the teacher's intents and content, the classroom organizational limitations were perceived to have a more dramatic impact on the Low Print aware children. Firstly, as the literacy content was difficult for them, too long a time period engaged in solitary interactions with provided materials resulted in frustration and increased feelings of personal incompetence. Time on task was limited as they were unable to engage effectively with the content, and the movement prohibitions prevented them from attempting to make sense of an activity by incorporating other materials into it, e.g. scissors and crayons in the printing centre. When a centre period was too short they had hardly mustered their available literacy resources and strategies before it was time to move on. Secondly, the organization and content limitations resulted in observable avoidance behaviours in these children. Prior to this research I had associated "bathroom wanderers" with severely frustrated children in upper elementary grades or in junior high schools. I now realize that this behaviour can be exhibited by kindergarten children. Janette, over the course of the study, developed a very short attention span and eventually had little perseverance for many literacy-related tasks. By February, she could still be absorbed in the librarian's weekly stories and in the painting or carpentry centres, but when she was expected to be engaged in print-related activities during Centre Times Janette's time was largely taken up with

continual visits to the bathroom, with quiet, uninvolved centre wandering or in attempts to exchange centre cards without attracting the caregivers' attention. Thus, Janette's waxing and waning attention and involvement was situation specific. When she felt comfortable and competent then she became absorbed, but when the content was too difficult, and when she could not officially control her own spatial or time movements, her concentration declined alarmingly. I watched similar patterns develop in Marvin and Belinda, though these children rarely wandered but chose, instead, to create noisy social scenarios in place of teacher provided tasks. Both children thus accessed "correctional time" from classroom caregivers. As Marvin chose literacy activities, his noisy avoidance behaviours also accessed him on-task time wherein adults attempted to refocus his attention back to the print. As Belinda rarely chose print-related tasks such behaviours did not result in caregivers assisting her in this area. Thus, I suggest, the classroom organization heightened these children's awareness of the separateness of literacy from other activities and of the relationship between print and the self-perception of "it's too hard for me to be involved with". Over time, content, space and time variables in the classroom de-emphasized their active involvement in print-related tasks. With a little adult reconstruction we may change Belinda's resigned comment, "Books is borin'" to "Literacy is borin'". Boredom and frustration seem intimately linked in human experiencing.

Interactions: In the kindergarten classroom three basic social forms were observed during literacy-related interactions:

Type I: Describer-Learner

- a) Caregiver-whole group interactions, i.e. "Teacher talk", monologues or functional interactions.
- b) Caregiver-child (or small group of children)

- (i) Functional, non-expanded communication that focused on class organization or on efficient task completion.
- (ii) Elaborative, co-operative dialogue that utilized the children's contributions and was intrinsically similar to Feuerstein's descriptions of a mediated learning experience (Feuerstein et al, 1980).

Type II: Learner-Learner

Peer interactions that could "fade" quickly, dwell on functional information or be elaborative depending on the shared knowledge base of participants and their mutual desire for social exchange.

Type III: Learner-Stimuli

Children's direct interactions with classroom print-related materials.

Two major interactive factors were observed to influence the degree of literacy knowledge acquired by the children in this study.

1. Interdependence of the Forms

Facility in engaging in peer print-related interactions (Type II) and in direct interactions with classroom materials (Type III) was related to prior experiences on supported socio-communicative literacy encounters with caregivers (Type I). To be able to engage in co-operate literacy dialogue with classmates required that participants either had shared knowledge or that one initiated child could model previously experienced caregiver strategies to coach a less initiated learner partner. In a similar vein, to be able to demonstrate independence and competence during solitary interactions with literacy materials demanded a well developed knowledge base and, interrelatedly, previous experiences with adult supported print engagements. Thus, independence (Type III interactive form) and peer collaboration (Type II) depended heavily on prior social learning experiences. One of Mrs. Compton's aims was the promotion of independent work habits (academic intent) and another was the facilitation of co-

operative interactions (socialization intent), but realistically these could only occur with literacy materials if the children had already experienced caregiver-supported engagements (Vygotsky, 1978). The interdependence of forms, in that Type II and Type III relied on scaffolded caregiver support (Type I), posed little difficulty for the High Print aware children in this study in that they had been involved in consistent mediated literacy engagements in their home contexts. However, such interdependence presented problems for the Low Print aware children who appeared to have received few elaborative literacy exchanges with caregivers during preschool years, and could similarly rely on the classroom providing minimal print-related mediation during their kindergarten year.

2. Caregiver Strategies

a) Monologues: Group Time caregiver-child interactions in the kindergarten often centred around lengthy monologues delivered by the teacher wherein new themes were introduced, materials explained or current topics explicated. The flow of communication was uni-directional in that the children were expected to listen silently to "teacher talk". Sometimes stories read to the class could be described as monologues as Mrs. Compton read and the children listened. Qualities characteristic of the monologue strategy were that 1) the teacher held the conversational floor, 2) the intent was to transmit content related to socialization and academic preparedness, and 3) the children's participation was limited to "just listening" and occasional responses to the teacher's questions that focused on checking knowledge transmitted. One of numerous examples of the monologue strategy is provided by the introduction of the hospital theme (November 3rd). Mrs. Compton had been monologuing for 45 minutes on "how we use our hospital materials". The children were expected to listen

silently as dozens of new pieces of equipment were described. In the middle of a lengthy sub-monologue concerning oxygen equipment, Marvin suddenly lost his glazed, dreamy expression and declared, "My Grandpa died". Mrs. Compton commented, "Oh dear", and immediately continued her flow of verbalization on the correct storage of oxygen masks. Monologues thus served to transmit enormous amounts of content without incorporating the children's contributions and were somewhat similar to television broadcasts with the same expectations of a passive audience. They lacked flexibility and awareness of the children's needs and were rigidly scaffolded in order that the teacher's agenda could be completed. Such communicative patterns were paced and regulated in order to transmit the maximum amount of content to the group in the most time efficient manner. Hence, children's questions and comments were interruptions and treated as such.

The results of monologues were clearly observable. The High Print aware children, following monologues that introduced print-related materials, either ignored many of the tasks (Mark) or demonstrated sufficient personal competence to engage in them successfully (Janice and Trevor). The latter two children had enough print-related knowledge to connect with the teacher's agenda and could "fill in the gaps" on their own when they encountered the materials, e.g. Janice and Trevor could work out directions on board games in January and February as they were able to reconstruct meaningful messages from print at that stage. Equally clearly, the Low Print aware children experienced difficulties transferring monologued directions into action. As they had more limited literacy knowledge, they were unable to connect with the teacher's directions and were puzzled when they attempted print-related tasks on their own, e.g. Janette desperately wanted to play a Winnie the Pooh board game in January

but was unable to as she did not know where to begin ("START" was printed on the board). Hence, from monologues, Janice and Trevor, especially, could glean sufficient information to engage with provided literacy tasks, but for the Low Print aware children such functionally presented information was relatively meaningless as they had insufficient literacy knowledge to either connect with the teacher's group explanations or to "fill in the gaps" on their own.

b) ^AFunctional Scaffolds: In whole class and in small group interactions, monologues sometimes gave way to caregiver-child interactions, wherein more participation from the children occurred. Calendar time, the isolated letter and word tasks and most storybook interactions were examples of communicative occasions where the children were permitted to join in. Functional interactions were, however, intrinsically similar to monologues in that child participation was subservient to the teacher's agenda. Qualitative dimensions of functional scaffolds in the kindergarten were that 1) the interactions were rigidly structured and invariably adhered to the Teacher initiation - Child response - Teacher evaluation format (Mehan, 1982, 1979), 2) the children's responses were evaluated on the basis of following the communicative structure and the production of accurate information, and 3) individual questions or comments were either ignored or accepted depending on their perceived relevance and the teacher's strength of intent to complete her agenda on any given activity. During such teacher scaffolded interactions the children were expected to be "slot fillers" and display knowledge in the gaps left by the teacher's questions. If monologued literacy interactions were similar to television broadcasts, then functionally scaffolded ones had some comparability to computer software programmes wherein exact responses result in limited

feedback, and creative contributions disrupt or are ignored by the system. However, there was inherently more possibility for some elaboration to occur in functional scaffolds than in computer programmes, for during some interactions Mrs. Compton did accept the children's on-topic comments and wove them into exchanges, though the latter type of expansion was not consistently incorporated into caregiver-group engagements.

As noted in Chapter Six, results of the functionally scaffolded interactions were clearly observable in the children's responses and in follow-up activities. The High Print aware children were able to engage in such literacy-related interactions as they possessed the prerequisite knowledge to "fill slots" and to monitor their own performances. The Low Print aware children, though desiring to participate, had less background knowledge and hence could not supply answers with the teacher expected accuracy. This was especially noticeable during interactions that focused on print, wherein the High Print aware children virtually monopolized the floor as "slot fillers".

c) Elaborative Exchanges: Caregiver-child interactions that were similar to mediated learning experiences (Feuerstein et al, 1980), and to the literacy strategies described by the High Print aware children's parents, occurred in the classroom with limited frequency. These exchanges were conducted between the caregivers and one child, or a small group of children. As described in Chapter Six, such exchanges characteristically involved co-operative adult-child dialogue where 1) participants shared joint intents, 2) content meaning was shared with the child, 3) behaviour was regulated with just enough adult scaffolding to ensure child competence, and 4) content was expanded or elaborated by the adult to assist the child in linking "old" knowledge to "new". Ideally such exchanges

involve the adult in utilizing the child's contributions (semantic contingency: Snow, 1983) as springboards into new expansions of knowledge (transcendence: Feuerstein et al, 1980; decontextualization: Wells, 1983) and acceptance of approximations of literate behaviours (Doake, 1981). Within the kindergarten, elaborative exchanges were somewhat fragile in terms of transcendence and the acceptance of print approximations.

There was inconsistency in Mrs. Compton's acceptance of approximations of graphic information and this emerged from her philosophical conceptions of the moment. When making brief ventures into language experience activities she more frequently accepted approximations, e.g. Mrs. Compton wrote "gonna" during Mark's dictated dinosaur story. However, when moving back to her more habitual skills' approach exactitude was sought, e.g. during Belinda's one elaborative literacy exchange experienced over six months, Mrs. Compton spent a great deal of time insisting that the child recognized the word "Pooh" as "Pooh" and not "Winnie the Pooh" (Chapter Six). Thus exactitude triumphed over the reconstruction of meaning during some, if not all, of the individual elaborative literacy interactions experienced by the children.

Transcendence was also "shaky" during elaborative interactions in the kindergarten. Elaboration involves sensitive awareness of the child's world of knowledge, and stimulating the child to link "the known" into new contexts demands that the caregiver is aware of what is known. With the High Print aware children the stimulation of such cognitive relationships was easier to achieve for Mrs. Compton, as Janice, Mark and Trevor possessed a pool of knowledge shared amongst themselves and their teacher. The Low Print aware children's knowledge was more personally contextualized and hence required the caregiver to enter their worlds in order to explore "the

known" and stimulate expansion to "the new". In a busy classroom it was thus easier for caregivers to elaborate on the High Print aware children's abstractly decontextualized knowledge than to expand the Low Print aware children's that was more intimately tied to concrete experiencing. However, I can only make the latter statement on the basis of observing Mark's, Marvin's and Janette's elaborative interactions with caregivers as Janice, Trevor and Belinda only received one literacy-related elaborative exchange each during the study.

Mark was relatively successful in accessing elaborative engagements, though due to his apparent avoidance of many Centre Time literacy activities, these interactions occurred more frequently with non-print rather than print-related materials. In a classroom where it was difficult to engage caregivers in "extending conversations" (Wells, 1983, p. 281), how did Mark manage to achieve thirteen such interactions, i.e. more than twice as many as any other child? Firstly, he had sufficient knowledge in order to ask the right questions of caregivers. Secondly, his knowledge enabled him to evaluate caregiver responses in order to ask more topic-related questions, and thus gain more information. Thirdly, through the maintenance of a cyclical flow of co-operative dialogue he was able to demonstrate interest in the teacher provided materials and hence "tie" the caregiver to him for extended periods. Mark invariably accessed and maintained more elaborative exchanges as he tapped into the teacher's intent, i.e. content learning, by asking content based questions. Though many of Mark's elaborative interactions involved non-print materials and hence could not be directly related to his literacy knowledge growth, interestingly Janice and Trevor accessed minimal elaborative exchanges on any classroom content. Though they possessed similar background knowledge

to Mark, they simply gained little caregiver attention during Centre Time activities. Both children rarely sought help or asked task-related questions of caregivers, presumably as they were able to self-regulate their own performances. Only one exception to the latter statement was apparent. Trevor desired help with the computer's print messages but did not seek it. The reasons for avoiding caregiver support can only be speculated. Possibly he preferred to work out the print directions on his own because he realized that understanding was within his grasp. Equally possibly he had received the strong suggestion from Mrs. Compton that print should be avoided on the computer and hence he was hesitant to ask for help when he knew that he could anticipate the response, "Press Enter" to bypass it. Thus, overall, Janice and Trevor accessed few elaborative engagements on any classroom materials, including print, and hence it is doubtful that the kindergarten's provision of mediated literacy learning experiences could be related to these children's literacy knowledge acquisition. A similar conclusion may be suggested for Mark in that many of his elaborative exchanges occurred with non-print materials. However, Mark did access several elaborative literacy interactions in late February, when language experience activities were introduced. The final administration of the Structured Literacy Tasks occurred concurrently and hence further literacy knowledge may have been acquired that was not tapped during post-testing.

Janette, Marvin and Belinda accessed more functional interactions than the High Print aware children as they largely asked, "How do you do it?" questions and so gained expedient responses. Janette and Marvin did gain more elaborative literacy exchanges than Belinda, as the latter child rarely chose print-related activities and her emphasis on social interaction

in other centres presented the outward appearance of task involvement to classroom caregivers. Demonstrations of "I'm occupied" prevented caregiver intervention in the kindergarten. Alternatively, Marvin chose print centres and his frequent withdrawal into daydreaming or his overt non task-related actions, e.g. pretending he was a robot at the printing centre, activated adult intervention. Thus, he gained elaborative exchanges at literacy centres by being passively or noisily off-task. However, elaborative exchanges rarely developed in a fully co-operative manner as caregivers concentrated on completing the centre task, which was frequently beyond Marvin's understanding. Janette accessed more print-related elaborative exchanges than any of the other children (six in six months), though such interactions were intermittently spaced. In October, Mrs. Compton, after seeing me involved in my literacy tasks, decided that she would like to group the children into categories, i.e. "those who knew a lot, an average amount, and next to nothing about books". Janette was classified as a child who "knew a lot about books". Following our October interview, Janette experienced most of the elaborative literacy exchanges with the teacher, possibly as Mrs. Compton perceived some inconsistencies between her categorization of the child and her subsequent observations of her literacy behaviours in the classroom. Over time these elaborative interactions declined drastically and, on March 1st, Mrs. Compton suggested that Janette presented a false picture of her literacy knowledge to the world, i.e., "That girl is over confident about what she knows and doesn't know". It is difficult to know whether Janette had disappointed Mrs. Compton by not living up to her perceptions. It is possibly more unfortunate for Janette that I cannot know whether her literacy knowledge would have expanded if elaborative interactions had been consistently employed with

her during the course of the study.

During my school-based research, elaborative interactions were not limited to those actually experienced in the kindergarten classroom. The library story sessions represented examples of "expanding conversations" (Wells, 1983, p. 281), that occurred in caregiver-whole group engagements. The librarian's intent was to expose children to qualitative storybook interactions wherein child participation and the transmission of literacy strategies were emphasized. Although conducted with a large group of children, these interactions embodied many of the communicative strategies discussed by the High Print aware children's parents as they described home-based literacy events. Ms. Windsor, like the High Print aware children's parents, overtly expressed a desire to weave literacy into the lives of the children and during storybook interactions she focused on stimulating the children's contributions and on linking new stories and poems to common experiences in the children's lives, e.g. sibling rivalry, keeping a secret and receiving a note from a friend. By relating information from written language to common childhood experiences and inviting the children to share these experiences with peers, and with the storybook characters, the librarian demonstrated semantically contingent dialogue (Snow, 1983) that maximized the children's participation, and also transcendence wherein she encouraged the children to link textual ideas to personal experiences. Ms. Windsor also focused on semantic, syntactic, graphic and pictorial strategies when she asked the children to predict words and events during story reading. Approximations of graphic information were accepted readily when the children's responses "made sense". Storybook interactions were scaffolded lightly in that opportunities were provided for the children to demonstrate competence, e.g. following a

reading of "If the Dinosaurs Came Back", Belinda voluntarily suggested what she would do under these circumstances. The storybook session expanded into an elaborational dialogue where most of the children added their thoughts on dinosaurs entering their worlds. Thus, storybook content was a vehicle for stimulating child participation in written language and for teaching the concept that literacy learning requires active child participation. The High Print aware children had received this message from their homes and appeared to enjoy similar strategies in both family and library contexts. For the Low Print aware children, such strategies and messages appeared to be relatively new experiences. The librarian had possibly affected their home literacy interactions by suggesting similar dynamics at the workshop that Belinda's mother and Janette's father attended. However, undoubtedly these children experienced their most consistent exposures to participatory storybook interactions during the weekly library sessions. The influence of the library, directly via elaborative strategies during the story sessions and indirectly via messages transmitted to their homes, may have been implicated in the Low Print aware children's growth in storybook knowledge. That Belinda, Marvin and Janette had some confused conceptions about their roles in literacy learning (Chapter Seven) may well be attributed to the divergent literacy strategies they experienced. Parents and the teacher appeared to share many similar functional strategies, though the school librarian and sometimes the teacher, in her exploration of language experience activities and when she chose to work with children in Centre Times, communicated qualitatively different literacy messages through elaborative strategies.

Summary of Variables that Make a Difference in the Kindergarten:

Three key variables that appeared to make a difference to the acquisition

of literacy knowledge in the kindergarten:

1. The teacher's belief system or philosophical conception of literacy was not well developed which caused incongruities in classroom print-related experiences when her basic intents were translated into action. Without a well developed philosophy of literacy learning the classroom activities provided fertile ground for the operation of the Goldilocks' Syndrome. In the rush to provide the "just right" environment, Mrs. Compton incorporated a flow of new materials and methodologies that may have served to communicate confusing concepts about literacy, e.g. on some days literacy was promoted as reconstructing meaning from print but on most occasions as an isolated skill that involved letter identification, spelling out words and counting letters in words. This was perceived to confuse the Low Print aware children, but to have had a more limited impact on the High Print aware children who had developed a more holistic conception of the role of print in their lives, prior to kindergarten entrance.

b) The responsibility for the primary communication of literacy concepts was unclear. Messages sent home indicated that parents should serve in a support, rather than a primary, role. However, in action, the classroom more frequently tested than taught print knowledge, and hence it is suggested that the teacher's underlying assumption was that the home had the primary responsibility for promoting literacy learning and the school should offer support. This incongruity was perceived to confuse the parents of the Low Print aware children but, again had a more limited influence on the parents of the High Print aware children who had always assumed a

primary role in their children's literacy learning.

c). Though there was a tacit understanding between the librarian and the teacher that they both shared similar philosophical conceptions of literacy learning, their beliefs translated into action were quite different. Thus there was incongruity in literacy experiencing between the library and the classroom. The library story sessions were conceived as beneficial for all the children in the study, and especially for the Low Print aware children, as they provided the major qualitative shared book sessions that these children experienced. Clearly, had the classroom story sessions shared similar strategies to the library's then their joint impact may have been more influential in the literacy knowledge growth of the children.

2. Though there was no external curriculum to be followed, the teacher's content agenda was the major focus in classroom life. This may have made a difference in terms of:

a) Sensemaking: as the literacy content emerged from the teacher, and not from the children, and as it largely focused attention on specific print details, then there were limited opportunities for learning the concept that reading involves making sense from graphic information. The High Print aware children knew that print messages made sense before kindergarten, but the Low Print aware children were more vulnerable as they had not been the recipients of holistic literacy messages in their home lives.

b) Complexity: much of the teacher's print agenda required prerequisite knowledge for display in classroom activities. Hence, the High Print aware children, who had a bank of literacy resources, were more able to engage in print tasks than the Low Print aware children,

who had more limited knowledge.

c) Space: although the emergence of new content resulted in spatial changes in the classroom, these did not enhance the integration of literacy concepts as no modifications were made to permit flow amongst print-related centres. Though this variable did not enhance any of the children's literacy learning, again it is suggested that it had more impact on the Low Print than the High Print aware children, as the latter group experienced integrated literacy learning within home contexts.

d) Time: as new content was constantly introduced there was simply less time in the day to consolidate previous learning, e.g. Belinda was no closer to printing her name in March than she was in September. Also, as the teacher controlled time spent at centres then there were many occasions wherein children spent too much time on solitary print activities or, alternatively, did not effect closure. All the children experienced disquiet with this situation, which may have been linked to expressions of boredom with literacy activities (Trevor and Belinda) and with demonstrated short attention spans (Belinda, Janette and Marvin).

3. There was limited adult support, in the form of elaborative exchanges, available for the children who required assistance before they could engage independently with print-related activities. It may be argued that caregiver-whole group, classroom situations are not optimal in their teacher-child ratios for communicating literacy knowledge to children via elaborative strategies. However, two observations made in this study counter this argument. Firstly, the children were engaged in elaborative interactions during their weekly story sessions in the library with a

caregiver-child ratio of 1:21. What distinguished the library was the caregiver's consistency between her beliefs about literacy and her teaching practices, i.e. the strategies used to translate these beliefs into practice. In addition, storybook content was a vehicle for the communication of messages and strategies, not a focal point in itself. Secondly, caregiver-whole class interactions were chosen as transmission arrangements, rather than being a necessary part of kindergarten life. The adult-child ratio was 1:7 on three afternoons each week, and 1:5 on one afternoon. The teacher chose to have no helpers on Fridays. Thus, with three or four caregivers in the room there were opportunities for small group or individual adult-child interactions. All too often caregivers were involved in the preparation of new content rather than in exchanges with the children. The emphasis on monologues and functional dialogues in the classroom, and the limited opportunities for elaborative interactions, appeared to make a difference in terms of:

- a) Minimal child contribution: monologues and functional scaffolds limited all the children's literacy contributions for all participation was rigidly controlled by the teacher.
- b) The Low Print aware children were placed at a disadvantage during monologues and functional interactions as they had limited literacy knowledge with which to engage with the teacher's agenda.
- c) The High Print aware children monopolized the conversational floor during such interactions as they had the required knowledge in order to participate when permitted to do so.
- d) Elaborative exchanges seemed necessary for subsequent print-related engagements with peers and for independent interactions with provided materials. With such limited provisions for supportive,

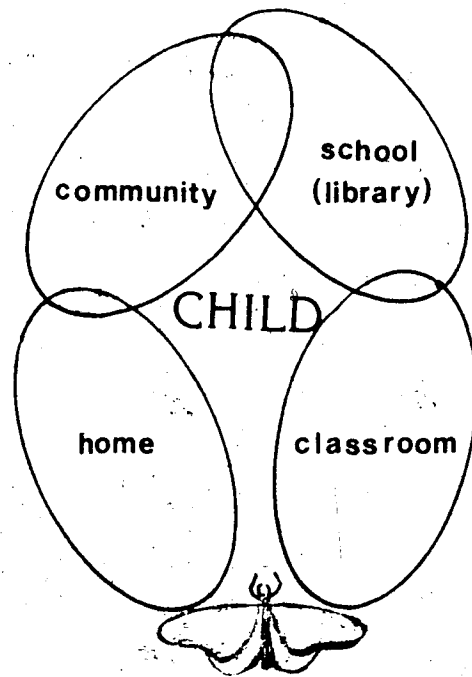
elaborative exchanges the Low Print aware children could not be fully involved in Types II and III interactions focusing on literacy content. The High Print aware children had experienced this support at home and therefore could engage in peer and independent interactions with print. That Mark did not choose to do so on many occasions, was seen as an internal recognition of his desire for further adult support and his lack of interest in isolated print activities.

Implications

Links in a Cultural Chain versus "The Secret of it All ..."

In 1908 Huey proclaimed that, "The secret" of literacy learning, "lies in parents reading aloud to and with the child" (p. 332). This study supports his emphasis on the importance of the home in promoting literacy acquisition, but suggests that by hunting further for "the secret of it all", educational researchers may well be following blind trails to discover "lost cities" or "blue butterflies". Although only investigating six children within one kindergarten, the very complexity of my findings persuades me that there are no single "secrets" in literacy knowledge acquisition, but rather a multiplicity of interconnected variables. The intricacies of literacy learning start with the complex life worlds of the children as they engage in social dialogue within several interrelated contexts. These children are active participants in literacy learning but their contributions can be enhanced or limited by the interpersonal support they receive in social interactions. This research strongly suggests that before children can engage in independent literacy acquisition their learning has to be supported by caregivers within social contexts.

At the beginning of this chapter, literacy learning was perceived as a cultural chain, and this analogy may be helpful in visualizing the implications of my research. Each of the links of the chain can be conceived as a context engaged in by the children, wherein home, community, school and classroom are interwoven in the experiencing of the children. The child, as the central pivot of the chain, interacts with each context and during the course of the kindergarten year is exposed to cross-contextual influences. The butterfly in this chain represents the variables explored by researchers which, in this study, could not be related to the children's literacy knowledge acquisition (Figure 16).



"Blue dust" variables (single factors)
e.g. socioeconomic status of parents;
relative age of child within
kindergarten

Figure 16: Cultural Chain of Literacy Learning

During, and prior to, the research the High Print aware children experienced qualitative literacy strategies within home and school library contexts, though their community offered few literacy resources and the

kindergarten classroom provided uncertain mediation. Thus, experiencing two strong links in the chain seemed sufficient to enhance literacy learning for Janice and Trevor (Figure 17), especially as their parents "strengthened" the community's limited provision of materials by searching for additional books and literacy resources.

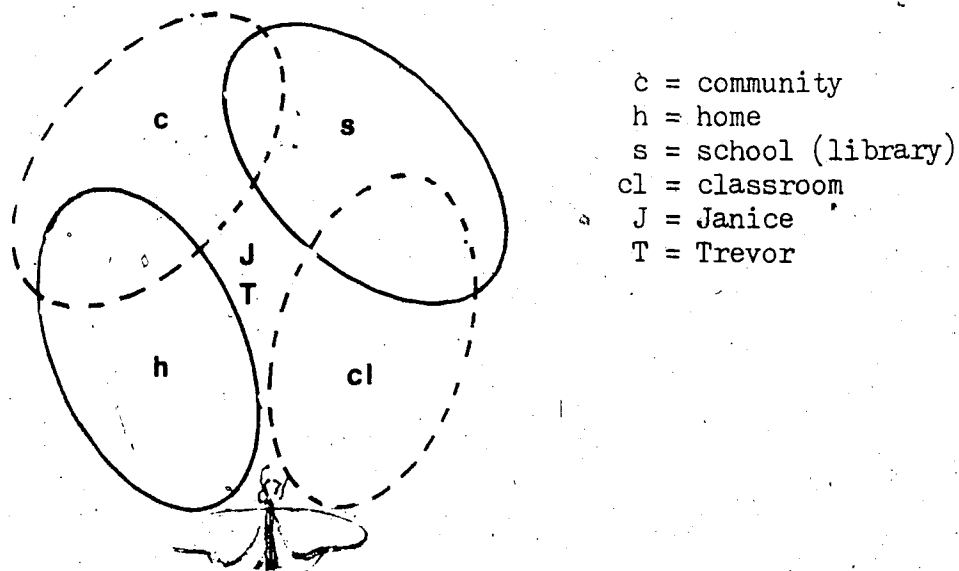


Figure 17: Cultural Literacy Chain for Janice and Trevor

For Mark, the cultural chain of literacy was inherently similar to Trevor's and Janice's, but the home context declined in support halfway through the study and hence this may have been reflected in the relative stability of his literacy knowledge over time (Figure 18).

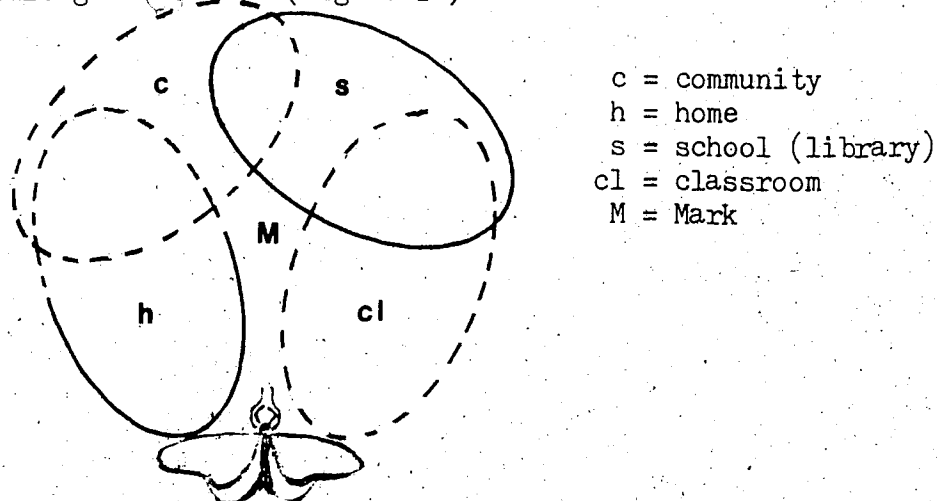


Figure 18: Cultural Literacy Chain for Mark

For the Low Print aware children (Figure 19) we see a rather different pattern in that home, community and classroom offered somewhat limited support in their literacy learning and hence three links in their chain were "weak". As their parents did not actively seek additional rich sources of print materials to bypass the community's limitations, then this link was not strengthened during preschool years.

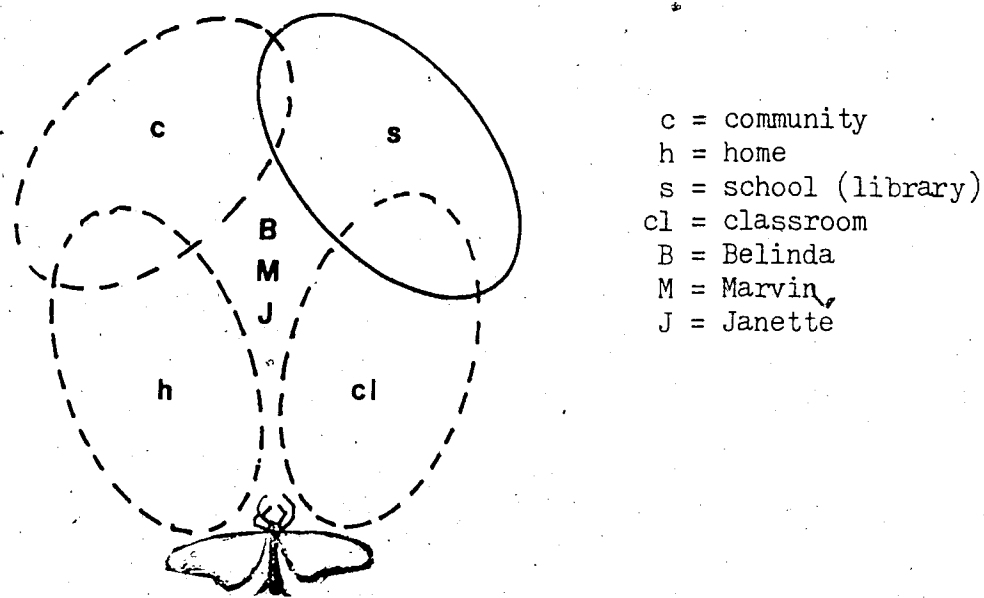


Figure 19: Cultural Literacy Chain for Belinda, Marvin and Janette

Thus, these children, although demonstrating some growth in literacy knowledge over the course of the study, most observably through the school library's direct and indirect influences, clearly remain vulnerable in terms of literacy acquisition. They cannot engage independently with print and self-regulate their own literacy behaviours (Type III interactions) until their social contexts provide resources and, more importantly, elaborative support strategies.

If, as suggested, literacy learning involves a cultural chain wherein sub-contexts are interdependently related, and if, as observed in this study, independent and peer print-related interactions rely on prior

social learning strategies experienced in supportive caregiver-child engagements, then there are hopeful implications for change incorporated into these findings. Firstly, the interdependence of cultural contexts offers directions for compensatory action in that if one sub-context offers limited literacy support then another can optimize support, or alternatively, several or all can improve their mediational offerings. Secondly, if we understand that independent literacy growth depends on elaborative learning interactions then again there is some avenue for compensatory measures. In the following section specific implications and directions are addressed.

Implications for Research

1. This study indicates that complex, rather than unitary, factors are involved in young children's literacy learning. It is suggested that researchers may consider incorporating contextual observation into their studies as the single "secret of it all" in human learning may not be there for discovery.

2. My life plans do not permit a longitudinal study of the children in this research, though such an endeavour would offer additional insight into their continued literacy learning as they enter the Grade One year.

Literacy learning seems extraordinarily sensitive to the social contexts of experiencing and hence it would be interesting to follow these children and observe possible changes as they progress through the different sub-contexts of the school system. It is also possible that home or community contexts may change in their resources and strategies over time and again such differences may be influential in the children's literacy learning. Hence, studies that bridge the kindergarten-Grade One year and, indeed, that observationally follow, over time, children's literacy knowledge growth in social contexts would undoubtedly contribute to our present understanding.

3. During this research, the parents of the Low Print aware children verbalized minimally concerning literacy strategies they utilized at home. Hayden (in progress) may offer further information on the potentially different strategies between the High Print and Low Print aware children's homes, used during storybook interactions.

Implications for Community Agencies

The paucity of literacy resources in the community observed suggests inequality of opportunity within our culture. Clearly, some communities in the city have rich resources of literacy materials, but Skipton Estates with its dense housing complexes only recently received a library, and its resources are totally inadequate for the large population it serves.

1. It is suggested that governmental spending may redress the inequality in literacy resources existing at present. Clearly, the Skipton Estates library requires more print materials to serve local needs.

2. A "store-front" conception of library services may be considered as an alternate to constructing costly central library buildings. It is possible, when many present office and shop spaces are empty in this area, to consider renting space and providing local library resources and story-reading programmes for young children. Avenues for decentralizing the library service in Skipton Estates require exploration, for presently the library is geographically distant from so many homes and preschool children. Literacy requires to be woven into community life as well as into homes and schools.

Implications for Homes

Parents need to know not only that they can make a difference in their children's literacy learning, but specifically how they can make a

difference. Parents of the Low Print aware children in this study stated that they wanted to help their children but were unsure of strategies and materials to use. Although the library partially alleviated this problem via its storybook workshop, when attempting to assist their children these parents often resorted to the "old and familiar", e.g. teaching the alphabet or the activities suggested in drugstore workbooks such as initial consonant sounds. However, such formal, isolated print strategies seemed to be less beneficial for promoting literacy learning than the strategies utilized by the parents of the High Print aware children. Key philosophical characteristics and communicative strategies, described by the High Print aware children's parents, may well be considered by all parents for incorporation into home contexts.

1. Philosophical characteristics

- a) The parental acceptance of primary responsibility for the stimulation of literacy learning in young children seems important, for a natural consequence is the active provision of literacy materials and interactions in the home.
- b) The belief that literacy learning can occur within everyday experiences at home, seems equally important, for it provides the groundbed for weaving writing, storybook reading and other print activities holistically into the children's daily lives. Thus, every experience has the potential for literacy promotion. The children are then provided with opportunities to integrate print-related knowledge into their general sensemaking processes.
- c) The parental demonstration of enthusiastic involvement in literacy activities transmits subtle, but vital, messages to children. From these messages of "Mom's interested" or "Dad loves this", the

children learn that print is both important and intrinsically enjoyable. Conversely, parental boredom or the message that, "I'm teaching you the alphabet because it's my duty" are unlikely to promote a desire for further literacy learning experiences from children.

d) The importance of the concept that "we read to learn" can be implicitly transmitted to children via the caregiver's interest in providing an ongoing supply of new books that support current hobbies or projects. This active hunting for new literacy supplies both demonstrates the importance of print materials to the children and maximizes opportunities for transferring learning across contexts, e.g. learning about dinosaurs from one book may be compared to similar or different information in another text, and then to school experiences centered on the same theme.

e) Provision of time in family life for the establishment of a storybook relationship with primary caregivers seems vital, for it appears to encourage children to repeat a positive experience, to request re-readings of books, to promote decontextualized thinking, and to focus increasing attention on specific graphic details. Alternatively, a sole diet of storybook reading with a somewhat older sibling is not viewed as positively related to enhancing literacy growth, in this study, for an older brother or sister may well be focusing on personal performance variables rather than the younger child's needs.

2. Strategies

Home caregiver strategies that appear to be related to young children's literacy knowledge growth include:

a) Maximizing the child's contributions by "grasping the teachable

moments" during everyday experiences. The child's literacy initiations, e.g. "How do you spell my friend's name?" should be developed and informal opportunities for weaving print information into daily lives should be optimized. This requires active listening on the parent's part and a willingness to engage in reciprocal dialogue rather than formal literacy lectures.

b) Offering the lightest type of scaffolded support required in order for the child to demonstrate competence. This demands parental sensitivity of the child's knowledge and feelings, for caregivers need to know when the child requires support with print-related tasks and when "to let go" to enable the child to self-regulate his own behaviours. Co-operative reading, wherein the parent leaves "gaps" for prediction is an example of scaffolded support. Such scaffolding becomes lighter when the child may suggest, "I'll read this page and you read the next". Under-scaffolding may result in the child feeling incompetent or confused, and over-scaffolding may lead to parent-child conflict or within-child passivity, e.g. Belinda's interactions with her mother.

c) Routinizing predictable or frequently read materials to permit the child to recognize the format and the rhythm of the language, and to enjoy an active "joining-in" experience during storybook interactions. This strategy may be linked to memorizing texts, increasing attention to print details and to the conception that the child is an active participant in the reading process.

d) Promoting the transference of written language information to other contexts in the child's life. Primary caregivers who are intimately aware of their child's experiences, are in a unique

position for stimulating the linkage of knowledge across contexts, e.g. discussing the Dr. Seuss' character's messy room with Janice's messy room (Chapter Four).

e) Uncritical acceptance of the child's literacy approximations.

This study confirms Doake's (1981) findings that children move from global to specific attention to print, when the caregiver support stimulates such growth. Hence, as parents accept oral language approximations in young children, then they should consider acceptance of their children's written language approximations, knowing that, with continued exposure to print materials and interactions, these will refine over time. Expecting immediate exactitude in print activities is both unrealistic and frustrating for the child.

f) Sensitivity to the child's literacy needs. Although such sensitivity is interwoven through all the strategies, special awareness needs to be directed to the contexts in which literacy events occur. For example, in Trevor's home, the mother was aware that both her sons had different storybook needs and created "special times" for caregiver-child book interactions, wherein Trevor listened to his book choice and Clifford then read his aloud.

g) Focusing on print itself as the "carrier of the message".

Though illustrations are an important part of storybook interactions, over time parents should direct attention to print by running a hand below lines of text, pointing to key words and by responding to comments on graphic features, e.g. "Yes, that word does begin like your name ...". Such strategies focus the children on the inter-related dynamics of the function and form of print.

Implications for Schools

1. The philosophy of the school has an important relationship to literacy learning. As print-related knowledge growth is supported by multi-contextual learning then the school can be an agent of literacy by encouraging conceptual bridge building amongst community, homes and classrooms. A school philosophy that promotes an "open door policy", where home and community helpers are welcomed in the building, fosters the socio-communicative transition of the children into the educational system. It also provides opportunities for home and school to share literacy materials and strategies.

2. The school library and an attendant trained librarian are absolutely vital in the networking of literacy messages and resources across sub-contexts. Such a facility and person can provide compensatory, or central, resources for literacy materials in a community that has limited public resources. A librarian with a philosophy of interweaving literacy through children's lives, and an active programme that is consistent with that philosophy, is an invaluable human asset for promoting literacy knowledge growth.

Implications for Kindergarten Classrooms

Though this research focused on detailed observations of one kindergarten classroom, three interrelated underlying variables may well be related to classroom life in general, namely the teacher's philosophical conception of literacy, the print-related content provided and the interactive strategies utilized within the social context. Thus at one level of interpretation, specific details and practices observed may be illustrative of Mrs. Compton's classroom, but at a deeper level of analysis of patterns, the three variables may be observed interwoven through

many classrooms. Hence, they may be usefully used by teachers for focii in the self-evaluations of their own classrooms.

1. The teacher's philosophy of literacy.

Mrs. Compton's philosophy was not, in general, cohesive in that her belief system changed under the influence of numerous "experts" who promoted ever-changing methodologies and materials. However, her actions demonstrated a nucleus of beliefs that centered around the conception that reading was a skill development and that young children were "unready" or "ready" to read. This nucleus was possibly undergoing change during the study in that Mrs. Compton's brief ventures into language experience activities demonstrated that, on occasion, she believed that literacy learning was a more holistic process and that all children were "ready to learn something about reading" (MacGinitie, 1969, p. 399). As the "new beliefs" were inconsistent with the "old beliefs" then Mrs. Compton resolved this internal conflict by invariably returning to safe ground, i.e. the old nucleus of beliefs that linked learning to read with the transmission of isolated skills. For example, during my May visit to the kindergarten, there were no new language experience charts hanging on the provided stand, indicating that the first charts, i.e. October's patterned story and late February's dinosaur stories, were also the last charts created with the children.

Observation in the classroom and library, and discussions with parents, revealed that a philosophical belief in interweaving literacy learning into the lives of children, wherein their linguistic contributions were used as meaningful bridges between oral and written language, were related to enhancing literacy knowledge growth. In this study, this philosophy was characteristic of the High Print aware children's parents and of the school librarian. When this philosophy was incorporated into

the classroom all the High and Low Print aware children were excited about participation and all felt competent readers-in-progress. I am not suggesting that a language experience methodology is the only "right" philosophy in an early childhood classroom, but that such an approach provides a fertile groundbed for important dynamics in child learning. A logical consequence of this belief system is that the child's contributions will be maximized, the literacy content will be embedded in meaningful contexts, the child will receive implicit messages about his active participation in the reading process, and interactions will emphasize the need for caregiver supported learning prior to independent performance. It is the latter factors that seem important in learning, and language experience methodologies provide the vehicle for collaborative caregiver-child literacy learning.

Taylor (1983), in her study of family literacy learning, suggests that the parents implicitly believed in weaving print-related activities into daily social interactions.

In the families participating in this study, literacy is deeply embedded in the social processes of family life and is not some specific list of activities added to the family agenda to explicitly teach reading (pp. 92-93).

Gourley, Benedict, Gundersheim and McClellan (1983) indicate that such a philosophical conception of literacy learning is both possible and desirable in the kindergarten classroom. In their account of three children's literacy development over the kindergarten year, these researchers link the children's demonstrated growth to the context of the classroom and the children's active involvement in literacy activities that were integrated into their social realm. Part of this context was the philosophy of the kindergarten teacher:

In this classroom curriculum and instruction in reading

and writing were based on the teacher's belief that children can learn written language in the same way they have learned spoken language. Written language was an important part of activities throughout the classroom and across the curriculum; the children were encouraged to interact with written language to comprehend and to communicate with others in a variety of contexts. Instruction about written language focused on the individual's strategies for making sense of print in interpreting and constructing meaning (p. 5).

Interestingly the latter kindergarten philosophy could be related to enhancement of children's literacy learning in Gourley et al's study, and in my research to the home contexts experienced by the High Print aware children, and to the library context experienced by all the children. For the Low Print aware children, the "specific list of activities" (Taylor, 1983, p. 92) aimed at teaching pre-reading skills, was an integral part of their home contexts, and was experienced once more at school within a classroom where literacy learning was not incorporated "throughout the classroom and across the curriculum" (Gourley et al, 1983, p. 5). The clear implication appears to be that there is a relationship between caregivers' philosophical conceptions of the reading process and the degree of growth in young children's literacy knowledge. If children are exposed to a holistic philosophy of literacy learning in one major context of their lives, i.e. home for the High Print aware children in this study, then they may accelerate in literacy knowledge growth. If they are not exposed to this belief in two major contexts, i.e. home and kindergarten for the Low Print aware children in this research, then they may be at risk in terms of accumulating an integrated body of literacy knowledge. (The school library was, of course, a stable variable promoting this belief, for all the children.) This would suggest that, for children entering school with limited print-related knowledge, the philosophy of the

kindergarten teacher is a vital variable related to their potential literacy development.

2. The literacy content in the kindergarten programme.

... School is directed toward those who already know
 ... Only those at quite advanced levels of conceptualization can benefit from traditional instruction; they are the ones who learn what the teacher intends them to. The others fail, accused by the school as having "incapacity to learn" or "learning disabilities". (Perhaps these labels should be qualified and related to difficulty in learning what teachers attempt to teach, in the conditions they provide in the classroom.) If we attribute the method deficiencies to incapacities in children, we are denying that all learning is a process. (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1979, p. 280)
 (Brackets indicate my paraphrasing which seemed necessary due to a translation difficulty in the text.)

Ferreiro and Teberosky, in their South American study of young children's literacy development, indicate, as Gates did in 1937, that there is an intimate relationship amongst the teacher's philosophy and intents, the materials and methodologies used in the classroom, and children's print-related growth. This study supports the link between kindergarten children's literacy knowledge and the environmental conditions provided by cultural sub-contexts. The Low Print aware children in this research, though demonstrating some literacy knowledge growth, appeared to be inhibited by their experienced sub-contexts. Certainly, I cannot and will not prognosticate "literacy failure" for these children, but I do suggest that unless conditions change for them then their literacy future may be inhibited. I suggest this, not as a "doom and gloom" statement but as a pragmatic indicator of what "may be" for these children if we provide adequate support for their literacy learning. Clearly there is hope that if "the conditions in which (literacy) is taught" (Ferreiro and Teberosky,

1979, p. 280) are changed, then we may anticipate progress.

It has been implied that the teacher's development of a holistic philosophy about the learning-to-read process may be beneficial. It is also suggested that such a philosophy may translate into action in the classroom via the provision of appropriate literacy content. In the observed kindergarten, print-related content was frequently too difficult for some of the children, emerging from the teacher and not from the children's knowledge bases, and fragmented into isolated letter and word identification skills. With such content, as Ferreiro and Teberosky (1979) suggest, only the High Print aware children who demonstrated "quite advanced levels of conceptualization (p. 280) could engage in the teacher's agenda should they choose to do so. The Low Print aware children were isolated from the provided literacy content by lack of prerequisite "skills". Those who "already knew" were thus separated from those who "did not know" by the classroom literacy content. Hence, there is the implication that the literacy opportunities were not equally available for all the children.

a) This study supports Clay's (1979a), Doake's (1981), Mason's (1980), McKenzie's (1977) and Sulzby's (1981) contentions that print knowledge moves along a continuum from the acquisition of global conceptions of print's meaningfulness, to refined attention, to specific orthographic features. Hence, if kindergarten literacy content emphasizes exact attention to, and reproduction of, print's distinctive features it may well have "put the cart before the horse" for children who had limited understanding of print's meaning.

b) All the children in the study did not have equal opportunities to display literacy knowledge. The Low Print aware children demonstrated increasing lack of self-confidence in their abilities as readers-in-

progress, as they could so rarely produce accurate content responses.

c) Some of the teacher's word samples had few meaning associations for the children. The High Print aware children, with their abstract background knowledge, had more opportunities to engage meaningfully in this content than the Low Print aware children whose knowledge was more personally contextualized.

d) The High Print aware children were provided with more opportunities for monitoring their own performances and for gaining new knowledge as they were able to engage in the literacy content. The Low Print aware children, though demonstrating efficient monitoring abilities in other aspects of their lives, were largely unable to monitor their own literacy performances. Monitoring requires prerequisite knowledge.

e) Due to the complexity of the literacy activities, the implicit message was transmitted that if "you don't know what print says, avoid it until you are taught to read". Janice and Trevor, due to their accumulated print knowledge, ignored this message, but Janette, Belinda and Marvin were provided with few other options than to obey the injunction. Mark was selective in his message reception and monitored the occasions when he was able to engage successfully with certain print activities.

f) As literacy centres were organizationally isolated from each other in the classroom, there was little opportunity for the Low Print aware children to integrate print-related concepts, whereas the High Print aware children had already developed integrated concepts from their home contexts.

Thus, literacy content provided almost entirely by the teacher can create conditions of unequal literacy opportunities for kindergarten children.

Alternatively, if the teacher flexibly capitalizes on the children's contributions and organizes the context to ensure that literacy content is interwoven through the classroom, then there is the implication that such factors may be beneficial to all children (Schickedanz and Sullivan, 1984; Taylor, 1983). If this occurs then much of the literacy content will emerge from the children's oral language contributions and current experiences. Writing would be integrated with reading and ideas for both activities would be obtained from the children's suggestions. Literacy materials such as storybooks, telephone books and paper and pencils for notes and shopping lists, would be located in the playhouse and flow between literacy-related centres would be promoted. Storybooks read to the children would be re-read and textual concepts linked to the children's world of experiences. Print would have a pragmatic function in the children's lives in that the content would emerge from their needs and not from external, artificial activities, e.g. Christmas parcels requiring labelling by the children provides a meaningful literacy activity, whereas in the kindergarten observed, such labels were printed by caregivers and writing was reserved for the passive copying of teacher provided Christmas words. Literacy content can be a dynamic, print knowledge enhancing variable in the kindergarten, or a restrictive factor. It is important that kindergarten teachers evaluate their literacy content to ensure that it maximizes opportunities for all children, and does not inhibit the children who enter their room with limited literacy knowledge. We need to redress the imbalance created by teacher controlled literacy content so that Vygotsky's (1978) suggestion is not recreated in early childhood contexts of the future:

Unlike the teaching of spoken language, into which

children grow up on their own accord, teaching of written language is based on artificial training ... Instead of being founded on the needs of children as they naturally develop and on their own activity, writing is given to them from without, from the teacher's hand (p. 105).

3. Interactive strategies in the kindergarten.

What I am calling for ... is a fundamental re-examination of what it means to be a teacher. Part of the answer, of course, has to do with being well informed about the content of the curriculum and its organization ... But just as important is the style of interaction that the teacher adopts in mediating between the content of the curriculum and the pupils ... This aspect of teaching, however, has received much less attention ... The pressures on teachers to retreat to a "transmission" style of teaching are great and continually increasing. But in the long run, I would contend, such a style is ultimately self-defeating, because it fails to recognize the true nature of the learning process. (Wells, 1983, p. 300)


Wells suggests that the learning process is collaborative in that knowledge grows from a facilitative caregiver, the content of experience and an active, enquiring child. In this study literacy activities in the kindergarten ranged from two extremes. During monologues and functional interactions, the transmission style was emphasized wherein "teacher talk" and content were emphasized over child participation. The caregiver support was thus over-scaffolded and literacy learning was not a collaborative affair. At the other extreme, children were expected to engage independently in print-related activities with minimal caregiver support, and such interactions were under-scaffolded. As in other studies concerned with children's participation in early childhood classrooms (Ayers and Evans, 1983; MacLure and French, 1981; Wells, 1983, 1981), this research indicates that there were simply few occasions when the teacher elaborated on the children's contributions. Literacy content in this kindergarten was transmitted but rarely mediated. Though hints of mediated

literacy learning experiences (Feuerstein et al, 1980) were evidenced in caregiver-child, or small group, interactions, two problems arose. Firstly, the teacher placed too much emphasis on exactitude rather than literacy approximations, and secondly, transcendence, or stimulating decontextualized thinking, was fragile. However, overriding these relatively minor inconsistencies was the major factor that elaborative, mediated interactions were rarely available in the social world of the kindergarten. Without elaborative support the Low Print aware children, especially, were unable to engage successfully in direct interactions with provided literacy content.

This research strongly suggests that independent literacy performance emerges as a consequence of mediated caregiver engagements. The seven strategies that emerged from the descriptions of literacy events in the High Print aware children's homes seemed inextricably linked to Janice's, Mark's and Trevor's literacy acquisition, and may be viewed as interactive dynamics that could be usefully employed within the kindergarten classroom. It may well require rethinking classroom philosophies and organization. Clearly, small group activities lend themselves to the possibility of elaborative interactions though they offer no guarantee that such mediated engagements are going to occur. The promotion of them depends on the teacher's belief in their importance. In this study, large group-caregiver interactions were also observed in the library storybook sessions, suggesting that the teacher's belief and intents can triumph over large numbers. The incorporation of such strategies may require a realignment of priorities in some kindergartens in that aides and helpers may need to be trained to use sound interactive strategies. Certainly classroom helpers will need to be removed from the preparation of content materials

and redirected towards social interaction with children. After all, if a decision is made to capitalize on the children's contributions then human literacy resources will be more necessary than pre-packaged print materials. Fifteen minutes of elaborative caregiver-child support in reading and re-reading a dictated story is surely more important than a similar time period spent in the adult preparation and decoration of a literacy task that can only be used effectively by a few class members. In the "fundamental re-examination of what it means to be a teacher" (Wells, 1983, p. 300), it seems important to explore the classroom implementation of elaborative strategies that provide one of the major keys in literacy learning and to re-evaluate the human interactive dynamics that are presently being used in our classrooms.

Implications for Teacher Training

Our teacher training programmes present avenues of opportunity for communicating the philosophies, programme content and interactive strategies that appear to make a difference in young children's literacy learning. However, there may presently be limitations in our programmes that inhibit this type of communication. Clearly, our culture and school system value literacy learning though I question whether our teacher training programmes transmit that they value  as strongly. Presently, in Canada, it seems perfectly possible to graduate from a teacher training programme without completing a required course in reading, or by only engaging in a one semester course (Fagan and Malicky, 1984; Nikiforuk, 1984) which hardly seems consistent with the demonstrated needs within our school system and our culture's emphasis on its importance. Though specialized courses, open to a small section of our student teacher population, may dwell on "reading failure" I think it is time that we

focus on our potential for the promotion of reading success. We may presently be expecting teachers to stimulate literacy acquisition when they have been inadequately prepared, have had limited exposure to materials and methodologies, and more importantly, have been provided with few opportunities for the development of personal philosophies about literacy learning. The present lack of provided time in teacher training programmes for the communication of literacy variables that make a difference to young children, is a demonstrable lack that is deeply disturbing. Unless this is addressed we may continue to produce teachers who have had "unequal opportunities" for understanding literacy learning and, as a result, have children in our classrooms with contexts that provide "unequal opportunities" for acquiring literacy knowledge in our culture.

Concluding Thought

Questioner: Why must we read?
 Krishnamurti: Why must you read? ... You must understand the whole of life, not just one part of it. That is why you must read, that is why you must look at the skies, that is why you must sing, and dance, and write poems, and suffer and understand: for all that is life.
 (Krishnamurti, 1964, p. 30)

Belinda, on separate occasions during this study, said, "I don't know how to read books" (September) and "I can't read" (February). As yet storybooks are read for her and the poems are written in her imagination, though she can sing, dance, suffer and understand many complexities about her expanding world. For Belinda, Janette, Marvin, Mark, Trevor, and Janice, we have the responsibility for creating fertile conditions across cultural sub-contexts to enable them to grow into literacy and hence contribute towards their understanding of "all that is life".

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APPENDIX A

Parent Information-Permission Letter

8th September, 1983

Dear Parents:

This year your child will enter the school system for the first time and will be involved in the new experiences offered by the kindergarten programme. The education of young children is the concern and interest of many people associated with the schools. The University of Alberta and the school system are continually working to improve children's educational experiences. Frequently we work co-operatively to research young children's learning development, and furthering this type of co-operation is the purpose of my letter.

Previously I have worked as a reading specialist for the School Board, and presently I am conducting a research study from the University of Alberta. I intend to study kindergarten children's learning activities, including their early reading experiences, before they encounter formal reading instruction during Grade One. This study has been approved by the School Board, the School Principal, Mr. Firth, and by the kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Compton. It is my intention to work closely with the school, with the expectation that my study of children's kindergarten experiences will be beneficial to the classroom teacher, to the University and of course to young children, as we gain understanding of the child's early steps in learning. To investigate how children learn I intend to visit the kindergarten classroom on a regular basis to enable me to observe the children involved in their everyday programme. I also intend to involve each child in two brief games conducted informally at an activity centre within the classroom.

If you have any queries I, or Mrs. Compton, would be happy to discuss them with you. If you do not wish your child to be included in my project please inform Mrs. Compton or myself before September 23rd, 1983.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

(Anne Brailsford)

Telephone numbers:

University of Alberta: 432-3840
Home: 963-3144 (local)

APPENDIX-B

The Research Schedule

April, 1983

- a) Initial contact with the school and preliminary visit
- b) Permission for pilot study granted
- c) Construction of the structured literacy tasks
- d) Exploration of the community around the school

May, 1983

- a) Pilot study in the kindergarten
 - (i) refinement of observational and record keeping techniques
 - (ii) trial and modification of the literacy tasks
- b) Kindergarten teacher's agreement obtained for participation in the extended study

August, 1983

Permission granted from relevant agencies for the major research study

September, 1983

- a) Introductory letter sent to the kindergarten children's parents
- b) Entry into the kindergarten classroom
- c) Observation of interactional patterns within the whole classroom

Ongoing:

- a) Collection of handouts and documents

October, 1983

- a) Completion of the structured literacy tasks (first week of October)
- b) Selection of three children designated as High Print aware and three children as Low Print aware, on the basis of performance on the literacy tasks
- c) Indepth observation of the six children within the classroom context

- b) Observation of changes in community, school and classroom literacy contexts

- November, 1983
- a) Indepth observation of the case study children continued
 - b) Interviews with the parents of the children, with the teacher and with the librarian
- December, 1983
- a) Extensive observation of the six children continued
 - b) Administration of the post-test literacy tasks to Marvin (Low Print Aware) on December 8th, before he left the area
 - c) Interview with Marvin's father on December 8th
- January, 1984
- Indepth observation of the five case study children continued
- February, 1984
- a) Continued observation of the case study children
 - b) Final administration of the structured literacy tasks
 - c) Final interviews with the parents of the five case study children
 - d) Interviews with the teacher, principal and classroom aide
- March, 1984
- a) Final interview with the school librarian
 - b) Research in classroom completed on March 1st

Ongoing:

- c) Informal interviews with teacher, aide, parents, librarian and relevant community members
- d) Observation of the whole class-teacher interactions

APPENDIX C

Environmental Print Task Samples



Photograph



Logo

STOP

Print

Scoring Categories for the Environmental Print Task

- 3 points: complete response, e.g. "Red Rooster" for "Red Rooster".
- 2 points: incomplete response or over-extended response, partially constrained by the text, e.g. "Malham" for "Malham Elementary School" or "telephone booth" for "telephone".
- 1 point: meaningful association, frequently demonstration a knowledge of purpose, e.g. "a store -- you buy summer things for the garden" for "Canadian Tire".
- 0 points: no response or an irrelevant response.

Environmental Print Task

(Scoring Sample: Janette, February, 1984)

Questions to stimulate responses:

- a) Tell me about ...
- b) How do you know....?
- c) What does it say ...?

Environmental print within close proximity of the school

	Photograph	Logo	Print
1) Malham Elementary School	a) This is our school b) 'cos it's built from bricks and there's that green door at our school c) school	a) school b) 'cos I see those bricks again! c) school	Don't know
2) Red Rooster	a) Red Rooster b) See - a Red Rooster (point to rooster picture on sign) c) Red Rooster	a) Red Rooster b) 'cos it's made of wood (point to siding under the print) c) Red Rooster	Don't know They're too hard for me
3) Canada Post (mailbox)	a) It's a mail post b) I always saw one on the way to school c) I can't read that - it's tiny	a) I can't read it b) It's the mail post.	This one's too hard
4) Fish and Chips	a) Red Rooster b) 'cos it's yellow and has that (point to the circular sign). I know it. c) Red Rooster	a) Red Rooster b) 'cos of that (points to the circular sign) c) Red Rooster	I can't read. I don't know
5) Stop	a) It says "stop" b) 'cos it's a stop sign	a) Stop sign b) 'cos it's a stop sign c) Stop sign	I don't know -- post mail?

	Photograph	Logo	Print
6) Telephone box	a) Where you 'phone somebody b) 'cos (Q) 'cos c) I don't know 'cos I can't read	It's too tiny -- I can't	I don't know
7) Edmonton Journal	a) Where post comes from b) 'cos I sawn it c) I don't know 'cos I can't read	Can't read it -- too tiny	Don't know
8) Sun	a) Where the posting is b) You get paper where pictures are in c) I can't read it 'cos I can't read	a) Mail - post b) I do c) Mail post	They're too hard for me
Environmental Print from a larger geographic context			
9) Gulf	a) Post station b) You get post -- no get gas, I think c) Gas station	I don't read	I don't read
10) McDonalds	a) McDonalds b) (traces the golden "M" with finger) c) McDonalds	I don't know that	Don't know
11) Food Barn	a) Too tricky for me c) I can't know that	Don't know	Don't know
12) Esso	a) Gas station b) There's gas there (points to pumps) c) Gas station	Don't know	Don't know

	Photograph	Logo	Print
13) Safeway	a) Safeway b) 'cos it's Safeway (points to the word in the middle) c) Safeway	a) Heritage Mall b) It's Safeway (points to the word)	Don't know
14) Zellers	a) Safeway b) I know -- 'cos there's my Mom and me (points to a woman and child) c) Safeway	Don't know that	Don't know
15) Woolco	a) Heritage Mall b) 'cos it's West Edmonton Mall c) West Edmonton Mall	a) Heritage Mall b) 'cos c) Heritage Mall	These are too tricky
16) Sears	Don't know at all	Don't know	Don't know
17) The Bay	Don't know	Don't know	I can't read
18) Eatons	a) Heritage Mall b) 'cos it says Heritage Mall (points to sign)	Don't know	I don't read
19) Dairy Queen	a) Safeway b) 'cos I see that (points to a sign on the curb). I always climb on it c) Safeway	Don't know	Don't know
20) Canadian Tire	Don't know anything about what this is	Don't know	Don't know

Scoring Sample: Janette

	<u>Context</u>	<u>Logo</u>	<u>Print</u>
1.	2	2	0
2.	3	3	0
3.	1	1	0
4.	1 (by proximity association: Red Rooster is next door)	1	0
5.	3	2	0
6.	2	0	0
7.	0	0	0
8.	1	0	0
9.	1	0	0
10.	3	0	0
11.	0	0	0
12.	1	0	0
13.	3	3	0
14.	0	0	0
15.	1	1	0
16.	0	0	0
17.	0	0	0
18.	1	0	0
19.	0	0	0
20.	0	0	0
Totals 23/60		13/60	0/60

Composite Score: 36/180
 = 20%

APPENDIX D

Shared Storybook Task

Going For a Swim

(Written by A. Brailsford)

- Page one: Sally is eating her breakfast.
- Page two: She goes out to play. Mom says, "Let's go for a swim. Go and tell Kathy."
- Page three: Kathy is Sally's sister. She is riding her bike. Sally runs over to Kathy and tells her, "Mom says we can go for a swim." "Let's go!" shouts Kathy.
- Page four: They run back to the house. Sally packs her swimming things into a bag.
- Page five: Sally, Kathy and their Mom walk over to the pool.
- Page six: They change into swim suits. Kathy blows up Sally's water wings. Kathy doesn't need water wings because she can swim now.
- Page seven: Sally puts her clothes in the locker and has a shower with her Mom.
- Page eight: "Let's get in the pool," says Kathy. They push open the door and see the blue pool.
- Page nine: into the pool.
The water's warm," says Sally as she steps
- Page ten: Sally swims in the warm water wearing her water wings.
- Page eleven: "Sally, do you want to jump in?" asks her Mom.
"Sure," says Sally.
- Page twelve: "What a splash!" says her Mom as she wipes the water from her eyes.

Page thirteen: Sally asks, "What's those things on the wall?" Mom says, "Let's go and look." She tells Sally, "It says 'WALK! DO NOT RUN'. The pool has safety rules."

Page fourteen: Sally runs to the diving board. "I'm going to dive in," she says. "No," says Mom. "The water is too deep and you can't swim yet. You can't dive here until you're older and can swim well without water wings."

Page fifteen: "I can jump off the side at the shallow end, can't I?" asks Sally. "Sure," says Mom, "and I can catch you."

Page sixteen: Kathy and Sally walk home after their swim. "That was fun," says Kathy. "I love swimming," says Sally.

Page seventeen: Mom makes Kathy and Sally some hot chocolate. "I love hot chocolate too," says Sally.

N.B. For a full reproduction of the text and accompanying pictures, please contact the author.

Shared-Book Activity

(Concepts, instruction format and scoring procedures)

CONCEPTS	INSTRUCTIONS	CHILD'S RESPONSE
About storybook terminology e.g. "book", "storybook", "title"	1. Show the child the storybook and flip through the pages. Ask: What is this?	Sample: Mark Scoring (Feb) "It's a book" 1 pt - book, storybook .5 pt - reference to any content
About purpose, e.g. "Read it", "Open it", "Look at it"	What do you do with it?	"You read it" 2 pts - mention of print (read it, read words) 1 pt - reference to pictures (look at it)
About content or form e.g. "story", "pictures", "words", "pages"	What's inside it?	"Writing and 2 pts - reference pictures and to print (words, spelling words" letters, story) 2 pts 1 pt - reference to content (pictures, pages)
About content/terminology e.g. "title", "name of the book", "pictures", "words", "-- tells me"	How do you know what the book is about?	"Because we 2 pts - anything could read them specific (title, ... and that" front cover (pts. to title) picture) 2 pts 1 pt - personal reference linked to front cover

CONCEPTS

INSTRUCTIONS

CHILD'S RESPONSE

<p>About form/terminology e.g. "front" or "first page" of the book</p>	<p>2. Present the book to the child, holding it by the spine. Ask: Can you show me the front of the book?</p>	<p>(pts to front cover) 1 pt - correct demonstration</p>
<p>About form/terminology e.g. "First page" and where to begin reading, "orientation of print"</p>	<p>Can you open the book so that we can read it?</p>	<p>(opens to first page) 1 pt - correct demonstration</p>
<p>About print and self as a reader, e.g. "independent reading", "attempted reconstruction of story from pictures", "I can't read"</p>	<p>3. Start at page 1. Say: I'd like you to read this to me.</p>	<p>"Sally is eating her breakfast ... (on tape) *Omitted from scoring. Descriptive data collected.</p>
<p>About orientation/ directionality/terminology e.g. "top of page"</p>	<p>If the child is unable to read the story, say: Let me read this book to you but I'd like you to help ... Can you show me the top of the page?</p>	<p>(pts to top of page) 1 pt - correct demonstration</p>
<p>As above, i.e. "bottom of page"</p>	<p>Can you show me the bottom of the page?</p>	<p>(pts to bottom of page) 1 pt - correct demonstration</p>
<p>About directionality, i.e. demonstration of first word in first line</p>	<p>Can you show me, with your finger, where to start reading?</p>	<p>(pts to first word on first line) 1 pt - correct demonstration .5 pt - inconsistent (checked on several pages)</p>

CHILD'S RESPONSE

INSTRUCTIONS

CONCEPTS

<p>About form/terminology e.g. "turn the page", "turn it over"</p>	<p>What do I do now? (end of page)</p>	<p>(Turns the page) 1 pt (turn the page) 1 pt</p>
<p>About form/directionality e.g. reading left page before right.</p>	<p>4. Turn to pages 2 and 3. Say: Can you show me where I should start to read now?</p>	<p>(pts to left page consistently) .5 pt - inconsistent 1 pt (checked on several pages)</p>
<p>As above, e.g. left-right movement, movement to a new line:</p>	<p>Show me, with your finger, which way to go as I read. Where then? (end of line)</p>	<p>(1-r direction consistently) 1 pt - left-right directionality correct 1 pt - correct line movement accurate) .5 pt --(either: inconsistencies in direction or movement) 1 pt</p>
<p>About process of pointing-matching</p>	<p>You point as I read ...</p>	<p>(pts to each word as I read) matching 1 pt .5 pt - inconsistent</p>
<p>About form/orientation of print e.g. "upside down"</p>	<p>5. Continue to read the story until the conclusion of page 8. Check any of the previous concepts as the reading progresses if the child has demonstrated uncertainty or inconsistency. 6. Turn to page 9. Ask: Can you or I read this page? Why or why not? (Where shall I start to read?)</p>	<p>Re-checked: *Above behaviours checked All consistent N.B. Asked me to slow down on point-matching (motor demands?) "It's upside down"(laughs) 1 pt or non-verbal behaviour to re-orient the book</p>

CHILD'S RESPONSE

INSTRUCTIONS

CONCEPTS

About form, e.g. "no words", "all squashed up", "no spaces"

7. Read pages 10 and 11. Turn to page 12. Ask: Can you or I read this page? Why or why not?

"It's fine
... there's
nothing wrong
with it."
0 pt

1 pt - verbalization
or non-verbal
behaviour to show
the lack of word
spacing

About content, i.e. "story comprehension"

8. Read to the end of the book. Ask: Can you tell me about the story?

Tape recorded
recall

*Not scored. Used
as descriptive data

About form/terminology, e.g. "letter(s)", "word(s)", "first and last letters", "capital letter"

9. Turn to page 17. Say: Let's put some of the story in a window. Demonstrate how two cards can be used to form a window. Say: I'd like you to make a window to show me ...

a) one letter
b) one word
c) two words
d) two letters
e) first letter in any word
f) last letter in any word
g) a capital letter

a) shows "g" 1 pt for each
b) shows "her" 1 pt
c) shows "her breakfast" 1 pt
d) shows "he" from word "her" 1 pt
e) shows "b" in "breakfast" 1 pt
f) shows "t" in "breakfast" 1 pt
g) shows "r" in "breakfast" 1 pt

Total possible = 7 pts

Total = 24/26
= 92%

Composite
Total = 26 pts