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The role of children's talk in writing development

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**THE ROLE OF
CHILDREN'S TALK IN
WRITING
DEVELOPMENT**

by

Belinda Nelson, Dip. Tch (Primary), B.Ed

A thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

Master of Education

Edith Cowan University

2001

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF CHILDREN'S TALK IN WRITING DEVELOPMENT

This study is a 'snap shot' into the interactions and utterances of developing writers. It provides insight into the usefulness of talk, the need to model and encourage talk in the composing processes of children and also into the factors that impact on such talk making it more or less effective for young writers.

The study observed six middle primary school students during the writing of two texts and recorded the accompanying talk. Classroom observations provided insight into the pedagogical and cultural influences within the writing contexts. Writing samples enabled each student's writing development to be analysed and became a point of reference for the analysis of the associated talk. These data were developed into a number of case studies enabling a thick description of the different contexts, each student, the writing activity, the written texts and most importantly the children's talk.

The patterns that emerged as the talk was analysed indicated that the students engaged in a variety of talk while composing written texts. The talk of these more developed writers included private speech, conversations with peers, assertive regulatory talk aimed at managing the behaviour of other students to other talk that reflected the instructional discourse of the classroom. Three categories were established from the data analysis, capturing the essence of the talk. The categories describe the talk as 'Doing Writing', 'About Writing' and

'Outside Writing'. These categories enabled further analysis which indicated that talk supported the students as they worked through issues of content, form, genre and audience in their writing.

Furthermore, some of the talk of these older writers was similar to the talk that emergent writers engage in as they seek to make meaning in the written form. However, important differences indicate that talk continues to be a scaffold for language learning, by enabling more capable writers to begin developing an awareness of audience or how their writing sounds to others. Talk also appears to help more developed writers gain a greater consciousness of the control of form and conventions and to maintain focus in a complicated and multi-faceted cognitive task.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text;
or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material

Signature of Candidate:

Date: 15/6/07

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Chapter One

Introduction

Background to the Problem

As a teacher who has had extensive classroom teaching experience with young literacy learners, I have noticed how young children use oral language to facilitate other literacy learning. I have observed children drawing and then using talk to bring their illustrations to life. I have seen children carefully print scratchy letter like symbols across a page while speaking life and meaning to them as they write. I have overheard young writers sounding out letters and words as they attempt to produce writing that conforms to adult models around them and I have heard children rehearse their writing by talking to one another, then writing exactly what they practised. These examples demonstrate how talk and writing are often connected and how this talk may often be necessary to children's initial attempts at making meaning in writing.

After experiencing first hand this relationship in young children's writing, questions about the role of talk in later writing development have become of interest. However, an examination of the literature in this area provided little information about the role of talk for writers who have progressed beyond emergent or early writing development.

Statement of the Problem

Much of the research related to the role of talk in writing development has been conducted with beginning writers or early writers, prior to formal instruction or in their first year of formal language instruction. Nevertheless, many classroom teachers have noticed that older children, conventional writers (Ministry of Education, 1992), also talk while involved in creating written texts. A review of the literature has revealed that social interaction and language learning are often linked, especially in emergent and early writing development (Donoahue, 1996; Dyson, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1993; Brock, 1992; Geekie & Raban, 1993; Kamler & Woods, 1987; Nicholls, Bauers, Pettitt, Redgwell, Seaman, & Watson, 1989; Salyer, 1994; Thomas & Rinehart, 1991). A body of research also demonstrates a strong relationship between language and cognitive development (Barnes, 1992; Britton, 1976; Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1983; Lemke, 1985; Novick & Waters, 1977; Tough, 1976, 1981; Wilkinson, 1982). Comparatively, little is known about the role of talk in the writing of older writers.

Furthermore, much of the research into children's oral language or talk and its relationship to writing has been conducted in the U.S.A., the U.K. or over more than a decade ago. Clay (1975, 1991), worked mainly with children from New Zealand schools. Kamler (1987) and Geekie & Raban (1993) studied the writing behaviour of young children in New South Wales. This comparative lack of research demonstrates the need for significant studies into the talk associated with writing and learning to write in Australian contexts.

In Australian classrooms, children are often formally involved in talking *about* writing, particularly as part of the Conference Approach to Writing (Graves, 1983, Butler & Turbill, 1984), a model of how writing happens based on the process described by real authors as they are involved in the production of a published text. As this approach has evolved in Australian classrooms, it appears that the talk about writing often occurs at the beginning of the 'process' as preparatory or pre-writing activity or after the writing, in a conference environment. Less emphasis has been placed on talking *during* the act of composing, nor its importance in the construction of the student's written text. Yet, within this process, children can be observed talking to themselves and others, during both individualised writing and collaborative writing.

Finally, current research into young children's oral language and early writing development has provided evidence supporting the idea that oral language competence is related to writing development (Clay, 1975; Thomas & Rinehart, 1991; Torrence and Olson, 1994) and that talking during writing is vital to writing development (Dyson, 1989; Glazer, 1989). There is also evidence that enables this talk to be categorised by nature (Dyson, 1981, 1983, 1989; Salyer, 1994) and to be further described according to the specific functions of such talk (Brock, 1987; Clay, 1991; Dyson, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1989; Jalongo, 1992; Kamler & Woods, 1987; Nicholls et. al., 1989). Other research upholds the idea that talk related to 'meaning making' decreases as the writer becomes more proficient (Dyson, 1989; Graves, 1983; Groenwold & Hayden, 1989; Groff, 1979). While in relation to pedagogy, evidence from research suggests that talk during writing can be a reflection of the learning environment and the patterns of teacher-

student exchanges that are a part of that environment (Bissex, 1981; Estabrook, 1982; Geekie & Raban, 1993).

This previous research, although extensive and important, has not fully addressed the nature and function of children's talk in further writing development or rather in children who have progressed beyond the emergent or early stages of written literacy acquisition. In this study, these children who have progressed beyond these initial stages are described as early writers and conventional writers (Ministry of Education, 1992). Early writers have moved beyond role-play with symbols and scribbles and no longer experiment with letters and sounds to convey meaning. They are able to write about topics that have personal significance and are beginning to consider audience needs, demonstrated by their attempts to use punctuation, write wider vocabulary, utilise some editing strategies including re-reading their writing. Conventional writers have developed more understanding of the writing process and can select and use different forms of writing. They use punctuation appropriately and are more aware of audience demands resulting in specific vocab being selected to achieve specific purposes. (See Appendix B for specific indicators of writing development for both Early and Conventional writers.)

The changes and patterns of difference in the children's talk as writing develops are also phenomenon not adequately addressed in previous research. These aspects of children's talk and writing are addressed in this study.

Research Questions

This study examines middle primary school children's talk during the act of writing. It identifies the roles of talk in relation to both process and product as developing writers create written texts. This provides information about the role of talk in writing development, and builds on what is known about the relationship between talk and writing in early writers.

The questions that provide the focus for this research relate to the children's talk produced during the act of writing.

Main Research Question

What is the nature and function of talk in which six middle primary students participate as they compose written texts?

Subsequent Research Questions

- What talk do students who are at the early or conventional writing stages (Ministry of Education, 1992) engage in while writing?
- What is the function of this talk before and during writing in relation to the composing processes of the children?
- What is the function of this talk in relation to the written text?
- What are the differences in the talk for the children in this sample compared to those at the emergent stage of writing development?

- How is the children's talk during writing indicative of their phase of writing development?

Definition of Terms

The following table defines terminology contained in these research questions and is provided here to clarify specific meanings referred to within this paper.

Table 1

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Talk:	All utterances elicited during the writing of the texts. The use of dots (...) in the transcripts denotes pauses in the talk.
Composing process:	Representing thoughts in writing. Making the marks on the page in order to mean, getting the first draft on paper.
Writing process:	The series of steps or routines or stages involved in taking a text from idea to published product.
Nature:	The type or category of talk at face value.
Function:	Purpose of the talk or what the talk was intended to do.
Writing development:	The growth in knowing about writing and doing the writing.
Phase/stage:	A marker of development as shown on the First Steps writing continuum that provides specific criteria as indicators of writing development.

Significance

This research into the talk in which middle primary school children engage during the act of writing, is significant for the following reasons:

1. It may inform resourcing and practice of teaching writing in the middle and upper primary years of school. Current pedagogy has evolved over years, as teachers have adopted practices and approaches from a range of theoretical perspectives. The influences of process writing, genre based approaches to teaching writing, whole language philosophy and an increased understanding of the developmental nature of language learning have all contributed to current writing pedagogy. The importance of talk is acknowledged by most teachers through their implementation of strategies like conferencing and pre-writing brainstorming and discussions, however, the influence of talk on the composing process and the resulting product may still continue to be a “neglected part of the writing process” (Reid, 1983). This study may be a timely reminder of the importance of talk in writing and that talking about writing is something many children want to and need to do.
2. Similarly, such research may inform classroom pedagogy generally by emphasising the functional nature of talk during writing whether it is social or text related. Research into children’s talk has produced unpredictable and surprising results, yet teachers still often expect classroom talk to be social and unhelpful, and are compelled to control how much of it takes place in

classrooms. Research of this nature inevitably reminds teachers that talk is helpful to learning. Through research it can be shown that students often actually talk about the tasks in hand. As they think out loud or interact with their peers, they work and solve problems, they make conceptual links, they consolidate understandings and they learn to use language for specific purposes.

3. Furthermore, this research may inform Australian teachers about the specific behaviours and patterns of talk that are related to writing development in middle primary school students. Teachers are always keen to look at their students' development in new ways. Adding to existing markers or indicators of writing development can provide teachers with more informative criteria with which to make judgements about student progress. Research such as this may provide further information about how talk can be indicative of writing development as well as how children's talk can alert teachers to areas of need in the process of learning written language.

Organisation of the Thesis

To begin with, this study examines the research and literature associated with children, their talk and their writing. This is conducted in order to define the nature of children's talk and the role it plays in learning language and in learning in general. The review of the literature begins by defining the process and components of writing and the theories of language development posited by the foundational research of Vygotsky, Halliday and Moffett before

presenting current models of writing development. Following this, current writing pedagogies implemented in Australian schools are examined and the role of talk within these approaches is identified. The major part of this review presents research and literature associated with talk and learning and more specifically talk and learning to write. This organisation is designed to enable the reader to identify the importance of talk in the learning context and specifically, the major role of talk in learning to write. It is also of interest that most of the research was conducted between 1979–1991 when new approaches such as the Process Approach (Graves, 1983) presented researchers with new reasons to explore children’s written literacy acquisition. The conclusions drawn at the end of the review suggest that up to date Australian research is necessary due to the changing nature of writing pedagogy and the changing nature of our understandings of writing development.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used and the associated techniques employed in this study. The characteristics of case study research are described and the details of the research are presented including information about the school, the setting, the subjects, the data collection methods and the data analysis procedures. So that the reader might understand the trustworthiness of these aspects of the research, the measures taken to ensure reliability and validity are also described.

Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven contain the case studies in which the data is described. Six children from years four and five feature in the case studies. The case studies are organised in such a way as to effectively describe every aspect

of the writing context, the writing and the writer. Each case study begins by describing the students in the classroom context with the inclusion of additional background information. Following this, the classroom writing context is described with reference to the pedagogy, the teacher talk, the teacher support and the general classroom climate. This information provides a backdrop for the description of the data related to the children's talk and writing activity that was collected during the observation period. This data is described in a narrative fashion, tracking the talk and activity of each of the six children, as they were involved in the writing of two texts. To conclude each case study, the writing that provided the focus for the talk is described and presented.

Chapters Eight and Nine are concerned with the data analysis. Chapter Eight analyses the data in general terms and is organised following the pattern of the case studies. The similarities and differences between the students are analysed; the different classroom contexts are analysed in particular detailing the pedagogical influences and the influence of teacher talk in those contexts. The talk is then analysed in terms of the similarities and difference that emerged as a result of the contextual influences. Furthermore, the talk is analysed in terms of the function it served at each stage of the composing process. The effect of the talk on the children's writing is summarised at the end of Chapter Eight.

Chapter Nine continues the analysis by examining the student talk in more detail resulting in the presentation of categories that describe succinctly the talk in which the students engaged.

Chapter Ten concludes this report by identifying and articulating three generalisations that are made as a result of the data analysis. These generalisations capture the major findings that have emerged from this research.

Furthermore, these generalisations are evidenced by subsequent conclusions linked directly to the data analysis. These subsequent conclusions are described in detail with reference to previous research and to examples from within this study. This chapter also speculates on what 'no talk' means in children's composing processes, reflecting on the exception in this study, Dean, who wrote without uttering a sound. To conclude this thesis, the practical implications that have emerged from this research are described and recommendations for future research are presented.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This study is concerned with what role talk has in later writing development. Children's talk in writing has become of interest because observations of young writers and a review of literature confirmed that for early or emergent writers oral language and talk has a significant role in learning about writing and in learning how to write. This literature review will demonstrate that there is little research into children's talk in later writing development and that such talk could be significant to the development of critical writing skills, in particular the notion of authoring.

Moffet (1979) defines full-authoring as the end point in an ascending scale of writing, "This alone is writing which is genuinely *thinking* – one's own ideas, arrangement and expression, fully 'owned' by the writer; in short, original" (p. 276). Authoring incorporates all aspects of writing: handwriting, copying, paraphrasing, crafting and full authoring. Hall (1989) refers to authorship as the reflective generation of written text and authors are people who use reason to write and write with reason.

To begin, this review defines what writing is and what is involved in the process of composing. Following this an examination of the foundational theories of language development demonstrates the links between language learning and cognitive development and an examination of several models of writing development demonstrates the complex nature of learning writing. This review then addresses pedagogy currently associated with teaching writing in the primary school and highlights how talk is utilised in these current practises to enhance writing development. Also of importance to this research is the relationship of classroom talk to learning in general and research in this area is presented to identify how children use talk to learn. Finally, this review discusses research into the role of talk in children's writing under the following headings;

- Talk and emergent/early writing
- Talk and later writing development
- Writers talking to each other.

This highlights the significance of talk to writing development, the pedagogical and contextual influences on such talk and the need for research into the area of later writing development because of the potential to observe the development of authorship in its midst.

Writing Development

This section of the review seeks to present the theories and models of writing development that have impacted on the teaching of writing. Some definitions are clarified, language development is discussed and several models of writing development are outlined.

The Process and Components of Writing

Writing is the product of meaning making, combining the desire to communicate one's thoughts with an understanding of language relevant to the context (field), appropriate to the intended audience (tenor) for a specific purpose (mode). It is the process of formulating these internal components, with the external elements of spelling, handwriting, punctuation, vocabulary usage and knowledge of sentence structure, into text.

The text then becomes a permanent representation of personal experience (Graves, 1983). But writing is more than just text. Writing is an active process for communicating meaning. Understanding the process of writing as a number of cognitive tasks is important in understanding how writing develops within young learners. According to Beard (1984, p.28) the process of writing involves aspects of composing, transcribing and reviewing.

Composing involves searching the mind for suitable content, usually from one's knowledge about a particular topic and then making an appropriate selection in

order to meet the demands of a particular writing task. Accompanying this aspect of writing may be some form of planning activity, listing, drawing or talking. The process of then converting these ideas into “coherent marks on the page” (Beard, 1984, p. 30) is labelled transcribing, translating or articulating. As the term transcribing suggests, this aspect of writing involves utilising a number of skills and then linking and arranging them with each other to create a pattern of discourse. This includes the skills of handwriting, spelling, vocabulary usage, punctuation and knowledge of sentence structures. Furthermore, the development of the physical coordination skills and concepts associated with directionality can be added to the complex task of transcribing. The third aspect of writing is the reviewing process. This aspect recognises that what has been written can be changed. Reviewing cannot be separated from the whole process and is embedded in both the composing and transcribing aspects (Beard, 1984).

It may seem as if this description of writing has been oversimplified, however it is recognised that there are other important cognitive adjustments involved in understanding language when transcribing spoken utterances into written form. For example writing words is much more than matching the phonemes to correct orthographic representations; words need to be thoughtfully selected to represent precise meaning; and the grammar associated with writing needs to be understood as being far different from the structures of oral language.

There is a lot for a young writer to pay attention to and it has been suggested that the aspects of planning and reviewing are late to develop in young writers because they have so much to attend to already (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1985).

Language Development

Learning language is a developmental process embedded in the social context in which the learning is taking place. It is learned as a result of interactions within a social environment; "Children acquire language as they need it in order to make their presence known to those around them, to find out things about the environment, to tell others their ideas, to accomplish goals and to socialise. Children learn language to function in their worlds" (Glazer, 1989, p.16). This social model of oral language learning is appropriate to all modes of language. "Children learn to talk by talking in an environment that is full of talk and write by writing in an environment that is full of writing and writings." (Bissex, 1981, p. 785).

Foundational to current understandings about writing and literacy is the early language research and developing language theory of Vygotsky (1987). In this theory, language acquisition is explicitly linked to cognitive development through social interaction from birth. As children experience language in social contexts, their thought processes develop to accommodate and assimilate concepts about both, resulting in cognitive growth and language development.

In relation to written language acquisition, Vygotsky (1981) refers to a developmental progression of symbolism, beginning with arbitrary symbols with meaning assigned idiosyncratically by the child, through to the more abstract direct symbolism, where symbols represent meaning on their own. According to Vygotsky, talk and drawing are scaffolds that help children come

to writing. As they become competent users of language in new situations, such as writing, the intermediate form of talk will disappear and their thoughts will be directly represented in writing.

Vygotsky hypothesised that at any level of language development there is always potential for growth. He identified the gap that exists between the actual developmental level and the level of potential development, with adult assistance, as the zone of proximal development (Steward, 1995, p.14). Parents for example, lead their children through the zone of proximal development for learning cultural forms of print, by engaging in activities such as reading bedtime stories. In the same way, teachers assist in children's gradual transition from assisted to unassisted performance in other zones, such as that of written language.

Clare Painter (1986) examined the role of adult speech in early language learning. Both parents and teachers unconsciously adopt a teaching role where for example they allow the child to build up knowledge of concepts about the world and about language by engaging in pseudo-question-response-evaluation exchanges. These exchanges, in a sense, mirror the type of scaffolding described by Vygotsky, where the language learning "zone of proximal development today, will be the actual developmental level tomorrow" (Steward, 1995, p.5).

Moffet's cognitive growth theory (Moffet, 1968) described a sequence of psychological development, related to children's language, based on the notion of abstraction. Associated with the concept of abstraction, and more relevant to

the social-cognitive theory of language learning being discussed here, is the notion of an individual moving from centre of the self, outward, or 'decentring'. This characteristic of cognitive development is defined as "a matter of seeing alternatives, of standing in other's shoes, or knowing that one has a private or local point of view and knowledge structure" (p. 57).

Part of this process of decentring involves the development of inner speech. According to Vygotsky (1987), inner speech is soundless language for oneself. This language then becomes a psychological tool for structuring thinking. For example, as inner speech develops in relation to writing, children move from writing for self as audience to considering others as audience and even unknown audiences, from writing about immediate contexts to contexts beyond the present. The development of this intellectual function is a profound change in cognitive growth and impacts upon language development and writing. These cognitive abilities; to think beyond self, to internalise the points of view of others, to be aware of audience and distancing self from a context are parallel to abilities in using decontextualised language and "Full-blown adult literacy is the ultimate decontextualised skill" (Snow, 1983, p. 175).

A functional language development model related to oral language described by Halliday (1985) is seen not only as a developmental model but also as a way in which children, and indeed adults, can use language (Glazer, 1989; Thomas & Rinehart, 1991). Halliday (1985) contends that the functions appear in language learners in the order in which they are listed in Fig 2.1. Eventually, as young children approach an adult model of speech, all seven functions appear and are

used automatically to fit social contexts and specific linguistic interactions (Thomas & Rinehart, 1991).

Table 2

Oral Language Developmental Framework

1.	INSTRUMENTAL:	to satisfy material needs in phrases like "I want".
2.	REGULATORY:	to control behaviour of others with "do this" or "Don't do this".
3.	INTERACTIONAL:	to establish inter actions and personal relationships between speaker and others.
4.	PERSONAL:	to assert power of individual with "I think" or "I feel".
5.	HEURISTIC:	to question and investigate one's world with "What is..."and "Why do...".
6.	IMAGINATIVE:	to pretend and create language fun.
7.	INFORMATIONAL:	to communicate knowledge of one's world with "I want to tell you something.

(Source: Halliday, 1975, p. 18-20 & 37)

Halliday's hypothesis links to Bissex's (1981) principles for language growth. Two of the three principles described by Bissex relate to the socio-functional aspect of learning oral language. That is, "children learn to talk by talking, in an environment that is full of talk" (p. 786) and "children learn language among people who respond to their meanings before their forms" (p. 787). The third principle, "language grows from being telegraphic and context embedded toward being elaborated and explicit" (p. 789) follows Halliday's hypothesis that language develops from being pragmatic, when the language context is shared, to being mathetic, founded upon functional plurality and employed to

fit more specific linguistic contexts (Thomas & Rinehart, 1991).

This discussion has explicitly linked language development, cognitive development and social development. It also shows how writing development is related to language development and how children learn and understand different mediums for expressing meaning as part of the process of decentring.

Models of Writing Development

Writing development combines development in the sense of maturity with development in the sense of learning from instruction and socialisation (Collins, 1984). In the first sense, writing development mirrors oral language development because the initial emphasis is on phonology and lexicon and then on syntax and discourse in later development. In the second sense, writing development is concerned about function.

There are many different ways of understanding, translating and labelling writing development. To most people, writing development is about the extent to which someone can control the elements of the written language system (Rivalland, 1991). This performance view of writing development describes achieving competence in the use of syntax, sentence structures, paragraphing, punctuation and spelling as being central to meaning making. And it is true to say that many of these aspects of written language are highly conventionalised and will be demonstrated by most children, given the appropriate opportunities

and conditions for learning to write. But there is more to writing development than these external components. The growth of the composer in the understanding of how to use written language to convey thought and meaning is most significant in writing development.

Berier (1980) considers writing development across five seemingly natural stages within an applied cognitive–developmental framework. Beginning with associative writing that combines enough understanding of language to produce ideas and enough understanding of the writing system to enable those ideas to be represented. At this stage children are able to write “what ever comes to mind, in the order in which it comes to mind”(p. 83). The next stage, Performative writing, is the integration of associative writing with an understanding of the conventions of written language; that is correct spelling, punctuation and correct grammar style. Communicative writing sees the writer developing the awareness and ability to have a desired effect on an audience. Unified writing then connects this awareness to the ability to construct or fashion the writing in terms of logical or literary critical judgement and the final stage represents the reflective, personal search for meaning by the writer in the writing task.

Nicholls, Bauer, Pettitt, Redgwell, Seaman and Watson (1989) inquired into writing development in an attempt to understand young children learning to write. Such an inquiry involved a substantial number of observations of children writing and resulted in the development of a magnified model specifically detailing pre-associative or early writing development. The model

was delineated to represent both the composing and performance aspects of writing.

The beginning of writing development is defined as an orientation towards writing where the writer is learning to distinguish writing from drawing, to control pencils, to understand page orientation, to recognise and make some letter shapes, some words and even distinguish some initial sounds in words. The writing generally reflects a verbal message. Further development sees the writer learning to form letters, control the size of letters, leave spaces between words, identify phonic units, develop concepts of what constitutes a word as well as learning to understand that their messages can be composed by making simple choices about words. As this initial independence develops, writers learn what it means to write with some degree of originality. They are also learning to write sentences, use conventional handwriting, use their knowledge of sounds to spell words and also spell a bank of familiar words correctly. Furthermore, there is a developing sense of self-monitoring in relation to handwriting and spelling conventions. Beyond this, the writer is learning "that I can write whatever I want to and sometimes I write stories but at other times I write something different" (Nichols et. al., 1989, p. 97). The concepts of story structure, sequence, overall planning and rule governed spelling conventions begin to develop. They are also learning to use linking words, correct punctuation and to monitor the text for meaning.

So far writing development has been described in terms of a linear or hierarchical model, as a continuum consisting of identifiable, sequentially

ordered steps. However, this is only one dimension of writing development. It neglects the social and instructional influences on writing development; social processes are just as important as cognitive ones.

Britton's (1976) functional model of writing development reflects many of the foundational ideas associated with language development discussed earlier. He suggests that children's early attempts at writing can be described, simply, as speech written down, personal expression of thoughts and feelings and recounts of the world close to them. From this, children move through transactional writing where information about the world beyond their context is formally communicated to eventually developing writing that uses language artistically. Britton's model supports Halliday's (1985) suggestion that writing and speaking are different ways of making meaning. Halliday maintains that both speaking and writing are learned, socio-cultural behaviours produced by specific cultural practices. The differences between the two are based on the different uses or functions of speaking and writing.

Britton's model indicates that writing moves away from resembling speech, as it does in early writing attempts, as more consciousness of thought develops. The end point of this model has writing making meaning in abstract, poetic ways. As this consciousness of thought develops, writers understand that different forms of written language have developed to meet different functional purposes not always met by oral language. As children begin to understand that written language allows a writer to distance him/herself from action and deliberately reflect and interpret it, they move away from expressive forms that resemble

speech written down, to more deliberate meaning making. This process of conscious deliberation does not accompany speech and appears to be linked directly to decentring in cognitive growth (Moffett, 1968).

Wilkinson *et al.* (1980) utilised aspects of Moffett's model in examining writing development. The model that was hypothesised as representing writing development was supported by research known as the Crediton Project. This model presented writing development as pluralistic and linked writing development across the cognitive, affective, moral and stylistic domains. This model reflects the complexity involved in articulating writing development.

In Western Australia, teachers have a resource for monitoring writing development and making decisions about writing instruction that captures some aspects of these different models. The First Steps Project (Ministry of Education, 1992) describes language development along a number of continua. Indicators are used to describe progress, allowing teachers to plot student development and look forward to see how to support children in order to facilitate further literacy development. Writing development is described across two such continua, a developmental continuum and a learning continuum, highlighting both the cognitive and functional aspects of writing. By providing important indicators of progress, this resource has given teachers the means by which to holistically view children's writing development. The First Steps Project assists teachers in monitoring student's development and in making instructional decisions so that development continues.

Writing Pedagogy

Children's language development prior to entering school is most powerfully influenced by the social interactions and opportunities that are provided within their specific cultural context. The most significant social context outside of the family environment is the language learning environment created within a classroom. Because of this, schooling has been singled out as the critical process that transforms children's language from utterance to text (Steward, 1995), a journey through the ultimate zone of proximal development.

Classroom language instruction is highly influential on children's perceptions about language and on the knowledge and skills associated with using language. Such instruction has been a major focus of research over the past twenty-five years. The influence of these ideas on teachers' understandings about writing and on current classroom teaching practice cannot be ignored. This section of the review seeks to describe three of the major influences on writing pedagogy. In doing so it will become clear that talk has a major role in writing instruction and consequently writing development.

Process Approach

The research of Donald Graves (1983) has had a dramatic influence on the way teachers view children's writing. He defines writing as a craft, a process of shaping material toward an end and as such, it demands constant revision, constant re-seeing of what is being revealed by the information in hand. His

idea of process oriented instruction has moved the emphasis off the product of children's writing and on to the process used in the production of writing. In a similar way, Walshe (1981) outlined an explicit model of how writing happens. He argued that understanding this process and providing the child writer with pointers on how to go about each piece of writing and how to change direction when things are going wrong is what good teachers of writing should do.

Numerous models of the process approach have been developed (Graves, 1983; Turbill, 1982; Walshe, 1981). The processes described a number of pre-writing stages followed by drafting, conferencing, editing, re-drafting, conferencing and finally publication and reader response. Each step has several sub-processes, including talking, to enable the writer to think and work at making the writing meaningful and correct.

Loann Reid (1983) commented that an average of three minutes elapsed between the time the teacher assigned a topic and the time the students were expected to begin writing in high school English classes. This research experience led her to articulate formally why talk is an important part of the writing process. These ideas are still relevant and supported by the ideas discussed earlier in relation to language development and cognitive development.

She suggests that speaking is natural while writing is not. Talk in the writing process encourages the exploration of words by slowing down the thought processes without stopping them completely. By talking to a sympathetic

partner, children can test ideas, explore words, experiment with different methods of organisation and not lose valuable thoughts. Talking throughout the process of pre-writing, drafting and revising enriches the finished product without stunting its growth (Reid, 1983, p. 3).

Graves (1983) placed very strong emphasis on talk and in particular the importance of the conference (a one-to-one conversation between the teacher and the child over the purpose, content and style of the child's writing). He argued that teaching about the mechanics of writing could be adequately done in a conference situation. In this sense, the conference represents the notion of scaffolding; creating an environment where the teacher is able to assist the child in understanding, identifying and learning something they do not know or are not yet able to do. In this way, the conference becomes a very powerful teaching/learning method. Peer conferencing was also an aspect of this approach and provided the writer with an audience for writing and a forum for seeing if it made sense to others outside the writer's internal context.

These ideas revolutionised the teaching of writing in the eighties in Australia and resulted in what has been dubbed the Conference Approach (Turbill, 1982). A shift developed in writing instruction as teachers began to give more control of the writing to the child. The term ownership captured the idea that children's control over topic choice, pre-writing, drafting, revising and publishing should be respected, giving children responsibility to make decisions and discover their own unique way or process of writing.

While this approach to the teaching of writing has many positive aspects, there are also problems associated with its implementation. Painter (1986) argues that the conference has the potential to become an unnatural teaching method because it is a contradiction of the adult-child language interaction previously experienced, since the child is elevated to the place of expert about their own writing. Both Painter (1986) and Applebee (1986) emphasise the shared responsibility and collaboration between teachers and students in the production of written texts. They both make reference to scaffolding and also to the notion of the transfer of the control of language as the student becomes more independent and able to produce texts without teacher scaffolding.

Labbo, Hoffman & Roser (1995) identified ways in which teachers unintentionally create problems for students in the writing process. They suggested that by focussing too much on the stages and constraints of the writing process teachers are failing to look at writing from the child's point of view. They argue that seeing writing as a process of predetermined, nearly fixed stages rather than a recursive and fluid experience means that teachers become more concerned about the process they are trying to teach than what the writers are trying to do.

Another criticism of this approach has been that children, left to themselves to choose their own topics for writing, will stay with what is safe or already known (Fox, 1993; Lensmire, 1994). This results in the opportunities to teach being controlled by what the children have written. Martin (2000) claimed that this approach brings about recount writers because many children don't have

appropriate textual capital in their heads to draw on when writing. The consequences of this is the development of a gap in the students understanding about 'what else' writing can do and their skills in being able to use the different forms of language to make meaning in different ways. The connection between reading and writing is very important in this approach. Without some sort of effort on the part of the teacher, to build up the children's bank of knowledge and experience of texts, it is likely that there will be limitations on the possible written texts that children will produce (Rivalland, 1991).

Despite these criticisms, the ideas and original theory behind the approach are still impacting on classroom teaching today (Mciver & Wolf, 1999). In many cases, the art of conferencing is no longer only marked by the teachers acting as good listeners in an attempt to learn what students already know (Graves, 1994). Rather, it has become a place where teachers respond to students' creative processes as instructional leaders and interested knowledgeable readers. Graves suggests that within the environment of the conference, many teachers are developing and using practical methods to communicate their insights as competent readers and writers. It is also a place where peers work together in a safe and structured context to construct meaning.

Genre Based Approach

Countering a criticism of the process approach, is another facet of primary school writing instruction, known as the functional approach to teaching writing (Derewianka, 1990). It is based on the socio-cultural belief that

“learning the genres of one’s culture is part of learning to become a successful participant in that culture” and that “they are absolutely essential elements of the ways human beings conduct and order their lives” (Christie, 1989, p. 10). Christie argues that it is for these reasons the genres merit serious attention in the classroom.

All the different ways of making meaning are culturally specific and one of the most important ways through which we make meaning, is through writing. Writing in schools, in particular, is of significance because so much of what students learn is measured by their capacity to demonstrate learning through written genres. The genre-based approach to teaching writing contends that children should be taught about genres from their earliest days at school (Christie, 1989). They should be taught to understand that when people write, they create different kinds of texts to serve different kinds of social purposes. By doing this the students will be well informed about the nature of genres needed to facilitate learning in the later years of schooling.

Christie & Rothery (1989) and Martin (2000) argue that teachers need to expose and model various genres to the children, highlighting the linguistic features of each text type. By providing real opportunities and scaffolding genres, across a number of different learning areas, the students will become aware that learning to write involves learning how language works and how texts are made. Young learners rely heavily on the models that are made available to. As they experience, learn about and play with the models they know, they learn how to change them to suit their purposes for writing. The cycle of teaching in this

approach makes use of the notion of scaffolding students learning. Beginning with strategies that prepare the students to learn about genres (reading in the genres), then working through the construction of texts, firstly by modelling, then in a joint construction context, and then allowing the students opportunity to work independently on the construction of text (Derewianka, 1990).

One of the important aspects of children's writing development is the number and variety of texts with which the children have had experience. The genre approach encourages teachers to be conscious of the selection of literature and other factual texts that provide background experience from which the writer can draw. Genre-based language programs link reading and writing explicitly with language learning and concept development within learning areas. The process of writing in the genres remains the same, the only difference being, that students are better equipped with an informed understanding of how texts work in conveying particular meanings. They can then choose to utilise that knowledge when it is needed within the process of composing. The ideas and experiences within a genre-based approach to teaching writing can be utilised alongside the process approach to writing and this is how effective teachers of writing incorporate significant aspects of learning how texts work (Graves, 1994).

Whole Language

In this approach to teaching writing, teachers attempt to integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to maximise the students'

understandings of how each mode is related to others and how these relationships can inform our language use and language learning.

Advocates of the whole language approach (Cambourne & Turbill, 1987; Goodman, 1986; Wilkinson, 1990) contend that all modes should be included and emphasised whenever possible in language learning contexts. When the four modes of language are used within a meaningful context, what children learn in or about one mode is more easily transferred to the others.

Indicative of this approach is the large repertoire of classroom strategies that teachers have to select from to support and extend the literacy development of the students. Strategies such as shared book and modelled writing are key experiences in this approach. In both strategies, the teacher becomes the proficient reader and writer and reads or composes in front of the children, providing a window into the unspoken dialogue that happens inside the head of a reader and writer. Children begin to see that writing, like reading, is about solving problems and that they can use the same strategies as the teacher when they need to solve their reading and writing problems.

This approach embraces Cambourne's (1984) set of natural conditions for learning. In particular it emphasises the need to provide good models of reading and writing practice. The use of modelling is based on Cambourne's principle of imitation, thus utilising one of the earliest and most effective learning strategies children employ.

Summary

A rich understanding of writing development is embedded in current writing practices and talk underpins many of the strategies used by teachers. In the past, the quiet working classroom was an indication that minds were at work, however, the research suggests that this is not necessarily true and the pedagogy discussed in this review suggests that talk plays an important role in writing development.

Talk and Learning

The link between language learning and early cognitive development has already been discussed. The emphasis so far has been on language learning rather than on learning through language. However, just as children learn language by experiencing it and using it as a resource, so too, as they learn to control the resources of language they also increase their understanding of the experiences to which the language refers (Wells & Nicholls, 1985). Children's learning is supported by language and at the same time such learning provides the context for learning more about the uses of language. Dyson (1987) suggests that peer talk "engendered by more holistic, more world-creating tasks may more easily reveal children at their intellectual best" (p. 398).

Talk, then, is the "exposed edge of the learning process" and can be used as a window into how children think and learn (Fillion, 1983). Language accompanies so much of what children experience and so it goes without saying

that the way in which language is used will also affect their view of those experiences and so too the learning that takes place (Tough, 1977). Talk provides a critical medium for young children to express complex ideas and to investigate the ideas of others.

The classroom is of interest to this study because it is a unique social context. It is the place where social interaction and learning meet more formally than in other contexts. Talk has a major place in this context; teacher talk instructs and conveys values and attitudes, children's private talk helps to enhance their thinking and peer talk solves problems and explores ideas. Research into all such talk is of significance to this study and there has been much written about what children say to themselves and to each other within the classroom learning context and the subsequent role this talk has in learning (Barnes, 1992; Britton, 1976; Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1983; Lemke, 1985; Novick & Waters, 1977; Tough, 1976, 1981; Wilkinson, 1982). Some of the key aspects of these relationships will be discussed here.

Language development theory discussed earlier has already highlighted the relationship between language development and the development of cognitive processes. The study of children's classroom seeks to understand how children use language for learning in general. Children's talk, within the context of the classroom, has provided teachers with information about what children are thinking and doing as they work together, or on their own, in both structured and unstructured learning environments.

This section of the review will describe some of the research into classroom talk from two points of view relevant to this study. Firstly research into peer interactions will be investigated to reveal how students talk to each other and how this talk enhances learning. Secondly a review of the research and writing on teacher talk will be investigated to demonstrate the ways teachers' talk influences student learning and student talk.

Peer Interactions

A number of different categories have risen out of studies into children's talk within the learning context. Novick & Waters (1977) identified three broad categories of talk in their study of children's talk within controlled learning experiences and problem solving activities. They noted that the children of their study engaged in mechanical language within the classroom; repeating words, rhymes, songs, reading aloud. These children also engaged in talk defined as verbalisations that help steady their independent thinking when cognitive challenge was apparent. This talk was usually in a low voice and sometimes did not sound intelligible at all, but rather was a series of noises or patterned sounds. The other category of transactional speech grouped those utterances formulated by the children that were directed to others. This type of talk was more prevalent than the other two categories combined, and the amount doubled when the children were in the schoolyard.

In an investigation into what her students talked about during problem solving experiences, Susan Huff (1991) observed twenty different categories of talk, each

with unique characteristics making them distinct in their own right. Within these categories, there was talk of a presentational nature, exploratory talk, talk that supported Cazden's (1988) idea of peer talk providing opportunity for interactional role reversal. There was also experience talk, where the children drew on their background knowledge; working talk, where they made suggestions and moved materials; thoughtful talk, that directed solutions and there was also social talk, where the children just talked about anything that was relevant to them, highlighting the social element of both work and play. Such social talk plays a significant role in the intellectual development of young children who are constructing knowledge about and learning to do such things as writing and communicating in new situations (Dyson, 1987).

Barnes (1992) theorised that talk takes on two specific functions when associated with learning. It can be presentational like a final draft. This talk is for display and focuses on the expectations of the audience rather than personal ideas; for example, answering teacher questions. The other function of talk in learning is exploratory. This talk is often hesitant, incomplete and enables the speaker to try out ideas, hear how they sound, see what others think of them and also enables the speaker to arrange information and ideas into different patterns. This kind of talk provides an important means for working on understanding.

Labercane & Hunsberger (1990) referred to this type of talk in their study of teacher attitudes to talk in the classroom. Most teachers in the study valued the piggy-backing aspect of talking through ideas with peers. Such talk lead to responsive ideas being generated from another and their conclusion was that

this was a form of “talking to learn” (p. 32). In contrast to the classrooms where quiet work equated to busy minds, learning through talk was seen to be social, collaborative and untidy, yet cognitively significant.

Exploratory language is important to the learning process because it can prompt involvement and motivation by enabling children to make links between curriculum content and their own experiences (Fillion, 1983). Such informal, personal language of jotting things down, mulling them over, talking them out and thinking them through is a major part of the process through which we get from information from ‘out there’ to our own personal understanding and appreciation of it.

The treatment students receive from their teachers and their peers can also impact on talk in the classroom. “All speech is influenced by features of the context in which it takes place and interactions among students are no exception” (Cazden, 1988, p. 137). In a study by Garnica (1981), students who were left out and not consulted by their peers in group experiences tended to talk more to themselves. This differential treatment, resulting in differences in how the students used talk, could be attributed to differences in knowledge based on experience, differences in ability, ethnicity and sex. Children with high social status have more access to peer interaction and these interactions assist their learning. This suggests that the grouping of students in the classroom can also influence peer interactions.

Vygotsky highlighted the cognitive benefits of talk among peers in relation to interactions with experts (adult or child). Social interaction is important to learning because talk is seen as a catalyst for cognitive change; necessary and indispensable in the process of cognitive growth. Cazden (1988) suggests that talk among peers provides opportunity for cognitive change through the exposure to the views of others and alternative ideas. In another way, talk with peers in specific learning contexts enables the “same kinds of scaffolding assistance that adults provide in teaching contexts”(Forman & Cazden, 1985, p. 343).

The peer interactions suggested by Cazden (1988) as contributing to learning are significant because they can be just as effective as teacher-student interactions without the limitations and rigidity that those interactions can have. In school lessons, teachers ask questions, and children answer them; teachers give directions and children follow them and these roles are often not reversible. The only place where children can take on interactional roles of giving and following directions, asking and answering questions is with their peers. These unique opportunities are places where the children learn special ways of using language. Talk can also provide opportunities to relate to an audience, as in the writing conference. This can assist the maturation of the writer in moving from considering self as audience to the idea of others as audience: decentring. Cazden also suggests that there are cognitive benefits to talking with peers in order to explore ideas.

Teacher Talk and Student Learning

Of the many activities that take place in the primary school classrooms, there is a preponderance of talk and teachers do much of that talking (Cazden, 1995). Through all this talking, teachers impart information about learning procedures and content as well as attitudes and perspectives (Mohr, 1998). Further more, talk is the medium through which teachers attempt to control behaviour and through which roles and identities are defined and maintained. This talk is recognised as making a difference and one of the significant ways is in the area of student attitudes towards learning.

Exploring how teachers talk in the teaching role is an inquiry into the register or the conventionalised ways of speaking in that particular role. Cazden (1988) likens teacher talk to the way adults talk to babies. It is characterised by a higher pitch, has a more exaggerated intonation and careful enunciation, involves shorter sentences and more frequent repetitions and many more questions are used than would be used in other contexts or when speaking with other adults. One pervasive feature of the content of teacher talk is the expression of control over both behaviour and talk. The research of Stubbs (1983) has revealed at least eight kinds of talk associated with monitoring and controlling the classroom communication system. These categories include attracting or showing attention, controlling the amount of speech of others, checking or confirming understanding, summarising, defining, editing, correcting and specifying the topic. Similarly a more recent study (Mohr, 1998) investigated the language features used by effective teachers and the degree to which a lot of this talk

included motivational constructs and communicated productive perspectives. The results revealed that the effective teachers used talk predominantly to build community. The use of 'we' and other collaborative terms promoted a shared learning mentality.

Teachers also used talk to challenge students behaviourally and academically by articulating expectations and responsibilities in the literacy learning environment. Most of this type of talk could be linked to that of classroom control; helping to maintain a productive learning environment. The effective teachers did not use sharp reprimands or embarrassing remarks, but rather encouraged students to be on-task, involved and productive. Teacher feedback comments including praise, repetition of student's answers, reward, comparative and assessment comments were also identified. Other talk was directly linked to specific tasks within the processes at work in the classroom. This included modelling and task focussing; characterised by the teacher stopping or interrupting the activity to focus on particular elements or reiterate options. Mohr contended that all this talk impacts on student learning in positive ways, enhancing student success and perceptions and also by contributing towards the achievement of a sense of community within the classroom.

Comber (1996) in her study of the construction of literacy in a disadvantaged school noted that teachers employed a number of discursive techniques in order to keep students on task and to produce the ideal student. The techniques of 'voice over', 'pep talks' and 'on patrol' are ways in which teachers made explicit

the norms for classroom behaviour and reinforced specific literacy behaviours. These techniques communicated to the students “where they should be, where their bodies should be, when and how they could speak, what they should be doing, how they should be doing it and how they should be using their time” (1996, p. 237). This talk influenced student activity and student learning in different ways. Furthermore, it contributed to constructions about literacy, school, work, talk and other ‘classroom’ concepts.

Novick & Waters (1977) believed a lot of what children say is directly affected by the teacher’s talk. One of the major categories of teacher talk is concerned with focussing the children’s attention firmly onto completing the set task. They believe many teachers are also very time conscious and force the pace of activity and use minimal response questioning. The talk aimed to assist in getting the job done in as short a time as possible. They suggested that possibly getting the job done had a higher priority than what goes on in the doing of it. The impact of such talk was reflected in the children’s preoccupation with finishing.

In examining her own talk in the classroom, Rowe (1998) identified ways in which that talk imposed definitions and boundaries to what it meant to read and write. She hypothesised that it is the covert signals in how teachers ask questions and respond to students that communicates information about literacy and learning rather than the overt effort on the teacher’s part to explain or teach. Consciously considering the subtle ways that teacher talk works to define the nature of literacy events, roles of the student and the strategies they use and value, is often overlooked by the rearrangement of space, materials and

experiences for literacy learning.

A study of the patterns of discourse which typify teacher - student exchanges during literacy activities was carried out by Geekie & Raban (1993). The study tracked the development shown in the nature of the conversations between a group of four to five year olds and their teacher over the first five months of the school year. Over this period of time the researchers identified that the patterns of exchange used in the teacher - student interactions became the property of the students and they began using this talk to regulate behaviour. Towards the end of the study, their talk during writing tasks began to reflect the exchanges modelled earlier by the teacher.

In a sense, the children's language became representational, not of any level of language or cognitive development or social competence, but rather, of the structured patterns of social interaction, intentionally deposited by the teacher and the environment itself. These patterns provided frameworks within which the children discovered ways language could be used to get things done. The relevance of this research is that children's talk during writing may reflect different aspects of the context for learning, including teacher talk, rather than any stage of writing development, generally. Children monitor what teachers talk about in classroom writing demonstrations and the teacher's responses to the writings of others and learn to use the same kinds of talk themselves.

Talk in the Teacher-Student Writing Conference

Mciver & Wolf (1999) investigated the writing conference in an effort to understand the interactions that make it a unique learning situation for young writers. They discovered that during teacher-student conferences, the teacher used all kinds of questions to read and interpret student work as a reader who was genuinely interested in what they have to say. This sharing approach led to an awareness of audience and a desire for the writer to continue their work rather than leaving the conference feeling destroyed by criticism (p. 6).

Estabrook's (1982) study of a six year old boy described his unique process of composing. He rarely shared his writing with anyone and it was not unusual for him to reach speeds of eighteen words per minute. The only talk that was recorded was to question his peers on the length of their writing. When questioned by the teacher about the topic of his writing, he would answer "I can't talk, I'm in the middle of writing" (p. 698). Matthew wrote profusely, feeling no need for, or awareness of, an audience other than himself.

Consequently, he did not revise his writing made no changes to it once it was completed. He could not see any need for this, as he (the audience) was happy with it just the way it was.

Estabrook's, long term observations of Matthew, indicated the powerful role talk has in leading to greater thoughtfulness, decision making and independence in young writers. This solitary young writer was lead toward a

developing sense of audience as he was exposed to questions by the teacher about the content of his writing and also through the exposure to the talk of other young writers around him. The interactions about writing that were modelled by the teacher and then encouraged between the young children, led to the development of critical writing skills especially in relation to an awareness of audience. Talk was the vehicle for this development

The destination of such a progression is one where “the writer begins to talk with himself without the need of another’s physical presence. The issues he deals with grow in sophistication as they did when he was conferring with other writers” (1982, p. 706). The spontaneous talk of writers sharing and questioning ideas and writings becomes the model for talking to self and for reflecting on the needs of readers while composing. This example indicates the need for opportunities to talk and also the need for modelling and teaching children how to talk and what to talk about.

Summary

This aspect of the review has identified the features and functions of two major aspects of classroom talk; talk with peers and teacher talk. The discussion has attempted to relate this talk to its impact on learning and subsequent student talk. It was interesting to note the way teacher talk works to impart attitudes and perceptions, set boundaries and shape literacy practices in literacy classrooms. Teacher talk can control, communicate roles and model literacy learning strategies. Peer talk not only allows the children to explore ideas, null

things over and take on interactional roles, it also contributes significantly to the learning of new knowledge and skills and to cognitive development generally.

Talk and Writing

The nature of language learning is such that the seemingly separate components of reading, writing, speaking and listening are intertwined and each contribute to the development of the others (Hall, 1989). Alan Luke confirms that "children's literacy is being 'done' and 'made' through the labour of classroom talk." (1992, p. 67). The naturalness of talk establishes a comfortable atmosphere, one in which writers feel free to take risks in writing and in sharing their writing.

Research has also discovered that talk in writing contexts is generally about the same sorts of things and impacts on the writing in similar ways (Dyson, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1989; Geekie & Raban, 1993; Slayer, 1994). Research into talk and writing has indicated that talk has a unique role in the development of written language and in the composing process (Calkins, 1991; Dyson, 1983, 1987; Graves, 1994). This section of the review will identify the categories of children's talk associated with emergent writing and later writing development. It will also review the research into talk associated with the conference aspect of the writing process and other writing contexts within the writing environment.

Talk and Emergent/Early Writing

Talk is a significant accompaniment to all activity for the young child and is explicitly linked to language learning (Donoahue, 1996). Because talk mediates most early learning, literacy learning is therefore mediated through young children's oral language (Thomas & Rinehart, 1991). There has been much focus, by Dyson particularly (1981, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1989), on the unique relationship between the two components of oral language and writing. This relationship is particularly evident in beginning writers; for whom talk is vital to text making. Talk provides the meaning and the means for writing as children begin the process of learning to map their oral language onto print (Dyson, 1983).

In her original research into the role of oral language in early writing, Dyson (1981, 1983) investigated how kindergarten children used talk during writing. She related the function of their utterances to their early writing, hypothesising about each child's understanding of the links between talk and writing. She found that in early writing development, children's spontaneous talk is linked directly with meaning making as they begin creating written texts. As children converse with others and talk privately to themselves, they provide meaning, or explanations and descriptions, to drawings and writings that would otherwise appear incomplete or fragmented (Sperling, 1996).

More recently Dyson's research focused on the social nature of the talk children engage in when working together on writing composition (Dyson, 1987, 1989).

Her observations of a small group of five and six year old peers suggests that academic and social talk (or 'on task' and 'off task' talk) are not easily separated. It was in fact the social talk rather than the academic talk that stimulated and contributed to the children's intellectual growth (Dyson, 1987). The social laughing, teasing, correcting and chatting, that accompanied the children's writing tasks were by-products of deeper social needs for relationships and recognition. The lively talk the children engaged in with their supportive and critical peers mediated their literacy journeys and enlivened and enlarged their writings.

Dyson's findings support the notion that oral language is part of the meaning making process when writing. Her theory stresses that there are two tools for early writing; "the pencil and the voice" (1983, p. 104). Whether a child's attempts at writing are motivated by making their thoughts and ideas visible or by forming print and searching for a way to make that print meaningful, talk plays a significant role in making the writing mean something.

Thomas and Rinehart (1991) recorded children's oral language during writing tasks and found it took on specific roles in the meaning making process. It provided a means to write by verbalising their start and by labelling. It then went on to elaborate and fill in the writing. Further to that children used talk to learn more about written language by questioning and mulling over the writing. Finally talk provided the avenue for communicating when they could not write or symbolise what they wanted. Talk was central to every aspect of the children's interaction with writing.

Children's talk also provides the means to write by assisting in the mechanics associated with making their thought visible (Dyson, 1983). Similarly and more recently, Thomas and Rinehart (1991) described four year old children's oral language and related literacy performances from a socio-linguistic perspective. Basing most of their analysis on Halliday's framework (Halliday, 1975), they documented four kindergarten children's oral language, describing the role and function it played in literacy tasks. Their results supported Dyson's findings that talk is central in young children's early attempts at writing. The children's talk served to sustain their writing, so much so that when they stopped talking, they often stopped writing. More interestingly, they were able to support the hypothesis that as the children's talk reflected more of the higher functions from Halliday's framework, so too their writing reflected similar functions (Thomas & Rinehart, 1991). As their subjects' writing included higher levels of Clay's Classification System (a diagnostic model for assessing early writing), they also used more of Halliday's functions in their talk while writing (Clay, 1975). This knowledge and use of higher functions of language had a direct impact on the code, language level, message quality and directionality of their writing as assessed using Clay's system.

It is also through oral language that children learn to map speech onto writing. Research provides discussion about the systematic means of getting thought on paper (Dyson, 1983; Geekie & Raban, 1993; Nicholls et. al, 1989; Salyer, 1994; Thomas & Rinehart, 1991), That is, talk is the analytical, encoding tool used to make invisible thought visible and conventional.

In Kamler's two year study of the writing development of a young boy, she noted that during writing he could be "... heard composing aloud, sounding, re-reading and talking to himself" (Kamler & Woods, 1987, p. 10). Clay refers to this aspect of talk and its relationship to writing in her findings (Clay, 1991). She maintains that good articulation is associated with progress in early writing and that poor articulation is associated with limited progress in early writing, particularly in encoding new vocabulary.

A lot of the talk at this stage of writing development may also be attributed to private speech (Vygotsky, 1987). This is the egocentric speech of pre-schoolers characterised by the children repeating sounds, speaking alone to themselves and using monologue in social settings oblivious to a listening audience. It is thought to be an intimate glimpse at the close relationship between thought and language (Jalongo, 1992). As children become more adept in their communication skills, their egocentric speech diminishes in favour of more socially oriented speech. Private speech reflects the young learners' inability to keep their thoughts to themselves, as they possess neither the will nor the ability to take listeners roles into consideration. Such speech is internalised by the end of the pre-school period as thought becomes internalised.

Galda, Shockley & Pellegrini (1995) explored the opportunities for literate talk in one first grade classroom. They noted that writing workshops provided a rich context for talking about writing. In this noisy, busy, social context, the children could be heard composing aloud as they wrote, saying words as they put them on the paper and spelling aloud. They reread their texts, read their writing to

peers, and offered unsolicited help to each other. Never told to write silently, this group of children used language to support their learning as they took chances and grew as writers.

Whether we attribute talk in the early stages of writing development to private speech, the development of inner speech or the social function of learning to write, there is no doubt of its existence nor its significance to young writers attempts at learning to control the written language system.

The question to which this review will now turn is whether or not talk has been found to have the same significance to writing in later writing development.

Talk and Later Writing Development

Contributing to our understanding of the composing processes of middle school writers is the research by Langer (1986) that investigates what children think about as they are writing, by examining their think-alouds on specific writing tasks. The analysis of the data showed that children in the intermediate grades place a primary focus on content, the ideas and linkages within the set of meanings they are constructing. They think about generating ideas, formulating meaning, evaluating and revising their writing. Langer's research indicates that these children use strategies that help them make sense of the content about which they are writing. Talk is one of those strategies and children do just that. They talk about what they want to say next in their writing and what to include about the topic (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

Early research by Graves (1975) suggested that the more developed child writers used very little oral language either as a rehearsal to writing or during writing itself. Using Graves' research as an example, Groff (1979) agreed that the type of deliberate, analytic action that is required in writing, cannot be reflected or observed in spontaneous writing talk because this level of abstract thinking is not used in talk. He suggested that "in the middle grades, oral language cannot provide a useful model for their written productions since oral language from that point onward is likely to be less complex and less fluent, and more prone to errors than is children's written composition" (1979, p. 34). He concluded that talk was not helpful as a model for written language. Unlike initial attempts at writing that closely resemble speech, later writing is understood as having moved beyond the simple structures of speech written down and talk is no longer useful in rehearsing and modelling written forms.

Groenewold and Hayden (1989) studied the writings of siblings in one family and noted that second order symbolism (drawing and talking) is no longer needed in writing situations once direct symbolism (writing) is achieved and meaning can be represented. This supports Vygotsky's (1987) notion that talk and drawing are scaffolds that help the children come to writing.

Browning & Mc Clintic (1995) wanted to build on the natural oral competence of Grade Six students by including an increasing amount of talk in the writing process. This was because they knew that "the relationship of talk to writing is central to the writing process" (p. 105). By introducing the students to a working writer, it became evident that they were interested in discussing the content of

the book but even more so, the writing of the book. The students began to see that writing comes from experience and their interest in that experience prompted the construction of questions appropriate to talking about writing.

The positive aspects of encouraging talk in the writing process were articulated by the students themselves and included; getting ideas from each other, getting to meet new people, and getting to see different types of writing. The students even suggested that their writing “turned out better” (1995, p.108) as the talk among peers helped them recognise additional necessary detail and made their writing sound more like stories. The researcher also commented that growth in the students acting, talking and thinking like writers was more observable in their talk than in their written products. Viewing the peer group’s process rather than individual products provided a valuable window into each student as a writer. This demonstrates the notion that learning is more a social construction of new knowledge than an individual production of acquired knowledge (Golub & Reid, 1989).

Kasten (1997) began listening to her students talk out of interest. What she heard was productive types of talk. She was interested in whether or not peer talk during writing represented on-task or off-task behaviour. Her observations of third and fourth grade students focussing on the writing and talking resulted in the discovery that nearly 90% of all the peer talk during writing was related to the act of writing and the talk was purposeful. “The young writers discussed topics, checked spellings, clarified assignment expectations, solved problems with mechanics, sought opportunities to collaborate, sought an audience for

their writing and listened to the sound of their own writing, as they read aloud their work" (p. 91). In an almost identical study with third and fifth graders but within a different cultural context, Kasten obtained similar results. She suggests that the process of writing is so engaging to these developing writers that there is "little room for frivolous talk" (p. 93). Both results indicated that "purposeful talk supports the process of the individual writer and the community of writers, as they assist each other" (p. 93).

There is a need for more studies that listen to older children's natural language during writing, because unlike Graves and Groff's suggestion that children no longer talk during writing in the later stages of writing development, research presented here suggests that they do. Pedagogical and cultural differences play a major role in this use of talk in later writing development and in learning to write generally therefore further research in this area needs to include examples of different pedagogical and cultural influences.

Writers Talking to Each Other

It goes without saying that given the opportunity to talk, most children will. When students are placed in a context where they need to collaborate and cooperate, problem solve, or learn, talk is present. There has been much research into some of the more formal arrangements for student talk in the writing process. This aspect of the review will discuss some of the findings related to what children say when they talk to each other formally about their writings. The section following presents the findings of research into talk during

collaborative writing episodes. Both opportunities for talking and writing were constructed by the teachers or resulted from the deliberate structure of the language learning environment.

Gere & Abbott (1985) examined the language of writing groups of students aged ten, thirteen and sixteen years to determine what students say when they critique each other's writing. The analysis revealed that most of the talk focussed on content and that it remained on task while they worked together, conferencing each other's writing.

Brock (1987) watched and listened to her class of Year One writers and concluded that through talking and group conferencing, the children were letting each other in on the complexities of written language in a very explicit way. Their talk was of direct importance to what they had written and was a way of 'writing' aloud, filling in the gaps, explaining and a means of getting help from their peers. It also provided opportunity for them to distance themselves from their writing, to see it in a different light. Talk was a means by which they could experience an audience and have reasons to write. The children wrote to appeal to an audience and were keen to latch on to new ways to achieve and maintain their audience's interest. Through this talk, the children were learning to be critical. They commented on the storyline, asked for clarification from each other and noticed and admired the appearance and use of new ideas or structural aspects in their writings.

Comparable to Dyson's study of children's talk during group writing (1987, 1989) is Salyer's study of the talk his class of 22 first grade children in Iowa engaged in while writing (Salyer, 1994). The focus of the research was on the spontaneous, uncontrolled talk of these children as they worked *together*, in groups, to compose their written texts.

Salyer identified two patterns of talk within this context. Talk very closely related to the writing termed "talk-in-the-middle" and talk more distant from the core-text termed "talk-around-the-edge" (Salyer, 1994, p44). The groupings within the context of the study also added an interesting slant to his research. It seemed that the children working collaboratively on writing engaged mostly in 'talk-in-the-middle' and children in the side-by-side composing groups, where each was working on their own composition, utilised 'talk-in-the-middle' equally with 'talk-around-the-edge'. In the side-by-side grouping the talk kept the children company as they worked. Their talk was a forum for the exchange of ideas and for responding to and admiring the work of others. Incidental collaboration also occurred. The major implication of this research was that the energy of the young children's social lives contributed to the meaning making of their texts.

In an investigation into whether students could learn from one another during collaborative writing, Freedman (1995) identified ways in which the students used each other. Some students, although working on their own writing, developed roles and responsibilities within a self directed, independent collaborative context: The Mr. and Mrs Club. (So named because the titles and

the content of the stories were about Mr and Mrs 'Something'.) Some children worked at providing models and patterns for others while others provided leadership and supported new writers as they joined the group. The power of collaboration is seen in the way each writer went on to use the group as a resource for their own writing. One student used the group purely as an audience and wrote independent of the other members, using her *own* ideas and characters. Another thrived on the collaboration. The pre-writing dialogue, dramatisation and interaction resulted in complex narratives, unlike anything she had ever written. For others the group provided encouragement, motivation and writing models. Freedman concluded that the valuable collaboration "influenced individuals in various ways, depending on their social and developmental placement, their individual personalities and their writing needs" (p. 108).

Summary

Young children talk while they write because it is in their nature to talk but also because talking provides meaning to their developing representations of the written communication system and assists them in mapping their thoughts into print. Many, but not all, older children take opportunities to talk about their writing when appropriate contexts prevail but also need to be taught how to talk about their writing in order to develop more critical writing skills.

Final Summary Comment

The foundational language research presented here and the theoretical discussion is important to the framework of this research. It provides the backdrop for understanding the nature of literacy acquisition as a socially and culturally embedded developmental process.

Talk is an explicitly social interaction and accompanies writing as a vehicle through which language is learned (Glazer, 1989; Jalongo, 1992). It would be appropriate to say at this point that the research described here has evidence to support the view that children learn much about written language through oral language (Sulzby, 1986). Clay (1991) supports this by predicting that every sentence a child constructs, whether written or spoken, is a hypothesis about language. By using language, either written or spoken, a child learns more about that language. According to Halliday (1985), children make meaning first through oral language. It is only natural, then, that oral language can be applied to make meaning in writing and assist the discovery of knowledge about the use of written language.

Talk is the exposed edge of the learning process and can be relied on as a window into the learning process (Fillion, 1983). Therefore, because talk during writing provides insight into the development of written literacy, a study of children's talk associated with writing development will further inform our understandings of the process of becoming literate.

Some of the significant research into different aspects associated with children's talk and writing have been presented here encompassing; talk during teacher-student conferences; talk during student-student conferences; talk and collaborative writing; talk and emergent writing; talk and later writing development and writer's talk when composing. As we know from Dyson's studies, young children's talk is central to writing development something that both Kasten and Salyer's studies have further informed.

Groenewold and Hayden's research into the writing processes of four siblings observed older writers at work, concluding that talk is no longer needed once direct symbolism is achieved. However, the context of that research was very controlled and did not allow for differences in setting, leaving the potential for further research into talk and later writing development within a classroom context. This research supported the ideas posited by Graves and Groff, that older writers use very little oral language while writing, but still ignores the usefulness of talk to developing more critical writing skills. Given a different setting, with the company of peers, different observations and conclusions about talk and later writing could be made.

Furthermore, little research into such talk has taken place in Australian school contexts or indeed other contexts culturally different to the United States of America and the United Kingdom. In other contexts, pedagogical differences influence the value that is placed on talk within the learning context. Similarly talk is culturally defined and other cultures may value talk in different ways, both inside and outside the classrooms. The ways children in these different

contexts use and value talk is reflective of the wider cultural and pedagogical influences. This demonstrates the need for research into the way pedagogy and culture impact on writing development and the role of talk that emerges from these unique contexts.

One significant area in which there is a need for more research is investigating the differences in the role of talk for emergent and early writers compared with later, more conventional, writers. It appears that the need for talk as a tool for text making, by providing the meaning and the means for writing (Dyson, 1983), seems to develop into the ability to talk and read one's own writing as an out-sider. Thus developing the ability in the writer to make meaning for readers other than the self; the development of authoring. The limited research in this area has meant that an extensive discussion about the talk of emergent writers and older writers has not been possible. Therefore, further research into older children's talk will also allow identification of the differing or changing nature and function of talk during writing as children develop in their writing. So too, any patterns of similarity and difference that exist in the talk between these two groups of writers may then be investigated.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

Introduction

The research method used in conducting this study is related directly to the nature of the research questions and the theoretical orientation of the researcher. This study is concerned with the children's talk during writing. It aimed to discover what children talked about while involved in the act of composing and if such talk impacted on their composing processes and the resulting texts. The results add to important understandings about the role of children's talk in current teaching practices and the role of talk in further developing students' writing skills.

The use of case studies in recording, analysing and describing detailed accounts of descriptive data is embedded in a qualitative approach. This chapter will define this qualitative approach as a form of educational investigation by referring to its major characteristics its credibility, transferability and dependability and confirmability. Further to this, the research design will be outlined and all aspects of the design, procedures and instruments used in the study will be described.

Case study research

“The case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observations is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about a wider population to which that unit belongs” (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p. 125). This definition not only describes what case studies are, but also what case studies do.

The characteristics of case studies, as described by Guba & Lincoln (1985, p. 88) were adopted for this study and are described below:

1. Natural setting.

This aspect relates to the unaltered environment and behaviour of the subjects in the research and observation of such facts as they normally occur. If the subjects were observed out of their usual context, then the data collected would be atypical and would discount the value of the context in interpreting the behaviour of the individual. ‘Kid-watching’ a term coined by Yetta Goodman (1989) reflects this emphasis on non-intrusive research methods.

This research investigated children’s talk while composing in the broader context of the literacy learning culture of the classroom.

Capturing that culture was important to this study as it contributed to

the analysis of the talk and activity within it. In order to obtain this kind of information, it was important to observe the natural writing context of the classroom. The method of gathering such data was by non-participant observation and the use of informal interviews. These approaches were adopted in order to minimise the interactions of the researcher (Burns, 1994) with the children and the teacher to maintain the naturalness of the work environment.

It has been argued that educational research commands an approach that portrays the complexities within such a unique community as the classroom (Goodson & Walker, 1983). Translated into terms relating to the investigation of classroom phenomenon, this approach allows the children's language and behaviour to be portrayed as it occurs in natural, real-life contexts rather than under experimental conditions. The children remained in their classroom context and participated in regular classroom routines, further promoting the language and social interactions that were used customarily by the students and the teachers.

2. Humans as instruments.

Humans are unique and contribute greater insightfulness; flexibility and responsiveness as instruments of data collection and as such are the ideal choice for naturalistic inquiry because they are "exquisitely adaptable" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 245). Non participant observation allowed this researcher to focus the attention of the

observations on pedagogical and social aspects of the classroom communities. These data were to compliment and support the tape recordings of the talk that occurred during these observations of writing sessions.

3. Qualitative methods.

A range of data collection methods was used, including; participant and non-participant observation, recording of language and behaviour and formal and informal interviews. Listening to children and watching them in the context of their classroom provides valuable clues to their thoughts, attitudes and abilities. A qualitative approach also allows for the effective description of classroom processes (Long, 1990). It has long been understood that writing is a process (Graves, 1993) and this research seeks to develop a better understanding of the role of talk in that process. Therefore, it was necessary to collect the children's talk, observe their writing processes while in the context of their own classroom and reference these data to the final written product. Collecting this information involved the use of tape recordings, observations and collecting the drafts as they were completed.

4. Purposeful sampling.

In most studies, the subjects are chosen because they represent a specific population. They must also be able to provide the appropriate data in relation to the research question. In this study the

subjects were selected based on the willingness of the teachers to agree to the research in their classrooms, the willingness of the parents and students to participate, as well as relevant criteria based on writing development and pedagogical factors.

5. Inductive data analysis

Qualitative approaches to research are also defined by the way data is recorded, classified and compared. In this study, analysis emerged from a theoretical anticipation of what the transcripts would reveal and what insights would develop through repeated readings of the data (Smagorinsky, 1994). This also occurs through a process of discovering relationships, looking for natural variations within the data and formulating hypotheses; the constant comparative method.

6. Grounded theory

Theory in naturalistic inquiry emerges from the collection of data and its subsequent analysis rather than collecting data to support theory and focussing on it as the reason for the inquiry. The naturalistic approach "is driven by theory grounded in data; the naturalist does not search for data that fits his or her theory but develops a theory to explain the data"(Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 244).

7. Reliability and validity

It is important to any research that the interpretation of data is validated and verified to ensure that it is not biased or incorrect.

Strategies employed in this study include examining the exceptions, looking for rival explanations, triangulation, extended observations, member checking and peer examinations. If the description of the data is clear enough, it will enable others to identify with the details and contexts described making it able to be replicated.

8. The written report.

Most qualitative research reports are characterised by thick description. The case study is no different and such detail allows the information to be added to “existing experience and humanistic understanding” (Stake, 1978, p. 7). The nature of the research questions in this study resulted in a research report that relied heavily on thick description (Guba and Lincoln, 1982), accurately detailing the context for language learning, the social and language interactions of the subjects and the subsequent analysis of these data.

These eight characteristics are defining factors in qualitative research and have been described here to provide the backdrop for understanding the procedures and methods implemented in this research.

Design of the Study

The following table outlines the overview of the research design for this study.

Table 3

Overview of Study Design

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1. Interviews with teachers of middle and upper primary
 2. Selection of four teachers and compilation of students into stratified list
 3. Selection of six student subjects from list parental permission sought
 4. Meeting with teachers and students to discuss initial visits and procedures
 5. Initial visits to trial methods and familiarise students with procedures.
 6. Collection of data from two writing experiences: tape recorded student talk, non participant observations, written texts. Informal interviews with teachers and students
 7. Tape recorded data transcribed and analysed using repeated reading method
 8. Written samples analysed with reference to written transcripts and observation schedules
 9. Case studies developed
 10. Triangulation and ratification of data by member checking with teachers
 11. Cross case analysis of all data and development of categories
 12. Conclusions drawn
-

Research Setting and Participants

The function and nature of children's talk during writing was explored through the direct observation of six children who were working within the early and

conventional phases of writing development (Ministry of Education, 1992). The subjects were from different classrooms within the same primary school.

The School

The school was a Government metropolitan school in the northern suburbs. It was a relatively young school and at the time of the study had only been operating for seven years. The school consisted of over 600 students and was regarded as a 'super school' by Education Department standards. There were over 20 classes and an Education Support Centre on site. The school is situated in an area where the median house price is currently \$156 000 with a 2% growth rate having been recorded over five years (REIWA, 2000). Many families were single income families and many mothers were the major caregivers of their children, choosing to stay at home. There was a small multi-cultural and aboriginal population in the school and the majority of the students were white Australian with English speaking backgrounds. Much of this information about the school was available to the researcher as a teacher at this particular school in previous years.

The Classrooms and the Teachers

The nature of the research required the children to have the freedom to talk during the data collection. The talk needed to be part of the children's normal writing activity. Therefore it was imperative the teachers, their belief systems about the role of talk in learning and the classroom environments were appropriate to the conceptual framework of the research. In order to select

teachers who encouraged their students to interact and talk during writing a number of informal interviews were carried out. In these interviews the teachers were asked about what they thought was important in language learning, how they approached the teaching of writing in the classroom and what was typical student activity within this writing context.

An informal meeting of eight selected teachers was addressed, outlining the research questions, research design and the requirements and responsibilities involved in being part of the research program. The teachers were invited to participate in the research. After accepting the invitation, the teachers were to begin selecting their students for inclusion on the list of eligible participants, from which a random sample were to be invited to participate.

At the time the staff appeared very positive toward and encouraging of the study. Teachers become vulnerable when access to their words and actions are made public and this vulnerability in the teachers who were approached as part of this research was appreciated. The stresses involved in having another person, even if not involved in research, watching, listening and unconsciously judging every word and action were very real to some of these teachers. Therefore, it came as no surprise that the number of classrooms to which access was available for the research was limited. Ultimately, only four teachers of Years Four and Five agreed to the research being conducted in their rooms.

The Subjects

The teachers were asked to construct a list of the children from their classrooms who, after analysis of three unobserved writing samples, were working within the early or conventional phases of writing development as described in the First Steps Writing Developmental Continuum (Ministry of Education, 1992). The indicators for assessing such placement have been included as appendixes (See Appendix B).

Other criteria that determined which students were on the list included the classification that they were 'good, average' students in most areas of the language program. They needed to be able to work independently. They were not to be students who had special needs because of an attention disorder or behaviour problem as the children's needs could interfere with the collection of data. The sample of children did not include children with speech problems or hearing impairments, a language learning problem or who were second language speakers as it was felt these issues could impact on writing development and would not necessarily answer questions about general writing development. And so the teachers constructed their lists based on the students meeting these specific criteria.

The six children who were invited to participate in the research were selected from a main list, developed by the teachers. The list was then reorganised, by gender, into two new lists and then three boys and three girls were chosen. This meant that there was an even distribution of male and female participants

across the specified range of general writing abilities based on the teachers' assessments of the writing development using the First Steps Developmental Continuum.

Gaining Access and Ethical Issues

In July 1998, the Principal of the school was approached formally (see Appendix C) after already giving verbal consent for the research to proceed at a time convenient to the researcher. He arranged a meeting of the middle to upper primary school teachers and gave permission to select teachers appropriate to the research conceptual framework. The eight teachers who were selected were sent a letter (Appendix C) inviting them to be involved in the research, of which four agreed. These teachers were given a copy of the research proposal, informing them further of the entire research activity.

In order to ensure the welfare and integrity (Hyde, 1988) of the subjects of this research, the parents were required to give informed consent in partnership with their child (Appendix C). Informed consent included the following:

1. Knowing the exact nature and method of all data collection,
2. Knowing that there were no risks associated with participating in this study either physical or psychological,
3. Knowing that measures were to be taken to ensure the anonymity of their child by using of a pseudonym in the final research report, and
4. Knowing that the data collected from observations and tape

recordings would only be used for the purpose of this research and would remain confidential until such time as they are destroyed.

The parents were required to inform this researcher of their consent in writing. The principal and teachers were also informed and assured confidentiality and anonymity in all publications associated with the research.

These measures have been taken in accordance with the terms of the parental consent. The children, teachers, principal and the school are referred to using pseudonyms.

Trial Visits

Initially, several visits were made to each of the children's classrooms, during writing sessions, in order to observe and record the context for language learning. Informal teacher and student interviews were conducted during these visits to provide data relevant to the context for learning and the background of the subjects of the research. The other purpose of these visits was for the children and teacher to become familiar with the presence of a researcher in the classroom so that the talk or activity of the teacher or the children would not be inhibited during the period of data collection (Wiersma, 1995).

Recording equipment was tested for volume control and effectiveness in tracking the talk of the target students. Observations at three-minute intervals were rehearsed and more general classroom context observations made.

These initial classroom visits were valuable for collecting preliminary information about the literacy learning context, the classroom climate and for fine-tuning the observation practices associated with non-participant observations. The visits were also valuable in that the novelty, created among the children of having a tape recorder on the desk, was given time to “wear off”, allowing more natural data to be elicited when the more formal data collection commenced.

Data collection

Data collection took place during the third term of 1998. The six children were observed constructing two texts. This meant that some children were observed for a longer period of time than others were, as some of the writing tasks in which they were engaged required more time to complete. An exact timetable of observations was negotiated with each of the classroom teachers at the beginning of third term (July, 1998), and amendments were made to this timetable as the study progressed due to unforeseen circumstances. The students were observed for between two and seven writing sessions.

It was impossible to observe all the selected children working on the same type of writing tasks, therefore each child was observed over the construction of two texts in order to observe and record the activity and talk while involved in a range of writing tasks. Furthermore, by observing the construction of two texts as opposed to a set number of writing sessions, both the process and product

form part of the data.

During the time of observation, the individual children's language was taped. This required the children having a small cassette recorder propped on their desk for each session. Continued observations of the children were made, in order to cross-reference the talk with writing or other activity. After each observation session, the individual subjects of the observation provided the researcher with a copy or the original of their written product. This not only acted as a point of reference for confirming their writing development, but also provided the written text which had been the focus of the oral language by which the text was shaped.

A number of case studies have been constructed to present the data on each child's literacy background, the classroom context in which their language learning was taking place, the instructional strategies and scaffolds facilitating this learning and their 'on task' activity as well as the nature and function of their talk while involved in writing tasks. These aspects have been organised under the headings "Name In Class", "The Writing Context", "Name Doing Writing" and "Name's Writing".

Data Analysis

The data collected by recording and note taking and presented in the case studies was analysed in terms of its function. Some general categories, derived from the researcher's classroom teaching experience and a subsequent

knowledge of the writing process were used in the initial stages of data analysis. Other existing frameworks were helpful in providing a starting point for the development of unique and more appropriate categories in relation to the research question. Salyer (1994) outlined two broad categories of children's talk: 'talk-in-the-middle' and 'talk-around-the-edge'. These two categories were useful when seeking to identify and analyse the 'nature' of the children's talk. Similarly, the analysis of the 'function' of the talk stemmed from existing frameworks, such as those described by Cazden (1988), Dyson (1983), Jalongo (1992). However, as with most oral language analysis, importing or adopting a coding system or framework from another study may not be helpful in answering the research questions, as these other systems and frameworks have been designed to answer different questions. The research questions determined the coding system for analysis of the transcripts, and as expected more questions emerged from and were shaped by the application of the coding system (Smagorinsky, 1994). As well as the field notes, the tape-recorded talk, student interviews and completed texts were used to corroborate and confirm working hypotheses as data was analysed (Guba & Lincoln, 1982).

The writing samples were analysed with reference to the developmental phases described in First Steps material (EDWA, 1992) in order to confirm that the phase of writing development in which the children had been identified was consistent. The texts were also analysed against the transcripts of talk and observation notes to determine the influence of the talk on the process of composing and on the resulting product.

Validity of the Data

All research strives to be valid and reliable, however it is only a construction of what is being viewed. Data always have to be interpreted and translated, which of course, exposes them to contamination (Johnson, 1994). To ensure credibility and enable the findings to be generalised (Guba & Lincoln, 1982), the following strategies were used.

1. Triangulation

Following Guba and Lincoln (1982), the researcher examined data from a number of different sources including recorded transcripts of talk, field notes, observations and children's writing so that refined judgements could be made.

2. Prolonged engagement

Spending an extended period of time at the site also overcame distortions introduced by the presence of the researcher, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1982).

3. Member Checking and Peer Examination

The case studies were read and scrutinised by the teachers of the participants. Amendments were made where necessary and the data were confirmed as being representative of the children and the contexts. Another uninvolved colleague evaluated and commented on the case studies, looking for discrepancies or agreements. Having

been ratified, the data analysis was able to proceed.

External Validity or Transferability

Due to the nature of quantitative research, it is impossible to replicate or reproduce exactly the same findings. This is because it is unlikely that another researcher would find a similar social setting, subject group or would utilise the exact methodology consistent with this study. The research report contained thick description (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) of the classroom context, the background of the children, their writing activity and other data so that transferability is enhanced, increasing the potential for teachers to align themselves, their context or their students with the research.

Reliability

Throughout the study, the main role of the researcher was that of observer. The class teacher maintained control and minimised the possibility for any change in the behaviour, talk and writing of the children being attributed to the presence of the newcomer, adding to the dependability of the results.

Final Comment

The use of case studies in recording, analysing and describing detailed accounts of descriptive data is embedded in a qualitative approach. This chapter has

defined this qualitative approach as a form of educational investigation by referring to its major characteristics its credibility, transferability and dependability and reliability. Further to this, the research design has been outlined and all aspects of the design, procedures and instruments used in the study have been described.

Chapter Four

Case Study of Craig and Sarah

Introduction

Craig and Sarah were Year Five students in the same classroom at a government school in suburban Perth. They were selected from a list of students developed by the selected classroom teachers after meeting the relevant criteria as outlined in Chapter Three of this report.

The following stories unfold as the children were observed writing and talking during the production of two texts; a poster and a summary.

Craig and Sarah in Class

Craig in Class

Craig sat in a group of very quiet workers, next to a boy who was also one of his best friends. This arrangement had been in place for most of the year. Craig was comfortable with his place in the class and neither sought popularity nor drew attention to himself. He readily conformed to the class routines and work expectations and complied with instructions as a member of the Year Five class.

Craig worked carefully and conscientiously and applied himself to each task diligently and seriously. His manner was intense as he went about his work. Sometimes he could be seen with his head right down, nose almost touching the desk, as he completed his work enthusiastically. His writing was very neat, large and carefully formed, and he made good use of his ruler to underline and rule up carefully. He paid special attention to the details of presentation, and took pride in completing illustrations when producing a good copy of his work.

He didn't appear to talk much during his work time and on several occasions during the observations instructed his neighbours and others around him to "Shhh!" Consequently, there were many long periods of silence when Craig was writing. During these times he was busy writing and thinking, undistracted by the conversations of other students or disturbances associated with classroom management.

Craig was a well-organised worker and maintained a neat work environment around him. His neighbour, although a very good friend, did not have the same enthusiasm for tidiness and was a constant frustration to Craig, who frequently needed to clear his neighbour's papers and books from his own work space before, during and after working.

Underneath the shy exterior, Craig demonstrated a keen sense of humour. As he worked on one piece of writing, he made several clever and humorous comments about its content. "Maybe I could have him standing outside a pub..." "My guy stuck up a hotel and held up mail coaches. Get it he held up the

coaches... in his hands!" are examples of this sense of humour. This sense of fun was not as explicit in his writing, as he appeared to take his schoolwork very seriously.

His progress in writing was described by the teacher as good average achievement. He was an independent learner, demanding little attention other than reassurance that he was on the right track, which he generally was. During the writing of a comic strip based on the life of Ned Kelly, he visited the teacher three times to confirm ideas, show an illustration and finally to have his completed draft checked and marked before setting about rewriting and redrawing it in a well presented good copy.

He has a keen attitude to reading and writing and understands the connection between the two. His passing comment to this researcher, "Kids that are good at reading are always good at writing too." indicated his recognition of this association. He read a lot and was constantly buying or swapping books that were in his area of interest. The Goosebumps series was one in which he was currently engrossed and he had read nearly all of them. He described these books as "a bit scary", but then went on to say "that's what keeps me reading them". He enjoyed the unexpected nature of events in the stories and the fact that they were about "kids like us". He also enjoyed the light-hearted entertainment of Paul Jennings and often alternated between reading books by this author and the Goosebumps series.

He demonstrated a developing ability to read critically and was beginning to make judgments about books and texts in relation to author intent and persuasion. He wasn't convinced by what he read in one of his Goosebumps books and commented on the predictability of the text by saying, "I knew what was going to happen before it did". In the draft summary he wrote statements that indicated his ability to internalise and think critically of a text. Evaluative statements like, "The Kelly gang killed three of them and one escaped. *It was the worst day in Australia's history* " and "to others he was a hero " confirm his developing ability to reflect on the meanings in a text.

Sarah in Class

Sarah's cheerful countenance and friendly interaction with her classmates made her a popular student in this Year Five class. Sarah's sense of responsibility as a class member was demonstrated in her frequent glances in the teacher's direction and her alert observations of the teacher's requirements. She was an obedient and conforming student who made no effort to stand out in the class.

Her teacher was pleased with her efforts in maintaining steady progress in language learning and because of this, allowed her to sit at the rear of the classroom with other independent, capable and well-behaved students. The less capable students and those who require more support from the teacher were seated toward the front of the classroom where the teacher was able to direct their behaviour and learning more readily.

Sarah's conscientious behaviour was evident in the way she was oblivious to the goings on of the rest of the classroom when participating in writing. When major classroom disruptions occurred, Sarah rolled her eyes and then returned quickly to her task. Such diversions did not disrupt the other well-behaved students at the back of the class either. When such disturbances occurred, Sarah continued to work, focussing on her task rather than the disruption.

She had the ability to focus and attend to a task very well and was observed more often than not with her head down, only surfacing when forced to depart from her task by interruptions from other students. When interrupted she encouraged the other students to "keep working on your wanted poster" or "don't worry about it". She even shows the tendency to pass off her classmates in favour of staying on task by adding, "we better start", "have a look yourself if you want to" and "everybody be quiet". Her conscientiousness was made explicit when the rowdy antics of classmates trying on costumes for their up and coming assembly item did not distract her focus. Even at the point where the teacher left the room temporarily, Sarah, unlike many of her classmates, remained on task. She was unconcerned and untempted by the momentary freedom the class was experiencing.

Sarah was an organised student. Her workplace was well organised and her pencil case was full of pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, and other stationery tools for every task. She was keen to do things correctly and neatly ruled-up her pages, writing the date at the top of them, each time returning items to the pencil case as she finished using them. She worked carefully on written tasks

and used an eraser effectively to keep her page free from errors or messy corrections. Many students interrupted Sarah requesting the use of some of her stationery. Sarah was happy to assist and lent out her belongings readily.

Sarah's attitude to language learning was enthusiastic and self motivated. She considered herself an 'okay' speller and enjoyed writing. Like many other ten year old students, Sarah had read nearly every Paul Jennings and Roald Dahl book and confessed to having a preference for the quirky and the ridiculous. She understood the importance of daily reading in order to improve her reading, but confessed that she did "not read for pleasure as much as I should". Most of the books Sarah read were completed over a period of several weeks, during class silent reading time. She said that she overlooks the more serious stories and authors in favour of light-hearted entertainment. In a sense, her own writing reflects this notion of sameness and there is very little room for the adventurous and risky in her use of language, ideas and structure.

This excerpt below, from a biography written by Sarah, shows her attempts to write more complex texts, although the text remains conventional in structure and content.

Ned Kelly was born in N.S.W. in 1855. By 10 Ned Kelly had already had a lot of experience with the police mostly because of his dad and the next year when he was 11 he had his own trouble with the police law. When Ned Kelly was 15 he went to jail for 6 months and when he was 16 he went to jail for 3 years for stealing horses.

A few years later Ned Kelly's mum got went to jail for 3 years because she got someone to kill a policeman. This made Ned Kelly really angry and made him rob banks in N.S.W. between 1878 - 1880 with his brother Dan Kelly and some friends Steve Hart, Joe Byrne, Aarron Sherritt.

This recount contains basic chronological facts and does not expand or elaborate the ideas, demonstrating Sarah's assumption of a shared context with her audience, shown in "had already had a lot of experience with the police" and "when he was eleven he had his own trouble with the law". These examples indicate Sarah's reliance on the reader being able to draw on his/her own knowledge of Ned Kelly.

Similarly, in the excerpt below, Sarah adequately recounts Ned Kelly's downfall with the use of simple vocabulary where more detailed and descriptive language could have been used to convey more precise meaning.

The police started firing guns at the hotel they got Steve Hart in the groin and the other two died by being poisoned and then burnt. When this was going Ned started teasing the police saying (go on shoot me you want to kill me). The police couldn't get Ned because of his thick and every time they shot at him the bullet would just bounce of.

The use of adjectives to evoke images of bloodshed and riot is limited, leaving the reader with a bland impression of an extremely violent event. The people at the centre of this recount are not described effectively and the reader is left without a clear picture of the nature of Ned Kelly. Ned Kelly's gang members were not described in any detail, with their death by poisoning leaving the reader wondering how that could have happened as no details about this had been introduced earlier.

The grammar and spelling has been left unchanged in this excerpt so that it provides a true representation of Sarah's original draft. She over used 'and' as a conjunction, missed out words, omitted or misused punctuation (Sarah used

parentheses for quotation marks). In one instance Sarah used 'of' instead of 'have' in the sentence 'he should never *of got* killed'. After reviewing her writing, she still continued to use these errors in her good copy. So we see how Sarah is still developing control and awareness of how to use written language to express meaning.

The Writing Context

The teaching and learning of writing in Craig and Sarah's class was organised thematically and was linked or integrated with other subject areas. Writing activities were part of a language program based on a specific theme usually developed around one or more Big Books appropriate to middle primary students.

The genre approach to teaching writing was the basis for the writing program, in which each weekly writing activity was designed to introduce the students to a different form or genre of writing. The Big Book provided the context in which the students were given opportunity to practise that form, at the time of the observations the theme was 'Bushrangers'.

In the sessions in which Craig and Sarah were observed a managerial teaching routine was implemented prior to them beginning their writing. These pre-writing sessions provided the motivation for the task, instructions on what the students had to do and a clear explanation of what was expected of them in

completing the activity that was to follow. There was usually some time for discussion about the task before the students formally began writing, but generally if the students had any questions or problems it was left to them to follow up.

- Teacher: Have you all got the page (text) in front of you? It wasn't a fiction story was it? It wasn't a narrative that tells you a story. Well what sort of piece of writing was it then?
Sarah?
- Sarah: Paragraphs
- Teacher: They were done in paragraphs, yes. Come on, think, I just gave you a hint. It wasn't, it wasn't a story or such that had a beginning, middle and an end and there was no theme to it or plot to it. Brad?
- Brad: Um mainly paragraphs about, with facts about different bushrangers.
- Teacher: Right! Facts about different bushrangers, Jessica?
- Jessica: Non-fiction
- Teacher: Yes it was non-fiction, which means what? Craig?
- Craig: Um,
- Teacher: Non-fiction...Do you know what fiction is?
- Craig: Yes, pretend
- Teacher: So if fiction is pretend, made up, what's non-fiction?
- Craig: Real
- Teacher: It's real. So Brad used the word 'facts'. It's usually factual. Okay, so, How did you know um, when they were starting to tell you about a new bushranger? How could you tell when you were reading that? Matthew?
- Matt: Um
- Teacher: They mentioned their names for the first time didn't they. If they hadn't have done that would you have been able to tell?
- All: No
- Teacher: No not really because basically the whole piece of writing was set out the same way. Paragraph, gap, paragraph, gap, paragraph. There was actually another - what else has this, ah the, what else has the, ah, 'Bushrangers Bold' got on it that could give you a clue as to where there was a new person they were starting to write about? Apart from having a name written in the first spot, what else is in that piece of writing?

The pre-writing session, in which the summary activity was discussed, categorised the original text in terms of its type (fiction or non-fiction). This transcript shows that the discussion identified the text's graphic presentation in terms of the organisation of the text and illustrations on the page and also allowed for identification of the text's content in terms of the names of the characters described within it.

The remainder of the transcript of this pre-writing session (below) indicates that the session also provided the students with clear expectations for the writing task. They were expected to combine two different skills, reading and writing. They were told that they were expected to prove how *well* they could read and write. They were also reassured that they "won't have to write much" and that they were to have some freedom in choosing how to present their final piece.

- Teacher: Now we're going to combine two different skill activities. One is how well you've read it and the other is how well you can write. Okay, now this is what you're going to do. You're going to do a draft in your language pads.
- Class: [Moaning and groaning]
- Teacher: It's not going to be a huge piece of writing like your Ned Kelly...um...stories. What you're going to do is you're going to work out how you're going to present it yourself. This is what you have to do. You've got five bushrangers and bandits who are well known in Australia. You have to read through and take out the most important facts that summarise who, when, where, how and why.... I want you to be imaginative in the way you present it. Put a heading, the person's name and then just write underneath. You may want to have a gap in your writing to do a little picture because I want an illustration. You might want to set out your whole page that way.
- Child 1: Would each one be about a paragraph?
- Teacher: I want you to read the thing and I want you to pull out the most important facts and write them in a paragraph. When you've got a paragraph for each one you've finished. Right...language pads out.... off you go.

On another occasion, the pre-writing session was used to establish a *framework* for the piece of writing. This was done with the students seated on the floor in front of a whiteboard. A standard framework was provided for the students and a short discussion about each heading allowed the addition of several key words to this framework. This additional information gave the students further explanation of the text type and the guidelines for the development of their own drafts. The framework remained on the whiteboard while the students worked on their piece of writing and they were encouraged to refer to it and follow it in the creation of their own texts.

On most occasions, while the students in this class were involved in draft writing, they were given further explanations and instructions about the specific task in which they were involved. These further comments resulted from interactions between the students and the teacher, questions asked by the students or general difficulties as assessed by the teacher during roaming conferences. One example of this occurred during the writing of the 'Wanted Poster'.

Teacher: I can see what's going to happen now with the physical description. Don't come up to me with one sentence. The physical description should take three to four lines at least because you have to include all of those things that we talked about....
And guys make sure you're writing proper sentences. Don't write 'six feet tall, brown hair, blue eyes and brown skin. He *is* six foot tall and *has* brown hair. Make sure you put in all those connecting words properly....make sure you tell me what he looks like.
Ah, guys, the draft, the draft must be finished today. You should all have started your good copy. (*after eighteen minutes of writing activity*)

The classroom writing routine was such that once a draft was completed, the students were expected to place it on the teacher's desk for editing at a later

time. The students were encouraged to read through their writing, to check it for obvious spelling, grammar and organisational mistakes, before handing it in to be marked. Proof reading their own draft was an expected element of the classroom writing routine and their work would be returned, unmarked, if there was no evidence of this having been done.

Craig finished all his writing tasks quickly and often well ahead of other class members. He was keen to have his work marked so that he could begin the rewriting process and illustrations. On those occasions when he had finished writing, he took his text to the teacher's desk to have it checked and marked. He waited patiently and proudly while this was taking place. He received instruction on any necessary changes that needed to be made and quickly returned to his desk to do such. His neighbour was suitably impressed by Craig's speed at completing his work and made comments like "I'm still on my first one and you're on your second one. You've done more than me", "Hey, Craig has done fourteen lines." and "have you written two pages now?" Craig was proud of his ability to work fast and enjoyed the challenge of being among the first to finish.

All the students' drafts were marked or edited for errors of grammar, spelling and content prior to the publication of the good copy. The comment on Sarah's biography draft after it was marked, reads "Very good effort Sarah. Watch your neatness when you do your good copy." On receiving their marked work, the students then rewrote their drafts onto a photocopied master page or onto neatly ruled lined paper for display purposes. Some students completed this

process ahead of other class members and were assigned jobs to do or errands to run. At the time of the observations the students who finished their work ahead of others were asked to paint a mural on the windows, matching the classroom theme at the time. Other students were asked to tidy their desks or trays or simply finish off any other work while the rest of the class continued to write.

Craig Doing Writing

Doing the Wanted Poster

As Craig began drafting his 'Wanted Poster', the following transcript was recorded. In the excerpt we can see how he was involved in the creation of a Wanted Poster based on either a character previously encountered in the thematic activities or an imaginary one. The writing of this draft followed the pre-writing session previously described where a framework provided guidelines for the students' writing. Craig got straight into this task and began organising his ideas by rehearsing them out loud before writing them down. This aspect of Craig's writing process became more evident and explicit after observing him talking and writing during subsequent writing tasks.

- Craig: *(reading)* Last seen standing outside....*(talking)* the hardware store...or maybe I could do him outside the pub?.. like a joke?
- Ron: Um..nah
- Craig: Yeah... hardware store...oh... *(as writing)*
hard...ware...store
- Ron: Hey Gideon, that's what I thought. Are you doing your PEAC test today?
- Craig: Oh I hate PEAC tests. *(not looking up, mumbling)*

Ron: Where's my pencil gone?
 Craig: (*reading*) Last seen standing outside the hardware store...Um physical description...(*as writing*) phys...i..cal..des..crip...tion...description.
 (*to others*) Shhh!
 Ron: I'm not talking
 Craig: (*reading*) Physical description. My name is..I'm doing 'Cat's Eye'
 Ron: Name. What do you reckon my guy's name should be?
 Craig: Ah, I dunno...(*as writing*) al...ways....wears...brown jumper, no, a brown jacket....brown...jack...et...and...jeans....brown...jacket...and. mediaeval, Is that what your guy is called?
 Ron: yeah like the Sony Playstation game
 Craig: I know. (*writing*) he...had...dark, no, *has* ...dark...skin...and
 Ron: What are you up to?
 Craig: Physical description
 Teacher: I can see what's going to happen now with the physical description.
 Don't come up to me with one sentence. The physical description should take three to four lines at least because you have to include all of those things that we talked about.
 Craig: I've got, I've got one, two, three, four lines
 Ron: Physical description, four and a quarter lines

Connected with this rehearsal talk was the vocalisation of words as he was actually writing them. In most cases after Craig had worked out what it was he wanted to write, he would then proceed to write it while saying it at the same time. This is indicated several times in this transcript by the deliberate syllabification of the words as they appear Eg. "hard...ware...store", "phys...i..cal ..des..crip...tion..", "al...ways....wears...brown jumper, no, a brown jacket....brown... jack...et..." and " he...had...dark, dark...skin..." . It is difficult to know whether this kind of talk was associated with spelling or a habit that Craig had developed in order to hear what he was writing as he wrote it. It may have helped him to maintain fluency in his writing or to retain an idea while in the process of recording it. It may also have been a way of listening to how his writing was going to sound as in the development of inner voice. Whatever the

reason, this kind of talk appeared to be one of the major characteristics of his unique writing process.

Craig's compliant nature emerged in this transcript as he responded to directions relating to the length of the different aspects of the draft. In the same way and at other times the talk Craig engaged in was initiated by the comments made by the teacher during the course of writing. Although, not explicitly distracted by the 'overtalking' of the teacher, the corresponding talk suggests that Craig paid close attention to and made a specific effort to comply with whatever the comments related to. In this case he began to count the 'lines' of his writing in order to comply with that which is expected of him. This talk was specifically linked to the teacher's comments regarding the amount of writing that was appropriate to the task.

Similarly talk throughout the writing of the Wanted Poster centred on the progress of his writing. He and his work mate compare their efforts at different points during writing. Dialogue like "What are you up to?", "I'm up to physical description" and "I'm up to other info now" (a comment Craig repeated close to finishing) are examples of this aspect of Craig's talk. Craig's motivation to finish work quickly was indicated by this progress checking.

Craig: Don't say he's got a scar, you should put that in special features
Ron: Yeah I know
Craig: Mine's got a deep scar on the side of his face
Ron: I don't do scars on my guy

Craig: Um, I'm up to other info now

Ron: *(writing)* He's.. got... black... hair... and... fair... skin
 Craig: My guys got dark skin. How do you spell info?

Ron: Five metres, that's pretty big, eh?
 Craig: Yeah I know
 Ron: This guy's five metres tall
 Craig: I'm up to other info, *(writing)* soon...as..poss..i..ble. Now, there, finished.

Craig and his partner also discussed ideas and content at different intervals. These discussions interrupted the silence of Craig's writing process and included rhetorical comments as well as inquiring questions. The two boys were reassured by each other as they offered advice and shared their own ideas.

Doing the Summary

A summary writing activity was planned for the period of time between morning recess (11.00 a.m.) and lunchtime (12.10 p.m.) and began with a nine-minute explanatory session where the original text was analysed and the elements of text type; graphic layout and content were identified. After receiving these instructions, Craig set about beginning his draft writing immediately. He complied with the routines of the classroom by ruling his page and dating his work, amidst 'overtalking' by the teacher to do such.

Craig: I better put 'Bustrangers Bold' eh! Shhh! *(to others)* ,
(writing) twenty fourth ...of ...the eighth...ninety...eight
 Teacher: Date your work, date at the top of your work please.
 Craig: Bustrangers Bold, okay, I'm doing John Caesar
 first...*(Long pause, silent reading)*...*(now writing)*
 John...Caesar.. arrived..with..the..first ...fleet...of... ships
 ..He... was..transported...for...stealing.....for stealing....to
 Australia... for....

(long pause)

- Ron: *(writing)* he...was..the...hardest..worker..
Why don't you call a black man a Negro?...They don't like
it cause it sounds like nigger and its racist
- Craig: Really
- Ron: That's what my mum said.
- Craig *(reading)* He was the hardest worker...*(writing)*
in...the...colony. *(spoke)* He was famous for his
appetite.....*(long pause)*....
- Teacher: Hurry up and get started James, you are looking for the
important information.
- Craig: *(writing)*...found...steal..ing....from..from..an
..officer's...garden.

Craig promptly moved into writing mode and the characteristics unique to his own writing process began to emerge. After an initial scan of the original text he began to articulate his own sentences and proceeded to dictate to himself as he was writing. He combined an oral rehearsal strategy with writing and continued to organise his ideas aloud as he was writing rather, than before writing. As the two boys and the rest of the class settled to their writing, the teacher's voice could be heard reinforcing aspects of writing such as the use of paragraphs and the importance of identifying and writing about the key words. This 'overtalking' was a minor distraction to Craig and he made no effort to pay attention to these instructions nor did he make any comment regarding its content. He continued working.

Some of the early comments, in this transcript, could be classified as self-commentary, where he described his own actions and thoughts aloud. These rhetorical comments appear to be a way of helping Craig settle to his writing task and they are only made in the first few minutes of commencing work in

this exercise. Other comments, regarding what he was doing at different points during the drafting process, related more to his overall progress in completing his task and are connected with talking to other students.

Craig finished the first summary paragraph just as the whole class was stopped for revision and reteaching. Craig sat quietly, listening to the words of instruction. During this time he was seen to yawn several times, quite loudly. When the time came to return to work he did so without a sound and with focus and determination.

After a long period of quiet writing, Craig was interrupted by his neighbour, Ron.

- Ron: I've done twelve lines in John Caesar
Craig: I've done about sixteen. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen....fourteen. *(writing)* coach...
Teacher: *(interrupting)* Fifteen more minutes and then we're stopping.
Craig: Yeah! Then we can do it at home.
Ron: No we don't
Craig: Yes we do.
Ron: Doesn't she expect us to finish this in half an hour.
Craig: No, I though she said we had to finish it at home.
Paul: How much have you done?
Ron: Eight lines, Hey, Craig has done fourteen lines. I'm up to Frank Gardiner
Craig: I'm up to Alpin MacPherson, the wild Scotsman.

Within this transcript the focus of the talk shifted to progress. Both Craig and his partner were very much interested in how much they had done, how long each paragraph was, where they were up to and when the draft needed to be

finished. Thirteen times during the writing of this draft, Craig commented about his progress towards completing his writing. Half of these comments were in response to the inquiries of others, such as "I've done about sixteen", "I've nearly finished Frank Gardiner", "Yeah. I've done all that, look, it's not much though", and "I'm down to about here". The remainder of the product talk was self initiated and was similar to the comments previously described as self-commentary. Craig asked a question of his progress, only to answer it himself. Amidst this progress talk Craig made the following statement, "Usually writing is fun but I hate it when you have to write for this long." At this point he had been writing for 13 minutes and had completed his third paragraph. Following this, he returned to his writing and continued for four more minutes.

There appeared to be a certain amount of competitiveness between the two boys and this was probably the reason for continually checking their progress with each other. Furthermore, in the pre-writing session the students were told that this would not need to be long piece of writing like their biographies, and so motivating Craig and the others to keep a check of the length of their writing. Whatever the reason, this progress talk accounted for a large portion of the total amount of talk in which Craig was involved throughout the construction of the draft summary.

- Craig: Hey look (*pointing to the book*) He's got black hair here and orange hair here!
Ron: No, that's not black, is it?
Craig: No, that's not Frank Gardiner
Ron: Yes, I think it is
Craig: That's Frank Gardiner there
Ron: Oh, yeah, oh..
Craig: Black hair there, Are you sure it is?...I think that's him

there, anyway... I'm up to the next one

The text, '*Bushrangers Bold*' also became the topic of Craig's talk at this point in his writing. The text was the basis of the summary writing activity, however, Craig only referred to it once in his conversations with others. In fact it wasn't even the text itself that the talk centred around. The illustrations provided the focus for this talk.

Toward the end of this particular writing session Craig became more easily distracted and engaged in talk that was further away from his task, than that which he had been involved to that point. He began to discuss the time, create sound effects and explore ideas from the text a little more playfully. When Ron asked Craig if an alias was a fake name, this encouraged Craig to make up his own alias, and the two chatted to each other in a jovial manner for a moment or two.

Ron: Is an alias a fake name?
Craig: Yes
Ron: It'd be wicked to have a fake name.
Craig: I'd call myself 'Blink' short for Blinky Bill
Ron: Giddy Blinky Bill
Craig: Giddy mate, hey if anything went wrong we could blame it on Blinky Bill.
Ron: Yeah! Who made this mess?
Both: Blinky Bill (laughing)
Craig: And, um, who's got my rubber?
Ron: Blinky Bill
Both: (laughing)

By this point it was time for the students to pack away and leave any unfinished draft writing until the next session. The next writing opportunity was the

following day at 9.30 in the morning. Interestingly, the desk arrangement in the class had been changed dramatically and created some disturbances and affected the settling to task of some of the other class members. However, Craig was still seated next to Ron and they were almost in the same position as the previous day. The time of day probably contributed to Craig's considerable attention and focus on getting his draft finished as soon as he could. After he found his place in the reading book and then his own place in his draft, he began working immediately. Once again he talked to himself as he continued to write down his ideas. He congratulated himself as he finished his second last paragraph then put his head down and didn't look up again until he had finished. He turned the tape player off himself and proceeded to the teacher's desk to hand over his completed work. The last paragraph of his summary took only four minutes to complete.

Craig's Writing

Unedited drafts are useful in developing an understanding of a student's writing development, and in this case are helpful in relating the student's talk to the text. This particular draft, however, was limited in the amount and use of language within it and so it is difficult to make judgments about writing development. There are some observations that can be made about Craig's use and control of language to convey meaning in the Wanted Poster draft (See Appendix D).

WANTED POSTER

NAME: Cat's Eye wanted for murdering Ned Kelly

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS: Last seen standing outside the hardware store

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: He is 190cm tall and he always wears a brown jacket and jeans. He has dark skin and black hair

SPECIAL FEATURES: He has an earring with a cross on it and a deep scar down the left side of his face.

OTHER INFO: There is a reward of \$1000 dollars. Please contact Craig Murdoch on 99999999 as soon as possible. Thank you.

Craig understands that language is meaningful and needs a context for it to be fully understood and so he writes his ideas in complete sentences. Generally, each aspect of the framework of the Wanted Poster is completed in well-constructed and correctly punctuated sentences. The first sentence is the only exception to this. Here some punctuation is omitted, possibly a colon, to separate the name of the wanted person from the deed. The reason this omission was made is probably due to the presence of a 'stem' or heading from which the sentences follows on. This provides the context for the statement, as the stem or heading does in the second sentence, allowing for the slightly abbreviated sentence that describes the last known address of the offender. All other information is written in complete, meaningful sentences that could stand alone, without their 'stem' or heading providing any further information.

Craig's compliant nature is evident again in this text. The physical description in the text was supposed to be "three or four lines at least" and Craig did just that. He also wrote complete sentences. The students were instructed to "make sure you tell me what he looks like", and Craig's description, both in the physical sense and the special features inform the reader of the appearance of the subject. These aspects of Craig's draft indicate that he listened to and implemented the

instructions given before he began writing and also those given during the course of writing the draft.

Ron: Year like the Sony Playstation game
Craig: I know. (*writing*) he...had...dark, no, *has*
...dark...skin...and
Ron: What are you up to?
Craig: Physical description

Craig self-corrected the tense in one sentence, indicating his awareness of the need for consistency of tense. His talk actually records him making this correction. The sentence in his text begins...“He is 190cm tall....” and then in the following sentence, “He had~~x~~ has dark skin” and he makes the change as he writes it. The talk allowed him to hear the confusion of the two tenses and he was able to change it immediately.

The summary writing activity provided a larger sample of Craig’s writing (See Appendix D). Craig’s summary accurately represents the original text. He has kept the information concise yet covered all the relevant aspects of each bushranger as he was instructed at the outset of the task.

Bushrangers Bold

John Caesar arrived with the first fleet of ships. He was transported to Australia for stealing. He was *the hardest worker in the colony*. He was famous for his appetite!! *After one escape he was found stealing vegetables from an officer’s garden*. In December 1789 he escaped again and got gunned down in 1796 near Strathfield, N.S.W.

Michael Howe was an English highway man who was sent to Tasmania. He escaped and joined a gang led by John Whitehead. When he was 30 he became the leader of the gang. He terrorised Tasmania but surrendered in 1817. 3 months later escaped from a Hobart jail. In 1818 he was tricked into going in a hut. Then he was murdered

Frank Gardiner was born in NSW in 1850. By the time he was 20 he was stealing horses or digging for gold. He tried both but failed. Frank became a butcher but it was suspected he was selling stolen meat. So he went to the bush. They held up government coach carrying 2600 ounces of gold and £4000 in cash, was bailed up. Frank was arrested and sent to California and died nine years later.

Alapin MacPherson was a well brought up young man with a clean record. For whatever reason Alapin took to the roads in 1864. He stuck up hotel, committed robberies, stole horses. Then he got captured by police. he went to jail for 20 years.

Ned Kelly was born in 1854 the son of Irish settlers. Ned was different from other bushrangers. To people he was a criminal to others he was a hero. He was hanged in Melbourne over 100 years ago but the argument still continues.

This text conveys meaning competently and demonstrates many attributes of Craig's writing development. The most obvious of these being his ability to produce intelligible text to the satisfaction of the teacher as well as himself, without too much difficulty. Although this appears to be a coherent and cohesive text, further examination indicates Craig's developing skills in using written language effectively.

Both Craig and as seen later, Sarah, did not employ any process for aiding the extraction of information before forming sentences and organising paragraphs. The nature of the task, where he had to extract information and write it at the same time, was difficult, as was the fact that the original text was in front of him the entire time. The outcome was such that Craig's draft summary contained many sentences and statements that were copied directly from the original. The italicised text in the piece of writing "*Bushrangers Bold*" indicates the statements

and sentences copied from the original text.

This observation highlights one of the coping strategies employed by Craig, and other students, in a task that required him to make use of factual information from an original source. The suggestion of several simple planning strategies may have been helpful to enable Craig to extract and organise the information before writing it. The inclusion of so much of the original text within Craig's draft indicates that this type of writing exercise is one which, without assistance, Craig is not yet able to complete competently. The talk in which Craig was involved does not provide any further information about the difficulties he may or may not have been experiencing in this aspect of the task.

Another observation that can be made about this text is the unconvincing nature of the writing. The combination of simple sentence beginnings ("He was...") and small uncomplicated sentences with the inclusion of a lot of the original text indicate that Craig saw this writing possibly as a performance activity and so completing the task was his prime motivation. The initial instructions given for this writing task were related to this performance aspect, for example, "Now we're going to combine two different skill activities. One is how well you've read it and the other is how well you can write". His particular motivation is further confirmed by the amount of progress talk that Craig engaged in during the writing period and also in the comment, "Usually writing is fun but I hate it when you have to write for this long".

In addition to this, the unconvincing nature of Craig's writing indicates little awareness of the need to maintain the attention and interest of the reader. There is no evidence in the text or the talk that Craig spends any time monitoring this text for meaning or readability. This is particularly evident in the sentence, "They held up government coaches carrying 2600 ounces of gold and £4000 in cash, was bailed up." where he describes the activity of one of the bushrangers. The repetition here demonstrates his neglect in monitoring his own text for meaning.

The confusion of reference in this sentence and in the one preceding it further indicates a lack of reader awareness or perhaps the assumption of a shared context. The text, "So *he* went to the bush. *They* held up government coaches carrying 2600 ounces of gold and £4000 in cash, was bailed up" relies on the reader's knowledge that 'Frank was in a gang' in order to know to whom '*they*' is referring to. This was described in the original text and so it is possible, he overlooked the need to make reference to the gang or to change *they* to *he* in order to maintain cohesion. Interestingly, at this point in his writing, he encountered several interruptions. His neighbour checked how many lines he had written for John Caesar, the teacher informed the class that they had fifteen minutes of work time left before lunch and then the two boys discussed where and when their drafts needed to be finished. Continuing to write about Frank Gardiner, Craig then talked to Ron about the illustrations in the text. On completing that paragraph, Craig informed Ron that he was up to Alpin MacPherson. It may be that these interruptions contributed to Craig's oversight in maintaining cohesion within this section of his writing. These interruptions

may have also contributed to the fact that there was a large portion of original text within this paragraph.

It is interesting to cross reference Craig's talk, with his writing of other paragraphs within this summary, in order to highlight other observations about the text. The second paragraph about Michael Howe contains the least amount of original text in it. In the transcript associated with the writing of this paragraph, Craig did not engage in any talk. During that time there were long periods of silence and when Craig began to talk again he dictated a sequence of words from the third paragraph. There were no other major disturbances and no incidence of overtalking was recorded during that time. The only background noise recorded was the low-level murmur of other students' talk. All other paragraphs were written amidst medium to high level classroom noise, some overtalking by the teacher, interruptions by Craig's neighbour and Craig's own vocalisations while he was writing. These other paragraphs contained up to four sentences of original text. It seemed that for Craig an uninterrupted work environment might assist in the production of coherent and effective writing. However the writing of the final paragraph about Ned Kelly also took place amidst notable silence and this part of the text contained up to three sentences of original text and only one sentence of his own paraphrased and summarised information. Perhaps the desire to finish quickly was the issue here.

The unmarked and unedited appearance of the draft also confirms the suggestion that little reflection and revision was associated with this writing. The relevant observation notes confirm this, as he was not seen checking through or re-reading his draft prior to presenting it to the teacher.

Identifying the connection between Craig's talk, the written product and his writing process have been the purpose of this case study. This case demonstrates that there are significant connections between the ongoing instructional input and Craig's subsequent talk and writing. This nexus makes them inseparable when making judgements about Craig's writing development and how or why his talk related to his writing.

Sarah Doing Writing

Doing the Wanted Poster

Sarah began work on her draft quickly. Her early talk demonstrated her focus and attention to the task.

Sarah: (*writing*) last ...seen.... snea....king..... a...round
Teacher: Date at the top of your work. Date your work please.
Jenny: wanted...oh..oh..date, date, date
Sarah: (*reading*) Okay, Wanted...Name...Ned Kelly for murdering
Humpty Dumpty. Last seen sneaking around Humpty
Dumpty's house....Last seen sneaking around....(*writing*)...
Hump....ty.... Dum.....pty's.....hou.....se... What's next?...
Oh, physical description.
Jenny: How's this sound so far? now, Ned Kelly wanted for
robbing banks (rereads own text)
Sarah: (*writing*) ..physical...description...um what are you..what

am I up to?..special features...I'm putting he's seven foot.
 Jenny: I'm gonna make mine eight foot
 Sarah: Now that's big - ha ha ha...(writing) ..seven ... foot
 Jenny: (writing) and...he...is...skinny..is..skinny
 Sarah: Um my reward is gonna be two dollars
 Both: laughter
 Sarah: Actually I might put a couple of zeros on the end and
 make it up to twenty dollars...I'll fix that up now

Much of Sarah's talk, in this transcript, revolved around eliciting ideas from, and sharing ideas with, her classmates in order to 'fill in the form'. Self initiated and rhetorical questions and statements like "Do you know what colour Ned Kelly's eyes are?...Who shall I say to contact?...I'm putting he's seven foot...my reward is gonna be two dollars...I'll put slim body shape." and " Are you finished?", indicated her genuine desire to fulfil the requirements of the task. At the same time she was also concerned about getting the job done and moving onto the more important good copy.

Other talk was related to the writing process. Her own unique writing process became more visible as she entered into the production of her written text. Re-reading her text was a significant aspect of her drafting process. No less than five times in the eighteen minute writing session, Sarah revisited what had already been written and read it aloud to herself. The re-reading in this case was self initiated and not in response to any neighbour asking, "What have you got?" or "Read me what you've done so far?" Furthermore, the re-reading did not attract any responses. Sarah's neighbour was also involved in re-reading her own text amidst similar circumstances.

Further to this, another significant amount of the talk was the vocalising of words as she wrote them on her page. The slow, quiet tone of her voice indicated such activity, for example, "Last...seen... snea...king ...a...round..", "Spe...cial...fea...tures...", "he...has...br...own...eye...s", "a...big...br..own...bea...rd.." all spoken carefully and precisely at the pace of writing.

Worth noting also, was the talk Sarah engaged in that is best described as personal commentary. This talk described her own actions both to herself and others and was self initiated rather than as a response or part of a conversation per se. Sarah's commentary was a reminder to herself of her progress toward the completion of her writing task. It was a combination of both process talk and product talk. Examples such as, "What's next?...what am I up to?...I'll fix that up now...I'll put slim body shape...I haven't finished yet...I'm gonna do ten pounds...There!" illustrate Sarah's spoken commentary throughout the drafting of the wanted poster.

Doing the Summary

The summary writing activity, in which Sarah was observed, produced talk centred around '*Bushrangers Bold*', an informally written, approachable informational text for young readers. The students had read the text several times in a reading comprehension lesson earlier in the day and were to draft a summary of its main points or important facts. The whole class explanatory session that preceded the writing focussed on the product in terms of

presentation and this emphasis was reflected in Sarah's talk as she began writing.

- Sarah: (*writing*) 24th ...of ...the...8th...98... Bushrangers.
Jenny: How do you spell rangers? (*consults book*) I'm keeping my language pad nice and neat!
Sarah: Any one that reads my language pad...
Teacher: Hurry up and start James.
Sarah: I better start....we better start.
Jenny: Okay
Sarah: Who's the first one you're doing?
Jenny: (*inaudible*)
Sarah: Ah ..John Caesar...John Caesar was a...Where's your ruler - can I borrow it?
Jenny: Wanna borrow it?
Sarah: yeap thanks.
Jenny: How are you setting yours out?
Sarah: Like that.(*points to her heading*)....and the I'm gonna write it ...write about John Caesar.
(*reading text*) John Caesar, a powerful Negro, arrived on the first fleet. He was transported for stealing. The hardest worker in the colony, he was more famous for...where am I?...for his huge appetite.... actually..it doesn't say - Oh!
Jenny: Hum?
Sarah: Doesn't tell where he was born or any thing!
Jenny: I know...I just wrote "John Caesar was sent in the first fleet to Australia because...
Sarah: Hey, does this sound okay? (*reading*) John Caesar was sent in the first fleet because he was stealing vegetables?
Jenny: Yeah! Vegetables.

Sarah was observed settling to this particular writing task with the same energy as she did with most other writing tasks. In this excerpt we see the page was ruled neatly and the date was written in the top left hand corner amidst chatting to her neighbour about keeping their language pads neat and borrowing and lending each other's rulers. However, when the time came to begin the actual writing task, the talk changed from being management or routine oriented to talk about their progress with the task and seeking reassurance from each other that what they were writing was correct.

It was evident that Sarah took the instructions she had been given very seriously, even to the extent that she looked for the exact information outlined by the teacher, that is, who, where, what, etc. When all these facts couldn't be found, it created a dilemma. Both girls sought reassurance from each other by exchanging their first summary sentences. As seen in the teacher's later comments to the whole class, Sarah wasn't the only one to worry over meeting specific criteria in her writing.

Sarah continued writing. She read the original text carefully and constantly reread her own writing. Sarah was focussed on her task. She stopped several times to listen to further instructions given by the teacher and her talk and subsequent writing indicates her compliancy with the instructions. After seven minutes of work, the whole class was stopped.

Teacher: Okay, guys, can you put your pencils down and listen to me please. Put your pens and pencils down. Now I'm just going to go through the first one with you because some of you are having a little bit of trouble and you're getting caught up with the idea that you have to have a where, when, what, why and how answer in every sentence that you write. That's not what I want you to do. Basically what you are doing is you're writing a summary or short summary of every bushranger in this piece of writing. Now the first one is John Caesar. Now, if I was going to summarise it, this is how I would write it. I'd say, John Caesar was an American Negro who came to Australia on the first fleet because he was caught stealing. Then the next bit of important info might be ...um... well, you could write about his big appetite but it's not really that important. The next thing is that he was sent to jail when he came here because he was caught stealing vegetables. He escaped in 1789 and after that he became a bushranger. And then in 1796 he was gunned down and killed....All right? So that's all you have to do because they are the most important facts in the piece of writing. But really, you should be up to the next person. Do you have a better idea now?

Class: Yes.
Teacher: Right, keep going...and remember to date your work please, date at the top of the page, every page.
Jenny: What is the date?... What year did Ned Kelly get really mad?
Sarah: Pardon?
Jenny: What are you up to? Are you up to your second one?
Sarah: Yep. What are you up to?
Jenny: But when d'he die?
Sarah: Just finished my Michael Howe.
Jenny: But when did Michael Howie die? I know, I know, He's my second one. He died when he was murdered, no in 1818 he got tricked into a hut and murder
Sarah: Murdered (correcting)
Jenny: Oops! murdered

After this, the students settled to their tasks and Sarah worked solidly for four minutes. Her neighbour continued to talk while she was working but the rhetorical chatter did not demand any response from Sarah. The girls then began to discuss which paragraph they were up to in their writing until Sarah returned quickly to her writing, whilst her neighbour continued to talk. After repeated interruptions by her neighbour, Sarah finally attended to her and the girls began to discuss when their drafts needed to be completed. They spent the next four minutes talking about when and why their drafts need to be finished by Friday and at that point the teacher interrupted again, this time explaining that it was time to pack up.

As in the writing of the 'Wanted Poster', Sarah used personal commentary at different points in the writing of this summary to help keep herself on task. She asked herself where she was up to and what should she do next. This personal commentary was not directed to any one in particular and did not need any

response. Sarah also continued to vocalise words as she proceeded to write them on the page. She reread her own writing a lot, just as she did during the drafting of the wanted poster, however this time she read to a specific audience. She initiated the reading and expected a response to her reading, "Hey, does this sound okay?...I'm doing it this way..." and "that's what I wrote, I wrote...". The re-reading was for others to hear and not only for herself this time.

Sarah did not finish the draft during this first writing session and the observations were carried over to the next day but on entering the classroom for the final observations, it was obvious that the seating plan had been changed completely. Sarah was now sitting further toward the front and next to a different girl. She was quite happy to be moved, however, she was no longer sitting next to a good friend, rather just an amiable classmate.

This new arrangement affected the talk that Sarah engaged in during the remainder of her writing, as she was less comfortable next to her new neighbour. The following excerpt shows how her talk changed in this new group.

Sarah: I've finished..yeah..all done Ned!
Sally: Have you finished your draft yet?
Sarah: Nup!
Sally: Wow! You've done a lot more than me.
Sarah: I'm up to Alpin, I'm up to my last one.
Sally: I'm up to my second last one, Ned Kelly, look.
Sarah: I'm doing it this way, I don't like it (*points to setting out*)...(reading her text) Ned Kelly was born in Ireland in 1854. When he was about fifteen he started a gang up called The Kelly Gang. They roamed around Glenrowan in Victoria. Then he was hanged and died in a Melbourne Jail over one hundred years ago.

Sally: Sounds good!

From this transcript it is evident that in this new grouping Sarah didn't initiate much talk with her new partner, however, the two became more chatty as Sarah engaged in commentating her actions, a behaviour that was part of her writing process. Her neighbour was less familiar with this part of Sarah's writing process and responded to these comments, although they were for Sarah's benefit only. There was more silence during this writing activity than in the previous sessions, broken up only by Sarah's commentary, a re-reading of part of her text on request and some vocalisations while printing specific words.

Sarah's Writing

The products of both writing sessions were draft texts and are valuable reference material in interpreting Sarah's talk during the writing process and her writing development.

The Wanted Poster draft took eighteen minutes to complete which reflects the emphasis placed on time by the teacher, as it was done well within the allocated time (Appendix D). The text Sarah produced in this activity contained five sentences. It is interesting to note that none of the additional instructions given by the teacher during the writing of this text were demonstrated in Sarah's final draft. Firstly, Sarah missed out all those little "connecting words" that complete the sentences, something that had been explained to the students earlier. Further to the physical description in the text there was supposed to be "three or four

lines at least” and Sarah wrote only two and a half lines. These aspects of Sarah’s draft indicate that she did not implement any of the instructions given before she began writing nor those given during the course of writing the draft. Rather, she got the job done quickly, and moved on.

In the text of the draft Wanted Poster there are several indicators to Sarah’s writing development.

Wanted!

Name: Ned Kelly for murdering Humpty Dumpty.
Last seen: Sneaking around Humpty Dumpty house.
Physical Description: 7 foot, Dark hair that end at his ears he has brown eyes and pale skin with a slim body.
Special Feature: Ned Kelly wore a metal armour, has a mark on his nose and a big brown beard.
Other Information: Reward \$20.50
- contact John the Policeman at the police station.

Firstly Sarah confuses tense. The two verbs *wore* and *has* do not agree although they are in the same sentence. Simple verbs and nouns were selected and furthermore, although this was a small uncomplicated text, Sarah makes several simple spelling and grammatical errors. The missing apostrophe on ‘Humpty Dumpty house’, ‘dark hair that *end* at his ears’ and ‘a big *bron* beard’ are examples of this.

Developing writers often have difficulty in the selection of words to express meaning and therefore not all aspects of language and meaning making come together all the time. Young writers can often only attend to particular aspects of text and they find the integration of texts difficult. This cognitive overload

(Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1985) could be the reason why Sarah made these omissions and errors. In her case, she focussed on one aspect of her writing, be it the task or presentation or setting out, whilst other aspects of composition were momentarily neglected. It may also have been Sarah's desire to please the teacher by finishing the draft, writing interesting descriptions in full sentences and starting the good copy as soon as possible that led to Sarah's talk and hurried writing.

The lack of real thinking time and thinking space that Sarah experienced while writing this draft may also have influenced the writing. For example, she was interrupted many times by the person she sat next to, the overtalking by teacher and the more formal "pens and pencils down" interruptions. From the time the pre-writing session finished to the time Sarah began writing, there was continual background noise and overtalking. Thinking time or thinking space, is that place where one is free from distraction to think and reflect, gather one's thoughts and ready one's self for the activity that is to follow. In Sarah's case, there was hardly a moment in the writing of her draft where the classroom environment provided such a space or place. It was possible these interruptions drew Sarah's attention away from her task and may have affected the continuity in her own writing process.

The summary writing activity produced a longer and more complex piece of writing (Appendix D). The summary was written straight from the original text not from notes made from the text.

Bushrangers Bold

John Caesar

John Caesar was an American Negro. He was sent to Australia in the first fleet for escaping. he also got in jail for stealing vegetables from a officers garden in Australia In February 1796, near Strathfield N.S.W. he died.

Michael Howe

Michael Howe was an English highway man. That was sent to Tasmania in 1811. Then he escaped and became a bushranger. A few years later his members of his gang were killed. In April 1817 Howe eventually surrendered. In 1818 he was murdered.

Frank Gardiner

Frank Gardiner was born in N.S.W. in 1850. When he was in his 20's he was stealing horses and digging for gold, but he failed at both. Pentridge Jail became his home. After being in jail he became a butcher, but he was stealing the meat. After that every robbery that happened everybody blamed Frank. Nine years later he died.

Ned Kelly

Ned Kelly was born in Ireland in 1854. When he was about 15 he started a gang up called the Kelly gang, they roamed around Glenrowan in Victoria. Then he was hanged and died in Melbourne jail over 100 years ago.

Alpin MacPherson

Alpin MacPherson was a Scotsman, a wild one. He was a bushranger. in 1864 he started committing robberies and stole horses, held up mail coaches and stuck up a hotel. He finally went to jail in Rockhampton for twenty years and died.

Sarah made no notes before writing this summary. So, initially finding the “important bits of information” was a difficulty in itself. It was assumed that the task of reading for information and subsequently extracting a summary was already known and well practised by the students. However, Sarah found this task difficult. Her writing did not reflect a level of competency that indicated that she knew how to do these things on her own.

Because of Sarah's difficulty in locating and organising the information, her written draft contained problems associated with sentence structure and grammar. Throughout the text of the summary, the sentences were simple in structure and at times were almost a duplication of sentences from the text.

Examples such as “John Caesar was an American Negro, Michael Howe was an English highway man, Pentridge jail became his home” support this notion.

It appeared that as soon as Sarah identified a key piece of information, she wrote it in a sentence. So, one important fact generally equated to one sentence in Sarah’s draft. The simplicity of sentence construction coupled with Sarah’s limited use of vocabulary resulted in some unusual combinations, for example,

...he also got in jail for...

In February 1796, near Strathfield N.S.W., he died...

When he was in his 20’s he was stealing horses and digging for gold...

After that every robbery that happened everybody blamed Frank...

...he finally went to jail in Rockhampton for twenty years and died.

Whether or not the facts are correct in each of these examples, the sentences are grammatically awkward. It is interesting to cross reference Sarah’s writing with what she was saying at each point in her draft. The talk that she was involved in gives insight into her writing process, work habits and possibly her thinking patterns.

Sarah was interrupted several times by her neighbour and the overtalking of the teacher giving further instructions, during the writing of her first paragraph.

Sarah also asked the teacher about her misunderstanding of John Caesar’s origins, but her discussion with the teacher did not leave her any clearer about the misunderstanding. Following this, both girls were distracted by a disturbance related to an assembly item in which the whole class were to be involved. These interruptions may have contributed to Sarah’s difficulty with

the task. During the writing of the second paragraph there were very few disturbances and she and her partner exchanged only a few words. This talk related to their progress with the task, "What are you up to?...Are you up to your second one?" In fact, during the writing of the second paragraph, Sarah retorted her neighbour's inquiries by asking her to "look for yourself if you want to know something", indicating her attention to the task and not the environment.

During the writing of the third paragraph, Sarah was similarly focussed. There was no 'overtalking' during this time and Sarah only stopped writing to counsel her partner about when they needed to have their draft finished. Once again, Sarah indicated her eagerness to continue with her writing by replying to her neighbour's queries with short, sharp retorts such as, "Don't worry about it Jenny" and "I Don't know it might be in there" (pointing to the text). While writing the fourth paragraph, Sarah's partner continued to debate the issue of when the draft needed to be completed and succeeded in distracting Sarah completely from her task by asking her to count how many words she had written. This fourth paragraph is thin on content and does not represent the original text well. The first and fourth paragraphs contain writing that is linguistically and organisationally less competent and contextually less accurate than the other three. It is interesting that at the point of writing both of these paragraphs Sarah was most distracted from her task. Her talk indicated a temporary lapse in focus on her part. Other talk at other times indicated Sarah's focus and attention to her writing rather than to her surroundings.

The information in Sarah's summary was also kept simple and does not stray far from that which the students were initially instructed to find; that is, who, what, when, where and why. Sarah was so intent on including the elements of 'who, what, when, where and why' that she added her own knowledge of Ned Kelly's life. By including this additional information in her summary, she elaborated on what the original text had omitted to say. A good example of this is the sentence; "When he was about 15 he started up a gang called the Kelly gang, they roamed around Glenrowan in Victoria". None of the information in this sentence occurs in the original text. Sarah added it in order to fulfil the criteria of the task, to tell where and when the subject became a bushranger. Furthermore, so intent was Sarah in writing paragraphs that contain this structured information, that she looked for it in the text at the exclusion of a lot of other useful and interesting information.

The step of translating this information was a further challenge for Sarah and several times her writing reflects a total misunderstanding of what was read in the original text. For example, she described John Caesar as being sent to Australia for escaping, not stealing, then for being jailed for stealing vegetables not escaping. She also describes Frank Gardiner as stealing the very own meat he butchered, however history recorded him as butchering and selling stolen meat and then dying nineteen years later rather than nine. Years later, according to Sarah, Ned Kelly was born in Ireland rather than to "Irish born settlers". Finally, she describes Alpin MacPherson as a bushranger *before* he started stealing and robbing, rather than a well brought up young man who stunned everybody by converting to a life of crime. The inaccuracies in Sarah's

summary indicate difficulties in reading for information and then translating that information without some form of scaffolding. This meant that at different points, Sarah gave an inaccurate summary of the text.

As with other examples of Sarah's writing, simple language structures were used to convey meaning simply when other more precise language would have conveyed the information more effectively and accurately.

After being in jail...
...he started up a gang...
He finally went to jail in Rockhampton for twenty years and died.

These sentences are examples of text with simple language structures. The use of subject specific language could have communicated more precise meaning and provided more accurate information to each of these instances.

Final Comment

Craig and Sarah have been described here in the context of their classroom writing activity. Their talk during this activity is significant to the research questions of this study. These data provide further information about how different children use talk in the writing of texts in a classroom context. The information presented here is complemented in the following case study of Simeon and Ruth and assists in developing a more detailed understanding of how children use talk once they have progressed beyond the emergent and early writing stages.

Chapter Five

Case Study of Simeon and Ruth

Introduction

Simeon and Ruth were Year Five students, in a different class but at the same school as Craig and Sarah, in Suburban Perth. They were selected from a stratified sample of students meeting the selection criteria for participation. The classroom teacher identified the students included in the sample as being good, average students in language and literacy.

Simeon's teacher referred to him as enthusiastic, intelligent and "a really nice boy". Initial observations of Simeon in his Year Five class confirmed how much he enjoyed his schoolwork, his friends and his classroom.

Ruth was a student of this researcher four years ago when she was in Year One. She was a quiet conscientious worker, who developed very quickly in learning to read and write. She liked to write notes and letters at home and most mornings before school would present such notes to the teacher. These notes reflected her developing understanding of how to use language and the enthusiasm she had for school and learning in general. Likewise, observations of Ruth in Year Five confirmed a consistent, quiet and conscientious worker, who demonstrated this same ability and enthusiasm in most aspects of school.

Simeon and Ruth in Class

Simeon in Class

Simeon sat at the back of the classroom, near the door, next to a good friend, Ryan. Ryan was a chatty boy who relied on Simeon for ideas and advice throughout the observations. Many of the interactions between the boys were initiated by Ryan asking either "How do you...?", "Can I borrow...?", "What is a...?", or "Did you...?". Simeon was very willing to assist his friend whenever he could and was able to do so with little distraction to his own work. In fact, the two boys talked almost continually while they worked, with only a few periods of silence occurring in the taped observations.

Simeon was a neat and tidy boy. This was also a characteristic of his work environment. He appeared to be a well-organised worker. The 'small tray', at his desk, was tidy and contained items that were used regularly such as pencils, rulers, glue, dictionary, diary and his 'have-a-go' pad. His 'large tray', situated in a set of draws at the side of the classroom, contained all his other school books and items. They were arranged neatly and he was able to locate his materials quickly when called upon to "get your draft writing books out". This approach enabled Simeon to begin work quickly, unlike his neighbour who was often heard on the tape shuffling and searching for items that were "there a minute ago".

Simeon was attentive and compliant in his approach to learning. He was observed during the pre-writing sessions, listening carefully and participating enthusiastically. He watched the teacher as she modelled writing a newspaper report, raised his hand to answer her questions and laughed and smiled at her humorous comments and ideas. This behaviour was evident in this excerpt from the transcript of the pre-writing session for the newspaper article.

Teacher: Let's take a look at a few of the ideas that we've had. Okay, a little bit more information is needed in the lead sentence and the first word or two words are in capitals...Right so... Okay, I have already said in the headline that it was a boy...so (*writing*)...*A boy today was bitten by a Red Back as he went to the toilet.*

Alright, so we've added a little bit more information. We now know that it's a boy, it happened today on the toilet.

After this we have to introduce all the details. So who is going to be my victim????

Okay, I need to think about the details now of my article. The who, where, when, how, what etc., so let me try...

(*talking and writing*)..*Hayley Clinton, 10, of Jolstra Terrace Primary School, was bitten on the bottom today while at school.*

(*class laughs*) This is a draft. Can you notice that even I am making mistakes and making changes as I go? That's what a draft is for. I might read it at the end and decide "Oh I should have put another little idea in there" What do we do if we need to put extra ideas in? What do I do?

Simeon: Do an asterix or a star and then write the new idea at the back or side.

Teacher: Yes Simeon, good.

Simeon: Are we going to be doing a good copy?

Teach: Eventually, but we won't get up to that today.

Simeon attended well and was able to offer an answer when invited to do so. He was also thinking ahead as he listened to what was expected of him in this particular task and demonstrated confidence, enthusiasm and initiative when he asked, "Are we going to be doing a good copy?"

Simeon was an independent worker. He made very few requests of his neighbours or the teacher while preparing to begin writing or while involved in writing. The only time, during the period of observation, that he approached the teacher was to tell her he had left his copy of the newspaper draft at home, where he had intended to finish it that night. Thankfully, for the purposes of the research, he was able to complete the remaining writing at school, on a copy of the draft taken at the conclusion of the previous lesson.

Simeon showed a dry sense of humour and used both talk and written language, cleverly, to convey this. When Ryan asked Simeon a question regarding the details of the Titanic, during the writing of their summary, Simeon took the opportunity to have some fun.

Ryan:	Hey Simeon,do you know when the Titanic was built?
Simeon:	A long time ago! ... <i>(laughs)</i> ..um, 1912, how many years ago is that?
Ryan:	Yeah, the date is two days before my mum's birthday.
Simeon:	Your mum's not 86!! <i>(laughs again)</i>
Ryan:	No, she's 38, but that's her day.

When Simeon was observed during reading lessons, he read quickly and quietly and was able to complete the accompanying comprehension tasks with speed and accuracy. During a silent reading session, after the students had returned

from their lunch break, Simeon located his own book, from his large tray, sat himself quietly at his desk and commenced reading before many of the other children realised what they were supposed to be doing. These observations confirm the teacher's assessment of him as enthusiastic, intelligent and " a really nice boy."

When questioned about silent reading, Simeon commented that he liked reading, that he always got books for his birthday and Christmas and that he had many books of his own at home. He liked reading novels and had read many Paul Jennings books. He was not into the 'Goosebumps' series of books, unlike many other boys his age; rather, he preferred books that were "more like real life and with real people".

Simeon's writing process and products also indicated his strength in language learning. During writing, Simeon was observed reading, re-reading his own draft and writing conscientiously, often at the same time involved in a conversation with his neighbour. He was able to focus on his task amidst distractions from Ryan and other classroom happenings.

His writing generally demonstrated his ability to use language effectively to communicate information and ideas. He was able to choose language to suit the purposes for writing and the particular genre. His newspaper article demonstrated this well, for example, he used the language of a 'reporter', in the third person, to report the incident clearly and appropriately. Furthermore, the appearance of his written texts showed his attempts at editing and proofing

during the drafting period. His talk also captured this process at work, when he said, “Charged, huh, I put changed instead of charged”.

Ruth in Class

Ruth sat at the rear of the classroom, in a group of three desks, with four other students. She had no immediate neighbour sharing her desk, but was still in close contact with the other four members of her group. She was considered, by the teacher, to be one of the better students in terms of work habits, ability and attitude. She had been seated at the rear of the class for this reason and also because of her ability to work independently of the teacher.

She was a confident yet quiet student. Even when relating to her classmates, her approach was quiet and friendly. During most initial observations, Ruth was observed working, talking and even moving around her classroom in an unimposing manner.

Her progress in language learning had continued to reflect her enthusiasm and ability. Ruth’s confidence in her own ability and in her ideas enabled her to work independently. She rarely visited the teacher or asked other members of her group for advice or to respond to her ideas. At times her opinion and advice was sought after by other class members and Ruth willingly involved herself in helping her friends and classmates.

This was particularly obvious when, during the writing of a newspaper article, Ruth was approached by another student to check and edit his writing. This student chose to go specifically to Ruth for this aspect of the class writing procedure. Ruth stopped her own writing, which she had been working on for some time, and concentrated on reading and helping her classmate with his writing. Ruth took this exercise very seriously and spoke directly to her classmate about some of the more obvious problems with his writing. She focussed on his use of the same sentence beginnings and encouraged him to think of some other ways to start sentences to make them interesting.

Ruth: Most of your sentences start with 'people'. Listen, um, I'll tell you when you stop. And tell you when the sentence starts, um, like, 'A hurricane sucks up dinosaur bones at Perth Museum.' and then, 'People stated that all bones were gone. People still went into the museum. People were amazed at the mess.' You always say 'people'."

Tom: Oh, okay.

Ruth's workplace was always well organised. Like many groups of students, Ruth and her group of fellow classmates shared items with each other throughout the course of different lessons and this occasionally caused some disruption to their work.

Much of the teaching was carried out on the 'mat' at the front of the classroom with all the students seated on the floor. This situation caused a few problems for some class members who couldn't avoid interfering with others. Ruth was unconcerned with this different arrangement and was able to focus completely on the teaching that was taking place.

Ruth approached writing with enthusiasm, often spending time on her writing. In the case of the summary writing activity, Ruth was so keen to complete it that she took her work home and finished the last paragraph there. Unfortunately, this meant that the talk associated with the last part of her draft writing was unable to be collected as data, but it did demonstrate her enthusiasm for her work.

Ruth read many books for pleasure. During silent reading time she was observed with a book that she had been reading for a few days. She was able to flick to her bookmark and begin reading when instructed to do so. She mainly liked to read short novels. At the time of the observations she was reading *Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo* by Tim Winton, a book which she was enjoying because she liked “the way the characters talk to each other”.

The Writing Context

As students in the same classroom, Simeon and Ruth participated in the same language program. The program was designed around language themes that provide the starting point for and the context within which developmentally appropriate activities were developed. The activities for most language learning were selected directly from ‘First Steps’ material and related to the general ‘phase of development’ within which the majority of the class were working. At different times throughout the year, the students were reassessed, allowing appropriate teaching and learning strategies and activities to be devised as they continued to progress in their language development.

Writing activities were selected and designed according to the students' interests, level of writing development and appropriateness to the theme. At the time of the observations the classroom language theme was 'Disasters'. This theme encompassed everything from natural disasters such as volcanoes and current interest in tidal waves to high profile disasters such as the sinking of the 'Titanic'. The writing activities were sometimes linked to specific reading material and at other times were related only to the theme. Simeon and Rebecca were both observed during the writing sessions involving the drafting of a newspaper article and a summary.

Language was an integrated subject where the individual components of reading, spelling and writing were explicitly linked and the students were encouraged to think in this way. While involved in the writing of the summary the students used 'have-a-go' pads to practise or attempt new or difficult words, linking spelling to writing. During this writing activity, some students referred to the thematic 'Big Books' that had been made available for ideas and vocabulary, linking reading to writing. Furthermore, the nature of many of the 'reading' activities in which the students were involved utilised written language to convey knowledge and understanding.

The writing sessions were preceded by instructional sessions where the students were modelled to, introduced to writing frameworks, taught specific skills and given opportunity to share ideas.

- Teacher: A memory test from yesterday. What were some of the things that we found out about the newspaper?
- Child 1: There was a headline for each story.
- Teacher: Okay, we found out that the 'headline' - remember that was the word we used, was bigger than the normal print and that was so it would attract attention and make you want to read it.

Making use of the student's background knowledge and using it as a starting point for learning was an integral part of language teaching and learning in Simeon's and Ruth's classroom. In this transcript of the pre-writing session for the newspaper article, the students were reminded of their prior experience with newspapers. Different aspects of newspapers were then discussed and revised, allowing the students time to place themselves in the language context of the activity. This knowledge was then extended through modelling. The students observed the teacher writing her own newspaper article and at each point of her writing the students were able to see and hear how to write such. The students were also participants in this modelling procedure, because they were able to read, question and experience the text as it was being created.

- Teacher: Alright, first of all we are going to look at the headline. Now our headline and our article is going to be about a 'nightmare' experience. Let's see how I can develop this one (*turning to white board, begins to write*) .
- Class: (*reading while teacher writes*) Red ...Back ...Bites ...Boy.
- Teacher: (*reading*) Red Back Bites Boy, now that's a bit of a tongue twister, try saying that ten times.
- Class: Red Back Bites Boy, Red Back Bites Boy, Red Back Bites Boy, Red Back Bites Boy..
- Teacher: Okay, thank you. If you were actually reading this article, what do you immediately notice about the headline and its difference with a sentence?
- Child 2: It's shorter, like abbreviated.
- Teacher: Yes it's shorter. It's an abbreviated sentence. It contains keywords. I've got rid of the little words that aren't important, like 'a', 'it', 'the', etc. Now with the lead sentence, you need to make sure it expands the headline.

Child 2: So what will my lead sentence do?
It'll just give you more information about the title.
Teacher: Okay, but it doesn't give away the whole story in one sentence because if you gave away too much information here we wouldn't need to write or want to read the rest, would we?

The students were explicitly taught the language features of each aspect of a newspaper article. The headline contained specific language and the students were made aware of this and later given opportunity to suggest some of their own ideas. The specific language features of the lead sentence were identified and discussed as the teacher wrote. This process of identifying and describing the language features of each aspect of the newspaper article continued as the teacher proceeded to write. The students participated in this activity and were constantly asked to share what they knew and what they thought.

As the modelling was taking place, the students were also exposed to a framework designed to assist them in the construction of their newspaper article. The teacher's modelled writing was demonstrated on an enlarged copy of a 'black line master', prepared by the teacher, specifically for this writing task. The page presented the writing framework as a graphic outline which the children would 'fill in' as they wrote. It also included teaching notes and helpful ideas, written beside each section of the framework, reminding the children of the specific language features associated with each section of the article.

NIGHTMARE NEWS - PLANNING SHEET	
Headline - to get attention	[]
Place - (in capitals)	[]
Writer - (in capitals)	[]
Lead Sentence - (extra info about the headline - First word in capitals)	[]
Details - (Gives more details about the article includes details of who, what, why, how, where when etc. Can include quotes from people who saw the event. Written in paragraphs. Always printed.	[]
	[]
	Photo - in black and white or colour
	Photo label
	Conclusion ending sentence or paragraph

This modelling session not only exposed the students to a writing framework and the specific language features of the text, but also to the process of writing in which competent writers engaged while drafting.

- Teacher: This is a draft. Can you notice that even I am making mistakes and making changes as I go. That's what a draft is for. I might read it at the end and decide "Oh I should have put another little idea in there" What do we do if we need to put extra ideas in? What do I do?
- Simeon: Do an asterix or a star and then write the new idea at the back or side.
- Teacher: Yes Simeon, good.

The students were able to experience first hand how a good writer, writes. They observed and heard the teacher's thought processes at work. They observed her re-reading and making changes to create a more effective text. They observed the way she used language to convey specific ideas. During this time the

students were encouraged to make changes as they wrote, realising that a draft was not a final copy and did not always need to look perfect.

Teacher: *(placing modelled text on easel)*
Now this is just to prove to you that I've actually finished off my article. Just to prove that even teachers make mistakes on their drafts. And this is a draft so I'm allowed to scratch things out and say "No, hang on, I don't want that", I'm allowed to change it. *(pointing to appropriate places on the text)* So, we had our headline, place, our reporter, our lead sentence, which gave a little bit more information about our headline then we went on to the details and I actually went on to change my details a little bit from yesterday. I decided that I still liked that first paragraph there, but I wanted to change that there. And even though I did something there, I still scribbled it out because I thought this sounded better.
So even this morning, when I was finishing off doing this, I still changed my mind as well. And that's what drafts are all about. drafts are about putting your ideas down and then when you re-read it back, thinking, you say "hang on, I know something that might be better", or "that doesn't quite make sense", and that's what I've done here. I've changed my ideas and made them sound that little bit better and even when I thought I'd finished the whole thing, I still went back and made changes

The students' drafting of both pieces of writing took more than one session to complete. At the beginning of each subsequent lesson, they revised and revisited the procedures, features and processes discussed in the initial introductory sessions. Furthermore, the students were able to see how a piece of writing developed over a period of time, as the teacher returned to her modelled text at the beginning of each session.

The classroom writing routine also included the use of peer tutoring and the students were reminded of this prior to beginning their writing.

Teacher: Okay, what do we do after we have finished doing your draft? What do you do?

Child 3: Read it yourself, get a friend to read it then you will read

Teacher: it.
Good, re-read it yourself. This is the first check and this is where you will find all those things that you might want to change. Then a second check is done by a friend or somebody else in the class. Then I will need to read it for a third check. Then when I say "This is wonderful", you may publish your draft.

(later....)

Ryan: Simeon, you write messy.
Simeon: That's good Ryan, I've finished mine, Mrs Woodvale, I've finished my draft.
Teacher: Okay, your check, someone else's check, my check!
Ryan: I'll mark it.
Simeon: I have to do it first, (*reads own text silently and makes several changes*) Did I do this in pencil?
Ryan; Looks like you did it in pen.
Simeon: Yeah. (*reads quietly to self*) ...now I need to get someone else to check it, don't I?
Ryan: yep!
Simeon: Um, can you check it?

In most writing activities it was the teacher's practice to stop the students after a few minutes of writing in order to give them an opportunity to share their initial writings. This was done during the drafting of the newspaper article and the teacher indicated that they would be stopped by saying, "then I'll stop you and we can hear how you are going", preparing the students and motivating them to be ready. The interactions during this sharing time provided an opportunity for the teacher to ensure the students were attending to the teaching points of the pre-writing session and to re-teach any misunderstandings as they were identified.

Teacher: Who else would like to share what they have written so far?
Ryan: Um, mine says 'Kids struck by lightning'
Teacher: In our headline we used key words, "Red Back Bites

Boy". Now when we get down to the lead sentence, we can use normal language again, normal sentences again, we don't have to abbreviate. The headline is the only time we abbreviate sentences in a newspaper article. Anyone else?

As the students worked, these pre-planned and purposeful interruptions occurred. The students expected them, participated in them and worked conscientiously towards them.

There were several pre-writing sessions preceding the writing of the summary because of the length of time this particular task took. Prior to the initial reading and note taking activity the teacher modelled how to identify the main idea and the subsequent supporting detail of a paragraph and then how to use a structured overview to record and organise that information. In a subsequent session she also demonstrated to the students how to translate the information from the notes into alternative sentences whilst retaining the accuracy of the facts. These ideas were revised at the outset of each of the sessions where the students continued with their reading, extracting, organising and rewriting of the 'Titanic' text at their own pace.

Simeon Doing Writing

Doing the Newspaper Article

Simeon engaged in a lot of talk during the writing of his two drafts. In addition to this, he was able to complete both tasks in a relatively short time. His neighbour and friend, Ryan, made comments during the course of writing, like, "Oh man, you can write fast", "You've done a lot" and "I bet yours is gonna be longer than hers, yours is a big one". Simeon was able to maintain concentration although he was working in an interactive environment. A lot of his talk was initiated by his neighbour and Simeon's responses ranged from giving helpful advice and encouragement, locating and sharing stationery items to comments that related to the behaviour management of his friend.

When Simeon sat down to begin writing his newspaper article, the initial talk provided an opportunity for the boys to share ideas, get themselves organised, clarify language forms and generally 'get started'.

- Simeon: I'm doing.. "Kids Fight Back" - its stupid
Ryan: Why do the kids fight back?
Simeon: Do you need a pen? (*offers Ryan a pen*)... Oh yeah..*(talking and writing)* Kids...Fight..Back (*reading*) Kids fight back, there. Sshhh!, What are you doing?
Ryan: "Kids Struck by Lightning"
Simeon: Sounds good.
Ryan: Christie, can I borrow your rubber?
Simeon: *(talking and writing)* ..Kids..are..disgusted..by...*(interrupted)*
Ryan: Me! *(laughter)* Mine's happening at Hungry Jacks.
Simeon: I'm already up to the details.
Ryan: Oh yeah! Do you write "Kids struck *by* lightning" or do you just write "Kids struck lightning"?
Simeon: "Kids struck by lightning", Yeah you'll have to put 'by'

- Ryan: cozy otherwise it sounds like the kids hit the lightning!
Yeah! The kids struck the lightning (*both laugh*) Lead sentence..what's the lead sentence? Do you just add how and all that?
- Simeon: You just say more about the title.
- Ryan: Um, so, like, "Kids were struck by lightning at Hungry Jacks when they went to get some food"?
- Simeon: I know, "Kids hang out at Hungry Jacks and get struck by lightning".

Simeon was already onto his details before Ryan had worked out his headline. At the same time, Simeon had managed to assist his neighbour in locating the appropriate writing utensil, redirect his neighbour to the task, encourage him in his choice of headline, give advice on the abbreviated form a headline should take as well as offering a definition and an example of a lead sentence. Simeon seemed undisturbed by all this talk and was able to continue with his own work while at the same time talking and thinking about other ideas.

This transcript also reveals a little of Simeon's writing process. In the initial stage of drafting his newspaper article, Simeon could be heard reading, re-reading and then saying the words as he wrote them. This occurred at other points in the writing of this text.

- Simeon: (*re-reading*)Anthony Wilson, the leader of the Kids Fight Back Campaign campaign, is leading 10 000 kids from around Jolstra street..
- Ryan: Mine are at Hungry Jacks, How do you spell 'aliens'
- Simeon: a-l-i-e-n-s, aliens. (*talking and writing*) kids...as ...young.....as (*reading*) Anthony Wilson, the leader of the Kids Fight Back Campaign, is leading 10 000 kids from around the Jolstra Street area to stand up for themselves. Kids as young as 5 (*now writing and talking again*)..are...joining...in.
- Teacher: A few more minutes then we'll hear from a few keen people

Simeon: I'm gonna take a photo, I might take a photo here, coz the
 kidsfight back, I might...(interrupted)
 Ryan: I'm gonna draw a bit of lightning going 'shshshsh' on
 Hungry Jacks. Oh where's the rubber gone?
 Simeon: Good, great.

As Simeon continued writing he was interrupted, again by his neighbour, and managed to assist him with some spelling and give more encouragement to his ideas. It wasn't until after the class stopped to share ideas that Simeon initiated some talk with Ryan. As seen in the transcript above, he started to explain that Ryan was one of the leaders of the 'Kids Fight Back' campaign, more specifically, that he is the vice-president. Simeon's next comment is very interesting. He directed his talk to another class member, close by, and told him that he is also a leader in his article and that he is "just like Pauline Hanson in this story". He did not elaborate further, however, the text described another class member as 'a bold leader' who was helping people 'stand up for themselves'. An interesting demonstration of how children's values become embedded in their talk and writing.

Simeon: (reading) led a parade and burnt down the office. All Ryan
 said to defend himself was that "Daan – nammit
 (Neighbouring class causes a distraction in the adjacent
 common area between rooms.)
 (reading)The police have now come and made a police
 statement. Anthony Wilson and Ryan Forsythe have been
 changed – charged – but they still will go on.
 Ryan: Yours is radical man! I wish they'd be quiet out there.
 Simeon: Charged – huh- I put changed instead of charged! I'll just
 fix that, there!(to Ryan) What are you missing lines for?
 Ryan: I'm not.
 Simeon: Miss Woodvale said not to.
 Ryan: I'm just doing it big
 Simeon: You're not meant to do it big
 Ryan: I don't care, I am, look, (reading) Kids struck by
 lightning, place Hungry Jacks,.....(reads all text)

Simeon: (reading) Joe Martin said he is happy to cut..(interrupted)
Ryan: Look, its past recess already
Simeon: (talking and writing)...Ryan...Are you sure you know how
to spell 'Daniel'?
Ryan: Yeah. Simeon, you write messy.
Simeon: That's good Ryan, I've finished.

As the transcript above indicates, Simeon then went on to re-read his text to Ryan, because his friend features quite prominently in it. Ryan was quite excited about this, "Yours is radical man". Simeon was also excited about this part of the text, but for different reasons. This particular re-reading of his text has indicated an error of usage and he is happy to have found it. He told Ryan of his mistake and corrected it while he talked. After this there was a short period of quiet writing activity. Simeon could be heard mumbling quietly to himself, perhaps re-reading or saying the words as he was writing them.

After noticing his friend doing something he shouldn't, Simeon initiated the next exchange in this particular transcript. Another interesting aspect of Simeon's talk becomes evident. Here he attempted to regulate his neighbour's behaviour. Earlier, he had directed Ryan to "Shhh" and had tried to guide him back to the writing task by asking "What are you doing?" he later asked him "What are you missing a line for" and, now, finally told him, "You're not meant to do it big". Simeon was probably aware of his own position of power in their relationship, because it was clear that Ryan looks to him for advice and encouragement, and he had now taken it upon himself to help Ryan stay on task and conform to the expectations previously set for the task. Ryan was a little defensive but of good humour regarding these comments.

The transcripts used here as examples of Simeon's talk also contain another type of talk. Apart from the talk already discussed, (such as, the re-reading for both himself and others, the vocalising of words while writing them, the talk related to ideas, content, behaviour management and classroom routine), Simeon talked about his own activity. He relayed a running commentary of his actions.

Comments like, "I'm doing 'Kids Fight Back', it's stupid!" "I'm already up to my details", "I've finished mine" and "I have to read it first" describe what he was doing as he was doing it. Most of these comments were isolated and weren't followed by a conversation of the same nature, demonstrating that this talk was accepted as being part of the writing process, reminding himself of his place, or just reporting rhetorically as he progressed in his work.

Doing the Summary

Simeon's talk during the writing of his summary was recorded over three writing sessions. This writing task was quite involved and was preceded by reading and taking notes from an original source. This aspect of the activity took Simeon two whole writing sessions, each approximately thirty minutes long. He worked conscientiously throughout both sessions and, when he had finished making his notes, was one of the first students in the class to begin writing his summary.

After ruling his page and telling a passer by that he was starting his draft while Ryan was still taking notes, Simeon proceeded to write his summary.

Immediately he began to vocalise as he wrote.

Simeon: *(talking and writing)*The...enormous...ocean ...liner
Ryan: Oh, man you can write fast
Simeon: Yeah, that's what I reckon.
Ryan: Are you up to there already?
Simeon: Yep.

Simeon engaged in 'vocalising' as he was writing. He engaged in this type of talk each time he started a new paragraph and at various points during the writing of those paragraphs. This talk is represented in the transcripts as "The... enormous ...ocean ...liner". On a few occasions, his 'vocalising' was preceded by the re-reading his notes. This demonstrated his thoughtful attempts to try and translate the notes into his own language, a process involving re-reading his notes, formulating sentences silently and then saying those sentences aloud as he wrote them.

As the drafting continued, Simeon's progress became quite an issue with Ryan and in this excerpt Ryan began commenting on this aspect of Simeon's writing. Simeon was proud of his ability to think and work fast, and at other points commented further on his own progress and what he anticipated will be the length of his completed draft. Ryan continued to be amazed at Simeon's work rate and not only commented to Simeon but also told others around him about Simeon's achievements.

As Simeon began writing his second paragraph, he and Ryan managed to discuss their soccer arrangements for lunchtime and check on one another's progress, until Simeon began vocalising again. This enabled him to refocus on his task but also led Ryan to question and make comments related to the topic of Simeon's writing. Simeon continued to write while discussing some of the details of the text with Ryan and while commenting on these details in relation to his own life.

Simeon: *(writing)* Millionaires...lords...and...count..esses.. c..o..u..n..t..
countesses, countesses.....first.....class

Ryan: They had nannies there

Simeon: I wouldn't need a nanny

Ryan; They had maid servants and nannies.

Simeon: *(writing)* first...class...nannies....maids...third....class

(a minute later)

Ryan: What's a Lord? Oh, why are we working so long?

Simeon: Look what the time is, look up there.

Ryan: Simeon, you were only up to thereand now you are up to here
and you've done all that.

Simeon: It's twenty past ten now. In an hour we've got music.....Come on
 Ryan.

Ryan: Are you gonna finish, when?

Simeon: Dunno.

Ryan: Did you get a note for doing that *(points to tape recorder on desk)*

Simeon: Yeah, come on.

In this exchange, Simeon began to assert control over his distracted friend by saying, "Come on Ryan". This was his first attempt to help Ryan focus on his writing task. To that point, Ryan had been talking almost the entire time that Simeon had been writing. Simeon seemed to be able to work amidst these distractions. Ryan seemed only to be able to do one or the other, illustrated by the amount of progress he had made. At the time of Simeon's encouragement, Ryan was still completing his notes from the original text. As mentioned earlier,

Simeon is well liked and is the 'gatekeeper' in the pair's relationship. Ryan accepted Simeon's advice, looked to him for encouragement and considered him to be a good worker. Simeon accepted all the attention that Ryan gave him and at the same time looked out for his friend.

Simeon's writing process emerged at this point as he continued to maintain his focus by vocalising and writing. It also becomes evident that he was aware of his classroom context and as he continued his writing, he could be heard checking the time. He was aware of the need to use his time efficiently and that was probably why he was keen to encourage Ryan to do the same.

The boys continued writing and talking as Ryan began to draft his summary. His 'start' was indicated by the rehearsal of his ideas for sentences and also by his questions to Simeon. The questions concerned some of the physical facts about the Titanic, such as when it was made and its launch date. This information was readily available in the text and probably in Ryan's notes but his own writing process required him to talk about it, in order to fully understand what he was writing about.

At this point there was a major classroom interruption as a maintenance man entered the room and the teacher was needed outside to assist with some advice. The boys talked about this and the problem that was being attended to. Their talk then moved further away from their task and onto the topic of Ryan's haircut. This exchange was initiated by Simeon, the interruption apparently moving Simeon away from his writing. Simeon did manage to complete the

second paragraph during this interruption, as shown in the following transcript.

- Simeon: *(reading notes)*...slight judder, hole a third the length. I've nearly finished my first page, so that means I could have two and a half pages but that one won't be as big*(pointing to overview notes as teacher arrives at the desk)*
- Teacher: No, of course, yes, That next one won't be as big, we haven't got quite as much information for these ones have we?
- Simeon: The 'Collision' is bigger than 'Evacuation'.
- Teacher: Yeah, so, like, the crew's pretty small, just that little bit.
- Simeon: I could fit that all on one page pretty easy
- Ryan: Oh man! The 'Collision' is pretty big.
- Teacher: The 'Collision' and the 'Evacuation' are probably the biggest ones, it's a bit like a report where the dynamics is normally the biggest part.
- Simeon: Yeah and the 'Collision' is the dynamics.

Simeon's talk here, relates to the product. He calculated that by the time he has written everything his work should be about two and a half pages in length. The size of this writing task influenced the talk at this point and the teacher contributed to the discussion as she wandered past. She put the task into perspective for Simeon by drawing a comparison to writing a report. Simeon made the connection and then continued with his writing.

A little later he was reminded again of the size of the task as he observed a student taking her completed text to the teacher for checking. Simeon indicated his interest in this activity by announcing, "Cripes, she's done the most in the class", encouraging Ryan to add, "Yeah but I bet yours is gonna be longer than hers, yours is a big one". Simeon considered this comment momentarily and then finally closed this exchange by saying, "I've only done one page, I don't think I'll get that far." This talk was related to the product talk in which Simeon engaged earlier, when counting the number of completed pages of writing.

The pause in the talk at this point indicated a concerted return to writing after a period of major distraction. This was short lived, however, as a whole class discussion developed around some of the more interesting phenomenon associated with the Titanic's sinking. The boys made several comments to each other about drowning, sharks and whether or not icebergs are easier seen at night or during the day. The whole class was then called to pack their things away, "in a safe place, so it is easy to find when we start again tomorrow".

The next session, two days later, provided the opportunity for Simeon to finish his writing. It happened to be the final day of third term and so the pressure was on all the students to complete their work, that day, so that they wouldn't have to "drag it out again" after the holidays.

Simeon and Ryan settled to their writing conscientiously and Simeon's re-reading indicates his starting place for writing that session.

- Simeon: (*writing*) .to...find...floors...flooded. I'm up to
 'Evacuation' ...12...0..5..
- Ryan: What? 3000, unsinkable? What does 3000 unsinkable
 mean? Oh, yeah, it could *hold* 3000 people and *was*
 unsinkable. (*reads own notes*)
- Simeon: (*mumbles as writing*)
 (*to Ryan*) have you already done that much today? that's
 fast!
- Ryan: You have to finish today
- Simeon: (*writing*)...half...the...people...

The motivation to finish their drafts during this session was evident in this initial talk. They had their heads down and were earnestly trying to get the job done. Once again, Simeon's writing process became visible as he vocalised while

writing and as he read over his text. My observations of the remainder of this lesson indicate that they continued this activity for twenty minutes. They both worked with their heads down, surfacing occasionally to check each other's progress or to fetch another sheet of drafting paper from the 'paper tray'. When Simeon finally announced to Ryan that he had finished, Ryan proclaimed this to the other students around him, saying in a loud voice, "Simeon's finished". Simeon was relieved and satisfied with his achievement and busily tidied his work surface, leaving only the completed draft resting on his desk.

Simeon's Writing

Simeon's texts indicated his developing control of written language. His newspaper article demonstrated his ability to select and use specific language structures in order to convey meaning in a specific way and the text of his summary demonstrated his ability to write informational text with good control of the elements.

Simeon's writing was lively, capturing the reader with interesting turns of phrase. He has the ability to distance himself from his writing as was evident in the newspaper article (below and in Appendix D) where he did not figure personally, at all, and in fact, used specific language intentionally for effect, well aware of the reader reaction that it will evoke.

NIGHTMARE NEWS - PLANNING SHEET

Headline -
to get
attention

K1DS F1GHT BACK

Place - (in
capitals)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Writer - (in
capitals)

Simeon Street

Lead

Sentence-
(extra info
about the
headline.

First word in
capitals)

JOLSTRA STREET PRIMARY kids
are disgusted by how much the
teachers make them do.

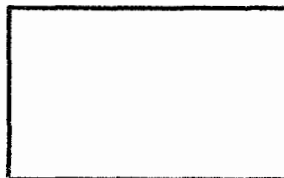


Photo -
in black and
white or
colour

Photo label

Photographer

Anthony Wilson leader of the
campaign
Joe King

Details -

(Gives more
details about
the article
includes
details of
who, what,
why, how,
where, when
etc. Can
include
quotes from
people who
saw the
event.
Written in
paragraphs.
Always
printed.

Anthony Wilson the leader of
K1DS F1GHT BACK campaign is
leading 10,000 kids from
around the jolstra street area to
stand up for themselves. Kids as
young as 5 are joining in.
Anthony Wilson says all he
wants is for school to go for only
3 hours.
John matthews, J.S.P.S.'s
principal said that we trie to
make school fun with sports
carnivals. On the 3rd September
Reece Forsythe Vice President of
the campaign led a parade
and burmt the office down. all
reece said to defend himself
was, "Dan-namit"

The police have come in now
and now its a police statement.
Anthony Wilson and reece
Forsythe have been charged
but they still will go on.
John Matthews said he's happy
to put school down to 4 hours.
Aaron and Reece are happy to
come to a compromise.

Conclusion
ending
sentence or
paragraph

The newspaper article contained other features indicating his development toward an adult model of writing. The most obvious of these features was his ability to write in the genre. He was able to convey meaning in this genre demonstrating his awareness of the use of third person point of view and the use of past tense in reporting incidents that have already happened. Both these textual features were maintained throughout the text and were well supported

by reporting style language, as in “all he said to defend himself was” “have been charged but will still go on” and “... are willing to come to a compromise”. These statements indicated an awareness of the types of statements that are common to newspaper articles and representative of a reporting style.

In addition to the effective use of specific language features in this genre, Simeon conveyed his message effectively through the logical progression of ideas. He established a context and key characters and then described the problem, the incident, the consequences and finally the solution. This is logical while also presenting the readers with a number of interesting facts and ideas, maintaining reader interest. The use of quotes adds realism to the writing, making it appealing to the reader by signalling that real people are involved, with real causes and passions.

His use of conjunctions in constructing complex sentences demonstrated his ability to write text that is beyond “talk written down” (Rivalland, pp 41). This was more evident in the text of his summary (to follow), where conjunctions were used effectively at different places in sentences enabling a number of interesting and complex ideas to be communicated, as in, “The crew nor passengers were not aware of the danger they would face that night *for* at 11.40 the Titanic hit an iceberg.” and “The crew tried to save the ship *by* pumping water out of the boiler room *only* to find it flooding again, *while* the operator still tapping SOS.” This last sentence was extremely complicated and Simeon controlled the elements well, conveying his ideas and the ideas from his notes effectively.

The text of the summary (below and in Appendix D) also provided information about other aspects of Simeon's writing development. He used punctuation well, perhaps due to his awareness of the audience of his writing. He indicated on many occasions places where the reader should pause or stop, effectively adding to the fluency of his writing. This aspect is a developing attribute and at times is omitted, possibly due to information processing overload (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1985, p. 95). His first sentence was a good example of his thoughtful use of punctuation, "The enormous ocean liner, the Titanic, one of the biggest tragedies in the 19th century was once called the "Unsinkable" ship." This usage created an interesting start to his writing as did the sentence that followed, "It was proved wrong on its maiden voyage." indicating his awareness of reader needs and the writer's responsibility to maintain reader interest by the use of tension in a text.

THE TITANIC

The enormous ocean liner, the Titanic, one of the biggest tragedies in the 19th century was once called the "Unsinkable" ship. It was proved wrong on its maiden voyage. it stood 104 feet high & 882.5 feet long. this "unsinkable" ship could hold up to 3000 people.

On the 10 of April 1912 the Titanic went on its maiden voyage. She sailed from Southampton but unfortunately it did not reach New York. This ship had lured some of the most wealthy & famous people such as millionaires, lords & countesses, of course all traveling 1st Class. They brought along their nannies, servants & maids, travelling with lots of not so wealthy people in 3rd Class.

Four days after this ship had set off the Titanic received warnings from neighbouring ships saying there were large icebergs where they were heading. These warnings were ignored and never left the chart-room. Also no one had noticed the temperature had dropped to 43°F. the Californian, a neighbouring ship contacted the Titanic and warned to turn off the engines because you were surrounded by icebergs The captain took notice of this warning but only put six lookout stations, but the passengers were not aware of the danger.

The crew nor passengers were not aware of the danger they would face that night for at 11.40 the Titanic hit an iceberg. there was a hole ripped along one-third of the ship's side. All the passengers felt was a light judder. Some that were in bed thought it was a big joke. Some people went admired the iceberg while others were playing "ICEBALLS" At 11.50 the captain saw how serious it was and he made history when he used the SOS signal. The lower class people woke up to find their floors flooded.

12.05 the life boats were launched & the captain said "Women & children first". There was no drill practice but still people were very calm Once the night was out half the people on the "Unsinkable" would be dead. 1 boat was lowered with 12 when it could hold 40. 4 women died three chose to stay with their husbands.

The crew tried to save the ship by pumping water out of the boiler room only to find it flooding again, while the operator still tapping SOS.

At 2 am the captain announced "Every man for himself", just three hours after the collision it was in the vertical position. Most men jumped in the water only to find to be sucked under. That night 1503 died.

The Carpathia, a neighbouring ship, tried to save people who had jumped off. The captain was blamed because of not noticing the warnings. White Star Line was blamed because of not having enough lifeboats.

Sailing today must conduct drills & carry enough lifeboats. The Titanic tragedy should never happen again.

Simeon's summary was written from notes that he had made while reading a text about the Titanic. His notes were adequate if somewhat wordy.

Interestingly, as Simeon progressed in the writing of the summary, he used more of his notes in the construction of the sentences than during the first three or four paragraphs. He utilised the wording from his notes more during the second writing session, where the pressure was on to complete the draft that day. Prior to that, he had taken his time and successfully summarised the information into a different form. It is possible in this case that finishing the task was his prime motivation.

The point at which Simeon appears to have confused the tense of the text, “the Californian, a neighbouring ship contacted the Titanic and warned to turn off the engines because your surrounded by icebergs” was also a place where he relied too heavily on the notes from the original text. These notes were very extensive and wordy, with phrases and sentences copied directly from the original text onto a structure overview. In this sentence he made reference to the notes and referred to the message to the Titanic as “your [you are]” instead of “they were”. By taking note of the original quote from the neighbouring ship, Simeon then proceeded to use the quote out of context and hence creating a problem with the tense and reference in this sentence. This can be problematic for students when writing in the content area from another source.

Finally a comment about Simeon’s spelling. He made few mistakes yet his writing did not indicate that he was a ‘safe speller’ because he attempted to use mature vocabulary and language structures. This would suggest that he was developing maturity as a speller. It is interesting to note that some of the errors were spelt correctly in some places and then incorrectly in others, as in campagn/campaign, traveling/travelling and neighbouring/neighbouring. Some of these words appeared in the original text, also making it possible that he was able to locate specific words in this text when needing to check their correct spelling.

Ruth Doing Writing

Doing the Newspaper Article

The newspaper article was an extremely motivating writing activity for Ruth because the students were able to choose their own nightmare disaster about which to write. There was much talk, initially, about what and who they were going to write about.

Anna: What are you doing
Ruth: The tape's going.
Anna: What are you doing?
Ruth: 'Quick Sand Kills Boy'
Anna: Are ya?
Ruth: (*nods*) What about you?
Anna: (*unclear*)
Ruth: Is that what you're doing? Did you do it in capitals?
Anna: Yeah, is your person gonna die?
Ruth: yeah, quick sand kills him.
Anna: This is what mine says, "Horror Holiday" What's yours again?
Ruth: 'Quick San Kills Boy" and I don't know where it's gonna be.
Anna: Why don't you do it here and everybody gets in?
Ruth: Oh, but everybody'll do school.
Anna: You could do it at school and the kids were going to the oval at recess and get sucked in by it.
Ruth: Yeah, but, I'm not gonna bother. (*writing*)...*Quick ...Sand...*

Ruth discussed her ideas with her neighbours and they continued to air their thoughts while beginning their writing. Ideas were challenged and advice was given during these initial exchanges and at other points in the writing of the article. Ruth responded to the ideas of the others in her group and sought confirmation and encouragement for her own. These exchanges and discussions about ideas constitute a large portion of the talk in which she engaged.

After these initial exchanges related to starting the writing, Ruth settled to her task until the whole class were interrupted several minutes later by a visiting teacher. The content of this interruption became the topic of Ruth's talk for the next two minutes. The girls discussed their lapathon money, how much they had raised and when they would bring it in to the teacher. At the conclusion of this conversation, Ruth signalled her return to work by re-reading her final sentence and then continuing to write quietly. This re-reading was significant to Ruth's writing process. It occurred at other times after a conversation had concluded or after other interruptions.

Similarly, at other points in the construction of this text, Ruth stopped writing to re-read what was written. Twice this was following a request to do so by a classmate and on the other occasions it was quietly to herself, possibly to hear if her writing sounded right.

After the visiting teacher's interruption, the general classroom noise level slowly began to increase and after it was pointed out that "a few people are having a nice old chat", the room fell quiet again as the students returned to work.

Several minutes passed until Ruth stopped writing to ask her neighbours if they had been doing "running writing". This led to a conversation with her neighbours, relating firstly to ideas and content, then to details about her cousin (the main character in her article). This subsequently led to Ruth re-reading her text for her neighbour and finally to some informal peer tutoring where her neighbour advised her that her article sounded like it had finished all too soon. Ruth's classmate presented her with a problem that she was not perhaps aware

of and her response of “Hey, its not finished yet” was an attempt to defend herself and her writing. The suggestions that followed provided ideas as to how she might continue the piece. The ideas were helpful and Ruth utilised them as she continued to write.

James: What did you do Ruth?
Ruth: I did 'Quick Sand Kills Boy" (*laughter*) , (*now reading*)...On July 19th, 1998, Ryan Thornhill, thirteen years old, was walking alone to Neil Hawkins Park. It was around lunch time when he was playing in the sand pit with his dog, that he noticed his feet were stuck in the sand. They say he screamed but you never know. His dog got free but Ryan didn't make it. It wasn't until July 19th, 1998 that another boy called Kevin, who was also walking alone to Neil Hawkins Park with his dog, and the same thing happened.

James: I told you to write that bit eh?
Ruth: Yep
James: What a great idea!
Ruth: Um, (*reading*)..the same thing happened, (*writing*)...at..a..bout..9..a..m..on..

This part of the transcript has Ruth re-reading her text for the classmate who had previously provided the ideas that kept her text going. Interestingly, during this exchange, neither Ruth nor her helpful neighbour identified the fault in her text. Their focus was on the ideas rather than the construction of that meaning, the re-reading was for the purpose of sharing ideas rather than as a forum for editing and challenging the meaning of the text. Although evidence about the development of inner voice would suggest that this should occur during every reading, regardless of any other purpose being assigned to the reading.

Ruth also engaged in some quiet vocalising while actually writing. She was heard several times saying words slowly at the pace of writing. This activity generally followed a dialogue with another student and indicated the end of the conversation and Ruth's return to task. This activity, identified in the previous transcript by italics, occurred only several times during the period of observing Ruth's writing. It was at this point in her writing that the class were called to pack away for the day and told they would have opportunity to complete their writing the following day.

The writing of this article took place over two writing lessons, over two consecutive days and, as was the teacher's practice, the second lesson began with a small pre-writing session at the front of the room. On returning to her desk, Ruth began the process of finding her place in her writing and settling to her task. There was some initial talk again about "what did you do?" and Ruth re-read her text for her neighbour. Once again Ruth returned to writing after the conversation had finished, re-reading and whispering to herself.

It was at an early stage in this second writing session that Ruth was interrupted by a classmate and asked to read and edit his work. Once again at the conclusion of this exchange, Ruth was heard re-reading and quietly talking to herself as she wrote. During this writing activity, Ruth was asked for her eraser, and also some time later again she was asked for some advice on how to indicate where a new paragraph should be in someone's writing. The same neighbour distracted her a third time from her writing to ask for another item from her pencil case. On this occasion Ruth indicated quite clearly that she did

not want to be interrupted by saying, "I really want to finish this now". Several quiet minutes later Ruth finished her writing and asked another group member "Kerry, what photo should I do now".

Doing the Summary

The talk associated with Ruth's writing of her summary was very different to that of her newspaper article. There were many long pauses in the talk indicating lengthy periods of concentrated effort. The writing was completed over three writing sessions and during the first writing session, in which Ruth completed the first page of her draft, there was very little talk.

Liz: (shuffling of paper)
Look how much I wrote(holds up paper)
Ruth: I know.
(quiet writing activity - four minutes)
Liz: (whispering) Ruth
Ruth: Yeap
Liz: Is that your draft?
Ruth: Yeah, I hope it is
(quiet writing activity - eight minutes)
Ruth: I'm onto my draft
Liz: yeah it's gonna be huge!
(quiet writing activity - seven minutes)
(class disruption, teacher leaves room momentarily)
(quiet writing activity - five minutes)
Teacher: We'll have to leave it there for today everyone, so put your things somewhere, together, so you can find them tomorrow.

This transcript presents all the talk that Ruth engaged in during this first session. This talk occurred over a twenty-four minute period.

It seems that this was a very big task to Ruth and her classmates, emphasised in the comment made by her neighbour, "It's gonna be huge!" and the fact that she wasted very little time talking during this first session. Firstly, she had to complete a structured overview outlining the main ideas and supporting detail of a text describing the sinking of the 'Titanic'. From this she was to write a summary of the original text. Ruth had already spent two previous sessions extracting the information from the text and writing it onto a 'teacher prepared' overview. During this note taking time the whole class were very focussed and were fascinated by the history and circumstances surrounding the ship's sinking. Several whole class discussions developed as the students questioned the teacher about the incident, the prevailing circumstances and the tragic outcome.

Prior to Ruth writing her draft summary, the class had also been rearranged. Ruth was no longer part of a small group of girls, but now at the back of a whole class arrangement where the desks were arranged in a large 'U' shape around the room with several rows of desks located within it. Most desks faced the front of the room and each child was sitting next to one or two other students rather than five as in the previous group arrangement.

Furthermore, when Ruth finally found herself in a position to begin writing, the other students around her had either started their summary already or were still completing their overview. Each student was working at their own pace and so there was no sense of working together. Ruth was working individually and

independently to compete the task. It is possible that these factors, the size and nature of the task and the new seating arrangement, influenced the amount and nature of Ruth's talk during this particular session.

The next writing lesson began with a session at the front of the room where, once again, the teacher modelled the translation of notes into summary sentences. The emphasis was on turning the notes into sentences that still maintained the meaning of the original text but used "your own words". On returning to her desk, Ruth acknowledged her neighbour's progress and then began writing. There was another long pause in the talk at this point indicating the quiet writing activity that was taking place.

After some time, Ruth was interrupted by a neighbour who announced that he was "up to his sentences too". She did not respond except for a nod and then continued writing. Some time later, after another long period of silent working activity, she was asked for her ruler. She responded with a "yeah" and returned to writing once again. There was another long pause in the talk until a neighbour inquired where Ruth was up to.

Anna: What part are you up to?
Ruth: 'Evacuation'
Anna: Is that your sentences?
Ruth: Yep. I'm up to 'Evacuation'
Anna: On your draft? I'm up to 'Warnings and action taken'
Ruth: Oh!
Anna: I'm gonna put some of the passengers were flung off.
Jill: Ruth, have you done 'Collision'?
Ruth: Yeah, and now I'm onto 'Evacuation'.
Jill: That's good.
Ruth: Here's my draft (*holds up draft*)
Jill: How long is it?
Ruth: Um, one and a half pages so far.

This excerpt of the transcript is indicative of a lot of the talk that Ruth and her neighbours engaged during her remaining time writing the summary. This progress talk focussed on where they were up to, how many lines they had written and how much more they had to go. Ruth responded to calls from her neighbours to tell where she was up to and also initiated talk by checking on their progress toward the completion of the task. They could easily gauge where each other was up to due to the nature of the text. It was divided into identifiable paragraphs with headings, so when Ruth said she was up to 'Evacuation' or 'Warnings and Action Taken' the other students knew exactly where she was working.

Jill: Aren't you writing it in?
Ruth: Writing what in?
Jill: Nothing, don't worry...Are you writing the headings in?
Ruth: Yeah, there they are!
Jill: Is that where we..(*interrupted*)
Ruth: Miss Brickhill, do we need to do a good copy as well?
Teacher: Not today.
Ruth: Oh, uh ha.

(quiet writing activity - four minutes)

Jill: Where are you up to now?
Ruth: Almost finished 'Evacuation' in my draft sentences.

(quiet writing activity - three minutes)

Ruth: I'm now up to 'The Crew'.
Jill: What?
Ruth: 'The Crew', What are you up to?
Jill: I'm up to 'Collision'. I'm half way through that.
Ruth: What, 'The Crew'?
Jill: No the 'Collision'.
Ruth: I'm up to 'The Crew'.
Jill: Cool.

In this exchange Ruth indicated her concern about having to repeat the writing of the huge summary into a good copy by asking this of the teacher. She settled

back to writing and, after several more pauses and progress type exchanges, the class are directed to put their things away for next time. Unfortunately, Ruth took her writing home after this session and proceeded to complete the last paragraph that night, returning to school the next day with a completed draft. The talk associated with this last part of her writing was unable to be collected.

Ruth's Writing

The texts Ruth produced were the result of her diligent and conscientious efforts. They were indicative of someone progressing in their development and understanding of language. She worked quickly and yet carefully in the production of them (See Appendix D).

The following newspaper article demonstrates Ruth's ability to internalise and apply new knowledge in language learning. It represents some of the language and ideas presented to her by the teacher during the pre-writing sessions. The different aspects within her article, the headline, lead sentence and the details, reflect a thoughtful and genuine effort to comply with the structures and language features of the genre.

NIGHTMARE NEWS - PLANNING SHEET

Headline -
to get
attention

QUICK SAND KILLS BOY'S

**Place - (in
capitals)**

NEIL HORKENS PARK

**Writer - (in
capitals)**

Lead

Sentence-
extra info
about the
headline.
First word in
capitals)

THE QUICK SAND killed some boys when they were at Neil Horkens Park.



*Photo -
in black and
white or
colour*

Photo label

Details -
*(Gives more
details about
the article
includes:
details of
who, what,
why, how,
where, when
etc. Can
include
quotes from
people who
saw the
event.
Written in
paragraphs.
Always
printed.*

On July 19th, 1998, Ryan Thorten, 13 year old, was walking alone to Neil Horkens Park. It was around lunch time when he was playing in the sand pit with his dog that he noticed his feet were stuck in the sand. They say he screamed but you never know. His dog got free but Ryan didn't make it. It wasn't until July 19th, 1998 that another boy called Keven, who was also walking alone to Neil Horkens Park with his dog, and the same thing happened. AT about 9.00AM on september 1999 a girl was

walking to Neil Horkens Park and found the sand had a shape like two boys laying under neith with sand over them so she dug it up. she found it was her cousin, Ryan and another boy so she phoned the police. The police Just thought that they had been murdered and not killed by Quick Sand. Their mothers and Fathers Got charged for being the murderer, but the police didn't know for sure. The place has been closed off now but their still is kangarros and other animals in it.

Conclusion
*ending
sentence or
paragraph*

Her headline is abbreviated enough so as to make sense and provides adequate information to the reader while still maintaining a certain amount of mystique and sensationalism. Her lead sentence expands the ideas in her headline further and provides information about who, where and what, once again, without giving away too much of the story. She has then attempted to communicate the

details of the incident clearly, using the third person point of view, in a 'matter of fact' manner. These were some of the teaching points the students encountered during the pre-writing sessions.

Further readings of the text enable other observations to be made. She has demonstrated the ability to sequence her ideas logically. The setting, presented initially, was followed by a recount of the events surrounding the disappearance of two boys, the discovery of their bodies and police intervention. The article concluded with a final comment about the outcome of the incident, "The place has been closed off now but their still is kangarros and other animals in it". This logical development of the text demonstrates her ability to write coherent text where the parts are in agreement and there is a sense of connection between events and ideas.

Within this description Ruth has chosen words and vocabulary that keep a distance between the reader and the writer by using matter-of-fact language. She selected vocabulary according to a purpose, that is, to report the facts. Further to this she demonstrated a consideration for and awareness of her audience and addressed them directly while still maintaining a sense of distance in her writing; "They say he screamed but you never know". There was also a general sense of cohesion established throughout the article by Ruth's use of reference. She only made one error in this instance and referred to the "mothers and the fathers" as the "murderer" rather than the "murderers".

At other places in this text she demonstrated her developing ability to write simple, compound and extended sentences, sometimes with punctuation and sometimes without. Her sentence structure appeared to have moved beyond 'talk written down'. This demonstrates a more competent control of the elements of written language, as in, "At about 9.00am on september 1999 a girl was walking to Neil Horkens Park and found the sand had a shape like two boys laying under neith with sand over them so she dug it up". This sentence contains other obvious linguistic errors but does demonstrate Ruth's developing ability to deal with several pieces of information within a single sentence structure.

There is a sense that Ruth could have expanded and organised the ideas in this text, in order to convey meaning more effectively. For example, the use of paragraphs containing a topic sentence and supporting detail would have enabled her to convey more specific and organised information to the readers. Additionally, her use of punctuation could have been extended in order to alert the reader to pauses in the text for improved readability.

Ruth demonstrated self-regulatory behaviours and both the draft text and the transcripts provide evidence to suggest such, for example, the presence of crossings and markings on the text indicated her attempts at editing and the re-readings during composing indicated her attempts at proof reading. This re-reading may also be linked with the development of inner voice where Ruth re-reads her text to find parts that do not sound right.

The summary writing activity produced a much larger piece of writing accompanied by very little talking. The text was organised into paragraphs and was the result of a note taking exercise in which the students extracted keywords and supporting details from an original source.

THE TITANIC Draft

The Ship=

On May 31st, 1911 the Titanic launched. it was an enormous ocean liner which people were fascinated by. It stood 104 feet high and 882.5 feet long and could hold 3000 people. the ship's hull was divided into 16 watertight compartments. they bragged about how big it was and that it was impossible to sink.

The Passengers=

On the 10th of April 1912 the Titanic set sail on her first voyage from Southampton bound for New York. Millionaires, lords, countesses and other people traveling in 1st class. They all had maids, servant and nannies. not very wealthy people (like working people) travelled in third class, what they didn't realise was that their first trip was going to be their last trip.

Warnings and action taken=

The trouble began 4 days after they set off. there were signals from other boats but they were ignored. Messages were saying that there were icebergs around but they did not reach the chart room. Nobody knew the temperature dropped from 43 °F to freezing cold.

Nearby another ship the Californian, told the Titanic to turn off their engine. The Titanic could stay afloat for 5 of the 16 watertight compartments. the captain finally told six men to stand on deck and look for ice. Unaware of the danger, they went to bed.

Collision=

At 11.40 pm the ship crashed. the iceberg ripped a huge hole about a third of the length of the boat and almost immediately the engine room filled with water. Passengers only felt a little judder because the boat was so big. People in bed though the hole thing was exciting and some people even ran on deck to see the ice and some people were playing iceballs. At 11.50 the captain realised how serious the situation was and immediately called S.O.S. The Titanic was the first ship to call S.O.S. so they made history. That's when the passengers began to worry. the lower decks were flooded and the engine stopped. Slowly the compartments were filling up with water and the captain knew it was the end.

Evacuation=

Straight away the captain ordered life boats lowered with women and children first. The passengers didn't know what to do because they didn't have a drill test at getting into the lifeboats or life jackets. all this was at about 12.05. Suddenly they realised there was only enough boats for half the people. There was no panic because people knew they

would be dead before the Night was over. Some boats had only 12 people in them when it could of had 40. Some ladies even ran back to their cabins to get their Jewlery. Only 4 ladies died and 3 chose to stay with their husband. The crew= Their was no time left the captains last order was every man for himself. The crew stopped trying to save other people and started to save themself. It was to late the ship was already sinking. At first the crew thought theywould sucseed by pumping icy water out of the boiler room only to have it flooded again. sinking= All together 1503 people were left to go down with the ship and people already off the ship were sucked under by the presure of the water. If people were lucky enough to Get off the ship and far enough away to escape being pulled under, no boats came back to save them so they died off freezing. The blame=Soon after the ship had sunk, the Carpathia came to its side but most lives were already Gone. The blame was on the captain and senior officers for ignoring the ice warnings. The people who made it (white star lines was also blamed for not having enough life boats. sailing today= Hopefully this tradegey will never happen again. Ships today have to require enough lifeboats and have drills. the Titanic was a sad story, but its intresting to find out things.

Once again Ruth's text contains well-constructed sentences that are mostly organised into logical paragraphs. In the third paragraph, however, the sentences appear unrelated although they are contained within the one paragraph. Ruth's fails to contextualise the reader and this is the probable cause of this lack of coherence within this paragraph.

There was evidence in the text that also suggests Ruth's difficulty in establishing cohesion in her writing. Sentences like, "Some boats had only 12 people in them when it could of had 40", "Nearby another ship the californian, told the Titanic to turn of their engine" and "The Titanic was the first ship to call S.O.S. so they made history", "Only 4 ladies died and 3 chose to stay with their husband." and also "The crew stopped trying to save other people and started to save themself", demonstrated her developing ability to hold a text together with correct referencing. Unlike the newspaper article, this piece of writing contained

several more errors associated with this aspect of cohesion. Possibly because it was a much more complex text.

Ruth has maintained the genre of this piece well by selecting appropriate vocabulary, maintaining a third person point of view and keeping to the facts extracted from the original source. At times, it seemed as though the step of translating the information into her own words was problematic and she appeared to have reverted to using the notes as sentences, themselves. This was especially noticeable in the second paragraph where some sentences were incomplete and unclear as to their meaning or purpose. Ruth's teacher indicated that this might have been a problem in her comment at the end of the draft. It read, "You have done quite a good job with this Ruth and most of the sentences are good. A few still sound very similar to the information sheet."

This was also noticeable in other complex sentences from her text such as, "at first the crew thought they would succeed by pumping icy water out of the boiler room only to have it flooded again" and in, "if people were lucky enough to get off the ship and far enough away to escape being pulled under, no boats came back to save them so they died off freezing" and also "unaware of the danger, they went to bed". When these sentences are compared to other attempts at mature usage such as, "Ships today have to require enough lifeboats and have drills" and "Slowly the compartments were filling up with water and the captain knew it was the end", the difference provides evidence to suggest that the more complex and mature sentences contain expressions directly from the text. It also suggests that those sentences that appear clumsy are her own

attempts at translating the notes to her own language.

Ruth's use of punctuation throughout this text indicated her developing control of some of the simple aspects of written language. At times, in this text, simple and complex punctuation was omitted and yet at other times it was included most effectively. This is perhaps related to her problem in translating the text from her notes from the original source. For example, capital letters were omitted for sentence beginnings and proper nouns, yet appear at incorrect places within the text. On other occasions, full stops were included at places where a comma would be better suited to the readability of the text.

Final Comment

The observations and recorded talk of Simeon and Ruth have provided valuable data to answer the research questions of this study. This case study has described these data in detail to provide the reader with a complete picture of each student, as they were involved in the writing of two texts. The Data Analysis draws on this information to identify similarities and differences in the talk and contexts in all six cases. This information was then used to categorise the talk in order to conclude what the role of the children's talk is in writing.

Chapter Six

Case Study of Laura

Introduction

The third of these case studies describes Laura, a Year Four girl at a northern metropolitan school, who has attended there since beginning school in Pre-Primary.

Laura in Class

Laura sat with a group of five other Year Four girls. They all appeared to be 'best friends' and were a lively bunch. She was a happy class member, who followed the lead of her peers towards behaviour, attitude and work habits. Her teacher described her as "a well mannered girl" who could be "easily led, but not deliberately disobedient". Because of this, she was often caught up with the antics of the group and led off task.

An example of this occurred during the trial observation. The cassette tape recorder was a major distraction when it first appeared on the desk. The girls in the group began to sing and joke into the device. Laura, too, became involved in these antics and copied her friends' behaviour. The excitement and thrill of being cheeky soon wore off and they returned to their writing, after a timely reminder that they still had serious work to complete despite the tape recorder

being present.

It also seemed that Laura relied on the other girls for approval, reassurance and advice on matters of work and play. Comments directed to her peers like, "Here's my name, it looks odd doesn't it?" "I've written ten lines, is mine neater?" and "Jane, does this make sense?" seemed like honest calls for approval of her work and indeed herself.

Laura was an enthusiastic and compliant worker. She began work well and attempted to do all that was required of her for the satisfactory completion of her schoolwork. She was observed sitting at her desk getting ready to begin work, as she did she chatted excitedly with the other girls, indicating the enthusiasm and enjoyment with which she approached her school work. This busy activity also demonstrated her compliance to get the job started.

Underlying this 'busyness' was a silent competitiveness among the group members. This competitiveness may have been the motivation for Laura to get started very quickly and to try to be among the first in her group to say "I've finished!".

Laura was generally well organised, however the group, of which she was part, tended to share and lend all their possessions to each other. This was, at times, a distraction to Laura and she often had to find her belongings before she could begin work. During the course of writing a draft newspaper article, Laura had to locate her pencil and eraser five times because they had been borrowed and moved by other group members; "Oh, where's my rubber?" "I need to find my

pencil” and again, “Now where’s my rubber?” demonstrate her distraction. This sharing and swapping of items was a very social thing among this group and each girl took pride in having items that the others wanted to use.

Laura’s eagerness to conform was also evident in her frequent visits to the teacher throughout the writing activity. She used these interactions to check details of her work, to clarify specific instructions and to seek approval for initiatives or innovations and ideas. As she settled to write her draft newspaper article, she discovered the good copy of her biography and went straight to the teacher to see if it was needed as part of the data. This is one example of Laura’s confidence in approaching the teacher. In this case she had an idea and was not shy about presenting it. Laura enjoyed the teacher’s affectionate and teasing reply to this suggestion, “Stop trying to show off how gorgeous you are, I think we’ve seen enough of the fabulous stuff you do for now!”.

Laura and her classmates enjoyed a relaxed relationship with their teacher and there was a lot of laughter in the classroom. The students and the teacher enjoyed ‘razzing’ each other. At times this provoked noise and excitement among the students, however, they settled back to their schoolwork when instructed to do so.

Laura’s teacher described Laura’s language development as average. She was a responsible, independent learner. She said Laura read at an average Year Four reading level and achieved good comprehension in reading. She was an average speller and still used phonics and visual clues to assist in spelling

unknown words.

Laura was observed during several silent reading periods. She would always choose picture books that she had read before and so was able to finish them quickly. Her eyes gave away the fact that she was reading the books, and because they were so familiar to her, she didn't stall on any page longer than it took to be reminded of the story. She was interested in the details of the illustrations and spent time looking carefully at these. To an onlooker it may have seemed she wasn't even reading at all. She commented that she prefers picture books to those without words because she liked to "have something to help [me] see what the story looks like".

She enjoyed language learning activities and especially enjoyed writing. Laura worked well on the writing tasks in which she was observed. She wrote quickly and although distracted, managed to finish her task before any of the other girls at her group of desks. She had good ideas and liked to write a lot. "If I write down here, I'll finish on this side", "I've got lots more to do" and "I've wrote a page so I'm gonna stop here after I've said this bit" are comments that indicate her desire to write what she considers a lot. Interestingly, the two sample drafts associated with these observations were both one page in length.

Laura was easily distracted by a number of incidents during the writing of her two drafts. The distractions were from within her group but also due to the misbehaviour of other students or general classroom management procedures. Laura was also observed fiddling, dreaming, interrupting others and walking

around the classroom for social activity rather than work activity.

The Writing Context

Language teaching and learning was designed around themes in Laura's classroom and the teacher expressed a necessity to provide a balance of both fiction and non-fiction texts. Familiar and popular themes were selected as the basis for the teaching and learning. A 'Big Book' was generally the starting point for other language activities in reading, writing, spelling and drama. Where the theme allowed for other resources to be utilised, they were included as reading material or reference material. The theme provided the context into which all language teaching and learning was then integrated. At the time of Laura's observations, the class language theme was 'Super Heroes'.

The morning language sessions included activities for the development of all aspects of language learning including spelling, grammar and comprehension. Such language activities were selected from 'First Steps' activities and related to the general 'phase of development' at which the majority of the class were working.

The thematic approach to the implementation of the morning language activities exposed the students to different texts. Time was allocated, in these activities, for the discussion of the forms, vocabulary and meaning of the texts. Within this morning language time, the students were also given opportunity to practise writing, in a writing journal on a daily basis. The daily journal writing

activity was for personal practice and was occasionally checked by the teacher, but generally left unmarked. There were no restrictions on what the students could write about in their journals.

Similarly, the students were also involved in weekly writing activities that were linked directly to the overall language theme. These activities were designed to introduce the students to different forms of writing. Each week the students were presented with a specific writing task. Approximately half of these pieces of writing were to be completed through to a published stage and consequently displayed as part of the developing thematic displays in the classroom environment. Laura was observed writing drafts for such activities.

The drafting and publishing of these weekly writing tasks followed a brief introduction by the teacher.

- Teacher: Your task for this is to make your own Super Hero...invent a Super Hero. Give your Super Hero a name. Now you know there are 'Superman', 'Spiderman', 'Super Ted' and 'Batman', Guys, don't use one of those. Think of one of your own. You can have a similar word, like 'something-man' or 'Super-something'. What specific skills and/or talents does he or she possess - don't panic - you are going to get this (teacher holds up sheet with illustrations and explanation of task on it)...Special skills or talents. Superman has quite a few. Yours can have more than one. I don't mind how many it has.
Write a short biography of your Super Hero, telling how his or her powers came to be. How did Superman get his powers?
- Child 1: He was born with them.
- Teacher: Exactly. He was born on another planet. He came to Earth...boys (raised voice)... and because he came from a different planet, the powers that would have seemed normal on his planet, like seeing through steel and being really strong, weren't normal here. That's why they are super powers. You might have something perfectly

normal here but if you went to another planet it may not be normal.
Can anyone tell me another way that someone's Super Hero can get their powers?
Child 2: (answer inaudible)
Teacher: So someone's bitten by an insect or something, yes, it could have a special venom or something that gives them the powers.
Child 3: (answer inaudible)
Teacher: So they could have been after an experiment. Yes...Guys, what else will you need in a biography. Not just powers. What else is in a biography about a person?
Child 4: Describe them.
Teacher: Yes you can describe them including why, how, where and when. Now we were going to start with a poster but because of everything I want you to start with this now.
Class: Oh!
Teacher: As soon as you get your sheet, put your name on it because it will be attached to your book and you may start working on your character now (hands out photocopied sheets).

This transcript demonstrates how the Super Hero biography writing activity was introduced. The students were presented with the task while seated at their desks. A photocopied handout provided a motivating illustration and ideas about new Super Heroes the students may or may not wish to invent. This handout was the focal point of the introduction to the writing task. It emphasised the content of the biography, specifically, the naming of the Super Hero and the details necessary for an effective description of his or her powers.

The students worked on their drafts for a period of seven minutes after which they were interrupted again and further details about the writing task were given. They were reminded not to tell a story about a specific incident involving the use of their hero's super powers, but rather a description of how he or she got his or her powers. They were forewarned that they would be writing a

'story' about their Super Hero in a newspaper article, at a later stage.

On another occasion, prior to the students beginning their writing, the introduction for the writing task encouraged the students to identify ideas and vocabulary that might be useful and helpful in developing a newspaper article of a specific act of heroism of their Super Hero.

- Teacher: Make sure you've all got a Super Hero comic. I want you to look for a Super Hero part. You are looking for a heroic deed that your Super Hero might do. You are looking for words that might be used around the time that your Super Hero does these deeds. So you're using the comics to get ideas, to get words and they are to help with your illustrations later.
Now I'm going to give you about fifteen to twenty minutes to read and you can discuss your events with the person next to you. You can share ideas. And if you finish the comic you've got, bring it back to the desk and you can get another one.
(Students read comics for 8 minutes)
- Teacher: You might get ideas for descriptions of your villain. Your newspaper report may not only mention your hero but may mention a villain of some kind.
Okay, you can start writing now. You're writing about your Super Hero. A heroic deed that your Super Hero did. You will need a heading.
(Students write for two minutes)
- Laura: Mrs Brady, do we have to write about the Super hero we already made up?
- Teacher: Yes using any ideas from your comic. What can your Super hero do?
- Laura: Um, he makes things float, break or disappear.
- Teacher: How can he use that to help someone?
- Laura: If someone's stuck up in a building he could float them down.
- Teacher: He could do that.
Pencils down for a second and comics down for a second. It's now time for everyone to start. One thing you need to consider or a few things maybe if you haven't decided what your Super Hero can do is, What makes your Super Hero a Super Hero? Don't have someone rescuing someone from a burning building if he's made of paper. Think very carefully about your Super Hero. Think about his or her powers first then work out the heroic deed that he or she can do. Okay, you may start your writing.

This introduction described how the resources were to be used as a starting point for ideas for the students' newspaper articles. They were expected to identify ideas and vocabulary from these sources and use them in their draft newspaper article.

These routine introductory teaching episodes usually focussed on content and ideas. A description of the final product was also a focus and little emphasis was placed on the linguistic features of the different forms of writing. The drafts that Laura produced reflected instructions given and showed a coping strategy of returning to the narrative mode, even though both drafts were intended to be factual texts. Furthermore, the question, "Mrs. Brady, do we have to write about the Super hero we already made up?", asked by Laura, showed that she did not really understand the task or the 'workings' of the genre itself.

It was the practice in Laura's classroom for the teacher to provide these brief introductions to the entire weekly writing activities. Another classroom practice associated with these weekly writing tasks was an assumed writing process. The term 'assumed' is used because the students all seemed to follow certain unstated, informal routines in the writing of their drafts. For example, it was understood that on completing their drafts, the students would hand them to the teacher to have them marked. Laura did this as she completed her own writing. Once marked, the drafts were copied out neatly onto lined paper and illustrated by the students. These published works were then displayed in the classroom alongside other items produced during the course of the thematic program.

The teacher commented that as drafts were marked, any specific teaching pointers from the students' writing (eg. spelling) were noted and treated in a subsequent language session with the whole class. As part of this process, the students were sometimes conferenced by the teacher as she wandered around the classroom or as they indicated a need for assistance.

Laura Doing Writing

Doing the Biography

The talk in which Laura engaged during the writing of her Super Hero biography contains elements of her own writing process as well as talk associated with distractions, seeking approval and her progress in completing the task.

- Laura: If I write down here, I'll finish it on this side. I'll do a little athletic man.
- Jane : I'm doing Mr. Orange (*laughter*) Super orange - he comes from an orange planet.
- Laura: Mine's a little person about that size (*demonstrates*) and he's got little stick ears.
- Jane: My one's all orange, orange. (*to others*) I'm doing Super orange.
- Laura: Um what can I really do? Are we allowed to talk about this?
- Jane: Yes we have to talk because the tape is on!
- Laura: Well I thought about doing a little popcorn thing that changes when it goes in the microwave and turns into a big popcorn guy and he comes out , da-da!
- Jane: Like Super Pop?
- Laura: Yeah! Super Pop.
- Jane: Katrina, she's doing Super Pop, like a piece of popcorn.
- Laura: Yeah! you put a little popcorn seed in the microwave and then it turns into a big Super Hero (*laughter*)
- Jane: Hey, your little popcorn man can look after my orange man
(*laughter*)

Laura: Every time he dies I have to replant it
Jane: No! It didn't come alive from the ground!
Laura: Oh yeah! No...No...Um...I just have to put another seed
in the microwave. I'm gonna write, we have to start
writing...*(reading)* ... Once...don't copy mine...when a
girl...Hmm, Once when a girl *(writing)* ...went...to...
buy...some... pop...corn...

As mentioned previously, Laura was part of a lively, talkative group of girls and the transcript above demonstrates the way this group generally settled to their work. As Laura began her draft, the chatter was task centred, a bit frivolous and playful but helpful to the extent of allowing Laura to air a few of her ideas in an environment of fun, while still considering the real task at hand. The girls talked about their ideas freely and read each other's work as it was being written. This talk helped Laura clarify her character.

Laura engaged in more of the same talk many more times throughout the writing of this draft. She presented her ideas without directly asking for a response or approval but was pleased when her ideas produced laughter and she happily joined in. Each time she presented her ideas, they related to the content of her work, that is, what her popcorn man could do. Statements reflecting this emphasis include,

...I'll put that my popcorn man did whatever I said and he beat up my enemies, he got me my food and everything...
...Maybe I could write he has been a super hero since the great depression ...
...I said he can make things float, break and disappear...

This transcript also gives an indication of other talk that Laura engaged in as she was writing. The comment "If I write down here, I'll finish it on this side" was associated with talk related to progress. Laura was very keen to write long stories as well as being keen to be among the first to finish and complete the task. Comments like; "I've got to do lots more" and "I've wrote a page" indicated her enthusiasm to do such. This progress talk was also closely linked to a personal commentary of her actions. In these statements, not only was she commenting on her progress and what she wanted to achieve, but she was also describing her actions at that point in the writing process. Such comments were made at different points in the writing of her draft especially as she neared the end of her writing. Her neighbours responded positively to both the progress talk and her personal commentary. The girls kept a close eye on the progress of each other and what each one was writing. In a sense this continual checking and commentary, motivated the group members to continue writing and complete it as soon as they could.

Characteristics of Laura's own unique writing process started to become evident as she continued to talk as she wrote. A lot of what Laura said during the writing of the biography was directly related to what she was writing at the time. The vocalisation of words as she wrote them was a major aspect of Laura's talk. She started her draft in this way, saying the words as she wrote them, she did this again each time the teacher interrupted and instructed the class to "settle down and work quietly" and also after being interrupted by the 'bumping' of her neighbour. It seemed this was a strategy she employed to help her focus back on the task.

Laura also reread her text aloud several times while writing it. Twice this re-reading was in response to someone else reading her own text or asking Laura to read hers. On two other occasions Laura reread her text more quietly, for her own benefit. Following this re-reading she continued to vocalise as she wrote. The nature of this reading could be associated with locating her place and finding her thoughts again after a distraction or more perhaps associated with the development of inner voice and hearing how her writing 'sounds'.

Laura also used talk to manage the behaviour of those around her. She made several comments to her group to start writing, to not copy, to stop bumping her and to get out of her way.

Doing the Newspaper Article

Laura's talk associated with the drafting of the newspaper article contained less sharing of ideas and more talk associated with her own writing process.

- Laura: I need to find my pencil. I'm gonna write it here now, on this page. Should I do a margin?
- Jane: No
- Laura: How are you starting yours off?
- Jane: I'm not really sure yet.
- Laura: I was going to write about my pop.. (*writing*) ..One... day...a...lady.....cooking, oops, I did a capital 'C', I need a little 'c'.
- Jane: I thought yours was about a girl though. Why are you putting a lady?
- Laura: This is his rescue job, not the other one, the description....(*reading*)
Once a lady was cooking...wait a minute..my rubber...oh..you've got it, that's okay.
- Teacher: That group at the front is far too noisy, settle down or I will move you somewhere else.

Laura: They muck around too much...*(reading)* ...Once a lady was cooking tea at five thirty...I've got to write all the details about this...*(reading)* ..five thirty p.m....*(writing)*..and..forgot..it..it..was..*(reading)*...Once a lady was cooking tea at five thirty p.m. and forgot it was on and *(writing)* ...left...*(reading)* ..Once a lady was cooking tea at five thirty p.m. and forgot it was on and...I'm putting in lots of details like five thirty and that.....
(To neighbour) Have you even started?

Laura began writing her draft newspaper article while giving a continual commentary of her actions, as in, "I've finished, I read all my comic", "I'm gonna write on the back of my last page", "I was gonna to write about my pop" and "I'm putting in lots of details". Amidst this talk, she constantly reread her text and vocalised words as she wrote them, translated in the transcript as "...flames...and...she...was...so...scared ...because...now...". These three types of talk, the continual commentary to self, the re-reading and the quiet vocalising of words as she was writing, relate to her own unique writing process and were also apparent in her talk while writing her biography.

The coinciding observations relating to this particular transcript noted Laura's immediate focus on her task. She worked with her head down, concentrating on getting her job done. Laura's focus on her task was also evident by the presence of long pauses in her talk. Some of these periods of silence were initiated by requests to "be quiet" from the teacher and the other periods of silence occurred when Laura was deeply involved in her writing, usually preceded by quiet vocalisations as she was writing.

After beginning her draft in this way, Laura continued to reread and add either a sentence or phrase to her text after each re-reading. Laura's neighbour also engaged in this type of talk and was heard re-reading and saying words slowly as if writing them also. The two girls worked well, re-reading, writing and saying words as they wrote their texts.

Laura then addressed a question to her neighbour, seeking assurance by asking "Jane, does this make sense?" This didn't lead to any conversation, other than a reply of "Yeah!" and so Laura continued working again.

After a period of four minutes, Laura made a comment about the weather and how sweaty she was. This then distracted the girls enough to check on each other's progress and they talked about the number of lines each had written, how neat their work was and who had started first. Noticeable, in the background of the tape at this point, was the increase in general classroom noise. The girls were not only distracted from their task by each other's questions but also possibly by the general level of noise in the class.

After a short period of silence, Laura began to talk again and the general noise level increased. All talk and noise was cut short at that point and the silence on the tape indicated that the class returned to working quietly again. The next comment Laura made approximately five minutes later was, "I've finished, I'm gonna to show Mrs. Brady".

Apart from Laura's questions to her neighbour about ideas and progress, most of her talk was an outward expression of her writing process. The re-reading of her text was followed by a short period of writing then by more self checking behaviour, such as, re-reading, more writing and vocalising, and so, on. Amidst this is the narrative or commentary of her actions.

Laura's Writing

The texts that were the focus of Laura's talk provided insight into her writing development and when referenced to the associated talk create a powerful illustration of how talk, writing and instruction are connected in the writing process. Laura's biography, included here, is titled 'Super Pop' (See Appendix D).

Super Pop

Once when a girl went to buy some popcorn She saw a packet with a popcorn man on the front and she bought it and took it home and put it in the microwave and when she took it out it had turned into a tiny little popcorn man and she kept him a secret until her little baby brother found him bouncing on her bed and her brother tried to eat him up but the tiny popcorn made him fly out the room and just as he was flying out the room the girl walked in and was amazed. after the girl and the popcorn found out that when the popcorn gets mad he uses his powers and can makethings float, break and dissapeer.

The expectation of this writing task was that the biography would describe an invented Super Hero, his or her skills and abilities and how they came to have such. In addition, the students were also to include details of why, how, where

and when. This information was a guide to the drafting of the biography and in a sense, Laura has achieved all that was expected of her in this writing activity. The text contains the details that she was instructed to include; the name of a new Super Hero, a comment about his skills and abilities and how he came to have them. The text, however, is not an informing biography. Laura wrote a typical story containing an introduction, a complication and a resolution.

An initial scan of Laura's text enables some obvious observations to be made. The first observation is that it is not a biography as such. The first word of Laura's text "Once..." indicates that she has written a narrative recount or story. Laura circumvented the problem of not understanding the genre of a biography by using a storying strategy. As a result, this text was largely composed using a 'what next' principle. Laura wrote what happened and then what happened next. This was indicated explicitly by her overuse of the conjunction 'and'.

The second observation is that there was no clear progression or organisation in the text. There was no introduction to the text alerting the reader to its purpose. There were no paragraphs organising the information about the Super Hero's appearance, skills and abilities or his origin. There were no lead sentences indicating the main idea of each paragraph, followed by sentences containing supporting details. These basic organisational elements would have provided a framework that Laura could have utilised to enable her to write more effectively in the biography genre.

There are many other aspects of this biography that demonstrate her level of understanding of the genre. A biography at this level usually contains information about physical appearance and other personal details. This was not included in Laura's text. Furthermore, a biography tells the story of one 'life', from birth to death. This was not the case here. In some ways Laura carried out the instructions, but her lack of understanding of the genre led her to write a narrative.

Laura demonstrated some positive developmental markers in the production of this text. Her use of a storying strategy in the writing of this text indicated her ability to use a small range of familiar text forms. Furthermore, she demonstrated a good sense of sentence and although she did not use any punctuation and overused 'and', her writing contained complete sentences. Connected to this was her constant re-reading and vocalising as she wrote. This demonstrated her efforts in maintaining correct word sequence in the writing, indicating her understanding of the connections between the syntax and the semantics of what she writes. Similarly, the use of "until" and "just as he was" indicate her developing awareness and use of varied language structures to make a text more interesting.

Some of these developmental markers are reflected in Laura's second text, also titled 'Super Pop' (See Appendix D). The expectation for this writing task was to produce a newspaper article describing a heroic deed performed by the students' newly invented Super Heroes.

Super Pop

Once a lady was cooking tea at 5:30pm and forgot it was on and left it. until it was 6:00pm and she realised it was still on and came rushing back and it was to late. the kitchen was up in flames and she was so scared because know the hole house was up in flames so she jump out the window of her apartment. just as she did the girl and the popcorn walked past the lady was falling and the little popcorn used his floating powers and got her saffly on the ground after he done that every-one came up and took photos of him and he was in Museums all over the world.

The most noticeable feature of this text is its 'sameness' in relation to the biography. Both texts were expected to represent different forms of writing however, there appears to be little difference between them. They both began with "Once", denoting a narrative mode. They both described a series of events in terms of a 'what next' principle and they both had the same title. Once again, Laura returned to storying as she did in the writing of her biography. The employment of this tactic as a way of coping with writing in an unknown genre, indicates Laura's need for the provision of scaffolds, to enable her to do and write that which she has demonstrated she couldn't do on her own.

Laura's draft newspaper article appears on the previous page as it did in the original form. The punctuation, spelling and grammar have not been corrected. The same errors occur in this piece of writing as in the biography. She overused 'and', she did not punctuate and use capital letters in sentences, and at times, has either confused the tense in some sentences or made some errors of omission, as in, "she jump[*ed*] out the window" and "after he done that". The errors in these aspects of Laura's writing indicate her developing ability, when

composing, to control more than one element at a time in order to produce a piece of writing that communicates meaning effectively. Despite her re-reading, she had been unable to detect these errors.

It is interesting to note that when Laura was involved in producing the parts of her text that contain these errors she did not vocalise the words as she wrote them, or reread her text before or after writing it. These errors were produced during periods of silence in Laura's writing process.

The last line of Laura's newspaper article was also interesting. The reference to photograph and museums "all over the world", indicated an awareness that newspaper articles report news. It appeared that her understanding of news includes photographs. She also understands that there is an element of importance associated with news, hence the inclusion of the museum.

Laura's talk and writing provide insight into her writing development and are representations of that development as well as making explicit the connections between her talk, her writing and all the elements of the language learning environment.

Final Comment

Laura was a unique young writer and the information provided by the observations and recordings, presented in this case study, contribute to

answering the different aspects of the research questions for this study. This young writer provided information about how talk is used by young children in the transition from emergent and early writing development to the conventional writing phase.

Chapter Seven

Case Study of Dean

Introduction

The final case study describes Dean. He was a Year Four boy at a northern metropolitan school he had attended since beginning school in pre-primary. Dean was randomly selected from a sample of 'good, average' writers in his Year Four class, as assessed by the classroom teacher. My observations indicated that he was a capable writer whose unique writing process allowed him to work quickly on written tasks leaving time for other pursuits.

Dean in class

Dean sat at the back of the classroom, near the door, in a group of six desks with eleven other students. All the desks were arranged into three such groups across the room. Although Dean was seated with so many other students, he did not generally interact with them and was observed ignoring them on several occasions. He also spent a lot of time out of his seat and away from this group of students, pottering around doing 'his own thing'. Sometimes he was out at the toilet, over at the bin sharpening his pencil, emptying his pencil case of litter, getting a tissue or just simply wandering.

Although Dean completed all assigned tasks, it appeared he approached his work with the idea of getting it done in the least amount of time and with the least amount of effort. During the observations, he engaged in short bursts of conscientious writing activity. This work behaviour was punctuated by either wandering around the room or by other off task activity as listed previously. He usually got enough work completed in each burst of writing activity to enable him to complete the proposed tasks.

He generally complied with most classroom instructions, although his methods of achieving the outcomes were different from the other students as reflected by his general work behaviour. For example, while most of the other students around him were beginning their writing, Dean settled to his writing tasks amidst searching for and sharpening pencils, rubbing out and ruling up. This longwinded settling technique or avoidance tactic was implemented in all the activities in which he was observed.

Dean worked independently of other students and the teacher. During his conscientious writing activity, he had his head down, writing frantically. He kept to himself and worked by himself. When he was observed approaching the teacher, it was only to ask for permission to go to the toilet during work time. This request was presented to the teacher during each period of observation and appeared part of his overall work avoidance tactic.

Dean appeared to enjoy writing activities, particularly the encouragement and positive feedback from other students and the teacher. He finished most tasks before other students, which meant that he had more time to explore other writing activities rather than the ones designated by the teacher. This generated many positive comments like “Hey, Dean’s done the draft already” and “Well done Dean, You can choose your own topic for writing now”.

Dean did not distract others with his unusual writing process, but did appear to get easily distracted himself. A specific distraction, either another teacher interrupting, the classroom teacher’s overtalking or a neighbour’s question usually initiated Dean’s periods of non-writing activity.

The Writing Context

Language teaching and learning was designed around specific literary items in Dean’s class. The specific writing activities were planned to complement the literature books being explored in the classroom at the time. For example during the period of observations, a book titled “*Going for Oysters*” provided the backdrop for the writing in which the students were engaged. Some of the writing that extended from this particular text included an Aboriginal symbol story accompanied by the student’s own translation, some ‘Who Am I’ animal poems and a narrative retell of the original text.

The drafting and publishing of the weekly writing tasks usually followed a brief introduction by the teacher. This introduction contained information for the students about the writing activity, and the procedure for completing it. In the case of the writing activities in which Dean was observed, the introductory sessions prepared the students for writing.

In the introductory session for the writing of an aboriginal 'symbol' story, the students, with the teacher, explored a variety of aboriginal-like symbols and their meanings. These symbols were presented on a worksheet and each student received a copy. Upon each worksheet a space was provided for the students to draw a draft of their own symbol story. Using the symbols from the sheet, the teacher drafted her own symbol story on the blackboard for all the students to see. It was explained to the students that only the key information could be presented using the symbols and that their translation would provide the whole story.

On another occasion the introduction to a writing session introduced the students to a narrative writing 'framework'. This particular activity was associated directly with the literature being read in the class at the time. The book "*Going for Oysters*" by Jeanie Adams, was the springboard for this writing activity. The purpose of the writing activity was explained. They were to plan a story about a specific incident from the book and tell what they thought might have really happened but were not told. The focus of this pre-writing session was another worksheet. The worksheet contained an explanation of the activity and a space for the students to write their planning ideas. After the details

about what was required were presented and the worksheet distributed, the students were set to work on their writing.

After these initial introductions to their writing tasks, the students settled to their work. The teacher roamed the classroom encouraging and supporting the students where necessary as is reflected in comments from the transcripts, such as;

Ten points for your group Ryan, well done.

Right some people are asking if they can go on... Corey.... You are not to go with the story plan we started this morning if you haven't finished both of the jobs on the board. The story that is going into your portfolio needs to be finished today. You need to be writing very fast thank you.

You read it for me and I'll see if I understand it.

Everyone just listen this way please. Some people are trying very hard to finish their work, well done. Hand up if you've done your symbol story? What about your portfolio story? Good. Keep going now, without the noise please.

Dean was observed writing the translation of his 'symbol' story, a number of 'Who Am I' poems and the narrative retell. In each of these writing activities he wrote without assistance from the teacher and completed the tasks well ahead of the others.

As indicated, these routine introductory teaching episodes usually focussed on the explanation of what was required in terms of the end product. Little emphasis was placed on the linguistic features of the writing in which the students were to be engaged. The drafts that Dean produced complied with the instructions but lacked attention to detail meeting only the basic requirements of the tasks.

Most of these whole class writing activities were completed to a published form of some kind and then displayed together as part of the overall classroom work environment. After the students had finished their draft and usually while others were still working, the teacher would visit those students who indicated their need for assistance. At this point the draft writing would be checked and marked and the student would move to the next stage of copying out the draft neatly onto a new page, or blackline master that had been prepared for the specific activity.

The writing context in which Dean was observed contained other features and routines that were significant to the classroom writing process. The classroom contained colourful displays of spelling charts and writing ideas. The students were encouraged to refer to these when spelling unknown words and also when seeking a topic on which to write during 'daily writing' time.

The students participated in daily writing for fifteen minutes every morning. During this writing time they engaged in free choice writing in a personal writing journal. The students' journal writing was used as spell check, providing errors for their personal spelling journals as well as an opportunity to just write. The writing journals were checked and read by the teacher throughout the week. The students were encouraged to publish any pieces of work from their journal and to add their work to the class display of free writing publications. However, most of the writing remained in draft form in these

books, as the students only chose some pieces to publish. A specific area was set aside for the students to display their own writing from their writing journals. The students enjoyed visiting this area and many would read these pieces of writing during the daily silent reading period.

Dean Doing Writing

The Symbol Story

The activity and talk in which Dean engaged during the writing of the 'Symbol Story' assist in developing a picture of his writing processes. The nature of Dean's writing process, as discussed earlier, is one of short bursts of writing punctuated by periods of inactivity and distracted behaviour. The transcript of Dean's talk, recorded during the writing of the symbol story, contains very little talk and has been expanded using notes from my observations (in italics), taken at two minute intervals throughout the writing session and included where appropriate and where they support the talk.

Dean: Have you got a hat? Can I borrow your hat?
Fred: No way.
Dean: Why not?
Fred: Here y'are.
Dean: Good! (*laughs with neighbour*)

(Dean places a hat over the tape recorder)
(Dean rules up page, chews on pencil, swings on chair and looks around)

Ryan: Dean, have you got a spare lead?
Dean: What?
Ryan: Have you got a spare lead?

(Dean does not answer, pulls face at Ryan)
(classroom teacher removes hat from on top of tape recorder)

Teacher: Don't do that again please Dean, this is important and you agreed to help Mrs. Nelson.

(Dean writes for 6 minutes, does not talk, does not raise his head)
(Public Address announcement interrupts class work)

Teacher: Ten points for your group Ryan, well done.

Jesse: Dean, got a rubber?

Dean: Jesse, here!

(Dean throws rubber to Jesse, bad throw, hits another student, boys laugh)

(Dean out of seat, standing at door)

(Dean out of room without permission)

(Dean returns to desk, with a handful of weeds)

(Teacher arrives at Dean's desk to check progress of writing)

Teacher: What have we got here. Good Dean, you have finished your symbol story translation. Is that all you need to write?

Dean: Yup!

Teacher: *(Still reading Dean's text)* Oh I see, What does that say? Oh yes, very good! Well, you have finished that now, have you got any other writing to go on with?

Dean: No. Can I draw a picture?

Teacher: Yes, draw one to match your symbol story.

(Dean shuffles in pencil case, leaves seat, takes pencils to bin and sharpens pencils – for 3 minutes. Returns to desk with piece of paper, draws a picture)

(Dean continues drawing for 4 minutes, places hat over tape recorder a second time, other student removes it immediately)

(Dean out of seat, standing at end of group of desks, watching other students, appears to be 'dancing')

Teacher: Okay everyone, I am really pleased with all your efforts in Completing your translations today. Put those drafts into your trays for tomorrow's reading lesson. Please don't take them home to finish, we'll have time tomorrow if you need it.

This transcript demonstrates the total amount of talk that Dean was engaged in during this particular writing activity. It also details the other activity in which he was involved during this forty-minute session. From the outset of this task, Dean was preoccupied with the tape recorder, despite previous experience with it on his desk. His initial attempt to cover the tape recording device with a friend's hat was foiled by the teacher. It was directly after this incident and the accompanying stern reminder from his teacher that he had agreed to help me, that Dean began writing. He wrote uninterrupted for six minutes. During this time there were a number of classroom distractions, including an announcement over the school Public Address system. Dean did not stop writing. He did not look up. He did not speak. He worked conscientiously for six minutes.

Dean's writing activity came to an end when interrupted by Jesse, asking if he had a rubber. This interruption must have coincided with Dean finishing his writing, as he did not return to his text again until the teacher came to read it, at which time she discovered he had finished. After being interrupted by Jesse, Dean left his seat and then left the room. He was out of the room for approximately three minutes and returned with a bunch of weeds in his hand. He proceeded to put the weeds into his school tray and began to look busy at his desk.

The teacher was involved in roaming conferences around the classroom and came to Dean's group of desks. She checked his progress quickly and was impressed to see he had completed a translation of his symbol story. The story was read briefly and a comment of encouragement given. As was common

writing practice in this class, Dean was now free to continue working on his own writing. He asked if he could draw a picture and the teacher agreed that this was appropriate, as he had no other writing to complete.

Dean's drawing activity was not unlike his writing activity. He worked on his illustration for three minutes and was then observed out of his seat again, this time involved in a showy routine of dancing and playing. Dean was doing this when the class was called to pack away.

It is difficult to categorize Dean's talk at this point as there was so little of it. In the forty-minute session, he asked a question about a hat, answered a request for a pencil then a rubber, replied to the teacher's questions regarding "is that all?" and then finally asked a self-initiated question about his own activity. None of this talk was associated with the writing of the text. Unlike other case studies of students at this developmental level, there was no rereading of the text, no self-commentary and no vocalising the words as he writes them. There was no self-initiated talk related to the text at all.

The Narrative Retell

Once again Dean's unique writing process was evident in the transcripts of his talk and associated activity during the writing of the narrative retell based on Jeanie Adams' book "*Going for Oysters*". It took Dean sixteen minutes to actually begin writing.

Teacher: Right some people are asking if they can go on... Corey.... You are not to go with the story plan we started this morning if you haven't finished both of the jobs on the board. The story that is going into your portfolios needs to be finished today. You need to be writing very fast thank you.

Dean: *(coughing, singing and whistling)*

Class: *(very noisy)*

Teacher: Right Year 3, sit down please.
Kathleen, SIT!
Kelly, you need to get this out.

Dean: That was mighty loud.

Fred: Dean, Dean?

Dean: Yes
(Dean fumbling in pencil case, turning pages of draft writing book)

Fred: *(inaudible question)*

Dean: Which part? The chewed part or not chewed part?

Teacher: Excuse me Joshua, I don't see you being very busy!

Fred: That one will do.
(Dean banging pencil sharpener on desk, fiddling with scissors and sharpener)

Dean: My sharpener's blocked. I'm getting the lead out.

Teacher: Boys in the corner, what are you doing?

Dean: I'm colouring in this

Teacher: Not now, put it away please, you need to be finishing your story.

Dean: I've done that, I've already done that. I've done my plan.

Teacher: Wait a minute. *(walks over to Dean's desk)* Right you need to write it out in full now. You need to actually create a draft from your plan like we talked about this morning.

Girl: What does that word say?

Dean: Don't worry.
(Dean searching in tray of school desk for something)

Teacher: Everyone just listen this way please.
Some people are trying very hard to finish their work, well done. Hand up if you've done your symbol story? What about your portfolio story? Good. Keep going now without the noise please. Corey, come here please. Right, this group here you've got ten points. *(to others)* That's not what I asked you to do at all!
(rubbing out work) whispering to neighbour – inaudible

Dean: *(rubbing out work) whispering to neighbour – inaudible*

Teacher: Where's the book Dean?

Dean: I didn't need it cos that part is finished. Can I go to the toilet?

Teacher: Yes, hurry up please.

(Dean out of desk, out to toilet – 5 minutes)

Teacher: *(in background)* You read it for me and I'll see if I understand it.

(loud classroom laughter and general work noiser)

Teacher: All right, thank you. Ryan settle down please!

(Dean back, laughing with neighbour)

Teacher: Boys in the corner, what are you doing? You are supposed to be writing quietly. Every single person please.

(Dean fits a pencil grip to a new pencil)

Fred: Have you got pencil grips on all your things?

Dean: Most of them.

Fred: Here give it to me. *(Dean hands over a pencil with a grip on it)*

Dean: It makes it easy to write.

Fred: I can see your veins coming out when you write.

Dean: That's cos I write so much all the time.

(Dean begins writing)

Dean actually began writing sixteen minutes into this forty-minute session. During the preceding sixteen minutes he had sharpened a pencil, been to the toilet, had several conversations about rubbers and pencils with his neighbour and had been reminded four times by the teacher of what it was he should have been doing. Similarly, it took Dean eight minutes to begin writing his 'symbol' story translation indicating a pattern of either avoidance or 'writer's block' prior to beginning a new writing task.

It was unfortunate for Dean, that just as he began writing his narrative retell, another teacher visited the classroom and interrupted the work environment with the distribution of some important notes. Dean had to leave his desk and put a note into his schoolbag before he could return to his task. Once again, Dean engaged in conscientious writing activity for four minutes without looking up, talking or getting distracted. After this short period of conscientious writing, a neighbour interrupted him.

(Interruption by another teacher – handing out sports carnival notes)
(Dean returns to desk, writes for 4 minutes)

Fred: What are you up to now?
Dean: I'm doing my story now after that plan.
Fred: Are ya? I'm gonna be up to that next.
Dean: Yeah!

(Dean writes for 3 minutes)

Teacher: (Elsewhere in the classroom) How are you going with your story?
Girl: I've finished the symbol one.
Teacher: Congratulations, what should you be doing now? Yes the story plan!

(Dean looks up and stretches, puts pencil down and leans back on chair)

Fred: I'm going to my dad's work today.
Dean: (stretching and flicking his pen) My dad's picking me up today.

Teacher: Too noisy every one, back to your seats by the count of four, 1, 2, 3, 4. Good now stay there and stay quiet. You've got 4 minutes of work time left on this writing today. Get to it.
Carl, you can have 20 points for your group, well done.

(Dean playing with neighbour, throwing items to each other)

(Dean out of seat/ out of room at bags momentarily – unnoticed by teacher)

Teacher: Sorry everyone, that's all we can afford for today. The people who did not get the portfolio stories completed come to me now. Other people I will see your work tomorrow. Bring the portfolio stories to me, others get ready for news.

Before Fred's interruption, Dean's writing activity was quiet and focussed. He wrote for four minutes. During this time, he referred to his story plan and it was obvious he was writing ideas from the plan into the body of his text. He responded to his neighbour and commented about what he was doing. A few brief words were exchanged and he returned to his writing. Once again Dean worked on his writing for three minutes without interruption and without looking up or talking. Dean then indicated he had finished writing by stretching and leaning back on his chair. From this point on, he did not go back to the writing at all. He continued stretching and then repeatedly flicked his pen onto the desk. He then sneaked out of his desk and then out of the room. He was out of the room for approximately two minutes and on his return, caught

the end of the instructions about packing away. Dean proceeded to 'pack away' and sat waiting for 'news time'.

Dean's talking during this session of writing was once again limited to responding to the questions of others. One comment of particular interest occurred during the discussion about pencil grips. Dean said, "That's cos I write so much all the time" in relation to his own writing behaviour. This comment demonstrated his pride in his achievements in writing and also his impression that he writes a lot.

This limited amount of talk provides little insight into Dean's composing process and associated patterns of thought. However, it does suggest that at this level of writing development some students do not talk during the process of writing or drafting a text. It seems it is possible for a student to be so completely engaged in the task of writing, that talk about the text or the process of writing is not necessary. Most of the time, Dean chose not to talk, except when he replied to another child. Unless spoken to by someone else, Dean made no effort to comment about his writing to anyone.

One other possible cause for this lack of talk in Dean's writing process could be that he was sitting next to students he neither liked nor knew. He did not talk to them because he did not want to or did not know how to. He did have other, closer friends in the classroom but these students were seated elsewhere. Even so, during Dean's time out of his desk he neither approached his 'friends' nor spoke to them.

Dean's Writing

The texts that Dean produced during the period of observation indicate a writer who has a good understanding of the conventions of written language and who also has the ability to convey meaning in simple form. The texts, produced during short bursts of concentrated writing activity, are smaller in length than what he has demonstrated he is capable of achieving in other writing samples collected for the purposes of this study. The texts Dean wrote during the observations lacked detail and seem to comply with the minimum requirements of the set task.

The first text here, 'The Symbol Story' was written in six minutes.

A Symbol Story

One day I made a campsite near a
river with a fish, I saw a warthog I
speared the warthog and took it back
to camp. It started to rain. I saw a giant
and speared and took it back to camp.

The story was based on this series of Aboriginal-like symbols, selected and organised by Dean to create an original story. This symbol sequence was like a draft and Dean was observed referring to it during the writing of this text. The text matches the sequence of symbols exactly and provides an adequate translation.

Dean's second text was created in two short bursts of writing activity, totalling approximately eight minutes of concentrated writing. This particular text was also written with reference to a planning /drafting sheet. A story plan was completed during a reading lesson earlier in the day and the writing task, this time, required the students to write out their story, including all the detail.

The similarities between the plan and the final text are obvious. Dean utilised the ideas from his plan in his draft narrative. It is interesting to note though, that the first part of the text contains many more details than the last part. Dean has extended his ideas on the planning sheet into cohesive and interesting sentences. Then, at the point where "They heard a thunder noise", the detail becomes limited to that which was contained on the planning sheet. It is possible that the first half of the text was written in his first period of concentrated writing activity and that the second part of the text was written during his second period of writing activity. Dean signalled that he had finished his writing with a great stretch and sigh of relief. He did not return to the text and 'did his own thing' for the remaining eleven minutes of work time.

Going for Oysters

Once there were a tribe of people who went on a trip to find some oysters and crabs. They collected some oysters and crabs. Then the boys and girls found a boat and filled in the holes with sticky mud. They rowed to the east side of the river. The boys got off to kill some wallerby. They heard a Thunder noise. It was a snake. The snake followed them and they got in the dnigy. They paddled back and they got growled then they told them the story.

The text was well written and conveys a message that respects the conventions of written language. Dean used punctuation well, writing in complete sentences. There were several errors of usage within this text and they all seemed to be related to plurals and their references. For example “were a tribe” and “kill some wallerby”. Further to this, in the final sentence the pronouns ‘they’ and ‘them’ were used, without reference to the subject or object of the sentence, forcing the reader to fill in the gaps with only a limited amount of written information. In a sense this last sentence is similar to “talk written down”. In an oral situation the context and the subject are shared and not always restated.

Final Comment

Dean was an example of a student who has the potential to write well. The interesting issue with Dean was that unlike the other subjects in the study, he did not talk while he writes. His texts were cohesive and well written and his writing process, although punctuated with other behaviours, was appropriate to his age and ability. Dean has provided this research with an interesting and informative exception to the data collected.

Chapter Eight

Data Analysis: Cross Case Analysis

Introduction

The case studies have presented a lot of information related to the talk and activity in which six students engaged, while writing. The purpose of presenting the data in the form of case studies was to enable thick description of all aspects relevant to the research questions. The aim of this Cross Case Analysis is to identify patterns of similarities and differences that existed in the collective talk. Identifying patterns in this way enables logical and well-supported generalisations and conclusions to be made about the data.

The similarities and the differences that will now be presented, provide a backdrop for the introduction of three categories that have been developed according to the nature and function of the talk. The categories clearly identify and articulate a functional framework within which all the children's writing talk can be placed. These categories will be introduced briefly in this general cross case analysis and will be presented in detail in the following chapter.

The case studies presented the data under four main headings: The Student In Class, The Writing Context, The Student Doing Writing and The Writing. The Cross Case Analysis was conducted with this structure in mind and as such the patterns of similarities and differences introduced in this chapter will be

presented under these same headings.

The Students in Class

The Similarities and Differences

The students were all from a northern metropolitan school in Perth, Western Australia. The school is situated in a rapidly growing area and was established five years prior to the research being conducted. All the children in this study had attended this primary school from their first year of school.

The students were all selected by the researcher from a stratified sample developed by the teachers on the basis of their phase of writing development using the First Steps Continua (Ministry of Education, 1992). Their willingness to write and talk in class was also a factor to be considered as was the absence of any other issues that might impact the data such as speech or hearing problems or learning English as a second language.

The six students all brought to school different opinions, values, experiences and habits. Further to this they were all different ages and following slightly different pathways of development. No two students were showing the same skills and abilities nor did they have exactly the same knowledge about language and how it works and is used.

Sarah was a cheerful worker who was developing confidence in her ability.

Craig was a highly organised intense worker with a very sharp, keen sense of

humour. Ruth was a very quiet, polite student who was a competent mature worker. Simeon, too, was mature and confident in his work but took things far less seriously than Craig. Laura was enthusiastic and energetic with excitable qualities. Dean was an independent worker who set his own agenda for most classroom activities. These differences impacted on their work habits, interactions with other students and their thoughtfulness and ability in written language activities.

The impact of these differences in these other areas becomes evident as this cross-case analysis proceeds.

The Contexts

The children were located in four different classrooms and therefore it goes without saying that, because of the nature of teaching and teachers, the classrooms were bound to be as different as the teachers and students themselves. This was generally the case although there were some interesting similarities between the four classrooms despite the children being two different year levels.

The Writing Experiences

In all classrooms the language programs, including the writing experiences, were planned around specific themes. The themes provided the context for extending the language learning into the areas of reading, writing, spelling and

in some cases drama. The content or topics of the writing activities were linked directly to the chosen theme. In one case the theme was literature based, in another room a big book, linked to the Social Studies theme, provided the context for language learning. In the other rooms the language learning activities were based on a popular culture theme, Super Heroes and a current issues theme of Disasters.

In all classrooms the writing experiences provided students with opportunities to write across a range of genres. At the time of data collection, the students in three out of the four classrooms were involved in writing non-fiction texts. There appeared to be balance in the use of both fiction and non-fiction texts.

The Pre-Writing Sessions

Another similarity within the contexts was the teaching routine implemented in the classrooms. In each case, before the students began writing, they were given an explanation of the writing task. These have been described as the 'pre-writing session' or 'introductory session' in the case studies. In all cases these sessions were used to motivate the students to write, to explain the instructions regarding the procedure for completing the writing task and also to present some ideas for their writing.

One of the most elaborate pre-writing sessions went a step further than this to provide effective teaching and modelling specific to the genre that was the focus of the writing experience. In these sessions, in Simeon and Ruth's classroom, the students' prior knowledge was the starting point for learning. The teacher gathered information from the children in order to provide a backdrop for the teaching session that followed. After an initial discussion, they were exposed to and participated in modelled writing by the teacher. They also participated in a mini lesson outlining the language features of the specific genre. Furthermore, time was allocated for the sharing of ideas. Each writing lesson began in a similar way with time allocated to revise the teaching points of the genre, to continue the modelled writing activity to completion and also to hear what the students had written to that point.

In the other classrooms the pre-writing sessions focussed on managerial issues; how the product should look, how it should be set out and how long it should be. Although there may have been some reference to a writing framework, it was not a detailed explanation and very little emphasis was placed on the linguistic features of the genre being introduced. In one classroom when no pre-writing scaffolding was given, the case study child used a storying strategy when the task called for a biography.

The Writing Process

The writing process or routine that was reinforced in each classroom demonstrated more similarities and differences between the writing contexts. In some classes the writing routine was made clear and in other contexts it was less explicit and more implied.

The general routine or process that appeared to be common to all contexts was one where the students first drafted their texts then, after proof-reading for errors of spelling and grammar, would hand it to the teacher to mark or check. When it was returned, they would go on to publish it or write it out neatly as a good copy and then have it displayed in the classroom environment somewhere. One exception to this procedure was in Simeon and Ruth's classroom where the process was made more explicit during one of the pre-writing sessions, and included peer tutoring or peer conferencing before handing to the teacher to be read rather than marked.

In two out of the four classrooms, the drafting aspect of this process was preceded by a time of planning and note making. Worksheets were provided for the students to plan their texts, sometimes using the specific headings of the First Steps writing framework as a guide (Ministry of Education, 1992). In Dean's classroom, during the period of observation, a symbol story or a sequence of aboriginal-like symbols provided the students with the opportunity to plan a simple narrative before writing out the details of their story. This activity was followed by a more formal narrative planning sheet for the next

writing activity, where the students organised their ideas under the headings beginning, middle and end.

In Simeon and Ruth's classroom, the students were provided with a planning page specifically designed to alert them to the key structural and linguistic features of a newspaper article. Space was provided for the students to draft ideas. In the summary writing activity, in that same classroom, the students were given a structured overview to enable them to extract and organise the information from an original source before writing their draft summary. Both these contexts provided support for the writers that impacted on the written product in terms of its genre specific language features and structure. The students in the classrooms where this scaffolding and support were not given produced texts where the understanding of genres was not as marked and in Laura's case a text was written that did not resemble the intended genre at all. These contextual differences impacted on the final written texts and also the possible impact on the talk that the students engaged in during the drafting of their texts.

Differences also emerged in the re-reading or proofreading of the draft once the students felt they had finished writing. In Simeon and Ruth's classroom the appropriate proofreading skills and behaviours were 'modelled' by the teacher during the pre-writing sessions and the students were constantly encouraged to make changes where necessary or where other ideas were preferred. This is demonstrated in the following comments from the pre-writing sessions in that classroom.

- “This is a draft. Can you notice that even I am making mistakes and making changes as I go? That’s what a draft is for. I might read it at the end and decide ‘Oh I should have put another little idea in there’. What do we do if we need to put extra ideas in?”
- “I actually went on to change my details a little bit from yesterday. I decided that I still liked that first paragraph there, but I wanted to change that there. And even though I did something there, I still scribbled it out because I thought this sounded better. So even this morning, when I was finishing off doing this, I still changed my mind as well. And that’s what drafts are all about. Drafts are about putting your ideas down and then when you reread it back, thinking, you say “hang on, I know something that might be better”, or “that doesn’t quite make sense”, and that’s what I’ve done here. I’ve changed my ideas and made them sound that little bit better and even when I thought I’d finished the whole thing, I still went back and made changes.”

In Dean and Laura’s classrooms there was less emphasis on this aspect of the writing process. Without having read through them, the students handed their drafts to their teachers to mark and make corrections where.

In Craig and Sarah’s classroom the writing routine was such that once a draft was completed, the students were expected to place it on the teacher’s desk for editing at a later time. The students were encouraged to read through their writing, to check it for obvious spelling, grammar and organisational mistakes, before handing it in to be marked. Proof reading their own draft was an expected element of the classroom writing routine and their work would be returned, unmarked, if there was no evidence of this having been done.

Another aspect of the writing process of Simeon and Ruth’s classroom was the integration of other resources and skills as the students were involved in

writing. In this classroom the students were encouraged to use 'have-a-go' pads to assist them in spelling new and unknown words. To a lesser extent, this procedure was also implemented in Craig and Sarah's classroom but was not present at all in the other two classrooms' language learning contexts.

Teacher Support

In all the classrooms the teachers provided continuous assistance and support to the writers. The informal roaming approach to conferencing was a common aspect of this assistance. The teachers roamed their classrooms assisting the students as a need arose. They also assisted those students in the class who were known to have difficulty with language tasks. The teachers were constantly on the move, helping the students remain 'on task', as indicated in Nathan's comment, "Shh! Here she [the teacher] comes – come on".

Associated with this roaming approach was the 'overtalking' that emerged from the teachers' contact with students. Overtalking refers to the interruptions caused by additional instructions and comments spoken over the working noise of the students. In three out of the four classrooms, the students were given further information about their writing task during the course of writing. This overtalking also included comments of encouragement and comments related to classroom control such as,

- "Right, this group here you've got ten points....That's not what I asked you to do at all!"

- “Pencils down for a second and comics down for a second. It’s now time for everyone to start. One thing you need to consider or a few things maybe if you haven’t decided what your Super Hero can do is, What makes your Super Hero a Super Hero? Don’t have someone rescuing someone from a burning building if he’s made of paper. Think very carefully about your Super Hero. Think about his or her powers first then work out the heroic deed that he or she can do.”
- “guys make sure you’re writing proper sentences. Don’t write ‘six feet tall, brown hair, blue eyes and brown skin. He is six foot tall and has brown hair. Make sure you put in all those connecting words properly....make sure you tell me what he looks like.”
- “Fifteen more minutes and then we’re stopping.”
- “Excuse me Joshua, I don’t see you being very busy!”

Overtalking was not present in Simeon and Ruth’s classroom. In this classroom, the interruptions were planned for at the beginning of the session. Before they began writing, the students were warned that they would be interrupted and have an opportunity to share what they had written to that point. The students all participated in these interruptions and then returned to task when instructed to do so. At this point they were again warned if they were going to be stopped for any further discussions or sharing, for example, “A few more minutes then we’ll hear from a few keen people”.

Doing the Writing

Despite some of the differences that existed between the writing contexts of the four classrooms and between the students themselves, there were some remarkable similarities in the students’ talk and writing activity during the act of writing itself. In the case studies, the category of ‘Doing Writing’ described the evolving story of activity and talk that was linked directly to the drafting of

a text. Each student became the main character in these stories, as their writing activity and its associated talk was presented.

In this section of the cross-case analysis, the patterns within the collective talk and writing activity of all the students will be reviewed. The review will follow the students settling to their writing tasks and describe their conscientious writing activity. The aspects of working together with other students will also be described along with the way in which the students coped with distractions and interruptions to their work while involved in this aspect of their writing. Finally, the way the students approached the end of their tasks will be discussed in terms of the writing activity and talk. A preliminary classification of the talk will be addressed during the telling of this review.

Starting Off – Settling to the Task

Settling to the writing tasks and beginning writing produced a variety of talk and activity among the six subjects. Some features of this part of the writing process could be identified as common to all students.

Firstly the routine behaviour of ruling up, finding pencils, putting the date at the top of their work and the talk associated with those tasks was prevalent in most cases.

- Simeon asked, "Do you need a pen? (*offers Ryan a pen*)... Oh yeah..*(talking and writing)* Kids...Fight...Back (*reading*) Kids fight back, there. Sshhh!

What are you doing?" and then later as he began his summary, asked, "Do you need to rule up? Oh yeah". Sarah began, "Can I use your pen?..(then began writing) 24th ...of ...the...8th...98... Bushrangers." And then asked "Do we have to rule up?"

- Craig also dated his work amidst the 'overtalking' by the teacher; "I better put 'Bushrangers Bold' eh! Shhh! (to others) , (writing) twenty fourth ...of ...the eighth...ninety...eight"
- Laura had difficulty finding her belongings, "Where's my rubber" and also, "I need to find my pencil"
- Ruth needed a ruler before she could begin her summary, "Hey, can I use your ruler?"

There was also a lot of initial talk associated with clarifying ideas and language forms and also seeking reassurance from other students to ensure they were 'on the right track'.

- Laura began her biography by asking, "Um what can I really do? Are we allowed to talk about this?" and then continued with, "Well I thought about doing a little popcorn thing that changes when it goes in the microwave and turns into a big popcorn guy and he comes out, da-da!"
- Simeon was proud of his newspaper headline idea and announced it to his neighbour; "I'm doing 'Kids fight back'." Then after a query from his partner about the wording of a headline, he said, "You have to put 'by', otherwise it sounds like the kids hit the lightning."

- Ruth and her neighbour shared their ideas, “[I’m doing] ‘Quick Sand Kills Boy’... Is that what you’re doing? Did you do it in capitals?”
- Craig made the suggestion, “(reading) Last seen standing outside...(talking) the hardware store...or maybe I could do him outside the pub?...like a joke?” his neighbour disagreed so Craig went on to say, “Yeah... hardware store...oh... (as writing) hard...ware...store”
- Sarah asked her neighbour, “Who’s the first one you’re doing?” and after answering, the other student asked, “How are you setting yours out?” Sarah replied “Like that.(points to her heading)... and then I’m gonna write it, write about John Caesar.”

As pen was put to paper the students began to use their talk for a different purpose. There was a quiet hush to their voices and slower pace to their talk as they began to vocalise words and move into a more conscious period of writing often re-reading what they had written.

- Ruth could be heard vocalising while she wrote her headline, “...quick...sand ...kills...boy..”
- When Craig started writing his summary, he worked in the same way, saying quietly, “I better put ‘Busrangers Bold’ eh! Shhh! (to others), (writing) twenty...fourth ...of ...the eighth...ninety... eight.... (reading) Busrangers Bold, okay, I’m doing John Caesar first...(Long pause, silent reading)...(now writing and talking quietly) John... Caesar... arrived...with...the... first ...fleet...of... ships ...He... was...transported...for...stealing...for stealing...to Australia...”

- Laura also read and vocalised quietly as she put pen to paper for her report, “(reading) ...Once a lady was cooking tea at five thirty...I’ve got to write all the details about this....(reading) ..five ..thirty p.m....(writing)..and..forgot. it..it..was.. (reading)...Once a lady was cooking tea at five thirty p.m. and forgot it was on and (writing) ...left...(reading) ..Once a lady was cooking tea at five thirty p.m. and forgot it was on and..I’m putting in lots of details like five thirty and that.....
- Simeon could also be heard writing, “Kids...fight...back” and then reading “Kids fight back.” Moments later he continued to write, quietly saying, ‘Kids...are..dis..gust..ed..” This type of quiet vocalisation also signalled Simeon’s start to writing his summary, “...the...enormous... ocean...liner..” He then settled into a period of quiet writing activity, continuing to vocalise occasionally as he wrote, “Millionaires...lords...and...count...esses...c...o...u...n...t... countesses, countesses...first...class”

Conscious Writing – Getting on with it

After initially engaging in the writing task by finding belongings, ruling pages and sharing ideas, the students all settled into a time of concentrated writing activity; and there was plenty of talk during this time. The continuous talk throughout this period of work varied greatly. It ranged from talk that was associated with performing writing, managing the behaviour of others, checking each other’s progress toward finishing the task, to talk that was purely social chit-chat.

Peer interactions: when students are working together.

The interactions between students were an important aspect of the talk collected during the writing observations. Very often the talk in which the subjects engaged was initiated by someone else and resulted in a sustained interaction. This type of talk is of interest and relevance to the research question as is the talk initiated by the six subjects themselves because the subjects were directly involved and readily participated in this interactive talk.

A lot of these interactions differed according to the seating arrangements and the specific relationship they had with the person/people with whom they were seated. Simeon sat with Ryan for the writing of both drafts. It was obvious from their dialogue that their relationship went further than just a classroom seating arrangement. They were mates. They socialised together at lunchtime, shared common interests and mutual friends. They spoke informally to each other, joked with each other and had licence to say things to each other only good friends would.

Sarah on the other hand was moved during the writing of her second piece, the summary. The new person she found herself sitting next to appeared to be just a classmate rather than a friend by choice. This was most evident in the formalities of speech utilised while interacting with her. Sarah was far less chatty, very polite and matter-of-fact with her new partner in contrast to her

conversation with her friend, Jenny. In those sessions she was animated, easily distracted and talkative.

Ruth provides another example of how the seating arrangements can make a difference to the talk and activity associated with writing. She sat alone almost the entire time while writing both texts. There was a space either side of her separating her from the other students by half a desk. She engaged in talk with the other students but very often they were interactions initiated for a specific purpose and then closed off quickly, unlike the rambling of Simeon and Ryan as they worked and talked together.

Laura sat with a group of five other Year Four girls. They all appeared to be best friends and were a lively bunch. She was a chatty class member, who followed the lead of her peers in her attitude and work habits. Because of this, she was often caught up with the antics of the group and led off task. The group also looked very busy, however, underlying this 'busyness' was a silent competitiveness among the group members. This competitiveness may have been the motivation for Laura to get started very quickly and to try to be among the first in her group to say "I've finished!" The sharing and swapping of items was a social thing among this group and each girl took pride in having items that the others wanted to use. These aspects combined to make Laura's work environment a social and at times noisy one, the impact of which is evident in the talk in which she engaged during writing.

Dean sat at the back of the classroom, near the door. Although he was seated with so many other students, he did not interact with them much, they did not initiate interaction with him and he was observed ignoring them on several occasions. He also spent a lot of time out of his seat and away from this group of students, pottering around doing his own thing. Sometimes he was out at the toilet, over at the bin sharpening his pencil, emptying his pencil case of litter, getting a tissue or just simply wandering. Dean worked independently of other students and the teacher. During his conscious writing activity, he had his head down writing frantically. He kept to himself and worked by himself. It did not matter to Dean who he sat next to. He did not interact with the others before, during or after his writing activity.

Other interactions not only reflected the relationship the subject had with the other student/s but also the emphasis that was placed on the task itself. These interactions reflected the classroom discourse more than the talk related to the six students' own writing process, as this was their shared context and the common ground for discussion

The students in some classrooms were told explicitly of the emphasis or objective of their writing. In these rooms the management of the writing task was clearly articulated, being related to either the size of the product, how fast the students needed to work, the importance of finishing that day and even complying to the classroom rules. In these classrooms both the talk and the product reflected this emphasis. Sarah and Craig were very concerned with how much they had done during the writing of their wanted poster and summary.

They had been told many times during the writing sessions to hurry up, that they didn't have that much time and that it had to be finished today. They continually checked their progress and even resorted to counting lines and words as part of this process.

In the case of Simeon and Ruth the objectives for writing were implied. The teacher made known her objectives about writing through modelling and teaching rather than specifically articulating it. The students in that class saw the emphasis the teacher showed in her own modelled writing and followed her lead in their own writing. This emphasis also had its links with the talk and the text each student developed. Simeon and his neighbour Ryan talked a lot about the language structures within the newspaper article, discussing headlines and lead sentences with each other and sharing ideas for each other's writing. Simeon also used talk for his personal writing process, telling himself what to do next, re-reading to himself and saying words as he wrote them. The teacher did these things during the modelled writing sessions prior to the students writing their drafts, implying their importance in relation to the writing task with which they were involved. Ruth also engaged in this type of talk, but to a lesser extent.

In Laura's classroom the teacher introduced the task by placing importance on their ideas for writing, inviting the students to make their ideas as original as possible. Laura included this emphasis in her talk to the others in her group by sharing many ideas and asking for confirmation of her ideas by the others. After ten minutes of writing the teacher interrupted the class and reinstructed them,

saying, "Don't include details about deeds your superhero does. This is just about your superhero and how he or she got their powers. What they can do but not a particular story about how they saved somebody or did something wonderful... That will be in the next part, A newspaper article about something they did". Reinforcing this emphasis directed Laura to tell her neighbours her ideas again, this time specifically related to what her superhero could do. The remainder of her self initiated talk was also related to her ideas, "I could write..." and "I'll put..."

The emphasis in Laura's second writing activity was articulated in a similar way for the students in that class. They were encouraged to use interesting words, original ideas and to include lots of details. Once again, most of Laura's talk with other students was related to her ideas, reflecting the modelling provided by the teacher.

Interruptions and starting again.

Many of the peer interactions, especially the ones that were initiated by some else resulted in interruptions to the subjects' concentrated writing activity. There were also other interruptions that effected the writing activity and talk of the subjects. These included the 'overtalking' by the classroom teacher, Public Address announcements, other teachers' interruptions, other students' activity or misbehaviour and even maintenance men fixing things. Such interruptions produced talk and activity that is relevant to this research.

Most interruptions from their neighbours or workmates resulted in some kind of exchange or conversation. After these interruptions, the subjects returned to work and began writing again by employing a number of different strategies to help them find their place and their train of thought.

- After Ruth's neighbour interrupted by talking about the school 'Lapathon', Ruth returned to her task by reading her last sentence and then continuing with her writing. Ruth employed this procedure each time she finished speaking with someone else.
- Similarly, after each conversation and even during, Sarah would re-read her last few words and begin writing as she said the words to herself.
- Laura returned to task after speaking with another student by telling herself what she was doing, for example, 'I'm gonna write..' and 'I've got lots more to do...'. After other conversations Laura began writing her ideas again, saying the words as she wrote.

Some interruptions involved the teachers 'overtalking' while the students were writing and sometimes included instructions to cease writing so they might attend to further teaching. These teacher initiated interruptions generally resulted from the teachers' roaming conferences and interactions with the students' writing activity, generating similar responses among most of the subjects. After being stopped, Simeon, Ruth and Sarah all returned to their work vocalising as they wrote. Similarly, after being asked to stop their work momentarily, Laura and Craig continued with their writing by re-reading first and then quietly writing.

At other times the students were distracted from their writing by the teachers' comments related to the progress of the writing or the amount of time left for working. Some of the teachers' remarks related specifically to the amount of time left on the task, including; "fifteen minutes and then we're stopping", "we've got until 2p.m. then we're stopping this", "we stop in five minutes", "for ten more minutes we are all going to write quietly". Other points of interruption related to amounts of work that needed to be completed or that should have been completed. These comments are reflected in the following examples; "The physical description should take three to four lines at least", "You should be up to the second one by now" and also "Ah guys, the draft must be finished today, you should all have started your good copy".

Most of the teacher comments used here as examples are from Craig and Sarah's classroom and their responses relate directly to teacher's instructions. Sarah discussed the time with her partner, Craig told others around him to "Shhh!" knowing that time was running out fast. Furthermore, he rejoiced twice with a "Yeah" when it was announced there were only five minutes of writing time left. He also proceeded to count his words when the teacher specified how long a particular section should be. In the other rooms, the students were not subjected to this amount of 'overtalking' but on the occasions when they were interrupted in this manner, Laura continued writing quietly, Simeon checked his own progress with a self-commentary and Ruth continued working.

As found in many classrooms, the noise level increased as the students worked and this also became the focus of some of the overtalking. This type of teacher

talk included comments like, “and a few people are having a nice old chat over there”, “will you hurry up”, “lower it and write”, “Too loud everyone” and also “No more loud noises thank you”. The six students were all very compliant and responded to these requests by the teachers with quiet writing activity.

Generally though most of the six students were on task during these interruptions and must have known that the comments were not directed at them. After the teacher told Laura’s class to be quiet, Laura said, “They muck around too much” indicating that she knew the comment was not directed at her. After a similar comment earlier, Laura said to her neighbour “We have to talk for Mrs Nelson” to which her neighbour replied, “yes let’s do it quietly”. Laura understood that her talk and working noise was exempt from these requests to be quiet.

Finishing – The End is nigh

As the students neared the end of their writing task, the talk changed again and although this talk and activity should not be separated from the whole process, it is interesting to note the subtle differences between the final period of writing and the writing that had already been completed.

Some of the teachers’ overtalking alerted the writers to the fact that time was running out for that day’s writing session and the talk associated with this aspect of ‘finishing up for the day’ was recorded. In Craig and Sarah’s room the students were constantly reminded of the time left on task and when they should be finished. In response to this, both Craig and Sarah payed attention to

where they were up to and how much they had left to do. This was particularly evident during the writing sessions where the students were involved in their summary drafts.

This was a very large writing task and so the teacher may have felt the need to continually hurry the students along in order to get the task completed within the week. In response to the teacher's reminders of the time, both Craig and Sarah made several announcements about their own progress, "I've finished Michael Howe", "Yeah, all done Ned", and "Yeah, I've done all that".

Furthermore, after another interruption, Sarah had a very lengthy discussion with her neighbour over when the writing needed to be finished.

Teacher: Fifteen minutes then we're stopping
Jenny: (*calling out*) Mrs Brady does it have to be finished today?
(*no reply, repeats question*)
Sarah: It doesn't
Jenny: Mrs Brady....(*repeats question*)
Sarah: No
Jenny: Oh my God it has to be finished by today!
Sarah: No, Friday
Jenny: Yeah, today
Sarah: Friday
Jenny: Today
Sarah: (*whispering*) Friday
Jenny: Oh my God, he's finished his already
Sarah: (*writing*)in....jail...
Jenny: What year did Frank die?
Sarah: I don't know, it might be in there (*the text book*), have a look!

(*Then a few moments later, after a short discussion about Frank Gardiner...*)

Sarah: I'll do Ned Kelly now
Jenny: What was that?
Sarah: I'm up to Ned Kelly now.
Jenny: I know, that's why I'm freaking out about it.
Sarah: Oh, right
Jenny: Yeah, but will we be finished?

Sarah: We don't have to finish Jenny
 Jenny: Yes we do, I asked Mrs Brady.
 Sarah: On Friday
 Jenny: No it isn't cos it's not part of our contract...hey Ron, when does this have to be finished?
 Sarah: It has to be finished today, but the draft copy, I mean the good copy doesn't need to be done.
 Jenny: *(calling out)* Mrs Brady, does this have to be finished today?*(to another student)* I'm up to my last one.
 Sarah: I'm still on my first page and I'm only up to my fourth one
 Jenny: You've got two to go Sarah, you better hurry up, *(calling out again)* ..Mrs Brady...? See Sarah, it has to be finished today! *(to other students)* I'm nearly finished so leave me alone.

This conversation continued longer than is represented in the above transcript, indicating the students' real concerns for finishing the task. In fact the fifteen minutes of working during which the girls debated whether the writing had to be finished that day or not could have been much better spent on the actual writing, ensuring that their writing was actually finished. The teacher's objective of getting the writing finished and then continually reminding students of the time and hurrying them along actually provided the most interruption to Sarah's writing process. The observations that accompanied this transcript indicated that Sarah attempted to continue writing the fourth paragraph of her draft as she engaged in this debate. The final written product indicates that this paragraph is thin on content and does not represent the original text well. It is interesting that at the point of writing this paragraph Sarah was most distracted from her task.

Similarly, after this same comment by the teacher, Craig and his partner, Ron engaged in an almost identical, but shorter, exchange.

Teach: *(interrupting)* Fifteen more minutes and then we're stopping.
 Craig: Yeah! Then we can do it at home.
 Ron: No we don't
 Craig: Yes we do.
 Ron: Doesn't she expect us to finish this in half an hour.
 Craig: No, I though she said we had to finish it at home.
 Paul: How much have you done?
 Ron: Eight lines, Hey, Craig has done fourteen lines. I'm up to Frank Gardiner
 Craig: I'm up to Alpin MacPherson, the wild Scotsman.

Both Craig and Sarah and their fellow classmates were obsessed with finishing their writing. They were fully aware of the pressure placed on them to finish that particular day and were very concerned about achieving just that. The transcripts of talk reflected their concerns.

Simeon and Ruth's teacher made little attempt to hurry the students along and actually had to stop them writing the newspaper article after realising it was recess time already and no one had noticed. This implied that the students were unaware of the time spent on task or of the time left and as a result made no comments related to such an issue. Toward the end of the second session of the writing of the summary, the teacher made one comment in relation to the remaining working time, "Okay, we have about fifteen minutes, let's see how we can go". In response to this Simeon checked his progress, "I've finished my first page right now" he then proceeded to continue talking to himself while writing "...there...was". Ruth made no response at all, she just continued writing quietly.

Laura's class was told at the "ten minutes to go" mark, how long they had left to write their biographies. The teacher's comment at that point did not impact on

Laura's talk or activity. She continued writing, whispering quietly to herself. Similarly while involved in writing her newspaper article, the teacher informed everyone that they had "five minutes of 'straight' writing to go and no more interruptions". Once again, Laura continued writing, without a sound until after a few more minutes she announced, "I've finished!".

As the students neared the end of writing their drafts they all began talking about finishing. However at this time the talk was self initiated and rather like an announcement or proclamation. Moments before Ruth completed her newspaper article she said "I really want to finish now" and as Simeon finished his article he announced "I've finished mine". At the end of writing his entire summary Simeon once again announced "I've finished", which impressed his friend Ryan. Simeon made similar comments as he neared completion of each of the sections that made up the summary, including; "I've finished the ship", "I'm up to the passengers", "I'm up to warnings and action taken", "I've just about finished that one" and then finally, "I've finished". Ruth also kept track of her progress as she neared the completion of each section, saying "I'm onto my draft", "I'm now up to the crew" and "I'm up to evacuation. Laura, Craig and Ruth also rejoiced at the end of each of their writing tasks, announcing with great enthusiasm, "There!", "Finished!", "I've nearly finished" and also "I've finished! Yes!". There was a real sense of achievement evident in these expressions and because each student made a point of proclaiming it aloud, it is perhaps the most heartfelt expression that developed around their writing.

The Written Products

The written texts were the focus of most of the students' talk and activity during the periods of observation and they prove very valuable in further analysing the nature and function of the talk in which the students engaged during the production of each one. Analysis of each text is difficult because each text was written by a case study student, at different times of the day within a specific classroom context, language context and support framework. Furthermore each of the writing tasks were different, requiring the students to write in a particular genre using specific content and within certain limitations, including the amount of time allowed for the task. For these reasons it appeared unwise to spend time analysing the similarities and differences between the final written texts.

Therefore, the final section of this cross-case analysis summarises the influence of the children's talk on the written text. The case studies presented the stories of the children as they were involved in writing activities and it was apparent that the talk described in those chapters affected the texts that the children produced. An analysis of the influence of the talk on the text has identified some commonalities.

The first commonality that emerged was that the text was influenced by talk that was in conversation with another child. In some instances, there were errors in the cohesion of their texts, in the grammar usage and in spelling. In these examples, the talk between the writer and the other students acted to distract

the children from the writing task causing momentary lapses in concentration that disrupted the cohesiveness and flow of the text.

For example, when Craig was interrupted from his writing and engaged in talk with his neighbour, he produced text that contained errors associated with cohesion and reference. It seemed that for Craig an uninterrupted work environment encouraged the production of more coherent and effective writing. Likewise, talk with other children contributed to Sarah's difficulty with her summary writing task; the first paragraph, although an accurate representation of the facts, was clumsy, simply constructed and contained errors of usage and punctuation.

However there were some exceptions to this finding. In these examples, the talk appeared to have little effect on the written text at all. The impact on Laura's writing of the conversations with others was minimal. The sameness of her writing indicated that the errors associated with cohesion and usage were not a result of being interrupted while writing, but were consistent with her writing development. Similarly in the writing of both his newspaper article and his summary, Simeon was constantly interrupted by his neighbour's requests for assistance, advice and encouragement. Despite these distractions, Simeon was able to produce a text that contained all the organisational and linguistic markers of a newspaper report while at the same time continually interacting with his mate, Ryan. He was able to maintain the progression and cohesion of ideas in his writing.

For some children talk had a positive influence on the ideas and structure of the text. As a direct result of peer interactions, Ruth developed other ideas for extending her report and was motivated to continue with her writing

The second commonality that emerged was that for some children the text was influenced by the absence of talk. The analysis of quiet writing episodes, with reference to the texts, demonstrates that as some children progress in their writing the development of an inner voice enables them to clarify thoughts internally rather than through articulation and interaction. Writing in silence appeared to enable the children to focus completely on the task making it possible to write a lot in a short space of time.

For example, the parts of Simeon's summary that were written in silence contained highly complex sentences linking his opinion with the facts. These parts of his text were well written with evidence of several self-corrections. Similarly, the text that resulted from Ruth's quiet writing activity, although containing a few errors of punctuation, tense, spelling and reference was substantial in size compared to other writing episodes.

On other occasions, 'no talk' meant getting the job done as quickly as possible. Simeon's last few paragraphs were written in less than twelve minutes and contained several errors related to spelling, usage and punctuation. It seems that, at this point, the motivation to finish influenced the writing more than the talk. The writing of Craig's final paragraph of his summary took place amidst

notable silence and this part of the text was a less effective summary than the rest of the text. Perhaps the desire to finish quickly was his main motivation.

Similarly, Dean's composing process consisted of very little talk. However, it is difficult to make any suggestions as to how this absence of talk influenced his final texts because there was no data to analyse. Dean needed to and chose to write in silence. More importantly, he was able to write in silence. He used his ability to think internally to help him make simple choices about content and vocabulary. His texts demonstrated a need to develop an awareness of audience, indicating that perhaps he did not understand the need to listen to his thoughts in order to write. Despite his apparent ability to write in silence, there was little evidence in his writing to suggest that he had already developed an effective inner voice or strong sense of the needs of a reader.

The third commonality that emerged was that quiet vocalisation, during the act of writing, seemed to have a positive effect on the resulting text. When Sarah was heard, talking quietly to herself, there were no errors of punctuation, indicating more attention to the conventions of writing than previously. This vocalising appeared to provide a rehearsal that helped her writing accuracy. Whereas at other times, despite her attention to the task her writing remained clumsy with several syntactic errors, showing her struggle to control the summary genre.

Ruth's constant re-reading and vocalising as she wrote demonstrated her efforts in maintaining correct word sequence in the writing, indicating her understanding of the connections between the syntax and the semantics of what she writes. Similarly, Laura engaged in a lot of re-reading and vocalising during the writing of both texts, helping her to keep the 'stories' going. Laura used rehearsal talk to sort through her ideas as a way of hearing them both before writing them and while writing them. Sometimes she wrote exactly what she had rehearsed. Here her talk demonstrated how she was moving towards internalising her thoughts.

When Craig sub-vocalised, sounding out a sequence of words as he was writing his summary, it was after a long period of conscious writing activity. The sub-vocalisation allowed him to paraphrase the original text and as a result the text contained more of his own writing and less of the original text. It appears that the sub-vocalisation following a quiet period of writing allowed him to utilise his inner voice and develop more understanding of what he was writing in the production of this summary.

Final Comment

The items discussed in this Cross Case Analysis have pertained to the similarities and differences that have emerged from the talk and activity surrounding the production of two written texts by each of the six students. These similarities and differences have been presented in such a way as to

reflect the format of the case studies and to allow for a similar progression of ideas.

Such a thorough analysis of all the talk has enabled the identification of patterns within the talk and ultimately to the grouping and labelling of those patterns. Three groupings and labels have emerged from the repeated readings and analysis of the data. These categories have developed based on the general focus of the talk. The first category groups the talk that was central to the writing task, and is labelled 'Doing Writing'. The second category groups the talk that was not directly about the writing process but was still linked to writing. This category is labelled 'About Writing'. The final category groups the talk that was removed from the writing task completely. It is labelled 'Outside of Writing'.

The following chapter presents the three categories of talk that have been developed as a result of the data analyses. The inclusion of examples from the transcripts of children's talk provides evidence to demonstrate the features of each category.

Chapter Nine

Data Analysis: Categories of Talk

Introduction

The general Cross-Case Analysis, that precedes this section, details the similarities and differences that emerged between the case studies as a deeper analysis of the data progressed. The similarities and differences were described under the same headings as in each case study. The section that described the students 'doing' their writing was where the patterns of similarities and difference in their talk and writing activity began to emerge. This section described the collective 'story' of the students talking to themselves and others as they engaged in the writing process. At different points in this 'story' the talk is described using a variety of terms and labels. This terminology, developed by this researcher during the course of the analysis, is used to further describe and identify the student's talk.

This chapter will describe the collective talk under three main categories. These categories were created as an outcome of analysing the talk and its function. This first category of talk has been labelled 'Doing Writing' and is associated with the children's own writing process. It is talk that was directly linked to the process in which they were involved. Further to this type of talk was the talk that, while still centred on the writing and the writing activity, involved others. This second category of talk is labelled 'About Writing'. The third and final category that

emerged from the data was the talk that was 'Outside Writing'. This talk was unrelated to the writing or the activity in which the students were involved. These three categories will now be described using examples from the student's transcripts so that the patterns of talk common to most students may be fully appreciated.

Doing Writing

Talk that focussed mainly on the task of writing, at the individual student's level, is the first of the three major categories of talk that emerged. It is the talk that is closest to the centre that is, closest to the piece of writing itself and the personal writing process of the writer. Generally, all of the talk in this category is self-initiated, self-directed and self-centred. It is sometimes rhetorical in nature, loud enough for somebody to hear but directed at nobody in particular. At other times it is very intimate and meant only for the writers themselves. It is linked explicitly to what the writer is doing at the time of the utterance.

Four types of talk have been classified in the data and identified as characteristic of this category. They are;

- Self-Initiated Reading and Re-reading,
- Vocalising while Writing,
- 'Progress' Self-commentary and
- 'Writing' Self-commentary.

Most students engaged in the four types of talk throughout the entire process of drafting their written texts. Each type of talk will be described, using the students' own examples, to demonstrate the pattern of talk and also to demonstrate its place in this category of talk. The first two types of talk in this category involve the text directly.

Self-Initiated Reading and Re-Reading

As the name suggests, the talk in this sub-category is easily identified as the reading and re-reading of the student's own writing. The reading is initiated by self and is for self. Many times throughout each writing session, most students were heard reading their own text quietly to themselves, often several times over, before continuing writing. For some students this was a major part of their writing process and provided a way of hearing how their writing sounded. Sometimes they read their entire text and at other times they read only a phrase or sentence. Some examples of this are included below.

Craig: *(reading)* Last seen standing outside the hardware store...Um physical description...*(as writing)*
phys...i..cal..des..crip...tion...description. *(to others)* Shhh!
Ron: I'm not talking
Craig; *(reading)* Physical description. My name is..I'm doing 'Cat's Eye'

In this example Craig read to find his place and return to task before telling the others around him to 'Shhh'. As he returns to the task a second time he reads again the last statement he had written, as a way of finding his place and gathering his thoughts.

Sarah: *(reading)* Okay, Wanted...Name...Ned Kelly for murdering Humpty Dumpty. Last seen sneaking around Humpty Dumpty's house....Last seen sneaking around....*(writing)*... Hump....ty.... Dum.....pty's.....hou.....se... What's next?... Oh, physical description.

Sarah re-read this part of her text in the initial stages of writing, when the teacher's 'overalking' reminded her to put the date at the top of her work. After doing so, she found her place by reading, and began to write while vocalising the words as she did.

Simeon: *(rereading)*Anthony Wilson, the leader of the Kids Fight Back Campaign campaign, is leading 10 000 kids from around Jolstra street...
Ryan: Mine are at Hungry Jacks, How do you spell 'aliens'
Simeon: a-l-i-e-n-s, aliens. *(talking and writing)* kids...as ...young.....as *(reading)* Anthony Wilson, the leader of the Kids Fight Back Campaign, is leading 10 000 kids from around the Jolstra Street area to stand up for themselves. Kids as young as 5 *(now writing and talking again)*..are...joining...in.

In this example Simeon re-read his work after a period of silent writing activity. He also re-read the text after a spelling query from his neighbour. And once he had regained his 'train of thought' began writing again, this was indicated by his quiet vocalising.

James: What did you do Ruth?
Ruth: I did 'Quick Sand Kills Boy" *(laughter)* , *(now reading)*...On July 19th, 1998, Ryan Thornhill, thirteen years old, was walking alone to Neil Hawkins Park. It was around lunch time when he was playing in the sand pit with his dog, that he noticed his feet were stuck in the sand. They say he screamed but you never know. His dog got free but Ryan didn't make it. It wasn't until July 19th, 1998 that another boy called Kevin, who was also walking alone to Neil Hawkins Park with his dog, and the same thing

happened.
 James: I told you to write that bit eh?
 Ruth: Yep
 James: What a great idea!
 Ruth: Um, (*reading*)..the same thing happened,
 (*writing*)...at...a..bout..9..a..m..on..

After re-reading to her neighbour in response for a request to do so, Ruth returned to her task by reading the last sentence quietly to herself. She then went on with her writing, vocalising the words as she worked.

Vocalising while Writing

This sub-category isolates that talk in which words and phrases were spoken as the students were actually in the process of writing them. This talk was characterised by the slow, writing-like-pace at which the words were spoken and also the hushed tone of the writer's voice as they were saying the words, indicating a talk directed at 'self' rather than to anyone else. Once again every subject engaged in this type of 'Doing Writing' talk throughout the course of the observations. This 'vocalising while writing' was also characterised by being self-initiated and not in response to a request to do such. The examples are self-explanatory and illustrate the students' need to speak as they write, possibly as a way of hearing their ideas as they put them on paper, or perhaps as a spelling strategy where they sound out the words as they write them.

- Sarah: I'll put slim body shape...slim...bod...y...shape.
- Craig: There...is...a...re...ward...of...of...a...thou...sand...one thousand.....please,,,,contact...Craig...Murray...on...

- Craig: He...was...the...hard...est...work...er...in...the...col...on..y he .. was famous for his appetite....he...was.... famous for...his ...appe...tite.....found....stealing ...from....from...an...officer's gar...den.

- Laura: She...saw...a...pack...et...of...pop...corn... Are you still doing Super Pop too?
- Jenny: Yeah
- Laura: I don't care.....on...the...front... and she...bought ..it...

The other two types of talk that are characteristic of this first category of 'Doing Writing' are both 'self-commentaries'. 'Self-commentary' is defined as talking to self. It is self-initiated. It is not an announcement and therefore does not expect any response. The 'self-commentary' in which the six students engaged seemed to provide a way of maintaining their momentum within the actual writing process by telling themselves either, what they were doing as they were doing it, or by telling themselves what they needed to do, 'now'. The two sub-categories of 'self commentary' within the 'Doing Writing' category are differentiated by the purpose associated with each one.

'Progress' Self-Commentary

Progress self-commentary categorises the talk that was directed to self and was specifically about each student's own individual progress toward the completion of their writing task. The talk described where the writer was in relation to the end, as in the following examples.

- "Right, I've finished the ship"
- "Now I'm up to the crew"
- "Just finished Michael Howe. I'll do Ned Kelly now"

- “There you go, finished!”
- “I’ve got lots more to do”
- “I have to read mine now”
- “I’ve finished, yeah! All done Ned!”
- “Now, where was I?”
- “What was I up to, Oh yeah, um, there”
- “Um, where am I, Oh I’m up to other info now”
- “I’m only just starting” and
- “I wonder if I’m ever gonna get this finished?”

On some occasions the other students responded to these statements of self-commentary and a brief conversation resulted. Generally, though, the comments did not attract any response and were a way of seeing their place within the ‘whole’.

‘Writing’ Self-Commentary

The other type of talk, defined as ‘self-commentary’, focussed on the actual act of writing words on paper. It was directed to self and appeared to be a way of enabling each of the writers to clarify what it was they wanted to or needed to write. Once again most of the statements in this type of talk were rhetorical in nature and were not directed to anyone in particular but rather were for the benefit of the writer with the purpose to ‘keep on with it’. The following examples from each of the students’ transcripts demonstrate this type of talk.

- Sarah made the following comments while writing her Wanted Poster:
 "I'll put slim body shape....Slim...body...shape"
 "I'm gonna do ten pounds"
- Laura kept track of her writing by stating:
 "I'm gonna write on the back of my last page"
 "I'm gonna write it here now, on this page" and
 "I've got to write all the details about this" and then encouraged herself by saying:
 "Mine looks neat"
- Simeon talked about his ideas to himself and what he had just written:
 "I'm doing 'Kids fight back'...it's stupid" and
 "Hah, I just said changed instead of charged, I'll just fix that. There!" and also asked himself a question,
 "Did I do this in pencil?"
- Craig reminded himself to write a title for his work in:
 "I better put 'Bushrangers Bold', eh?"
- Even Dean made a comment to himself about what he was doing:
 "I'm doing my story now, after the plan"

Some other examples of 'Writing self-commentary' also included comments related to editing their own writing.

- Sarah told herself that she "better fix that up now"

- Laura changed her mind mid sentence as she was writing, “teeny weeny...no tiny little” and then later, “oops, I did a capital ‘C’, I need a little ‘c’ .”

The examples included here to elaborate the category have demonstrated what ‘Doing Writing’ talk looks like and sounds like. It was talk that more often than not, did not require an audience and was in a low voice as the child worked. It appeared as if this talk accompanied thought and was a partial voicing of these thoughts (Novick & Waters, 1977).

About Writing

The second of the three major categories of talk that emerged from the data is directly related to the text and the writing activity but is less intimate and less personally associated with the writer and his or her own processes. The talk here is not intimately connected to the personal aspect of writing in the way the talk described in the ‘Doing Writing’ category. Rather, it is *about* the writing in terms of the product itself, the progress of the writing and the management of the writing. It is talk that has a shared context and usually takes place within a conversation, which means that a lot of the talk, but not necessarily all of it, was actually in response to the questions and comments of other students and therefore was not self-initiated. For these reasons the talk in this category does not have the intimacy that was characteristic of the talk in the previous category. Three types of talk emerged from the data as being characteristic of this category.

- Product Talk
- Progress Talk
- Management Talk

All students engaged in the three types of talk, with the exception of Dean

Product Talk

This type of talk was grouped and labelled as such for several reasons but mainly because it was centred on the product and therefore 'about' the writing. Firstly the talk was related to the product because it was about the content of the writing or the students' ideas for writing. Secondly this type of talk was related to the product because it was about spelling. Thirdly it was related to the product because it was about how acceptable the text was to others. All three aspects of the product, that is the content or ideas, the spelling or grammar and the acceptability of the writing form only part of the total picture of the talk that has been categorised 'About Writing'.

Some examples of the talk that was related to the content of the text or the writer's ideas for the text are included here to demonstrate the 'product' emphasis.

Talk related to the content of the writing or the students' own ideas, was the major type of talk characteristic of this sub-category. Most of the talk in which

most six subjects engaged, could be classified as 'content-based product talk'. The talk involved clarifying their ideas for writing, such as, commenting on characters, discussing the sequence of events, discussing dialogue from the texts and sorting out facts from fiction within their writing.

This talk could even be classified further into talk that was *initiated* by the six writers themselves and talk that was in *response* to the questions or comments of others. As was discussed earlier in the 'Settling to the task' section, the students needed to and enjoyed sharing their ideas about what it was they wanted to or were writing as they began writing. The examples included in that section are also very relevant here because the initial stages of getting started on a piece of writing cannot be separated from the process of writing a whole text.

Some of the following specific examples of talk will assist in developing a picture of this type of talk and its inclusion in this sub-category of this major category, 'About Writing'.

- Simeon: "What are you doing?"
"I'm gonna take a photo, I might take a photo here
coz kids fight back"
"Anthony, you're just like Pauline Hanson in my
story."
"What are you missing lines for?, We're not
supposed to... You're not meant to do it big"
"You have to say 'Kids struck *by* lightning' You'll

to put 'by'."

"No, you just say more about the title"

- Sarah: "I'm putting, he's seven foot"
"My reward is gonna be two dollars...actually I might put a couple of zeros on the end and make it up to twenty dollars"
"Do you know what colour Ned Kelly's eyes are?"
- Craig: "Maybe I could do him standing outside the Hard-ware store..."
"Mine's got a deep scar on the side of his face"
"My guy's got, dark skin"
- Laura: "I'll do a little athletic man"
"Mine is a little person: about that size...and he's got little stick ears"
"You can't make up something that has already been made. But 'Super Ted' has cos he's on Play School"
"How are you starting yours off?"
"What was your super hero again?"
- Ruth: "What about you? Is that what you're doing?"
"Did you do it in capitals?"
"Everybody'll do school"
"Mine's about a boy, he's my cousin"

Talk related to spelling and grammar is also included in this sub-category because it is 'about' the writing in terms of the product. There was a balance between asking for help with spelling and giving it. The important thing that emerges from this type of talk is the way that the students used each other to source and solve problems. In one case, Simeon actually corrects his neighbour's spelling without even being invited to do so. Most of this talk, however, was in response to other's requests for help.

- "How do you spell 'beard'?"
- "I think you do a 'p' in front, no, its like the number two backwards with some lines in it" (£)
- "Does this have an 'o' or an 'e'?"
- "That looks like a 'd'."
- "Aliens, a-l-i-e-n-s"
- "Are you sure you know how to spell 'Daniel', is that Daniel?"

The other talk that has been grouped and labelled 'Product Talk' along with the talk associated with content and spelling, is that associated with seeking or giving reassurance and encouragement. This type of talk was all about finding out if what had been written (the product) was okay. Does it sound right? Once again, at times this encouragement was freely given, at other times it was in response to a question and again at other times it was initiated by the writer, seeking approval or reassurance for himself or herself that what they were doing or writing was 'right'.

- “You’ve got pretty tall people”
- “Here’s my name. It looks pretty odd doesn’t it?”
- “Justine, does this make sense?”
- “Sounds good...That’s good Ryan”
- “That one’s easy”
- “Oh right, great, good”
- “Most of your sentences start with ‘people’, look!”

Progress Talk

This sub-category within the ‘About Writing’ category is characterised by talk that is related to the writers’ progress toward finishing the task set before them. Glimpses of this talk were found in the ‘Doing Writing’ category when the students talked to themselves about their own progress towards finishing the job. This ‘progress talk’ is different again in that it is talk in conversation with or directly to others rather than an intimate reminder or motivation to self. It does have a similar focus to the ‘progress Self-commentary’ already discussed, because it is all about progress. That Is: How much has been done? Where are you up to? How much still needs to be done? How long is it? When will it be finished?

Once again there are self-initiated comments within this sub-category as well as those made in response to or conversation with others. These comments are all grouped together with the common link of all being ‘about’ the progress of the writing itself.

Some of the talk is about 'progress along the way':

- "What are you up to?"
- "Have you even started?"
- "I'm up to Ned, I'm up to my fourth"
- "Here's my draft. I'm up to evacuation"
- "Are you doing your draft or notes?"
- "I'm still on my first page and I'm only up to my fourth one"
- "I've got lots more to do"
- "I'm now up to the crew"
- "I'm already up to the details"
- "I'm only onto my third"
- "Now what am I up to?"

Other talk in this sub-category of 'Progress Talk' is purely about 'counting' and putting a number on how much has been achieved in the writing of the text. Most students did this at some time during the drafting of the two texts in which they were observed working.

- "Finished my first page"
- "Look how much I wrote. So that means I could have two and a half pages if that next one is as big"
- "99, 100, 101, 102.....104"
- "I've got 1, 2, 3, 4, lines"

- "I've done about sixteen. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14."
- "I wonder how many I did for Frank Gardiner? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19."
- "I've already done two pages"
- "I've written ten lines"

The other type of talk that I have grouped with 'progress along the way' talk and the counting talk is all about 'finishing'. It is as if each time a certain amount of writing was achieved, it gave the writers licence to celebrate by announcing to everyone that they had 'finished' or were intending to finish very soon.

- "I've finished Michael Howe"
- "I'm gonna stop here"
- "Yeah, I've finished Ned Kelly"
- "Finished my first page"
- "I've nearly finished Frank Gardiner"
- "Are you finished?"
- "I wonder if I'll get it finished today?"

Management Talk

This talk 'about writing' is associated with the management of the routines of writing that were in place in the classrooms and were made known to the students either explicitly or implicitly. Once again this type of talk was evident when the students settled to their tasks but is part of the whole and is included

here because most the students engaged in this talk at some time throughout the writing of their texts. Once again this type of talk is further removed from the 'centre' of thinking and doing the writing and is mainly about managing the writing task.

There was talk about getting organised to write:

- "Can I use your pencil?"
- "Where's your ruler? Can I borrow it?"
- "Where's my rubber?"
- "I need to find my pencil"

There was talk about the structure of the text, how it should be set out or look:

- "[I'm setting mine out] like that, then I'm gonna write it"
- "She [the teacher] said just put a line where a new paragraph should go"
- "Yeah, there they [the headings] are"
- "Are you doing it like that?"

The talk also related to general classroom practice:

- "Do I have to rule up?"
- "Are we allowed to talk about this?"
- "Have you been writing in running writing?"

- "Do you need to [rule up], oh yeah"
- "Can we do this at home?"
- "What should you do when you finish the first one?"

Also associated with this grouping was talk related to the behaviour management of others. This particular type of talk from the six students is included as part of 'process talk' because it was all about getting on with the process of writing, doing the right thing and staying on task. Most students at sometime or another told those around them how to behave, what to do and what not to do:

- "Shhh! Here she comes, come on"
- "Come on Ryan"
- "Shh, what are you doing?"
- "Shhh, keep on working on your wanted poster"
- "We better start!"
- "Have a look yourself if you want to know something"
- "Don't worry about it Lauren"
- "Everybody be quiet"
- "What are you missing lines for?"
- "Miss Brady said not to!"
- "You're not meant to do it big"
- "Please don't copy mine"
- "Don't do the same as me"
- "Hey Move over, You're bumping me... Move over again!!"

Outside Writing

The patterns of talk that have emerged from the data and been discussed so far are directly linked to the writing. Having been labelled 'Doing Writing' and 'About Writing' makes this fact explicit. There is a whole aspect of the students' talk that has not been addressed or categorised yet. That is, the talk that is completely removed from the text.

Talk that did not refer to the writing process or the written text at all was also prevalent in all observations. The talk that is characteristic of this category included talk arising from the observations, class related chit-chat, social talk and other personal comments. The talk in this category is 'fringe' talk. It is removed from the centre the task, having its only connection to the task by being uttered during the time when the students were participating in a writing lesson. It does not refer to the writing process written text, the task or the classroom discourse. It is talk that has been labelled 'Outside Writing'.

On the surface it all appears social and even 'off task', however, it is more than this. It is talk that is highly relevant to the speakers and as such needed to be shared. It is only a small proportion of the total amount of talk that emerged from the writing sessions and therefore is not a threat to the task itself, having little impact on the overall process and written product.

A lot of the talk isolated and grouped here, emerged as a result of classroom interruptions, other students' comments and the teacher's comments heard in the background of the tape recording. Very few comments were initiated by the six subjects without being in response to something external, unlike most of the task-oriented talk discussed in the other two categories.

Tape Talk

As the label suggests, this talk evolved around the tape recorder located on each of the subjects desks during the periods of observation.

- Sarah's new neighbour noticed the tape recorder:

Pippa: What's the tape for?
Sarah: Um, she wants to know what year five girls talk about
 when we write.

Then she noticed something else and commented to each other:

Pippa: You know, when anyone's talking the light goes on.
Sarah: And when it goes quiet, it wet, goes dark. Everyone be
 quiet!
Pippa: This doesn't record background does it?
Sarah: Dunno!

- Simeon and his neighbour, Ryan, also noticed the flashing light on the recorder and talked about it briefly.

Simeon: *(reading)* Recorder Battery!...Oh my gosh!
Ryan: Is that on? Did that tape Mr Samoitis?
Simeon: Yeah it must have.

- Later, during the writing of his summary, Simeon's neighbour Ryan enquired about the whole 'tape' thing.

Ryan: Did you get a note for doing that?
Simeon: Yeah. Come on now.
Ryan: Do you like having the tape there Simeon?
Simeon: I couldn't care!
Ryan: (*sighs*)

- Laura and her partner discuss what they have to do for the tape.

Laura: I have to talk about this, for Mrs Nelson, That's why the tape is there.
Jenny: Yes we do. Let's do it quietly.
Laura: No. it has to be loud enough to make the light go on and off. I'm not allowed to whisper.

- Craig's friend, Ron, became curious about the device and went to reach for it.

Craig: Hey, don't touch it. It's on. Shh!
Ron: I'm not turning it off

- As Craig began his summary, a new neighbour noticed the tape recorder.

Matthew: Is that a tape?
Craig: Yeah. Didn't you know. Me and Sarah have to do it.

Classroom Discourse

This talk relates to classroom activity and/or routine that is outside the writing task.

Sarah and her neighbour noticed some action at the front of the classroom. The teacher was preparing for the assembly item, soon to be performed. They began to discuss their roles during this temporary distraction.

Sarah: Are you in the play?
 Jenny: yeah, I go like this [sic] I got the hardest words to sing.
 Sarah: mm!
 Jenny: What was that?
 Sarah: I just have to go 'AhhAhh'. You have to go 'Yeah'
 Jenny: Yeah and then we go 'woo'
 Sarah: Sounds really cool too!

Craig, his neighbour Ron and another student, Gideon, noticed the teacher talking about PEAC tests to a visiting teacher at the front of the classroom and talked about it for a moment.

Ron: Gideon, that's what I thought! Are you doing PEAC next year?
 Craig: Oh I hate PEAC tests.
 Gideon: They start next term.
 Craig: Oh man!

Ruth and her neighbour were also interrupted from their writing by the presence of another teacher in the classroom. This time reminding the teacher about the school 'Lapathon' the following day.

Justine: Ruth, We've got Lapathon tomorrow.
 Ruth: I know.
 Justine: How much money are you getting?
 Ruth: Are we meant to have handed to money to Miss Brady?
 Justine: Tomorrow, cos the lapathon is tomorrw.
 Ruth: Yeah but don't you have to hand the money in today?
 Justine: Oh right, I dunno. If you get someone to give you two dollars per lap, it'llbe sixty bucks.
 Ruth: I've only gat seventeen dollars.
 Justine: I've got eight dollars.
 Ruth: *(re-reading)* It was around lunch time....*(continues writing silently)*

Later, when Ruth was involved in writing her summary, the class next door received a stern telling off from their teacher, interrupting the girls and resulting

in the following conversation.

Justine: I reckon she's getting mad.
Ruth: Yeah I reckon.
Justine: I wish they be quiet in there!
(*A loud bang heard in background*)
Ruth; What was that?
Justine; That was scary
Ruth: Yeah!
Justine; It's just a balloon!
Ruth: (*continues writing*)...the...ship...

Simeon and Ryan were distracted from their writing during a visit from a maintenance man.

Ryan : Man! That guy stinks! He put a bit too much perfume on!
Simeon: Which fan is broken?..Oh it's the ceiling!
Ryan: There's a few bits broken, Simeon.
Teacher: (*overheard in background*) I don't think this is a master key.
Ryan: What's a master key?
Simeon: It opens all the doors. Master keys are wicked.
Ryan: There's a master key for the block.
Simeon: There's a master key for the whole school.
Ryan: Yes there is. And I've got a master pen!!!!
Simeon: What does your master pen do?
Ryan: Um, (*teacher walks past*) look how much I've done.
Teacher: Yes you have done quite a lot of talking haven't you?

Social Chit-Chat

Social happenings and other people were the topic of some of the other talk that was 'outside' the writing.

For example, Simeon and Ryan began to organise their lunchtime soccer match at one point in the writing session.

Ryan: Do you want to make up the teams for soccer? Me..you..
Simeon: I don't want to play today.
Ryan: You do. Play normal soccer on the oval.
Simeon: *(to another student)* Trav, we're playing normal soccer.
Travis; Yeah I'll play.
Simeon: Do you think Daniels will come and play?
Travis: Sure!
Ryan: Why?
Travis: yes he will, cos he joins in with big Ryan.
Simeon: Shh, here she comes, come on.

Personal Comments

On the odd occasion the students discussed quite personal things. This talk has also been grouped within 'Outside Writing'. Laura made a personal comment to her neighbour, "It's hot today. I'm all sweaty. Are you sweaty?" her neighbour replied with a "yep!" and they both continued writing. Similarly, Simeon noticed something different about his mate.

Simeon: Have you had a hair cut?
Ryan: Yeah.
Simeon: When?
Ryan: Yesterday.
Simeon: It's short.
Ryan: Yeah short eh!

Conclusion

These categories identify the type of talk six middle primary school children engaged in as they composed texts. The categories demonstrate that the children used talk for a variety of purposes with the ultimate goal of achieving a written product that reflected the original task as described by their teacher. The talk is both individually and socio-culturally constructed reflecting the personalities and developmental levels of the writers as well as the contextualised pedagogical emphasis.

Such detailed analysis of the talk enables several generalisations to be made about the nature and function of talk in relation to the children's composing processes and written products. These generalisations will be articulated in the final chapter of this report and supported by examples from this analysis and also from the previous research in this area of language learning.

Chapter Ten

Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate what kind of talk six middle primary school children engaged in during the act of writing, within the context of their own classroom. Research and literature in this area (Graves, 1975; Groff, 1979; Vygotsky, 1981; Groenwold & Hayden, 1989) has suggested that as children gain more ability in controlling their writing, the need for talk, as in emergent writing, diminishes and is not necessarily as prevalent. In later writing development meaning is communicated through the written word and so the spoken word is no longer a necessary accompaniment to the writing. The interest for exploring this area has come from personal experience of children who are developing in their writing, and from observations that they do talk during the composing process.

The presence of such talk is embedded in the cultural and pedagogical context in which the research has taken place. In reading the following conclusions it must be understood that they cannot relate to general writing development except in a similar cultural and pedagogical context. The current pedagogical context described in this thesis must be understood as one that permits, supports and encourages talk in the students' composing processes and within the writing process generally. It is a context that sees talk as valuable as long as it is not disruptive. Other cultural and pedagogical contexts will value talk

differently and consequently conclusions drawn in this chapter may not be transferable.

Accordingly, this study set out to discover for what reasons children talk as their writing develops. The transcripts alone provide an indication that children *do* talk as they write and the analysis of those data confirms that they use talk for a range of reasons. This final chapter outlines the conclusions drawn from the data analysis in relation to the research questions. Following this some hypotheses relating to the absence of talk will be made. The limitations of this study will then be addressed. And to conclude this chapter, some recommendations in terms of the impact of this research on classrooms and the avenues for further research will be presented.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data collected from six children during the writing of a total of twelve texts demonstrates that these children engaged in specific kinds of talk during the act of composing. Conclusions are drawn, in terms of the research questions as follows:

Main Research Question – What is the nature and function of talk in which six middle primary students participate as they compose written texts?

Subsequent Research Questions –

- What talk do students who are at the early or conventional writing stages (Ministry of Education, 1992) engage in while writing?
- What is the function of this talk before and during writing in relation to the composing processes of the children?
- What is the function of this talk in relation to the written text?
- What are the differences in the talk for the children in this sample compared to those at the emergent stage of writing development?
- How is the children's talk during writing indicative of their phase of writing development?

The data provides evidence that the children not only engaged in different types of talk, but also that the talk performed a number of functions in the children's composing process and that it influenced the final written product. It appears that the talk is similar in some ways and different in others to the talk of emergent writers (Clay, 1975; Dyson, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1989; Kamler & Woods, 1987; Geekie & Raban, 1993; Thomas & Rhinehart, 1991; Slayer, 1994).

The major conclusions emerging from the data analysis and relating directly to the research questions are as follows.

- 1. Children talk as they write.**
- 2. Children use talk for specific purposes as they write.**
- 3. Talk influences the production of the written text.**

These conclusions are elaborated below.

Conclusion One: Children Talk as They Write

Conclusion One relates to the nature of the talk in which the children engaged during writing. The talk has already been categorised, labelled and sorted based on the audible features of the talk, the context, the content, its relationship to the writing activity and also whether or not it was self-initiated or in response to other talk. These categories have been discussed at length in chapter nine of this report. Organising the talk in this way was helpful in identifying the types of talk that these middle primary school children engaged in while writing. Such organisation enables other conclusions to be drawn about what developing writers talk about while writing. These are as follows.

While they write;

- children talk to themselves about their writing activity and the composition of their written texts.
- children talk about the mechanics of what they are doing and what they are writing.
- children talk about their progress towards completing their writing tasks.
- children talk about their ideas with their peers
- children talk about how words are spelt, how sentences sound and how texts are organised.
- children talk about things other than their writing and
- much of children's talk is associated with the writing itself; that is, 'on task'.

These findings support some of the research discussed in previous chapters about children's talk while writing. Kasten (1997) reported similar findings after listening to three different groups of fifth grade students as they wrote. Her suggestion, that the process of writing is so engaging for these writers that there is little room for talk that is not related to the task, seems to be an appropriate inference to draw from the data presented in this study. Most of talk from these six children was connected in some way to the act of writing or the written text; it's nature was mostly 'task related' or 'on task'.

Conclusion Two: Children Use Talk for Specific Purposes as They Write.

The conclusion that children use talk for specific purposes as they write encompasses a number of other important ideas captured in the data analysis. These other ideas are supporting conclusions and are listed below.

1. Children in later writing development use talk in similar ways to emergent writers.
2. Children in later writing development use talk in unique ways during the composing process.
3. Children in later writing development use talk in ways that reflect specific patterns of discourse

The following section describes each of these supporting conclusions, with reference to the data analysis and other research.

Children in later writing development use talk in similar ways to emergent writers.

Firstly talk assists children in 'doing' writing. Similar, in a sense, to the talk of emergent writers, described by Dyson (1981), that assisted in the 'mechanics' of writing. Some of the talk in which the six children in this study engaged was practical in function. Aspects of both their quiet personal talk and their talk in conversation with others enabled them to focus on the conventional elements of spelling, organisation, punctuation and neatness of their handwriting. Most of the six students needed to vocalise to themselves some of the mechanical aspects of their composing as well as talk to others about these things. This talk was a tool for encoding these conventional aspects of their writing as well as a means of obtaining help with these things.

Secondly, talk helps writers to 'keep on with it'. Related to the first type of talk was a kind of rhetorical rehearsal. Labelled in the 'Categories of Talk' as the 'Writing Self-commentary', this talk also had a practical function. As with younger writers (Thomas & Rhinehart, 1991), the talk served to sustain their writing. It was a way of telling themselves what they were doing and what they were about to do. This seems to contradict the notion posited by Groff (1979) that talk is not helpful as a model for written language because unlike initial attempts at writing that closely resemble speech, later writing is understood as being different to speaking and so talk is no longer useful in rehearsing and modelling written forms. More research is needed in this area to clarify whether this type of talk exists in a wider population of more developed writers and

whether it is a rehearsal or merely a way of maintaining focus in the composing process.

Thirdly, talk helps writers keep check of their task and their progress in comparison to other writers around them. 'Progress' talk such as "Where are you up to?", "How much have you done?" and "I've finished" indicate some of the ways these six students used talk to monitor progress and motivate the completion of the task. Some of this talk also has the purpose of exalting the status of the writer by explicitly demonstrating their compliance and ability to fulfil classroom and teacher expectations ahead of others or better than others. Salyer categorised this talk as 'talk-around-the edge' Cazden associates it with the language of personal identity (1988, p. 3).

Fourthly, talk helps writers work within classroom expectations. Thomas & Rhinehart (1991) related young children's talk while writing to Halliday's functional model of oral language development and identified ways in which the young writers used language to regulate the behaviour and language of others. This regulatory function of talk develops early in young language learners and was utilised in the context of this study to motivate the writing community to conform to acceptable writing behaviours.

Finally, talk builds and maintains social relationships. Both emergent writers and children who are developing in their writing engage in social talk as they write. Social talk is an accompaniment to most tasks for children because the social world of the classroom is where underlying social needs are revealed and

met (Dyson, 1987, 1989; Phinney, 1998).

Children in later writing development use talk in unique ways during the composing process.

Firstly, talk assists writers in developing an awareness of audience. Young children read and re-read their writing, hearing how it sounds and unintentionally providing opportunity for comments from the children working around them. The suggestion, based on the data from this study, is that children in later writing development use talk more deliberately to find out what their audience thinks of their writing. Whereas young writers develop this awareness of audience almost as an accidental by-product of the natural talk that is part of being an emergent writer (Brock, 1987).

In the early and conventional stages of writing development (Ministry of Education, 1992), writers are aware of the concepts of story structure, sequence, overall planning and rule governed spelling conventions. They are also learning to use linking words, correct punctuation and monitor the text for meaning. Such development marks the end of emergent writing and the beginning of later writing development (Nicholls *et. al.*, 1989). The emergence of an awareness of the need to monitor the text for meaning is significant because the talk tends to take on a whole new role.

In emergent writing, a lot of the talk during writing is concerned with the mechanics of writing and is used as a means of communicating meaning when the writing is inadequate. As the young writers develop, it seems that, for a while, talk is no longer needed for these purposes and occasionally it is not even present at all (Estabrook, 1982). Dean, for example, has developed a good understanding of the conventions of writing and can communicate a message in print without much effort at all. He writes mostly in silence and his writing lacks detail and an awareness of audience shown in his writing by assuming the reader has a shared understanding of the context

Dean is at the point where reading and talking about his writing with someone else, informally, would provide him with a critical audience, enabling him to identify those shortcomings of his writing, assisting him to learn to monitor or read his writing like a reader. The other children in this study do just that. They read and re-read their texts to each other, asking "How does this sound?" in order to engage an audience for their texts, realising that others need to understand the message and the meaning within the text, in order for the writing to be effective and successful.

Secondly, talk, it seems acts as an intermediate agent in the development of the inner speech associated with 'silent writing'. Private speech acts as a bridge for the development of inner speech in young children's language and cognitive development because it enables the child to relate inner thought to language in a concrete way. It seems that in the same way, talk during writing is a 'concrete' bridge between the early/intermediate stages of children's writing development

and the development of silent writing associated with advanced or adult writers. Such talk enables developing writers to coach themselves in juggling, manipulating, utilising and controlling the many skills and understandings involved in communicative writing because the cognitive demands of such makes it difficult for them to keep these thoughts to themselves (Jalongo, 1992). Ultimately, the writers develop inner control of the various aspects of writing. This 'self coaching' private speech diminishes and the advanced writer writes silently. In this way, oral language accompanies and nurtures the act of writing through the 'growing' stages (Kasten, 1997).

Children in later writing development use talk in ways that reflect specific patterns of discourse.

Firstly, teacher talk influences student talk. Novick & Waters (1977) suggest that a lot of what children say is directly affected by the teacher's talk. One of the major categories of teacher talk cited by Novick & Waters is concerned with focussing the children's attention firmly onto completing the set task. They believe many teachers are very time conscious and teacher talk encouraged children to get the job done in as short a time as possible. They suggested that possibly getting the job done had a higher priority than what goes on in the doing of it. In the classrooms under observation, most of the teachers made comments associated with these things and consequently the children talked about finishing their task, how much they have left to do and what the time is until the end of the lesson.

This type of talk was not identified as a common category of talk among emergent writers. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that it is a learned type of talk (Comber, 1996) resulting from the importance placed on finishing by teachers over the years. Thus it is not as prevalent in young writers because they haven't had the same amount of exposure to teacher talk. Older children have been exposed to more teacher talk than young children. Furthermore, younger writers do not do such extensive writing tasks and such exposure impacts on their perceptions of what is important in the writing or learning task. These perceptions lead the writers to constantly confirm with one another when and how they will be finished.

So too, comments related to size, form and structure impacted on what the students talked about. When teachers talked about the size of the product the students became distracted from the composing aspects of their writing and redirected attention to focus on conventions. This change in focus was reflected in student talk and a considerable amount of student talk, including counting and comparing the number of words, lines and pages that had been written, resulted.

There were also incidents to the contrary when teacher talk relating to grammar and ideas, was not reflected in the student's talk. Such comments were usually followed by quiet writing episodes. On some occasions, but not always, the text reflected the comments made by the 'overtalking' or 'pep talk' of the teacher (Comber, 1996, p. 248).

Secondly, student talk is influenced by pedagogy. Writing pedagogy impacts on the writing activity in the classroom by prescribing what and how things are done in that context. When students are engaged in writing, they talk about what and how they are writing. It goes without saying, then, that any pedagogy will directly impact on children's talk. Teacher comments relating to 'the writing process' further influence the talk by reiterating and reminding students about events, strategies and processes that are embedded in the pedagogy. In one classroom in this study, the teacher made aspects of the process explicit by reminding the students, "Your check, someone else's check, my check". Both subjects in that class engaged in talk directly related to this revisionary step of the 'writing process', reflecting the pedagogical emphasis on the 'process approach' in this class.

Conclusion Three: Talk Influences the Production of the Written Text

Supporting this third major conclusion are two other ideas that emerged from the analysis.

Talk impacts on the amount and quality of the revision activity.

Talk seems to be linked to the revisionary activity associated with developing writing. Most of the children who talked about their ideas and read their writing to others usually recognised errors of usage, words that did not sound right and ideas that needed clarifying in their own writing. The talk provided the opportunity to identify these things and change them accordingly. When there

was no talk associated with the composing of a text, very little revisionary activity was noted.

Exploratory talk is a useful pre-writing activity.

Talking about ideas before writing is useful for developing writers. When students are provided with the opportunity to talk about their ideas, they begin rehearsing what they will eventually write. They 'weed' out irrelevant information and can define the characters, the order of events and the specific genre frameworks with their potential audience enabling the written text to be written with greater motivation and increased understanding of what they want to say and how they will say it. This is a great advantage for developing writers who are still learning to control the many complex operations involved in the composing process (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1985). Having negotiated these things, the writer can attend to other aspects of composing.

What 'No Talk' Might Mean

The data analysis identified occasions and cases where no talk was present during the act of writing at all. In particular, the non-existence of talk was a consistent and unique characteristic of Dean's writing process, rather than just an occasional or momentary silence during conscious writing periods. Some inferences can be made about this type of writing behaviour.

The non-existence of talk during writing may be an indicator of writing development. It has already been suggested that talking takes on a number of different functions in later writing development. It may be that in the transition from emergent writing to early and conventional writing stages the writer, unaware of any other audience for his writing apart from self, sees no need to talk about what he is writing. To the writer, it may appear to make sense and look good (and that is good enough). Estabrook (1982) identified this 'decentring' aspect of writing development in her study of a young writer.

No talk might therefore be interpreted as an indicator that development is in progress and that the transition from early writing to conventional and advanced writing is under way.

However, as Cazden (1988) suggests, 'no talk' could also be related to a child's status in the class. Cazden noted that children on the fringe of social groups and collaborative working groups were there because they lacked status within the group for reasons ranging from ability, gender, ethnicity, behaviour, previous experience and background knowledge. "Those children with higher social status have more access to peer interactions, that in turn, assist their learning. In other words, the rich get richer." (p. 142). This may be one of the reasons for Dean's apparent lack of interaction during classroom writing sessions. Although Dean was seated with so many other students, he did not generally interact with them and was observed ignoring them on several occasions. He also spent a lot of time out of his seat and away from this group of students, pottering around doing 'his own thing'. At times his behaviour was out of order and face pulling,

dancing, whistling and other attention seeking behaviours could effectively have isolated him from the other more compliant children in the group.

Finally, much of the talk identified in this study was related to 'thinking out loud' or 'private speech'. Such talk associated with writing is thought to disappear as children develop in their writing (Graves, 1975; Groff, 1979).

However it is probably more appropriate to say that this talk does not completely disappear until the writer has developed beyond these intermediate stages and is truly an advanced writer. Advanced writers very rarely engage in talk during the act of writing. Therefore 'no talk' might mean that the child has reached the advanced writing stage. The data does not support this notion in relation to Dean's lack of talk while writing. However the intermittent episodes of 'no talk' in the writing processes of Simeon and Ruth indicate definite movement towards the advanced writing phase.

Final Concluding Comment

The conclusions articulated relate directly to the research questions. They generalise the findings that have emerged from extensive analysis of the data associated with six children talking while composing a number of different texts. One of the most poignant observations in all of this is that 'children talk'. Many classrooms allow them to and the result is most positive. Talk is used to learn, relate, express and develop more complex writing.

Limitations of this study

The results obtained and the conclusions made in this study may be confined in terms of the external validity due to the influence of the following conditions.

1. The research was carried out on six children's talk during writing. This small sample, although extensively observed and thickly described, may not necessarily typify the language associated with the composing processes of children within the identified phases of writing development.
2. Each school is different in its social, economic and ethnic status in the community. The unique situation of the subject school and the cultural and ethnic background of the children will need to be considered when drawing conclusions from the data.
3. The literacy instruction children had already received and continued to receive as the study progressed influenced the children's understanding of language and the role of talk in constructing written texts. These understandings may have also influenced the children's 'on task' behaviour during writing experiences (Geekie & Raban, 1993). These understandings and attitudes need to be considered when reading the data and drawing conclusions.

4. The transcripts indicate that on occasions, the teachers instructed the children to work quietly, putting boundaries on the amount and type of talk that each writer engaged in. Had this not been the case, different data may have been collected, being more representative of the talk that children engage in rather than talk they were able to 'get-away-with' in between the teachers' controlling comments.
5. The nature of the specific writing tasks may have influenced the talk. Of the twelve writing tasks observed, four were linked directly to a text, requiring the students to summarise rather than 'compose' their own texts. Such controlled writing may have impacted on the type and amount of talk produced. Had the students all been involved in writing across a wider range of genres and contexts, the results may have been different. Observations over a longer period of time may also be beneficial in ascertaining the changing role of talk as children develop in their writing.
6. All the teachers in the study were female. There may be differences between male and female teachers in terms of their pedagogical loyalties, programming decisions and classroom discourses and such differences may have impacted the student talk and influenced the results.
7. The time that elapsed between collecting the data and presenting the case studies for ratification by the teachers should be taken into consideration. At the time of the member checks, the teachers were teaching a new

group of students. They had to rely on their recall of events, contexts and children from six months earlier.

8. The study was descriptive and so the bias of the researcher must be taken into consideration, and the impact of her presence on the talk and activity of the children. This researcher's competence and experience in research itself may have imposed some limitations on the research design, however the classroom teaching experience and contact with children along with the familiarity of the setting and subjects of the study may counter such inexperience.

Implications and Recommendations

This study sought to discover for what reasons children talk as their writing develops. As a consequence of this research, a number of implications for the findings have emerged as well as the identification of areas for further research.

Implications

Children do talk as their writing develops. Although children become more competent in making and using language in the written mode, they are still developing in many other aspects of writing. This means that they are developing writers and as such rely on talk as a scaffold for learning those other aspects of writing that they are not yet able to do. If talk is necessary at this stage of writing development to assist revision attempts, then a silent working

classroom may effectively rob some children of an opportunity to learn for themselves (Askew & Fountas, 1998). As children move towards becoming successful writers, teachers should be aware that for many students, talk might be a scaffold for writing success. To remove this support system may inhibit writing development and may send hidden messages that writing is only words on a page, not representation of meaning (Groenwold & Hayden, 1989).

The observations and findings of this study further inform our knowledge of teacher talk, looking at what we say, its effectiveness to assist student learning and to set boundaries for student learning.

“Much classroom talk revolves around knowing about and acting out a distinct literacy practice ... as displays of understanding the complex interaction of the content and procedural demands of the classroom. However, the problematic issue is that, in classrooms, displays of acting out classroom management procedures and pedagogical routines are more prevalent than those displays of specific content knowledge such as subject matter or language features” (Ludwig & Hershall, 1998, p. 83)

Teachers talk a lot in the classroom. Some of the observations in this study suggest that students don't necessarily take much notice of this talk. The small snap shots of the classrooms presented in this research demonstrate how important it is for teachers to choose their words and timing in order to be effective in their literacy instruction.

Finally, an important implication for this study is that pedagogical decisions and cultural factors play a large role in the way talk is valued in the classroom

and in turn in how literacy processes such as composing and producing written texts are constructed. In Australian schools, talk is often valued in all aspects of learning, and in particular language learning. Furthermore, in this context, writing pedagogy encourages and supports the use of talk as a scaffold for student learning. In this instance, talk is prevalent enough to enable it to be used as a way of understanding children's composing processes and the difficulties they are experiencing in learning to compose. In other contexts it may not be possible to use children's talk to assess or understand these aspects of literacy learning.

Recommendations for Further Research

Emerging from the results of a study such as this is the recommendation for further research into children's composing processes and the role of talk within such processes. There has been limited research into this aspect of language learning since the eighties and the changing nature of literacy pedagogies requires ongoing research to investigate the impact of pedagogy on student processes and student learning.

The suggestions that follow would provide valuable information to complement the findings of this study.

1. An examination into student talk in composing processes across a number of pedagogically different contexts would determine if talk

associated with writing development can be conventionalised as relating directly to development of writing or if it is bound by pedagogical and/or cultural influences.

2. An examination of children's talk while involved in writing across a range of genres would determine whether the nature of the writing task influences the talk in which developing writers engage.
3. Replication of the study utilising other data collection methods including attitude surveys and interviews after the writing episodes may reveal the connection between the children's perception of language and how they see the role of talk in writing.

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APPENDIX A

A Model of Early Writing Development

Nichols, J. *et. Al.* (1989) *Beginning Writing*. Milton Keys: Open University Press
(p. 92)

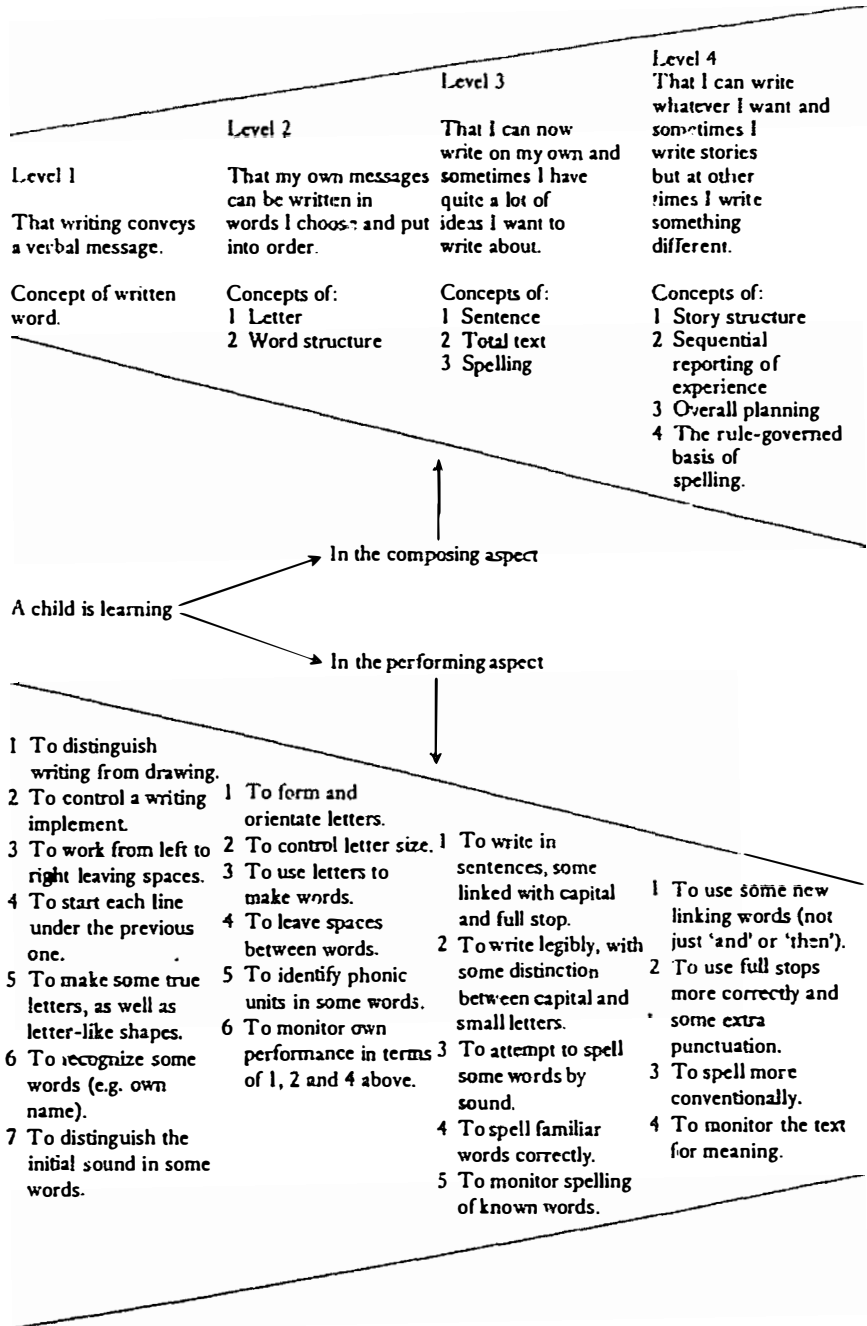


Figure 6.1 Writing development up to level 4

APPENDIX B

Indicators for Early and Conventional Writing Phases

Ministry of Education (1992) *Writing developmental continuum*. Perth: Author.

INDICATORS FOR WRITING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

CONVENTIONAL WRITING PHASE

(See also Phases of *Spelling Developmental Continuum*)

Whole-Class Record Sheet continued

INDICATORS FOR WRITING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

CONVENTIONAL WRITING PHASE (Continued)

(See also Phases of *Spelling Developmental Continuum*)

Content and Organisation
The child:

- ◆ *uses text forms to suit purpose and audience* (may not control all essential elements, e.g. may use narrative language when writing informational text)
- uses rhyme, rhythm and repetition for effect (where appropriate)
- writes using a variety of forms
- demonstrates the ability to develop a topic
- demonstrates knowledge of differences between narrative and informational text when writing
- shows evidence of planning before writing (may be oral or written plan)
- organises the structure of writing more effectively, e.g. uses headings, subheadings
- can write from another's point of view
- shows evidence of personal voice (where appropriate)
- considers the needs of audience and includes background information
- can transfer information from reading to writing, e.g. takes notes for project
- ◆ *uses simple, compound and extended sentences*
- often includes dialogue
- uses dialogue to enhance character development
- shows evidence of the transfer of literary language from reading to writing
- ◆ *writes a topic sentence and includes relevant information to develop a cohesive paragraph*
- groups sentences containing related information into paragraphs
- orders ideas in time order or other sequence such as priority order
- links ideas coherently in whole texts
- uses a variety of connectors such as *and, so, because, if, next, after, before, first*

Word Usage

- ◆ *is beginning to select vocabulary according to the demands of audience and purpose, e.g. uses subject-specific vocabulary*
- uses some similes or metaphors in an attempt to enhance meaning
- uses words that adequately convey meaning but lack variety
- varies vocabulary for interest
- includes specific vocabulary to explain or describe, e.g. appropriate adjectives
- provides sufficient information but little elaboration
- uses adverbs and adjectives to enhance meaning
- uses simple colloquialisms and clichés

Editing

- ◆ *edits and proofreads own writing after composing*
- reorders text to clarify meaning, e.g. moves words, phrases and clauses
- reorders words to clarify meaning
- attempts to correct punctuation
- recognises most misspelled words and attempts corrections

Language Conventions

- ◆ *punctuates simple sentences correctly*
- uses capital letters for proper nouns
- uses capital letters to start sentences
- uses capital letters for titles
- uses full stops to end sentences
- uses question marks correctly
- sometimes uses commas
- uses apostrophes for possession
- writes apostrophes for contractions
- writes effectively in both first and third person
- uses appropriate subject-verb agreements
- uses appropriate noun-pronoun agreements
- maintains appropriate tense
- use titles and headings appropriately

Affective

- writes for enjoyment
- writes to get things done
- experiments with calligraphy, graphics and different formats
- manipulates language for fun, e.g. puns, symbolic character or place names (Ms Chalk, the teacher, Pitsville)

Process

- ◆ *rereads and revises while composing*

TEACHERS NOTES:

EARLY WRITING PHASE

(See also Phonetic and Transitional Phases of Spelling Developmental Continuum)

Content and Organisation The child:

- ◊ *uses a small range of familiar text forms*
- uses a partial organisational framework, e.g. simple orientation and story development
- often writes simple recounts of personal events or observation and comment
- uses time order to sequence and organise writing
- is beginning to use some narrative structure
- is beginning to use some informational text structures, e.g. recipes, factual description
- includes irrelevant detail in 'dawn to dark' recounts
- attempts to orient, or create a context for the reader, but often assumes a shared context
- rewrites known stories in sequence
- includes detail in written retell
- is beginning to use 'book' language, e.g. 'By the fire sat a cat.'
- attempts to transfer knowledge of text structure to writing, e.g. imitates form of a familiar big book
- has difficulty staying on topic
- ◊ *is beginning to use written language structures. Has a sense of sentence, i.e. writes complete sentences with or without punctuation*
- writes in a style that resembles oral language
- includes some dialogue
- uses little variety in sentence length
- joins simple sentences (often overusing the same connectors, e.g. 'and', 'then')
- includes little elaboration, usually simple description
- uses knowledge of rhyme, rhythm and repetition in writing
- repeats familiar patterns, e.g. 'in the jungle I saw ...'

Word Usage

- ◊ *writes a range of words that are personally significant*
- discusses word formations and meanings; noticing similarities and differences
- transfers words encountered in talk, or reading, to writing
- highlights words for emphasis, e.g. BIG

Editing

- ◊ *begins to develop editing skills*
- deletes words to clarify meaning
- adds words to clarify meaning
- begins to proofread for spelling errors
- adds information on request

Whole-Class Record Sheet continued

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INDICATORS FOR WRITING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

EARLY WRITING PHASE (Continued)

(See also Phonetic and Transitional Phases of Spelling Developmental Continuum)

Language Conventions

- ◊ *attempts to use some punctuation*
- sometimes uses full stops
- sometimes uses a capital letter to start a sentence
- uses capital letters for names
- attempts use of question marks
- attempts use of exclamation marks
- sometimes uses apostrophes for contractions
- over-generalises use of print conventions, e.g. overuse of apostrophes
- often writes in the first person
- attempts writing in both first and third person
- usually uses appropriate subject-verb agreements
- usually uses appropriate noun-pronoun agreements
- usually maintains consistent tense
- writes a title which reflects content

Affective

- perseveres to complete writing tasks
- resents interruption
- is preoccupied with a desire to get everything right
- has difficulty writing because of the complexity of the task, e.g. attending to spelling, handwriting, composing, punctuation simultaneously

Process

- ◊ *rereads own writing to maintain word sequence*

TEACHERS NOTES:

APPENDIX C

Letters for Research.

Belinda Nelson
c/ The Principal
Jolstra Street Primary School
July, 1998

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you to inform you of a research project being undertaken at Jolstra Street Primary School in Term Three this year and to invite your child to participate in it.

I am a classroom teacher and am currently completing my Master of Education Degree at Edith Cowan University. The research that I am describing here is part of my studies for this degree. I have taught at this school for several years and may even be known to you and your child.

The research I will be conducting involves listening to children talk as they work during classroom writing activities. It also involves observing their classroom environment and talking to their teacher about general writing development and teaching writing.

Each of the six children that I have invited will have a small tape recorder propped on their desk during routine writing sessions and I will be observing them and the classroom environment during these sessions, from a distance. There will be little to no interaction with me during this time as I am interested in the natural talk or oral language that the children produce. I would also like to keep a copy of the written work produced during my observations.

Involvement in this research is purely voluntary. If you are happy for your child to be involved in my research please let me know in writing, through the classroom teacher. If you have any questions at all please direct them to your child's teacher or the Principal, and they will let you know when I will be in the school next so that you can talk with me personally.

I am very keen about my research and look forward to learning more about children's writing development. I believe it is important research and hope you feel a sense of pride and privilege that your child has been asked to participate.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you and your child are happy to be involved.

Yours sincerely,

Belinda Nelson
July 1998.

Belinda Nelson
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

July, 1998

Dear Teachers,

I am writing to you to with the purpose of inviting you and some of your students to participate in a program of research which I will be conducting as part of my Master of Education Degree at Edith Cowan University.

The title of the research is 'The Role of Children's talk in Writing Development'.

The research will involve observing and recording the talk produced by children as they work on a piece of writing. The research will also require an in depth observation of the language learning contexts in which each of these children are situated. This will mean some interaction with you by way of informal interviews and observations. The children may also need to be interviewed briefly to obtain background information about previous literacy learning. This data collection phase should take around six weeks and will involve a number of visits to your classroom.

Involvement in the research program is purely voluntary and you or your students are free to withdraw if you should wish to do so. Your name or the names of the students will not be identified on any publications associated with this research unless you or you students indicate otherwise. The research does not intend to create extra work for you or the students, as most data collection is through non-participant observation by myself in the classroom during normal writing sessions.

In terms of what I require for the research to get underway:

1. Students. A list of the good average students in your class working in the early and conventional phases of writing development.
I will be making my selection from this list and will be inviting a total of six students to participate. These will be chosen through random sampling of the master list for each phase.
2. Informed consent from these students and their parents and also written consent from yourselves, as teachers of these children.

It is my sincere hope that you and your students will be open to participating in such a program of research, in the knowledge that it may have significant impact on our current understanding of this phenomenon. If you have any questions about this research or would like to indicate your interest please feel free to call me at home on [REDACTED]

I look forward to your response to this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Belinda Nelson

██████████
██████████
July, 1998

Principal
Jolstra Street Primary School

Dear Bill,

A while ago I discussed with you, the possibility of conducting some research for my Masters Degree at Jolstra Street Primary School at a future date. With that conversation in mind, I am writing to you now with the purpose of gaining your approval to approach and invite some of your staff and some of the students to participate in a program of research which I will be conducting in third term this year.

I would appreciate the opportunity to utilise your school as it is not only my local school, but also, it is a school at which I am well known to most of the staff and students making my presence as a researcher less threatening. My research involves the development of a number of case studies and your school provides a handy setting, being big enough to supply me with a large pool of children from which to invite a handful of subjects.

I see this as a great opportunity for Jolstra Street Primary School to be directly involved in a unique project that has as its main purpose to identify aspects of language learning that will help give teachers greater insight into the teaching and learning of writing.

The school, teachers and children will remain anonymous in any publications associated with the research, unless otherwise negotiated. It is my sincere hope that you, your staff and students may be open to participating in such a program of research, in the knowledge that it may have significant impact on our current understanding of this phenomenon.

I would like to meet with you at a convenient time and as early as possible in Term Three to initiate the selection of teachers and students.

Yours sincerely,

Belinda Nelson
B.Ed. Dip.Tch(Primary)

APPENDIX D

Children's Writing Samples.

19.8.98

WANTED POSTER

NAME: Cat's eye wanted for
murdering Ned Kelly.

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS Last seen
standing outside the
hardware store.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION He is 190cm
tall and he always wears
a brown jacket & jacket
and jeans. He had ^{the} dark
skin and black hair.

SPECIAL FEATURES He has an
earring with a cross on
it and a deep scar down
the left side of his face.

OTHER INFO There is a
reward of \$1000 pound
dollars. Please contact
Chris Mockford on
9300 156 as soon as
possible. Thank you.

Bushrangers Bold 248-98

11x John Caesar arrived with the first fleet of ships. He was transported to Australia for stealing. He was the hardest worker in the colony. He was famous for his appetite. After one escape he was found stealing vegetables from an officers garden. In December 1789 he escaped again and got gunned down in 1796 near Strathgield, NSW.

Michael HOWE Howe was an English highwayman who was captured in 1811 and sent to Tasmania. He escaped and joined a gang led by John Whitehead. When he was 30 he became the leader, lead leader of the gang. He terrorised Tasmania but surrendered in 1817. 3 months later escaped from a Hobart jail. In 1818 he was tricked in to going on a trip. Then he was murdered.

Frank Gardiner was born in NSW in 1830. By the time he was 20 he was stealing horses or digging for gold. He tried both but failed. The jail became his home. Frank became a butcher but it was suspected he was selling stolen meat. So he went to the bush. Even x the x They held up Government coach carrying 2600 ounces of gold and \$4000 in cash, was looted up. Frank was arrested and sent California and died 9 years later.

Alapin Mac Pherson was a well brought up young man with a clean record. For whatever reason Alapin took to the roads in 1864. He stuck up a hotel, committed robberies, stole horses. Then he got captured by police. He went to jail for 20 years.

198-98

Wanted

Name: Ned Kelly for murdering Humpty Dumpty.

Last Seen: Sneaking around Humpty Dumpty's house.

Physical Description: 7 foot, Dark hair that end at his ears he has brown eyes and pale skin with a slim body.

Special Features: Ned A Kelly wore a metal armour, has a mark on his nose and a big brown beard.

Other Information: Reward \$20.50
- Contact John the Policeman at police station.

24-8-98 Bushrangers BoldoJohn Caesar

John Caesar was an American Negro. He was sent to Austr in the first fleet for stealing vegetables from the officers' garden. ^{in his kitchen} ~~stealing~~ He also got in jail for 1st February 1796, near Strathfield, N.S.W. ~~in 1796~~ he died.

Michael Howe

Michael Howe was ~~not~~ an English highway man. That was sent to Tasmania in 1811. Then he escaped and became a bushranger. A few years later his members of his gang were killed. In April 1817 Howe eventually surrendered. In 1818 he was murdered.

Frank Gardner

Frank Gardner was born in N.S.W. in 1830. When he was in his 20's he was stealing horses and digging for gold, but he failed at both. Pentridge Jail became his home. After being in jail he became a bushranger butcher, but he was stealing the meat. After that was robbery that happened every body blame ~~from~~ Frank. ~~ago~~ 9 Nine years later he died.

Ned Kelly

Ned Kelly was born in Ireland in 1854. When he was about 15 he started a gang called the Kelly gang. They roamed around Glenrowan in Victoria. Then ~~did~~ he was hanged and died about in Melbourne jail over 100 years ago.

Alvin MacPherson

Alvin MacPherson was a Scotman, a wild one. He was a bushranger. In 1864 he started committing robberies and stole horses, held up mail coaches and took up a hotel. He finally went to jail in Rockhampton for twenty years and died.

The Titanic!

✓ The enormous ocean liner the Titanic, one of the ~~most~~ biggest Tragedies in the 19th century was once called the "Unsinkable" ship. This was ~~proposed~~ on its maiden voyage. It stood 101 feet high & 82.5 feet long. This "unsinkable" ship could hold up to 3000 people.

✓ On the 10 of April 1912 the Titanic went on its maiden voyage. She sailed from Southampton but unfortunately it did not reach ~~up~~ New York. This ship had lived some of the most wealthy & famous people such as millionaires, lords, countesses, of course all traveling 1st Class. They bring along their nannies, servants, maids, traveling with lots of not so wealthy people in 3rd class.

✓ Few days after this ship ~~was~~ set off, the Titanic received warnings from neighboring ships saying there was large icebergs where they were heading. These warnings were ignored and never left the ~~char~~ ~~room~~ also no one had noticed the temperature had dropped to 43°F. The Californian, a neighboring ship contacted the Titanic and warned to turn off the engines because you surrounded by icebergs. The captain took notice of this warning but only put six lookout stations, but the passengers were not aware of the danger.

✓ The crew ~~or~~ ^{not} passengers were not aware of the danger they ^{would} face that night for at 11:40, the Tit hit an Iceberg. There was a hole ripped along

The Titanic

one-third of the ship's side. All the passengers felt
was a slight judder. Some that were in bed thought
it was a big joke. Some people went &
admired the iceberg while others were playing
'CEBACS'. At 11:50 the captain saw how
serious it was and he made history when
he used the SOS signal. The lower class
people ~~were~~ woke up to find their floors
flooded.

12:05 the lifeboats were launched & the
captain said "Women & children first". There was
no drill practice but still people were very
calm. Once the night was out half the people
on the "Unsinkable" would be dead. Boat
was lowered with 12 when it could carry 40.
4 women died three chose to stay with their
husbands.

The crew tried to save the ship by pumping
water out of the boiler room only to find it
flooding again while the operator still tapping SOS.

At 2am the captain announced "Every man
for himself" just 3 hours after the collision it was
in vertical position. The men jumped in the
water only to find to be sucked under. That
night 1502 died.

Carpathia, a neighbouring ship, tried to save people who had jumped off the Titanic was blamed because of not noticing the warnings. White Star Line was blamed because of not have enough life boats

Sailing today must conduct drills & carry enough lifeboats. The Titanic tragedy should never happen again.

A very well-written report. You notes were very much like the information sheet, but you have managed to only use the key info from the notes and have re-written them into very good paragraphs - Well done - a good effort.

Headline
to get attention)

KIDS FIGHT BACK

Place
in capitals)

WESTERN Australia

Writer
in capitals)

[Blank box for writer name]

Lead Sentence
extra info. about
the headline.
First word in
capitals).

PRIMARY
kids are disgusted by
how much the teachers
make them do.

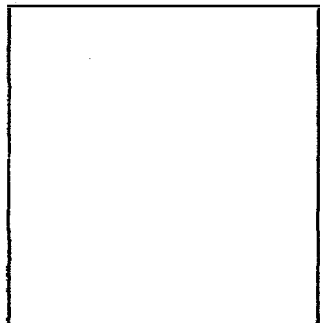


Photo
(in black
and white
or colour)

Photo label
campaign leader of the
Joe King
September

Details

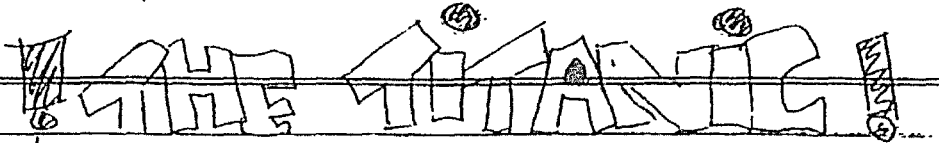
(gives more
details about
the article.
Includes details
about who,
what, why, how,
where, when etc.
Can include
quotes from
people who
saw the event.
Written in
paragraphs.
Always printed).

~~the~~ the leaders of the "KIDS FIGHT BACK" campaign is leading a group of kids from around the area to stand up for themselves. Kids as young as 5 are joining in. [Name] says he all he wants is to have school go for only 3 hours. [Name] says principals said that we are to make school fun with sports carnivals. On the 3rd September Reece, Vice President of the campaign, said that he led a parade & burnt the afternoon. All Reece said to defend himself.

was that "Don't name it". The police made some law & made a police statement. Aaron & Reece have been charged but they still will go on. [Name] said he's happy to get school down to 4 hours. Aaron & Reece are happy to come to a compromise.

Conclude
ending
sentence,
paragraph

Draft



The ship =

On May 31st, 1911 The Titanic launched. It was an enormous ocean liner which people were fascinated by. It stood 104 feet high and 882.5 feet long and could hold 3000 people. The ship's hull was divided into 16 watertight ~~rooms~~ compartments. They bragged about how big it was and that it was impossible to sink.

The passengers =

On the 10th of April 1912 the Titanic set sail on her ~~first~~ first voyage from Southampton bound for New York. Millionaires, lords, countesses and other people traveling 1st class. They all had maids, servants and nannies. ~~Not~~ Not very wealthy people (like working people) travelled in 3rd class, ^{what} ~~but~~ they didn't realize ^{what} their first trip was going to be their last trip. ~~There were~~ warnings and action taken = ~~could not only to water~~

The trouble began 4 days after they set off. There were signals from other boats but they were ignored. ~~There were~~ saying that there were icebergs around but did not reach the chart room. Nobody knew the temperature dropped from 43°F to freezing cold. Nearby another ship the Californian, told the Titanic to turn off their engine. The Titanic could ~~not~~ stay afloat for 5 of the 16 watertight compartments. The captain finally told six men to stand on deck and look for ice. Unaware of the danger they went to bed.

Collision = At 11:40 pm the ship crashed. The iceberg ~~was~~ a huge hole about a 1/3 of the length of the ~~boat~~ and almost instantly the engine room rilted with ~~the~~ passengers ~~also~~ only felt a little judder because the ~~line~~ ~~bits~~ ~~penetration~~ in ~~bed~~ ~~through~~ ~~the~~ ~~hole~~ ~~thing~~ ~~was~~.

Some people even ran on deck to ~~see~~ see the ice and some people were playing icebergs iceballs. At 11:50 the captain realised how serious the situation was and eternally called SOS. The Titanic was the first ship to call SOS, so they made history. That's when the passengers began to worry. The lower decks were flooded and the engine stopped. Slowly the compartments were filling up with water and the captain knew it was the end.

Evacuation =

Straight away the captain ordered life boats lowered with women and children first. The passengers didn't know what to do because they didn't have a drill test at getting into the lifeboats or life jackets. ~~It was~~ All this was at about 12:05. Suddenly they realised there was only enough boats for half the people. There was no panic because people knew they would be dead ~~before~~ before the night was over. Some boat only had 12 people in them when it could of had 40. Some ladies even ran back to their cabins to get the jewelry. Only 4 ladies died and 3 chose to stay with their husband.

The crew = There was no time left the captain's last order was every man for himself. The crew stopped trying to save other people and started to save themselves. It was too late the ship was already sinking. At first the crew thought they would succeed by pumping the icy water out of the boiler rooms only to have it flooded again. **Sinkings** All together 1503 people were left to go down with the ship and people already off the ship were sucked under by the pressure of the water. 55 people were lucky enough to get off the ship far enough away to escape being pulled

Drake.

Under, no boats came back to save them so they died off freezing. ~~The blame~~ The blame = soon after the ship had almost sunk the Carpathia came to its side but most lives were already gone. The blame was on the captain and senior officers for ignoring the ice warnings. And the people who made it (White Star line) was also blamed for not having enough life boats. Sailing today = Hopefully ~~today~~ this tragedy will not happen again. Ships today have to require enough life boats and have drills. The Titanic was a sad story, but it's interesting to find out things.

You have done quite a good job with this and most of the sentences are good. A few still sound very similar to the information sheet.

Nightmare News - Planning Sheet

Headline
(to get attention)

QUICK SAND KILLS BOYS

Place
(in capitals)

NEIL HOKKEN'S PARK

Writer
(in capitals)

Lead Sentence
(extra info. about the headline. First word in capitals).

THE QUICK SAND killed some boys when they were at Neil Hokkens Park.

Photos
(in black and white or colour)

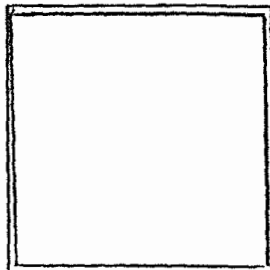


Photo Lab

Photograph name/cap

Details

(gives more details about the article. Includes details about who, what, why, how, where, when etc. Can include quotes from people who saw the event. Written in paragraphs. Always printed).

On July 19th 1999, Ryan Thorton, 13 year old, was walking alone to Neil Hokkens Park. It was around lunch time when he was playing in the sand at with his dog that he noticed his feet were stuck in the sand. They say he was there but you never know. His dog got stuck but didn't die. It was until July 19th 1999 that another boy called Kevin was also walking alone to Neil Hokkens Park with his dog and the same thing happened. At about 9:00 AM on September 1999 a girl was walking to Neil Hokkens park

and found the sand had a shape like this. It was laying under with with sand. It was the dog it was her cousin Ryan and another boy so the dog the dog. The quick sand was that they had been manded and not killed by quick sand. Their mothers and fathers got charged for being the murderers, but the police didn't know for sure. The place has been closed off now but their still is kangaroos and other animals in it.

Conclu
ending
senten
paragr
it.

Super Pop

Once when a girl went to buy some popcorn she saw a packet with a popcorn man on the front ~~and~~ she bought it and took it home and put it in the microwave and when she took it out it had turned into a tiny little popcorn man and she kept him a secret until her little baby brother found him bouncing on her bed and her brother tried to eat him up but the tiny popcorn made him fly out the room and just as he was flying out the room the girl walked in and was amazed. After the girl and the popcorn found out that when the popcorn gets mad he uses his powers and can make things float, break and disappear.

Super Pop

Once A lady was cooking tea at 5:30 pm and forgot it was on and left it until it was 6:00 pm and she realized it was still on and came rushing back and it was too late the kitchen was up in flames and she was so scared because know the hole house was up in flames so she jump out the window of her apartment. Just as she did the girl and the popcorn walked past the lady was falling and the little popcorn used his floating powers and got her safely on the ground after he done that every one came up and took photos of him and he was in Museums all over the world.

A Symbol story

One day I made
a campsite near a
river with fish.
I saw a warthog I
speared the warthog
and took it back
to camp. It started
to rain I saw a giant
and speared and
took it back to
camp.

Going for Oysters

Once there were a
tribe of people
who went on a
trip to find some
oysters and crabs.

They collected some
oysters and crabs.

Then the boys and
girls found a boat
and filled in the
holes with sticky mud.

They rowed to
the east side
of the river. The boys
got off to kill some
waterfowl. They heard a
Thunder noise

going

Name: _____

GOING FOR OYSTERS by Jeanie Adams

Grandad looked quite worried. He said, "Be careful, my granddaughter. That's the story place of Yaatamay, the Carpet Snake. If you swim in the eastern swamp, you'll never come back. And don't ever go near its edge, or you'll be swallowed up by the quicksand."

Write a story that tells what you think really happened to the boys when they went to the dangerous story place. Give your story an interesting title. Plan your story here.

Introduction: The boys and girls went to a island on the east so they paddled to the island with a dingy.

Middle: they went to the island and they heard a noise it was a snake the snake followed them they got in the dingy.

Ending: they paddled back and they got crawled them they told them the story.