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BECOMING LITERATE IN AN INNER CITY, WHOLE LANGUAGE SCHOOL

By

Debra Lynn Goodman

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

BECOMING LITERATE IN AN INNER CITY, WHOLE LANGUAGE SCHOOL

By

Debra Lynn Goodman

This study describes the literacy experiences of Lauren and Marco, second graders in an inner city, whole language classroom. The focus is the social nature of classroom literacy and the relationship between literacy events and literacy development. Lauren and Marco's literacy experiences are described in addressing the questions: *What are the social and cultural literacy events and practices in the schooling of two second graders?; What factors appear related to the literacy learning of developing readers within this classroom culture?*

Deficit perspectives of African American learners portrays literacy as a discrete set of skills, and literacy development as standardized test scores. Deficit images of inner city students are at odds with teacher's observations of articulate, literate children. I view children's literacy experiences as both social practice and language process, shifting from ethnographic-style to transactional research methodologies. Transactional perspectives view literacy as a language process involving meaning construction. Social literacies perspectives describe *multiple literacies*, dependent on contexts, social relationships and sociopolitical factors change.

This study follows two second graders through a day of school: "Marco's Day" and "Lauren's Day". I explore children's literacy experiences as social activities and children's roles as meaning makers within social literacy events. The data comes from following fifteen children from kindergarten through second grade. Observations were documented through audiotape, video tape, photographs, field notes, interviews and children's work.

Significant findings of this study highlight the importance of social interactions for children's literacy development. The classroom creates social spaces for language learning,

with children engaged in a wide range of texts, genres and social activities within literacy events. Children “learn by overhearing” as they participate as listeners and observers, as well as readers and writers. Participants are *talking about texts* in ways that make implicit language processes explicit. Literacy events occur throughout the day, including procedural times when texts are instrumental in planning and transitions. Children’s proficiency with social events involving instrumental texts and literature texts, suggest a role of schools in linking literacy development in home, school and wider community.

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DEBRA LYNN GOODMAN
1999

For Yetta and Ken Goodman

**You illuminated my path
with your wonder in children
your respect for teachers
your love of language
and your belief in me.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not exist without a group of inspired, brave and hard working teachers. Susan Austin, my friend and colleague, opened her classroom to me, collected materials and viewed tapes with me, and read early drafts of this dissertation. I hope I have captured a little of her talented work in my retellings. I also owe a great debt to Lauren's and Marco's other teachers, Barbara Lauchlan and Mary Jo Regnier. We started this study together and I continued with constant conversation and encouragement. The other members of my TAWL group also offered inspiration and support (not to mention snacks): Mindy LePere, Marjorie Harnois, Tanya Sharon and especially Toby Curry. These women have been essential to my own learning, but they have also supported countless young learners with democratic and liberatory teaching.

The members of my dissertation committee have each contributed to my thinking throughout my degree, and during the time I was working on this study. Geneva Smitherman kept me straight on linguistics and language variation. Patti Stock and Jenny Denyer reflected my own ideas back to me and help me see further than I could on my own. Sherri Thomas, as an outside reader, gave me some great ideas for revisions -- not to mention proofreading tips. And I can't express my appreciation enough for Marilyn Wilson and Diane Brunner, my co-chairs, who helped keep me going, gave me many ideas about methodology and writing, and were willing to read and respond to my work at the last minute. (Sorry about that!)

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[illegible]

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Chapter One

What Counts as Literacy?

This study describes the literacy experiences of two second-graders, Lauren and Marco, within one inner city, whole language classroom. The study focuses on the social nature of classroom literacy, exploring the relationship between literacy events and the children's literacy development. I first interviewed Marco and Lauren when I was the school librarian at The Dewey Center, an inner city school-of-choice. My colleagues and I were disturbed by the discrepancy between deficit images of inner city students and our own observations of the bright, active and literate children in our classrooms. I began interviewing and observing children as a school evaluation project, and continued with these observations for my doctoral research.

As I observed Lauren and Marco's literacy experiences, I considered the following questions: *What are the social and cultural literacy events and practices in the schooling of two second graders?;* and *What factors and principles appear to be related to the literacy learning of these developing readers within this classroom culture?* This chapter begins with an introduction to the children and the second grade classroom. The introduction becomes a backdrop for an ethnographic - style study of the literacy experiences of two children in an inner city classroom in a large city.

Before describing literacy use and literacy learning in the classroom, it is necessary to address the contradictions between public images of rampant illiteracy among inner city schools and my own experiences as an inner city teacher. I address this discrepancy by considering "*What counts as literacy?*" and, by extension, "*Who counts as literate?*" I begin by describing how a group of teachers involved with literacy evaluation struggled with a legacy of deficit models of inner city children. I then explore and critique other explanations for "failure" in urban schools. Next, I describe several theoretical stances on literacy and literacy learning including a language process or transactional perspective and Street's (1998) dichotomy: Autonomous, Critical Literacy, and New Literacy Studies.

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At the end of this chapter I provide a summary of my conclusions. Lauren and Marco are participants in a literacy rich classroom community. Literacy events include the reading of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. But social literacy events are pervasive and children read and write as they plan, clean up, prepare for lunch, and so on. Marco and Lauren participate in literacy events in a variety of social roles as listeners and observers as well as readers and writers. As they participate in classroom literacy events, Lauren and Marco are learning how to read and write. They are also learning what it means to be readers and writers in a variety of social contexts.

Introduction

Terrence and Alicia have just finished reading a book to the class. Susan Austin, their teacher, looks around. "You have book clubs that want to read to you today."

A voice whispers, "Yes!"

Susan continues, "But I think you have given us a lot of listening energy. So what I'm going to do is, I'm going to send tables at a time to get something for 'Silent Reading.'"

As Susan is talking, Jackie approaches with a request.

"Okay," Susan says, "Let's do this. Jackie just said something about 'Silent Writing.' If you would prefer to write rather than read, I will give you a choice -- only for the next fifteen minutes. And then we're going to listen to a book club. Square team, please go get your writing or reading."

The room is noisy as children rush off to get materials. Some go to the library corner and collect books, pillows and stuffed book characters. Others head to the writing table for paper, staplers, or art supplies. Sharonda picks out four illustrated song books from a large plastic basket under the calendar table. She sits down in the "reader's chair" by the door, and begins with *The Hole in the Bucket*, (Westcott, 1990) singing out the words with great enthusiasm.

Jackie shows me a wrestling book she is writing with Terrence. "Miss Goodman, I made a chapter book," she announces proudly. Jackie and Terrence are writing about children in the class using "book names" instead of real names.

I ask, "Why did you think of having a book name?"

Jackie says, "It was kinda simple. We didn't want our real names to be in the book. In biography books we want our names to be in them."

Marco comes over and stands next to Jackie so he can see the book as he listens to her talk. Jackie talks about how she represented the voices of wrestling announcers in the book text. "Don't you know how they say and... AND... A:ND'?" she asks me, imitating an announcer with growing excitement. She shows me the text:

Johnny Cage vres Lukane and and and Lukane won.

Susan asks the children to settle down. Amber stands illustrating the cover of Alicia's new book with a beautiful vase of flowers. Alicia leans across the table watching. Across the table, Jonathan sits at his seat reading a book.

Marco shows me a book that says "Pictionary" on the cover. "I'm making a dictionary," he says.

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Susan tells a group in the back, "No, you can't do this. This is 'Silent Reading.' Not 'Read Aloud.' Not 'Book Club' time. This is not a talking time at all. Marco, get something to read now. Or something to write."

Lauren and Katherine settle down on the floor near the door with their backs against the front wall. They each have two pillows, one for their seat and one for their back. They each hold a book, and seven more books are scattered on the floor between them. Lauren is reading out loud to herself, but Katherine is listening to Susan's instructions.

Susan says, "Hurry and get what you (need). Everybody has to find a spot quickly."

Lauren continues to read out loud. She is reading an illustrated chapter book *Dragon's Fat Cat* (Pilkey, 1992). Katherine puts her book down and leans over to listen to Lauren reading.

Sharonda asks Lauren, "Does this say (??)¹." Lauren goes over to help Sharonda.

She is sitting down when Sharonda calls again. "When... is this '*when*'?" Lauren and Katherine over to look at Sharonda's book.

Susan calls from her desk, "Katherine, Lauren, and Rudy. Would you choose a book you want to be read to you?" Katherine and Lauren go to get books for the "Books to Go" bags. The bags will include one book to practice at home for reading aloud to the class. The other book is for an adult to read to the child.

In the corner near the door, Sharonda is reading her second book, *If a Tree Could Talk* (Williams, 1994a), an environmental poem. She speaks with great emphasis, "*We WISH you would stay.*" Jessica sits on the carpet nearby, engrossed in a longer picture book.

Susan says, "On your mark. Get ready. Get set. Read or write." Susan sets a timer for fifteen minutes. The room gets very quiet as 'Silent Reading (and Writing)' officially begins.

This ten minute transitional time provides a snapshot of Susan Austin's second grade classroom, where literacy events are squeezed between other literacy events. This vignette also introduces the two case study children -- Marco, who is eager to hear about Jackie's writing, and Lauren, who is too busy reading to listen to Susan's announcements.

Susan offers "silent reading" to give the kids a break between two whole class listening experiences: Read Aloud and Book Clubs presentation. ("You've given us a lot of listening energy.") It takes ten minutes for children to "get ready" for silent reading and writing. But during that time, most of the children are engaged in a variety of reading and writing activities. When Silent Reading officially begins, Sharonda is reading the second of five books she will during the Silent Reading language event.

¹ Transcription Notes: (??) indicates that spoken language is inaudible. Italics indicate texts read aloud. In "A:ND" the capital letters indicate emphasis and the colon indicates an elongated vowel sound.

In addition to reading and writing, children are involved in book selection, topic selection and a variety of “pre-composing” activities. Lauren and Katherine gather a large stack of interesting titles, and then choose additional books to take home. Lauren tells me later that she loves Miss Austin’s books. Sharonda selects from the popular song and poetry books gathered in a large plastic basket near the front of the room. Children do not wait for Susan’s guidance, but find materials and resources themselves, and seek assistance from each other.

Susan sets firm guidelines, insisting that children participate in defined reading and writing activities. But she is willing to negotiate, taking up Jackie’s suggestion for writing as well as reading. Children’s talk about texts provides examples of the how members of this community explicitly focus on reading and writing processes. Jackie and Marco’s exchange shows how language is used in awareness of various text genres and styles. Sharonda sees her classmates as resources for her reading and asks Lauren to help her with unfamiliar text.

Susan Austin is a teacher in the Dewey Center, where I spent my last five years of elementary classroom teaching. The school is a large city public school-of-choice with a whole language philosophy. The scene described above is a familiar experience for teachers at the Dewey Center. My colleagues and I observed children engaged in a wide range of meaning construction activities in our classrooms. Like Susan, we heard an enthusiastic “Yes!” to reading and writing experiences. On the day that I observed the vignette above, Lauren, the child I was observing, directly participated in some 37 literacy events involving 29 different texts.

Like most teachers, we had doubts and worries, and we shared them with each other. When should we trust that children were developing as literacy learners, and when should we be concerned? How far should we push children to be authors of their own learning, and when should we intervene? How could we move beyond teaching reading and writing

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to help children become critical readers and writers? How could we create more democratic classroom communities? Discussions and debates outside of our classrooms heightened our own concerns. The literacy learning we observed was not reflected within the district's deficit driven signs of "success": testing, grading, and evaluation.

Of greater concern to us were the growing questions about whole language education among African American educators and parents. Most of the children in our classrooms were African American. About half of the children at our school came from the poverty stricken neighborhood around the school. We could not change the conditions of poverty and the inequities of America's public schools from within our classrooms. But we found hope as children became problem posers (Freire, 1994) and decision makers in a curriculum that was built upon inquiry, authoring, and choice. Still, we were always working to improve and strengthen teaching and curriculum in our classrooms. In order to improve classroom teaching, we focused our attention on documenting and understanding learners and learning within our whole language school.

In *Voices of the Self*, an educational autobiography, Keith Gilyard describes studies of African American students in school. He states, "Oddly enough, conspicuously absent are the voices of the students themselves. I'm not speaking about the street stories or the recorded snatches of conversation that typically have provided some researcher with his or her data, but the articulate opinion of those African American students who face the task of public school language education. It is not being idealistic to expect at least some students to be able to furnish such information if encouraged to do so." (Gilyard, 1991, p. 10)

In this study, I ask young children to tell their own stories about literacy learning. I **make** visible "the voices of the students themselves." I also closely observed the literacy **learn**ing of these children. I have selected a case study approach in order to come as close as possible to understanding and describing literacy learning experiences from the child's perspective.

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Background of the study

During my last years of teaching in elementary schools, I worked with a group of teachers planning and transforming an inner city neighborhood school into a city-wide magnet school. Named after the progressive educator, John Dewey, the school philosophy embraces Dewey's experience-centered, democratic approach to teaching and curriculum (Dewey, 1963). The Dewey Center was conceived by a group of whole language teachers and adopted by a predominantly African American, inner city community. Unlike Kozol's (1991) description of city magnet schools in inner city neighborhoods where neighborhood children are not included, our school proposal was designed to serve neighborhood children first.

My colleagues and I believed that whole language theory had the potential for supporting teachers in creating the democratic schools that Dewey (1961) envisioned, bringing together a long tradition of progressive education with new understandings about language learning. We named our proposal after Dewey to place our school within a long history of progressive education and assure parents we were not experimenting on children. We never really thought the school would use Dewey's name, but parents voted almost unanimously to change the school name after investigating Dewey's philosophy and beliefs.

During the time when I worked at The Dewey Center, the school experienced a major transition on several levels. The population tripled from around 200 to 600 students. The demographics shifted as predominantly low-income families from nearby housing projects were joined by "citywide" families of various socio-economic levels. The school curriculum shifted from a focus on academic content, with reading and writing as the "subjects" of study, to an inquiry driven curriculum, with reading and writing (and math) as the tools of inquiry. Materials shifted from textbooks and worksheets to a wide range of children's literature and writing materials. Classroom organization shifted from a

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transmission model to a transactional model (Weaver, 1988). In a transactional classroom, children are active participants in their own learning.

These changes had a major impact on everyone in the school, including students, parents and staff. The school attracted a group of experienced teachers with a strong background and interest in whole language and holistic education. This community of evolving teachers and changing classrooms, with a school-wide focus on whole language theory and practice, provided an opportunity to observe how reading and writing develop in holistic school settings. It is within the climate of professional change that this study begins.

The evaluation committee

As a part of this change process, I chaired the school evaluation committee. Our goal was to develop tools for evaluation that would reflect the learning and teaching in our classrooms. The committee planned a three-year process for our own professional development. We planned to spend the first year learning ways of documenting literacy learning, and a second year learning how to interpret and analyze these "documents." During the third year, we would begin compiling data to develop a picture of the range of literacy development that was occurring in our school.

As a part of this project, I volunteered to follow a group of kindergarten children through the three years of our evaluation project. At that time, I was school librarian and I had the flexibility to observe and interact with children and teachers. I was given a half day a week to work with a group of twenty kindergartners. My meetings with the kindergartners included engaging them in reading and writing experiences and interviews about the reading and writing process. I followed fifteen of these children through first and second grade with classroom observations and additional interviews.

The evaluation project ended after the first few years. However, I describe the project because it influenced this study in two ways. First, the project grew out of the concerns of the teachers on that committee. Our primary interest was improving teaching

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and learning in whole language classrooms. However, we worked within a historic context of deficit views of children and literacy learning in inner city communities. Secondly, I began gathering data while focusing on the broad goals of the evaluation committee. As I conducted these observations and interviews, my questions were wide ranging:

- *What does it mean to become literate for children in our school?*
- *How can we document and describe children's literacy practices and literacy learning?*
- *How does the social structure of the classroom, and the "instruction" of the teacher, serve to enhance or inhibit literacy practices and literacy learning?*

These questions became more focused as I continued to follow the children for this study. As I reframed my research questions for doctoral research, I began with this extensive, longitudinal data set. I wanted to look closely at literacy development, and I had many years of experiences observing and describing children's reading and writing transactions with texts. What interested me was how the classroom community in a whole language school influenced children's literacy development. I narrowed the focus of my questions to focus on the social nature of literacy and literacy learning in the second grade classroom community.

Documenting literacy learning in holistic classrooms

The major goal of the Evaluation Committee at the Dewey Center was to develop ways of assessing learning and learners that matched our understandings of the richness and complexity of language and learning within the social setting of our classrooms. We needed to shift our ways of describing literacy to match our shifting paradigms in curriculum and teaching. Our understandings of whole language theory and practice were most influenced by researchers such as Brian Cambourne, Kenneth and Yetta Goodman, and Frank Smith, and teacher/researchers such as Nancie Atwell, and Bobbi Fisher.

In *What's Whole in Whole Language*, a book read and re-read by teachers at the Dewey Center, Ken Goodman (1991) proposes four theoretical "pillars" of whole language: a theory of language, a theory of learning, a theory of teaching, and a theory of curriculum. Kenneth Goodman, who spoke to teachers and parents at the Dewey Center

twice during the first few years, has since added a fifth pillar, a theory of the social nature of language and learning. However, as a whole language teacher, I had come to think and talk about the original four pillars supporting three “walls”: content, process, and the social/cultural community in the classroom (D. Goodman, 1991). Dewey Center teachers worked together to describe and define whole language in a brochure provided for parents and community (See figure 1).

A major tenet of whole language is that literacy learning in school can occur in the same way that children learn language at home. After studying young children learning language at home, Brian Cambourne (1988) identified eight conditions of language learning: immersion, demonstration, engagement, expectation, use, responsibility, approximation, and response. Cambourne’s model has implications for language teaching as well as learning, since his conditions suggest a social context for home learning that might be cultivated within the classroom community. Teachers at the Dewey Center used Cambourne’s model to critique the “authenticity” of classroom learning experiences compared with the real-life language learning experiences outside of school.

The vignette from Susan Austin’s classroom above illustrates some of the changes teachers at the Dewey Center observed within whole language classrooms. Children were reading and writing a wide range of literary genres, and enthusiastically discussing these texts. Students appeared to enjoy school and have a positive, comfortable attitude towards writing and reading. Children appeared to view themselves as a part of a social community of learners, and participation in the social community was a resource for individual learning. In addition, children appeared to view reading and writing as meaning construction and focused their attention on making sense rather than getting the words right.

Our observations were often discussed at lunchtime and at staff meetings, but they were not valued by district officials since the district recognized three measures of academic success: letter grades, standardized test scores, and attendance. The discrepancy between our descriptions of literacy learning (as illustrated in the vignette above) and official descriptions of literacy learning in our school is based on different underlying assumptions

Figure 1: Definition of "Whole Language" written by Dewey teachers

What is Whole Language?

Whole language focuses on the learning process. In a whole language school children are learning how to learn. Children participate in drama, role-playing, research and other experiences that give them tools for life-long learning. Children learn how to ask questions, select topics, find materials, read, write, interview, share, and present as they focus on science, social studies and literature themes. The school-wide young authors program takes children through the entire process of writing and publishing. In our classrooms, students are evaluated on their growth as learners as well as on their written projects or oral presentations.

Whole language is meaning-based. The best learning experiences are those that are meaningful to the child. Learning experiences such as letter writing, storytelling, field trips, interviews, reading fiction and non-fiction books, and drama help children to construct meaning and understand the world around them. Even beginning readers can start with signs or familiar stories. Language skills are easy to learn when the focus is on making sense.

Whole language is developmental. Children must be allowed to grow at their own pace. Mistakes are a part of the learning process. For example, as children become writers they "invent" spelling and punctuation rules. These invented spellings reflect the child's learning. Whole language teachers look for growth rather than perfection.

Whole language is experience-based. Hands-on activities and projects provide the basis for learning and provide many opportunities for reading, writing, talking, calculating and thinking. For example, science experiments allow children to see and understand science concepts. A classroom store teaches economics and provides practice with math and language. Paper and pencil activities can't replace first hand experience.

Whole language is child-centered. Teachers develop their classroom curriculum based on their understanding of children and how children learn. Activities grow out of the particular interests and needs of each class group and each child. Children have choices and are encouraged to express themselves in discussion, writing, and other creative media. Children are helped to select materials, plan activities, and organize their time so that they become self-motivated learners with a lasting thirst for knowledge.

Whole language is functional. Adults use language to get what we want, find things out, share with others, and express our thoughts and feelings. Children will read and write when they have a reason to read and write: to remember things, to give reports, to enjoy good book, or to say thank you to someone who lives far away. Learning experiences in whole language classrooms have a real-world purpose.

Whole language is strength oriented. A child's view of himself or herself is extremely important to success in school. Learning experiences that are successful and enjoyable give children confidence that they can learn, and encourage them to become active learners. Whole language teachers observe and evaluate children to learn about their background and interests. Class experiences build on the child's strengths, rather than focusing on the child's weaknesses.

Whole language is social. Children learn more when they talk and share with others. Classrooms are often noisy as children work on a variety of projects. Children are grouped in many different ways so that they may share their unique talents and points of view.

about *what counts as literacy*. Before documenting the literacy learning of children at the Dewey Center, I address the question “*What counts as literacy?*”

What counts as literacy?

A fundamental theory of literacy underlies any attempt to understand and describe literacy experiences. Answers to the questions “*What counts as literacy?*” and “Who counts as literate?” drive differing perspectives on literacy research, assessment, and instruction. For administrators in our district, like many state officials and others in the “public” audience, statistical measurements such as letter grades and test scores are *what counts as literacy*. These scores are used to label countless learners as “illiterate” in spite of the prevalent view in the professional community that reading tests are inaccurate, biased, and pedagogical flawed (Dyson, 1997; Edelsky, 1991; Shannon, 1989)._

Sonia Nieto (1996) describes three major theories that attempt to explain the “school failure of students, particularly those from culturally diverse and poor backgrounds.” In a deficit theory, school failure is viewed to be “the fault either of the students themselves, who are genetically inferior, or the social characteristics of their communities, which suffer from economic and cultural disadvantages.” (Nieto, 1996, p.229) An economic and social reproduction theory proposes that schools reproduce the economic and social structures of society. A cultural incompatibilities perspective suggests that school failure is caused by incongruities between the culture of the home and culture of the school.

The legacy of a deficit view of African American children

Gloria Ladsen Billings (1994) traces the “language of deprivation” in the educational community. In the 1960s, children were labeled “culturally deprived” and “disadvantaged.” Although the goal was to improve “student and teacher effectiveness, the use of such terms contributed to a perception of African American students as deprived, deficient, and deviant.” In the 1980s and 1990s, the popular term is at-risk. “The language of deprivation had changed, but the negative connotations remained.” (Ladson-Billings, 1994)

Nieto points out that while “characteristics students bring with them to school including their race, ethnicity, social class, and language, also often have a direct impact on their success or failure in school”, there is not a causal effect between these characteristics and school failure. “Instead it is the school’s perception of students’ language, culture, and class as inadequate and negative, and the subsequent devalued status of these characteristics in the academic environment, that help to explain school failure.” (1996, p. 230) It is not the child’s language, culture or class that is disadvantaged, but the way that schools engage in reproducing the discriminatory practices in the larger society.

Historically, deficit perspectives have led to what Gilyard (1991) calls “eradicationism” as educational policy. “From their [policy makers and educators] outlook poor reading and writing scores by Black English speakers are understood to be the direct result of these students’ inability to abandon their own delimiting dialect.” (Gilyard, 1991, p. 72) The thinking is that the language (and culture) of racial and ethnic minorities must be rejected before they can learn.

There has been a disturbing and regressive return to deficit driven school policy in the last several years. The New York Times recently profiled a group of Brooklyn third graders who are in summer school in order to pass a test that is their “ticket to the fourth grade.” This test not only determines who will pass or fail, but what teachers will do during the summer course.

The lesson plan, based in part on guidelines from the Chancellor, is closely linked to the city’s reading and math texts. It dictates what books to read -- an assortment of multi-cultural works intended to make reading more interesting for these students, who are mostly black or Hispanic -- and when to read them and even what is written on the chalkboard. Mrs. Hunt learned the other day that she must add “mandatory” to “summer school, Class 3-224” to remind students of the importance of being there. (Archibold, 1999, p. 38)

The Times reporter does not question the racial demographics of these mandatory students, or find it odd that one child’s mother reports that he “generally took home good

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grades.” He also does not appear disturbed by placing the names and pictures of children in a public article under the headline “Pupils with Low Scores Face Grueling Struggle to Learn.” These children are not only defined as illiterate by one test score, but they are being defined as struggling learners by one of the highest symbols of literacy in our country. How much is expectation, adult’s perceptions about what these children know and can do, a factor in this “grueling struggle.”

For these children, *what counts as literacy* is determined by their performance on one test. Not only are their literate lives outside of school discounted, but the professional judgment of teachers, reflected in grades and other evaluations, are discounted as well. Policies such as this one in Brooklyn are propped upon the widespread belief that American schools are failing, and teachers and children are at fault. Studies have shown that the “failure” of American children to achieve in schools is largely a “manufactured crisis.” (Berliner and Biddle, 1996) In an exhaustive and thorough analysis of measures of “reading performance” Kaestle and others (1991) report the following conclusions, among others:

- According to the US Census, the number of Americans who considered themselves “illiterate” decreased from 20% of Americans in 1870 to .06% of Americans in 1979.
- The median educational level of adults in the United States rose from 8.6 to 12.5 years of schooling between 1940 and 1980. Since “reading achievement” levels have remained stable at each grade level, the “level” of literacy in the nation has increased considerably.
- The definition of “functional illiteracy” has changed dramatically since the term emerged in the 1930s. First defined as at least three years of school, current “illiteracy measures” define “functional illiteracy” as an 8th or even 12th grade “reading level.”

These authors do not find any decline in literacy learning, even by the questionable statistics of test scores. This finding includes the literacy learning of disenfranchised groups. However they do point to a “gap” between children in wealthy districts and those in poorly funded districts: often including African American and poor children. “Even if schools today are performing about as well as they have in the past, they have never excelled at educating minorities and the poor.” (Kaestle, 1991, p. 128)

In *Savage Inequalities* Jonathan Kozol (1991) documents the inadequate funding of most public school systems and the gross inequities in public school funding between wealthy communities and poverty stricken communities.

There is a certain grim aesthetic in the almost perfect upward scaling of expenditures from the poorest of the poor to the richest of the rich within the New York City area: \$5,590 for the children of the Bronx and Harlem, \$6,340 for the non-white kids of Roosevelt, \$6,400 for the black kids of Mount Vernon, \$7,400 for the slightly better off community of Yonkers, over \$11,000 for the very lucky children of Manhasset, Jericho and Great Neck. In an ethical society, where money was apportioned in accord with need, these scalings would run almost in precise reverse. (Kozol, 1991, p. 123)

In this light, attacks on urban public schools serve to mask the inequities in our school systems based on cultural diversity and economic class. As these inequities become more difficult to ignore, the problems of large urban districts have become the focal point of attention in many state governments. The district where the Dewey Center was housed was recently taken over by the governor, who ordered the mayor to disband and reconstruct the school board. The first recommendations of the reconstituted school board were to require every student in the district to wear a uniform, and to institute military-style schools.

A mask of concern for inner city children conceals a political agenda to discredit public schools and blame economic inequity on its victims. Well meaning teachers, parents and community members are drawn to support deficit driven policy and curriculum for urban schools. However, many city parents see through this attempt to "help" the city's children by destroying the last vestiges of community input and control. One parent said on the local TV news, "It's almost as if our children are being declared criminals before they have a chance to show if they're good or bad students."

Some politicians and right wing interest groups have learned to use deficit theory to undermine and attack urban schools. This new attention to urban schools is not a response to actual declines in literacy learning within urban centers, but a concerted political effort to maintain a policy of inequity and discrimination in public school funding. In addition to take-overs of large urban districts, recent legislative measures favoring charter schools and

private school vouchers are calling cards of a political campaign aimed at ending public education as we know it.

These campaigns draw attention away from the real problems of urban education today. Berliner and Biddle (1996) outline their own list of the “real problems of American Education” obscured by the manufactured crisis. I summarize just a few of these problems below:

- Income and wealth inequity. “Income and wealth are much less evenly distributed here than in other Western nations.” (p.216) This income gap has widened in recent years. In 1987 dollars, families in the first decile of income had 14.8% less income than in 1977, while families in the top income decile were earning 49% more than they had ten years earlier.
- Growth and stagnation of the economy. “Over the past twenty five years, average wages in America fell behind the rate of inflation, and the only reason American families have been able to keep even is that more and more of those families have been supported by two wage earners. Also, costs of crucial basic needs- particularly housing and health care- have increased sharply in recent years.” (p. 233)
- Racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity. School districts have conflicts over how to distribute scant resources to meet the needs of various cultural and linguistic groups. In addition, these populations are unevenly distributed within states and districts.
- Prejudice, discrimination, and Black Americans. “Racism in this country has historically meant that Americans were willing to tolerate far worse conditions for the poor (who are thought to wear black faces) than are tolerated by other Western Countries. This tolerance of inadequacy for the poor has generated appallingly bad schools, where the educational accomplishments of the students are dismal.” (p. 227)
- Suburbs, ghettos and city centers. Local funding allows affluent parents to avoid paying for urban schools. Schools are often expected to provide recreational facilities and services lacking in cities.
- Violence and drugs. These issues affect the health and progress of American children. In addition, in countries “where rates of violence and drug abuse are lower, schools can spend more of their resources on the education of students.” (p. 232)
- The aging of the population. America has a growing aging population, a significant voting block promoting its own interests “which often do not include the needs of young people.” (p.234)

It is much easier to blame teachers and children for educational concerns than to face these “real” problems. In urban districts, school board and state concerns have become a political struggle “in defense of good teaching” (K. Goodman, 1998). In recent years, such attacks have particularly focused on whole language or “process” teachers. Reid Lyon, of the National Institute of Child Health and Development, has become a

spokesperson for a movement to legislate a phonics approach to reading instruction. At a hearing in California he testified, for example, that many inner city children hold their books upside down when they first come to kindergarten (Taylor, 1998). Lyon's comment discredits children's homes and families as language learning communities.

As a reading specialist, I have conducted many "book handling" interviews with kindergartners and first graders. The first task involves handing a book to a child upside down and backwards and asking them to show me the front. I have never met a kindergartner who did not turn the book right side up and identify the front cover. Of the twenty children that I interviewed at Dewey in the winter of their kindergarten year, all of them knew that books were read from left to right and top to bottom.

Within this campaign against public education, negative descriptions of African American children are used deliberately to gain public favor. One article in the Baltimore Sun describes wild, out of control children and the classroom teacher's comment that "it's not their fault." Pictures of African American children are prominently displayed. These descriptions play to middle class white stereotypes and lead to the foregone conclusion that inner city public school teachers are doing little to help these "poor urchins."

The political situation in literacy education today brings into clear focus the socio-political aspects of early literacy research in schools such as The Dewey Center. In an effort to document and represent children's learning, teachers and researchers struggle against a campaign to paint African American children as deficient language users and disabled learners. Within a deficit model, *what counts as literacy* is defined so narrowly that large groups of young readers and writers are labeled illiterate.

Economic and social reproduction

Kozol's (1991) *Savage Inequalities* suggests that schools reflect the economic and social inequities of the larger society. An economic and social reproduction perspective argues that that "schools reproduce the economic and social relations of society and therefore tend to serve the interests of the dominant classes." From this perspective, the

fact that “70 percent of students in urban schools were dropping out was understood not as a coincidence but actually as an intended outcome of the educational system. In other words these students were “doing just exactly what was expected: they were succeeding at school failure” (Nieto, 1996, p. 234).

Dyson finds that “socio-cultural and linguistic differences can be institutionally framed as correlates of academic deficiencies, from the very start of a child’s school life” (Dyson, 1997, p.11). Dyson and the teachers in the San Francisco East Bay study group identified a range of factors in differential treatment of students including: reputations, expectations, grade levels, retention, report cards, and standardized test. Nieto (1996) identifies many “structural factors in schools” that perpetuate discrimination based on differences including tracking, testing, curriculum, pedagogy, physical structure, disciplinary policies, limited roles of students and teachers, and limited parent and community involvement.

Patrick Shannon (1989) describes how tracking or ability grouping discriminates against children in “low” reading groups:

- Teachers interrupt students in lower ability groups during oral reading between two and five times more frequently.
- Seventy percent of reading in high ability groups is done silently, while 70% of reading in low ability groups is oral.
- Students in high groups were often asked to read texts that were easy for them while students in lower groups were asked to read texts that were difficult for them (Shannon, 1989, p. 102).

This data is especially disturbing in light of studies of the selection process for ability grouping. “What is most often found is that differences in dress, deportment, manners, language and language use are interpreted as intellectual deficits.” (Shannon, 1989, p. 103)

Cultural reproduction explains some of the problems of urban education without placing blame on learners. However, Nieto points out several problems with accepting a simple explanation of “cultural reproduction” to explain student failure. One problem is that social and cultural reproduction theories focus on social class and “almost complete(ly)

neglect the role of gender and race” (Nieto, 1996, p. 235). For example, women often worked in the home in the past making it “unclear how females were prepared by schools for their role in society” by inequities in school funding. In addition, “The purposes of the dominant class are not perfectly reflected in the schools but are resisted and modified by the recipients of schooling. (p. 235)”

Cultural incompatibility

Another explanation for inequities in educational achievement focuses on cultural incompatibilities, where “school culture and home culture are often at odds.”

The more consistent that home and school cultures are, the reasoning goes, the more successful students will be, in general terms. The opposite is also true: The more that students’ experiences, skills, and values differ from the school setting, the more failure they will experience (Nieto, 1996, p.235).

Edelsky describes power based inequality in her study of the bilingual classroom where English speaking children did not learn Spanish. English speaking children were often in the role of language teacher, while the Spanish speaking children were always in the role of learner.

The gross inequality of power between two languages (and two groups of people) that guarantees that one set of young children will always be language teachers and the other set language learners, that one set will be congratulated for making almost no progress while the other is disparaged for making tremendous (but not ‘total’) progress -- the situation is not one that any program can change. (Edelsky, 1991, p.28)

Lisa Delpit (1995) worries that holistic classrooms may fail to educate African American children in the “culture of power” that they need to survive in dominant society. Delpit describes five aspects of power in urban classrooms:

1. Issues of power are enacted in classrooms.
2. There are codes or rules for participating in power, that is, there is a “culture of power.”
3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.
4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.
5. Those with power are frequently least aware of -- or least willing to acknowledge -- its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence (Delpit, 1995, p. 24).

Delpit's concern is that European American teachers, either by design or by ignorance, are likely to fail to address issues of power in the classroom. She is particularly concerned about process writing or whole language practices because of their "indirect" approach, which may not serve to make the "rules of that culture" explicit.

For Delpit acquiring the codes of power is *what counts as literacy*. Her assumption is that reading, writing and speaking like someone within the "culture of power" will allow the learner to achieve power: "This means the success in institutions -- schools, workplaces, and so on -- is predicated on acquisition of the culture of those who are in power."

Delpit proposes that it is important for African American children to be directly and explicitly taught the culture of power in school. However, Edelsky's study suggests that we must be careful that such teaching doesn't reproduce the power relationships between cultural groups. Ladsen-Billings (1994) has developed a criterion for "culturally relevant" teaching that seeks in all teachers and students ways of developing respect for and critical analysis of culture and cultural differences.

One limitation of "the cultural mismatch theory" is that it "is still insufficient to explain why some students succeed and others fail." Nieto sites Gibson's study of Punjabi students who have been quite successful in school (Nieto, 1996, p. 236). Edelsky's (1991) conclusion that the power differential in bilingual classrooms "is not one that any program can change" suggests studies of literacy learning must look beyond notions of "success or failure."

Unexamined assumptions of "failure theories"

Edelsky warns of some pitfalls of transformative research and/ or teaching including "unexamined acceptance of prevailing conceptions of language instruction and evaluation, especially written language" and "a focus on failure, along with an absence of concrete examples of liberatory practice" (Edelsky, 1991, p.3).

Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (1991) and *Amazing Grace* (1995) are crucially important in exposing the relationship between schooling and discrimination in the United States. However, Kozol also provides an example of unexamined assumptions about language competency and language learning in inner city communities.

We may estimate that nearly half of the kindergarten children in Chicago's public schools will exit school as marginal illiterates.

Those very few who graduate and go to college rarely read well enough to handle college-level courses.

In strictly pedagogical terms, the odds of failure for a student who starts out at Woodson Elementary School, and then continues at a non-selective high school, are approximately ten to one. The odds of learning math and reading on the street are probably as good or even better. The odds of finding a few moments of delight, or maybe even happiness, outside these dreary schools are better still.

Kozol describes a failure mechanism that makes it difficult for Chicago students to graduate from high school, go on to college, or do well at the colleges they attend. He equates this with students' actual abilities to read, write, and think. In spite of the wise and well-read people that Kozol interviewed for *Savage Inequalities* and *Amazing Grace*, he buys into the "failure" of children to learn to read and write, most likely based on test scores. Edelsky deplores this practice as contradictory for transformative educators. "Even though tests are hopelessly biased, even though they are conceptually invalid, even though they are used to support social stratification, tests and test scores are nevertheless appealed to - with a straight face - in work that is supposed to promote change" (Edelsky, 1991, p. 4).

Kozol's last comment about learning on "the street" is ironic in that it appears to underestimate not only the people of the inner city, but the importance of social literacy and local literacies. Brian Street studied social literacies outside of school. He reports that "uneducated" people in Iran read and write in rural villages, but there is often a mismatch in "literacy practices" between the community and the school. Further, in homes and communities reading and writing is a social practice, embedded within the activities of daily life (Street, 1995).

Carole Edelsky warns that a focus on reasons for “school failure” can be “conserving” of social and economic injustices rather than “transformative”:

Much research in language and education provides both summaries and also richly detailed pictures of these failures, so much in fact that it is the ‘scientific’ mainstay, however unintentionally, of a ‘failure industry’. As McDermott has said, millions of people are ‘measuring documenting, remediating, and explaining’ these failures. What is conserving about all the activity is that it puts an analytic distance on failure and offers no countering ‘language of possibility’ (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985 in Edelsky, 1991, p.6).

Denny Taylor (1993) claims the “in-the-head” measures of tests and grades focus on “what’s wrong with the child” as educators attempt to help children, particularly those in trouble. She describes how this process can produce the failures it attempts to avoid, for families and schools as well as for children:

When we evaluate children we get lost in our own abstractions and children fail. When children fail, families are placed in jeopardy. Sometimes families fail. When children fail, teachers are held accountable. In essence, they too are found wanting. The ultimate irony of the situation is that when children are given the opportunity to create an authentic foundation for their own existence, they do not fail. In our adult-made, in-the-head-tested educational system, we consistently underestimate the enormous potential of children to participate in the construction of their own learning environments. (Taylor, 1993, p. 26)

While *what counts as literacy* may differ in Kozol or Delpit’s discussions, there is often an underlying assumption that they are failing to learn to read and write, supported by statistical measures such as tests or grades. With these constant failure messages, urban teachers tend to assume that students in our classrooms compare poorly with suburban counterparts. Teacher’s expectations influence how children progress in schools. However, there is little evidence outside of test scores to support this assumption. One reason for the unexamined assumption that inner city children can’t read and write is the commonly held belief that literacy has a causal relationship with economic success. Success in school, in terms of grades and promotion, and later economic success in life are equated with literacy levels.

Literacy and economic success

In our highly literate society, then common assumption is that highly successful people are highly literate. By extension, poor people are assumed to be uneducated and

illiterate. Literacy is viewed as the key to economic advancement, while illiteracy is inextricably linked with poverty. Lauren expressed this viewpoint as a kindergartner:

- Debi: How do you think people learn how to read?
Lauren: They go to a library.
D: They go to a library? Why would you go to a library to learn how to read?
L: Because reading is important.
D: Reading is important?
L: And you got to know how to read.
D: Why is it important?
L: Um... because reading is very important and you need to know how to read.
D: What would happen if you don't know how to read?
L: Then you would be on the streets... holding a sign.

Lauren's comment illustrates how notions of *what counts as literacy* are imbedded in our family and cultural beliefs. In a study of "print awareness" of preschoolers, Y. Goodman, Altwerger and Marek found that 3 to 6 year olds are reading the print in their environment such as stop signs, logos, and product labels. They found that young children are able to "read" (make sense of) many product logos and signs. Predictably, children read print they were familiar with, and were more likely to read print given a more complete context. Few children read the "milk" printed in handwritten letters; more children read the logo "milk" copied in the original shape and color; still more children read the word "milk" on the side of a carton. Since the children were interviewed using contrived tasks, the researchers speculated young children are even more proficient readers given the full social context of the breakfast table or the grocery story.

The researchers found no correlation between income levels and ability to read environmental print. Children of all income groups performed equally well, responding to texts that they had experienced in family or community literacy events. However, while all children were readers, lower income children were less likely to identify themselves as readers. In addition, middle income children were more likely to suggest reading was learned at home and it was "easy", while lower income children were more likely to believe that reading would be learned at school and would be "hard."

As a teacher, I used procedures from this print awareness study to evaluate young readers. For me, the study had several important implications. First, when you go looking

for literacy, you generally find it. This maxim is true for illiteracy as well. Secondly, young children are reading the texts around them. Third, reading signs and logos and other “environmental” print may be more universally familiar to young children than reading books. Finally, very young children have already formed perceptions about what counts as reading and who counts as a reader.

As a reading specialist and classroom teacher in Detroit, I evaluated many children’s reading using miscue analysis (Y. Goodman, Watson and Burke 1996), a procedure where children read and retell an entire story. In fifteen years, I only met one child who was still a beginning reader after completing third grade, and he had never been to school before he came to my fifth grade classroom. However, it is common for children labeled as “non-readers” to deny their own reading and writing abilities. Reading a TV Guide, according to one group of fourth graders, was so easy anyone could do it. School reading tasks, on the other hand, were difficult and challenging.

The popular link between literacy and economic success has led to the assumption that inner-city families and communities lack literacy experiences. The “common sense” belief that poverty equals ignorance is so widespread that it is often accepted by teachers, parents and children in these communities. Evidence of proficient reading and writing in home and community contexts is rejected in this view of *what counts as literacy*.

Social literacy in family and community

Ethnographic studies have taken the study of early literacy to the breakfast table and the grocery store. Shirley Brice Heath (1983) describes the poor African American community of Trackton, where adults sit on their front porches reading the paper and calling to each other about the news. While children in these families may not be reading picture books, they are sitting on laps or playing nearby when these literacy events occur. Luis Moll describes what he calls the “funds of knowledge” in the Latino community, which include community resources about school, church, auto repair, cultural history, health and medicine, and other areas of expertise (Moll, 1994).

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) observed an inner city African American community in the north. They selected families with children who appeared successful in first grade, and discovered a system of support for children's literacy development within the extended family. The authors compare their study to Heath's and identify a wide range of types and uses of reading and writing including:

- instrumental, dealing with schools, and public agencies
- social/interactional, such as letters, notes, and cards
- news related, newspapers, magazines, etc. to gain information
- confirmational, documents, special writings or announcements
- critical/educational, schoolwork and studies

Although not all children have book reading experiences at home, all children have experiences with story telling. Miller and Mehler (1994) describe the "power of personal storytelling" within families. The authors note that all families engage in storytelling, and young children are strong storytellers by the time they enter school. They found several consequences of family storytelling for language learners including: acquisition of narrative skills, a heightened opportunity to learn past the immediate event or incident, and "self-construction."

The authors observe that "personal storytelling is an important means by which young children, together with family members, experience and re-experience self in relation to other" (Miller and Mehler, 1994). They speculate that bringing personal storytelling into kindergarten classrooms would make children's transitions into school easier, as they would explore self in relation to other in the classroom community. However, the researchers found few opportunities for storytelling when the children in the study entered school, and those storytelling experiences tended to focus on curricular goals and differed from the social construction of stories in families.

In each of these studies, meaning construction occurs within the social context of family and community. It is questionable whether individual instruments for evaluation or research reflect the child's linguistic understandings and abilities within the supportive social context of language practices in homes and communities.

A comprehensive account of self-development would have to be much more dynamic than has previously envisioned: it would have to take into account not only the child's moment-by-moment interpersonal encounters, but his or her participation in iterative narrations of those encounters, which are themselves imbedded in moment-by-moment interpersonal encounters" (Miller and Mehler, 1994, p. 47).

Studies that have followed children from home to school have found that children have fewer opportunities for the rich experiences with language observed in home settings. Wells and others (1986) audiotaped children's language and literacy experiences during the pre-school years. When the researchers followed these children to school they found "compared with homes, schools are not providing an environment that fosters language development. For no child was the language experience of the classroom richer than that of the home -- not even for those believed to be "linguistically deprived" (Wells, 1986, p. 87).

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) also found children's literacy experiences in school bore little resemblance to the rich social experiences of children at home. They followed one child, Shauna, through a day of school. While the first grader participated in a wide range of literacy events in conversation with an extended group of family members, she spent her school day quietly working on worksheets, looking at her library book, and playing silently with flashcards and language puzzles. She also spent many minutes silently waiting for activities to begin.

There is a prevalent view that inner city parents do not provide literacy experiences for their children, because of their own presumed illiteracy. Toby Curry, a middle school teacher at the Dewey Center, introduced a roving "parent journal" that traveled from family to family. Curry wrote back to each parent's letter, sending a copy to the last parent while passing the journal on to the next family. Parents wrote eloquent messages about the work their children were doing, their own aspirations, and their thoughts about Curry's classroom. They read the letters of previous parents and wrote responses in support and admiration. In four years of parent journals, there was only one case where a family member didn't add a letter to the roving journal.

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' study of inner city families pushes the boundaries of how we answer the question "*What counts as literacy?*"

True, some of the parents with whom we worked did not finish high school, and some of the older children did drop out of school during the four years that we visited the families. In addition, some might argue that many of the children came from "broken homes." But no one can deny that these were literate homes. One of the explanations for this apparent paradox lies in the persistent use of obsolete definitions of literacy as a series of dispassionate skills that can be counted, measured and weighed (Taylor, 1988, p. 200).

When children do not succeed in school, it is common to blame the "lack of language models" in the homes. However, in each of these studies, children brought richly literate backgrounds to school. Heath observed rural children overhearing newspaper conversations as they grew up on their relatives' knees. Miller and Mehler note that oral storytelling is a strength of most young preschoolers. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines describe inner city children participating in a wide variety of literacy events. When we invited parents to write letters at the Dewey Center, we got thoughtful and often eloquent responses. Wells points out that no child in his study experienced language in school as the same rich opportunity for talk and interaction that they enjoyed at home.

These studies suggest that school discourse communities could gain much if teachers were more aware the discourse of families and communities outside of school. The prevalent view that inner city families are illiterate has at least two negative implications for inner city children in schools. First, it turns the focus of society away from fixing the real "gates" that keep inner city children from succeeding such as racial discrimination, poverty, violence, etc. If illiteracy is blamed for the lack of economic success, then schools, teachers and even learners are at fault, and not American system of economic inequity. The rallying cry of "illiteracy" is used to obscure social injustice and economic discrimination.

Secondly, many concerned educators and public figures accept that inner city children (and adults) can't read and write, often based on test scores and similar statistics. The danger in the assumption that inner city children come from illiterate homes is that the focus of schooling (for example President Clinton's education initiatives) becomes merely

teaching them to read and write. Instead, it becomes important for teachers and classrooms to recognize and affirm children's literacy practices in homes and communities since these practices are often invisible and discounted.

In addition, educators must look further than literacy levels to consider the role of schooling in improving the economic status or quality of life of inner city children. Delpit states that children need to be educated in the "discourses of power" in order to change power structures. Her suggestion implies that literacy learning moves beyond the acts of reading and writing to include negotiating larger social issues and structures. In addition to affirming children's home literacy practices, schools have a role in providing connections between the social literacy practices at home and the social literacy practices in the wide range of discourse communities in the wider world. *What counts as literacy* involves participating in the social literacies of the child's world.

What counts as literacy? : A social perspective

Researchers in the field of New Literacy Studies use the term "social literacies" to describe a socio-cultural perspective of *what counts as literacy*. Reading and writing, from a socio-cultural perspective, involve a variety of social literacy practices that include the literacy event, the meanings brought to the event, the characteristics of the literacy event, and the social relationships involved. In this description, literacy is a social process difficult to describe using grades, attendance, test scores and other individualistic measures abstracted from social contexts.

From a New Literacy Studies perspective, there is not a single entity called "literacy," but "multiple literacies" depending on social context. David Barton (1994) describes a social perspective on literacy:

- Literacy is a social activity and can best be described in terms of the literacy practices which people draw upon in literacy events.
- People have different literacies which they make use of, associated with different domains of life. Examining different cultures or historical periods reveals more literacies.
- People's literacy practices are situated in broader social relations. This makes it necessary to describe the social setting of literacy events, including the ways in which social institutions support particular literacies. (Barton, 1994, p. 34)

Researchers in New Literacy Studies have primarily been working with adult populations or at the university level and few New Literacy studies have focused on the social nature of literacy practices in elementary classrooms. Anne Haas Dyson (1993) has brought studies of social literacy into schools with her descriptions of children's writing as "social work." Dyson describes how young children develop as authors in relation to others in classroom "story-making." This occurs when stories are "socially enacted" within classrooms where children write on self-selected topics within social groupings, and have opportunities to "perform" their stories through reading or drama:

When socially enacted, though, narratives not only communicate, but they allow their authors to manipulate or regulate their own identities and those of others. Through their narratives, the observed children worked to (a) establish commonalities, or social cohesion, with others; (b) criticize others or defend themselves from others' criticisms; and (c) take the stage, the interactional spotlight, for an artistic performance. (Dyson, 1993, p. 58)

From a New Literacy studies perspective, theoretical models of *what counts as literacy* can be categorized by how the researcher/educators consider the social and political worlds of the participant. Brian Street (1998) groups theoretical approaches to literacy into three types of theoretical models: Autonomous models, Critical Literacy, and New Literacy studies.

Autonomous models of literacy

Defining *what counts as literacy* as a score on an achievement test or report card is an example of an "autonomous" model of reading (Street, 1998). Literacy is defined as an individual's collection of skills. From this perspective, researchers and educators consider language abilities and language learning autonomously from a social context. Oral language is seen as separate from written language. Cultural issues, linguistic issues, and socio-political issues are not seen as connected with literacy issues. The goal for educators is to identify the learner's problems and fix them.

Street describes an “autonomous” view of reading and writing as one that divorces practice from cultural or political context. The instructional “study skills” approach focuses on “fixing” student’s problems. Autonomous views of language can be connected to deficit perspectives. They result in reductionist pedagogies, where language is segmented into small pieces. Since autonomous perspectives ignore the role of culture and cultural diversity, they may lead to eradicationist education with the goal of eliminating any differences between the child’s language and the expected language of the school.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy can be most closely associated with the work of Paulo Friere (for example, 1994). Literacy is not an individual ability to read and write, but a tool for identifying problems and solutions in communities, particularly oppressed communities. The goal is not just to read and write, but to think and critique, and ultimately to act. Critical literacy means educating for democracy. For a growing group of “social justice” educators, educating for democracy includes establishing democratic classrooms and schools. Learning focuses on relevant experiences and language, meaningful to the learner. Evaluation is strength oriented and contextual.

From Street’s perspective, the “weakness” of Critical Literacy in classrooms is a focus on “academic socialization,” the “acculturation of students into academic discourse” (Street, 1998). In academic socialization, student reading and writing is viewed as a “transparent medium of representation” that can be critiqued by the teacher and shaped towards the mainstream culture. Although the focus is on meaning, rather than skills, there is a lack of focus on institutional practices. Power is viewed as a quantity rather than as a social process.

Street places Whole Language within a critical literacy perspective. Delpit criticizes Whole Language for not acculturating children into the discourse of power. My observations of Susan Austin’s classroom raise questions about both of these contradictory statements. In the following chapters I describe how Susan and the children shift social

structures such as scheduling and assignments in ways that address underlying institutional practices. In addition, discussions among members of this community often include making underlying language practices and processes visible and explicit in ways that go beyond acculturation into mainstream culture.

Since a prime function of education, and parenting as well, is acculturating learners into the community, it is a challenge to imagine a shift in teaching practices from a Critical Literacy to a Literacy Studies perspective. However Street raises an important question to consider, particularly in light of Delpit's critique. As Gee (1991) puts it, since literacy is a social language process, learning to read always involves learning to read a discourse. In my own words, when a child is learning how to read and write, they are also learning how readers and writers act within particular social literacy events.

In this study I found many examples of how Lauren and Marco are learning how to be a reader and writer, at the same time that they are learning how to read and write. When these social practices (how to be a reader and writer) are made explicit, then children have an opportunity to address underlying issues of power and social structures of schooling. I'm not saying whole language classroom communities, or Susan's class in particular, consistently address our role as acculturation of students into the discourse of schooling. However I describe in Chapter Six how educators consider the role of school discourse communities in making connections between the discourse of home and families and the discourse communities in the larger society.

Street divides descriptions of *what counts as literacy* into Autonomous models, Critical Literacy, and New Literacy Studies. However, while these categories address perspectives on the social practices of reading and writing, they do not address the reading and writing as language processes. Over the past thirty years there has been groundbreaking research in reading and writing processes that has significantly shifted perspectives among educators about what it means to read and write.

For example, Freire's classroom pedagogy (Freire, 1994, Shor, 1987) focused on discussions of symbolic or significant words. Recent work has recognized the potential of adult beginning readers to construct whole, relevant texts such as letters, articles, songs, and books. While New Literacy Studies theorists tend to ignore these distinctions, transactional perspectives and social perspectives inform each other. I'm not convinced that we must abandon critical or transactional perspectives as we move forward into new understandings of literacy as social practice.

A transactional perspective of what counts as literacy

Research traditions that view reading and writing as language processes are transactional because they focus on the transaction between reader (or writer) and the written text. Transactional perspectives are also called psycholinguistic or sociolinguistic perspectives (Smith, 1971; Weaver, 1988; K. Goodman, 1996) reading and writing are seen as constructive processes, involving both language and thinking. Rosenblatt (1971) also describes a transactional view of reading to include the aesthetic experience that the reader has in "evoking" a text.

A transactional model of reading is built on basic assumptions about language and learning. Literacy is written language and not oral language written down. Reading and writing are active processes with readers using printed text to construct meanings. Readers and writers bring meaning to the text in order to evoke meanings in transaction with the text. These meanings are shaped by the participants' previous experiences and understandings, and are thus influenced by socio-cultural histories. Psycholinguistic perspectives are influenced by cognitivist views of learning. Learning to read and write is a process of constructing or inventing the principles and rules of written language. In the transactional process, the reader/writer acts on the text as the text acts on the reader and writer. Through this transaction, both reader/writer and text are changed.

From a transactional perspective, meaning construction (or "evoking the poem") is *what counts as literacy*. Preschoolers who look at the logo "Crest" and say "toothpaste"

are readers because they are able to construct meaning with text. Understanding precedes comprehension in the sense that a reader brings meaning (language and experiences) to a text in order to construct meaning with a text. The term transaction implies a dynamic process where the reader acts on the text and the text acts on the reader. As a result, both reader and text are changed.

Researchers exploring the reader's role in meaning construction rediscovered the work of Louise Rosenblatt (1978) who first described reading as a "transaction" between a reader and a text. Rosenblatt was most concerned with the readings of works of literature. She distinguished between "efferent" reading, strictly to gain information, and "aesthetic" reading such as the "lived through experience" of reading a book. The reading of a work of literature is, to Rosenblatt, as much a creative act as conducting an orchestra.

Transactional perspectives of reading have a different research focus than autonomous or skills perspectives. The research lens is enlarged from a focus on sub-skills for working on small pieces of language (such as sounds, letters or words) to the reader or writer's transactions with whole meaningful, functional texts. Transactional research focuses on reading and writing processes, rather than measurable products. The reader's retellings and interpretations of texts become significant in evaluating comprehension.

Ken Goodman (1996) developed a methodology for understanding the reading process called miscue analysis. This procedure involves having the student read and retell an entire text without interruption. Goodman coined the word "miscue" to describe readers' mistakes, which he found revealed a good deal about the language systems and strategies involved in reading. This represented a shift from a deficit model uncovering a reader's weaknesses to a model that viewed readers as knowledgeable language users. Miscue analysis studies (Brown, 1996) have shown that all readers, even those labeled as "slow" readers, have a wealth of experiences and language strategies for making sense of texts.

In the field of early or emergent literacy, a group of Piagetian researchers studied how young readers and writers invent the rules and principles of written language (Y. Goodman, 1990). Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) identify three stages in the literacy development of young children in Argentina. Very young pre-school children appear to hypothesize that writing is *iconographic*, with written symbols representing meaning directly. For example, children predicted that the word “cat” (gato in Spanish) should be bigger than the word “kitten” (gatito).

English has some iconographic symbols, the most obvious ones being numerals. Numerals, like Chinese characters, represent concepts rather than sounds. In interviews with young children, it is common for children to read numbers before they read letters or words. They have even surprised me by reading symbolic texts such as “15% off.” This reading ability may reflect a familiarity with products and advertisements, or it may be because of the iconographic nature of these symbols.

Children later realize there is a relationship between the spoken utterance and the printed words and will attempt to match spoken words or syllables to units of written texts (letters or words). For example, when my son was about three, he pointed to each letter in the text “PUSH” on the lid of a trash can and read, “trash can, trash can.” He had to repeat trash can twice to match each letter. Ferreiro and Teberosky call this the *syllabic stage* because Spanish speaking children tend to focus on matching each spoken syllable to one unit of text. The work of these Piagetian researchers shows that children construct various hypotheses about how written language works before arriving at an understanding of the alphabetic nature of English. In the view of these researchers, once a child reaches the alphabetic stage “the rest is just mechanics.”

Other early transactional studies of literacy focus on how children learn what it means to be a reader and writer in their world. Marie Clay (1972) developed book handling activities to explore young children’s awareness of how print is organized and read in books. As mentioned earlier, Goodman, Marak, and Altwerger developed a variation of

Clay's "Sand Test" and also created a procedure for exploring children's "print awareness" or understandings of how print is organized and read in advertisements and signs. Many researchers (Wells, 1986) have explored children's responses to storybook reading. These researchers have found that as children are learning to read and write, and even before, they are learning about how print is organized and used within their social worlds.

Literacy as social practice and language process

Transactional perspectives of reading and writing are limiting if reading and writing are observed separately from the social and cultural context. Ferreiro and Teberosky's study, for example, was based on Piagetian type "tasks" using isolated words and sentences. Miscue analysis, while involving whole texts, is often conducted in contrived situations outside of the "real life" social practices of reading and writing. These methodologies are important since they have taught us about literacy and learning processes. However, they have limitations in understanding the nature of literacy within social literacy events.

On the other hand, *social literacies* perspectives often ignore literacy as a language process. As Edelsky puts it, this perspective "changes the terms altogether, switching the focus from psychological goings-on to social ones" (Edelsky, 1991, p. 79). Edelsky argues that literacy should be viewed as *both* language process and social practice:

It is a short step from seeing literacy as a social practice to seeing it only as a social practice. And, in fact, because interior processes have been 'discredited' as 'psychological' within the literacy-as-social-practice view, this work discourages a serious consideration of the profoundly social nature of interior processes, and, reciprocally, the extent to which underlying processes are implicated in social practice (Edelsky, 1991, p. 79).

In this study, I use ethnographic-style and transactional methodologies to describe literacy as both social practice and language process. I start by identifying literacy events, or occasions when children participate in social experiences with texts. Within these literacy events I use miscue analysis and writing analysis methods to look closely at the children's transactions with text. These observations are informed by debriefing interviews

when I ask the children to talk about the day's events and read and discuss the texts they read and wrote during the day. Bringing the social practice and language process perspectives together, I attempt to address the complex nature of literacy practices in schools.

What counts as literacy? Learning from Marco and Lauren

Even when we speak of literacy as a social process, we rarely look beyond the literacy event and the linguistic transactions that take place. So much of the process remains buried in the multiple layers of communication that are a part of our contextual worlds. We forget that to be literate is a uniquely human experience, a creative process that enables us to deal with ourselves and to better understand each other. (Taylor, 1988, p. 200)

As a researcher, this study has been a journey of renewal and discovery. After many hours watching Marco and Lauren negotiate the literacy events of the day, I have renewed my appreciation for the "uniquely human experience" of being literate. I have watched in amazement as Marco, while still discovering the alphabetic nature of text, invents a symbolic outline for a group project. I listened with wonder to Lauren's stories and her descriptions of what it means to be a writer. After observing Marco and Lauren literacy experiences in this classroom community, I have four general conclusions.

1. Children are becoming literate as they participate in social literacy events.

This study builds on the assumption that children learn language through using language. Halliday (1979) puts it this way: learn through language, learn about language, learn language. Susan's whole language classroom provides a wide range of social literacy practices with a rich meaning-potential for young readers, writers, and language learners. In one day of second grade, Lauren participated in 37 literacy events involving 29 different texts. On Marco's Day, he participated in 30 literacy events involving 27 different texts. Most of these literacy events involved reading or writing literature (fiction, non-fiction, and poetry) although many events involved reading and writing for other social activities. A small number of events involved school exercises, for the purpose of instruction or evaluation. As participants, children are becoming readers and writers (learning language) as they are using language to read, write, and learn.

2. *Children participate in events as readers and writers, but also as listeners, observers, and overhearers.*

Children in this community participate in literacy events in a variety of social roles, not only as readers and writers, but as observers and listeners. In addition, I discovered that children learn language not only by learning through language, but through many other social practices such as planning, organizing, getting ready for lunch, and so on. As children participate in social literacy practices, they are learning to read and write but they are also learning how literacy works within a particular social and cultural context. Literacy events occur not only during content area learning experiences, but during procedural activities as well. The range of events and activities expands notions of “text” and “genre”.

This study has expanded my understanding of the social activities, texts and genres of literacy events in the classroom. As I expected, the children in this classroom are immersed in a range of experiences with literature texts: reading and writing fiction, non-fiction and poetry. There are very few commercial “school” texts, and literature texts are the mainstay of children’s reading and writing material. However, half of the texts the case study informants encounter are “instrumental” texts, written and read during other social activities. Children use texts as tools to accomplish a variety of results and goals: recording and reporting information, planning or regulating classroom activities, and so on. In these literacy events, reading and writing are often invisible as they are imbedded in the social activity where the focus is not text construction. Literacy events involving these instrumental texts are usually familiar and comfortable to the children, suggesting that these practices are similar to literacy practices outside of school.

3. *Literacy events include demonstrations and discussions of language and thought processes, making implicit understandings explicit for participants.*

An important finding of this study is the potential of classroom literacy events for making language processes explicit. In Marco and Lauren’s classroom, children and teacher are interested in language, learning, and thinking processes. The teacher plays an

important role, prompting many process discussions. These discussions often introduce specific values, such as the importance of meaning construction. In addition, the teacher's language connects children with a discourse community of people interested in literacy and learning processes. Discussions about literacy processes make these processes explicit to the reader/ writer, and also to the observers. These discussions focus on the forms and conventions of written language, the function of literacy in society, and the process of reading and writing. Explicit discussions of literacy and language form an important link between the discourse and literacy practices children bring from home communities and the discourse and literacy practices in the wider community. I have come to believe that one largely untapped potential of schooling is to make explicit connections between home discourse and the language of wider communication.

While I observed many examples of discussions where implicit linguistic processes and practices were made explicit, these discussions were not lessons introduced to teach a particular language convention or practice. Instead, these discussions occurred within the social context of a literacy event involving meaning construction for a social purpose other than language learning. Discussions were generally initiated by Susan's observations ("Marco made a prediction."), children's observations ("Look, Miss Austin, one page has black and white and the other page has color."), Susan's questions ("How did you figure that out?"), or children's questions.

4. As children become literate within the social context of classroom literacy events and practices, they are crafting literate identities.

We use language not only to meet needs and functions but to understand who we are in relationship to the people around us. As Marco and Lauren participate in literacy experiences in this classroom, they develop a sense of who they are in relation to other readers and writers. These identities are social constructions, crafted through the social interactions of literacy events. Lauren and Marco each describe themselves as "a good reader". They appear to know what's going on and approaches classroom reading and writing experiences with interest and confidence.

In this study, I attempt to describe the process “buried in the multiple layers of communication that are part of our contextual worlds”. I am left with a new appreciation for the intensity and integrity of social literacy experiences within any discourse community. More than ever, I am convinced that school literacy events must have the richly contextualized layers of communication that are present in literacy events outside of school. I am convinced that children need opportunities to interact with each other as they use language in school. It is through these interactions that children not only learn to read and write, but learn how to be readers and writers in their contextual worlds.

In this chapter I have provided the history of this study and the rationale for the study. In the next chapters I provide a description of the study and a presentation and interpretation of the data that has led me to these overall conclusions. The subsequent chapters are organized as follows.

Overview of chapters

Chapter Two: The Research Journey.

Chapter Two describes the study methodology, and the background of my data collection and analysis process. I describe my desire to move away from defensive “racehorse” comparisons and look closely at literacy learning in whole language classrooms. I trace the evolution of this study beginning when I interviewed kindergartners for the school evaluation committee, continuing with several pilot studies as I followed these children through second grade, and concluding with my decision to focus on the social nature of classroom literacy for Marco and Lauren.

Chapter Three: Lauren and Marco in Two Days of School

This chapter describes Marco and Lauren’s immersion in multiple experiences with literacy texts and practices through participation in classroom literacy events. I begin with an introduction to Marco and Lauren. I provide a time line for Marco’s Day and Lauren’s Day, and discuss the overall classroom structures and how they related to literacy. This introduction to the children creates an understanding of my perceptions as I observed Marco and Lauren at the end of second grade.

Chapter Four: Literacy Events and Practices in Lauren and Marco's School Days

Chapter Four begins by drawing connections between participation in literacy events and literacy learning. Next I describe and discuss the literacy events in Marco's Day and Lauren's Day. The Marco and Lauren's literacy experiences are sorted by the social activity (i.e. reading to the class.) within each event. Grouping the events by social activity allows a discussion of the social practices underlying the children's literacy experiences. Literacy events are grouped into three general categories of activity: Reading and writing literature, Reading and writing while engaged in another social activity; and Reading and writing school exercises.

Chapter Five: Making Meaning in a Classroom Community

Chapter five explores the nature of Lauren and Marco's literacy experiences in term of meaning construction, social function, and the roles and relationships of participants. I describe a classroom where meaning making is a community focus. Before describing Lauren and Marco's meaning making experiences, I distinguish between literacy events and meaning construction and discuss how social roles and relationships emerge within literacy events. I organize the discussion of Marco and Lauren's meaning construction processes around social roles: listener/observer, reader, writer, etc. At the end of the chapter, I discuss and compare Lauren and Marco's experiences as listeners, and as readers and writers.

Chapter Six: Becoming Literate.

In this chapter I further develop my conclusions about the incredible importance of social interactions in literacy development. Literacy learning can be seen in the intersections between home, school and the wider community. Teachers have a role in helping to make these connections explicit, so that children recognize the social and linguistic foundations they bring from home. When schools focus on building connections between communities, literacy instruction helps children to see how language works within particular social contexts. I suggest that schooling should emphasize the intersections between literacy in home, school and the larger community.

Chapter Two

The Research Journey

This study explores the literacy experiences of two second-graders, Lauren and Marco, within the culture of one inner city, whole language classroom. In my description of Lauren's and Marco's reading and writing, I view literacy experiences as social and cultural practices through case study and thick ethnographic-style descriptions. Within these literacy experiences, I also view literacy as language process and look closely at children's transactions with text. Shifting research lenses from microanalysis of language processes to macroanalysis of social practices provides a more rounded image of the children's literacy experiences. In this chapter I will describe my research process in gaining an understanding of Marco's and Lauren's literacy experiences.

As described in chapter one, this study evolved within the historical, cultural, and political climate facing teachers and families at the Dewey Center, and facing public school teachers across the United States. I begin the chapter by describing a research climate in which holistic approaches are pitted against fragmented approaches in language education in metaphors like "the reading wars." I describe my desire to move away from defensive "racehorse" comparisons and look closely at literacy learning in whole language classrooms. I trace the evolution of the study, beginning when I interviewed kindergartners for the school evaluation committee, continuing with several pilot studies as I followed these children through second grade, and concluding with my decision to focus on the social nature of classroom literacy for Marco and Lauren.

My methodology in data collection and analysis is a fluid process that I am continually refining as I observe the children, review the data, discuss observations with teachers, colleagues and advisors, and analyze the trends and patterns within the data. I describe the methodology and decisions behind the methodology for data collection, description and interpretation. In addition, I describe how the process of writing this dissertation interacted with data description and interpretation.

Historical and political climate of the study

A predominant metaphor in literacy, learning, and teaching theories today is that of a pendulum swinging. This pendulum is said to swing from holistic to atomistic views of language, from behaviorist to cognitivist views of learning, and from learner-centered to direct-instruction views of teaching. If educators accept the pendulum metaphor, the logical approach to curriculum development might be to find the middle ground and somehow avoid being knocked over as the pendulum swings by. A similar, more deadly, metaphor is the “reading wars”, in which phonics first advocates are pitted against holistic educators. Again, there has been a “moderate” cry to “end the reading wars” by finding a middle ground.

This outcry for moderation ignores several important factors in the pedagogy and politics of language and literacy education. First, a significant shift has occurred in theoretical understandings and beliefs about written language processes over the last 30 years (For example, Weaver, 1988, Brown, 1996, Goodman, 1996, Graves, 1994). Where reading was viewed as “decoding” from print to oral language, reading and writing are now commonly viewed as language processes, involving meaning construction. Observations that young children are learning to read and write in the same way they learn oral language, through social experiences with print, are well documented and widely accepted (Hall, 1987, Cambourne, 1988). Readers and writers use all language systems (semantic, pragmatic, syntactic, graphophonic) simultaneously as they construct meaning. Reducing language learning to the graphophonic system (phonics) from a whole, meaningful context makes language learning more difficult (Smith, 1971, Goodman, 1986). Most literacy researchers and educators are not bunched in the middle of a battle-field between whole language and phonics approaches. Instead, they probably place themselves at some point between the “middle ground” (an eclectic or “balanced” approach) and the holistic end of this continuum (Allington, 1997, Pearson, 1994, Weaver, 1998).

The “reading wars” metaphor inaccurately presents an image of two contending group of educators. In fact, the current situation is that a group of non-educators with a political agenda is attempting to define and control research and teaching through legislation and political campaigning. Holistic educators, on the other hand, have not attempted to narrowly define and control research and teaching through legislation. In an attempt to push phonics legislation, phonics proponents paint whole language advocates as extremists on an either/or battle for the “right” teaching methods. In states like California, this political campaign has led to situations reminiscent of McCarthyism where the theoretical models of consultants, schools of education, and materials are checked by the “paradigm police” (K. Goodman, 1998; Taylor, 1998) before they are allowed contact with state funded schools or universities. In an educational world of strong metaphors, teachers and researchers who take a strong position become extremists (pendulum swing), or even terrorists (reading wars).

These metaphors play a destructive role in the progress of literacy research and teaching when researchers give them too much credence. We compromise our own progress in holistic education, narrowing our attention to the teaching of phonics and spelling “holistically.” Or we conduct racehorse studies to determine which methodology is “best.” While comparison studies may be useful and even valuable in some political arenas, they are limited in describing and critiquing the complex and social nature of literacy learning in classrooms.

There are problems and limitations in racehorse studies that attempt to compare Whole Language classrooms with other classrooms. First, Whole Language is a theoretical approach to language, learning, teaching, and curriculum. Reading and writing experiences in whole language classrooms may not exist in other classrooms. Whole language is a belief system, not a strict methodology, and varies widely in practice from classroom to classroom. It is difficult to define classroom teachers as “whole language” or “not whole language.” Teachers who advocate reductionist approaches such as “skills” or “phonics”

often use holistic practices such as sustained silent reading, reading aloud, creative writing, drama, class discussions, etc.

But the major limitation of racehorse studies is that it is externally motivated. Research that responds to public concerns and attacks does not address important questions about language and learning in whole language classrooms. In order to collect a balanced data sample, researchers are limited in their ability to examine holistic practices closely, and to critique and extend such practices. As an urban public school teacher I have spent much evaluation time and energy proving that my students are readers and writers. Externally motivated research fails to address and answer critical research questions arising from within holistic and progressive educational communities.

Research questions from within a holistic, progressive perspective

I described in Chapter One the way my colleagues and I, as inner city teachers, began to see the political potential of whole language curriculum. While we can do little to change the conditions of poverty and powerlessness in the inner city community around the school, we found hope in watching children become problem posers (Freire, 1994) through basic whole language tenets such as choice and authority over their own learning. Collaborative learning and curriculum negotiation created potential for democratic citizenship (Dewey, 1961). Indeed, this political potential may be one reason why whole language is the current scapegoat of the same organizations that were attacking “humanistic” educators a few years ago.

I began this study with a fervor to document the strength and power of whole language classrooms for the outside world. I particularly wanted to prove that whole language programs work with African American and inner city children. While under political attack and set off in a “camp” separate from the rest of the educational community, I am not naive enough to address my work to my political opponents.

However, I have had much internal argument and dialogue with educators such as Lisa Delpit (1995) and Maria de la Luz Reyes (1992) who have critiqued and questioned

holistic practices out of a concern for children of color. They state that African American children and Latino children are not succeeding in “process focused” classrooms, and conclude this may be because “indirect” approaches are a more comfortable cultural fit for white, middle class children. One problem with this argument is that the dichotomy between direct language (Sit down.) and indirect language (Would you like to take your seat?) is equated with direct and indirect instruction.

After closely observing and documenting Marco’s and Lauren’s literacy learning within the social culture of the second grade classroom, my thinking and my questions quickly moved beyond the defensive posture of wanting to champion whole language classrooms. I found myself engaged in external and internal dialogue about the literacy and literacy learning of the children in my study and the social factors that support and thwart literacy learning. Delpit and Reyes raise some important and critical questions. To what extent are African American children succeeding or failing in whole language classrooms? What aspects of these classrooms are supporting or thwarting literacy learning? What is the relationship between direct or explicit language and direct or explicit teaching?

As I stated in the first chapter, I am ultimately concerned with the role of teaching and schooling in educating for democracy and social justice. I have conducted my study within whole language classrooms because I believe these classrooms have the most potential for “transformative” (Edelsky, 1991) language and literacy education.

Assumptions

I began my study with the following assumptions about literacy and literacy learning.

- Literacy and literacy learning exist as social practices and language processes independent of the opinions of politicians, teachers and researchers.
- Writing is holistic, with socially constructed meanings and functions. Literacy is embedded within the culture of the United States as families eat, shop, pay bills, share stories, write letters, make plans, seek information and otherwise live their lives.

- There are social and cultural traditions and beliefs about the roles of literacy in human lives. Literacy experiences in the home community and socially constructed beliefs about the role of literacy within readers and writers' lives affect their responses to literacy events within classrooms and schools.
- Reading and writing are meaning construction processes. They always involve perception and interpretation. Since perceptions grow out of our socio-cultural experiences, reading and writing can never be politically "neutral." They are socio-political processes.
- Literacy involves issues of power. Literacy is used to define, persuade, regulate, and even incarcerate. Literacy measures and standards used to sort and grade have an influence on an individual reader or writer's development.
- Whole language classrooms, in attempting to build upon children's language use outside of schools, provide a rich and fertile ground for literacy use and literacy learning within school.
- Whole language classrooms support interpersonal and cultural aspects of literacy learning by encouraging talk, choice, and collaboration.
- Whole language classrooms, like all classrooms, reflect the political and cultural structures of the outside community. Issues of inequity in race, gender, culture, language and socioeconomic background cannot be ignored.

Research questions

The study began as I interviewed a group of kindergartners for our school Evaluation Committee. I began observing these children in first grade using these observations and interviews as a pilot to develop and refine my data collection methodology. I began to conduct all day observations, which continued through the children's second grade year. At this time, I had general working questions:

- *What does it mean to be literate in these classroom communities?*
- *What does it mean to become literate in these classroom communities?*

During the interviews, observations, and my ongoing reviews of data tapes, notes and documents, I noticed many factors of literacy learning that I investigated in pilot studies, which I describe later in this chapter.

- Home and community literacy experiences.
- The power of story, and the use narrative structures in class discussions.
- Understandings of functions and forms of written language.
- The relationship between sign systems in terms of language learning: oral language, written language, math, science, art, etc.
- Relationship between individual “development” (Piagetian cognitivist perspective) and social “experiences” (Vygotskian social constructivist perspectives).
- Social alignments and groupings, and relationship to cultural alignments and groupings outside of school.
- Oral language development.
- Learner’s perspectives about reading and writing and self as reader and writer.
- The development of pragmatics as a cultural linguistic system.

However, my main interest was in considering some of the apparent contradictions and lingering questions within progressive literacy evaluation and research, particularly concerning African-American students. On the one hand, Moll (1988), Heath (1983), and Taylor/Dorsey-Gaines (1988) describe a wide range of “funds of knowledge” and literacy events and practices within African American and Mexican American communities. On the other hand, Jonathan Kozol details “savage inequalities” which, he assumes, result in ignorance and illiteracy.

Assuming that inner city children bring a history of experiences with social literacy practices to school, how are these experiences reflected within the literacy events of whole language classrooms? Are inner city children “less literate” than other children, contributing to a lack of “success” in school and later in life? Or are there factors within the school culture that perpetuate class structures outside of school? Are there cultural miscommunications between teacher and students? Other questions are raised based on Street’s (1995) dichotomy between Critical Literacy and New Literacy Studies perspectives, described in Chapter One. To what extent are we engaged in “acculturating students into academic literacy”? Is this an inappropriate role for classroom teachers, especially when students are young children?

In order to explore these socio-cultural issues in literacy learning, I decided to focus on the social aspects of literacy learning. I narrowed my scope to studying Marco's and Lauren's experiences so that I get closer to the child's point of view (Taylor, 1993) of literacy and literacy learning experiences. My revised questions are:

- What are the social and cultural literacy events and practices in the schooling of two second graders?
- What factors and principles appear to be related to the literacy learning of these developing readers within this classroom culture?

Data collection

The study focuses on the literacy events and practices during two days in March of the children's second grade year. The children were observed in a variety of learning experiences throughout the school day in order to explore social aspects of literacy across curricular areas. In addition, the study draws on historical data including observations, interviews and documents collected from a larger group of children followed from kindergarten through second grade.

Figure 2 provides a timeline for data collection. I interviewed 20 kindergartners as part of the Evaluation Committee project. The classroom teacher, Barbara Lauchlan, provided documents such as journals and other writings. Fifteen children returned as first graders and I began to observe them in the three classrooms where they were placed. I interviewed all 15 children in the fall and spring and collected written documents for all 15 children. Observations were documented with audio tape, photographs, and field notes. I wanted to observe children's literacy experiences in a variety of social activities, and I began following one child throughout a day at school during the winter term. In order to accommodate these longer observations, I selected eight students for more focused study.

Figure 2 - Data Collection Timeline

Kindergarten year	
February - May 1994	Interviewed 20 kindergartners including: book handling, writing sample, reader and writing interview, print awareness.
First grade year	
September-December 1995	Began informal observations and interviews of the 15 children who returned as first graders. Collected audio tapes, photographs, field notes and documents.
January- May 1995	Identified eight children and piloted focused, all day observations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 23 Lauren • Feb. 6 Dion • Feb. 21 Shaundra • Mar. 14 Martin • Mar. 21 Amber • Mar. 28 Marco • Apr. 11 Shaundra • May 22 Clairese
May 15	Conducted interviews with other seven children Second grade year
September 1995 to June 1996	Focused study on Susan Austin's classroom. Conducted all day observations focusing on six children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 20 Shaundra (placed in second grade after this visit.) • Oct. 11 Amber • Oct. 25 Lauren • Nov. 3 Marco • Dec. 6 Jonathan • Dec. 14 Victor • Dec. 18 Sharonda • Feb. 7 Amber • Mar. 7 Marco • Mar. 13 Lauren • May 7 Jonathan • May 15 Victor • May 20 Sharonda
May 29, 30, 31, June 7,11	Conducted reading, writing and miscue analysis interviews with 12 of the original 20 kindergartners.

During the second grade year, I spent 18 days observing and interviewing in Susan Austin's classroom. Out of the original group of children, 13 returned for second grade and 10 were placed in Susan's classroom. I conducted two day length observations (one in the fall and one in the spring) focusing on each of six children. Observations were documented with videotape, audio tape, field notes, and written documents. At the end of each day, I held a debriefing interview with the child I had been observing. I also had periodic interviews with all 13 children still attending the school, in two classrooms, and collected written documents.

These interviews and observations were supported by discussions with the classroom teachers during the observation days and while analyzing the data. As I began to describe and analyze the data, I returned to the school and interviewed three of the study children as fourth graders: Lauren, Lauren, and Marco.

Selection of the children in the study

The 20 kindergartners who were in the original Evaluation Committee project, were selected (out of a class of around 28 kindergartners) because they returned permission notes. Within this group, the selection of "case study" children was based on: concern for balance in children's socio-economic background, gender, and age; teacher's experience; accommodations for an in-depth, case study methodology; and placements of students by parents and school personnel.

- **Representation:** All of the children in the study are African American. As I selected children for close observation, I was interested in balance based on community, gender, and birth date. The Dewey Center has two distinct community populations: "neighborhood" children and "city-wide" children. Neighborhood children live primarily in federally subsidized housing near the school, in a community reputed to be one of the most economically depressed areas in the state of Michigan. City-wide children come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, but tend to have parents who are working, often professionals and college educated.

- **Teacher's experience:** Because I wanted to observe children's literacy learning in whole language classrooms, I selected children in classrooms with experienced whole language teachers. The three teachers in this study were veteran teachers who had worked to develop whole language classrooms for at least five years. In addition to teaching experiences, they read professional materials and attended study groups, classes, and workshops focusing on whole language theory and practice.
- **Student Placement in Classrooms:** In the end, many decisions were made for me by parents and school administration. Figure 3 charts the classroom placements of the 15 children who returned to the Dewey Center as first graders.

As a first-year teacher, Kathy² did not have a experiential background with whole language teaching and theory. When the children were in first grade, I closely observed the eight children in the other two classrooms. I particularly focused on the four children in Mary Jo's room (Lauren, Marco, Martin, and Shaundra) who were a good match in terms of gender, community, and birthdays. In the second grade year, Mary Jo left to teach in another school. All 13 children returning from my original 20 kindergartners were placed in Susan's classroom. However, several weeks into the term, the classrooms were reorganized and Shaundra, Mark, and Clairese were moved into another second grade classroom with Bill, a first year teacher.

My matched set of four was broken up with Martin at another school and Shaundra placed in another classroom. I was particularly disappointed to lose Shaundra, who had written in kindergarten: "My family is kindful," but the decision could not be reversed. Because of my interest in balancing gender, age, and community, I selected the three children (Lauren, Marco, and Amber) from the first grade "case study" group and three additional children (Sharonda, Jonathan, and Victor) for close observation in second grade.

² I have permission to use the names of the three primary teachers in the study. I use their names out of respect for them as teachers and collaborative researchers. I give pseudonyms to other adults in the study.

Figure 3 - Placement of children in first and second grade

First grade placements:

Mary Jo's classroom	Susan's Classroom	Kathy's Classroom
Martin- citywide boy (Mar.)	Dion- citywide boy (Feb.)	Danielle Julia
Lauren- citywide girl (Mar.)	Mark - citywide boy (Sept.)	Sharonda Destine
Marco- neighborhood boy (Apr.)	Amber-neighborhood girl (Jan)	Victor Bruce
Shaundra- neighborhood girl (May)	Clairese-neighborhood girl (Sept.)	Jonathan

Second grade placements:

Susan's classroom		Also in Susan's room
Lauren	Amber	Sharonda-neighborhood (Mar)
Marco		Victor - neighborhood (Nov.)
Martin (left school)	Dion (Left school)	Jonathan- citywide (Sept.)
		Danielle
Bill's classroom	Mark	Julia
Shaundra	Clairese	Destine
		Bruce

Box represents "case study" first graders, shading indicates "representative" groupings.

Selection of Lauren and Marco for this study

The selection of Marco and Lauren for in-depth case study was a result of decisions about study methodology. When I decided to use day-long observations as a framework for data collection, it limited the number of children I could study closely. Still, I observed eight children in first grade, and six children in second grade. However, the amount of data accumulated over the three years was overwhelming. Data collected for the second grade included over 50 hours of videotape alone. I needed to select a "slice of data" that would be small enough to manage within the parameters of this study, without losing the big picture of literacy learning within this classroom culture.

I decided to start with "one day in the life" of a few children. Following a child throughout a school day would allow me to document literacy events and practices in a variety of academic and non-academic contexts. I initially selected three children (Lauren, Marco and Amber) because they were the only children I observed closely in both first and second grade who were still in a classroom with an experienced whole language teacher. In addition, Amber was among the most proficient readers in Susan's class, Lauren was a

fairly typical reader among the second graders, and Marco was among the least proficient readers.

However, documenting just one day of school was a monumental task involving going back and forth between videotape viewings, audio tapes, notes, charts and narrative descriptions as I attempted to glean the nature of literacy practice and literacy learning for each child. Lauren participated directly in 37 literacy events involving 29 different texts during one day of observation, while Marco participated in 30 literacy events involving 27 texts. Lauren and Marco were the obvious choice for case studies because I had spent more time observing and interviewing them than any of the other children in the group of six I observed in second grade.

Not a representative sample

I stress that Marco and Lauren are not representatives of their class, communities, genders, etc. It's important not to draw conclusions about gender or socio-economic community in terms of reading proficiency or any other factors, based on just two children. If the original 20 kindergartners were somehow ranked by ability to read independently at the beginning of the first grade year, the boys and girls, neighborhood and city-wide children would be fairly evenly distributed along this list. Martin, a city-wide boy in my original focus group, and Sharonda, a neighborhood girl, were among the most proficient readers in the original twenty. While it is possible that boys in inner city communities are more likely to have slower literacy development, I can't draw that conclusion based on Marco's development alone. Examining this hunch would be a different investigation and involve more of the children.

The Data

This study focuses on two days in March, which I call "Marco's Day" and "Lauren's Day." These observations were video taped, audio taped, and supplemented by field notes, activity maps (room maps showing student placement during language events),

and copies of student work. In addition to these observations, I had additional data and resources available:

- **Debriefing interviews:** At the end of each full day observation, I conducted a debriefing interview reviewing the day and the literacy events of that day with the child I observed.
- **Additional observations:** There are a total of 17 days of video-taped observations during the second grade year, as detailed above on the data collection timeline, figure 2.
- **Reading/writing interviews:** I conducted Reading Miscue Interviews (Goodman, Watson, and Burke, 1987) and reading and writing interviews with all children several times a year. Appendix A details the components of these interviews.
- **Documents:** Samples of the children's written work during the day of observation were copied, as well as samples from writing folders and other work folders.
- **Teacher's perspectives:** Susan Austin, the second grade classroom teacher, was available to answer questions and participated in viewing sessions of the videotapes. The kindergarten and first grade teachers also were available at the time of the observations and later by phone.
- **Data from kindergarten and first grade:** All children were interviewed once during the kindergarten year, and several times during the first grade year. First grade observations were audiotaped and supplemented by field notes, photographs, room maps, and copies of written work. I collected documents written by the children from kindergarten and first grade including journal entries, stories, class publications, artwork, etc.
- **My remembrances:** I visited the kindergarten classroom frequently, and the children also visited the library, where I was librarian. During the first and second grade year I was present during all observations and interviews.

The setting

The Dewey Center for Urban Education is a public school of choice in a large North American city. The school is situated near the downtown area, across from a neighborhood of federally subsidized townhouses. The school serves the neighborhood population and then draws children from the rest of the city on a first-come, first-serve basis. Children in the neighborhood population are 99 percent African American. Most live in subsidized housing near the school. City-wide children are also 99 percent African American but represent a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds. City-wide parents transport their children to the school, indicating a level of commitment, as well as personal choice, towards the school's philosophy and structure. All of the children in Susan Austin's classroom are African American and there was a balance between the neighborhood and city-wide communities.

Susan Austin's classroom is organized to maximize collaboration and dialogue. Small two-seat tables are grouped into five clusters, which she calls "teams", and children are free to talk and assist each other during most work times. There is a carpeted area for class meetings, and a library corner with another carpet and small rockers and cushions for reading. The classroom is filled with books in the library corner, on a cart near the meeting area, and in many small baskets scattered around the room. A basket near the meeting rug, for example, is filled with song and poetry books used to gather the class together.

Supplies and materials are organized so children can get them easily. Each team has a plastic caddie with crayons, markers, pencils, and glue. There is a writing area with various types of paper, pencils, scissors, staplers and other materials for writing. There is a math area with manipulatives, books and materials for math. A table near the meeting area holds the materials for the calendar and "days of school" activities and the bulletin board with these activities is organized so that everything is in the children's reach.

The classroom walls are dripping with print and artwork, usually growing out of the children's learning experiences. There are bulletin boards with charts, signs and children's

work. Poems, charts, children's work and a variety of group projects are also posted on the chalkboard with magnets, taped on the walls and windows, and attached by clothespins to two wires strung across the room. Materials on the walls include: lists documenting class activities (i.e. books read to the class), information related to author study or research projects, large class reports about science or math problems, charts and graphs of class activities (i.e. the "missing persons graph"), artwork and writings related to current themes of study, poetry on chart paper, and so on.

My role as a classroom researcher

I first met Marco and Lauren and their classmates when they were in kindergarten, as their library teacher and frequent classroom visitor. The children knew me quite well by the time they were in second grade. During classroom observations, I acted as if I were visiting the classroom of a friend and colleague. During group meetings, I sat on the outside of the group and would occasionally make comments. When the children were working, I usually sat down at the table where I could observe them closely. I responded to questions and comments, and sometimes asked children to talk about what they were doing.

The human subjects review process heightened my concern about student "consent" to the research process. I explained to the class why I was in the classroom, and answered the children's questions about my research study. We had a very interesting discussion, at one point, about the relationship between reading and other sign systems, such as mathematics. Although research consent is required by the parent and not by the child, I always asked children's permission for interviews or anything beyond class activities. Children often took an interest in my field notes, particularly in first grade, and I developed a form for them to write field notes of their own.

Since I was a colleague and close friend of the teachers in this study, I was sometimes asked to play an instructional role in classroom activities. During the first grade year, Mary Jo asked me to conduct reading conferences (as she was doing) and occasionally help children with reading and writing. There were occasions during the

second grade year when Susan asked me to “watch” the children briefly so she could handle a problem or emergency. Children often solicited interactions with me. I generally responded as a visiting teacher to the classroom. These interactions included reading me an original story or published book, seeking assistance with reading and writing, or seeking help with other classroom activities.

My approach was very similar to the classroom teacher’s on these occasions. As an observer, one dilemma was how to respond when I saw children “acting out.” While I was obviously influencing the outcome of the behaviors, I worried that it might be artificial (and disruptive) to ignore children’s behavior when they were aware I was watching them. Again, I decided to ignore or respond to children’s behaviors as an adult visitor in the classroom. In the later chapters, I identify and discuss my own roles in literacy events that I participated in directly.

As an inner city teacher for 15 years, I am especially sensitive about the relationship between teacher and researcher. Critique and critical reflection are essential in educational research, but I have grave concerns about studies that paint negative images of classroom teachers. The three teachers I worked with in this study are very special people. They spend enormous amounts of energy, time, and money to create literate environments for the young children in their classrooms and receive very little validation or support. The teachers invited me into their classrooms, and I felt it was important to share and discuss my observations and hunches throughout the data collection and analysis process. The teacher’s perspectives improved my understanding of what was going on. Because I’m not doing a comparison study, my influence on literacy events in the classroom does not substantially change the nature of these events and what can be learned from them.

It is impossible for any primary grade teacher to look good throughout long days in classrooms crowded with very young children. Lost chances and missed opportunities for learning are easy to spot on the play back of videotapes. In writing this study, I find it easier to critique my own interactions than to critique Susan’s actions because I am viewing

events from my own perspective. One way I address this concern is by sharing this thesis with Susan and inviting her insights and suggestions for revisions.

The use of a camcorder in classroom research

The video camera was both helpful and distracting. I introduced the camcorder on several visits before my official observations, allowing the children to view the recordings and see themselves on camera. While they quickly learned to ignore the camera, they continued to be aware of it and would occasionally look up at the camera during observations. Lauren would sometimes adjust the microphone to be sure it was facing her. At one point, Marco and David recited an off-color rhyme and both looked up at the camera and covered their mouths.

Because I was operating the camera, it did become more difficult to take extensive field notes. I could place the camera to focus on the child, but had to check that it was not jostled, etc. Ideally, one researcher (or more) should operate the camera while another observes and takes field notes. In addition, it's important to attach a mike directly to the camera to pick up conversations and sub-vocalizations as children work. I also used audio tape recordings as a backup.

While videotaping is more disruptive than other data collection methodologies, viewing classroom activities on camera is very powerful. There is so much that is not captured on audio tape such as how children are oriented towards one another, facial expressions, body language, etc. Humor or irony is often lost on audiotape. The videotape also caught incidents and events that I missed while observing.

Pilot studies

As indicated earlier, Marco's Day and Lauren's Day were selected from a larger longitudinal body of data. The data collection was initiated for a group of teachers with the goal of improving evaluation strategies in our school. I used this data collection for several pilot studies, which helped to expand my understandings and refine my methodology for this study.

Reading strategies in kindergartners

I conducted one pilot study to describe and compare the interviews of four kindergartners, Marco, Martin, Lauren, and Shaundra. As I expected from children in whole language classroom, the kindergartners had holistic responses to reading, and expected that written texts would make sense. They described learning to read as a fairly simple social process; someone reads to you and then you read to yourself. As children talked, they did not separate their literacy experiences from the daily life of the family, and the relationships between family members. Each literacy event described was also a social event in the life of that child.

From Lauren's kindergarten interview

I take a book and I open it and I make the story up and I read it. And sometime I don't know how to read, or it's bedtime. My mommy reads a story to me and then we'll watch TV and then go to bed. Every night I eat something.

All four of the children identified themselves as readers, although only Martin and Shaundra could construct meaning from an unfamiliar text. Three of the children said they learned to read at home, from the parents. For these three children, the school literacy experiences were so familiar and comfortable, they felt like home literacy experiences. Only Marco described some of his interactions with the teacher, indicating that these exchanges were important to him. For each of the children I interviewed, warm, "home like" experiences with real books in school appear support and extend the literacy experiences that children bring from home.

One thing that struck me about these interviews is the amount of *reading strategies* that these five and six year olds described. Although Lauren was not yet reading independently, she described eight different reading strategies including: reading a familiar book, looking at the pictures and making up a story, and asking your mother to read to you. Marco described six different strategies including asking your mama or auntie to read to you, and "pick an easy book":

From Marco's kindergarten interview

I don't be reading the hard books because ... cause I don't know how to read 'em. So I be picking out the books. And then when she (the teacher) say, "When you get done with your journal, then you go look at the book." So I pick an easy book.

What impresses me about these descriptions of strategies is that the children aren't only learning how to read but how to be a reader. Lauren is learning to construct meaning as she looks at a book, but how reading is as much a part of life as eating or going to bed. Marco is learning the language of familiar texts, but also how to pick a book within his kindergarten class.

As I talked with the kindergartners about reading and writing, I gained new appreciation for the complexities of written language. Children *may* go through stages in constructing written language systems, however each child appears to be working on his or her own questions about language, focusing on different language functions, and thinking about different genre or topics. Conducting and analyzing these interviews allowed me to get to know these children as learners. It is unnecessary to check off progress or judge a child against a standard. It is enough to discover the child's wisdom, and his or her current areas of inquiry and build from this strong language base constructed in early experiences (Wells, 1986) with family and community.

A narrative participation framework

In a study of institutional and conversational discourse, I analyzed a classroom discussion focusing on a conflict during lunchtime when James was teased because he "liked Lily." Susan brought this conflict to the class in order to talk about "being kind" to each other. I was looking for a typical IRE (Initiation, Response, Evaluation) pattern, or some variation of the classroom discourse patterns described by Cazden (1988) and others. What I found was something looking more like the types of conversations that happen outside of school.

Many children got involved in the discussion, and two additional issues of interest emerged: the issue of friends keeping secrets, and the issue of boys liking girls. I began to see this discussion as a "narrative participation framework" (Goodwin, 1990) where the

children and children were “negotiating the point” (Polanyi, 1985) of the story “James likes Lily.” As the issues involved in the socially constructed story, “James likes “Lily”, were explored, children began telling their own stories involving teasing based on boy/girl friendships.

This study raised the issue of the unofficial language policies in classrooms. Susan’s policy of always calling on children when they raise their hand creates a possibility for children to take important roles in classroom discourse. What impressed me most about the discussion was the potential of narrative structures for class discussion. Storytelling expanded the conversation to include many children. Children spoke as often as Susan, a high level of participation according to other discourse studies (Gutierrez, 1994). Children also took longer conversational turns as the structure shifted into a narrative framework. I was even more impressed when Susan reminded me that two of the most eloquent speakers, Kenneth and Patrice, were not very avid readers and writers. This is one reason Susan believes class discussions are important.

The “Raccoon Group”

In another discourse analysis study, I examine the interactions and activities of a group of six children (five second-graders and one first-grader) engaged in a research project investigating raccoons. In this study, my perceptions as a participant were very different from my interpretation after analyzing the event. During this group meeting, the children begin to divide into three groups focused around tasks. As a participant at that time, I remember being frustrated because I thought the group should work together. I interpreted Lauren and Danielle’s actions as “fooling around” while only Darryl, Sarina, and Julia were “working.” Audrey appeared to be doing nothing.

After constructing a detailed timeline of alignments and activities at this meeting, I have a very different picture of the event. Early in the event, Danielle appoints herself as scribe and asks the group to tell her something to write. Lauren goes to get a dictionary in her role of helping Danielle with the spelling. There is actually little “off task” activity as

the girls talk about raccoons and what they should write about. Audrey attempts to get into the conversation, but she is ignored until she finally gives up and stops talking.

The Raccoon Group study taught me several important things, besides not to trust my first impressions. All of the participants work to complete “the assignment,” but group members have differing views of the assignment. Darryl, Sarina, and Julia viewed “the assignment” as finding information about raccoons. Danielle views “the assignment” as being a scribe, while Lauren saw her job as helping Danielle to spell. As an adult participant, I privileged the views that matched mine, involving reading and learning about raccoons. If I had listened more closely to Danielle and Lauren, I might have heard their understandings of “the assignment” and helped them to consider how to participate in learning about raccoons.

In addition, since I wanted the whole group to work together, I did not see how Audrey was ostracized from the group. Ironically, Audrey initially attempts to read the same magazine article that Julia was reading. It would have been easy to encourage the two girls to work together. If I had attended to the children’s own social alignments around tasks related to their view of “the assignment”, I might have been able to support alignments where everyone was included.

The Raccoon Group is an example of miscommunication between adults and children in the classroom. However, it was not a case of indirect or inexplicit language. Susan’s initial instructions are quite direct, but they are interpreted differently by group participants. My mistake was in assuming that children were “fooling around” rather than assuming that everyone was interested in participating in the research experience. It was critical to observe and listen to the children’s understandings of the Raccoon Group event in order to clarify Susan’s intentions as make the research experience more explicit to the children.

Data analysis

My methodology for data analysis evolved as I considered my research questions within this large body of data. How might I come to understand the reading and writing of two young children, embedded within the cultural context of one second grade classroom? What would be a good “unit of analysis”? I wanted to examine literacy practices very closely, without losing the flavor of the entire classroom community. For this reason, I decided to describe an entire school day for each of the children I was studying, Marco and Lauren. Through careful description of each day, I attempt to paint a portrait of two socially situated literate children.

Selection of days

I selected two days in March because of their close proximity. The days also occur late in the year, when the children are relatively experienced with literacy practices in this classroom. The children have almost three years of experiences with school literacy, affording me an opportunity to look backward through the data to learn how the patterns I discover in these two children evolved. A retrospective analysis was beyond the scope of this study, but I hope to continue with it in the future.

Identifying a unit of analysis

Once I decided to focus on two days of school, I needed to identify smaller units for analysis and discussion. Obvious smaller units were the *language events* that defined the day, such as: Morning meeting, Silent Writing, Math time, etc. Because I catalogued data on a spread sheet, I initially attempted to “code” each action or activity throughout the classroom day, looking at texts, functions, Marco’s experiences, etc. This became overwhelming and also very repetitive as the same general activity (i.e. writing a story) might occur for some time. In addition, not all activities involved literacy. However the general literacy activities or *literacy events* were units I could identify and study for trends and comparisons.

The *literacy event* is a good unit of analysis because it is small enough to describe one social activity such as writing a story, reading a book, making a list, etc. On the other hand the literacy event provides a holistic picture since it describes the entire social context of the reading or writing experience.

Definition of terms as they evolved in this study

Language event: I am using the term *language event* as researchers in discourse analysis

or conversational analysis use the term *speech event*. (Goodwin, 1990, Tannen, 1989).

I chose *language event* to indicate that the event may (and generally does) include both speech and written language. A language event is a unit of language that is bounded or framed by some type of shift in participation structure. A language event's duration may be short (i.e. faculty exchanging greetings as they pass in a hallway) or long (i.e. a faculty meeting). In Susan Austin's classroom, language events generally correspond with instructional activities: morning meeting, writing time, math time, etc. Shifts from one activity to the next were usually cued by the teacher's language (i.e. "Okay, clean up. Daily helpers, you can read if you want.") The boundaries of language events in the classroom often involved what I call "transitional events" as students cleaned up from one activity or began preparing for the next. In addition, some language events had distinct sub-events. For example, Morning Meeting included calendar, weather, daily news, and attendance.

Literacy event: A *literacy event* is a specific "occasion in every day life where literacy has

a role." (Barton, 1994, p. 36) This term has been generally credited to Heath (1983),

and was popularized within literacy education by researchers such as Harste, Burke and

Woodward (1984). For the purpose of this study, a *literacy event* is any event

involving a text where the child is a participant either as a reader, writer, listener, or

observer. In some cases the case study child is a peripheral participant or *overhearer* of

the *literacy event*. In some cases a text is focus of a discussion, but is not read or

written during the event. A *language event* may involve several *literacy events*.

Literacy practice: A *literacy practice* refers to “common patterns in using reading and writing in particular situations.” (Barton, 1994, p.37) The term literacy practice is related to the use of “social practice” in anthropology. Literacy, Barton suggests, can be seen as “social practices related to the written word.” The *literacy event* is the specific incident (Marco reads a book), while the *literacy practice* is the generalized social practice (reading a book).

Data analysis methodology

In order to describe the practice and process of Marco’s Day I used three methodological approaches.

1. Ethnographic analysis:

Erickson’s *Audiovisual Records as a Primary Data Source* (Erickson, 1982) provides a methodology which allows a researcher to shift lenses between language events and smaller units, focusing in on interesting transitions and telling examples without losing track of the larger picture. Rather than transcribe an entire language event, the researcher catalogues the event, developing timelines and charts to create a picture of what’s happening within the event. Transcribing is selective, focusing on key points in the entire event. I used this approach in the Raccoon Group study while taking a class with Susan Florio-Ruane and Jenny Denyer. Their handbook *Researching Communication in Educational Contexts* (1997) is built upon Erickson’s approach.

2. Narrative description or anecdotal analysis

Patricia Lambert Stock (1995) has described how classroom anecdotes take on a life of their own as they are retold. With each telling, participants gain new insights and understandings of the event and its significance for teachers and learners. I wrote out each language event in narrative form, and then wrote initial reactions and interpretations of the event. These commentaries were wide ranging, but I used them to bring out the key issues for discussion. These narratives are found in Appendix B (Marco’s Day) and Appendix C (Lauren’s Day).

3. Transactional analysis

I used several methodologies for focusing on reading and writing as language processes including miscue analysis, writing analysis, book handling and print awareness interviews. Some of these methodologies are detailed in Appendix A.

Data analysis procedures

1. Initial viewing/timeline

I initially viewed each videotape without stopping. This allowed me to construct a general timeline for the language events and the activities within events.

2. Second viewing

I viewed each language event more slowly, noting key activities, literacy practices and talk within the event. Most camcorders can imprint actual time directly on the videotape while making the recording. This provides additional information and makes data retrieval easier.

3. Cataloging language events

I used a spread sheet to catalog each language event. Each row detailed an activity, or sometimes a speech act. Columns had headings for observational notes and interpretive notes. After some experimentation, I ended up with a two columns for observation: one column focusing on the “class”, and another focusing on “Marco” or “Lauren.” I used a loose-leaf binder for each child to organize this data once printed.

4. Early data analysis

I selected a spread sheet for categorizing data because any number of columns can be added for analysis. The initial categories I used to head “analysis” columns were texts, genre, practices, process, stance, principles of learning, and notes. As I decided to look at literacy practices as a unit of analysis, issues such as genre and function were more interesting under the umbrella of a literacy practice, and it seemed better not to break practice down into these smaller segments. My final columns for the analysis of each

activity included: “texts”, “practices”, and “notes” (my inferences, descriptions and other comments).

5. Third viewing: focus on the child’s experiences

I viewed each video recorded language event again, filling in missing information on the spreadsheets. I did not transcribe in detail, but focused on documenting the child’s actions and some literacy related talk. I used maps and sketches to augment my notes. I also listened to audiotapes when language was inaudible or additional information was needed.

6. Narrative description and analysis

After viewing carefully and cataloguing each language event, I wrote a narrative account of the event. In these narratives, I described my observations and refrained from inference or opinion. I reread each narrative, highlighting points that I found interesting, and wrote a commentary after each narrative segment, identifying and discussing aspects of the child’s literacy experience that I found important. Once I had identified factors of interest, I used colored markers and pencils to highlight elements in the narratives such as: literacy practices, Marco’s literacy, texts, relational principles (written language relating to other sign systems), linguistic principles, a focus on process or strategies. Rereading the narratives closely allowed themes to emerge that could be synthesized in the final analysis. As I narrowed the focus of analysis, I rewrote the narratives and commentaries in order to develop aspects I had identified for analysis and discussion and to downplay other issues not included in this study. These revisions became Marco’s Day (Appendix B) and Lauren’s Day (Appendix C).

7. Identifying patterns and issues for discussion and analysis:

I began to compile data on charts and tables in order to identify issues for discussion. I started with Literacy Events and Practices (See Appendix D and E), again using columns to detail each event in terms of text, genre, practice, child’s experience, etc. I developed a list of texts, which I organized by genre. As I began to write about these

texts, I realized I was losing the picture of the social practice. I decided to reorganize literacy events by “activity” (reading a book, making a list), since activity approached a notion of social practice more than texts and genres. At this point, I abandoned my spread sheets and actually put each literacy event on 3x5 cards so that I could group them in piles and see what kinds of patterns emerged. I found three broad types of literacy activities: reading and writing literature, reading and writing as an instrument for other social activities, and school exercises. These activities are discussed in Chapter four.

8. Analyzing while writing:

While writing, I continued to return to the data to extend and refine my understanding of the patterns and issues I was discussing. This included:

- **Viewing:** Continued to review some of the videotapes with specific questions in mind.
- **Timeline:** Created more detailed two page timeline of the days, including events, transitions, and key phrases that seemed to signal events and practices.
- **Notes and written documents:** Reviewed field notes, and student documents.
- **Audiotapes:** Used tapes particularly where talk is inaudible or additional information desired.
- **Interviewed Susan (classroom teacher):** Involved Susan in phone interviews and viewing sessions, particularly with questions or puzzles.
- **Debriefing interviews:** Reviewed and selectively transcribed debriefing interviews to see how Marco and Lauren describe and discuss various events of the day.
- **Miscue analysis:** Used miscue analysis to look closely at readings and writings during the day.

A note about transcription

In order to give a flavor of the language events, I often include dialogue in the actual words of the speaker. These transcriptions are generally placed in quotations marks, in a traditional narrative form. Occasionally, I switch to the more typical format of transcription, that of a play. Because of my choice of narrative, I have cleaned up some of the hesitations (um.. uh) and backtracking or repetitions in the speech. I have used transcription markings

to indicate variation in speech: capital letters indicating emphasis (PLEASE stop.), a colon indicating elongated vowel sounds (I took mine ho:me.). These and other markings are footnoted when they appear. I have also selected to use italics to indicate when the speaker is reading a written text.

Marco, Lauren, and most of their classmates have many features of African American Vernacular English in their speech. As seven and eight year olds, they also have some of the speech immaturities of young children. In addition, the oral speech of both children and adults includes fragments and unconventional grammatical forms. When representing the children's language, I record their speech in the syntax and morphology that I hear on tape. For the most part, I ignore most phonological variations and use conventional spellings for all speakers. The exceptions are phonological variations at the morphemic or syllabic level such as "pose" for "supposed." I try to represent these variations in the language of all participants. For example, Susan might say "gonna" for "going to", while Marco often says "g'on" /gon/. I use the narrative convention of eye-dialect, rather than linguistic transcription, when representing phonological variations.

Writing as analysis

I discovered that early dissertation writing is actually a part of the data analysis and interpretation process. For example, I originally thought Chapter 3 would be Marco's Day, and Chapter 4 would be Lauren's Day. After completing the first draft of Chapter 3, I realized I had just written an appendix (Marco's Day - Appendix B). Once I shifted Marco's Day and Lauren's Day to appendixes, I rewrote Chapter 3, focusing on texts and genres of both children's day. I realized that I wasn't really writing about social practices so texts and genres became a chart, and vignettes were incorporated in a new chapter in which I described and discussed literacy practices by activities. My advisors suggested that I introduce Marco and Lauren before discussing the literacy events, and so Literacy Events and Practices became the current Chapter Four.

This process sounds fairly straightforward when described as hindsight. However, these revisions involved painful disappointments, periods of great uncertainty, and days of inertia as I tried to pick up the pieces and move ahead. Still, every step backwards in writing was a step further in understanding the nature of literacy and literacy learning in the classroom. And I hope I also arrived at some distinctions between data analysis and interpretive writing or research.

The social nature of research

In this chapter, I described my research journey. Although I was tired of having to defend whole language, I started out doing just that. But I soon got caught up in the more important and interesting aspects of literacy events in Marco's and Lauren's school lives. When studying literacy "from a child's point of view," Denny Taylor (1993) is a great inspiration. I return to this reminder, cited in chapter one, of the difficult but promising road of the literacy research journey.

Even when we speak of literacy as a social process, we rarely look beyond the literacy event and the linguistic transactions that take place. So much of the process remains buried in the multiple layers of communication that are part of our contextual worlds. We forget that to be literate is a uniquely human experience, a creative process that enables us to deal with ourselves and to better understand one another. (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988, p. 200)

I draw upon two research traditions: transactional analysis of literacy processes, and ethnographic analysis of the social practice of literacy. In the process of inquiry and writing, I am learning to be a researcher. I have learned that each of these perspectives on literacy informs the other, creating a more complete picture of the literacy as a "social process." By drawing these two perspectives together, I hope it is possible to move beyond "the literacy event and the linguistic transactions" and reveal the "multiple layers of communication" in the contextual worlds of Marco's and Lauren's classroom.

Chapter Three

Lauren and Marco in Two Days of School

In this chapter, I introduce Lauren and Marco and provide an overview of two days in their school lives as second graders. Marco and Lauren's literacy profiles emerge from the social literacy practices (discussed in Chapter Four) and meaning making processes (Chapter Five) of their classroom experiences on these two days. These profiles are also informed by interviews at the end of each day and by my history with Marco and Lauren over three years of interviews and observations.

The profiles of Marco and Lauren take an advocacy evaluation stance (Taylor, 1997), focusing on their strategies and understandings as language users, their strengths and abilities as learners, and their roles and interactions within the social context of this classroom. I met Lauren and Marco when they were in kindergarten. By the end of their second grade year I had interviewed them many times, and watched them grow as language learners. I introduce Marco and Lauren in this chapter in order to share the insights and connections that I brought to the second grade observations.

Language Events in Two Days of School

I observed and videotaped Marco and Lauren's second grade classroom on eighteen full day visits. For this study, I have selected two days in March for close observation. I call these days "Marco's Day" and "Lauren's Day" because my observations followed the activities of a case study child. A more complete narrative description of each day is included in Appendix B - Marco's Day, and Appendix C - Lauren's Day.

Each of these days involved seven "language events." A language event is a unit of discourse defined by a particular activity (i.e. Math) and "participation structure" (Schultz, 1982). For example, Lauren's Day starts with the language event "Things to Do" when children talk and move around freely as they work on a variety of tasks listed on the board. The participant structure shifts to "Morning Meeting" where the children gather on the floor, one person talks at a time, and speakers must be recognized by the discussion leader.

There were often brief “transitional events” as children completed one activity and moved to the next. I have elected to use “language event” rather than the more common term “speech event” (Schiffrin, 1994; Tannen, 1989) to imply that the event includes both speech and written language.

Marco’s Day

This observation was on March 7 of Marco’s second grade year. The observation starts with the second language event of the school day.

9:37 Event 1 - Three Toed Sloth (4 m 20 s)

Susan stands at the front board conducting a mini-lesson focused on the poem “Three Toed Sloth” (Prelutsky, 1983). The children sit at tables, with their “handwriting” copies of the poem in front of them. The mini-lesson includes a scientific discussion of sloths, a search for “long-O” words in the poem, and a choral reading of the poem.

Marco’s Experience: Marco sits with his pencil poised and looks very attentive. During the choral reading, he recites the title and first line of the poem, and then listens as others recite. After the mini-lesson, he shows his paper to David and says, “I did all this.”

9:41 Transition Event 1.1 - Cleanup (1 m 50 s)

The children put away materials from the morning work time, and gather on the area rug near the door.

Marco’s Experience: Marco puts his paper away in his desk. He sits down on the floor near the carpet, just to the side of the front row of children.

9:43 Event 2 - Morning Meeting (12 m 7 s)

“Morning Meeting” is a daily ritual with small variations from day to day. On this day, the “daily helpers” lead the class in a calendar discussion, involving an analysis of the days of school, day of the month, and weather. Next, Susan takes attendance by exchanging greetings with each child in Swahili (Jambo). The daily helpers tally those children present and absent. Finally, the class stands and sings two active songs. A third song ends with “Teddy bear, teddy bear, sit right down,” signaling the “Books to Go” event.

Marco’s Experience: Marco sits on the floor near the front. He often looks at his new shoes. He sometimes talks with Jonathan and Terrence. James, one of the daily helpers, complains and Susan asks Marco to apologize to James, and he quickly complies. Marco watches the daily helpers as they tally the attendance, and joins in as the class counts the tally. He participates in the songs, making up his own rhythmic dance.

9:55 Event 3 - Books to Go (25 m 6 s)

“Books to Go” is a classroom program where children take turns taking home book bags with two books: one for the parents to read to the child, and one to practice reading to the class. On this day, James reads *If a Tree Could Talk* (Williams, 1994a), and then Amber reads the first part of the book *Snakes* (Demuth, 1993).

Marco's Experience: Marco sits in the second row of children. He continues to admire his new shoes, but always looks up at the picture. He applauds enthusiastically, with his hands above his head, when James finishes reading. Marco is very attentive to the book *Snakes*. He makes a slithering motion with his body when Amber says, "snakes slither and slide." He asks to see the picture. At one point Amber pauses and Marco predicts the next word in the text. Susan calls attention to Marco's prediction.

10:20 Transition 4.1: Preparing for Math (6 m 14s)

Susan walks to the board and lists choices for math, explaining each activity as she adds it to the list. Children signal each other, making plans. Susan calls a small group to meet with her on the area rug while the other children have choices. The children get up and get materials and begin activities. Susan distributes materials to the small group and leaves to help the children making choices to get settled.

Marco's Experience: When Marco's name is called, he gets a clip board and sits down next to Susan in the loosely forming circle on the area rug. He places his paper on the clipboard, and writes something. He carefully places his plastic bag of unit blocks under the clip on his clipboard and looks up at Susan as she gives talks to the class.

10:27 Event 4 - Small Group Math. (23 m 28 s)

Susan sits on the floor with the children, who form a loose circle on the area rug. Each child has a worksheet on their clipboards and a set of "unit blocks" (1x1 cm cubes representing ones and 10x1 cm sticks representing tens). Susan provides step by step instructions for using the unit blocks to solve two digit addition problems with regrouping. The children talk and work together as Susan directs the activity.

Marco's experience: Marco sits next to Susan. He follows her instructions on his own, listening carefully to her interactions with other children. At times he reports his progress to Susan ("I got thirteen."). He frequently looks around at what other children are doing, but does not interact with his classmates.

10:50 Transition 4.2 - Math Cleanup (5m)

Susan tells the children to put away math materials and get ready for writing. She sets a timer for four minutes. The Daily helpers place writing folders on each table. Once children are prepared, they begin to write without further instructions.

Marco's experience: Susan asks Marco to gather up the unit blocks. He does this methodically, carefully lining up the tops of each baggie. Jonathan helps him put the blocks away. Then he leaves the room to go to the boy's bathroom across the hall.

10:55 Event 5 - Silent Writing (24 m 29s)

Susan reminds the class that everyone needs to complete their autobiography. Those finished can work on other projects. By the time she sets a timer for 20 minutes of silent writing, most children have been working for several minutes. Children work quietly, but get up when they need supplies or have questions.

Marco's experience: Susan calls Marco over and gives him a blank book for the "sloppy copy" of his autobiography. Marco sits next to David, and the two boys work quietly, frequently looking at each other's work. Jackie comes over to tell me about her dinosaur book, and Marco shows great interest in the discussion -- making comments, listening attentively, and leaning over to look at the materials she is showing me. Marco spends most of the writing time illustrating the cover of his autobiography.

11:21 Transition 5.1 - Writing/ lunch prep

The daily helpers call students' names to get ready for lunch. Children continue to write before and after their names are called.

Marco's experience: Prompted by David's writing and a dialogue with David, Jackie and me, Marco orally composes and begins writing the first page of his autobiography.

11:30 LUNCH

Susan asks the "buyers" to line up for lunch. Marco gets in line.

12:30 Transition 6.1- Introduction to afternoon (1m 21s)

Children come in and gather on the area rug. Susan reviews the plans for the afternoon. Children make comments and react to plans.

12:31 Event 6 - Books to Go - Part II (28m)

Amber finishes reading the book *Snakes*. (14 m) Then Destine reads *D.W. All Wet* (4 m). Susan complements Destine on her growth as a reader. She talks with the class about snakes and recommends a book called *A Snake Mistake* (Smith, 1994).

Marco's experience: Marco sits in the front of the group. He asks several questions as Amber reads. One question prompts a brief discussion about snakes shedding their skin. Marco applauds enthusiastically when Amber finishes reading. Marco listens to Destine reading, looks up at the illustrations, and also interacts with Jackie who sits next to him.

12:55 Transition 7.1- Prep for Book Clubs (4 m 18)

Susan calls out the names of the book clubs, and gives each group a folder.

Marco's experience: Marco responds to Susan when she calls his book club. He convinces David to get up. He jumps around on the area rug with Danny and is sent to time out. He goes to confer with Susan about the group project, and returns to the table with a stack of envelopes.

12:59 Event 7 - Book Clubs (33m 45s)

Children are working in small group "book clubs" on a variety of different projects. Marco and David are working on a group book using *What's in my Pocket* (Williams, 1994b) as a model. I assist the boys with planning and writing.

Marco's experience: Marco opens the envelope seams. He makes a visual outline of six shapes, and counts out six envelopes for "pockets." As Marco plans, he reads sections of the book to himself. Marco takes leadership in this event, and tells me the plan for the group project in detail. He has difficulty including David in the project work. At one point they stop to make "triaramas," and David spells out his name for Marco to write. As Marco starts writing on the first envelope, I intervene and work with him on the first "pocket." Then Marco and David each make a pocket, using my envelope and their book club book as a model. While working, Marco reads my writing and his own.

1:33 Transition 7.2- Book Club clean up (10 m)

Susan gives instructions for writing in "book club diaries" and cleaning up. She sets a timer for eight minutes because the room is messy with projects. David cleans up the materials while Marco writes.

Marco's experience: I locate the book club diary because Marco and David aren't sure what it is. Marco writes the date, using the class board as a resource. He writes the names of the group members, remembering David's name because "he taught me." I assist Marco in writing, "We made 3 pockets."

1:45 Debriefing Interview

After the cleanup time there is a group activity related to the rain forest unit. Marco meets with me for a debriefing interview at this time.

Discussion of Marco's Day

What strikes me about Marco's Day is how the children move smoothly from activity to activity with very little direction. Marco spends most of his time engaged in learning experiences, or in related activities such as preparation and cleanup. Very little class time is spent on "management," or disciplinary activities, and Marco spends almost no time waiting between language events. In this discussion, I describe how Susan and the students work together to create large chunks of work time and smooth transitions that maximize opportunities for learning experiences and meaning construction.

Scheduling and transitions support meaning construction

The classroom schedule maximizes time for learning experiences. The transition from math to writing provides a good example. As Susan gives instructions for cleanup, she announces that the next activity will be Silent Writing. Including brief instructions, the class takes five minutes for cleanup and four minutes to get settled for writing before the writing time "officially starts." However, by the time Susan announces the beginning of "Silent Writing", most of the children are already writing or drawing. At Marco's table, Destine writes her autobiography for 30 minutes, starting well before "Silent Writing" starts and stopping only to line up for lunch. Children are encouraged to continue writing during the lunch preparation, because the "daily helpers" call them one at a time to go to the bathroom and lockers.

This classroom structure is "transactional," with time and space organized to maximize children's transactions with texts, learning experiences and other learners. Weaver (1988) contrasts a transactional organizational structure with a "transmission" approach, where the teacher closely directs learning experiences. The "transmission"

model of classroom organization is often called “direct instruction” and might be compared to Freire’s (1994) “banking” view of education. To illustrate how scheduling affects children’s opportunities for constructive work, I compared just the process of “going to the bathroom” on Marco’s Day with “Shauna’s Day at School” documented in *Growing Up Literate* (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

Shauna’s teacher uses a common practice of taking the entire class to the bathroom at once. In the morning, it takes thirteen minutes for the children to get from the library to their classroom including the bathroom visit. In the afternoon, Shauna’s class has to wait for another class to leave, and the bathroom visit takes 14 minutes. Shauna spends most of that time silently waiting in line, while her classmates go the bathroom a few at a time. The only time I observed Marco waiting was just after Book Club cleanup, when he sat at his table for a few moments crooning a popular tune into my microphone. This is just one example of the contrasts in how time is used in the “transmission approach” in Shauna’s Day of School and the “transactional approach” of Marco’s Day.

Table 1 contrasts class time during Marco’s Day devoted to content area “work” with class time focusing on procedures. The majority of time (75%) was spent on content focused activities. In addition, nearly half of the “transitional time” (class time spent on classroom procedures) included opportunities for children to continue working or begin working on content focused activities. For example, the children spent 21.5 minutes engaged in “cleanup,” but during 14 minutes of that time many children continue working or begin working on new learning experiences. During the six minutes that the class is “getting settled” for a group meeting, such as waiting for a reader to get a book during “Books to Go”, there is informal talking rather than silent waiting. This talk often involves conversations about books, and resembles the productive “exploratory talk” described by Barnes (1993).

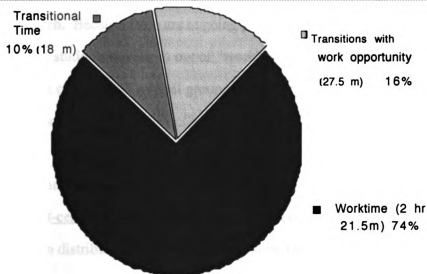
Very little class time is focused on “behavior,” in part because teacher and students cooperated to stay focused on learning experiences. In addition, the workshop approach

allows Susan to handle children's problems, conflicts and questions directly without taking up the time of the entire class. For example, Marco is sent to "time out" when he disrupts the planning time for Book Clubs. Once Susan has helped the groups to get started, she talks to Marco briefly and then sends him back to join his group.

Table 1 - Comparison of Content Focused Time to Transitional Time

Content Focused		Transitional Time		Transition Time* with	
"Work Time"	minutes		minutes	work	discussion
Sloth	4.5	Cleanup	21.5	14.0*	
Morning Mtg.	12.0	Proc. instructions	7.5	-	
Read Aloud 1	18.5	Get Settled	6.0		6.0*
Math	21.5	Set up	7.5	7.5*	
Writing	20.0	Interruptions	3.0		
Read Aloud 2	22.5	(discipline)			
Book Clubs	32.5				
TOTALS	131.5		45.5	*21.5	*6.0

*Subtotals of total transitional time.



Classroom structures create social spaces for learning

Susan has worked with the children to create classroom structures that offer the potential for meaning construction. Even when she thinks kids need to get up and stretch, she introduces active songs that engage children in socially experiencing the cadence and melody of poetry with their bodies, using three semiotic systems: kinesthetic as well as music and language. The singing time provides an example of how Susan and the children

work together to provide seamless transitions between activities. After attendance Susan says, “Stand up” and begins singing “I’m gonna shake, shake, shake my sillies out.” The children sing and dance through several verses. A child starts chanting, “Head and shoulders baby, one, two, three.” -- a children’s playground song in the African American tradition. Susan says, “okay” and the class enjoys the active verses of this chant. After the song is over, Susan leads, “Teddy bear, teddy bear turn around. Teddy bear, teddy bear sit right down,” and the children sit down on the area rug ready to listen to Amber read.

Singing time is an example how Susan and the children use classroom structures such as scheduling, room organization, grouping, curriculum development, discipline, and language policy to create a social space for learning. These social and pedagogical structures include:

1. A workshop approach: Writing, math, and book club are organized in a workshop approach. Because there are ongoing projects and choices of activities, topics and genres, students never run out of “work” to do. The workshop structure allows Susan to work closely with a small group, as she does during math. During workshops, questions, problems and conflicts are discussed without interrupting the entire class. Within workshops, students work in formal or informal groupings, allowing opportunities to observe and talk with other learners.
2. Student-centered organization: Supplies are available to the students. The daily helpers assist in distributing materials and coordinating the classroom procedures. Children don’t have to wait, and the teacher spends her time scaffolding learning experiences.
3. A community of learners. Children’s comments throughout the day reflect their involvement in all aspects of the class, including procedures. Susan works with the children throughout the school year to establish this learning community. In addition, children are involved in teaching and collaborative learning experiences. Susan contributes to this community by understanding and respecting the needs and abilities of young children to move and talk as they learn. Susan also expects children to respect

each other and themselves, as she illustrates when she asks Marco to apologize to James, as the discussion leader.

This overview of Marco's Day portrays a community of learners working together to construct structures that create social spaces for learning. Of course, the critical element is what types of learning experiences children are engaged in within these spaces. The quality and nature of learning experiences, involving meaningful and relevant literacy events, is the focus of the following chapters. The overview of Lauren's Day further reveals how these structures support social literacy practices through language and literacy events.

Lauren's Day

This observation takes place on March 13 of Lauren's second grade year. The observation begins as the children enter the room in the morning.

8:35 Event 1 - Things to do (48 min.)

Susan stands in the hall as children put away their coats. A "Things to do" list is posted and children read it and consult each other as they enter the room. The class is noisy and busy as children greet each other and select work activities. Some children go to "sign in" or write a message on the "Daily News." Other children begin working on the two "assignments" starred on the list: coloring a map and completing a math sheet. PA announcements start and children quiet down, but continue to work. They stand and recite the "school pledge." Susan interrupts the workshop time to provide instruction on the math sheet (7 minutes). After this, children have ten minutes to complete their work. Children who complete the "assignments" begin to work on choices such as: read, write, and draw.

Lauren's Experience: Lauren enters the room and begins with the two assignments. She colors and labels Mexico on a map of South America, using a sample map as a model. As she works on math, she frequently looks over at her friend's paper to compare answers. Lauren works intently, but also talks and jokes with the girls at her table and others that come by. During PA announcements she continues to work, even as she stands and recites the pledge. Lauren attends to Susan's math instructions, writing in answers on her sheet. Lauren takes a short break after she turns the math in, and then pulls out a rough draft book she is working on and begins reading it to Amber and me.

9:22 Transition Event 2.1 - Cleanup / gather (10 min.)

Susan asks for cleanup, telling the "daily helpers" that "You can read if you want to." Susan circulates as the children finish up their work and begin cleaning up. The daily helpers, with a few friends, stand in front of the calendar and "read" the song book *This Old Man* (Adams, 1974). Children join in as they gather on the area rug.

Lauren's Experience: Lauren continues to read her book to me until Susan tells her to join the class. She puts her book away and sits near the singers between Amber and Alicia.

9:33 Event 2 - Morning Meeting (9 min.)

“Morning Meeting” is a daily ritual with small variations from day to day. Today, the “daily helpers” lead the class in a calendar discussion, involving an analysis of the days of school, day of the month, and weather. Next, Susan takes attendance by exchanging greetings with each child in Spanish (“Hola.”) while the daily helpers tally those present and absent. The meeting shifts to “Books to Go” when Susan says, “I promised Danny he could start the ‘Books to Go.’” Children ask about the “Daily News” and Susan says they will do it after Danny reads.

Lauren’s Experience: Lauren sits in a group of six girls. She leans towards Katherine, talking. Susan calls Lauren’s attention to the calendar discussion saying, “Lauren, look. I want you to see this.” Lauren attends to the meeting, occasionally interacting quietly with friends. She looks up before her name is called, ready to greet Susan.

9:42 Event 3 - Books to Go (25 m)

“Books to Go” is a classroom program where children take turns taking home book bags with two books: one for parents to read aloud, and one to practice reading to the class. On this day Danny reads *Who Sank the Boat?* (Allen, 1996). Then children read from “The Daily News,” postponed from Morning Meeting. After that Sharonda reads *Teddy Bear for Sale* (Herman, 1996). Susan complements Sharonda for how much her reading has improved.

Lauren’s Experience: Lauren looks at Danny as he reads. She plays with her bracelet and interacts silently with Katherine, looking up when Danny shows the picture. She smiles when Danny reads a funny line. Lauren watches Sharonda intently, and looks closely at the pictures. She moves closer to Alicia and begins retwisting a braid. She and Katherine play with Amber’s braids, pulling them down and watching them spring back. She continues to listen to Sharonda, who is reading slowly. Lauren smiles when Susan praises Sharonda’s reading.

10:07 Transition 4.1 - Preparing for Math (8 min.)

Susan says, “When you get to your seats, I’m sorry, but we have to do some work in math books again.” There are groans and a few cheers. Children go to their tables and get out their math books. Susan tells them to find a certain page. It takes about three minutes for everyone to get their books out and find the page.

Lauren’s Experience: Lauren and Amber look for their math books in the cubbies under the table. Katherine comes over and they clap hands and talk until children start to get settled. Lauren finds her book and sits waiting. Lauren sits with Danielle, Amber and Alicia, when Susan has them cluster for “teamwork.” Lauren finds the page in the math book right away. She offers to help Amber and Danielle.

10:15 Event 4 - Math (35 min.)

Susan places magnetic unit blocks on the board and asks the children to signal if they can “read my number.” Initially, she calls on individuals to answer questions. Later the children chant responses together. After working through several problems, Susan has the second graders tear the page out of the workbook. She explains how to do both sides of the page. Then she calls the first graders for a meeting on the carpet, while the second graders finish their work sheet “on your own.”

Lauren's experience: Lauren writes in her workbook, as Susan starts instruction. As Susan goes through answers, Lauren writes in her book and raises her hand. After the instructions, Lauren tears the page out of the workbook and puts her book away. She begins circling answers on her paper. Danielle accuses Lauren of "looking at my paper," but Lauren says, "I'm not." She works intently, reporting her progress out loud, "I'm on the second page!"

10:50 Transition 4.2 - Math to Writing (10 min.)

Susan announces, "When you're done with math, you can start writing." The room becomes noisy and busy, as children finish their math. Susan gives several warnings (five minutes, three minutes) and then tells children to get settled with their writing. She begins counting backwards slowly from ten to zero.

Lauren's experience: Lauren says, "Yes!" when Susan announces it's time for writing. She watches Amber working. Katherine and Alyssa come over and the girls argue playfully. Lauren finishes her math and turns it in. She gets out the book draft she is working on. She talks to me about her book, and reads from where she left off in the during "Things to Do." I ask what's coming next, and Lauren tells the next segment, smiling as she talks about humorous events. She begins writing as Susan says, "six."

11:00 Event 5 - Silent Writing (20 min.)

Susan says, "Everyone should be writing now." She sets the timer for 20 minutes. The room becomes very quiet. At Lauren's table, Lauren and Jonathan are writing. Amber and Alicia are making blank books. They have trouble with the stapler and the project takes time. Susan has had Danielle switch with Bruce after he had problems with another "team." He sits staring at his desk, and finally starts working on his unfinished math sheet after encouragement from Susan, Jonathan and me.

Lauren's experience: Lauren writes steadily during the entire twenty minutes. She writes a page, then illustrates it. She tells me a bit about the illustration. When she turns a page, she carefully creases the back so it will lie flat. Occasionally she stops to think, but she continues to write most of the time. She writes and illustrates three pages, with several sentences on each page.

11:20 Event. 5.1 - Writing/ lunch prep (3 min.)

The timer rings and Susan says, "Would you please clean up your tables, it's almost lunch time." The daily helpers begin calling children's names to prepare for lunch.

Lauren's experience: Lauren goes to the bathroom when her name is called. She returns and talks with me about her story until Susan asks the class to line up for lunch.

11:30 LUNCH

Susan asks the children to line up silently. After lunch, the children go to Science and Susan has a planning time.

1:10 Transition 6.1 Read Aloud (10 min.)

After returning from science, Terrence and Alicia take turns reading a picture chapter book *Two Dog Biscuits* (Cleary, 1996).

Lauren's experiences: Lauren sits behind Amber, and pats Amber's hair as she listens. She laughs when Terrence reads a humorous line in the book.

1:20 Event 6 - Silent Reading (and Writing) (25 min.)

Because the children have just been sitting, Susan decides on fifteen minutes of "Silent Reading" before Book Club presentations. Jackie asks about writing, and Susan revises her plan to include both. She calls table "teams" to go get their materials and get settled. Children get books and pillows and find spots around the room to read. Other children get writing materials and begin writing. Susan calls Lauren, Katherine and Rudy to choose books for the "Books to Go" bags. Then she sets the timer for fifteen minutes and says, "Ready, set, write." The room is a quiet murmur as children read aloud to themselves, or interact quietly as they write.

Lauren's Experience: Lauren and Katherine get pillows and books and a D.W. doll. They sit down to read near the front door, with books and doll piled between them. Lauren begins reading *Dragon's Fat Cat* (Pilkey, 1992), an illustrated chapter book, aloud to herself. She assists Sharonda when she asks for help. Lauren reads almost two chapters before Susan calls her name, and then goes to select books for Books to Go. She returns to her book and reads about 3 1/2 chapters all together.

1:45 Transition 7.1 Preparation for Book Club Presentation (5 min.)

The timer rings and Susan gives instructions for clean up and gathering for the book club presentation. Children begin to put materials away and gather on the area rug. They are facing away from the calendar wall, and the *Lunch Boxes* (Ehrlich, 1991) group begins to arrange their chairs in the "stage" area near the windows. Susan begins singing the book *Ten in the Bed* (Rees, 1988), but stops to give further instructions for clean up.

Lauren's Experience: Lauren continues to read as Susan gives instructions. She does not stop until Katherine tugs at her arm. Katherine is concerned because I am recording Lauren reading. She suggests that Lauren finish quickly, but Lauren does not want to "disobey Miss Austin." She comes over to ask if I'm coming back tomorrow, and I ask if I can interview her after the presentation. She puts the books aside for the interview and goes to join the *Lunch Boxes* group as they prepare for the presentation.

1:50 Event 7 Book Club Presentation (20 min.)

The *Lunch Boxes* (Ehrlich, 1991) group is sitting in a row of chairs facing the area rug. They have bags on their backs, like backpacks. Susan begins by talking about "the first presentation." The *Lunch Boxes* group gives a choral reading of their book. Susan is confused because they were going to do a play, and suggests that they show the class the lunch boxes they made as one of their projects. Each girl in the group shows the construction paper foods. The class is restless, but interested and amused by the girls' project. The presentation ends when the last girl is finished and another class comes in to watch a movie.

Lauren's experience: Lauren is a member of the *Lunch Boxes* group. She sits in the middle of the group. She appears to be leading the choral reading, looking around to see if the other girls are looking at her and then beginning to read. The girls keep together fairly well, aided by the rhythmic text, written in couplets. Lauren and Alyssa share one book, holding the book between them. Lauren and Alyssa appear to be leaders as the group reads the entire text with few hesitations. Lauren shows her "food" to the class saying, "This my lunch box. This my apple. This my Swiss cheese." and so on. Children laugh at the more unusual items.

2:10 Debriefing interview

Kathy's class joins Susan's class to watch a movie together. Lauren meets with me for a debriefing interview at this time.

Discussion of Lauren's Day

Lauren's Day provides strong examples of the collaborative nature of learning within the social spaces created by this classroom community. Lauren has several close friends and is friendly with many of the girls in the classroom. She sits next to Amber and the two girls often collaborate on stories together. Amber is an unusually strong artist and often illustrates pages in her classmates' books. Lauren works closely with Katherine during "Books to Go" and Silent Reading. Lauren also interacts with Danielle and Alicia, who sit at her table. Alyssa often stops by to talk to Lauren. During class meetings, Lauren sits close to her friends on the carpet and often whispers or interacts with them. At times Susan reminds her to listen.

Lauren and her friends work closely together, and tend to be very aware of each other's work. When the class is working on math worksheets, Lauren frequently compares her answers with Katherine's. At two points she snatches Katherine's paper away to look at it more closely. Lauren and Amber appear to know each other's writing quite well. In one case, Amber remembered Lauren's book better than Lauren:

Lauren's Day, "Things to Do" (See Appendix C)

"Our teacher, Mrs. McGee, she is nice."

Amber says, "You said McGillicutty."

"Oh, I forgot. *After school we walked to the playground.*"

(Italics indicate the speaker is reading a text aloud.)

This collaboration is supported by a "workshop" approach to work time where children work on a variety of projects, move around to get supplies and materials, and see the children around them as resources as well as the teacher. Table 2 shows a balanced schedule between workshops and whole class events on Lauren's Day.

During this day about over half of the total class time is spent in workshop settings, particularly if we had the 27 minutes of work time provided during transitions. To some extent, this day is atypical because 25 minutes are spent in whole class math instruction and the book club time takes the form of a class presentation. In the next section I discuss the

differences between whole class events and workshop events as I compare Marco's and Lauren's days.

Table 2
Comparison of workshop time, whole class events, and transitions on Lauren's Day

Workshop events	Whole Class Events	Transitions
Things to Do 41 min.	Things to do- math inst. 7 min.	Clean up/ gather 10 min. SG
	Morning Meeting 9 min.	
	Books to Go 25 min.	Prep. for math 8 min.
Math 21 min.	Math 16 min.	Math to writing 10 min. **
Silent Writing 20 min.		Writing/lunch prep 3 min. **
Silent Reading 15 min.	Read Aloud 10 min.	Prep. for reading 10 min. **
	Book Club Presents 20 min.	Prep. for book club 5 min.
Totals: 97 minutes	87 minutes	46 minutes/ **27 worktime

Notes: SG - song, INS - procedural instructions, ** work time available during transitions
Comparing Marco and Lauren's Days

Marco's and Lauren's Days have similarities in terms of how classroom structures such as time and organization are used to create a social space for learning. I describe below how the collaborative nature of this classroom community creates a social *zone of proximal development* (Vygotsky, 1989) that is different from more competitive classroom structures where collaboration might be viewed as cheating. I then describe the nature of whole and small class events on these two days, and the influence of an upcoming standardized test on the social space for learning in the classroom.

A social ZPD and the specter of cheating

Lev Vygotsky (1978) describes a *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) representing the difference between what learners can do on their own, and what they can do with help. His work suggests a role for teachers in providing a "scaffolding" within the child's ZPD. Within this classroom, the structure of social literacy events creates a Social Zone of Proximal Development. Rather than the teacher, Lauren uses her peers as resources, particularly when working on the math worksheets. When Susan finishes explaining the math problems, Lauren looks over at Katherine's paper and asks, "What's

the last one?" During reading she switches roles, helping Sharonda and Katherine with unfamiliar texts.

On Marco's day, during the small math group, Danielle offers to show Audrey and Destine how to use the language blocks. Later James shyly asks Terrence if he needs help, and then proceeds to confidently instruct Terrence in the procedures. This is an interesting switch because Terrence was one of the *kids on the rug* (See Chapter 4) who assists readers during Books to Go. Children are aware of the "funds of knowledge" (Moll, 1994) in the classroom. Amber, an unusually talented artist, illustrates a page in Lauren's book and works on a beautiful vase of flowers for the cover of Alicia's blank book.

In addition to collaboration, the workshop provides opportunities for "demonstrations" (Cambourne, 1988) of readers and writers in action. While Marco reports his work progress to Susan and appreciates her attention, he also attends to the interactions and actions of the students around him. He comes over to listen when Jackie, a very creative and inquisitive child, shares her work with me. When children engage in observing these social demonstrations of literacy in action, they are learning *what it means to be a reader or writer* within a particular literacy event. Recent research on early literacy has indicated that children's observations of their parent's reading and writing activities may be more important than reading aloud experiences (Barrs, 1993; Taylor, 1997).

In a situation where children are sitting in rows, Marco and Lauren would not have an opportunity to observe the interactions and "work" going on around him. Both Marco and Lauren observe the actions of children around him, and children in the classroom help each other to assignments and other projects. These activities are labeled "cheating" in competitive classroom structures. Susan encourages working together and calls it "team work." The social ZPD is not accidental but is fostered by structures such as the classroom workshops.

Whole Class Lessons, Standardized Testing and the Use of Class Time

I have described the value of workshops in creating a social space for collaborative learning and a variety of demonstrations of what it means to be a reader and writer. The whole class activities on these two days provide a contrasting social structure for reconsidering the importance of collaborative spaces for literacy learning. Language Events on Lauren's Day were somewhat evenly divided between whole class events and workshops. On Marco's Day, there were also two events involving small group meetings: Math and Book Clubs.

The whole class language events occurring on both days include: "Morning Meeting" and "Books to Go." These language events involve opportunities for Lauren and Marco to observe demonstrations of reading and writing in action, particularly during "Books to Go" when their classmates read stories to the class. "Morning Meeting" is led by the "daily helpers" and involves a variety of reports concerning focusing on charts and models. The daily routine of this meeting has positive and negative implications. Children have repeated opportunities for learning, as concepts are discussed every day. However, the repetition may get tedious, and Susan has to remind both Marco and Lauren to attend the meeting activities.

On both Marco's and Lauren's Days, there was one additional whole class activity. Marco's Day included a 5-minute mini-lesson focusing on the poem "Three Toed Sloth". Lauren's Day included a whole class math lesson involving 16 minutes of direct instruction. On Lauren's Day, Susan also provided whole class math instruction for 7 minutes during "Things to Do". On Marco's Day, Marco also works on a math sheet, but this was during a small group math lesson. Each of the math sheets on Lauren's Day involved whole class instruction.

The literacy practice "working on math worksheets" was unusual in this classroom, as suggested by Susan's introduction on Lauren's Day, "When you get to your seats, I'm sorry, but we have to do some work in math books again." It was very unusual to have a

worksheet assignment during the “Things to Do.” On other observations, the children did “math journals” at this time, solving a story problem often having something to do with classroom or public events. Children shared their solutions during Morning Meeting. Susan told me math worksheets were used on this day because standardized testing was starting the next week and the worksheets and workbook pages were similar to the types of problems children would be facing on the test.

The differences between the whole class math lesson on Lauren’s Day and the small group lesson on Marco’s Day were striking. Susan’s method of instruction was similar on both days; she worked through the problems with the children, posing each part of the process as a question (“How many tens?”, “What do we do next?”). However, on Marco’s Day, Susan watched each child, and provided extra instruction as she observed their progress. In the small group children collaborated and talked, and asked Susan questions without raising their hands. Marco had more interactions with Susan during this time than during the entire rest of the day.

Susan instructs the children to count their ones, “What do we add first?”
Marco counts all his unit cubes (five and eight). He says, “I count thirteen.”
Susan works with other children, making sure they are following the procedures.
Marco watches Susan’s interactions with other students.
Susan talks to the group. “Okay, thirteen. Now what do we have to do?”
“Trade for a ten,” Marco says, looking down at his blocks. Then he picks up ten cubes and exchanges them for a stick. He has five tens and three ones laid out.
Marco says, “I traded.”
Susan says, “Okay. Good, Marco.”
Susan then explains to the group how to record the information on their paper, indicating the trade above the tens column. Marco looks over at other papers. He begins to write. Susan shows Marco how to record his answer.

Susan addresses Marco directly nine times during the math meeting, and interacts with him directly eight times during the rest of the day, at least while I was observing. The number of interactions in other segments of the day may be skewed due to my presence, which might cause Susan to be less likely to see how he’s doing. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the small group supports Marco’s learning processes and strategies.

On Lauren’s Day, Susan stood at the board and the children sat at their desks. A good deal of time was spent waiting as Susan made sure that everyone was with her. It took

3 full minutes for all of the children to find the right page in their math books. The entire class had to wait if a child had a problem or conflict.

Lauren's Day, Math (Appendix C)

As Susan writes another problem on the board, Sharonda goes up to complain about Bruce. Susan says, "Bruce, you know what I said about teammates getting along." Danny raises his hand. Susan says, "Danny is this important?" She tells Kenneth to "sit down and boss Kenneth." (Worry about yourself and not other children.)

After spending 9 minutes going through several examples with the class, Susan took 6 minutes to explain how to do the rest of the worksheet. During the whole class instruction Susan could not check to see that everyone was understanding and children could not talk and assist each other because it would be disruptive. Children's participation in the discourse involved raising their hands to "signal" they had the answer or providing an answer to the problem.

The differences between the small group math lesson on Marco's Day and the whole class lesson on Lauren's day raise questions about the benefits of direct instruction. Although Delpit (1995) suggests that direct instruction may provide more learning opportunities for African American Students, these language events show that the workshop structure provides more opportunities for interactions and a greater potential for learning. In the small group structure, Marco participated in more interactions with his teacher and his classmates than Lauren did during the more lengthy whole class structure.

A standardized testing period coming up at the end of March had an influence on classroom literacy events during these two days. The "Three Toed Sloth" event was part of a rain forest unit introduced because Susan felt that some of the texts children would read for the reading text were far removed from the experiences of urban second graders in North America. Lauren's assignment of coloring Mexico on a map of North America was related to this unit. The search for the "long o vowels" was also prompted by the standardized test. As an experienced whole language teacher, Susan creates inquiry focused, literature experiences and slips in a 2 minute phonics lesson in preparation for the "reading" test.

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The math instruction took over longer chunks of Lauren's Day as Susan worked to prepare children for the type of problems they would face on the test. The test prompted Susan to change the texts and literacy practices children encountered. They shifted from "math journals" where children provided a variety of solutions to problems drawn from every day life, to commercial "worksheets" where the problems had no meaning or relevance to the kids. In addition, the structure of literacy events changed so that children were spending time waiting, personal problems and conflicts became disruptive, and everything seemed to drag out.

Table 3 compares how time was used in the "Whole Class Math Lesson" compared to Marco's small group lesson, and Lauren's "Silent Writing." The "Whole Class Math Lesson" involved over an hour of class time, including 14 minutes focused on procedural matters. The "Small Group Math Lesson" and "Silent Writing" times, involved just over 1/2 hour with most of that time devoted to collaborative learning experiences. In addition, because "Silent Writing" followed math on Lauren's day, it was cut short because of the math lesson. On other days, the actual writing was followed by a sharing time.

Table 3

Time use in Whole Class Math, Small Group Math, and Silent Writing

Lauren's Whole Class Math Lesson 63 min.*	Marco's Small Group Math Lesson 37 min.	Lauren's Silent Writing 33 min.*
Sit down, get books out 5 m	Inst. for choices 3 m	*Finish math, start writing
Find page in book 3 m	Get settled 3 m	And start writing 10 m
Math instruction 9 m	Distribute materials 3 m	Children write 20 m
Instr. for ind. work 6 m	Small group instruction, w/ unit blocks 23 m	Lunch prep & writing 3 m
Independent work 35 m	Cleanup, writing 5 m	
*Finish math, writing 10m		

* This is the same 10-minute block.

The math instruction on Lauren's Day illustrates the detrimental influences of standardized testing on this classroom community. When Susan introduces "worksheets" rather than "math journals", she changes the nature of relationships between participants in

the literacy events and also the relationship between children and texts. During “Things to Do” the math work sheet involves cutting out answers and pasting them in appropriate boxes. Many children report difficulties with the assignment, so Susan stops the class to go through several problems together. Because gluing would take up too much instructional time, she tells the children to write the answers with their pencils and glue them down later.

Lauren’s Day, “Things to Do” (See Appendix C)

Susan reminds the children to put their names on their papers, and then tells Lauren that she can get the glue.

“Miss Austin,” Lauren calls out, “Do I have to glue it?”

Susan says, “yes.”

This exchange is interesting because Lauren is not seeking instruction, but essentially questioning the validity of the assignment. If the answers are already written in the boxes, is it really necessary to glue them? Lauren bows to Susan’s authority and glues the answers down on the worksheet. She is aware of the boundaries of these instructions, and later tells Danielle that it is not necessary to glue anything down if the answer is “zero.” However, Lauren’s question expresses an implicit awareness of the “nonsense” of this task. Lauren’s question exhibits a critical stance towards her school work. She appears to feel that there is a reason behind the tasks she is expected to do, and that these reasons will make sense to her.

Whole class learning experiences such as “Morning Meeting” and “Books to Go” are important in bringing the class together, and providing a common base of shared literature and conceptual understandings. Whole class instruction on math worksheets is questionable in terms of learning and meaning construction. It changes the nature of social literacy practices in the classroom, and the relationships among participants.

This pre-testing period affected the mood of interactions in the classroom. After the “Things to Do” meeting, Susan told the children she was “way crabby” about how things had been going during the morning. It was a bad day for Susan, and she was frustrated about children’s behavior, although she appeared to have a cold as well as testing anxiety. Of course a bad day for Susan is still a good day for language learning as my description of

Lauren's literacy experiences. In the next sections, I provide an introduction to Marco and Lauren before describing these literacy experiences in the next chapters.

A Profile of Marco

On this day, Marco is wearing jeans and a red plaid shirt. After lunch, he ties the shirt plaid shirt around his waist. He has a plain white T-shirt underneath. Marco has a "fade" haircut, short on top and even shorter on the sides. Marco had on new gym shoes, which he tied and retied as he sat on the area rug for class meetings.

Marco pays attention

Throughout the day, Marco is attentive and methodical about his schoolwork. When Marco was asked to gather up the unit blocks after math, he neatly lines up the tops of the baggies before putting them away. Later, while working on his book club project, he methodically unseals a stack of envelopes, stacking the finished "pockets" in a tidy pile. When I invited Susan to view the videotape of the "Three Toed Sloth" language event, we both agreed that Marco's entire demeanor was one of "paying attention."

Marco's Day, Three Toed Sloth (See Appendix B)

The camera shifts to focus on Marco who sits at the "square team" table, between David and James. He holds his pencil poised to write; peers closely at the board and then down at his paper. On Marco's right, James is circling words on his paper. Marco looks at the board, moves his mouth, and looks down at his paper again. He points at the paper with his pencil, and says something to David. He glances over at the camera.

Susan and I were somewhat surprised to see Marco's attentive posture. Marco was not a strong "independent" reader and writer. This study has changed my association of proficient readers with paying attention. I now believe that less proficient readers and writers are more likely to pay close attention to the social events in the classroom. Even in kindergarten Marco believed that literacy learning involved "studying."

From Marco's kindergarten interview:

- D: Okay. Well how do you become a good reader?
M: Because... uh... because I be... because I be studying.
D: You're studying? Okay so studying makes someone a good reader?
M: Yep.
D: Is there anything else they need to do besides study?

M: Yeah. They just tell their mama... grandmother... or their auntie or their mother... tell them to read the story. And sometimes they say, “No” and sometimes they say “yeah.”

Marco lives with his grandmother in a household where there are many adults available to read to a young child. He sees adults as a resource for literacy learning. In addition, his family has conveyed to him a perspective on what “makes someone a good reader.” It’s important to “study.” Marco has taken this to heart, and continues to be studious and attentive in the second grade classroom.

Marco pays attention to social interactions

Marco studies in order to learn, but he also pays attention to the social exchanges around him. When I asked him what he liked about his classroom, he talked about many aspects of this social world including choices, sharing, and taking pictures -- most likely for class books. During these classroom practices, Marco has opportunities to observe and participate in meaning construction through a variety of sign systems: art, oral and written language, and the varied materials and experiences of “choices.” At the same time, events like “taking pictures” and “sharing” begin with learning about the children around him -- the most important people in his school life.

From Debriefing Interview

Marco: Like we do choices, like people bring they stuff in to share like they doing now. And then like we take pictures and sometimes. Like... when people get on the escalator they some time Kenneth (mimes reaching and grabbing) be trying to take the pencil. And so every time I see it I try to go stop it.

Marco describes his role as peacemaker when children get on the “conflict escalator,” Susan’s metaphor for classroom conflicts, in his list of things he likes about his classroom. Susan started out the year with a unit on “peacemakers” in order to encourage children to think about resolving conflicts peacefully.

Marco’s attention to social interactions includes language use. For example, he displays his concern for appropriate language when he and David enjoy a raunchy couplet from a movie before remembering they are on camera:

Marco's Day, Book Clubs (See Appendix B)

David leans over towards Marco. David says, "What's that (??)³ Your mama something... she... something in 1998."

Marco says, "Your mama got to skate. She (?hit the flo'?). Her (?bootie roll?) In nineteen ninety eight."

Marco continues to pull apart envelopes. David laughs at the rhyme. He looks at Marco and raises his eyebrows. Marco glances at the camera. He smiles.

Apparently viewing this as a social gaffe, Marco responds to David differently the next time this rhyme comes up:

As Marco writes, David begins to chant, "In eighteen eighty eight..."

Marco says, "Your mama tried to skate. She skate so well you couldn't even catch her."

He looks at David. "The other one that I got off that movie, it's a nasty one."

David says, "I ain't saying that."

Marco pays attention by "studying" in order to be a good student. But he also attends to the pragmatics of social interactions. As a beginning reader and writer, Marco relies on observations and listening as his main receptive meaning making systems. He has fine tuned "paying attention" into a strategy of "learning by overhearing."

Learning by overhearing

Within the collaborative spaces in this classroom community, children participate in literacy experiences in a variety of social roles (Lawson, 1997). Marco's experiences during the small group math lesson illustrate how he learns by observing and listening. Marco sits next to Susan in the loose circle on the gathering rug. He closely attends to Susan's instructions and her interactions with other children. He also attends to the work of children around him:

Marco's Day, Small Group Math (See Appendix B)

Susan begins. She points out the first problem ($35+18$) and asks, "Can you make thirty five with your base ten sticks?"

Marco takes out his ten sticks. He lays out three tens.

Susan asks, "How many tens in thirty five?"

Marco looks around at the other children and what they are doing. He places three ten sticks on his clipboard. He puts five unit blocks near the sticks. He looks over to see what James is doing.

³ (??) indicates inaudible speech. When I am not certain of what the speaker has said, I include the words I think I hear between the question marks.

Marco is immediately able to follow Susan's instructions, indicating that he has an understanding of the number concepts involved. He checks his own work by counting his unit blocks. However, he looks around at the other children's "work" in order to reconfirm his responses. Again, in many classrooms this behavior might be considered cheating. In this case, the literacy event has the quality of most holistic literacy events in that Marco has possibility to check and evaluate his own meaning construction. In social literacy practices, children can evaluate their understandings on the social as well as the personal level. In the next problem, Marco makes a mistake but corrects himself as he watches and listens.

The group proceeds to the next problem: $46 + 17$.

Marco counts out forty-six. He puts away his excess sticks. He says, "Miss Austin. Now I have forty six."

Susan says, "Okay, now we're making seventeen."

Marco puts away the forty-six and gets out seventeen. He says, "Now I got seventeen."

Susan is talking to Audrey, "No Audrey. This is forty-six. Now we got to make seventeen."

Marco listens and looks over at Audrey. He gets out more blocks. He makes forty-six and then seventeen. He picks up ten ones and trades them for a ten stick.

Julie lies on the floor just behind Susan and works through the problems on her own. While Marco appears to understand what he's doing, he waits for Susan's instructions before proceeding. Other children use conversations to enhance understandings, but Marco listens and watches before acting.

Susan asks, "What are we adding?" and kids call out, "eighteen."

Susan looks around at each child's work as she gives instructions. "Marco, put these over here so you can see them." Susan moves Marco's sticks off the clipboard and arranges them on the carpet where they are more visible.

Children repeat instructions and talk over their work. "Eighteen. She said eighteen."

Marco silently takes out a ten stick, and then lines up eight one cubes on the right side as Susan did with the thirty-five sticks. Marco counts the unit cubes. He puts the extra cubes back in the baggie. He watches as Susan works with the other students, stopping to count his own blocks several times.

Marco's "learning by overhearing" strategy raises questions about the importance of direct instruction for children's oral language learning. An influential group of educational activists, publishers, and politicians (Taylor, 1998) advocate direct and intensive

instruction of phonics, particularly for students like Marco who are becoming readers more slowly than their peers. Delpit (1995) and Reyes (1992) equate indirect language with indirect instruction and suggest that such structures are confusing to non-European American Children.

However, Marco's "learning by overhearing" strategy is reminiscent of the cultural *Ways with Words* Heath (1983) describes in the African American community of "Tracton". In this community, young children were not spoken to directly until they began to speak by themselves. However, babies sat on the laps or hips of adults and older siblings and were immersed in countless language demonstrations as community members spoke to each other. In the White community of "Roadville," adults spoke to children directly, but children were often placed in cribs or playpens and isolated from adult conversations. In each context, children learned to speak the language of the community around them.

Marco reads and writes

At the time of this observation, as I mentioned before, Susan and I did not view Marco as an "independent" reader. My observations of Marco's reading and writing in a variety of classroom language events, led me to conclude Marco had not yet developed an alphabetic principle (Ferreiro, 1982; Goodman, 1990), understanding that graphemes (letters) have a relationship with phonemes (sounds). The following exchange occurred when I was assisting Marco with writing a book club diary entry:

Marco's Day, Book Clubs (See Appendix B)

Debi says, "And you want to write 'made.' How does 'made' start?"

Marco thinks for a while. He mouths the word 'made.' He guesses 'K.'

Debi says the word slowly, "/mmai:d/. Do you know any words that start like 'made'? How about Marco- 'Marco', 'made.' Do you hear the same sound?"

Marco shakes his head.

While Marco had difficulty reading or writing *unfamiliar texts* independently, he could read and write a variety of familiar literature and functional texts within the social literacy events and practices of his classroom community. Repeated social experiences with literature books create a "language bank" of familiar texts and stories for reading.

During the debriefing interview at the end of the day, Marco re-reads a familiar book (see Figure 4), *What's in My Pocket?* (Williams, 1994b). *What's in my Pocket?* is Marco's "Book Club" selection, and he had read the book many times.

Marco miscues show his use of semantic (meaning) and syntactic (grammar) cues. For instance, Marco substitutes "furry" for "soft" with a focus on text meaning. After predicting "wiggly or giggly" for "fuzzy" on page 10, he turns the page and sees a picture of a bear. Then he self corrects, saying "hairy or something." Marco's "or something" suggests that he *knows* he has not provided the expected text. He feels comfortable providing a meaningful substitution, using pictures, language patterns, and previous experiences with this text to help with meaning construction.

Marco's miscues also demonstrate his syntactic understandings. All of his substitutions for the pattern "Something that's ____." show his understanding of adjectives. He uses the noun phrase pattern (a marble, a feather) to create his own final sentence (15) "a lots of toys." Marco consistently changes the sentence structure of the hint phrase "Something that's round." to "It's something that's round." Where the author uses a sentence fragment, Marco's insertion of "it's" creates a more formal, NP/VP (It / is something that's round) structure that might be expected in written language.

What's in my pocket?
(It's) something that's round.

Marco also uses *graphic* cues, contrary to my initial assumptions. For example, on page 12 (It's something that's gooey) Marco reads "*It's something that's...*" He stops to consider the text "gooey," and then slowly re-reads the sentence leaving out "It's," "*Something that gooey.*" Marco's self-correction of "it's" shows that he is attending to graphic information.

Figure

Cover

Writer

Illustr

1 Po

What

It's

2 A

3 A

4 Po

What

It's

5 Se

6 A

7 Po

What

It's

8 S

A

9 F

What

It's

10 S

11 A

12 I

What

It's

13

14

15

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Figure 4 - Marco Reads

Cover: What's in My Pocket

Written by Rozanne Lanczak Williams

Illustrated by Lucyna A. M. Green

1. Pocket, pocket.

What's in my pocket?

It's

2. ^ Something that's round.

3. A marble.

4. Pocket, pocket.

What's in my pocket?

It's

- ^ Something that's square.

5. A block.

6. Pocket, pocket.

What's in my pocket?

It's

- ^ Something that's soft.

7. A feather.

8. Pocket, pocket.

What's in my pocket?

It's

- ^ Something that's hard.

9. A rock.

10. Pocket, pocket.

What's in my pocket?

It's

- ^ Something that's fuzzy.

(Mario: *Wiggly or giggly*. Looks at bear in picture. *Hairy or something*.)

11. A bear.

12. Pocket, pocket.

What's in my pocket?

It's

- ^ Something that's *goosey.

*(Talks to self, then rereads and corrects.)

13. A worm.

14. Pocket, pocket.

What's in my pocket?

15. (picture of many objects)

Key:

script = Marco's responses to text.

c = correction

^ = insertion

uc = attempted correction

line under text = regression

As I described in Chapter One, a group of Piagetian researchers (Y. Goodman, 1990) studied how young readers and writers *invent* the rules and principles of written language. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) identified four stages in the literacy development of young children in Argentina. Very young pre-school children appear to hypothesize that writing is *iconographic*, with written symbols representing meaning directly. For example, children predicted that the word “cat” (*gato* in Spanish) should be bigger than the word “kitten” (*gatito*).

Children later realize there is a relationship between the spoken utterance and the printed words and will attempt to match spoken words or syllables to units of texts (letters or words). Ferreiro and Teberosky call this the *syllabic stage* because Spanish speaking children tend to focus on matching each spoken syllable to one unit of text. While the syllabic hypothesis does not seem as consistent among English speaking children, the significance of the “syllabic stage” is that the child has come to realize that there is a graphophonic relationship (rather than conceptual) relationship between the oral utterance and the written text.

Marco’s correction of “It’s something that’s gooey.” to “Something that’s gooey.” might indicate a syllabic stage. He is attempting to match the words in the oral utterance with the number of words in the written string. Marco shows a sense of “wordness” in the following discussion.

From Debriefing Interview

Marco: *What’s in my pocket?*

Debi: Okay, before you turn the page, can you point the words that you’re reading

Marco: *What’s in my pocket?* (Points to each word as he reads.)

Debi: Where does it say “pocket?”

(Marco points to “pocket.”)

Debi: Where does it say “my?”

(Marco points to “my.”)

Debi: Where does it say “in?”

(Marco points to “in.”)

Debi: And what does this say? (Points to “What’s”).

Marco: *What’s*

Marco notices differences between different text strands, and recognizes that different looking texts represent different meanings.

- Debi: And remember you told me this [illustrator] was a different name from this person [author]?
- Marco: Yeah
- Debi: And how did you know they were different? You were looking at some of the letters.
- Marco: (points) Cause this 'l' and that 'l' are the same but 'cept for that 'u' and that 'a.' But that 'a' is on there before that 'u.'

At the time of this observation, I had concluded that Marco had not yet developed an alphabetic understanding of the relationship between sounds and letters. As I looked more closely at the data, I realized that Marco was in the process of constructing an alphabetic principle. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) describe a transitional stage where children move between the syllabic and alphabetic hypotheses.

Marco's Day, "Silent Writing" (See Appendix B)

- Marco: How do you spell was?
- Debi: What letter does it start with?
- Marco: Wa:z Wa:z . Wa: s s s 'S.' I sound it out!
- Debi: You hear an "S?" Yes there is an "S," that's right.

Marco's Day, Book Clubs (See Appendix B)

- Marco: How do you spell 'and'?
- Debi: ae:nd/. How do you spell 'and'?
- (Marco mouths the word 'and', and thinks for a moment.)
- Marco: That's an 'N'?" he says. He writes "n" on his paper.

In each of these cases, Marco hears a sound that is close to the *letter names* "ES" and "EN." It is easier to hear the relationship between letters and related phonemes when the consonant phoneme follows a vowel (was, and) as they do when we say the letter names. The association between "EM" and "made" (as in the earlier example) is less obvious. Of course, "was" does not have an /s/ sound, it is pronounced /wʌz/. However the /s/ and the /z/ are a closely related -- they are the same sound except for the voicing in /z/. Marco may also have a graphic image of the word "was" to draw on.

The above examples were taken from writing, rather than reading. Understandings of the graphophonic system are more critical for writers than for readers. Readers have a printed text to aide in meaning construction, and use minimal graphic cues to arrive at a

meaningful interpretation. Writers construct the printed text themselves, and must pay more attention to each letter and word. The process of “invented spelling” engages young writers in graphophonic analysis. While engaged in the writing process, writers’ theories are constantly put to the test, creating the disequilibrium to expand or revise their theories. Marco’s comment “I sound it out!” may reflect his awareness that he is beginning to associate phonemes (sounds) with graphemes (letters).

Marco’s understandings about written language

While Marco was just beginning to use graphic cues in reading, he was not a non-reader. In Chapter Five, I describe in detail how Marco uses a variety of resources in order to read and write during the Book Club activity. Reading and writing involve a wide range of understandings about story schema, experiential concepts, forms and functions of texts, how texts are constructed, etc. In addition to developing understandings about linguistic principles, Marco is developing understandings about texts and genres, functions of texts, social relationships among participants and a wide range of other aspects of the social practices of literacy events. My conversations with Marco reveal some of the understandings about literacy that he brings to his reading and writing experiences.

From the debriefing interview after Marco’s Day

Text: *Written by Rozanne Lanczak Williams* (On front cover of book)
Debi: What do you think this says, right here? (points with eraser to text)
Marco: Uh. (Marco studies text and appears to think for several seconds)
Debi: What does this tell us about?
Marco: It tells about who wrote it.
Debi: And what does this... what do you think it should say there? What does it usually say?
(Marco looks at text and appears to be thinking.)
Debi: Do you know what this word says right here? (Text: by)
Marco: *by*
Debi: And what does this word say? (Text: written)
Marco: (looks at print, cranes neck, looks again) *Wroted...*
Debi: Good, *written*
Marco: *Written by...* (Whispers.) *written by...*

While Marco is initially reluctant to *read* the author’s byline, he understands the form and function of bylines within text. In this example, Marco recognizes the word “by,” again showing graphic awareness, and uses his understanding of the by-line form to

read “written by.” Michael Halliday (1975) describes children’s language learning as “function driven” and believes that “function precedes form.” Marco’s understandings of the nature and functions of print appear to be developing in advance of his ability to read independently.

This exchange illustrates that a non-response to a question (“What do you think this says?”) is not a good indicator of what a reader knows about text or what he can read. On a hunch, I discover that Marco can read, “by.” With further encouragement, he reads, “Wroted by.” My guess is that his initial hesitation was related to concern about pronouncing the author’s name, rather than his ability to construct meaning with the text. Marco knows about illustrators as well as authors.

Text: Illustrated by Lucyna A. M. Green

- D: If this is “written by Rosanne...” what do you think this part says?
(Marco runs finger under text.)
D: This person wrote the story, and then what did this one do?
M: Illustrate it.
D: Okay, so can you read this one to me?
M: *Illustrated by* (Points to text as he reads. Stops at name.)

Marco also is aware of the publication process. *What’s in My Pocket* (Williams, 1994b) is a repetitive riddle with no characters or plot. Perhaps for this reason, Marco’s retelling quickly moves to a description of the text publication process. Marco’s comments are made without prompting.

Marco retells *What’s in My Pocket*?

1. And so that’s how they make the book.
2. And then... so, when... when they got done with the book, they had get on the stage and had... had took a bow.
3. And then they had... they had the pictures... then they had drew the pictures.
4. They went someplace to get the pictures like this. (Points to book.)
5. And then uh they had worked the rows and...
6. worked the pictures
7. and wroted who and um... who they was...
8. and then they had drawn this page all with pretty (Voice goes up.) colors.
9. And they wrote “a marble.”

Marco appears to have a good understanding of the publishing process. He appreciates the aesthetics of “pretty colors” accompanied by related texts (lines 8-9). He

knows that the original artwork has to be processed (“worked the pictures”) in order to be printed in the book (line 3-4). He invents his own language for technical descriptions; “worked the rows” for “typeset the text” (line 5). Marco predicts that the last page, depicting many different toys, might be hinting about a sequel.

Marco: And then at the end, on the last page right there, and then they had drawn a picture with a lot of toys. They go’n show that in the new book.

Debi: And they what?

Marco: These are the toys that they might put in the other book. (Shows last page.)

Marco also compares this book to a similar, repetitive book *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* (Shaw, 1947). Both books focus on objects appearing in relief, in one case within pockets, in the other suggested by clouds.

Debi: O:h. Have you every seen other books that did that?

Marco: Yeah, some of ‘em. Like *Spilt Milk*.

In addition to interpreting this text as a reader, Marco also reflects upon the relationships between author, illustrator and text, and between author, illustrator and audience. Marco appears to understand, with Anne Haas Dyson (1993), that writing is a social performance. He imagines that “when they got done with the book, they had get on the stage and had... had took a bow” (line 2, above). Marco’s discussion of *What’s in my Pocket?* might be compared with Davidson (1989) and others who study how literature is socially, culturally, and historically situated. He has a sense that books have a background including author, illustrator, and publication history. He talks about the relationship between artist and audience. While Marco is a beginning reader and writer, he is not a non-reader. It would be a mistake to evaluate Marco’s literacy development with a narrow focus on his productive control of the graphophonic system.

This close analysis of Marco’s transactions with texts provides a window into the sociolinguistic understandings that Marco brings to literacy experiences. Marco’s understandings about texts illustrate to a small extent the “multiple layers of communication that are part of our contextual worlds” (Taylor, Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). In

the next chapters I will describe how Marco uses these understandings as resources when he participates in the contextual world of the second grade classroom. At the same time, Marco's participation in classroom literacy events enhances his literacy development.

A Profile of Lauren

On this day in March, Lauren is wearing a black corduroy skirt, a white shirt with black collar and cuffs, and white tights. Her hair is in two small ponytails high on the sides of her head. Lauren is a talkative and outgoing girl. Lauren's mother drives her to school from the mid-town area, about five miles away. She is a "citywide" student, attracted by the whole language alternative to the neighborhood school. Although the school's whole language philosophy is the focus of this school-of-choice, Lauren's mother has some ambivalence about whole language, and bought Lauren "Hooked on Phonics" when Lauren was in first grade. Lauren reports that her mother talked about moving her from Susan's classroom. Lauren ended the discussion by threatening to "act a fool" if her mother moved her to another room.

Lauren has a good time

Lauren appears to enjoy herself in school. She often laughs and jokes with her friends. Her interactions involve a good deal of play fighting, a very common aspect of Lauren's relationship with her friends.

Lauren's Day, "Things to Do" (See Appendix C)

Alyssa comes over to the table and leans over to look at Lauren's paper.

Lauren says, "Here, I'm done with it. Alyssa, I'm already done with mine."

Alyssa picks up one of Lauren's strips.

Lauren says, "Now you put that back." and laughs.

Alyssa mimics, "Now you put that back." She leans close to Lauren.

Lauren says, "Do you know what Alyssa means?"

Alyssa says, "Yes." She pretends to slap Lauren, but does not touch her.

In some cases, this humorous play fighting is used to mitigate potential conflicts. In the following example, Lauren is holding Katherine's math worksheet.

Lauren's Day, "Things to Do" (See Appendix C)

Katherine picks up two answer squares from the table, looks at them and starts to take her paper back from Lauren. Lauren waves her hand around as Katherine tries to get her paper. Lauren holds Katherine back with her left hand as she reads Katherine's paper. She laughs. Alicia watches and laughs. Lauren gives the paper to Katherine and Katherine sits down to work. She says, "All right, where'd the glue go?" Lauren makes a raspberry sound and laughs. Alicia laughs.

This play fighting is reminiscent of Marjorie Goodwin's (1990) study of girls' and boys' "street play" in one neighborhood in Philadelphia. While the boys' arguments tended to focus on one-upmanship and competition, girls' disputes were carefully orchestrated to maintain balance so that no one would emerge as being "better" than the other girls are. In exchanges with girls who are not Lauren's close friends, the play fighting continues though with a little more reserve:

Lauren's Day, "Things to Do"

Lauren continues working on math, occasionally looking over at Katherine's paper. She pushes the purple crayon box towards Danielle. Danielle sits down to work on her map, and pushes the supply box out of her way. Lauren pushes it back. Danielle shakes her shoulders, miming "an attitude." She smiles. This mock argument has jostled my microphone. Lauren adjusts it so it faces her. Lauren looks at Danielle out of the corner of her eye and smiles.

Getting along with classmates, at least certain of the second grade girls, seems to be important to Lauren and her peers.

Lauren's Day, Math

Susan asks Danielle to switch seats with Bruce, who is having a difficult time getting along with his teammates. Sharonda says, "Yes!" in the background.

Danielle says, "Why they like that?"

Lauren responds, "They don't like Bruce." She lowers her voice and adds, "So why we have Bruce here?" The children quietly talk about Bruce.

Danielle gathers her things together. "I'll see you next year, Lauren."

Lauren appears comfortable in the classroom community. She does her work, but also takes advantage of opportunities to socialize as she works and between work activities. The classroom structure of certain work periods appears to encourage these interactions, because students are allowed to talk and move around the room within reason.

Lauren gets busy

Lauren appears to be a self-starter. When she enters the room, she studies the front chalkboard where the "Things to Do list" identifies morning assignments and choices. She begins working on the two assignments: coloring in Mexico on a map of South

American and completing a math work sheet. She gets involved in her work, and continues working throughout PA announcements and other interruptions. She is anxious to complete her assigned work, and reports her progress to herself and her friends.

Lauren's Day, Math (See Appendix C)

Lauren says the numbers as she finds them and pastes them down, "twenty five, thirty... this is it."

"I only got /two⁴ \more," she says. She leans back and puts her hands on her head.

Danielle looks over at Lauren, and Lauren repeats, "I only got /two \more. See, look. One, two. One, two."

Lauren continues working. "Now I got one more."

Danielle is looking at her answer pieces, "Five, seven."

Lauren glues the last piece down. "Got it. I got all of them right."

Alyssa comes over to the table and leans over to look at Lauren's paper.

Lauren says, "Here, I'm done with it. Alyssa, I'm already done with mine."

Lauren appears comfortable with the open-ended participation structure of classroom workshops. She completes assignments, working closely with her friends. During "Things to Do", she finishes the two "assigned" projects and gives herself a short break, talking with Alyssa for a while and playing with Amber's ponytails. Then she chooses to "finish writing" her book, one of the choices provided on the "Things to Do" list. Lauren's book is one that she has been working on for several weeks.

Lauren's Day, "Things to Do" (See Appendix C)

Lauren plays with Amber's ponytails, counting them as Amber works. The girls look at the board, where Susan is giving out team points.

Lauren says, "I'm going to finish writing my (??) book." She begins pulling things out of the cubby in her desk until she finds a "book" made from folding blank paper and stapling.

Throughout the day, Lauren appears to know what she is doing and moves from one task to another without input from the teacher. She is what I call an "independent" worker, although she certainly interacts with other children. Lauren needs little prompting to participate in reading and writing experiences, and structures of this classroom community give her the freedom to be a reader and writer.

⁴ The slash marks are used to indicate rising (/) and falling (\) tones. Lauren's voice goes up high on two, and comes back down on more. Danielle repeats this pattern.

Lauren speaks up

When Lauren walks in the room, she asks Kelly, the future teacher, “And why you’re behind the camera.” Later she is trying to copy “Mexico” off the board and tells Kelly, “Move out of the way. I can’t see.” She goes up to Kelly and explains, “I can’t hardly spell Mexico.” Lauren’s admission shows a confidence in what she should and shouldn’t be able to do on her own.

As mentioned earlier, Lauren also politely questions Susan’s instructions.

Lauren’s Day, “Things to Do” (See Appendix C)

Susan reminds the children to put their names on their papers, and then tells Lauren that she can get the glue.

“Miss Austin,” Lauren calls out, “Do I have to glue it?”

Susan says, “yes.”

In this literacy event, Lauren is placed in the role of a passive “object” of the event, rather than the active “subject”. However, her question indicates that she expects agency as well as logic in classroom assignments. On an earlier observation in October, Lauren also asks a question during a class discussion. (This discussion transcript was used for the “James like Lily” pilot study described in Chapter Two.)

Susan: Okay... Lauren?

Lauren: Can I ask James a question?

Susan: James, can she ask you a question?

(Everyone looks at James. I can’t hear what he says.)

Susan: You can [ASK him.]

Lauren: [How did]⁵... how... how did they know you liked... Jasmine?

Charles: <Cause Tiffany told everybody>⁶ (Chin propped on elbow.)

Lauren: Cause what?

Charles: Tiffany told everybody

In this exchange, Lauren adeptly requests permission from Susan to take on the role of teacher in *asking the questions*. Lauren’s question turns the conversation in an important new direction, and Susan later incorporates this information into her own understanding of the topic of discussion.

Lauren’s “speaking up” is another example of her comfort and confidence within the classroom setting. Further, Lauren exhibits strong understandings about the parameters

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of participation in this social context. Lauren's actions show that she has a sense of agency in her role in classroom learning experiences. She is thinking critically about language events as they occur and often plays a deliberate role in shaping ongoing events.

Lauren is an author

When I met Lauren in kindergarten, I asked her to write something for me. She was the one child who wrote a book. It was called "The Wiggle of Oz." Even as a kindergartner, Lauren had an awareness of the literary elements of stories. She started her story "once upon a time." She borrowed literary elements from a movie she had seen and also from two books her teacher had read to the class. As a second grader, Lauren's writing is more complex, as I describe in detail in Chapter Five. She has strong openings ("This what I call a rainy day."), plot development, dialogues, detail, and expressive wordings.

Interviews with Lauren reveal other aspects of her image as a writer. She tells me that she writes at home, almost daily. She has a little table in her family's "library" and folders full of her works. She also describes thinking about her work while not writing. A family trip in the rain, for example, inspired a story she wrote in October called, "A Rainy Day."

Literacy in a Community of Learners

I do not want to compare Marco and Lauren's literacy use directly because they are different children. However, considering how these children are similar and how they are different reveals some of the interplay between the social community of school and the individual child.

Both Marco and Lauren appear to feel a sense of confidence and belonging in the class. Lauren moves around the class as if it is her home. In fact, she would "act the fool" if someone suggested she leave. She completes all of her assignments, selects from a number of choices. She shows interest and enthusiasm in class activities. She especially

⁶ <> Indicates a very quiet tone of voice.

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enjoys her friends and peers, working closely with her “teammates,” and talking and joking through the day.

Marco takes a variety of roles in class learning experiences, but he participates in each language event attentively. His pride in his work comes through in his meticulous attention to details; he carefully unglues each envelope for his Book Club project and stacks them in a neat stack to his side. He is attentive during class events, and feels successful with his work, saying to his friend David “I did all these.”

Establishing a “community of learners” is a basic tenet of whole language teaching. A growing group of whole language teachers have written books about their classrooms and each stresses this foundational principle [See for example Avery, 1993 #81; Hindley, 1996 #82; Fisher, 1998 #79; Atwell, 1998 #80]. Ralph Peterson details the process of establishing a caring learning community in his book *Life in a Crowded Place* (Peterson, 1992). Susan has worked hard to encourage her 28 first and second graders to work together. She begins the year with a unit on “Peacemaking” and talks to the children about great peacemakers. She helps children to avoid the “conflict escalator” by resolving conflicts peaceably.

Frank Smith talks about “joining the literacy club,” and says that children join the literacy club if they feel welcome and if they feel like the people around them, the people they care about are members of the literacy club. Both Lauren and Marco described themselves as readers and writers during my interviews with them throughout kindergarten, first and second grades. They each participate in a variety of literacy events as members of a literate community.

Conclusion

In this chapter I provided an overview of Marco and Lauren's Days of School. I described how Susan, with the children, developed classroom structures that foster social spaces for learning. I described how social literacy practices in this classroom involve collaboration within a community of learners. I also discussed the negative impact of testing on the texts, genres, and practices within classroom literacy events. Marco and Lauren were introduced, providing a portrait from my perspective as I participated in their school days.

This chapter describes some of the perceptions of the classroom and the children I had developed through three years of observing and recording Lauren and Marco's literacy experiences. In Chapter Four I will describe the social practice of literacy in the classroom, focusing on the question: *What are the social and cultural literacy events and practices in the schooling of two second-graders?* In Chapter Five I will describe Marco and Lauren's literacy development, particularly their roles as meaning makers, focusing on the question: *What factors and principles appear to be related to the literacy learning of these developing readers within this classroom culture?*

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Chapter Four

Literacy Events and Practices in Lauren's and Marco's School Days

In this chapter, I describe and discuss the literacy experiences in which Marco and Lauren participated during the two days of observation. This chapter explores the social *practices* of literacy during the events of Marco's Day and Lauren's Day. My intention is to explore what it means to be literate for Lauren and Marco within this classroom culture.

Underlying the discussion of Lauren's and Marco's literacy experiences is an assumption that the children are *learning language* as they are *using language*. To illustrate this connection, I begin this chapter with an example of Marco's literacy learning as he listens when a classmate reads a story to the class. Next I discuss how literacy events were identified and grouped in Marco's Day and Lauren's Day first by text and genre, and then by social activity. Examples and discussion of the literacy activities are grouped into three general categories: reading and writing literature, reading and writing while engaged in another social activity; and reading and writing school exercises. I also describe the texts and genres within each category.

Marco and Lauren were participants in each of the literacy events catalogued for analysis. However, they participated in these events in various social stances such as reader, writer, listener, observer, discussant, bystander, apprentice, or "teacher." It is not always possible to discern how Marco and Lauren experience an event, or what they learn from the event. Language learning is not usually observable in the child's actions or talk. However, exploring the nature of literacy events and practices provides opportunities for understanding the potential impact they may have on Lauren and Marco as human beings, as members of this community, and as language learners.

Introduction

At the end of Marco's Day, I interviewed him about his experiences that day and some of the literacy events I had observed. Marco had just read his Book Club book,

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What's in my Pocket? (Williams, 1994), a book that he has read many times during the Book Club meetings. After the reading, I asked Marco questions designed to gain insight into his view about reading and his strategies as a reader⁷.

Researcher: Now when you're reading and you come to something you don't know=⁸

Marco: =I go back=

Researcher: =how do you figure it out?

Marco: (Shows book page with text: "**Pocket, pocket. What's in my pocket?**")

I just go back from that word

and then I go, when I read that word ("Pocket, pocket.")

and I don't know that word ("What's")

I just skip them two words ("in" and "my")

And I read *pocket* ("pocket," end of sentence)

And then I go back to these words (points to "What's in my")

Then I say, *pocket*

At first I just, "*That's in my pocket*"

Then I just go back and go, *Pocket, pocket. What's IN my pocket?*

That sound much better

So that... *What's in my pocket?* (Reads slowly, pointing to each word.)

Researcher: So you just keep going back and forth.

And you keep going until you find what sounds right?

My question (When you're reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do?) is meant to elicit Marco's description of the strategies he believes he uses with unfamiliar text. Marco's "I go back" strategy includes several steps:

1. Skip over the unfamiliar text and read to the end of the sentence.
2. Reread the sentence, providing a placeholder for unfamiliar text.
3. Come up with a prediction that "sounds much better."
4. Continue to re-read and read ahead until satisfied with text construction.

Marco appears to have a strongly formed understanding of this reading strategy; he begins to describe it before I am finished with my question. He describes a process where he works on unfamiliar texts without assistance, demonstrating a confidence in his own reading abilities. Marco's response does not necessarily describe his actual reading

⁷ Questions were based on Carolyn Burke's Reading Interview from the Reading Miscue Inventory (Y. Goodman, Watson, Burke, 1987)

⁸ = Indicates slight overlapping speech.

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process, but *his view of his own reading process*. A common response to this question is the folk strategy “sound it out,” which suggests a phonetic approach to reading.

Marco’s “I go back” strategy suggests a meaning focused view of reading. He focuses on concept carriers, or content words. He suggests skipping over the function words (in my) in order to get to “pocket.” In the question structure (What’s in my pocket?), the actor/ subject (my pocket) comes at the end, so Marco’s strategy of reading ahead makes a lot of sense.

When Marco described this reading strategy in March of his second grade year, I was astonished. I had spent three years observing and talking with Marco, and felt I knew him pretty well. I was not surprised that Marco would describe a meaning focused strategy because Marco had spent three years in classrooms where “making sense” is always the focus of reading. But this particular strategy process appeared to go beyond Marco’s actual abilities as a reader. As I discuss in Chapter Three, at the time of the interview I believed that Marco had not yet developed an “alphabetic principle” (Goodman, 1990, Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982). I attributed Marco’s ability to read *What’s in My Pocket?* (Williams, 1994) to “holistic remembering”-- using pictures and familiar language to reconstruct a familiar text. It is now clear, after close analysis of the data, that Marco’s reading abilities extended beyond my initial assessment after observing and talking with him.

But Marco’s “I go back” strategy is still powerful and surprising because he not only shows linguistic understandings of the reading process, but demonstrates metalinguistic awareness in articulating these understandings. How is it that Marco could describe a reading strategy that extends beyond his apparent abilities? Earlier in Marco’s Day, during “Books to Go,” Marco is actively listening to Amber read a non-fiction book called *Snakes* by Patricia Demuth (1993). He wriggles his body back and forth when she mentioned that snakes “slither,” and he looks at each picture intently. When Amber needs

help with her reading, she turns to the “kids on the rug”, the group of children who sit nearby the reader ready to help.

Marco’s Day, “Books to Go” (See Appendix B)

Amber reads, “*In a flash the rattle snake...*”⁹

She stops and Darryl and Terrence stand up to look.

“Give her some time.” Susan says.

The listeners wait, while Amber studies the text. Amber turns towards the first row and says, “Alicia.” Alicia, Darryl, and Terrence all study the page with Amber.

Someone says, “Stricks,” and Amber repeats it, but then stops and says, “Miss Austin, what’s this word?”

Susan begins to walk around the children towards Amber.

Susan: Can you go on with the sentence. Let’s listen to the rest of the sentence.

Amber: ...*the mouse*.

Susan: Okay, start at the beginning.

Amber *In a flash the rattlesnake something the mouse.*

Susan: And I heard someone over here say “stricks,”
I think that’s cause it starts with s-t-r.”

Terrence: (quietly) ssss sstrike.

Susan: So what do you think would make sense?

What’s the rattlesnake going to do to the mouse?

Terrence: Strike.

Voices: STRIKE! (loud staccato, like a snake striking a mouse)

Amber continues reading, “*It grabs it with its needle sharp teeth, then it...*”

When the “kids on the rug” strategy falters, Susan provides a “teachable moment strategy lesson” (Y. Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1996), helping Amber and her classmates to make sense of the unfamiliar text. Susan’s suggestions are very similar to Marco’s “I go back” strategy:

Susan’s impromptu strategy lesson:

1. Read to the end of the sentence.
2. Reread the sentence, providing a placeholder for unfamiliar text.
3. Make note of graphophonic cues.
4. Think about what would “make sense.”

Marco’s “I go back” strategy:

1. Skip over the unfamiliar text and read to the end of the sentence.
2. Reread the sentence, providing a placeholder for unfamiliar text.
3. Come up with a prediction that “sound much better.”
4. Continue to work at the text, re-reading and reading ahead.

Marco’s “I go back” strategy mirrors the process that Susan works through with Amber. Marco’s “sound much better” may be another way of saying “it makes sense.”

⁹ Italics indicate a written text is being read aloud.

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Or he could be implying that the text “sounds like English” indicating a focus on the syntactic structure.

This anecdote is a strong example of how Marco “learns by overhearing” as a participant in reading demonstrations. Because Susan also viewed Marco as a holistic reader not yet focusing on graphic cues, it is highly unlikely that she would respond to Marco’s reading with the same type of strategy lesson that she provides for Amber. However, Marco has had many opportunities to hear his classmates read. On Marco’s Day, he heard three books read to the class and one poem as a choral reading. On Lauren’s Day, four books were read to the class, and two songbooks were sung in chorus. A conservative estimate would be that Marco had heard over 300 texts read aloud in the 120 days of second grade up to this date.

Marco has been a participant observer in countless reading and writing demonstrations, involving many teachable moment strategy lessons. Brian Street (1995) writes “reading and writing are located within the real social and linguistic practices that give them meaning. (p.3)” As I observe Marco within classroom literacy practices, I become more and more convinced of the importance of social interactions in literacy learning. Mario is not “the reader” in the anecdote above, and yet he gains understandings about reading and what it means to be a reader, not to mention snakes.

The “Books to Go” language event involves literacy practices that are socially constructed by this particular community throughout the school year. Children take turns being “the reader,” taking books home and practicing them with their family before reading to the class. When the reader needs assistance, she turns to the “kids on the rug” -- the group of children sitting right in front of the reader. In general, the readers are not assisted unless they request help. Susan says, “Give her some time” when kids move to assist Amber before she is ready. This is a reminder of an informal language policy that Susan has established for this recurring event. The term “kids on the rug” came from an interview with Victor:

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Debi: When you're reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do?

Victor: And the kids on the rug don't know it either?

Victor's clarification of my question suggests a classroom community where "what one knows we all know." This perspective is reminiscent of Moll's (1994) concept of "funds of knowledge" within communities. Moll describes how members of the barrio communities he studies share a wide range of expertise with other community members in areas such as: auto mechanics, religion, crafts, education, etc. Such examples raise questions about the typical ways readers are evaluated within contrived situations outside of a particular social context. If reading and writing are social activities, it becomes difficult to justify typical assessments where children are evaluated based on individual performance. I will return to this issue in Chapter Six.

I introduced this chapter with Marco's "I go back" strategy to illustrate that participating in literacy events has an impact on developing readers and writers. In a study of oral language development, Brian Cambourne (1988) found that immersion and demonstration are essential conditions of language learning. In literacy events, participants are immersed in written texts, and engaged in making meaning with texts. At the same time, they experience demonstrations of how readers and writers use texts within particular social contexts. Language events that support social interactions and social literacy development closely resemble the social language learning of the home. It is through the literacy events and practices of Lauren's Day and Marco's Day that we can best understand and describe them as readers, writers, and learners.

Identifying Literacy Events

The vignette above demonstrates the power of literacy events for Marco's language learning. However, it's important to acknowledge that literacy events are not inherently positive and valuable experiences for participants. School literacy events that include meaningless exercises with little relationship with how language works outside of school, often have a negative impact on language and literacy learning. In addition, each participant

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in a literacy event may have different experiences in terms of meaning construction, relevance or importance, positive or negative impact, etc. Differences can depend on participants' interpretation of a literacy event, or on the participants' social position within the literacy event.

In order to discuss literacy events generally before making assumptions about the quality of the experience for the participant, I find it useful to adopt Edelsky's (1991) distinction between "literacy" and "reading (or writing)." Literacy is any social event where participants interact with written texts, while reading and writing involve meaning construction. Identifying letters on chart in order to get a driver's license *is* a literacy event, because it involves a printed text, but it does *not* involve "reading" because there is no meaning construction.

My initial lists and descriptions of the literacy events of Marco's Day and Lauren's Day deliberately include *all* events involving a written text where the child was a participant. It is not easy to define a literacy event. I debated over whether artifacts involving numerals, such as a model of a thermometer, should be considered a "text". After observing these events carefully, I decided to consider any object that has letters or numerals a "printed text". I decided *not* to include events involving "tools of literacy", such as when Lauren says to Amber, "Let me see your pencil". I do include events where the written text is not present, such as Lauren using a "name book" as a reference in an argument. *A literacy event, for the purpose of this study, is any social activity that involves a written text.* This inclusive listing allows for qualitative discussions of the meaning potential of the event and how these events impact Marco's and Lauren's literacy development.

Marco and Lauren sometimes participate in the event as a reader or writer, but also may be a listener, observer, or peripheral "overhearer" of the literacy event. Because of the complexity of literacy events, identifying the specific events of Marco's and Lauren's Day is a somewhat arbitrary process. For example, "Writing Time" can be described as a single literacy event (Lauren and her tablemates prepare and write literature texts.), or it

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could be several overlapping events (Lauren writes a fiction story, Alicia makes a blank book, etc.) In order to look more closely at the practices, texts and genres of these events, I tend to separate literacy experiences into smaller, rather than larger, events.

Literacy events are contained within other events. For example, I decided to classify Amber's reading of *Snakes* (Demuth, 1993) as three events: Amber reads *Snakes*, "kids on the rug" assist Amber, and Susan provides on-the-spot strategy lesson. On the other hand I did not carefully document every single occurrence of one reader helping another as a literacy event. Because I was interested in understanding the nature of various events rather than counting every event, the exact numbers and percentages of each type of literacy events listed later indicate trends and patterns and have no statistical significance.

What is a "text"?

Because a literacy event is any social event involving a written text, I should also define what I mean by "a text." In order to be as inclusive as possible about what comprises a "literacy event," I decided to define a "written text" as any object of a social event that contains letters or numerals. In a small number of events, such as Lauren's use of "name books" to support an assertion about her own name, the text was not present but was the object of discussion. Written texts included: trade books, children's rough drafts, lists on the board, the classroom calendar, math worksheets, and so on. In a few cases there was very little writing on the text. For example, the "Missing Person's Graph" was named in print on the top, and a row of dates along the bottom with the number of students absent shaded in above each date.

The only case where a "written text" does not include letters or numerals is "Marco's Outline." During the "*What's In My Pocket?* Book Club" meeting, Marco creates an outline for the group writing project consisting of two rows of geographic shapes. These shapes represent objects (i.e. something round, something square) to be placed in each pocket. I include Marco's outline as a "text" within a literacy event

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because Marco is practicing what writers do, using a symbolic model to plan a text. Figure 5 provides a list of texts read and written on the two target research days.

Looking for “Social Practice” in Literacy Events

After reviewing the data for Marco’s Day, I catalogued 30 literacy events where Marco was a participant, involving 27 written texts. For Lauren’s Day, I catalogued 37 literacy events involving 29 written texts. A detailed, chronological charting of the specific events is listed in Appendix D: Literacy Events and Practices of Marco’s Day and Appendix E: Literacy Events and Practices of Lauren’s Day. The number of texts is a little less arbitrary than the number of events, because I included all of the texts that the children encountered in some literacy event, and only those texts that the children encountered directly. There is some grouping of texts within this category; for example Lauren and Katherine choose a stack of nine books for silent reading.

After cataloguing the events, I attempted to group or sort them in order to gain a understanding of how Lauren and Marco experience literacy within this cultural context. I first grouped the events by text and genre (Figure 5). While this list yields interesting issues for discussion, it does get at the essence of the literacy event - the underlying social practices. For example, Marco experiences the poem “Three Toed Sloth” (Prelutsky, 1983) as a text within a handwriting lesson, a scientific discussion, a search for the long-o vowels, and a choral reading. The nature of the text, while always remaining a poem, changes as participants use the texts in different social events.

In my initial cataloging of literacy experiences in the classroom, I did not distinguish between *literacy events* and *literacy practices*. Literacy practices are the more generalized social practices involving literacy. For example, “*Amber reads Snakes*” is a literacy event that occurred on Marco’s Day. This event can be related to a set of literacy practices involving *reading aloud*. Literacy practices do not just include the transaction of reading, but also include texts, genres, settings, social roles and relationships, and social activities.

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Liter

1. A

2. B

3. C

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Liter

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Figure 5: Texts and Genres

Texts and Genres of Marco's Day: (30 literacy events/ 27 texts)	Texts/Genre's of Lauren's Day (37 literacy events/ 29 texts)
<u>Literature - Poetry/Songs:</u>	
1. Three Toed Sloth, Jack Prelutsky	1. This Old Man, Pam Adams
2. If a Tree Could Talk, Rozanne Williams	2. Song books Sharonda reads during SR
	3. Ten in the Bed, Mary Rees
<u>Literature - Fiction:</u>	
1. A Snake Mistake, Mavis Smith	1. Lunch Boxes, Fred Erlich
2. D.W. All Wet by Marc Brown	2. Two Dog Biscuit, Beverly Cleary
3. My Best Friend's New Baby Sister, by Lauren	3. My Best Friend's New Baby Sister, by Lauren
4. What's in my Pocket, Rozanne Williams	4. How do I love you? Class book
5. What's in my Pocket- group writing project	5. Who Sank the Boat?, Pamela Allen
	6. Teddy Bear for Sale, Gail Herman
<u>Literature - Non-fiction:</u>	
1. Autobiographies of Marco's team mates	1. Name books
2. Digging up Dinosaurs, Alike	2. Rudy's autobiography
3. Jackie's book on dinosaurs	3. The Daily News (reports by children)
4. Marco's autobiography	4. Our Trip - Class Authored book.
5. Snakes by Patricia Demuth	
<u>Literature - genre unknown</u>	
	1. Blank books: Alicia, Amber, Jonathan
	2. Lauren & Katherine's stack of books for Silent Reading
	3. Lauren's "Books to Go" bag
<u>Instrumental texts - forms, charts and lists:</u>	
1. Attendance book ("Morning Meeting")	1. Attendance book
2. Book club diary	2. Book club evaluation form
3. Book club folders	3. List of girls names, list of boy's names
4. Destine's autobiography math problem	4. Sign in sheet
5. List of boy's names, list of girl's names	5. "Things to Do" list
6. List of math choices	
7. Mario's "outline"	
8. Writing folders	
<u>Instrumental texts - Charts, models, etc.</u>	
1. Attendance tally	1. Attendance tally
2. Classroom calendar	2. Days of school numberline
3. Days of school numberline	3. Maps of North, South America
4. Missing person's graph	4. Team behavior chart on chalkboard
5. Outdoor thermometer model	5. Classroom calendar
	6. Outdoor thermometer model
<u>Instructional (Commercial) texts:</u>	
1. Days of school units chart	1. Days of school units chart
2. Math worksheet	2. Math texts books (consumable)
	3. Math worksheet

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In Susan's classroom, *reading aloud* includes a familiar set of literacy practices: a class member reads, a large audience of listeners, times when pictures are viewed, comments and questions, kids on the rug helping the reader, and so on. There is a participation structure to this event in terms of where and how participants sit and how and when participants speak and listen. *Reading aloud* at home involves a set of literacy practices with similarities and differences from the "Books to Go" literacy practices in the classroom.

As I struggled to understand Marco's and Lauren's literacy experiences, I realized I needed to gain an understanding of the social practices of literacy and how they worked within this classroom community. I began to think about the "social activity" that occurs in relation to a text. I categorized each event in terms of *what is being done with or around a text*: reading, writing, listening, recording, reporting, discussing, etc.

Social activities within literacy events are not the same as literacy practices, because the practice includes the social and physical context, the reader or writer, the texts and genres, and the roles and relationships of the participants. However, grouping literacy events by activity allows me to consider the nature of literacy practices in the classroom. For example, the literacy event "Amber reads Snakes" is associated with the activity of "reading aloud". By identifying and grouping other *literacy events* with the *activity* of "reading aloud", I am able to describe the *literacy practices* in this classroom associated with "reading aloud".

Literacy Activities within Literacy Events

The chart "Literacy Activities" (Table 4) provides an overview of the patterns of literacy activities during the 69 literacy events on Marco's Day and Lauren's Day combined. This list of literacy activities was constructed by first identifying a "major activity" of each literacy event such as: read a book or poem, write a creative text, discuss a text, record or report information, plan or organize activities or behavior, and do a worksheet or exercise. Then I grouped the literacy events by activities. A few events (six) are included in two places but, for the most part, each event involves a single major activity.

Table 4: Literacy Activities within Literacy Events Catalogued

Literacy Activity:	Occurrences:	
Events involving Reading or Writing Literature	42/69 events	
<u>Reading (listen to) a book or poem:</u>	<u>(18 /69 events)</u>	<u>26%</u>
• Reading to class / listen to book read aloud	7	
• Choral reading	4	
• Reading to “a friend” / listening to “a friend” read	3	
• Reading to self	3	
• Reading book excerpts as reference or model for writing	2*	
<u>Write a “creative” text /observe classmate writing:</u>	<u>(6 / 69 events)</u>	<u>9%</u>
• Writing a “book”	5*	
• Writing a group project	1	
<u>Prepare to read or write literature:</u>	<u>(5/ 69 events)</u>	<u>7%</u>
• Selecting reading materials, writing materials	3*	
• Making a blank book	2	
• Outlining a written work	1	
<u>Talking about text*</u>	<u>(13/69 events)</u>	<u>19%</u>
• Discussing unfamiliar text/ assist a reader	4*	
• Discussing “how a text works”	4	
• Discussing information, using text as reference	3*	
• Discussing text as an author	3	
• Discussing a “mistake”	1	
Reading and Writing in Pursuit of other Social Activity		
<u>Recording or reporting information</u>	<u>(17/69 events)</u>	<u>25 %</u>
• Reporting information - using visual aides.	7	
• Using tally, chart or graph to compile information	4	
• Using list, charts, or forms to keep classroom records	3	
• Reporting (read) News	1	
• Reporting (write) progress on class activity	1	
• Requesting/ gathering texts for display	1	
<u>Planing, organizing or regulating activities and behavior</u>	<u>(8 / 69 events)</u>	<u>11%</u>
• Reading or writing to label, sort, identify, locate	5	
• Organizing or planning classroom activity w/ list	2	
• Recording and regulating behavior	1	
Doing a School “Exercise”	(8/ 69 events)	11%
• Writing (or pasting) “answers” on math worksheet	3	
• Participating in a guided lesson on doing a math sheet	3	
• Circling, labeling or coloring targeted responses	2	

* Six events were included in more than one category, so the total of all percentages is 108%. Items with an * include one or more literacy events that were tallied in two activities.

+ Texts are discussed w/in many events, however in these cases the primary “activity” of the event is to discuss the text rather than read or write.

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After identifying a list of activities, similar activities were grouped together, arriving at seven general categories. These general categories can be grouped under four headings:

1. Reading and writing literature texts (fiction, non-fiction, poetry or song)
 - Reading (or listen to) a book or poem
 - Writing (or observe the writing of) a creative text
 - Preparing to read or write a literature text
2. Talking about texts
3. Reading or writing in pursuit of other social activities
 - Record or report information,
 - Plan, organize or regulate activities and behavior
4. Doing school exercises

The sheer number of literacy activities that Marco and Lauren experience is striking. On just two days of school, Marco and Lauren participate in 29 literacy events involving literature texts (fiction, non-fiction or poetry). These literacy events include reading, writing, listening, observing other writers, and preparing to read and write. Literacy events involving “reading and writing literature” comprise 42 percent of the events catalogued. This is not surprising because literature is a foundation of a Whole Language classroom, and is integrated into thematic studies as well as the Language Arts Curriculum. I was surprised to see that Lauren and Marco encountered 18 different literature texts in just two days of school, when reading and writing are combined. Marco participates in reading or writing experiences related to 12 different literature texts on his day of school, while Lauren participates in activities related to 13 different texts during the day I observed her.

But, the events that I listed as “Talking about Texts” for this analysis are those where the *major activity* of the event is talk focused on a text. For example, Susan recommends the book *A Snake Mistake* to the class after Amber reads a book about snakes. In this case, the actual text is not present. The category “talking about texts” is somewhat misleading because talking occurs in almost every literacy event. This is particularly true with young children, who tend to read aloud and verbalize as they write even when they are working alone. During the Silent Reading on Lauren’s Day, I observed Sharonda having

dialogues with herself about the pictures. In chapter four I describe some of these examples in terms of meaning construction.

There are 25 different literacy events (36 percent of all events) where reading and writing are the vehicle or instrument for other activities such as reporting information, planning a work session, or calling on children to go to the bathroom. After many studies of home literacy with my own students, I am aware that the majority of encounters with literacy in our highly literate days involve reading labels and signs or writing notes or lists. However, it is interesting to see this pattern repeated in a classroom, because classrooms do not often reflect the literacy experiences of children outside of school.

The percentage of literacy events where reading and writing are involved in other activities (36%) is almost the same as the percentage of literacy events involving literature texts (42%). However, this number is a bit misleading because of the time factors involved. Reading a book generally involves more time (at least five minutes during my observations) than finding your writing folder, or taking attendance. Amber's reading of the book *Snakes* (Demuth, 1993) on Marco's Day involved thirty minutes, broken into two fifteen minute sessions.

Most of the activities I identified during Marco's and Lauren's school days involve reading or writing literature or using reading and writing instrumentally in pursuit of other social activities. Only 8 literacy events (12%) involve purely instructional exercises. Edelsky (1991) uses the term "exercise" to identify school practices where the main purpose of the literacy event is for language instruction or evaluation. Most of the activities in the category are actually math exercises rather than language exercises. These include three math sheets that are the focus of instruction followed by independent work, thus listed twice. There is only one such instructional event involving language arts. All of these literacy activities were introduced in preparation for a standardized testing period which occurred the third week of March. These eight events were the only events that stood out as

obvious examples of “doing school.” Whether an event is an exercise is somewhat more complex, as I will explore in Chapter Five.

In the next sections I discuss each of the four major categories of literacy activities described above providing examples and considering the implications for understanding literacy and literacy learning in Marco’s and Lauren’s classroom.

Reading and Writing Literature

In Marco’s and Lauren’s Classroom, children love to read and write. When I asked Lauren what she liked about second grade she said, “I love Miss Austin’s books.” Kids ask all morning when writing will start, and groan when the timer announces that writing is over. One picture that always sticks in my mind is choral reading of “This Old Man” (Adams, 1974).

Lauren’s Day, Transition to “Morning Meeting” (Appendix C)

Susan says, “Daily helpers, you can read if you want.” As the class begins clean up, Brent and Destine pick out a songbook from the large basket under the table. Danny comes over and suggests a different book. They exchange the books and take out *This Old Man*. (Adams, 1974) Terrence joins them, and the four children stand in front of the rug that marks the gathering area. The four song leaders huddle together, holding the large book facing the gathering “audience,” and reading the book upside down or sideways as they begin singing.

Children hurry over and sit down to join with the song leaders. The four “readers” smile at each other as everyone enjoys the song. Together they lead the reading of this book, singing the words with wide smiles on their faces, looking at each other to share the enjoyment as the rest of the class gathers for “Morning Meeting”.

In *Creating Classrooms for Authors and Inquirers* (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996) the authors discuss the potential of “invitations to learning” where the teacher, as an experienced learner, offers possible learning experiences without imposing experiences on young authors and inquirers. In this vignette, Susan offers an invitation to read which the daily helpers, who will lead the “Morning Meeting”, eagerly accept. Children have authority over the learning experience. They are able to negotiate the content of the literacy event, and lead their classmates in the song reading.

This brief event illustrates that “reading literature” is both curricular content and social practice. Through invitations such as this, children become familiar with literature

texts, in this case the lyrics and artwork of a large group of illustrated songbooks. At the same time, the songbook reading draws the participants together in a joyful celebration of the community created through written language.

Within the general category of activities involving reading and writing literature there are the following sub-categories: Reading (or listening to) a book or poem, writing a creative text (or observing a classmate writing), and preparing to read and write literature.

Reading (or listening to) literature:

Literacy events involving reading of literature (fiction, non-fiction, poetry or songs) include five different reading activities: reading to the class, reading to a “friend,” reading to yourself, choral reading, and reading excerpts as a reference or model for writing (See Table 4). All of these events involved oral reading because the second graders tended to read aloud while reading to themselves as well as while reading to others. However, some readings were rehearsed performances, while others were more like “rough drafts.”

Reading to the class

Reading to the class was the most common “literacy activity” involving literature on Marco’s and Lauren’s days. Seven illustrated books were read to the class, three on Marco’s Day and four on Lauren’s Day. Reading to the class varied from five to thirty minutes per text. Reading aloud introduces listeners to a wide variety of texts and genres. On Marco’s Day, for example, listeners hear a fiction story (*D. W. All Wet*), an illustrated poem (*If a Tree Could Talk*), and a non-fiction book (*Snakes*). On Lauren’s Day, they hear three fiction stories, including a mystery (*Who Sank the Boat?*), a fantasy (*Teddy Bear for Sale*), and a realistic fiction story (*Two Dog Biscuits*). In some cases, the books are new to the children, and in other cases the books are so familiar that children are mouthing the words along with the reader.

Marco’s Day, “Books to Go” 2 (See Appendix B)

Susan says, “This is my favorite page.”

When Destine is finished reading, Susan talks about how much “we like this book,” even though they’ve heard it over and over. “That’s why it’s a good book, cause you want to hear it again.”

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All of the books read to the class are picture books, and the illustrations are an important aspect of the literacy event.

Marco's Day, "Books to Go" (Appendix B)

Amber reads, "*It can be as long as a school bus. And weigh as much as two grown men.*"

Darryl says, "Jeesh."

Marco says, "Let me see the picture."

Other kids call out, "Ooo. Show the picture."

Viewing the illustrations provided a time for informal reactions to the texts, generally exclamations, gestures, or brief comments. There is no formal discussion time following each book, but quite a few informal responses and dialogues occur as the text is being read and during intervals before and after readings.

Lauren's Day, "Books to Go", (Appendix C)

Danny reads, "*Was it the pig as fat as butter?*," and Lauren looks up and smiles.

Willie says, "Miss Austin, I know who sank the boat."

Susan says, "Don't tell."

Someone says, "Miss Austin, on one page is a page with color. On the other page is a page without."

Reading to the class is a social performance. On these two days, most of the readings occurred during "Books to Go". In this classroom program, children take turns carrying book bags with two books: one for a family member to read to the child and one that the child rehearses for reading to the class. In addition to providing children with experiences with a wide range of literature, the "Books to Go" experience provides opportunities for children to see demonstrations of their classmates' reading. Most of the readings are fluid and expressive, with children taking on roles of characters in dialogue, and highlighting humor and irony. But the audience is patient and attentive, even if readers read slowly and have obvious miscues. In this classroom community, miscues are a part of the reading and learning process. On Lauren's Day, Sharonda reads *Teddy Bear for Sale* (Herman, 1996) in a hesitant manner. Susan stands nearby for support.

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Lauren's Day, "Books to Go" (See Appendix C)

Sharonda smiles at Susan as she reads. Lauren looks at her bracelet in her lap, and up at the pictures. She mouths words at Katherine. Sharonda asks for a word. Susan has her read to the end of the sentence and then reread.

Susan says, "Now what would make sense?"

Sharonda fills in a meaningful word.

When Sharonda finishes reading, children applaud. Susan compliments Sharonda saying this was a difficult book for her. "Sharonda is growing," Susan says. Lauren smiles.

"Remember what Goofy says?" Susan asks.

The children chant, "Keep on growing, keep on learning."

Reading to the class is also a celebration of literacy learning. Unlike the practice of "round robin reading" this oral reading experience is orchestrated so that readers are successful. Children have time to rehearse their books at home. Miscues are never corrected by the audience unless the reader asks for assistance. When each reading ends, the children applaud enthusiastically.

Choral Reading

Choral reading involves a group reading of a text. Choral reading is a common activity in this classroom, occurring once on Marco's Day and three times on Lauren's Day. Half of the four choral readings I observed on these days are actually choral singings, as described in the earlier. The children's familiarity with choral reading is illustrated on Lauren's Day, when the "*Lunch Boxes* Book Club" selects a choral reading as a way to present their book to the class. The group sits on six chairs in front of the class, with Lauren and Alyssa in the middle. When they are ready to start, Lauren looks around to make sure that she has eye contact with group members. She begins reading and the others join with her. The rhythm of the couplets helps them to stay together but, for the most part, the lines are clear as the six voices speak in unison. As a teacher who has lead many a choral reading, I know this is no small feat for a group of first and second graders working on their own.

Choral readings allow children to experience the prosodics of the text as they explore the text rhythms and emotions. Texts are often read again and again, providing repeated opportunities for meaning construction. Choral reading supports beginning

readers because they can participate to the extent that they are able. On Marco's Day, Susan leads a choral reading of *Three Toed Sloth*, a poem the children have copied for handwriting. Marco reads the title and the first line and then listens as his classmates continue reading. Susan introduces the Book Club presentations on Lauren's Day by explaining that children do not need to be concerned if they have chosen a challenging book club, because they will be "reading together" during the presentations.

Reading to/with "a friend"

In these literacy events, a reader reads a literature text to a small, selected audience.

The reader always initiates these events on the days I observed.

Lauren's Day, "Things to Do" (See Appendix C)

Lauren looks in her desk and pulls out a book she is writing *My best friend's little baby sister*. It is made of blank paper folded and stapled on the side. Lauren looks through her book, and then says to Amber, "Let me read this book to you."

Lauren begins reading to Amber, and also to me because I am sitting nearby. She holds the book "teacher style," showing the picture as she reads. Amber leans over to watch and listen as Lauren reads.

Marco does not participate in any "reading to a friend" activities on these particular days. During the debriefing interview, he described learning to read the book *What's in my Pocket ?* by reading with his group members at an earlier book club meeting. I describe this event in the discussion of "Literature Reading and Writing" later.

Reading to yourself

The three activities involving reading literature to "yourself" all occur during the "fifteen minutes" of "Silent Reading" provided on Lauren's Day. Although many children were reading during this time, I focused on the three overlapping literacy events where Lauren was a participant: Lauren reads a book, Katherine reads a book, and Sharonda reads five songbooks. During this time, Lauren read most of the book *Dragon's Fat Cat* (Pilkey, 1992). Her oral rendition of this text is discussed in Chapter Five.

"Silent Reading" did not occur on Marco's Day, and Marco did not read an entire literature text, except during the debriefing interview. During the "Silent Reading" on Lauren's Day, children were given an option to read or write during this event, and Marco

elected to write. Susan opened up the language event by saying that they hadn't had silent reading in a while, perhaps because class members were engaged in "Book Clubs" during the two days that I observed.

Reading book excerpts as reference or model for writing

On Marco's Day, there were two literacy events where book excerpts were read as a reference or model for writing. During "Silent Writing", Jackie came to talk to me about the book about dinosaurs she was writing. Jackie brought over Alik's *Digging up Dinosaurs* and flipped from page to page, reading brief excerpts as she talked about her own book and how she was using information from Alik's book. Marco listened to Jackie's talk as he worked, and sometimes leaned over to see the book.

Later that day, Marco and David were working on a book club project, creating their own version of *What's in my Pocket?* based on the book by Williams.

Marco's Day, Book Clubs (See Appendix B)

Marco opens one envelope and places it on the table. He opens the book and reads, "*Pocket, pocket. What's in my pocket? It's something round.*" He looks over the next few pages, and then turns back to the first page.

Marco reads excerpts from the book aloud as he uses the book as a reference for planning, content, and spelling of the group book.

Writing a literature book

During these two days of observation, all of the documented literacy events involving writing fiction, non-fiction or poetry were examples of the activity "writing a book." The activity "writing a literature book" started with a blank book, usually made by folding and stapling plain sheets of 8x11.5 paper. Children wrote and illustrated rough drafts of fiction stories or informational texts.

On Marco's Day, the class was working on autobiographies. At the beginning of the writing time, Susan calls Marco over and hands him the autobiography book and talks with him about the project. Marco spends his time illustrating the cover of his autobiography. At the end of the "Silent Writing" time, he is ready to begin writing:

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Marco's Day, "Silent Writing" (Appendix B)

Marco says, "I'm bout to write my page GOOD."
He looks at Debi, "You want to know my title?"
I ask why Marco hasn't started yet. He says, "I've just been thinking.
"What have you been thinking about?"
"I've been thinking I'm gonna write, *I was four years old... When I was four I had went... I mean six.*"
"I know where you went," Jackie says "It starts with an 'M'... Oh, Major Magic."
Jackie reminds Marco about Major Magic, a pizza fun house. I ask Marco if he and Jackie know each other outside of school. He agrees, saying they know each other in school too.

Marco's oral composition ("I was four years old... When I was four years old") includes a revision from a direct statement to an indirect clause, shifting to the more complex sentence structure of literature texts. Marco also demonstrates his understanding that books have "titles," and qualities (I'm 'bout to write my page good.)

When not working on class projects, children worked on writing projects of their own choice. Jackie was working on a "dinosaur book." Her "book" involved many sheets of notes, drawings, and original writings. Lauren was writing the fiction story *My Best Friend's Little Baby Sister*. Lauren's stories generally focused on family and friends and were written in first person. This led me to think they were personal memoirs, until I asked Lauren, in first grade, about her sister and she replied, "I don't have a sister. That's fiction."

Preparing to read or write literature

Preparation activities are often overlooked as "reading and writing activities" in a theoretical framework where reading and writing are defined as a set of "decoding skills." However, if reading and writing are viewed as creative social processes, selecting and planning written texts become critical "skills" for literacy. Preparation is an aspect of most literacy events where children are reading and writing literature. Six of the literacy events on these two days involve preparing to read and write literature texts.

Activities involving preparing to read and write include selecting materials, making a blank book and "rehearsals" for a written text (i.e. drawing, talking or outlining). While I document six literacy events where participants are "preparing to read and write,"

preparation is an on-going element of many literacy events, particularly literature writing. During “Silent Writing”, “Things to Do”, “Book Clubs”, and other open work times, children frequently left the tables to get supplies and materials.

Susan encourages and supports the “selecting and preparing process” through the class schedule, the room arrangement, and procedures for work times. Materials and supplies in the classroom are organized so children have easy access to them. Books are displayed in the library corner and in several carts and baskets so children can find their favorites easily. A caddie on each table has crayons, pencils, scissors and glue. Additional writing materials are organized in the writing center including a variety of kinds of paper, art materials and writing and illustration implements. During workshop times, children are free to get up to get materials or check references.

Selecting materials for reading

On Lauren’s Day, Silent Reading (and Writing) begins with ten minutes to select materials and get settled. When Lauren’s team is called, she and Katherine go to the book corner and choose nine books. They take these materials and sit down on the floor near the door. They each select a book to begin reading, and the other seven books were arrayed between them. Sharonda selects four songbooks from the basket under the calendar table, and sits down nearby. While the girls are reading, James comes over and asks Katherine for a particular book he wants. Lauren tells him to ask Sharonda and James goes over and got the book.

These book selection activities suggest several elements of book selection in this setting. Children are familiar with a number of titles and types of books available in the classroom. Children know how to choose enough books to have some selection that will last for the entire time. Children also know which books they like, which books they will be able to read, and where books are found in the classroom.

Selecting materials for writing

At the beginning of “Silent Writing” children either locate a writing project they have been working on or select and prepare materials for writing. Materials include lined or unlined paper, blank books, or other arts and crafts materials. Staplers, scissors, glue, tape, and staple removers are all available to the children. Susan allows for a fairly long transitional time before “Silent Writing”, silent reading, and other project type activities. On Marco’s Day, there is a nine-minute transition between the end of math time and the moment when Susan sets the timer to announce the beginning of “Silent Writing”. During this time, children finish up their math activities, clean up their materials, prepare for writing, and then begin writing. Because the materials are available to the children and do not need to be distributed, children do not have to wait for classmates but can move from one activity to the next at their own pace.

Making a blank book

On Lauren’s Day, while Lauren is working on an on-going story, Amber and Alicia are working on blank books. Amber makes herself a book that involves folding paper in half and stapling it along the side. She has problems with the stapler and starts over several times before she has a book she is happy with. She starts writing near the end of the writing period and completes almost a full page of writing before it is time for lunch. Alicia takes sheets from a pad of scrap paper, counts them carefully, stacks them and staples them along the side. This takes most of the class time.

Amber and Alicia work together, helping each other and talking about their plans as they work. When Alicia’s book is finally ready, Amber begins decorating the cover with flowers. Amber continues on the flower arrangement during the “silent reading (or writing)” time after lunch. Amber is a greatly admired illustrator and creates a beautiful blank book for Alicia. This lengthy preparation time is quite time consuming, although the girls may then spend many days writing a text in their blank books. Making and decorating

blank books is a part of the creative process, a time for thinking, planning and rehearsing ideas for the text to come.

Outlining a written text

During the “*What’s in My Pocket?* Book Club” meeting, Marco comes over with a stack of envelopes and begins pulling them apart. He explains to me that these are going to be the pockets for a book his group would write, modeled after the “Book Club” book.

Marco’s Day, “Books to Go” (See Appendix B)

Marco takes another piece of paper and draws a line. He draws a triangle, square, circle, and diamond on the line. As he draws, he looks up on the wall, where the square hangs marking their table, as a reference.

Marco says, “Okay, then the ones we going to put in.”

David goes over to the supply table. He returns with some glue. Meanwhile, Marco draws a second line and adds two more shapes.

Marco says, “These the ones we’re going to draw in there.” He points to the envelopes.

Marco had invented an outline. He uses his outline as a reference for planning the book. On all of the days I observed in Susan’s room, I did not observe any literacy events involving outlining. However, there were other events where “temporary texts” were used for planning, such as the list of “Things to Do” that “outlines” the choices for that workshop time, or the “List of Math Choices” that Susan uses on Marco’s Day to outline choices for math. This literacy event is described in more detail in Chapter Five.

Discussion of “reading and writing a literature text”

Literacy activities involving reading or writing literature engage Lauren and Marco in meaning construction processes as listeners/observers as well as readers/writers.

While Susan’s schedule demands that children read, write and listen, children are able to select books to be read and topics and projects for writing. Even “assignments,” such as the autobiography project, allow authors a good deal of autonomy as they work.

Student involvement makes it more likely that reading and writing experiences are relevant and interesting to Marco and Susan. Within these literacy events, children read and write literature for many of the same reasons people read and write literature outside of school: enjoyment, discovery, information and human connections. They also have

opportunities to learn what it means to be a reader and writer, within the social community of readers and writers in the classroom.

The social community plays a role in both Lauren's and Marco's book writing. As Marco and David worked on their autobiographies "silently," they sat slightly facing each other. Marco would often show David his writing, or lean over to see what David was doing. At times, Marco would point to David's picture and laugh. Marco's decision to start writing is prompted by David:

Marco's Day, "Silent Writing" (Appendix B)

David shows Marco his work, and Marco listens while David reads the page. I ask David, "With this page you're going to be one?"
Marco says, "I'm bout to write my page GOOD."

Amber and Lauren work side by side. Lauren reads her books to Amber, and Amber helps illustrate Lauren's texts. The social sharing and awareness of the writing of friends and classmates appears to thrive even when writing is "silent." This may be because writing occurs at other times throughout the day, and children have times to share their writing outside of the "Silent Writing" period. However, Marco's oral composing through a dialogue with Jackie and me seems to help him in the process of writing his own text.

Marco's Day, "Silent Writing" (Appendix B)

I ask why Marco hasn't started yet. He says, "I've just been thinking."
"What have you been thinking about?"
"I've been thinking I'm gonna write, *I was four years old... When I was four I had went.. I mean six.*"
"I know where you went," Jackie says "It starts with an 'M'... Oh, Major Magic."
Jackie reminds Marco about Major Magic, a pizza fun house.

The structure of "Silent Writing" works well for Lauren, who works intently on her story for the full twenty minutes. Marco also works diligently on his illustrations. However, the benefit Marco gets from dialogue during this time makes me question the policy of "silence" while writing. On the other hand, Susan instituted this policy based on earlier experiences where some children chose NOT to write or illustrate texts during the writing time. The choice NOT to write had a somersaulting effect as alternative choices

disrupted other children’s writing as well. “Silent Writing” is recommended in Bobbi Fisher’s (1998) *Joyful Learning* and Susan found it helped children to focus on writing.

Examining Marco’s and Lauren’s activities during these literacy events, further reveals how the structures of literacy events support reading and writing development. Figure 6 lists Lauren’s and Marco’s activities during the literacy events involving Reading or Writing literature.

Figure 6 Marco’s and Lauren’s Activities Related to Reading and Writing Literature	
<u>What Marco does on Marco’s Day.</u>	<u>What Lauren does on Lauren’s Day.</u>
Official class activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listens to books read aloud • listens to choral reading • illustrates autobiography • starts to write autobiography page • makes symbolic outline for writing • reads book excerpts while writing 	Official class activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listens to books read aloud • Choral reading/ book club presentation • illustrates fiction book • writes three pages of fiction book • selects books to read • reads book to self during silent reading
Unofficial activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listens to Jackie talk about her writing and reading 	Unofficial activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads her own book to Amber • assists Sharonda, Kristine with unfamiliar texts

The “official” activities are those that Lauren and Marco do as part of an organized class learning experience. The “unofficial” activities are those that Lauren or Marco initiates. When I constructed this list, I thought it would show that Lauren takes more initiative than Marco in terms of reading and writing. However, I discovered that both children are equally engaged in literacy experiences, both official and unofficial. One distinction is that Lauren takes on a “teacher” role in assisting other readers, while Marco takes on an apprentice role in listening to Jackie’s conversations. Marco frequently came over to listen in when Jackie was talking to me, and Jackie always had interesting things to say.

Another difference between Marco and Lauren, at least on these particular days, is that Lauren does more actual reading and writing than Marco does. This discrepancy makes sense because Lauren is able to read and write a variety of texts independently, while Marco tends to need the support of other meaning making systems such as listening,

illustration, or dialogue. Also, on the two days that I observed, activities involving literature reading were weighted towards whole class and/or listening experiences: read to class (7), choral reading (4), read to a friend (3), read to self (3), read book excerpts (2).

During the Book Club meeting that I observed, Marco re-read excerpts of the book as he wrote his own contributions to the group project. While Lauren did more reading than Marco, she was reluctant to stop reading when the silent reading time ended. She also created reading experiences by offering to read her own book to others.

Lauren and Marco experienced rich and varied social relationships with literature on the days I observed. I believe the listening, choral reading, and illustration experiences are important ones, and especially for Marco because he is able to organize ideas symbolically through these sign systems. However, both Marco and Lauren might do even more reading and writing if there were more opportunities for reading and writing independently, with a friend, or in small groups. I also believe that both children, but Marco in particular, would especially benefit from more opportunities for dialogue while reading and writing.

Literacy Events Where Talking about Texts is the Major Activity

From Lauren's Day, "Things to Do" (See Appendix C)

Alyssa picks up one of Lauren's answer strips.

Lauren says, "Now you put that back." and laughs.

Alyssa mimics, "Now you put that back."

Alyssa leans close to Lauren.

Lauren says, "Do you know what Alyssa means?"

Alyssa says, "Yes." She pretends to slap Lauren, but does not touch her.

Lauren says, "My mama got a name book. What does it mean?"

Alyssa says, "I don't know what it means. I know what Lauren means."

Lauren, "What?"

Alyssa, "It means soft and gentle and meddlesome and (?blavely.)"

"No, it doesn't." Lauren tells what her name means.

Alyssa repeats Lauren's definition and laughs.

Lauren says, "Yeah. I got a name book. So you're a liar." She smiles at Alyssa.

Alyssa leans backward. She leans forward again. "My aunt has a name book and she told my mama what Lauren means. But then I forgot."

This exchange illustrates the playful back and forth teasing that is a common feature of Lauren's interactions with her friends. Here Lauren appeals to the "name book" as an ultimate authority, proving that Alyssa is "a liar." As mentioned earlier, "talking about

texts” is a rather fuzzy category because almost every literacy event involved talking in relationship to text. The events that are included in “reporting using a text as a visual aide” (such as the classroom calendar) certainly involve talking about a text. However, this tally is limited to events where the *focus* of the activity is to discuss a text.

In some cases, such as in the “baby book” vignette, the text was not present during the discussion. In other cases, the activity involves talking about some feature of a text such as content, unfamiliar language, the form or interpretation of a text, or the process of reading and writing.

Discuss “unfamiliar language” in a text

This was the most common type of event involving discussing a text. The activities I observed include: children asking for assistance while reading to the class, or children asking neighbors for assistance.

Lauren’s Day, Silent Reading (See Appendix C)

Sharonda asks Lauren, “Does this say (??)”

Lauren goes over to look. She says something to Sharonda. She is sitting down when Sharonda calls again. “*When...* is this ‘*when*’?” Katherine returns and both girls go over to look at Sharonda’s book.

When Susan was asked to assist with unfamiliar language in a text, the request often lead to a strategy lesson, such as the “teachable moment” when Susan walked Amber through a strategy during the reading of Snakes. In one other case, Susan interrupted Danny’s book reading to ask if children understood the word “din.” These events are very common, and I did not tally all the occurrences because they usually occur during another reading or writing event.

Discuss information using a text as a reference

The “baby book” exchange above is one example of using a text as a reference. This occurs two other times. Susan interprets lines from the poem “Three Toed Sloth” (Prelutsky, 1983) in a scientific discussion of the animals. Jackie uses the book *Digging Up Dinosaurs* (Ailiki) to talk to me about the dinosaur book she is writing.

Marco's Day, "Silent Writing" (Appendix B)

Jackie shows a picture of dinosaur teeth. Marco gasps. She talks about the biggest dinosaur teeth, "They have sharp teeth."

"Rats have sharp teeth," Marco comments.

Jackie shows me pictures and talks about the information in the book. Marco and David listen. Marco leans across the table to study the book illustrations.

Use of texts as a reference is often associated with research or scholarly work.

It is an unusual activity for first and second grade children. These examples show the reflection and thought that occurs when children are engaged in reading and writing experiences with a wide range of texts. In addition, these children have experienced the discourse of research through earlier literacy events.

Discuss text as an author

Children sometimes talked about their texts as the author. An adult often initiated this discussion. However, I did observe spontaneous conversations from authors, as this case where Rudy tells Terrence about his autobiography.

Lauren's Day, Math (See Appendix C)

Rudy and Terrence stand behind Lauren. Rudy says, "Terrence, I finished my autobiography. It was funny, you can ask Miss Austin. It was funny, wasn't it Lauren?" Rudy recites segments of his autobiography for Terrence.

In this brief vignette, Rudy shows his pride in completing his autobiography and being able to write with humor.

Discuss how texts work

There were three literacy events where the activity focused on talking about how texts work. In this example, Susan has just introduced the "day's temperature" into the "Morning Meeting" weather report, and children aren't sure how to interpret this new text.

From Marco's Day, "Morning Meeting" (See Appendix B)

Alyssa holds up a large cardboard model of a thermometer, with the temperature marked by moving a piece of elastic. Alyssa says, "Today was 16 degrees."

Susan tells Alyssa and James to fix the line, "It looks like it's on the ten." Several children ask questions about how to interpret the temperature. Susan points out that each line is two degrees. She takes the thermometer model and shows it to a group at the back of the rug, explaining that only the tens are written down, and then you have to count by twos.

Another example involves my field notes. Alicia wanted to know what I was writing about, and what my notes were for. My field notes had been a common interest throughout

my three years of observing the children. When they were in first grade, some of the children tried writing field notes themselves. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) describe a similar experience when they observed “Shaunda’s Day of School” in *Growing Up Literate*.

Discuss reading, writing process

Discussions of language and thought processes are a frequent occurrence, though usually embedded in other discussions, as for example the discussion of texts as an “author.” In one case, Darryl raises his hand and asks about a mistake that the Daily Helpers have made in writing today’s number on the Days of School number line:

Marco’s Day, “Morning Meeting” (See Appendix B)

- Darryl: Miss Austin, they put twelve zero zero. (On the “days of school” number line.)
- Susan: You know what, James got confused. He thought nineteen and thought 20, and got excited and put two “O”s=
- Terrence: =Twelve=
- Susan: =and made two hundred=
- Terrence: =twelve hundred
- Susan: So I just Xed out one of the zeros. It’s one hundred and twenty.
(Jackie stands up, raising her hand, then sits back down.)
You can see. There’s the one, the two, and the zero.

In this example Darryl is concerned with the process of writing on the number line. Susan speaks for James, interpreting his thought processes. Susan told me that one reason she has “daily helpers” rather than “captains” is so that each child has an opportunity to do every job, and so she has an opportunity to assist every child and see how well they understand the various roles involved in the daily helpers job.

Discussion of “Talking about Texts”

Literacy events involving “talk about text” illustrate the interest and curiosity that children have about text. After repeated exposure to a variety of texts within authentic social literacy practices, children pay attention to many details including how texts are written and illustrated. On Lauren’s Day, during the “Books to Go” reading one child said, “Miss Austin, on one page is a page with color. On the other page is a page without.”

In the examples described above, the talk about text occurs in the social process of a literacy event. In the example of the outdoor thermometer children learned how to represent and interpret information on the thermometer within the context of a weather report. In a similar example, Susan holds up an evaluation form for the Book Club project and explains the items on the form.

From Lauren's Day, Book Club Presentation (Appendix C)

Susan shows the class an evaluation form, and says she is going to tell them how they did on reading to the class, diary pages, project one, project two, and teamwork. Children ask about another form. Susan says those (self-evaluations) forms were their chance to say how they did on book clubs and this is her chance to evaluate their work.

Children are curious about how these texts work, and ask questions to understand how to read and write these texts. I did not observe any cases where Susan taught lessons on how to read or write a specific text or type of text. Instead children engage in texts in an aesthetic transaction, "evoking the poem" (Rosenblatt, 1978), whether authors, readers, listeners, or observers. However, the contextual nature of these experiences immerses children in the social practice of reading and writing and arouses their curiosity about how the underlying processes worked. Further, because of the holistic nature of these richly contextualized events, these literacy experiences have greater potential for providing meaningful and accurate instruction about underlying language processes than typical school exercises.

Reading and Writing in Pursuit of Other Social Activities

In this classroom, children are constantly engaging in literacy activities while involved in other tasks. For example, at the beginning of "Silent Writing", James distributes the writing folders to each table.

Marco's Day, "Silent Writing" (Appendix C)

James brings the writing folders (legal sized pocket files) to the square table. Terrence says, "Cool, cool." He takes his folder from the file. David looks through the folders. James comes back and stands by his chair. He looks through the folders, reading the names out loud, until he finds his own folder. David watches and then finds his folder.

The writing folders not only organize texts but also have labels (children's names) that allow these texts to be quickly distinguished from each other. I am calling these "instrumental texts" because the reading or writing is instrumental to another social practice. Children in this classroom appear quite proficient readers and writers of instrumental texts, perhaps because experiences with these texts within school are similar to experiences with similar texts outside of school. Terrence is one of the "kids on the rug," always ready to help other readers. David and James are less confident of their own reading abilities, yet all three boys are able to identify their own writing folder, and distinguish it from others at their table.

The use of instrumental texts in literacy practices is so familiar that it almost becomes invisible. Just before lunch, as writing time is winding up, the daily helpers stand by the door and call off the names of boys and girls. Although I had observed the video tapes many times and recorded this activity in catalog and narrative form, it wasn't until I began writing about instrumental texts that I "noticed" that this activity is a literacy event involves reading. Each helper is reading the names from a list posted on a piece of cardboard.

I have asked students in elementary classrooms and teacher education classes to keep track of what they read or write for a day in order to appreciate the variety, type, and function of real - life literacy. Students are always surprised by the volume of reading they do. However the bulk of the "activities" do not involve reading literature. In our daily lives we tend to read and write phone messages, directions to get somewhere, signs and logos, phone books, e-mail, advertisements, labels, etc.

In studies of literacy in families outside of school (Heath, 1983; Street, 1995) community members often contribute and aide each other in the reading and writing process with some "real-life" (non-instructional) goal. Barton (1994) describes a family where a retiree takes phone messages for his working son, while the son helps his father with

business correspondence. Literacy “is tied up with particular details of the situation and... particular to a specific community at a specific point in history” (Barton, p.3).

This balance of literature texts and instrumental texts is true in Marco’s and Lauren’s classrooms as well (See Figure 5). The larger number of texts read and written are not stories and informational pieces, but lists, charts, labels, and other organizational texts. As stated earlier, this list includes only those texts that were the focus of some activity where Marco or Lauren was a participant. The classroom environment includes a vast range of other such charts, signs, and labels.

Literacy events where reading and writing is embedded in other activities include two general areas: events where reading and writing are used to report or record information, and events where reading and writing are used to organize or regulate activities and behavior.

Literacy Events involving Recording or Reporting Information

Reporting information using visual aides

Reporting information using visual aides is the most common activity in this category, involving seven literacy events. During the “Morning Meeting”, the daily helpers present information to the class focusing on several different charts or models. A number line at the top of the calendar bulletin board keeps track of the “Days of School,” printed in children’s handwriting. The daily helpers lead a discussion of the factors of the current day of school.

Marco’s Day. “Morning Meeting” (Appendix B)

James begins the “Morning Meeting,” “Today’s one hundred and twenty. It’s a four, two, and a ten.” The factors of 120 are indicated on the number line with symbols below the numbers: a square for multiples of four, two dots for multiples of two, etc. Children call out, “five” and James puts his hand on his head, miming “I knew that.” Someone calls out “ten,” and James says, “I said ten.”

The calendar is the focus as children talk about the day of the month, and indicate the tens and ones in straw bundles in two plastic cups near the calendar. Finally, the children show today’s temperature on the thermometer. In this procedure, the daily helpers record information before the “Morning Meeting” and then use their records to report

information to their class. These events occur seven times because they are daily events and most of them occur on both days that I observed.

I considered the nature of this group of activities for a long time, in terms of whether they are “school exercises” contrived to teach math skills, or more authentic literacy events. I decided they are not unlike news reports and analysis, particularly the weather report. I am not completely convinced about the authenticity of these experiences as examples of how people use math in the world outside of school, but they are certainly literacy experiences growing out of events connected with children’s lives.

Using lists, charts, and forms to keep classroom records

Using tallies, charts or graphs to compile information

Susan uses an attendance book to keep official records as she greets each child during “Morning Meeting”. As Susan takes attendance, the daily helpers tally the number of children present and absent on a chart written on the chalkboard. The daily helpers then record the number of children absent on an ongoing “missing person’s graph”:

Marco’s Day, “Morning Meeting” (Appendix B)

Latrice selects “Jambo,” a Swahili greeting, for the attendance.

Susan reads the children’s names from official attendance sheets compiled in a black binder. She notes a child’s absence with a mark on the printed form.

Susan greets each child as she turns the pages in the attendance record book.

“Jambo, Alicia.”

“Jambo, Miss Austin.”

The daily helpers have written a tally chart on the chalkboard. As Susan reads, Alyssa tallies students present, while James tallies those absent.

Most children, including Mario, respond with, “Jambo, Miss Austin.”

However, some children are creative in their response. Jonathan says, “Jambo Madam Miss Austin. Happy Good Morning.”

As Susan calls the children’s names, she makes personal comments about children who are absent. Sharonda “might come, but we have to mark her absent for now.” Students chime in during these personal asides:

Susan: Sarina’s hardly ever absent.

Voice: I know.

Susan: She hasn’t been feeling well. She told me she has a cold.

Voice: Every day she said it.

Susan compliments Danielle on coming to school four days in a row, and lets her know that she will have been in school an entire week if she comes on Friday.

When Susan is finished taking attendance, she and the daily helpers begin to count the tally marks on the chalkboard. “Five, ten.” Then Susan says, “I’m not going

alone.” She begins counting again, and the class chants, “Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty one, twenty two, twenty three, twenty four.”

There are twenty-four children present and four absent.

“Stand up,” Susan says. Most of the children stand and begin chanting and dancing together, “Clap, clap, clap your hands. Clap your hands together.”

The daily helpers pull the Missing Person’s Graph down from the chalkboard. It is a large piece of butcher paper marked off in inch squares. They put the date 3/7 on the first empty box on the bottom row, and then shade in the four squares above it with crayons. They put the graph back on the chalkboard with large magnets and join in the singing and dancing.

This four-minute event is marked with social rituals that are highly familiar to the classroom community on this 120th day of school. These literacy practices bear a relationship with other “taking attendance” rituals, while at the same time being a specific to this social community. Some activities may not initially appear to be related to literacy, such as Susan’s personal comments. However, they are as social practices involving text construction. Susan’s compliment to Danielle on her presence for four days in a row, for example, is based on her interpretation of the attendance record sheet. As Susan interacts with children around this text, children participate in the social world of their classroom, school and society.

On Lauren’s Day, the attendance tally was used to resolve a problem. After Susan called attendance, Danny said she had not called his name. Susan suggested they see what the tally showed. The number of absent and present added up to the number of children in the classroom, 28, which showed that Danny must have been included. Danny suggested that Susan had called him, but he had not responded. Susan apologized for overlooking him.

Reporting News

Another aspect of the “Morning Meeting” was the “Daily News.” During “Things to Do,” children were invited to write personal news down on a large sheet of butcher paper. The reporter then read his or her news to the class during “Morning Meeting”. On Lauren’s Day, three children read their news. Interestingly, each of the three reporters is a very quiet child who did not participate in other class discussions.

Reporting progress

Each book club group had a “diary” used to report progress at the end of each meeting. This activity encouraged the children to talk to each other about WHAT their group had done during the meeting. At the end of the Book Club meeting on Marco’s Day, Susan asked the group to “write what you did.” Marco and David were not sure what the “book club diary” was, and I helped them to locate the diary and record their progress.

In this literacy event, Marco and David are introduced to a new genre, a group diary. Susan introduces this genre within the discourse community of the “Book Club” and the diary is similar to how clubs might keep records or minutes. In the next chapters I discuss the importance of events such as the “book club diary” in building connections between familiar literacy practices of the home (i.e. listing) and literacy practices within other discourse communities.

Request texts for display

During “Things to Do” Lauren is coloring in Mexico on a map of North America when Susan requests some South America maps for display.

Lauren’s Day, “Things to Do” (Appendix C)

Susan asks about their South America maps. Lauren says, “I took mine home,” and then repeats more loudly, “I took mine HO:ME¹⁰.”

Susan comes by the table and Alicia hands her a South America map. “Can I hang it up?” Susan asks. “I wanted a couple to hang up.”

Lauren sings, “I took mine ho:me.” She smiles, rocking back and forth with the rhythm of her speech.

This exchange illustrates the potential influence of peripheral events, one reason why I included such examples on the list of events of Lauren’s and Marco’s Days. While Lauren is not involved in the text exchange, she involves herself in the interaction and enjoys her own language as well.

¹⁰ Capitals indicate emphasis and raised voice. The colon (HO:ME) indicates that the vowel is elongated.

Literacy Events Involving Planning or Organizing Class Activities

Literacy events played an important role in classroom planning and organization. While a lot of these events occur in many classrooms, Susan consciously uses reading and writing activities to assist with classroom organization. She is certainly aware of the potential in these literacy events for “real life” language learning.

Reading or writing to label, sort, identify, or locate

The literacy activities involving “finding your writing folder” and “calling the names of boys or girls for the bathroom,” described above, are examples of these functional literacy events. For young readers and writers, the events are often learning experiences. For example, it takes three minutes for the entire group of second graders to find a workbook page in their math workbooks.

Organizing or planning an activity with a list

It was common for Susan to use a list to help plan or organize an activity. The “Things to Do list” is posted on the board every day as the children came into the room. Children read the list as they enter the room, or confer with each other about what they are “pose to do” that day. Next to the list, there may be models and additional instructions. On Lauren’s Day, the North America map is posted on the board. Children often work on the floor near the board near the board, sitting on the floor and using chairs as small desks.

During this time, Susan greets children as they entered the building. Then she comes in, assists the daily helpers to prepare for “Morning Meeting”, and circulates among the children as they works. The list on the board creates a structure for Susan and the children to move into the day with opportunities to talk, get important things done, and get started on work without waiting for verbal direction by the teacher. Required assignments are marked with stars, and are followed by choices. Within this structure, children planned their own agenda for the “Things to Do” workshop time.

Reading or writing to record and regulate behavior

There was only one literacy event involving student “behavior,” as opposed to learning experiences or procedures. On Lauren’s Day, Susan uses a chart to record the behavior of “table teams” as they work. These “points” are posted towards the end of the event as children begin to finish assigned work. Lauren has finished her math and is taking an unofficial break to visit with friends.

Lauren’s Day, “Things to Do” (Appendix C)

Lauren plays with Amber’s ponytails, counting them as Amber works. The girls look at the board, where Susan is giving out team points.

Lauren says, “I’m going to finish writing my (??) book.” She begins pulling things out of the cubby in her desk until she finds a “book” made from folding blank paper and stapling.

Amber picks up the book. Lauren puts her other stuff back in her desk and looks up, “Where is... EH!” Amber laughs and Lauren takes the book back. She looks at the board. “Oh. *Check minuses.*”

Danielle says, “Everybody got a check minus.” Alicia, Danielle and Amber are working on their maps.

Lauren sits with her book on her desk and her pencil in her mouth. She looks at the board and then towards Susan. Lauren turns in her chair and is talking to the group at the round table. She also talks to Katherine, who is standing nearby. Katherine leaves and Lauren turns back to face the table.

Susan asked the students to finish their work “quietly,” and I assume that she is using this chart to encourage behaviors involving “working” and keeping relatively quiet. Lauren and her teammates all look up to read the chart, and appear concerned about their “score.” When Lauren sees Susan posting points, she decides to work on her writing. She takes a few moments to started, but is aware of the behavior expectations implied by the chart.

The workshop approach places responsibility on the children for their behavior. This freedom involves constant choices about what behaviors are “appropriate,” as children learn to take responsibility for their own learning. Susan’s behavior chart subtly reminds students of these responsibilities. Although this chart is “indirect language,” Susan frequently defines her expectations about children’s “behavior.” For example, at the beginning of “Books to Go” on Lauren’s Day, Susan says, “Let’s see who’s ready.”

Then she proceeds to describe what behaviors she is looking for, “I’m looking for people who are looking at the reader, etc.”

The behavior chart is an example of using written language to control or coerce. Susan uses the chart to encourage children to make responsible choices about work time. When children are taking responsibility for their own learning and their interactions with classmates, behavior charts are unnecessary. Again, I saw few examples of regulatory literacy events during my observations.

Discussion of “Reading and Writing in Pursuit of other Activities”

Children in literate societies such as the United States tend to be universally familiar with instrumental texts. Just think of a four year old’s reaction to seeing the logo “McDonald’s.” Y. Goodman, Altwerger and Marek (1989) studied preschooler’s responses to what they call environmental print, particularly signs and logos. Experiences with these types of texts appeared to be universal across background and income, while experiences with what Goodman calls “connected discourse” of books, magazines, and newspapers may vary widely. Children’s strong and familiar experiences with instrumental texts within the United States makes the practices involving instrumental texts particularly interesting and important. Literacy events involving instrumental texts in this classroom appear to “act like” events outside of the classroom.

Marco’s Day, Transition to Math (Appendix B)

Susan walks over the chalkboard and begins giving instructions for math. Someone asks, “Can we do writing?”

Susan says, “We’ll do writing in a few minutes. I want the kids who were working on math with me to stay here today. Kids who don’t have math sheets can choose.”

Susan explains the choices as she lists them on the board. In one case, she demonstrates how a math game is played. James and Terrence signal each other silently, perhaps planning out their activities. Marco signals at Jonathan.

Susan says, “Okay, let me read the names of the kids who are going to stay with me. Get a clipboard and a pencil. If I don’t call your name, you know you can make choices.”

In this vignette, Susan creates a list while talking about plans for math time. Children attend to Susan’s talk and writing, and use the text to think about and plan their activities. The text is very relevant to the children because it represents available choices.

While the text serves to regulate the children's activities- delineating what they may or may not (by omission) do - it also gives children a measure of control over their activities. When Susan finishes the explanation, the children make choices and begin to get settled very quickly, to Susan's apparent surprise:

Susan finishes calling the names, and the remaining children get up and move quickly to get materials for choices. Susan says, "You know what? Everyone stop. I made a mistake." She walks over to the table area, but sees the children have selected materials and tables without a problem. She says, "Oh you worked it out."

Such examples of proficient reading and writing within "real life" social activities have prompted social literacy theoreticians to question how we evaluate readers based on contrived situations outside of these particular contexts, such as the "functional literacy" tests often used to access adult literacy. In a study of "functional literacy tests" Acland reports that, while 61 percent of one sample population had trouble interpreting a tax table, the IRS indicates that only 6 percent of filers made arithmetic errors in their returns (Acland in Kaestle, 1991). Acland's study suggests that a reader/writer's performance within the "real life" social setting of a literacy event is quite different than their performance on an examination sample question.

When we observe children's responses in situations such as the "writing folder" and "math choices" events described above, it becomes difficult to justify typical assessments where children are evaluated based on individual performance. In Susan's classroom children are encouraged to read and write together as people do outside of classrooms. This creates a social zone of proximal development where children's abilities and performances are enhanced by interactions and support of classmates.

Literacy events such as "calling off names for the bathroom" seem so unremarkable that we don't even think of them as reading and writing. Yet these practices are probably very significant for young children learning to read and write. On Marco's Day, he makes a triarama during Book Clubs and decides to label it with the members of his book club group. It is less common for children to talk about instrumental texts than they

do about literature texts, perhaps because the events are so familiar. One exception is the discussion of how to read the model of the outdoor thermometer, prompted by children's questions. Another example of talk about instrumental texts is Marco and David's confusion about the "book club diary", which I discuss at length in Chapter Six. The unfamiliarity of the literacy event makes the text more visible and problematic. The literacy processes also become more visible as children negotiate new literacy practices.

While Susan makes conscious use of these types of functional texts, I'm not sure that even she would consider the children's responses exemplars of their "reading ability." The children appear to be highly proficient at reading and writing these texts, however they may not be aware that they are reading and writing. One concern about these examples is that while this is an area of high proficiency, the participants do not see themselves as readers and writers- and do not attach this to their image of self as reader /writer.

Yetta Goodman (1997) highlights children's proficiency in "environmental print" as one of the "multiple roads to literacy. (p.58) " Goodman expresses concern over the popular and professional belief that being read to by parents is "the only and most important road to literacy learning." In addition to "being read to," Goodman's "multiple roads to literacy" include: reading of newspapers, magazines and comics, writing, playing at using literacy, environmental print, seeing others read (the demonstration road), technological literacy, family literacy traditions, child and adolescent cultural traditions, and unique and personal literacy experiences.

Texts as "contested" grounds

Another concern about the invisibility of literacy practices involving instrumental texts is literacy practices and texts are "contested" grounds (Street, 1995) , and are not politically neutral. My favorite invisible example of "calling the names of boys (or girls) to go the bathroom," is an example Henkin (1998) uses of school practices that unnecessarily highlight gender differences in elementary children.

The “taking attendance” event provides an example of the socio-political nature of literacy practices. The attendance book is a legal document. As with many institutional text, the attendance sheets are impersonally called by a number “the 29.” Although each attendance sheet contains personal student information, only the teacher writes in this book. The records can be read by any school official, but are not usually read by the children or parents. This document is imposed on teacher and students. In the school district, attendance, test scores and grades are criteria used as an indicator of a school’s success. Therefore, this document may also be used to define the teacher’s performance.

On the back of the attendance sheets, teachers often document additional information about the children such as behavior problems or parent contact. In the brief exchange above, we see evidence that these records are used to define children. For example, we learn that Sarina is seldom absent, Danielle is frequently absent, and Sharonda is often tardy.

However the taking attendance routine in this classroom provides a time for greetings and conversations. Susan greets each child personally, and the children respond with their own greetings. Susan uses the institutional text to compliment and encourage Danielle, rather than chastising her for absences. The potentially “toxic text” (Taylor, 1996) is humanized within a ritual of personal connections with the community members. Those who are absent are “missed” with comments expressing interest and concern.

Further, the children participate as readers and writers (and mathematicians) in the social and transactional practice of “taking attendance.” Denny Taylor (1999) recently defined a “toxic text” as “one you can’t transact with.” In this case, the class constructs a temporary text, the attendance tally, in order to record information that is interpreted and transferred to the missing person’s graph. They have taken attendance records and made them their own.

Literacy events involving “doing school work”

On Marco’s Day, Susan calls Marco and some of his classmates together for a small group math lesson focused on solving two digit arithmetic problems involving regrouping. This exercise was augmented by “hands on” materials. Each child had a bag of “unit blocks” with 1x10 cm sticks representing “tens” and 1x1 cm blocks representing ones. Each child had a math worksheet for “reading” the problems and recording their answers. The small group engaged in this lesson provided opportunities for Susan to work closely with the children and Marco had more direct interactions with Susan at this time than he did during the rest of the day.

As written texts, however, the math worksheets, do not “make sense” to students in the same way that the list of math choices does. They do not represent any choice or activity in the children’s lives. The numerals on the sheets do not represent objects that the children understand. The worksheets are exercises (Edelsky, 1991) designed to help children learn an algorithm. During Lauren’s Day, the class worked on two additional math sheets during “Morning Meeting” and during a whole class math lesson.

Determining which “activities” are exercises is more complicated than it initially appears. These activities are not “fake” literacy practices because they are common occurrences in school communities. Edelsky (1991) defines exercise as a literacy event where the primary focus of the event is language (or math in this case) instruction or evaluation. My initial inclination was to look for texts that were published for instructional purposes such as: the math worksheets, the maps of North America, etc. While the commercial nature of these texts give a strong clue about their influence on the nature of the literacy event, the publication history does not determine how texts are used.

The “outdoor thermometer,” described above, involved the Daily Helpers reporting the temperature to the class. My original response was that this was an “exercise,” after all it was a commercial teaching tool and it wasn’t even a real thermometer. However, I realized that this model was used in a similar way to the models and charts that weather reporters

might use on TV. This would be a familiar context, within children's life experiences, to introduce daily temperature. In reviewing this event, Susan explained that the daily helpers used an actual outdoor thermometer on the classroom window to read the temperature, making this event very much like weather reporting.

Literary texts, while most likely to be used in "real life" contexts, are also used in learning exercises. When Susan uses Jack Prelutsky's poem *Three Toed Sloth* as a handwriting lesson, or to "circle the long O words" it becomes an exercise. Children copy down the poem in order to improve their handwriting, rather than for meaning construction or to accomplish some more functional activity. On another day that I visited, I asked Lauren to read me a text she had copied. She was reluctant, and said she hadn't read as she copied. It turned out she was able to read the poem, but her original understanding of the "activity" was that it was an exercise (Copy something down.) rather than a meaning making experience (Read a poem.). There are only eight literacy events (11%) that appear to be clearly instructional exercises.

Participating in a guided lesson on "doing a math sheet"

Writing (or pasting) "right answers" onto a math worksheet

On these two days, I observed three guided lessons where Susan works through several problems on a math worksheet. After the "lessons," the children complete the worksheet on their own. In Chapter Two I describe the impact of these events on the overall experience of Lauren's Day. Here I describe them as literacy events and learning experiences. Susan used a Socratic approach to the lesson, asking questions focusing on concepts "So how many tens do we have?," and guiding the children through the problem. In each case, as described above, she uses manipulatives to show the concepts. In some cases individual children provide answers, and in other cases the group chants responses in unison as Susan worked through the problems. In every case children are encouraged to "work together," and both Marco and Lauren looked around at other children's papers as they work.

During the worksheet activities, the children worked out answers to questions supplied by the worksheet and then wrote or located the correct answer and placed it in the space provided. This activity appears to be an instructional “set up” on a number of levels. The “problems” are dictated by the math sheet, and the correct answers are already “known.” The worksheet allows children to show that they know a skill, rather than to pose and solve real problems as mathematician. As a contrast, the “attendance tally” activity, described above, was used to answer the question “How many are present and absent today?” and - in one case - was actually used to check whether Susan had forgotten to call Danny’s name.

As Lauren works on her math sheet, she reports her progress to herself and her friends as she works:

Lauren’s Day, Math (See Appendix C)

“I only got /two \more¹¹,” she says. She leans back and puts her hands on her head.

Danielle looks over at Lauren, and Danielle repeats Lauren’s phrase, “I only got /two \more. See, look. One, two. One, two.”

Lauren continues working. “Now I got one more.”

Danielle is looking at her answer pieces, “five, seven.”

Lauren glues the last piece down. “Got it. I got all of them right.”

Lauren’s comment “I got all of them right.” emphasizes the nature of this literacy event, with a focus on accuracy over meaning construction. Lauren also tends to follow her own progress as she reads and writes, telling me that she has added three pages since I saw her last, or has three pages left to go in her book. But as she finishes writing her text, she says “Let me read this to you,” not “I got it all right.” Marco has a similar conclusion to the Three Toed Sloth paper, when he shows his paper to David and says, “I did all those.” Although the children are anxious to finish their work, and proud of their accomplishments their responses are more the procedural display (Bloome, 1989) of doing school than meaning construction with lasting social implications.

¹¹ The slashes indicate rising (/) and falling (\) tones or intonation. Lauren’s voice goes up on two and down on more, almost singing the phrase.

Circling, labeling or coloring a targeted response

On Lauren's Day, children were to take a map of North America, and then color and label the country of Mexico. For Lauren, at least, this activity did not involve meaningless copying because she asked for the map by saying, "I don't hardly know how to spell Mexico." On Marco's Day, Susan asked children to circle the "long o" words in Jack Prelutsky's poem Three Toed Sloth. This is the only phonics exercise that I observed in the two days, and was an unusual occurrence in my observances in Susan's classroom. Like the math worksheets, this phonics mini-lesson was introduced in preparation for the standardized test the children would take later in March.

The "circle the long o words" activity took just a few minutes of class time, while the math work sheets on Lauren's Day took over twenty minutes of whole class instruction and another 45 minutes or so for Lauren to complete the math worksheets (including "Things to Do" and "Math Lesson"). This discrepancy suggests that Susan has greater confidence about the children's abilities to negotiate a reading test based on her regular curriculum than they will to negotiate a math test. This may be because the math test has less similarity to Susan's holistic math instruction, or because Susan has more confidence in her language arts instruction.

In any event, Susan believes these exercises will be more like the kinds of literacy tasks children will experience on the standardized tests, than like the more authentic literacy and math practices they experience in her classroom. Even on these pre-testing days, these activities represent 11 percent of the literacy events, which shows that Susan values literature focused events and instrumental activities over school exercises.

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the social literacy events and practices in Marco's Day and Lauren's Day. The sheer number and range of literacy events was surprising. I observed Marco on the 120th day of school. On that day, Marco participated in some 30 literacy events and encountered 27 written texts. Lauren participated in 37 literacy events involving 29 written texts on her 124th day of school. At this rate, over the course of a 180 school year, Lauren and Marco are likely to encounter well over 3,600 texts within about 4,500 literacy events.

Lauren and Marco experienced literacy in 27 different types social activities. They participated in literacy events involving demonstrations of 27 different ways that members of their classroom community use reading and writing. Only three of these social activities were school exercises, with a focus on language instruction or evaluation. Within the other social activities, the children experienced reading and writing to enjoy literature, learn, organize, plan, communicate, and otherwise experience their social worlds. A close examination of these events led me to the following conclusions:

- Marco and Lauren participate in literacy events through listening, observing, illustrating, singing, and talking as well as through reading and writing. All of these sign systems support Marco and Lauren as participants in social literacy practices.
- Reading and writing literature involved a wide variety of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry genres. Literature activities focused on constructing meaningful texts and aesthetic experiences with texts. Literature reading and writing involved choice and agency. Literature was seldom involved in school type exercises.
- Reading and writing literature are social meaning making events for both Marco and Lauren. Both Marco and Lauren work closely with the children around them, view classmates as resources, and use dialogue to share, rehearse, and celebrate their work and the work of classmates.

- Children in Marco's and Lauren's classroom are exploring "literacy" as they participate in literacy events. While I did not observe a lesson in "how to read" or "how to write," reading and writing processes were demonstrated throughout the day. Children's talk about text revealed that they were exploring questions about literacy processes and practices within the social context of literacy events.
- Many literacy events involved reading and writing for other social activities, and more than half of the texts Lauren and Marco encountered were "instrumental texts." These literacy events closely match Rosenblatt's description of "efferent" reading: "the reader's attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residue after the reading -- the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out." (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.23)
- Literacy events where reading and writing were used for other social activities, were so familiar to participants, that the reading and writing became almost invisible. Literacy practices were similar to those outside of school. Participants collaborated and supported each other in reading and writing to get things done.

The literacy events involving "exercises" in preparation of a standardized text drive home the disruptive nature of standardized testing on curriculum and children's literacy development. Susan minimizes the impact of tests with brief mini-lessons and a few worksheets in the weeks before the test. But it seems a shame that even one minute of class time is devoted to test preparation when Marco and Lauren might be solving problems in a math journal, or reading a book with a friend. In addition, the power of social literacy events raises questions about assessment practices where children are evaluated based on individual performance. In these testing situations, children are separated from the "funds of knowledge" within their classroom community. In addition, literacy events are separated from the "real life" contexts that support reading and writing.

Another implication for learning and teaching is the potential of functional, "efferent" literacy events in creating connections between family literacy and school

literacy. Susan brings so many “roads to literacy” into the classroom with the lists, charts, graphs, calendar, and thermometer as well as the autobiographies and books about snakes. We might give more thought to the “multiple roads to literacy” as we consider classroom curriculum.

As a classroom teacher, I would want to explore more ways of engaging children in talking about texts, encouraging the sharing, oral composing and rehearsing that I observed in Lauren and Marco. As I looked closely at the literacy events of Marco’s and Lauren’s school days I was more and more impressed by the importance of opportunities for social interactions while reading and writing. I wonder how children ever learn to read in straight rows with little opportunity to watch and overhear what other readers and writers do when they read and write.

Chapter Five

Making Meaning in a Classroom Community

In the last Chapter I describe Marco's and Lauren's literacy experiences with a focus on the *social activities* within the literacy event. In this chapter I explore more closely the *nature* of literacy experiences in term of meaning construction, social function, and the roles and relationships of participants. I closely examine literacy as a language process within social events and practices of the classroom.

Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic studies of literacy and literacy development generally focus on the transaction between reader / writer and text, and may not address social context. Miscue analysis studies, catalogued by Brown and K. Goodman (1996) usually involve an interview setting outside of the classroom literacy event. Studies of beginning literacy in young children also involved interviews and may involve contrived tasks (Y. Goodman, Altwerger and Marek, 1989, Ferreiro, 1982). Studies of the writing process (Graves, 1983, Milz, 1983, Y. Goodman et. al, 1992) tend to involve observations, and include discussions of how the child interacts with the classroom environment and other learners. However the focus remains on observing the text construction process as a transaction between writer and texts. Studies such as those described above have contributed to a theoretically grounded understanding of literacy processes and literacy learning that has widely influenced current research and practice.

Social literacy studies focus on the socio-cultural practice of literacy. Researchers in New Literacy studies (Barton, 1994; Street, 1995) explore the "multiple literacies" that are socially constructed within literate communities. Denny Taylor (1983) describes the practices and functions of literacy in families, and Taylor and Cathe Dorsey-Gaines (1988) extend this study to inner city families. Ann Haas Dyson (1984) studies the social construction process of young writers in classroom settings. These studies take literacy

beyond language processes and consider how community, culture, and other social structures influence literacy practices and literacy development.

Few studies do a close analysis of reading and writing transactions within social literacy events, bringing together these research perspectives. In an effort to consider classroom literacy events as both language process and social practice, Carole Edelsky (1991) makes “some purposeful distinctions” based on three aspects of a literacy event: meaning construction, social function and the role or position of the participant. Goodman (1996) describes literacy learning as a balance between “personal invention” and “social convention.” For example, Marco invents a symbolic outline for his group writing project.

In this chapter, in order to look more closely at the meaning construction processes, I am shifting lenses from the social activity to the *transaction* between meaning maker and text. There is the danger in case studies of seeing literacy as an individual endeavor between the child and the text or the learning experience. I avoid this narrow view of literacy by describing meaning making within the literacy events of Marco’s Day and Lauren’s Day. In addition, I organized examples of meaning construction around Lauren’s and Marco’s social roles or stances (listener, overhearer, author, reader, expert, illustrator, assistant, etc.) as participants in literacy events.

The chapter begins with a discussion of meaning making within this classroom community. Next I discuss distinctions within literacy events based on meaning construction, social function, and the participants role within the event. Not all literacy events involve making meaning, and participants experience literacy events differently. I explore how social roles and relationships emerge within literacy events. These roles are “mutually constituted” (Larson, 1997) by the interactions and activities of a literacy event. A description of Marco’s meaning making is organized around these roles, followed by a similar discussion of meaning making in Lauren’s Day. Finally, I compare Lauren’s and Marco’s experiences as listeners, and as readers and writers.

Meaning Making in Lauren's and Marco's Classroom Community

From Marco's Day, "Books to Go" (Appendix B)

Amber begins reading, "*There are over 2,400 different kinds of snakes in the world.*"

The children gasp and look around at each other. Terrence and Darryl open their mouths wide, miming amazement.

Amber continues, "*Snakes slither and slide on their belly.*"

Marco places his hands together in front of his chest like a snake's head. He makes a slithering motion with his upper body as Amber continues to read. He continues for a time, appearing to enjoy the movement. Amber shows the picture to the group. Darryl holds the page to look closer. Alicia leans over to see. Marco looks at the picture. He makes a comment to Jackie.

Amber reads, "*The giant of all snakes is the Anaconda.*"

Darryl leans back onto his knees, miming being impressed. Terrence points to the class model hanging across the room...

Amber reads, "*It can be as long as a school bus. And weigh as much as two grown men.*"

Darryl says, "Jeesh."

Marco says, "Let me see the picture."

Other kids call out, "Ooo. Show the picture."

Amber shows the picture to the class.

Children cry out in amazement, "Whoa!"

While Amber is "reading" the non-fiction book *Snakes* (Demuth, 1993), the listeners are also active participants in the social construction of the text. In this brief vignette, the listeners are engaged in many layers of meaning making involving a range of semiotic systems including body language and art along with oral and written language.

In *Notebooks of the Mind*, Vera John Steiner (1990) refers to "thinking with the body" as the first "language of thought." In the example above, children use body language for several purposes. When Amber reads that "snakes slither and slide," Marco expresses his parallel text construction with his body, miming the motion of a snake. Marco's body language suggests the "lived through" aesthetic experience that Louise Rosenblatt (1978) describes as "evoking a poem." Rosenblatt first used the term "transaction" to describe the reading as a dynamic process where reader and text both act on each other. She compares the process to conducting an orchestra.

Body language was also used for nonverbal "conversations" without interrupting the reader. Terrence points to the class model of an Anaconda, making a connection between a class experience and the text. The children mime amazement and shock in

response to the information presented in the text. Miming and eye contact add to the social experience of each listener's meaning construction. The children share their reactions in the same way we enjoy watching a movie with a friend in an appreciative theater audience more than we do when we're alone.

During this text reading, listeners are also "viewers." All of the books read are picture books, and the illustrations are an important aspect of the meaning construction process. Listeners almost always looked up when a picture was shown, even if their gaze was focused elsewhere during the readings. Children look to the pictures to extend meanings and convey new meanings.

Amber reads, "*It can be as long as a school bus. And weigh as much as two grown men.*"

Darryl says, "Jeesh."

Marco says, "Let me see the picture."

Picture book illustrations provide an additional symbolic system to engage children's meaning making. Illustrated picture books include a wide range of contemporary art for children to interpret as meaning makers. Children's attention to illustrator's work is revealed in some of their comments during a read aloud on Lauren's Day.

Lauren's Day, "Books to Go", (Appendix C)

Danny reads, "*Was it the pig as fat as butter,*" and Lauren looks up and smiles.

Willie says, "Miss Austin, I know who sank the boat."

Susan says, "Don't tell."

Someone says, "Miss Austin, on one page is a page with color. On the other page is a page without."

Viewing the illustrations provides a time for informal reactions to the texts, generally exclamations, gestures, or brief comments. During the two days that I am describing, there is no formal discussion time following each read aloud, but quite a few informal responses and dialogues occur as the text is being read and during intervals before and after readings.

Snakes (Demuth,1993) is a non-fiction text, suggesting an efferent (Rosenblatt, 1978) reading, where the text is a vehicle for gaining information as quickly as possible. However, in this case, listeners respond with emotion and animation. The animated responses may be a response to the context, where the text is read or heard for its own sake.

Listeners also respond to the metaphoric language. Marco remembered that the snake was “long as a school bus” when we talked about this event at the end of the day. However, the social community is an important element of the meaning making experience.

Lauren’s Day, “Book Clubs” (Appendix C)

“When Rosa’s milk spills on the floor, she tries to drink it with a straw. Maria takes her hard boiled egg and throws it to her best friend Craig.”

There is loud laughing and children call out “ewww” and “yeech.” The book club group smile at each other over the reactions to the text, and continue with even greater enthusiasm.

In these shared reading experiences, meaning making is a socially constructed transaction between readers, listeners and texts. Halliday describes three layers of meaning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. (Halliday, 1975) Children are constructing understandings about the content and concepts (ideational) of the text. At the same time, they are constructing social meanings (interpersonal) as they participate in a group reading and listening event. They experience aesthetic (textual) elements of the text as well.¹²

In the example above, the social meaning construction process are made obvious by children’s reactions, movements, and comments. However, listeners are meaning making participants in literacy events even when they are still and silent. Joanne Larson (1999) has shown that children are making meaning, even as peripheral “overhearers” of a literacy event, as I will describe in detail later. As children participate in social literacy events, they are participating in meaning construction, even if they are silent.

In Chapter Four, I described the types of events that Marco and Lauren experienced. A significant aspect of these social literacy experiences is the way that the classroom community creates and enhances the meaning potential of literacy events. These events can be viewed as having a meaning potential for these young readers and writers. In this chapter I focus the research lens on the language transactions and describe Marco’s and Lauren’s meaning making within this classroom community.

¹² I am borrowing from Geoffrey Leech’s (1983) model of language in *Principles of Pragmatics*. Leech defines ideational meaning as residing in the grammatical or semantic system. He places pragmatics, including conversational maxims and politeness maxims, in the interpersonal layer of meaning. He includes principles of style, humor, and -by extension - aesthetics in the textual layer of meaning.

A Community Focus on Meaning

Whole language is meaning-based. The best learning experiences are those that are meaningful to the child. Learning experiences such as letter writing, storytelling, field trips, interviews, reading fiction and non-fiction books, and drama help children to construct meaning and understand the world around them. Even beginning readers can start with signs or familiar stories. Language skills are easy to learn when the focus is on making sense. (Dewey Center Teachers)

This statement is an excerpt from eight principles of Whole Language written by Dewey Center teachers for parents and community members (See Figure 1, page 8).

Language is “whole” when it has meaning for the participant in a language or literacy event. The “Books to Go” event is an example of Susan’s focus on meaning making in language arts instruction. Susan selects one book for the child to read to the class and another book for their parents to read. In the home and school reading aloud experience, children experience texts that they might not read to themselves. The wide range of texts read in the classroom increases the body of literature (in terms of topic, genre, style, author, illustrator, etc.) available to children far beyond books they might select to read. While immersed in a literature experience, children also experience demonstrations of what it means to be a reader as they listen to their classmates read.

Smith (1988) and Cambourne (1988) both discuss the role of demonstration in language learning. Demonstration does not mean overt instruction, but the opportunity for learners to observe language users (in this case readers and writers) engaged in the process of using real language for real purposes. In Susan’s classroom, Marco is able to observe and participate in countless demonstrations of readers and writers engaged in the process of reading or writing.

The Language Arts program in Susan’s classroom is organized to maximize opportunities for *immersion* in meaningful literacy events, and *demonstrations* of reading and writing. Children use spoken and written language to explore their world. In “real life” literacy events, the focus of participants is on the social practice, what it is we’re doing with language, and the process is a secondary concern. Literacy events in Susan’s classroom also focus on “what it is we’re doing with language.”

From a whole language theoretical perspective, reading and writing are the tools for learning and not the content of learning. Learning experiences are organized around using language to explore content: literature, science, social science, etc. Procedural activities, such as organizing the math workshop, also involve using language as a tool to get things done. As children engage in learning about the world or organizing learning experiences, they are learning language. This is the teacher's not-so-hidden agenda in what some call "process" classrooms.

Whole language focuses on the learning process. In a whole language school, children are *learning how to learn*. Children participate in drama, role-playing, research and other experiences that give them tools for life-long learning. *Children learn how to ask questions, select topics, find materials, read, write, interview, share and present* as they focus on science, social studies and literature themes. (Dewey Center Teachers)

In Lauren's and Marco's classroom, demonstrations of reading and writing within meaningful literacy events highlight the underlying processes. The reading process is demystified as less proficient readers learn that the "best" readers in the class do make miscues. When children deal with unfamiliar or complex text, they observe the strategies and the suggestions made by other classmates and teachers.

There is a "dual curriculum" (Goodman, 1986) in Whole Language classrooms as teacher and children focus on content areas with an underlying awareness that children are "learning how to learn." To some extent, the learners' agenda is *what I'm using language to do* while the teacher's agenda includes *how* children are using language. However, from time to time Susan and the children stop to reflect on the language and thought process involved in classroom experiences.

Making the process explicit

In Chapter Three, I described a “teachable moment” strategy lesson where Susan assists Amber with unfamiliar text.

Marco’s Day, “Books to Go”, Appendix B

Susan: Let’s listen to the rest of the sentence.
Amber:*the mouse*
Susan: Okay, start at the beginning
Amber: *In a flash the rattlesnake something the mouse.*
Susan: And I heard someone over here say “stricks,”
I think that’s cause it starts with s-t-r.”
Terrence: (quietly) ssss sstrike.
Susan: So what do you think would make sense?
What’s the rattlesnake going to do to the mouse?

When Susan works through this reading strategy with Amber, she *demonstrates the process* to the class. Susan’s reading strategies are meaning focused, involving reading ahead to gain meaning, re-reading to reconstruct meaning, and then stopping to think about “what makes sense.” Terrence and “the kids on the rug” actively participate in the exchange, while Marco and his classmates listen. In Chapter 4 I described how Marco later describes an “I go back” strategy that is very similar to Susan’s strategy lesson demonstrating that these on-the-spot conversations have long range influence on the reading of all participants.

Susan’s strategy lesson is one example of *making the process explicit*. When Amber reads that “*Snakes shed their skin two or three times a year.*” Alyssa poses a math problem to herself.

Marco’s Day, “Books to Go” (Appendix II)

Alyssa has been counting on her fingers. She says, “If a snake were seven years old, it would shed its skin twenty times.”
“How did you figure that out?” Susan asks.
“I just counted by threes.”

Susan frequently asks, “How did you figure that out?” in order to highlight the thinking process when children make interesting discoveries. When Susan asks Alyssa to share her thinking process, she is *making the process explicit* for Alyssa and for her classmates. Other members of the classroom community share Susan’s focus on language

and thinking processes. Before Morning Meeting begins, Darryl raises his hand and asks about a mistake James, a daily helper, made while writing on the Days of School number line:

From Marco's Day, Morning Meeting (Appendix B)

Darryl: Miss Austin, they put twelve zero zero.
Susan: You know what, James got confused. He thought nineteen and thought 20, and got excited and put two "O"s=¹³
Terrence: =Twelve=
Susan: =and made two hundred=
Terrence: =twelve
hundred
Susan: So I just xed out one of the zeros. It's one hundred and twenty.
(Jackie stands up, raising her hand, then sits back down.)
You can see. There's the one, the two, and the zero.
Susan: Jackie?
Jackie: That's how you learn cause you know
How (?the line is?)
I did that before but I thought about it
And I crossed it out.
But before I crossed it out, I looked at it a couple of times.
Susan: That's right. Jackie says, "That's how you learn."

In this example, Darryl, Terrence and Jackie are all concerned with the process of writing on the number line. Susan speaks for James, interpreting his thought processes. Darryl and Terrence are interested in a writing "problem" and may also be critiquing the Daily Helper's job. Susan and Jackie consider James' feelings, an interpersonal level of this conversation. Susan's explanation also implies that mistakes involve thinking.

Jackie's comment reveals not only an explicit interest in language processes, but particular values about meaning construction. She suggests that everybody makes mistakes, uses herself (a highly confident learner) as an example, and asserts that making mistakes is a part of the learning process. Susan repeats Jackie's statement, emphasizing her agreement. Jackie and Susan appear to view language learning as a tentative process, involving mistakes and development, rather than accurate acquisition of skills. These particular values -- that meaning construction is a process, and learning involves growth -- are expressed in various ways throughout the days that I observed.

¹³ The equal sign (=) indicates lightly overlapping speech. When I am uncertain what the speaker says, the wordings are marked with question marks within parentheses.

When Susan asks Alyssa to explain her thinking, she shifts Alyssa's talk from cognition (what I know) to metacognition (how I know what I know). It is important to distinguish between these two types of meaning making. Language users have *implicit* understandings of language and thought processes, but that does not mean these processes are *explicit*. For example, Marco's reading of *What's in My Pocket* shows that he has implicit understandings of adjectives:

Text: What's in my pocket? Something that's fuzzy.

Marco: *What's in my pocket? It's something that's wiggly or giggly...*

(M turns page and looks at picture of a stuffed bear) *hairy or something.*

Although Marco is able to use adjectives appropriately while reading, this does not mean that he can talk about how he made these particular predictions. It is not necessary for Marco to know the term "adjective" in order to understand how to use adjectives. Teachers sometimes assume children don't have language because they can't talk about it. Tests designed to determine a child's dominant language have found them to be "a-lingual."

Lisa Delpit (1995) expresses concern that progressive white teachers in "process" classrooms often use indirect language that may cause cultural miscommunication with African American children. Delpit draws connections between open-ended classroom structures and indirect language, and between explicit language and direct instruction. I don't think there is a direct link between direct instruction and explicit language. I believe that *making the process explicit* provides a connection between a child's implicit understandings and the explicit understandings of "the culture of power." These discussions help listeners like Marco and Lauren to understand *how their classmates are making meaning* as they participate in the meaning construction experience. I discuss this further in Chapter Six.

Distinctions between literacy events and meaning making

Literacy events include any social event related to a written text. However, literacy events do not always involve meaning construction. As a visitor to Taiwan I participated in many literacy events where I was unable to construct meaning with print. Negotiating the

signs, tickets, and other printed messages in a local airport was difficult or impossible and the announcements on loudspeakers did not help me to “read” or make sense with print. My experience illustrates Edelsky’s distinction between “literacy,” social activity involving print, and “reading,” literacy events involving meaning construction.

An event can be categorized as “reading” or “NOT-reading” based on whether the reader/ writer is constructing meaning. In Edelsky’s definition “reading” includes reading or writing. In the case of young children, I extend the question of meaning construction to the listener /observer as well as reader/writer. This distinction is important for classroom research because many of the literacy events in skills oriented Language Arts programs include activities involving text with little or no meaning construction. Examples are numerous, including spelling tests, handwriting assignments involving coping without meaning making, phonics worksheets, etc. Edelsky (1991) calls these activities NOT-Reading.

While my literacy experiences in Taiwan were “NOT reading” events, they had a different function than a spelling test. The printed plane ticket that I was “NOT reading” allowed me to board a plane, while the spelling test has the purpose of assessing the writer’s ability to spell. Edelsky distinguishes between “exercise” and “NOT-exercise” to consider the social function of the event. If the purpose of the literacy event is primarily for language instruction or evaluation, then the event is considered an “exercise.”

Edelsky borrows from Freire (1994) to suggest that readers/ writers can be positioned as the “subject” or “object” within social literacy events. This dichotomy describes the amount of control the reader/writer has with the text and the literacy event. These distinctions are relative because texts act on readers, and cultural understandings and constraints scaffold meaning construction. While my Chinese language text was purchased for me, I was the subject of the event as the traveler making a trip to the Taiwan coast. Edelsky provides some examples of these distinctions.

Figure 7: Examples from “Literacy: Some Purposeful Distinctions” (Edelsky, 1991)

Reading, NOT an Exercise, Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read an essay for personal entertainment. • Write a movie review for publication.
Reading, NOT an Exercise, Object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent orders child to write a thank you note.
Reading, Exercise, Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a trial movie review for a job as critic. • Child selects a worksheet during a classroom workshop.
Reading, Exercise, Object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a reading test. • Read an essay to answer questions for a grade.
NOT Reading, NOT an Exercise, Subject *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doodling decorative letters • ? Pronouncing foreign language print (i.e. in religious rituals) without understanding.
NOT Reading, NOT an Exercise, Object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Reading” an eye chart during an eye exam.
NOT Reading, Exercise, Subject*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ? Self initiated calligraphy practice.
NOT Reading, Exercise, Object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter naming, flashcard lesson • Read nonsense syllables in testing situation.

*? Where there is no meaning construction, it is difficult to find examples where the reader/writer is the subject of the literacy event.

In determining what is “reading” the question is, *Is the participant (whether reader, writer, speaker or listener) engaged in meaning construction with a printed text?*

In Susan’s whole language curriculum, cases of NOT-reading are rare, but the answers to this question are not always clear cut. I illustrate the complexities of this issue with Marco’s experiences during the “Three Toed Sloth” language event.

The Three Toed Sloth

The three-toed sloth is in a deep
and curious wakeless sleep.
The boughs and branches bend and break
but seldom does the sloth awake.
The noisy jungle far below
is not for three-toed sloths to know.
Jack Prelutsky (1983)

Marco first encounters the poem “The Three Toed Sloth” as a handwriting exercise. He and his classmates have copied down the poem during the “Things to Do” workshop first thing in the morning. Now, Susan conducts a five-minute mini-lesson focusing on the poem. The poem is written on the board, and a picture of a sloth hangs near the poem. The children have their handwritten copies out on their tables. During this

five-minute language event, Three Toed Sloth, there are three brief literacy events involving the same text: a scientific discussion, a phonics lesson, and a choral reading

From Marco's Day, Three Toed Sloth (Appendix B)

Susan refers to the first two lines of the poem, explaining that sloths sleep about 18 hours every day. Alyssa does some rapid figuring, and says that the sloth is only awake for six hours out of the day.

Susan reads, "*The noisy jungle far below is not for three toed sloths to know.*" She explains the sloth "hardly ever goes down on the ground" because it has long claws, good for climbing but not walking. Susan points out a greenish tinge on the sloth's fur in the picture. She asks if the children have seen algae in fish tanks. She wonders if the green-brown fur makes it hard or easy to see sloths in the rain forest. Jonathan responds with, "hard." Susan suggests that algae is good camouflage.

In this literacy event, Susan interprets the poem in a *scientific discussion* of the sloth. Alyssa gets involved in the discussion, once again setting herself a literary math problem. After this brief discussion, Susan asks the children to *circle the "long O" words* in the poem.

Susan says, "Julia and Brent were trying to figure out, today, which vowels we're going to look for in the poem." After reviewing vowels discussed previously, Susan says, "We're looking for the long "O," or when we hear it say..."

Children call out, "O," or "Its name."

Children call out words and Susan circles them on the board. She walks around for a few moments and gives children time to complete the activity. Then Susan invites the children to do a *choral reading of the poem*. Children participate in a variety of manners with the choral reading activity. During the first part of the lesson, the camera is focused on Susan. As the children begin to "circle the long o words," the camera shifts to Marco, who sits at the "square team" table between David and James:

Marco holds his pencil poised to write; peers closely at the board and then down at his paper. On Marco's right, James is circling words on his paper. Marco looks at the board, moves his mouth, and looks down at his paper again. He points at the paper with his pencil, and says something to David. He glances over at the camera. ... Susan leads a choral reading of Three Toed Sloth. Marco recites the title and first line, which also begins "*The three toed sloth...*" After the first line, Marco holds his pencil poised and listens to his classmates. Next to Marco, James reads from his paper while Terrence reads from the board. Destine, who also sits at Marco's table, is drawing a picture on her paper.

When the choral reading is over, Susan tells the children to put their papers away and come to the area rug for morning meaning. As Marco leaves the table, he shows his paper to David and says, "I did all those."

As Susan and I watched this vignette later on videotape, we were struck by Marco's attentive posture and scholarly pose. His demeanor is one of "paying attention." However, in this case, it seems likely that Marco is engaged in "procedural display" (Bloome, 1989), participating in the activities involved in "doing school." While he appears confident and indicates a sense of pride in his "work," his comment "I did all these." hints at a focus on completing an assignment, rather than constructing meaning.

From a transactional perspective, meaning does not reside in the text, but is constructed during the transaction between reader and text (Goodman, 1996). However, a text has "meaning potential." It has a variety of linguistic and cultural cues that the reader must interpret in order to construct meaning. In social literacy events the text, the talk of participants, and the activities of participants in relationship to texts all have meaning potential. However, participants' interpretations of the same literacy events vary.

In the vignettes above Alyssa provides a mathematical interpretation of the text *Three Toed Sloth*, James and Terrence participate in a choral reading, and Destine interprets the text in art. Marco is a direct or peripheral listener/ observer of each meaning construction activity. Figure 8 considers the meaning potential and meaning making that occurs during this language event from Marco's perspective. When I talk about "meaning making" I am including meaning construction through listening or reading. Meaning making includes any text interpretation; I am not addressing how closely Marco's understandings of a text match my own. I assume that meanings differ among readers and may include "misconceptions" compared to my own text interpretations.

Figure 8

Meaning Potential and Meaning construction in Three Toed Sloth

Literacy event	Marco listens/ observes	Marco reads/ writes or NOT reads/ writes	Marco constructs meaning
1a. Text interpretation, discussion of poem.	Susan talks about sloths		?
	Alyssa and others participate in disc.		
1b) Text analysis, circle the "long o words."	Susan and children identify & circle words	NOT – Marco peers at board, circles words	No
1c) Choral reading	Susan leads choral reading of poem.	Marco recites title and first line.	Yes?
	Charles reads from paper	(Marco listens with pencil poised)	
	Terrence reads board		
	Destine draws picture		

During the interpretive text discussion, Susan is engaged in meaning construction, interpreting the text and expanding on text language with her own information. Alyssa's self-selected math problem shows her own engagement with the discussion of the text. However, Marco does not participate in the discussion. When I asked Marco about this event later during the debriefing interview, he did not appear to remember it.

D: That one. Did you talk about three... do you remember learning about a three toed sloth today?

(Marco shakes head, no.)

D: No? You don't remember learning about the three-toed sloth?

M: (Shakes head) Nope.

In answer to the question "Is Marco constructing meaning?" during this event, I can only put a question mark in the meaning construction box. Experience with reading miscue analysis has led me to conclude that I can learn what readers *do* understand from their responses, but I can't really learn what they *don't* understand. Marco's responses may have been different if I had asked a different question: Did you copy a poem today? Did your class read a poem called Three Toed Sloth today? Marco's attentive silence during the actual event is not a good indicator of meaning construction.

On the other hand, the “circle the long o words” is certainly NOT reading. While Marco does a paper and pencil task with the other children, this task does not involve constructing a meaningful text. A key aspect of literacy events of social communities is constructing shared meanings. In this case there is a shared understanding of *the assignment*, and children successfully negotiate the task “circle the long o words.” However, the activity itself disrupts the meaning construction of the poem, *Three Toed Sloth*. The focus is on identifying words with certain sounds, and not on understanding or interpreting the message of the poem. This literacy event has no meaning potential. It is an example of a school exercise focusing on instruction or evaluation. In fact, Susan introduces this mini-lesson in anticipation of a standardized testing period coming up at the end of March.

When Susan introduces the choral reading, Marco reads the title and the first line of the poem along with the class. He then listens to the class recite the poem in unison. Again, I can’t know what meanings Marco is constructing through this choral reading experience. I suspect that there is some meaning construction, based on his reading of the title and first line and his attentive listening as the poem is read.

This example illustrates several points about meaning making within literacy events. First, not all literacy events involve meaning construction. Secondly, meaning making experiences vary among participants in a literacy event. Participants interpret texts differently, as illustrated by Susan’s scientific interpretation, Alyssa’s math problem and Destine’s artistic interpretation in response to Prelutsky’s poem. Participants may also have different interpretations of what the event is about. I did not discuss the handwriting lesson where children copied down the poem because I did not record that event. However, it is likely that some students (such as Alyssa) were engaged in “reading a poem” during that event, while others (such as Marco) were engaged in a meaningless exercise.

A final point is the relationship between meaning construction and meaning potential. Some literacy events, such as “circle the long O words” have no meaning

potential, resulting in “NOT-reading” experiences for all participants. Other events have great meaning potential. Choral reading is a good example, particularly because texts are often read and discussed on several occasions providing many opportunities for meaning construction. Overall, the *Three Toed Sloth* mini-lesson has strong potential for meaning construction since Susan introduces a variety of literacy events related to the poem.

However, this does not guarantee a meaning making experience for every participant. Close observations of the learner’s meaning construction during social literacy events provide insight into the child’s literacy learning.

Considering meaning making in relation to social function and social role provides additional insights into the relationship between particular school literacy practices and language learning. Again, the event must be viewed from the learner’s perspective. Susan and other participants play an active role in text interpretation with a scientific discussion and aesthetic choral reading experiences. Marco appears to experience this event as a school assignment he negotiates successfully (“I did all those.”). It is likely that Marco experienced these three events as a school exercise designed to help him learn to read and write, rather than having any other social function for him.

Figure 9

Marco experiences “The Three Toed Sloth”

Literacy event	Marco’s meaning construction	Exercise/ NOT Exercise	Subject / Object
Ia. Text interpretation, discussion of poem.	?	Exercise?	Object?
Ib) Text analysis, circle the “long o words.”	No	Exercise	Object? Subject?
Ic) Choral reading	Yes?	Exercise?	Subject?

Marco’s role as a subject or object within the literacy event is unclear because of the complexity of literacy events, as well as the problem of interpreting the event from the learner’s perspective. Susan selected each of these events, and certainly has coercive power

to require participation in her role as classroom teacher. From this stance all classroom learning experiences place children in the “object” role.

However, the fact that children responded and participated in a variety of manners suggests that they also had some degree of control over the literacy experiences. During the choral reading, for example, Marco begins to read with the group and then listens to the remainder of the poem as his classmates continue reading. This reading experiences can be contrasted to a “round robin” reading, common in many classrooms, where Marco might be required to read a segment of the text selected by the teacher. In this case, Marco’s participation is under his control and he has the choice to be a listener rather than a reader.

As figure 9 indicates, it is difficult to *code* literacy events according to Edelsky’s distinctions, and Edelsky describes many “fuzzy examples” in her discussion of these qualities of literacy events. However, these distinctions are useful in *discussing* the relationship of literacy experiences to literacy learning, assuming that learners gain more when they are the subject participant of a meaningful literacy event with a real life social function.

The Three Toed Sloth language event does not seem to be a supportive language learning experience for Marco. I selected this event to discuss the distinctions between meaning making, social function, and social role because it provides *a rare example*, in my observations of Susan’s classroom, of literacy events that do not involve meaning construction. The other language events that occurred on Marco’s Day and Lauren’s Day provide a contrast in their potential for meaning construction and language learning through participation. These events are discussed when I address Marco’s and Lauren’s social roles as meaning makers.

Social roles in classroom literacy events

I have discussed how Marco and Lauren participate in literacy events in a variety of social roles such as listener and observer as well as reader and writer. Joanne Larson (1997) observed interactions between teachers and kindergartners during journal writing

activities. Larson notes that when the teacher has a conference with one child, the child's tablemates participate in the exchange in a variety of social roles. She identifies five roles of participants during these conferences including teacher/scribe, primary author, overhearers, peripheral respondent, and pivot. The "overhearers" are children who sit quietly nearby and appear to focus on their own work. The "peripheral respondents" are children who respond to the teacher's interaction with the primary author. The pivot, a term Larson borrowed from Goffman (1981), is a child who picks up on the talk between teacher and primary author, prompting a discussion outside of the teacher / child interaction, as Marco does while I'm talking with Jackie.

From Marco's Day, Silent Writing (Appendix B)

Jackie sits down next to me, in the chair across from Marco, and talks about dinosaurs. "And then once dinosaurs was extinct they found these big heavy rocks and that's how... the book tells you about how they found them."

Marco and David look at Jackie. Marco applauds Jackie's talk. Jackie tells me about her plans for the book she is writing. Marco draws. He looks up at Jackie. He tells David, "They been working on that book about twenty days."

These roles are not assigned to the children, as some teachers do in cooperative learning approaches, but they "are mutually constituted and emerge over time in daily interaction (Larson, 1997, p. 501)." Children are not confined to one role but shift roles over the course of writing time and across the school year. The importance of Larson's work in relationship to this study is her finding that children are learning language as participants in literacy events, even if they are not the reader or writer.

I observed Lauren and Marco in a variety of social roles during the school day. I describe many of these roles in Chapter Three, for example Marco's looking out for others and Lauren's play fighting with her friends. For the purposes of this analysis, I have selected social structures where Marco and Lauren take roles as meaning makers. I describe Marco's meaning making as listener, overhearer, reader and writer. I describe Lauren's meaning making as (selective) listener, writer, storyteller, and reader.

Meaning Making in Marco's Day

I have discussed Marco's frequent strategy of "learning by overhearing." In this section, I look closely at this meaning making process. The first example is "Books to Go" where Marco participates as a "listener." In the second example, Silent Writing, Marco participates as an "overhearer" of my conversation with Jackie. The difference between these two roles has to do with Marco's position in relationship with the principal "reader or writer." In "Books to Go" the reading is directed at Marco as a member of the audience. In Silent Writing, Jackie is having a conversation with me and Marco is on the periphery of this dialogue.

In addition to "learning by overhearing," Marco also learns by reading and writing. We capture a glimpse of his composing process at the end of Silent Writing. At the end of the day, during "Book Clubs", Marco takes the lead in the writing project. In this language event Marco uses a wide range of meaning making strategies in order to construct written text. I have used brief examples from these language events in other chapters, but I introduce them again here in more detail for the purpose of taking a close look at Marco's meaning making processes.

Marco as listener

Marco shows his interest in listening experiences by where he sits. During Morning Meeting, Marco sat in the "first row," but to the side of the 6 x 8 area rug that marks the classroom meeting area.

(Daily Helpers)

Ariel Amber Lauren Alicia Darryl Jonathan Terrence **Marco**

When the class settled down to hear James read after the songs, Marco sat in the middle of the group, not far from reader.

(James)

table

Terrence

Amber Lauren Tiffany Danielle
Jackie Marco Kenneth Jonathan

After lunch, when “Books to Go” continues, Marco sits on the front of the rug, but next to the children clustered around Amber, the reader

(Amber)

table

Katherine Lauren

Darryl Alicia Jackie **Marco** Kenneth
David Ariel Alyssa

Marco places himself where he can attend to what’s going on. However, Marco does not sit right next to the reader. This spot is unofficially reserved for the “kids on the rug,” those willing to help the reader, and Marco may not see himself among this group. When I observed Marco on other days when Susan reads aloud or leads a class meeting, Marco is more likely to sit directly in front of her. During the small group math lesson, he chooses a spot right next to Susan. During “Books to Go”, Marco places himself close to the action but not in a spot where he might be called upon to help the reader.

I have described Marco’s involvement in the “Books to Go” language event at the beginning of this chapter. Marco is especially interested in the book *Snakes* (Demuth, 1993). On one occasion, he points to the picture and asks Amber, “What kind of snake is that?” She answers, “A rattle snake.” Marco initiates a brief discussion when Amber reads about snakes shedding their skin.

Marco's Day, "Books to Go" (Appendix B)

Marco looks at the picture and says, "He changing."

He looks at Susan, "Miss Austin, why he changing?"

Susan says, "Cause he's growing. He doesn't fit his skin anymore."

"Cause he's... he's getting bigger." Jackie says.

Susan says, "Just think if every time you got... your mom says, "Oh you've grown, I have to get you new pants or shoes. Just think if your skin had to peel off and you had another skin underneath."

Kids laugh.

In these examples, Marco has shifted from "listener" to "inquirer." Amber's reading and the illustrations in the book prompt inquiry questions, which Marco asks out loud. Although Susan tends to discourage interruptions, she supports Marco's inquiry with a brief discussion. In these exchanges, Marco sees both Amber and Susan as potential "teachers." Jackie gets into the discussion as an expert as well. Marco's inquiry into snakes was reflected during the debriefing interview:

Debi: Did you like that story about snakes?

Marco: (Nods his head, "Yes.")

Debi: What was your favorite part?

Marco: About the snake? I liked when his skin came off and he changed to another (?skin or snake?). Cause I like black and orange too.

D: Did you know that snakes shed their skin before you read that book?

M: No

D: What else did you learn about snakes today?

M: That sometime that they can't see very well. And other snakes, when they sleep, they eyes be open a little so they can see. And then if they see a rabbit on top, he ain't gonna get it because he just [a]sleep.

D: Anything else about snakes you learned?

M: When his skin come off, when they skin come off, they change to another color. (pause) Sometimes when he see something, he might stick his tongue out and it like be poison, and then he might go get it sometime (sticks tongue out like a snake) like that with his tongue.

D: Who made this snake? (Snake hanging across room.)

M: Jonathan and Miss Austin and (???) brother.

D: What kind of snake is that?

M: It might be a rattlesnake. It might be. It's long though.

D: Why is it so long?

M: (shrugs) It's longer than a school bus.

Marco's responses suggest that he did not know a lot about snakes before Amber read the book. He remembers quite a few details from the text. He makes sure I know that he's not sure what kind of snake Jonathan and Miss Austin made, but he remembers hearing about a "rattlesnake." He does remember that the Anaconda is "longer than a

school bus.” While Marco’s retelling includes some misconceptions, he is beginning to construct schema around a new topic, snakes, which he learned about through listening.

Perhaps because of his interest in this story, Marco gets involved in the reading performance at one point. Marco makes a prediction out loud:

Marco’s Day, “Books to Go” (Appendix B)

Amber continues reading, “*It grabs it with its needle sharp teeth, then it..*”

“Swallows it,” Marco whispers loudly as Amber pauses.

Susan says, “Marco has a prediction. Say it out loud Marco.”

“Swallows it,” Marco says.

“... *sinks its fangs into the mouse,*” Amber continues.

James says, “Ooo. Dang!”

When Amber finishes reading the page and is showing the picture, Susan says, “I want to ask Amber something. Marco thought it was ‘swallowed’. How did you know it was ‘sinks’ and not ‘swallowed’?” Amber responds that she just knew the word. Susan goes on to explain that Marco’s prediction made sense with what came before it, but not with what came after.

Marco’s prediction shows that he is engaged in the text and constructing meanings as he listens to Amber read. Since the meaning construction of listeners is generally silent, it is rare to have such a clear example of the active listening process. Although Marco has spoken out of turn, Susan highlights his prediction, in part because she is impressed with his thinking. It is also likely that Susan is validating Marco’s reading strategy (predicting) because of Marco’s position outside of the “kids on the rug” group. It is rare that Marco speaks out to “assist” the reader, and Susan is celebrating this milestone by calling attention to it.

Susan labels Marco’s comment as “a prediction,” using the discourse of reading process theory. She points out that his prediction “makes sense,” emphasizing that reading is a process of making meaning. She also asks Amber to share her own thought process, “how did you know...” This exchange is another example of Susan highlighting an implicit reading and thinking process in order to make it explicit: Marco demonstrated a prediction strategy. Susan has noticed Marco’s linguistic abilities and has connected these abilities to the wider community of people who study the reading process.

This literacy event “Amber reads the book *Snakes*.” illustrates the role of listening in Marco’s meaning making and literacy learning. Marco’s active meaning construction process is expressed through his body language, his interest in the pictures, his questions, and the oral comments and predictions that he makes as Amber reads aloud. As a listener, Marco has opportunities to experience the content, style, language, and art in a range of texts extending beyond his abilities for making meaning as a reader.

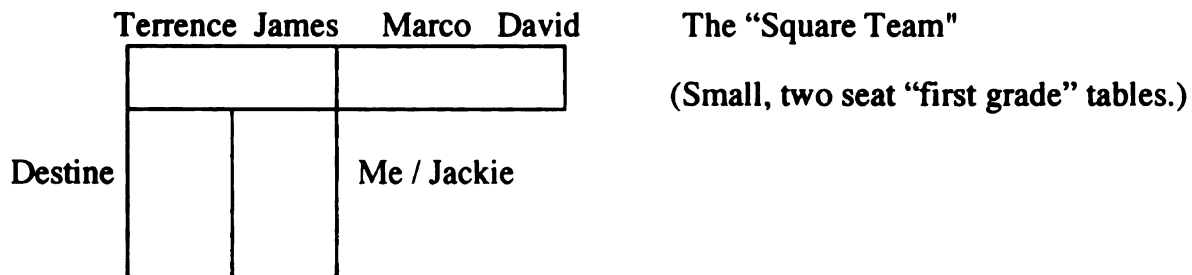
Many researchers have stressed the importance of listening experiences for young literacy learners (Cambourne, 1988; Hall, 1987; Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Wells, 1986). Marco is not only learning about snakes, but he is learning language as he listens to Amber read. He is learning how to read as he experiences the literary language of a variety of authors and text genres, revealed through his predictions and his comments (“long as a school bus”). He learns specific reading strategies as he observes interchanges between his classmates and his teacher.

When Marco listens to Amber reading a book to the class, social functions of the literacy event include experiencing the text, learning about snakes, enjoying the language and the illustrations. There is a social meaning construction occurring between reader, listeners and text. There is an active “literacy club” (Smith, 1988) of *subject* participants who help each other to read and understand the text. As he participates in the social demonstration of reading in his classroom, Marco is learning how to read and what it means to be a reader.

Marco as overhearer

In addition to participating in literacy events as a listener, Marco often participates in the role of overhearer, listening in as other participants interact. Silent Writing provides an example of Marco’s meaning making as an overhearer. As children are getting ready for writing, Susan calls Marco over and gives him a blank book for his autobiography. At the “square team” table, Destine begins working well before Silent Writing begins, and sits writing page after page for a full thirty minutes. Marco and David sit side by side and

illustrate the covers of their autobiographies. They are facing slightly towards each other, and Marco often looks over to see what David is doing or to show David his book. Next to Marco and David, Terrence and James work in similar postures.



As Marco and David are working, Jackie talks with me about her writing.

Marco's Day, Silent Writing (Appendix B)

Jackie comes over with an illustrated page she is writing about dinosaurs.

Marco looks at her picture. He gasps and rolls his eyes back, miming fear. I say to Jackie, "You're into dinosaurs now, huh?" I remember that Jackie has "BEEN working on dinosaurs, haven't you?"

Marco says, "Yep. They got.. they go'n make a big book."

Jackie leaves to get the rest of her "book." I ask Marco, "A big book? How do you know all about it?"

Marco says, "I know because... (He thinks for a moment before continuing.) I just seen them write it." Jackie returns with a folder filled with many pages of writing and drawing. Marco says, "They... see there go the book."

Jackie begins to sift through the papers, showing them to me. Marco stands up to look at Jackie's book. Marco says, "This an information book."

I ask, "An information book? What kind of book is yours?"

"Biography." Marco sits back down and starts to draw again.

Using Larson's (1997) terminology, described above, Marco is initially an "overhearer," on the periphery of my conversation with Jackie as he and David work on their own writing. However, he takes the role of "peripheral respondent" when he answers my question for Jackie. When I respond to Marco's comment, I legitimize his role in the discussion. Marco's response ("they go'n make a big book") shows he is familiar with Jackie's work. This suggests that Jackie and Marco have opportunities to share their work outside of the *Silent Writing* time. Marco's comments also reveal that he is learning about genre through the literacy events in this classroom community.

Marco's Day, Silent Writing (Appendix B)

Jackie shows me the book *Digging up Dinosaurs* by Alike. She stands flipping through the pages and talks about how she has used this book as a reference. "I'm copying all this information." Marco continues drawing. David looks over at Jackie and back at his paper. Marco looks at David's paper. He rolls his eyes, miming amusement. Marco takes David's book and looks closely at the picture. David watches Marco.

Marco says to me, "Hey, you want to see this pretty picture?" He laughs.

David grabs at his book, but Marco holds it away. Marco starts to write or draw in David's book. David takes the book saying, "Don't draw on my.." Marco laughs.

Jackie sits down next to me, in the chair across from Marco, and talks about dinosaurs. "And then once dinosaurs was extinct they found these big heavy rocks and that's how... the book tells you about how they found them."

Marco and David look at Jackie. Marco applauds Jackie's talk. Jackie tells about her plans for the book she is writing. Marco draws. He looks up at Jackie. He tells David, "They been working on that book about twenty days."

Jackie talks about the people who found dinosaur bones. She wants to be a paleontologist. She talks about her great grandmother who told her that "if you look and see your dream... don't say you can't be anything you want."

Marco draws. He looks up and listens as Jackie continues talking about how fossils are found. Marco looks at David. He hides his picture in his lap, and continues drawing.

Jackie shows a picture of dinosaur teeth. Marco gasps. She talks about the biggest dinosaur teeth, "They have sharp teeth."

"Rats have sharp teeth," Marco comments.

As Marco works, he "overhears" my rich conversation with Jackie. He appears impressed, and even applauds Jackie's talk - which was much more extensive than this synopsis. Marco comments on Jackie's writing process ("They've been working on this book about twenty days."), and relates Jackie's talk with his own experiences ("Rats have sharp teeth.") As "overhearer" of Jackie's conversation with me, Marco is learning about dinosaurs. He is also learning about *why* dinosaurs are interesting, and *how* she is reading and writing about them.

Later, David finishes the first page of his autobiography and shares his work with Marco.

David shows Marco his work, and Marco listens while David reads the page. I ask David, "With this page you're going to be one?"

Marco says, "I'm bout to write my page GOOD."

He looks at Debi, "You want to know my title?"

I ask why Marco hasn't started yet. He says, "I've just been thinking.

"What have you been thinking about?"

"I've been thinking I'm gonna write, *I was four years old.. When I was four I had went.. I mean six.*"

"I know where you went", Jackie says "It starts with an 'M'... Oh, Major Magic." Jackie reminds Marco about Major Magic, a pizza fun house. I ask Marco if he and Jackie know each other outside of school. He agrees, saying they know each other in school too.

The timer rings signaling the end of "silent" writing. The class gets noisy as children start to prepare for lunch. Marco gets up, but Susan asks the children to return to their seats and begins giving instructions for cleanup and lunch preparation.

Marco comes back and stands by the table. He turns to the first page of his book and writes, "*I*." He says, "How do you spell was?"

I ask him, "What letter does it start with?" Marco says the word to himself,

"Wa:z Wa:z . Wa: s s s 'S'¹⁴. I sound it out!"

"You hear an 'S'? Yes there is an 'S', that's right. Start with a 'w', then put the 's'".

David looks over as Marco writes. "Ain't it 'W', 'A', 'S'?" he asks.

I agree, but suggest that "ws" is close enough for the sloppy copy.

Marco writes "4" next to the "ws." He reads, "*I was four*", pointing to each word, and then completes the sentence orally, "*when I went to Major Magic.*"

He and David talk about how to spell "Major Magic".

If I focus only on Marco's writing as evidence of meaning construction, I might describe Marco's literacy experiences during Silent Writing as follows: Marco spent most of the time drawing. At the end of the writing time, he wrote three words on his paper "I was four." Marco asked for help with spelling "was," and "sounded it out," predicting an "s." He spelled the word "I" independently, and used the numeral "4" for the word "four." If I consider Marco's "pre-writing" experiences, I might say that Marco's text construction begins when he orally composes and revises his text: "I was four years old... When I was four I had went ... I mean six."

However, looking closely at this brief segment of a thirty-minute language event, it becomes clear that Marco is engaged in meaning making on many levels. He makes meaning through art illustrating his own autobiography and observing David's illustrations. He makes meaning through overhearing my conversation with Jackie. He makes meaning through listening to David read his autobiography. He plans his writing through oral composing and discussion. And finally, through discussion with others at the table, he begins to "write his page GOOD,".

¹⁴ Quotation marks indicate the letter name is being pronounced. For example "S" is pronounced /Es/. Italics indicate the speaker is reading or writing.

During “Silent Writing” Marco constructs meaning through listening, overhearing, illustrating, and oral composing as well as writing. Marco’s work is connected to the works around him, as he is closely connected to the people around him, particularly his friends. As Marco writes and interacts with other writers, he is learning how to be a writer. As he observes my exchange with Jackie, he learns about what it means to write a book as well as what it means to be a paleontologist. Through his experiences writing an autobiography in a group of children who are also writing autobiographies, he is learning how to write an autobiography as well as how to be an author.

Figure 10 addresses the meaning potential and meaning construction of the Silent Writing language event. These literacy events are NOT exercises, but experiences where children are in the role of authors writing for authentic purposes. The autobiographies are later published and shared with family members at an author’s celebration day. The Silent Writing language event provides Marco with many opportunities to “learn by overhearing.” Marco observes interactions between teachers and other students, and demonstrations of other students’ reading and writing.

Figure 10
Meaning Potential and Meaning Construction in Silent Writing

Literacy practice:	Marco listens/ observes	Marco reads/ writes	Marco’s meaning making.
6a. Writing autobiographies.	Susan gives Marco blank book, explains autobiographies.	(listens)	Yes, oral
6b. Marco’s table mates work on autobiographies.	Marco attends to David’s work.	Marco illustrates cover of his autobiography Marco writes the first page of his autobiog.	Yes, art Yes
6c. Jackie talks about her dinosaur book.	Marco listens and comments.		Yes
6d. Jackie talks about Alikí’s book.	Marco listens and comments		Yes
6e. James calls Marco’s name from list.	Marco goes to get ready for lunch.		Yes

It strikes me that in some classrooms, where children's learning is measured by individual performance, Marco's strategy of watching his classmates closely might be viewed as cheating. When I see how much Marco benefits from observing the actions and interactions of other learners, I am convinced that it is essential that children have opportunities to observe their teacher interacting with other students and to observe their classmates reading, writing, and talking about their work.

Marco reads and writes:

For much of the day, Marco took the role of "novice" and looked to others for expertise. During Small Group Math (described in Chapter Three) he was likely to respond to Susan's questions, but waited for Susan's instructions as he worked on a task. During literacy activities he was likely to listen and observe. All this changed during "Book Clubs".

Marco's Day, "Book Clubs" (Appendix B)

Susan calls off the names of the "Book Clubs", beginning with *What's in my Pocket?* Marco gets up when he hears the title.

A child calls out, "Patrice is not here."

Marco says, "I here."

Susan says, "Marco, were you in this group? Okay."

Marco walks over to David, who is sitting on the floor by the door. Marco says something to David. David shakes his head, "No." Marco waves to David, "Come on."

Susan calls the *Lunch Boxes* group. The group members get up and begin moving toward their group area. David gets up when he sees the other students standing.

Always alert, Marco gets up when he hears the title of his book club. The responses of classmates (Patrice is not here) suggest that Patrice is a "leader" of the group. With Patrice absent, Marco appears willing to take charge of the meeting. However, David is reluctant to acknowledge Marco's leadership.

David sits at the "square" table in his usual seat by the window. The book club folder, a loose-leaf binder, is open on the table in front of him. One pocket holds several copies of the book *What's in my pocket?* (Williams, 1994). Marco comes over and picks up a book. David takes the book and puts it away. David talks to Marco about "what we're 'pose to be doing."

Marco leaves the table to confer with Susan. He returns to the table with a stack of white envelopes. He waves at David, who is getting something from another

table. Marco calls David's name. Susan tells them not to shout across the room. David returns and sits down by the window, facing Marco.

Marco sits with the pile of white card size envelopes in front of him. He picks up an envelope and opens all the glued seams. Then he closes up the sides and neatly stacks the "finished" envelopes on a separate pile.

Marco says to David, "You ain't go'n help me?"

Marco and David begin by negotiating the activity. Marco goes over to confer with Susan. He returns and starts working. He asks if David is going to help him, but has some difficulty involving David in the project.

Marco says, "You ain't go'n help me?"

David looks over at Susan, "Oh, Miss Austin got some paper."

David gets up and starts towards Susan's desk.

Marco calls, "But we already got the envelopes."

David says, "I know but she giving out paper."

David returns with a used, blue legal sized file folder. He looks at Marco and asks, "Why you doing that?"

"CAUSE. That's what Miss Austin says we GOT to DO:O." He shakes his shoulders to emphasize his words. "Then we put it in there and then we be... draw something in there and then we be done." He indicates that the envelopes will go in the blue folder.

David says, "Then we go'n to make a triarama. I'm..."

"No."

"I'm going to make a triarama." David leaves and goes over to the supply table. He returns with green "handwriting" paper and begins to fold it for a triarama.

In explaining the project to David, Marco uses Susan's authority to enforce his leadership over the group project. However, Marco explains to me that the decision about the project was not Susan's decision.

I ask how the group decided on the project.

Marco says, "The reason...because that... cause when we heard... when we said, "What's in my Pocket?," I had thought of it. And then I decided to make this one up and so then I got it and then when we open it (the envelope) there's going to be a little picture in there."

In this project, Marco and David are subjects of the literacy events, negotiating activities and procedures with each other. Marco looks to Susan for direction, and borrows her authority as he begins to move into more "independent" writing. When Marco has difficulty including David in the book making project, he asserts his leadership by taking charge of David's triarama project.

I ask, "What's David doing?"
Marco explains, "He making a triarama." He looks over at David. "You got the wrong paper." Marco takes David's paper and tries to form a pyramid shape by overlapping two of the four sides. It works, but the paper is flimsy.
David says, "This will work." He goes to get a stapler.
Marco decides, "We go'n make a triarama too. I'll go get a piece of paper."
He goes to the supply table and returns with a sheet of stiff manila paper. He folds the paper and cuts off the side so it's square.
David explains to me, "First you got to fold it, then you got to cut it."
Marco folds the square twice from corner to corner so there is a X creased across the middle. He cuts from one corner to the center of the X.
I ask, "How did you learn?"
Marco says, "Miss Austin."
Then he says to David, "Ain't that one hard to make?"
David starts to write on his triarama with a marker. I suggest a pencil, but he is resistant.
Marco folds one side overlapping another, forming a three-sided pyramid. He staples the sides together and sits the triarama on one surface of the pyramid so he can write or draw inside.
"Is that David's?," I ask.
"It's all of ours," Marco says.
He writes his name on the triarama. "So David, it's your turn."
David spells his name for Marco to write. "Don't write it sloppy," he says, "And don't write it that big."

As Marco and David work, they talk about the construction process. The boys are concerned with the quality of their projects. Marco scolds David for using the wrong paper; David admonishes Marco not to "write it sloppy." There is an ongoing concern for the quality of the writing, which may relate to the knowledge that these projects will later be shared with the class. Marco and David both appear to view their work as a group project. Marco insists that the triarama is "all of ours," and David appears to feel Marco's work reflects on him.

Marco returns to the group book writing project. During the Silent Writing, Marco appeared to be a novice writer, having difficulty with getting his words down in paper. However during this project, Marco has a strong mental image of the final project, and the writing process involved. He describes this mental plan to me as he works.

Marco says to me, "Look what we making. I'm going to draw a picture."
"What are you going to do?"
"We making *What's in my Pocket?* books like this." He pulls a copy of the book out of the group binder. "And we got to draw in something. We can draw. We can get some of the ideas out of here [the book], but then when we don't want to get the ideas out of here, we can just think of some."
Marco explains, "We're going to use these [envelopes] for the pockets."
"Those are the pockets?"
"And this what we go'n put them in," Marco says, pointing to the blue folder.

One reason for the discrepancy between Marco's apparent writing ability and his confidence during the Book Club project is that writing is much more than knowing which letters to place on the paper. Marco's explanation is another example of text composing, what writing process researchers (i.e. Graves, 1994) call "rehearsals" or "prewriting." He is thinking and planning as a writer. Marco continues to plan the project with an "outline," which I described in Chapter Four.

Marco takes another piece of paper and draws a line. He draws a triangle, square, circle, and diamond on the line. As he draws, he looks up on the wall, where the square hangs marking their table, as a reference.

Marco says, "Okay, them the ones we going to put in."

David goes over to the supply table. He returns with some glue. Meanwhile, Marco draws a second line and adds two more shapes.

Marco says, "These the ones we're going to draw in there." He points to the envelopes.

David sits trying to open the glue. "Why we need glue?" Marco asks.

Marco studies the paper with the lines and shapes. "Okay," he says. He counts off six envelopes, moving them from one pile to another, while looking at the shapes. Then he counts the shapes, pointing to each one with his finger. He counts the shapes three times, and counts the envelopes once more.

"We don't need these," he says. He moves the extra envelopes to a corner of the table. David is still working on the glue. He looks over to see what Marco's doing.

Marco has invented an outline for his book. *What's in My Pocket* is a riddle book, where the pockets initially hold "something round," and then "something square." Marco draws shapes to represent "the ones we're going to draw in there." He uses signs posted around the room as a reference for his drawing. He then matches the number of pockets (envelopes) to the number of shapes on his outline. Susan and I were amazed at Marco's resourcefulness in developing this outline. Susan can not think of any similar outlining experiences that Marco may have observed, Marco has participated in literacy events where

temporary texts were used to organize other activities: such as the Math Choices list, or the attendance tally.

Marco's question to David ("Why we need glue?") and his use of "we" in his explanations, highlight his continued belief that he and David are working together. In another example of pre-writing, Marco then opens the book *What's in My Pocket?* (Williams, 1994b) and reviews the pattern that the author uses to write.

Marco opens one envelope and places it on the table. He opens the book and reads, "Pocket, pocket. What's in my pocket? It's something round." He looks over the next few pages, and then turns back to the first page.

Marco starts to copy from the book to the inside of the envelope. He is using the thick, black marker.

Marco uses oral language, outlining and reading in order to plan and organize his writing project. Unfortunately, at this point, my teacher instincts take over and I intervene with Marco's process:

Marco starts to copy from the book to the inside of the envelope. He is using the thick, black marker.

I say, "Honey, don't you want to write that with a pencil?"

Marco shakes his head, no. "I'm writing this- pocket, pocket ."

I am sitting in the chair on Marco's right side. "Wait a minute." I take the envelope and close it up. "Do you want it closed like this, and then you open it and the surprise is inside."

David takes an envelope and glues it to the blue folder.

I say, "Let's see if we can plan that a little bit. What I'm thinking is maybe... what's going to be inside this one."

Marco says, "Marble."

"Okay. Draw what's going to be inside."

Marco draws a marble inside the envelope.

"Okay. So you want to write, "a marble."

Marco writes a marble, copying the words from the book.

"So on the outside." I write on the outside of the envelope. "Pocket. See I think a marker's going to be too fat to write all these words."

Marco reads the envelope as I write, "Pocket, pocket, what's in my pocket."

I say the words slowly as I write, "Somethi:ng... tha:t's... rou:nd. Then you open it up."

Marco points to the text inside the envelope. We both read, "a marble."

My intervention is intended to support Marco's plans. Marco does engage in reading and writing within this vignette, but I have taken the leadership away from him, at least momentarily. It may be that Marco would have needed assistance eventually, I just

wish I had let him work on his own a little longer. Marco wants David to participate, but is concerned about David's role. In the vignette above, David has glued a blank envelope to the blue folder.

Marco takes the folder from David, "What did you do?" he asks. He laughs. "You 'posed to wait." David, Marco, and I talk about how the folder should be oriented. Marco wants it horizontal, "That way, 'cause that way we got more."

Marco suggests we might need tape. I say we can use glue, but should line the envelopes up. We take David's envelope off and wipe off the glue. "Glue this one down here so you can put more on."

Marco does the gluing, even though I suggest that David do it. He places his envelope on the left side, beneath the fold.

Marco's laugh mitigates his criticism of David, but he asserts his leadership with his suggestion of using tape, and his insistence on gluing the "pocket" down himself. He realizes David should be included in the activity, but clings to his role as writer and group leader.

David says, "This time Ima do it. Let's trade seats."

Marco pastes David's envelope below the first one.

David says, "I don't get a chance to do nothing. Why you have to do everything?"

Marco says, "Now what we go'n write up here?"

We decide on something square.

David says, "Write it, just like that." He points to the envelope that I wrote.

Marco says, "You know I can't write that neat."

Marco begins to copy from the front of my envelope to the one underneath it.

David leans over to watch.

"That's neat enough, huh?" Marco says, looking over at David.

David reaches for the pencil. "Let me see."

Marco hangs onto the pencil and continues writing.

"I don't get a chance to do nothing. All I have to do is..."

"You 'bout to do something."

"Why you get to do everything?"

Marco shakes his head.

I say, "Hey, David, where's your pencil? You can do this one."

I show him another envelope. David looks around for a pencil.

Marco says, "Hold on. I think I got a pencil." He finds a pencil for David.

Marco involves David in planning ("Now what we go'n write up here?") and discussion, but does not know how to involve David in writing without giving up his own authority. When I suggest David can write on another envelope, Marco finds him a pencil. But he is concerned about what David writes:

David sits for a few seconds. He says, "Pocket, pocket, what's in my pocket." He takes the envelope and starts to write.

Marco waves his hands in annoyance. He is concerned that David is copying from the same page that he is copying. He says, "You you STOP. You got to do the next page."

David starts to turn the page in the book. Marco stops him. "I know. But I got to do this page."

Marco points to each word in the book as he reads, "All you do is write *Pocket, pocket, what's in my pocket.* That's all you got to write."

For the next few minutes, the boys write quietly. Marco copies from my envelope. David copies from the book.

While working on the book club project, Marco and David constantly move back and forth between reading and writing. This project creates many opportunities to read and re-read the literature book, and other texts. When Marco finishes his first envelope, he reads it aloud to himself:

After a time, Marco looks over at me. "I wrote . . . It say, '*Pocket, pocket, What's in my pocket.*' He taps each word on the envelope with his pencil eraser."

Marco looks over at David's work. He moves David's pencil so he can see what he's doing.

As Marco and David work, Marco also has opportunities to practice and think about many aspects of the writing process:

I ask Marco, "Are you doing something square? Something that's square?"

Marco puts his pencil down. "You can write that," he suggests.

I refuse. "No. You go ahead. You're doing a really good job. You're almost done."

Marco continues to write: *Something that's sq.*

"I don't got enough room."

"Write 'square' down there," I suggest, "Erase the 's' and 'q'. See how I wrote 'round' underneath it."

Marco uses the book to copy the word '*square.*'

"How's that 'p' look?" he asks.

"That's a 'Q'. It's like a 'P' backwards."

"I mean.." Marco starts to erase the Q.

"No, you got it. It's s'posed to be a 'Q.' *S-q-uare.*" I emphasize the phoneme /k/.

Marco and David also discover, as most writers do, that we often underestimate the work and time involved in a project while planning.

"I'm tired," Marco says. He leans back in his chair. Then he leans forward and erases something.

"I'm tired too," David agrees. He starts writing again.

"It's gonna take DAYS for this," says Marco.

In Silent Writing, Marco appears to have difficulties writing his autobiography without assistance, although he does use drawing and oral language in his meaning construction process. During this book club meeting, Marco plans out a writing project, invents a symbolic outline, reads his book club book, writes and reads his own writing, and writes an entry in the book club diary. While Marco is a beginning writer in terms of the mechanics of text construction, he is able to use a wide range of resources such as familiar books, language patterns, art, visual mapping, thinking, and the people around him. Where he is a follower for most of the day, Marco takes a leadership role in this activity.

Marco's abilities as a writer during this language event appear to reach beyond his understandings of writing as a language system. However, writing is much more than knowing which letters to place on the paper. Being a writer also involves knowing something about books and the language of stories, composing texts in thought or spoken language, outlining or organizing the format of a text, using other texts as models, and having something to say. It involves having a group or friend nearby with whom to share these experiences. In this setting, Marco has many reading and writing abilities and strategies to draw from.

Figure 11 considers the meaning potential and meaning construction in Marco's experiences during the Book Club activity. The participation structure of a club provided children with considerable freedom to plan social literacy experiences in relationship to a book they enjoyed. As David and Marco negotiated and worked on their book club projects, they had multiple opportunities for text creation as readers and writers as well as listeners and observers. During much of the day, Marco was in the role of novice and participated in literacy events as a listener or observer. However, given the opportunity, Marco engaged confidently as a leader during the Book Club meeting. In his role of leader, Marco uses a variety of resources and strategies for meaning making.

Figure 11
Meaning Potential and Meaning Construction in “Book Clubs”

Literacy practice:	Marco listens/ observes	Marco reads/ writes	Meaning construction:
7a) A group project in response to a book.	Marco and David negotiate project. Marco explains project orally.	Marco makes a symbolic outline Marco reads from book as model. Marco reads what I write.	Yes Yes Yes
	I suggest plan, write one “pocket.” David writes, using book as model.	Marco writes, using my work as model. Marco reads his own writing.	Yes Yes
7b) Making triaramas	David makes a triarama.	Marco makes triarama, and writes names.	Yes
7c) Book Club Diary	Marco and I discuss diary.	Marco writes in book club diary.	Yes

Marco is learning language as he and David negotiate the literacy events of the book club meeting. His exchanges with David show a concern for the form and appearance of the project as well as the composition process. Marco writes his name on the triarama and turns to David saying, “So David, it’s your turn.” David spells his name for Marco to write. “Don’t write it sloppy,” David says, “And don’t write it that big.” Later, when Marco is recording the group’s activities in the “Book Club Diary”, he accurately writes David’s name from memory. He says, “I know how to spell David’s name ‘cause he taught me. D-A-V-I-D”.

Few examples of literacy learning are so immediate or overt. However, the ramifications of Marco’s “spelling lesson” move far beyond spelling. Not only is Marco learning to spell while he and David work on Book Club projects, he is learning to spell something not included in most spelling texts: the name of his best friend. Marco’s social construction of David’s name occurs within a literacy event created by Marco and David: it is *NOT an exercise* for the purpose of evaluating their language abilities. In this example, Marco is the subject of his own language learning, seeking answers to his own linguistic inquiry questions as young children do when they learn language at home.

The Book Club language event provided opportunities for Marco and David to learn literacy through using literacy, in a context where they had a good deal of control over the reading and writing experience. In this light, Susan's introduction of the social structure of "Book Clubs", where children are problem posers (Freire, 1970) rather than passive recipients of language instruction, becomes an example of liberatory teaching.

Meaning Making in Lauren's Day

Lauren's Day, Math (See Appendix C)

Susan announces, "When you finish your math paper you can get your writing out right away."

Lauren says, "Yes!"

Danielle is amused. "She was like, 'Yes! Yes!'"

Lauren is an enthusiastic writer. When she was done with the "assignments" during Things to Do, she pulled out her current rough draft book out of her desk to work on it. Lauren also chooses reading experiences. During "Silent Reading (and Writing)," she and Katherine collected a stack of books and got busy. The language events of Lauren's Day provide many opportunities for Lauren to select reading and writing experiences and she does.

When Lauren is reading or writing, she is not easily distracted. Like Marco she "overhears" what's going on around her, looking up and around and then back at her work. In one case she stops reading to answer a question that James' asks, and then returns to her book without skipping a beat. Lauren is likely to ignore Susan's announcements and keep working, although she appears able to keep track of what's going on. I call this process "selective listening." Lauren's ability to selectively listen and selectively ignore classroom talk and activity contributes to her meaning making process.

Lauren does not generally ask for assistance as she reads and writes, although she does seek assistance with math. She needs no encouragement to write and writes at home as well as at school. However, she enjoys sharing what she's written with others. She also is eager to assist other children in the class with their work. Lauren's meaning making is both a personal and a social experience.

Lauren as (selective) listener

Lauren and Katherine sit by the door intently reading their illustrated picture books when Susan announces the end of Silent Reading:

Lauren's Day, Silent Reading (See Appendix C)

Susan says, "Okay. Stop please and look at me."

Both girls continue to read.

Susan continues, "Who's looking at me? Nobody. My feelings are hurt."

Lauren glances up after Susan's comment about feelings. Katherine leans over and asks Lauren for a word. Lauren supplies the word and continues reading, "*A litter box will make that smelly problem go away.*"

Lauren continues to read as Susan is talking, "There's Sarina. Okay, great... four people. I feel much better. Okay. Will you PLEASE put your books away and then go to the carpet and sit down and face the west. We are starting with *Lunch Boxes*. I need everything put away."

Katherine gets up and starts picking up materials. Lauren stops to listen to Susan's instructions, and then returns to her book.

Katherine, "Come on Lauren. We'll read tomorrow. Psych¹⁵."

Initially, both girls continue to read, ignoring Susan's instructions completely.

When Susan continues, the girls appear to listen to her instructions but continue with their reading for several moments. This response occurs, in part, because the girls are engrossed in their reading and don't want to be interrupted. In addition, their experiences with Susan's instructions lead them to predict that there will be a brief interlude when they can continue their tasks. In many cases, children continue to work for several minutes before the next activity. In this case, the next activity involves the entire class, and Susan is pushing them to begin cleaning up more quickly.

Lauren and Katherine's responses to Susan's instructions might be called "selective listening." For Lauren, there is a conflict between her meaning making, and her desire to continue to read, and Susan's current requirements. Lauren ignores Susan's initial request, because she knows she will have another chance to attend. She glances up when Susan says, "my feelings are hurt", gauging Susan's level of concern. She returns to her reading as Susan continues talking for the purpose of getting attention, but looks up when Susan actually gives instructions. After Susan completes the instructions, Lauren returns to her book, confident that she has a few more minutes to read.

Lauren's gaze reveals that she is not inattentive, but selective in her attention. She looks up to gauge Susan's mood. When Susan is giving instructions, she stops reading to attend. Ken Goodman (1996) describes a proficient reader as being both "effective" and "efficient." She is "effective" in focusing on making meaning, but "efficient" by using the language cueing systems selectively; taking the shortest path to meaning. Readers do not focus on every letter, space, and punctuation mark when we read, but sample the graphic cues selectively in the search for meaning.

Lauren's "selective listening" involves a similar process. Lauren samples the cues around her as she makes decisions about her activities in the classroom. Lauren makes meaning of the classroom discourse, including the social context and social relationships as well as the language that she hears.

Lauren's Day, Things to Do (See Appendix C)

Announcements begin over the PA system, and Susan puts her finger to her mouth. The room gets quiet, but children continue to work as the assistant principal speaks. Lauren continues working on math, occasionally looking over at Katherine's paper...

On the PA, the assistant principal says, "Students from Mrs. Brassel's room will lead us in the school pledge." Susan says, "stand up please" as the school pledge begins. Lauren sits as she begins chanting, then stands. She stops pasting for a moment, then continues to work. Danielle and Alicia also continue working as they stand and chant the pledge. When the pledge stops, Lauren and Katherine continue to stand for a moment, engaged in working.

Lauren and her tablemates quiet down as the PA announcements begin, and even join in with the school pledge. Yet they never take their focus off their work tasks. Susan complains about this selective listening when several children ask about computer class. She tells the class that the PA announcements are for the younger children too, and if they had been listening they would have heard that the computer classes were canceled that day. Obviously, many of the children have learned that the PA announcements are not relevant to them. In addition, they count on their teacher to listen for them and repeat any relevant announcements. Lauren appears adept at "reading" the classroom discourse and knowing when to attend.

¹⁵ "Psych" is short for "I'm psyching you out." In other words, "just kidding".

Susan begins to take attendance. Today she greets each child in Spanish, with "Hola." Lauren plays with something in her hands.

As the children respond, Brent tallies those present and Destine tallies absences on a chart on the chalkboard. Several students respond in Chinese. Susan answers, "Oh, Happy New Year to you too. Thank you."

Willie responds, "Hola, Señor, Madam, Miss Austin. Happy New Year."

Lauren is talking to her friends. Susan says, "Um." Lauren looks over.

Susan makes personal comments to some students, "Hola Jessica. I'm glad you're back."

When Kenneth is called, Lauren looks up at Susan, anticipating her name.

Patrice is next, and then Lauren.

Susan says, "Hola Lauren {last name}."

Lauren smiles, "Hola, Miss Austin."

The literacy event "taking attendance" is very familiar by the 124th day of school. Lauren interacts with her friends, appearing indifferent to the official dialogue of the Morning Meeting. However, when Kenneth is called, Lauren looks up at Susan because she knows her turn is coming soon. In this case, Lauren's experience allows her to predict when her name will be called. Kenneth's name is a cue that she needs to pay attention. Lauren also looks up when Susan says "Um." Susan's "Um" cues a possible shift in the predictable attendance discourse, and Lauren looks up to see what's going on. Lauren uses prediction as a strategy as she selectively listens for particular signals that cue her to pay attention.

In a busy classroom, with many overlapping activities, Lauren has sorted out how and when to pay attention. Much of the classroom discourse is predictable and Lauren knows when she needs to attend and when she can safely ignore what's going on. Lauren's selective listening strategy gives her more time to work on her own agenda and more control over her learning experiences. On the other hand, she uses cues in the classroom discourse to keep tabs on what's going on, and cooperate with the official activities. Lauren's interest in being a cooperative group member is revealed as students continue to clean up after Silent Reading.

Katherine gets up and starts picking up materials. Lauren stops to listen to Susan's instructions, and then returns to her book.

Katherine, "Come on Lauren. We'll read tomorrow. Psych."

Lauren says, "I don't think she's coming tomorrow.. but she might."

.....

Lauren comes over and asks me if I'm returning the next day. I say no, but I'd like to interview her during the movie Susan's class and another class will be watching at 2:00.

Lauren goes back to Katherine, who wants her to "put that book up." Lauren says, "I gotta talk to Miss Goodman, so I gotta have the book."

Katherine says, "Well just finish reading... very quick."

Lauren says, "I cant. I can't disobey Miss Austin rules."

"I know you can't", Katherine agrees, "but you..." The voices become inaudible as the girls walk away from the camera.

In the vignette above, Katherine knows I have been taping Lauren as she reads. She and Lauren try to negotiate a way that Lauren might finish reading her book and still follow Susan's instructions. Although Lauren often ignores her teacher, she does not view this selective listening as "disobeying" class requirements. Lauren's comments during math show her concern for listening and paying attention.

Lauren sings, "I'm on the back." She wrestles with the scissors. "Can you pass me some glue." She gets the scissors.

Lauren says to Danielle, "Here's these blanks."

Danielle says, "You better keep them. You might need them."

Lauren says, "No, you weren't paying attention. If you got O (zero), you can just leave it blank."

Danielle says, "No, you weren't paying attention."

The girls talk about what Susan said.

Lauren is concerned with paying attention and getting her work done. However, she has learned to pay attention selectively, listening for cues that tell her when to attend and when to ignore what's going on. Selective attention is an important aspect of language learning. When babies learn to talk, they must learn which cues to attend and which cues to ignore. They learn to attend to differences between phonemes, or sounds, in order to distinguish between "boy" and "toy". On the other hand, they learn to ignore differences in pitch between their mother and their father's voices since these features don't relate to meaning. They also learn to attend to the expressions on their parent's faces in order to gauge the seriousness or sincerity of the spoken words.

Learning to read and write involves the same balance between attending and ignoring printed symbols. Readers learn to ignore differences in font, treating different looking print (read, READ, read) as if they are the same. They must also treat print that appears to be the same (Did you *read* that book. I *read* it yesterday.) as different. K. Goodman (1996) calls this a “set for ambiguity”. In this way, Lauren’s selective listening process shows a sophisticated ability to read and gauge the subtle cues and signals in the classroom community.

Lauren as writer

On the two days that I visited in March, Lauren was working on a book: *My Friend’s Little Baby Sister*. Lauren brought the book over to read to me on Marco’s Day. At that time she had written and illustrated about three pages. The following week, on Lauren’s Day, she brought the same book out during Things to Do and read it to Amber and me. Later in the morning, Math is ending and children are getting ready for Silent Writing. Lauren turns in her math and wanders over to visit with Alyssa, but Susan sends her back to her table. She takes out her rough draft book and sits down.

Lauren plays with strips of paper left from math. She opens her book to the first blank page. She asks if she can use my markers, and gets a colored pencil from my supply box. Lauren draws something in her book as she is sitting down. Amber sits looking at her hands.

Susan says, “Its time to get quiet. All right. I’m looking to see who’s ready in one minute.”

Alicia shows Amber her papers. They discuss whether Alicia’s book should be wide or tall. Lauren looks through her book.

She shows me a page she was working on last week. “I got that one done” she says.

Like many writers, Lauren takes a while to get down to work. She takes a break to talk to her friends, and then to get her materials arranged. She adds to an illustration, and looks over the previous pages. Next to Lauren, her friends are also getting ready to write. When Lauren shows me the book, I ask if she would like to read to me from where she left off that morning.

She reads the last page out loud to me, “*When we had got into the car, we saw my best friend and her mother and her baby sister. We had to drop them off because her mother had got off early. And I haven’t finished this part.*”

I ask, "What are you going to do for that part?"
 Lauren says, "I'm going to write about when they had got into the house and they had called my mother."
 As Lauren tells me about her book, Susan explains to the class that it's time to put everything away and get ready for writing "when I get to zero."
 I said, "So you already know what's coming next?"
 "Mhm," Lauren continues "And they gonna have a sleep over party."
 "So they have a sleep over party?" I repeat. "And then what's gonna happen?"
 "Then I think," Lauren begins to smile, "And their mother went on a trip. Their mother. And the baby had stayed at home with them. And she was a bad baby."
 "Uh oh. That's what you're planning? So this is gonna be a very long book, huh?"

Lauren is constructing the next part of the text before she begins to write. She volunteers the incidents about the phone call and the sleep over party. Our dialogue prompts Lauren to think about the next events, which she composes as we talk. ("Then I think...") Lauren's story is entertaining, and she smiles as she tells me about the "bad baby." She is enjoying the creative process and her own creation.

As we talk, Susan is counting slowly, "Ten... nine... eight..." Jonathan continues writing, and Alicia is working with large sheets of paper, making a book. The room is quiet, with some murmuring as children get settled.

"Go ahead," I tell Lauren.

Lauren starts to write as Susan says "six." She holds her book with her left hand at the top.

Lauren writes, "Wen tey gat in thr heme they het call my mommy." As she writes, she says the words slowly aloud, "When they got in their home they had called my mommy."

Susan says, "Zero. Everyone should be writing now." She sets the timer and the room gets very quiet. Only murmuring and whispering can be heard. Lauren lies across the table, with her face leaning against her left hand as she writes. Next to her, Amber is picking at the stapler.

By the time Susan says, "zero," Lauren is well into the writing process. She is lying across the table, totally engrossed in her story.

(Lauren) continues to write. She says the words to herself as she writes, "...mommy and ask can her daughter spend the night..."

Lauren writes, "mommy and ask can her dar sem aen neyt."

Lauren looks up at Bruce. She plays with her braid, and appears to be thinking. She gets a tissue. Lauren returns to the table. She sits down and picks up her pencil. She looks over her page and says, "My mother said..."

She begins to write, saying the words again slowly, "My:y . . . mo:mmmy: . . sai:d . . yes." her voice drops as she completes the sentence.

In her book, she writes: My mommy sed yes.

Lauren looks over the page and begins to draw a picture under the written text.

Susan is talking in the background. Lauren looks up and then continues to illustrate her picture. After a several minutes, she shows me her picture. "This the telephone cord," she says.

Lauren works steadily throughout the writing time. However, the writing is not always smooth. She stops and appears to think, and gets up to take a break. Lauren always writes the words first, on the top of the page, and then illustrates her text. On Marco's Day, Lauren and I talked about how words and images interact in her composing process.

- Marco's Day. Writing Time: Lauren talks about her writing.
- Debi: Do you remember thinking about the words, do you ever think about what words you want to use when you write?
- Lauren: Yep.
- Debi: Yep. Can you tell me a little about that?
- Lauren: When I went "I couldn't believe my eyes." I put her mouth open like that. (Lauren opens mouth, miming surprise, while pointing at picture.)
- Debi: So it went with a picture in your mind. So do you see a picture in your mind when you're writing?
- Lauren: Mhm.
- Debi: Do you draw first or do you write first?
- Lauren: Write.
- Debi: But when you're writing, you see the picture in your mind and when you're drawing you try to show that picture?
- Lauren: Yep.
- Debi: So that's how you write those interesting words. You see the picture.
- Lauren: Mhm.
- Debi: Anything else you want to tell me about how you write such good stories?
- Lauren: When I said that, "I was getting up really early in the morning" (shows page), this is her mother's purse. And I didn't have room to have... to draw the picture and have them when they kissed their mother in the kitchen, drawing the picture.
- Debi: When they did what? What did you want to do in the picture?
- Lauren: I wanted their mother to be in the kitchen cooking their lunch.
- Debi: Oh. So you just showed her leaving with her purse.
- Lauren: Mhm and their lunch boxes.
- Debi: Oh. But you pictured her packing their lunch boxes for them and everything. Oh, very nice.

Here Lauren gives us a glimpse of an "author's text" that differs from her illustrated book. In Lauren's mental text construction, the mother is in the kitchen cooking the girls' lunch. The girls come in and kiss their mother in the kitchen. Lauren represents this scene with a picture of a purse and two lunch boxes and the written text: *We had to get up really early. Mama had to pack our lunch so when we eat at school.*

Lauren is illustrating her second page when the timer rings announcing the official end of silent writing. Children continue to work as names are called to prepare for lunch.

As Lauren is working the timer rings announcing the official end of silent writing. Children groan, "Awww." The daily helpers begin calling children's names to prepare for lunch. Lauren finishes her picture and shows it to me.

Lauren turns a page in her book and creases it so that lies flat. She looks up at Amber and they exchange smiles.

Lauren sighs loudly. Then she talks as she writes, "*When we woke up we fe:lt... kitchen. was a mess. The baby messed up everything.*" Lauren works at the writing with an intent expression on her face and no hesitations.

Writing a story is hard work, as many authors discover. Lauren sighs loudly as she begins her third page. Yet she works diligently at her writing without hesitation. It is a labor that she enjoys. Lauren is what I used to call an "independent" worker. All she needs is an opportunity to write. As a Whole Language classroom teacher I noticed that about half the children simply needed the freedom and opportunity to read and write. Fifth graders who came from traditional classrooms could never believe they would get "credit for reading." After three years in Whole Language classrooms, Lauren and her classmates rarely need to be motivated to write. Many ask for writing all morning and groan when the timer announces the end of writing time.

However, after observing children working in social literacy events, I realize that "independent" is a misnomer. It is the social milieu of being a writer among writers that creates a space for young writers to thrive. Children collaborate on works together, like Amber illustrating a page of Lauren's story, or this conversation I overheard on Marco's Day.

Marco's Day, Silent Writing (Appendix B)

Terrence and Darryl come over and stand by the table. Terrence says, "Next I'm making a newspaper and you and James are going to have to help me with that."

Even when children do not collaborate directly, their writing is a "social performance" (Dyson, 1993), as they work side by side with an audience of classmates in mind.

Lauren turns a page in her book and creases it so that lies flat. She looks up at Amber and they exchange smiles.

As I discussed earlier with Marco's experiences during the Book Club, being a writer is multifaceted and involves much more than the ability to print letters. Lauren's experience during Silent Writing further illustrates the various aspects of the writing process that children are learning as they write within this community. In March of her second grade year, Lauren is writing illustrated stories that may take several weeks to complete. The structure of the Silent Writing time provides Lauren with the time and space to be a writer -- writing, drawing and taking breaks on her own schedule. Lauren needs no special motivation or assistance with writing. However, she collaborates with friends and enjoys sharing her work, indicating that she derives support from writing in a community of writers.

As Lauren writes in Susan's classroom, she is learning to write and learning what it means to be a writer. Lauren is learning the skill and style of a writer as she learns the forms and conventions of written language. As illustrations of Lauren's language learning, I will describe Lauren's language learning as a storyteller and a speller.

Becoming a writer: Lauren's storytelling

Unfortunately, I do not have a copy of Lauren's written text. However, Figure 12 is a transcription of the story as she read it to me. Although My Best Friend's Little Baby Sister is not finished yet, it shows many elements of a well constructed story. Lauren's story has a sophisticated opening. Young writers often write "bed to bed" type stories that start when they wake up and end when they go to sleep. In Lauren's introduction, she begins by developing the plot and topic: the new baby sister and the narrator's reaction.

Lauren's description of the narrator's thoughts "I couldn't believe my eyes," and her use of dialogue are devices that heighten audience involvement in a story, whether oral or written (Labov, 1972; Tannen, 1989). Lauren is using internal evaluation, expressing the narrators feelings as the story evolves. Lauren develops the several characters and establishes the relationships between them through dialogue and action. She extends the plot through the suspense, anticipating the moment of finally meeting the new baby. She introduces a problem as the children are left alone with the baby, and writes with realistic humor.

Figure 12 : Lauren's Story (as read aloud)

My Friend's Little Baby Sister

Me and my mama and my sister went to the mall. I saw my friend and I couldn't believe my eyes. I saw her new baby sister.

But I didn't get to say "hi" or "bye" because we had... it was time to go home.

We waved "bye" but they didn't see us.

Finally we got home. We ate dinner. After dinner we had to go to sleep. And my.. and Mama kissed us goodnight.

We had to get up really early. Mama had to pack our lunch so when we eat at school.

Our teacher, Mrs. McGillicuty, she is nice.

After school we walked to the playground. My sister said, "Why didn't you see your best friend?"

"I don't know." Finally we were at the playground.

My sister asked, "When will mommy get here?"

"She will be here in a minute."

"Good."

"Mommy's here."

"Yes," said my sister.

I couldn't believe my eyes. When we had got into the car, we saw my best friend and her mother and her baby sister. We had to drop them off because her mother had got off early.

(The section was completed on Lauren's Day as I observed.)

When they got in their home they had called my mommy and asked can her daughter spend the night. My mommy said, "yes."

Then that night she drove.. came over. We had to go to bed.

When we woke up the kitchen was a mess. The baby messed up everything.

Like many writers, Lauren builds her fiction on the framework of her own life. When Lauren was in first grade, she began to write journal entries and stories focusing on family

activities and events. Since she writes in first person, I assumed that most of her stories were memoirs. However, when I asked Lauren about the sister that appears in so many of her stories, Lauren informed me that her story was “fiction.” She doesn’t have a sister. Lauren’s “sister” is based on a close cousin. At the end of the Silent Writing time, I talk with Lauren about what elements of the story are true:

Lauren: We do sleep in one bed, me and my cousin.

Debi: And you do have a little cousin like that.

Lauren: And we do go to school.

Debi: Does your cousin have a baby sister?

Lauren: Mhm.

Debi: What other parts are true?

Lauren: The dinner part.

Debi: Did you go to a mall and see your cousin?

Lauren: We actually wasn’t in the mall, we were at the market. And my mother does make my lunch.

Lauren’s use of language in *My Best Friend’s Baby Sister* demonstrates her understanding of the language of written texts, particularly stories. She uses adverbs and adverbial phrases (finally, after dinner, that night) to add details to her story and create a chronology of events. Out of twenty nine sentences, twelve (41 percent) involve multi-clausal sentence structure. A few of these are the common use of “and” between independent clauses (“I saw my friend and I couldn’t believe my eyes”). But she also uses more complex structures involving dependent clauses (“When we had got into the car, we saw my best friend...”). She uses dialogue with dialogue markers, except for the exchange between the sisters on the playground when she drops the markers for the middle comments as professional writers might. These complex sentences are familiar structures in written narratives. They allow Lauren to include a lot of detail in her story without getting overly wordy.

Complex sentence structures can often cause grammatical problems for beginning writers. Lauren has few grammatical problems in twelve complex structures. The most obvious is “Mama had to pack our lunch so when we get to school.” In this sentence Lauren is using “so” as a preposition “for,” perhaps there is an implied missing clause “so when we get to school (we can eat).” Lauren read this story to me several times and appeared comfortable with the wording.

Two other structures involve past perfect: “When we had got in the car” and “When they got in their home they had called.” The first case may be a dialect variation for “have gotten.” The second example (had called) may be the result of the complexity of the clauses in that four-clause sentence: “When they got in their home/ they had called my mommy/ and asked/ can her daughter spend the night.” In last phrase, “and asked can her daughter spend the night” Lauren uses an embedded question, a common dialect variation of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). This sentence also demonstrates Lauren’s ease with referents, another common problem of young writers. Within the dialogue “I” becomes “her daughter.” Another example of this shift is “My sister said, ‘Why didn’t you see your best friend’.

From the first day that I met Lauren in kindergarten, she has impressed me as a story teller. In that first interview, she produced a little book called “The Wiggle of Oz.” During her three years at the Dewey Center, Lauren has had daily opportunities to write, share her work with other writers, and observe other writers at work. During this time Lauren has developed into a confident writer who composes stories that demonstrate a growing understanding of literary elements and sophisticated language.

Becoming a writer: Lauren’s spelling

Lauren writes complex, creative texts with little difficulty or hesitation. One reason that Lauren is such a prolific writer is that she feels free to use invented spellings in the early drafts of her writing. At one point during Silent Writing, we hear Susan in the background saying, “I’m not spelling, I’m sorry.” At the beginning of the year, Susan would write words on sticky notes or add them to the “word wall” in order to support children who were reluctant to invent their own spellings, but at this point Susan is pushing children to work on their own. In discussions with Susan, she gives two reasons for her refusal to help children with spelling.

First, if Susan begins to help children with spelling, she spends all of her time helping children with spelling. And the children would spend a lot of time asking for

words. Getting the words spelled right interrupts meaning construction, and Susan wants the children to spend their time writing. Later, as “sloppy copies” become final drafts, Susan helps the children to spell conventionally. Encouraging children to “invent spellings” frees them to write independently from the teacher.

Secondly, Susan knows that when children are engaged in the process of invented spellings, they are engaged in discovering the complex rule system of English orthography. Invented spelling is a good way for children to learn “phonics” (Goodman, 1993), or the relationship between sounds and letters in an alphabetic writing system. Lauren’s invented spellings illustrate her phonics rule construction. I sat next to Lauren as she wrote one section and recorded her spellings in my field notes. Lauren tended to vocalize her words as she wrote, and so I recorded her oral words as well.

Figure 13 - Lauren’s Spelling

Writes:*	Says:
wen tey gat in thr	<i>when they got in their</i>
heme tey het call my mommy	<i>home they had called my mommy</i>
anD ask can her der	<i>and asked can her daughter</i>
sen aen ¹⁶ neyt.	<i>spend the night.</i>
My mommy sed yes.	<i>My mommy said yes.</i>
Then thert neat	<i>Then that night</i>
she came over	<i>she came over.</i>
we het to go to bAd	<i>We had to go to bed</i>
wen we weke up	<i>When we woke up</i>
w e the ken was a pes	<i>the kitchen was a mess</i>
the baby miss up herthing	<i>the baby messed up everything.</i>

Lauren spells 38 percent of the words conventionally. These include many high frequency words. Lauren’s invented spellings tend to include less common words. The more unusual words or spelling patterns are likely to produce the most variation between Lauren’s spelling and conventional spellings.

Figure 14 - Lauren spells 19 of 50 words (38%) conventionally

A	go	over	up
And	her	she	was
baby	in	the	we
came	mommy	then	yes

¹⁶ The spelling of “aen” for “the” seems unlikely. However, Lauren’s spellings are recorded in my field notebook. I do not have a copy of the original story.

can my to

Lauren's invented spellings show her current phonics understandings and spelling strategies. In some cases, Lauren simply spells "phonetically," choosing letters commonly used for the corresponding phonemes, for example: "wen" (when) as in went, well, wish; "gat" as in walk, fall; "sed" (said) as in bed, or red. Most of Lauren's spellings are close to the original word, and differ by one or two letters. This is true of the her spelling (neyt) for the word "night" if we consider that it has four phonemes /nait/. The three letters "igh" are the unlikely spelling of the diphthong /ai/. Lauren tries "ey" and "ea" for this sound, showing that she probably hears the two phonemes in the diphthong /ai/ (ah-ee).

Lauren uses a /t/ in "had," which she carefully pronounces as /hœt/. This demonstrates that phonics rules may vary according to a writer's spoken language. Lauren says /hœt/, while I say /hœd/. The conventional spelling for both pronunciations is "had." She also omits the written past tense markers in two cases "call/called" and "miss/messed," as she sometimes does in her oral speech.

While Lauren's dialect influences her spelling inventions, it is not really an impediment to learning conventional spelling because no oral language variation is the same as the English spelling system. The words "called" and "messed" are not spelled as I pronounce them either: /kald/ and /mæsd/. The "ed" spellings do not relate to pronunciation but to morphology- the "ed" marks the verb as past tense. These morphemic patterns must be learned by speakers of all English variations.

Lauren and I both have the same "impediment" when it comes to spelling words such as "daughter." Not only is there no "gh" sound in modern English, but American English reduces the medial /t/ to a flap. Lauren chooses not to represent this sound and comes up with "der." Lauren's most "off the mark" spellings tend to involve more unusual spelling patterns. She attempts "kitchen" and again skips the medial consonant and writes: "ken."

Lauren's conventional spelling of double letters for single phonemes in the words "call" and "miss" shows that she is influenced by graphic patterns and is not simply spelling phonetically. In addition to being aware of double letters, Lauren is also aware of silent letters and uses them conventionally in "heme" and "weke," although she spells the medial vowel /o/ as "e."

Lauren's invented spellings show her implicit understandings of graphophonic rules and patterns. One reason Lauren is such a prolific writer is that she had developed strategies for writing unfamiliar texts without adult assistance. By the end of second grade, Lauren takes a similar approach to reading.

Lauren as reader

In previous examples I showed that being a writer involves many complex abilities beyond the ability to print letters on paper. Being a reader also involves many understandings and abilities. During Silent Reading time, Susan gives the children a choice of reading or writing and Lauren chooses to read. Lauren's friends and classmates appear to view her as a reader. Both Sharonda and Katherine seek out Lauren's help during Silent Reading time. During "Books to Go", Lauren often sits near the front with the "kids on the rug," a group of children who are ready to assist the reader upon request.

Lauren's facility with book selection is another sign of being "a reader," since book selection involves the reader in matching understandings of titles and genres available with understandings of her own interests and abilities. Lauren and Katherine choose nine books for quiet reading. At the end of the day, Lauren talked to me about the books they selected. She and Katherine choose books that they like, but also books they feel they can read independently. She tells me that two of the books were Katherine's selection but "she can't read them either." Instead of reading these books, Katherine might look at the pictures and make up the story. Lauren first described these strategies, looking at the pictures and making up the story, in kindergarten. Although she and Katherine both read many books proficiently, "looking at the book and making up the story" is still a favorite

strategy for enjoying a book when the text is too complex for other meaning making strategies.

Lauren selects *Dragon's Fat Cat* (Pilkey, 1992) for her Silent Reading book. The book is popular with primary age children because the author uses an understated yet direct humor that second graders enjoy. Lauren's miscues (See Figure 15) suggest that the book is a good choice for independent reading, within her grasp but just a bit challenging. Lauren and Katherine sit down on the floor at the front of the classroom on cushions from the classroom library, and Lauren immediately begins reading. She stops reading when Susan calls her over to pick out books for the "Books to Go" bag.

Lauren returns to her seat and begins reading again just before Susan announces the beginning of the fifteen minutes of silent reading. *Dragon's Fat Cat* is a "transitional book," a picture book with five short chapters. Lauren has already read ten pages, and is into the second chapter when silent reading begins. Lauren has read 24 pages in about 25 minutes when silent reading ends, and she reluctantly stops reading.

Lauren reads aloud, moving through the text with few hesitations. Since she is reading to herself, she does not use a lot of variation in her intonation though she emphasizes the lines "P.U!," said the mailmouse, "Your house STINKS!" Lauren's miscues show her willingness to continue moving ahead in meaning construction; she does not have many regressions (Indicated in Figure 15 by underlining). She does self correct on three occasions. On Sentence 12, for example, she pauses after to, and then appears to read ahead silently. She says, "to... of," and then rereads: "*to take care of a cat.*"

Figure 15 - Lauren Reads Dragon's Fat Cat

Dav Pilkey, Orchard Paperbacks, New York, NY, 1992

(Captured on audio tape during silent reading, starting with sentence 1.)

Chapter 2: Life with Cat

After a few hours by the fire, the fat cat was warm, dry and very cozy.

The fat cat sat in Dragon's lap and purred and purred.

"It is too cold for you to go back outside," said Dragon. "So you will have to stay here with me."

The fat cat did not seem to mind.

"And if you are going to stay with me," Dragon said, "I will have to give you a name."

told talk

1. Dragon tried to think of a name for the fat cat.
2. "I will call you Cat," said Dragon.
3. Cat was a very good name for a cat.
4. "If you are going to live at my house," said Dragon,
I "you will need a bed *to* sleep in."
long
5. So Dragon took a big brown basket
stuffed books and filled it with soft blankets.
6. Then he wrote Cat's name on the side.
7. Dragon put Cat's bed down on the floor next to his own bed.
8. "How do you like your *new* bed?" Dragon asked.
sleep
9. But Cat was already fast *asleep*.
10. And soon, so was Dragon.

Part 3 - Problems

11. Dragon liked living with Cat, and Cat liked living with Dragon.
12. But Dragon did not know
a how to *take care* of Cat.
taught
13. He did not know how to train Cat.
14. That was a problem.
15. Dragon did not know what to feed Cat.
is
16. That was a big problem.
17. And Dragon did not know what to do
(mumbles) about all the yellow *puddles* Cat made.
18. That was a smelly problem.
stinky
19. Dragon tried to teach Cat to use the toilet.
told
20. But Cat did not understand.
mouse came
21. One day the mailmouse stopped by.
mouse
22. "P.U.!" said the mailmouse.
23. "Your house stinks!"
24. "I know," said Dragon.
stinky
25. "My cat has a smelly problem."
26. "What you need is a litter box,"
mouse said the mailmouse.
27. "A litter box will make the smelly problem go away."
28. "A litter box?" said Dragon.
29. "That's a good idea."

Lauren's reading "to take care of a cat" instead of "to take care of Cat" shows evidence of her meaning construction strategies, as well as an understanding of proper and common nouns. In this case, she understands the author's intent and uses a different, and perhaps more predictable, wording.

Lauren's miscues show how she uses predicting strategies when she reads. For example, in Sentence Five, she predicts that Dragon is telling what he will do (I will...) instead of stating a conditional fact (You will need a bed). In Sentence 2 and Sentence 20, Lauren predicts "Dragon told" cat something, rather than "Dragon tried" to do something. Although Lauren does not correct these miscues when they produce unacceptable sentences, her initial miscue of "told" for "tried" shows evidence of prediction.

Most of Lauren's miscues are meaningful within the story. Her substitutions of "came by" for "stopped by"; "mouse" for "mailmouse" ; and "stinky" for "smelly" are examples of using meaningful synonyms. The fact that "came" and "stopped" and "mouse" and "mailmouse" are graphically different suggest that she is making meaning on the story and sentence level. Further evidence for Lauren's focus on meaning construction are the sentence level substitutions of "big long basket" for "big brown basket," "your bed" for "your new bed." In all of these cases she maintains the meaning while producing variations in wording compared to the printed text.

Out of the thirty sentences that Lauren reads, twenty-six (86%) are semantically acceptable (meaningful). Two of those sentences (5 and 6) slightly change the meaning of the author's text, although the events occurring in the following sentences would certainly clarify any confusion Lauren might have. Lauren also shows a strong use of syntactic (grammatical) cues and strategies. All of Lauren's word level substitutions are the same "part of speech" of the authors text (long/brown, books/blankets, stuffed/soft, told/tried). Twenty-six of the 30 sentences Lauren produces (after self-corrections) are also

syntactically acceptable. In one case (Sentence 18) Lauren does not read the entire sentence aloud.

Lauren's other syntactically unacceptable sentences all have to do with infinitive constructions. She also has miscues on the two other infinitive structures (Sentence 5 & Sentence 13), but these are self-corrected. In Sentences 2 and 20 she seems unfamiliar with the "tried to ---" structure and predicts more direct language. These infinitive structures are probably less familiar to Lauren as a reader.

Lauren's miscues also show her use of graphic cues. She particularly relies on graphic cues when she is unable to produce meaningful sentences, for example "told to think" for "tried to talk." In these cases she is using both initial and final graphemes in text construction. In other cases, Lauren's miscues maintain the initial grapheme, suggesting that she scans the first letter quickly while making predictions.

In only two cases (sentences 5 and 21), does Lauren appear to abandon graphic cues. These examples show her active involvement in meaning construction. In Sentence 21 (One day the mailmouse stopped by.), she reads "One day the mouse came by." She is so engaged in predicting story meanings, she produces an alternate text wording with a highly similar meaning.

In reading *Dragon's Fat Cat* Lauren is a proficient reader, using the language cueing systems selectively as she constructs a meaningful text. Lauren's miscues, like her invented spellings, demonstrate that she is learning about language systems and processes as she reads and writes.

Comparing Lauren's and Marco's meaning making

Marco and Lauren are meaning makers within a community of learners. Marco constructs meaning through listening and overhearing as teacher and classmates read, write, and talk about reading and writing. Lauren uses selective listening to cooperate with classroom requirements while focusing on her own agenda. Marco uses a range of resources and strategies to support his own reading and writing. Lauren uses reading and

spelling strategies to create meaningful texts as a reader, writer and story-teller. While Lauren and Marco both use listening, reading and writing for meaning construction, there are interesting distinctions between Marco's and Lauren's meaning making processes and strategies.

Listening and NOT listening:

Throughout my observations, Marco *learns by overhearing* as a listener and observer of other readers and writers in action. Lauren, on the other hand, is a selective listener and sometimes deliberately ignores her teacher as she focuses on reading and writing experiences. When I invited Susan to view the videotape of Marco's Day, she had the same shocked response I as we observed Marco paying attention. We were both struck by Marco's attentive posture. During the Three Toed Sloth mini-lesson, he sits peering at the board with his pencil poised. During the Small Group Math lesson, he sits next to Susan and closely observes her interactions with other students. Marco's attentiveness surprised us, perhaps because he was one of the less proficient readers and writers in the class.

Lauren, on the other hand, must be paying attention. After all, she was doing so well. But Lauren was much more likely to ignore interactions around her than Marco. Marco was very interested in the conversations and literacy events around him, and he was learning a good deal about science concepts and language processes through listening. Susan and I had unexamined assumptions about young learners. It just makes sense that children who are "independent" readers and writers pay attention, while children who are learning more slowly than their classmates don't pay attention. It makes sense, but it's not true.

As I thought about this issue, I looked at other examples. During a pilot study, described in Chapter Two, I observed "The Raccoon Group," six children who were researching raccoons. My gut feeling as a participant observer was that three of the children, including Danielle, were just fooling around. After careful study of the tape, I

noticed that Danielle believed she was “doing the assignment,” but had a different view of “the assignment” than my own. When I watched Danielle closely, I noticed that she was the first to look up when Susan came over to talk to the group. She was paying attention.

It actually makes sense that novice readers are more attentive than proficient readers. For one thing, less proficient readers are more likely to attend closely to oral language in order to support their written language learning. The difference between how Marco attends and how Lauren attends may be related to their written language development. Lauren’s written language development allows her to use written language cues to support the cues in verbal exchanges. Meaningful language transactions involve redundant cues and language learning is, in part, a process of learning which cues to attend to and which cues to ignore. For example, in predicting the end of the sentence “I have one brother and one ____.” the syntax cues the reader to predict a matched pair (one xxx and one xxx), the semantics cues point to something related to “and brother.” So before readers even see the graphic cues, they have probably already predicted “sister.” It’s not that Lauren doesn’t pay attention, but she’s learned to pay attention selectively. Marco pays attention more closely and generally as he learns which cues are important, and which cues can be ignored.

Another possibility is that Lauren is “reading” the discourse of the classroom because of cultural understandings she has developed but Marco doesn’t share. The members of the Raccoon Group had very different understandings of “the assignment” even though we had all listened to the same instructions. Some of the differences were based on views about classroom experiences that members brought to the group. Julia, who read the entire time, was focused on *learning* about raccoons, while Danielle’s goal was to “do the assignment.” While neither girl was actually following my interpretation of “the assignment”, I favored Julia’s approach because it matched my own values and beliefs about classroom experiences.

It’s important to recognize that children are making meaning through listening experiences. Marco and Danielle are paying attention in order to make sense of classroom

literacy and social events. These understandings might not be expressed, or they may be discounted because they differ from a teacher's understandings. These differences might suggest direct and explicit instruction. However, direct instruction would limit the range of reading and writing experiences and remove the opportunity to observe readers and writers in action, and to observe interactions between the teacher and other readers and writers. These experiences provide powerful meaning making and language learning opportunities for both Marco and Lauren.

Direct instruction generally reduces literacy events to learning exercises and greatly limits children's roles as subjects of their own literacy learning. Rather than providing direct instruction, we need to create opportunities for children to express and discuss their understandings. If children's concepts and underlying processes are made explicit through discussion, we can explore and address differences in meaning construction.

Further research might investigate the relationship between listening styles and language development, personal beliefs, roles and relationships, and cultural understanding. However, I believe the implications for teaching are similar regardless of the underlying reasons for these differences. It's important to recognize children's listening strategies. Marco pays attention and nobody noticed. In my observations of Marco's Day, listening was his primary vehicle for meaning making and learning. It would also be a mistake to view Lauren's "selective listening" as not paying attention. Lauren has developed strategies about when to listen and when not to listen. Both Marco's and Lauren's listening strategies are resources for learning and teaching.

Reading and Writing Strategies:

Both Lauren and Marco approach reading and writing as "meaning makers," and use reading strategies that help them to make sense with a text. I always find this remarkable when I contrast it with my years as a reading specialist in a school that used basal readers and workbooks. Children in classrooms with a skills approach tend to approach reading with a goal of "getting the words" or "sounding out" the words. Children in

classrooms with a word recognition approach to reading instruction became “Swiss Cheese readers,” omitting any words they didn’t know. Children in classrooms focusing on phonics instruction became “Perseverators,” repeatedly trying to sound out the same words. Many of these children continued reading even if the text they were constructing did not make sense.

One characteristic that all the children I interviewed for this study share is an expectation that written texts make sense. If a child is not making sense out of a text using their current reading strategies, she or he reverts to earlier developmental strategies in order to produce a meaningful text. In the debriefing interview, Lauren describes how she and Katherine, both proficient readers of many texts, return to an earlier strategy when they come to a text they “can’t even read.”

- D: Okay... and you’ve got a whole lot of books right now. Why do you have so many?
L: I can’t read some of them... like this one and this one. I didn’t pick up these two books. Kristine did.
D: Oh, you just got all of the books that you and Kristine were looking at?
L: Yeah, she got these two books. She can’t even read them.
D: Oh. She can’t read them either?
L: She make up the words.
D: Oh. She makes the story up? But she likes to look at them?

Lauren described this strategy of looking at the pictures and “making up” the text as a kindergartner, and continued to fall back on this reading strategy as she was learning to use other text construction strategies in first grade. As a second grader, Lauren’s reading and writing strategies allow her to work inter-dependently with the children around her. Lauren’s reading strategies include selecting texts that she could read, predicting meanings, making meaningful substitutions for unfamiliar text, and self-correcting. Lauren used conventional and invented spellings as a resource for constructing stories and meaningful texts. She generally did not seek outside assistance with her rough draft writing or reading. However, Lauren also had many other resources for both reading and writing: past experiences with texts, understandings of how stories work, previous interactions with other readers and writers, etc.

Lauren's reading and writing are an example of Vygotsky's (1978) internalization. Social language learning has become an internal resource that Lauren draws on as she reads and writes independently. Lauren continues to use oral language as she reads and writes. Meaning construction is an oral dialogue with herself. Lauren also likes to share her writing by reading it aloud.

Marco uses more external resources than Lauren during the composing process. He uses a wide variety of resources including written texts, illustrations, oral language, familiar texts, classmates, and his teacher or other adults. Using these resources, Marco was able to participate actively in reading and writing experiences. When reading a familiar text, Marco also used predicting strategies and meaningful substitutions. However, Marco was reluctant to use "invented spelling" as a strategy for writing, in part because he was just beginning to discover the alphabetic relationship between written language and oral language.

It might be tempting to focus Marco on phonics skills and try to teach him the alphabetic principle. I'm not sure it's really possible to rush development. But I am more concerned that phonics instruction would focus Marco away from his view that reading and writing are meaning construction processes. In addition, using invented spellings as a young writer is a process of rule construction. Children discover patterns of spelling and punctuation as they write and read. In *Phonics Phacts* Ken Goodman (1993) describes how much whole language teachers and researchers have discovered about phonics through observing children's invented spellings and reading miscues.

Encouraging Marco to use invented spelling helps him to explore alphabetic relationships while becoming more independent in his writing. In addition, holistic reading and writing experiences allow Marco to make use of the linguistic resources and strategies that he is developing.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the nature of meaning making within the literacy events of Marco's and Lauren's Day. The literacy events described suggest that the teacher and children in this community have a focus on meaning making. Within these meaning making moments, Susan and the children make language processes explicit, providing opportunities to learn language through meaning construction activities. Meaning is constructed through a variety of social roles evolving within literacy events, and literacy events have meaning potential for language learning. I described Marco's meaning construction during three literacy events related to different social roles: as a listener, as an overhearer, and as a reader and writer. As a listener, Marco experiences meaning construction through a wide variety of texts, genres, and literacy events. Marco attends closely to the demonstration of other readers and writers, and the interactions between his teacher and other children. Through these demonstrations, Marco is learning how to read and write and how to be a reader and writer within this classroom community. While Marco is a novice learner for much of the day, he takes on a leadership role during the "Books to Go" language event and uses a wide range of resources in meaning making.

I describe Lauren's meaning making strategies as reader, writer, and story teller. Lauren uses selective listening strategies to cooperate with the classroom community while maximizing her own literacy experiences. Lauren chooses reading and writing experiences for herself, and selects reading materials and writing topics. Through daily reading and writing experiences in this literate classroom community, Lauren has become a skilled storyteller, as she is developing the conventions of written language.

Finally, I compared Lauren's and Marco's meaning making experiences as listeners, and as readers and writers. Both Lauren and Marco learn through listening and observing as well as reading and writing. Both children focus on meaning construction, and use a wide range of strategies and resources to construct meaningful texts. Lauren's invented spelling strategies contribute to her independent writing, while Marco is more

reluctant to write without assistance. Lauren uses selective listening to negotiate social literacy events. Marco attends closely as a participant in literacy events. Both Marco and Lauren are supported by language events where they are subjects of their own learning with some choice in activities, materials and topics. In addition, structures such as workshops and clubs provide opportunities for dialogue and negotiation that support reading, writing, and literacy learning.

In the next chapter I describe the implications of these findings for literacy learning and teaching.

Chapter Six

Becoming Literate

Lauren and Marco's literacy experiences in just one day of their school lives drive home the importance of considering the social nature of reading and writing and its implications for literacy development in and out of school. In this chapter I review and discuss what I have learned from Marco and Lauren. I consider how factors in Lauren and Marco's experiences support and thwart literacy development. The implications for classroom teaching move beyond the level of teaching strategies and learning experiences to address the interplay between how classrooms are socially structured and how classrooms are socially situated within the larger community. I propose a model in which classroom communities play a powerful role in building bridges between literacy in home communities and literacy in the wider communities outside of school. I explore the relationship between the individual and the social literacy experience by considering how Marco and Lauren are constructing literate identities within classroom community. I end the chapter with a postscript revisiting Lauren and Marco as fourth graders.

Learning from Lauren and Marco:

As a researcher, this study has been a journey of renewal and discovery. As I expected, I found that Marco and Lauren are members of a richly literate classroom community. However, their literacy experiences involved a depth of social activity thought and dialogue in relation to text that far exceeded my expectations. I have organized the issues raised by this study into four topics for further discussion:

- Creating Social Spaces for Language Learning
- The Social Construction of "Instrumental Texts"
- Social Roles within Literacy Events
- Talking About Texts: Making the Process Explicit

Creating Social Spaces for Language Learning

In Chapter Three, I provide an overview of Marco's Day and Lauren's Day. On these days, Susan and the children use social structures such as scheduling and room organization to create social spaces for learning. Within this structure classroom time devoted to "content work" is maximized and minimal amounts of time are spent waiting. Transitional times tend to focus on preparing for work, rather than on management issues, and children often work during these times. As children "get ready" for whole class meetings, they read songbooks or talk informally.

Literacy practices in this classroom involve collaboration within a community of learners. In Chapter Four I looked at the "social activities" within literacy events in order to gain an understanding of the social literacy practices that comprise classroom "work time." On two days of school, Marco and Lauren participate in 67 literacy events, involving 56 texts. These literacy events include 27 different social activities or, to paraphrase from Heath (1983), "ways with texts" in their classroom. When these social activities are grouped into larger categories, the largest number involve "reading and writing literature" and include experiences (reading, writing, listening or observing) with a wide range of texts and genres.

Lauren and Marco were immersed in many literacy experiences that involved "real life" reading and writing. By "real life" reading and writing, I mean literacy experiences where children are engaged in social activities involving text that are similar to literacy events in the social worlds outside of school. Participants read books aloud, wrote stories and non-fiction texts, reported the "Daily News," or used a list to plan math choices. These experiences involved a wide variety of texts and genres. As Marco and Lauren participate in "real life" events they are learning to read and write texts, but also learning to what it means to be a reader and writer within the cultural contexts of literacy events. These "real life" literacy experiences had great meaning potential for participants.

The smallest number of literacy activities involves "doing school exercises" for the purpose of instruction or evaluation. These exercises are related to the upcoming standardized text. Literacy events designed to prepare children for testing, or those that had little relevance to children's lives, have less meaning potential for Marco and Lauren. The "Three Toed Sloth" (Prelutsky, 1983) mini-lesson does not appear to make much of an impression on Marco as a learner. Lauren works diligently on her math worksheet, but she

doesn't turn and say to her friend, "Here, let me read this to you." as she does with her fiction story.

By March this community has established familiar and predictable social literacy events and practices. The community of learners in the classroom has a profound influence on Marco and Lauren's literacy learning. The workshop approach provides a more democratic classroom structure in which children have responsibility for completing assignments and choices with reasonable noise and movement. The "daily helpers" have additional responsibilities for teaching and learning, and the children take turns in these roles. Children have "access to literacy" as supplies and materials were organized within reach. They are also familiar with materials and texts, and are able to select reading and writing activities and materials. Children work with friends sharing resources and expertise.

Susan also has "language policies" that respect children and encourage them to respect each other. For example, during class meetings she always calls on children who raised their hand. This leads to many interesting discussions as students asked questions or commented on a wide range of issues including classroom procedures and language processes. Susan always addresses children's questions and comments, coming back to them later if they were disruptive at the time. Susan calls tablemates "teams" and encourages children to work together. She spoke of listening behaviors in terms of respect, "Let's listen to Destine, she practiced for us."

Opportunities for dialogue and social interactions also have an influence on the "meaning potential" of literacy events. Group meetings such as "Book Clubs" encourage children to talk as they worked on literacy projects. Many of the workshops and transitional times allow for informal conversations. Both Lauren and Marco engage in oral reading and composing around their story writing. Marco talks to himself, to me, and to David as he takes on a leadership role during the "Book Club" meeting.

The social nature of literacy events in this classroom raises questions about competitive classroom structures where emulating the demonstrations of other children is considered

cheating. The power of social experiences in this setting also makes it difficult to justify assessment measures that demand individual *performances* of understandings, often involving contrived exercises rather than “real life” literacy events. Within this social structure, the classroom community becomes a “social zone of proximal development” where children view classmates as resources. Victor’s description of “the kids on the rug” as a resource when a child is reading to the class implies a social understanding that *what one child knows everyone knows* by extension.

The Social Construction of “Instrumental Texts”

I was surprised by the number of literacy events involving reading and writing with the focus on other social activities. In these events the text is instrumental, used with another social goal in mind. Children read “efferently” (Rosenblatt, 1978), seamlessly negotiating the transaction with text in an effort to report or record information, find their writing folder, choose a math activity, go to the bathroom, and so on. Children are often highly proficient readers and writers within these social events, perhaps because the events closely resemble literacy events within their home communities.

These events have important implications for classroom language learning and teaching. While children negotiate these events with a high level of proficiency, the children are often unaware that reading and writing have occurred. Because texts within these literacy events are “instrumental” within another social activity, the texts and the reading and writing processes often become invisible.

Literacy events involving “instrumental” texts generally occur outside of the times of the day devoted to “reading” and “writing.” Some of these events occur during other content related activities. For example, children use calendars, models, charts, and tables in a series of math activities focusing on the date, the day’s weather, and the current “day of school”. Other literacy events occur during “procedural” times of day such as taking attendance, when children tally the number present and absent and record the information on the “missing person’s graph.”

The large number of events involving instrumental texts illustrates how literacy events permeate the school day. Members of the classroom community use in every aspect of classroom life. Susan is deliberate in creating literacy experiences throughout the day, placing “teacher texts” such as attendance records, lesson plans, or evaluation forms in a public space where these texts become integral to the school curriculum. An example occurs when Susan shows the students the evaluation form she will use for the book club presentations, prompting a discussion of the nature of such texts.

Lauren’s Day, “Book Club Presentation”, (See Appendix C)

Susan shows the class an evaluation form, and says she is going to tell them how they did on: reading to the class, diary pages, project one, project two, and teamwork. Children ask about their self-evaluations, and she says that was their chance and this is her chance to evaluate the book clubs.

Literacy events involving planning, organizing and evaluation provide an interesting twist on David Bloome’s (1989) discussion of “procedural display”. Bloome describes how many classroom lessons involve “doing school,” with teacher and students cooperating to get through a lesson and little attention to meaningful language, relevant concepts, or real world social activities. In this case the teacher and students negotiate procedural aspects of classroom, creating additional social spaces for literacy.

Social Roles in Literacy Learning: Learning by Overhearing

In Chapter 5 I describe how Lauren and Marco participated in literacy events from a variety of social roles and stances. Participation in literacy events has meaning potential for whether the participant is a listener, reader, writer, or observer/ overhearer. Listening is an important social role for Marco, who often employs a strategy of “learning by overhearing.” Throughout the day, Marco is attentive. Marco was a peripheral participant in demonstrations of reading and writing. The debriefing interview reveals that Marco learned about the content presented in texts and the poetic language of texts through listening to texts read to the class. In addition, Marco explained a meaning focused reading strategy after listening to contextual conversations about reading strategies between his teacher and other readers.

Lauren, on the other hand, employed a strategy I call “selective listening.” She often appeared to ignore her teacher, continuing with her own work agenda. However, both Lauren and Susan viewed Lauren’s role in the classroom as cooperative. Lauren’s responses show her awareness of when she must attend class discourse, and when it is okay to ignore discourse around her. Meaning making involves selectively attending to cues, and Lauren is adept at reading the classroom discourse.

The contrast between Lauren and Marco’s attention strategies was initially suprizing to me, contradicting my “common sense” notions of which children are more attentive in the classroom. After making these observations I now would predict that children who are less proficient readers and writers are closely attending the classroom discourse. This attention allows them to use oral language resources and observations in order to understand “what’s going on?” within the social literacy event.

In order to support Marco’s “learning by overhearing” strategy, it absolutely crucial that he participate in literacy events where he can observe demonstrations of reading and writing. It is critical that he have opportunities to observe his teacher interacting with other readers and writers. Classroom practices that separate children from one another (such as placing desks in rows, placing children in homogeneous groups or forbidding children to talk) would greatly diminish Marco’s opportunities for language learning.

It is also important to view Lauren’s “selective listening” as a strength. Her “inattention” could be interpreted as being uncooperative or even rude in some situations. However, Lauren’s adept negotiation of classroom events serves to maximize her own social learning activities and minimize interruptions and distractions. Lauren’s ability to read the class discourse and understand the social rules might be recognized and explored further. Helping Lauren make her “selective listening” process explicit to her classmates would introduce “discourse analysis” into the second grade curriculum.

After observing Marco and Lauren’s listening strategies, I can’t emphasize enough the importance of literacy events that provide children with opportunities to participated in “real

life” reading and writing experiences, observe, listen and talk with other readers and writers, and/or overhear conversations between the teacher and other children. Structures that limit opportunities for participation in conversations about texts greatly disadvantage and handicap children as literacy learners.

Talking about Texts: Making the Process Explicit

In addition to reading and writing activities, members of this classroom community participate in a range of activities involving “talking about texts”. For example, children’s questions prompt a discussion about how to read a model of an outdoor thermometer.

Implicit language and thought processes are made explicit through discussion as participants talk about how texts are organized, how texts work, how texts are read and written, and so on. This social focus on “making the process explicit” also occurs during other literacy events, for example when Susan is prompted to provide an on-the-spot mini-lesson while Amber is reading to the class. During these literacy events, Marco and Lauren experience demonstrations and discussions of how reading and writing work, and what it means to be a reader and writer.

In the book *Other People’s Children*, Lisa Delpit (1995) connects explicit discussions in the classroom with issues of power. She proposes five “aspects of power” play themselves out in classroom settings. I listed these in Chapter One and repeat them here for further discussion

1. Issues of power are enacted in classrooms.
 2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a “culture of power.”
 3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.
 4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.
 5. Those with power are frequently least aware of -- or least willing to acknowledge -- its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence.
- (Delpit, 1995, p.24)

I agree with Delpit that children, particularly children who are not members of the dominant cultures, need explicit demonstrations and discussions of the “rules”, or the underlying language and learning processes within the classroom culture. However, telling children “the rules” directly is difficult because linguistic and cultural rules and principles are extremely complex and variable depending on the nature of the literacy event. Delpit also points out a problem in this process, that “Those with power are frequently least aware of -- or least willing to acknowledge -- its existence.” It’s difficult for a teacher to teach rules if she or he is unaware of their existence.

However, within social literacy events it is possible for teachers to recognize underlying processes and practices, linguistic and cultural rules, and to help make these processes explicit to children. This is particularly true if the teacher, like Susan, is knowledgeable about language and literacy and an observant “kidwatcher” (Y. Goodman, 1985). One of Susan’s roles within classroom literacy events is to make implicit understandings more explicit. She does this by asking, “How did you figure that out?” or pointing out to the class that “Marco made a prediction.” These explicit conversations do not involve direct instruction where the teacher tells the students a cultural or linguistic rule. Instead, these powerful discussions emerge from the rich cultural context of holistic literacy events.

Delpit connects explicit instruction with power or cultural capital. I share her strong concern that classroom cultures reflect social inequities and injustices within the larger society. As Ira Shor states, “School is one large agency among several that socializes

students. One way to touch the real potential of teaching is to see that education can either confirm or challenge socialization into inequality” (Shor, 1987, p.14).

With Delpit, I am committed to “challenging socialization into inequality.” However, I question the Delpit’s assumption that acquiring the “codes of power” will result in “acquiring power.” She suggests that literacy alone, at least in the “codes of power”, will result in changing the power relationships in the wider community. In addition, underlying this conviction is an assumption that inner city families are not highly literate (otherwise they’d be more powerful). While I don’t negate the importance of literacy learning, I’m not sure there’s a direct connection between becoming literate and gaining power.

I am also not convinced that the goal of schooling is to help children gain power. I return to Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) reminder that, “to be literate is a uniquely human experience, a creative process that enables us to deal with ourselves and to better understand one another.” Literacy has a role in a wide range and variety of human experiences, including negotiating the “culture of power.” For me, one “potential of teaching” is to challenge the dichotomy between “powerful” and “powerless.” Direct instruction structures recreate this power differential in the classroom.

In many of the literacy events I describe in this study, Marco and Lauren have agency as literacy learners and are the subjects own literacy learning. Susan and the children are working to create structures that shifted power relationships to a culture involving “shared power.” The literacy events involving “instrumental texts” demonstrated how Susan creates new spaces for literacy by making “teacher” texts more public, sharing her role with the children. Children in this classroom community participate in many thousands of literacy events over the course of the year. Within these literacy events it is common for the children or Susan to initiate conversations about the nature of texts and the processes of reading and writing. Within these social spaces lies the potential

of classroom communities in challenging inequity and constructing democratic spaces for learning.

Factors in Marco and Lauren's literacy development

Factors that support Lauren and Marco's literacy development include opportunities for "real" reading and writing, opportunities to observe and listen to other readers and writers, opportunities to talk about literacy experiences, and access to literacy materials and texts. Workshops and small group meetings provide many opportunities for collaborative literacy events, although whole class discussions and listening to books read aloud were also valuable experiences.

Opportunities to talk are influenced by how children are grouped for learning. I describe in Chapter Three how the whole class math lesson is time consuming, and did not allow for many interactions between participants. During Marco's small group lesson, on the other hand, there are many opportunities for talking with the teacher and with other children. More "official" opportunities for talking about reading and writing, especially in small groups or dyads, seem appropriate.

I also wonder whether Lauren and Marco could be engaged in more literacy events that invited reading and writing. I have shown how important whole class experiences such as "Books to Go" are for Marco's literacy development. On the other hand, the "Book Club" language event really pushed Marco to read and write. This small group project provided a good deal of time for talking, reading and writing. Although Lauren needed no encouragement to read and write, the Silent Reading time ended before Lauren was ready to stop reading. In future classroom scheduling, I would look closely at the nature of events that support meaning construction, events that provide space for reading and writing, and events that push children to read and write.

In considering what factors thwart literacy learning, it's important to recognize that many factors outside of Susan's control influenced classroom literacy events. Some of the activities on these two days were organized in anticipation of an upcoming standardized test.

These activities were less likely to involve meaningful social learning experiences. Other factors that thwart literacy learning are the poverty in the community, and the inequities in funding. Funding inequities result in large class sizes in inner city classrooms and little money for supplies and materials. Most of Susan's books and many of her supplies were purchased with her own funds. Susan had 28 children, a "small" group within this large district. Class size makes it more complicated to organize group experiences or meet with children in conferences or small groups.

Outside-of-the-classroom factors such as poverty and inequities in funding are a reminder that classrooms and schools reflect the inequities and power structures that exist in communities outside of schools. I observed a community focus on "making the process explicit." I believe that "making the process explicit" represents an important shift in the potential of language learning to shift power structures in classrooms and communities. In the next section, I address the interplay between sociopolitical factors and the literacy events that I have already described.

Contexts for Literacy Learning

This study stretched my thinking about the contexts, texts and genres of literacy learning. As a frequent visitor to Susan's room, I was impressed, but not surprised, to see that Marco's experiences involved 12 literature texts and Lauren's experiences involved 13 literature texts. I was not surprised that the number of instructional texts was small. Literacy events and practices involving these texts were relatively easy to classify, although they did involve ten different reading and writing activities, not including "talking about texts." What did surprise me was the large number of literacy events involving texts that were not fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

I have described earlier the "multiple roads to literacy" that Yetta Goodman (1997) found among young learners. In Susan's classroom, children encounter not only the "literature" road to reading and writing, but these other roads as well. Attempting to describe, categorize, and understand these "non-literature" events has led me on a journey

of discovery about the potential of classroom literacy communities to serve as a bridge between contextual worlds of home and family and the larger communities outside the home. I will illustrate my thinking with two texts from Marco's Day: the math list, and the book club diary.

The Math List: Building Bridges Between Home and School

Marco's Day, Transition to Math (Appendix B)

Susan walks over the chalk board and begins giving instructions for math. Someone asks, "Can we do writing?"

Susan says, "We'll do writing in a few minutes. I want the kids who were working on math with me to stay here today. Kids who don't have math sheets can choose."

Susan explains the choices as she lists them on the board. In one case, she demonstrates how a math game is played. James and Terrence signal each other silently, perhaps planning out their activities. Marco signals at Jonathan.

Susan says, "Okay, let me read the names of the kids who are going to stay with me. Get a clipboard and a pencil. If I don't call your name, you know you can make choices."

In this vignette, Susan *writes a list* and *reads names* within a language event focusing on organizing the class math experience. The text is very relevant to the children, because it represents available choices. Children listen and read as Susan talks and writes, using the literacy event to plan their own activities. The children's meaning making is apparent as they signal to each other. When Susan finishes the explanation, the children make choices and begin to get settled very quickly, to Susan's apparent surprise:

Susan finishes calling the names, and the remaining children get up and move quickly to get materials for choices. Susan says, "You know what? Everyone stop. I made a mistake." She walks over to the table area, but sees the children have selected materials and tables without a problem.

She says, "Oh you worked it out."

The math list serves to regulate the children's behavior; they must chose specific math activities although at least one child would rather do writing. But it also gives children a measure of control over their activities. During the math time, children can refer to the text constructed within this event rather than referring to Susan. Susan proceeds to meet with a small group of children, while the rest of the class works "on their own." While Susan is the "writer" of the text, the text is a co-construction of the teacher and children who participated as writer, readers and listeners.

Literacy events around “instrumental texts” (such as records, lists, and charts) are often so seamless, with the focus on a task rather than on reading or writing, that the acts of reading and writing appear invisible to the participants. It took me quite a while, for example, to notice that calling the names of the boys and girls to line up for lunch involved *reading* from a list.

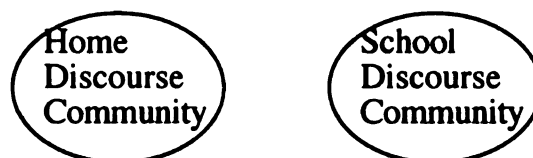
My initial hypothesis was that children participate easily in classroom literacy practices such as “writing and reading a list to organize math choices” because these practices were more “familiar,” similar to literacy events children experienced outside of school. For example, preschoolers often observe adults writing shopping lists to prepare for a trip to the grocery store. Chances are the adult will include the child in thinking out loud and the child may accompany the parent to the store. I have asked pre-schoolers and kindergartners to write a “shopping list” as a way of understanding their current theories and abilities as writers. I find that they produce something that looks like a list, even if their writing is “scribbling” or their spelling patterns are unconventional.

Children begin learning to read and write as participants in “family literacy” (Taylor, 1983) practices. While children may have limited experiences with book reading experiences, literacy events within everyday life are a common experience across the United States. In *Growing Up Literate*, a study of literacy in inner city families, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) compare the “memory aids types of uses and writings” from five communities including the three communities in Heath’s (1983) *Ways with Words* and the two communities Taylor studied in *Family Literacy* and *Growing up Literate*. In all cases, writing was used to record phone numbers, make notes on calendars, and for a variety of other purposes. In “Shay Avenue,” the inner city community that Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines studied, they record the following examples: Shopping lists; writing of college schedules; bathroom schedule for potty-training a young child; recipes; monthly planner, listing appointments and information to be remembered; list of postnatal exercises; list of

friends to attend baby shower; menu for Thanksgiving dinner; lists of food for a party; notes on refrigerator; etc. (1988, p. 162).

Literacy practices within homes and families represent one aspect of what James Gee (1991) calls the child's "primary discourse," the language that children learn before they come to school. The term "discourse" is used by socio-linguists to include not only the language meanings and processes, but the social ways that language is used within a community. Gee describes "discourse communities" where groups have common ways of using language. The child's home is their first discourse community.

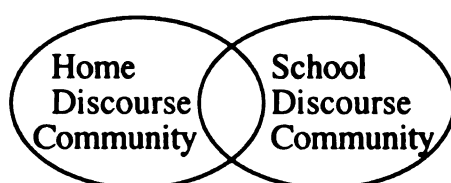
The child's home literacy experiences might be defined as the cultural ways that participants use written language in their "primary discourse community." The child's school literacy experiences are the cultural ways that participants use written language in the "school discourse community." The model below represents these communities. Of course, literacy in home discourse communities, while overlapping in the nature of experiences, will differ from family to family. By the same token, literacy events in school communities will differ from classroom to classroom.



In home discourse communities, children learn language while using language as speaker and listener in a variety of "real life" cultural events. Since language events often include literacy events, children are learning to read and write before they enter school. During the "using a list for math choices" literacy event, children appear to be proficient readers. At the same time, the structure of the event supports literacy learning. The child's "reading" of the math list is supported by the social context and the interactions between participants. Susan explains each item as she writes it down.

While the focus of the event is on organizing the math experiences, Susan is demonstrating how members of this school community use literacy. She is also

demonstrating the writing process of making a list. Children are learning written language as they participate in this literacy event. They are not only learning how to read particular words and phrases, but they are learning how people use written language in particular contexts. Susan orchestrates this language learning experience by integrating the familiar ways that people use written language at home with the ways that written language is used at school. In this event, the two discourse communities intersect.



The “list of math choices” is easy to read because it is a familiar literacy practice, common at home and at school. In the morning, during “Things to Do”, Susan leaves a written list on the board. Reading the list is also a social event. Some children stand and read the list, while others consult each other about “what we’re ‘posed to do.” The “things to do” list is easy to read because it is a familiar practice, supported by social interactions, and by repeated experiences. Children come into the room and begin working with no apparent prompting or instructions from Susan.

The practice of listing forms a bridge between home and school, as Susan takes a familiar practice and extends it to a school experience. Children learn new listing strategies supported by the literacy strategies they bring from their home community. This intersection between “home discourse” and “school discourse” is an element of all classroom language events for all children. Most children learn to read and write because they make connections between written language in school and outside of school. However, these connections are harder to make when school literacy events are very different from home literacy events.

Classroom literacy experiences can provide explicit connections between home and school. All of the children I interviewed at Dewey Center described family book reading events. But the range and variety of experiences in Susan’s classroom supports the

“multiple roads to literacy” children are traveling when they enter school. In addition to reading and writing literature, children in Susan’s classroom read and write charts, signs, graphs, tallies, thermometers, calendars, lists, and so on. The math list helps in constructing bridges between home literacy and school literacy, an important role of teachers and schools.

The first step in this construction is to recognize the kinds of literacy events and practices among the families in a classroom community. Next bridges can be constructed from home to school by creating learning experiences in classrooms where children use familiar language in familiar ways. Community studies, family history projects and field trips to build bridges from home literacy experiences to school literacy experiences.

It is critical to help children and families view their home literacy activities as “reading and writing.” This is particularly true of the functional literacy events because reading and writing often become invisible in pursuit of other social activities. Building connections between home literacy and school literacy allows young children to learn about the systems and processes of written language in familiar social contexts.

Familiar literacy events provide supportive contexts for literacy learning in young beginning readers and writers. Bringing the discourse circles of home and school closer together has socio- cultural implications as well. In this model, classroom experiences support the family, rather than placing demands on the family to push children to fit a certain mold in school. Building connections between home and school begins by recognizing and validating the child’s home language and cultural background. Classroom language experiences help children to maintain and expand on their home discourse. A bridge between home and school provides a base of common understandings for the teacher to build upon.

The “Book Club Diary” - Building Bridges to other Social Worlds

As I examined literacy events involving “talk about text,” I noticed that instrumental texts are not usually the object of discussion. This makes sense to me since these literacy

events are so familiar that the texts almost become invisible. However, a conversation about “the book club diary” provides an exception that led me to rethink this generalization.

Marco’s Day, Book Club (Appendix B)

It is near the end of a long day at school. Marco and David have been working hard on their Book Club project. Susan stops the class and tells the children it’s time to clean up and “record what you did today” in “your book club diary.” Susan suggests that the book club members help each other with writing the diary.

Marco and David stop to listen, and then return to their work. Marco quickly finishes his picture and then looks around for the “book club diary.” I help David complete his envelope. Marco brings over his autobiography.

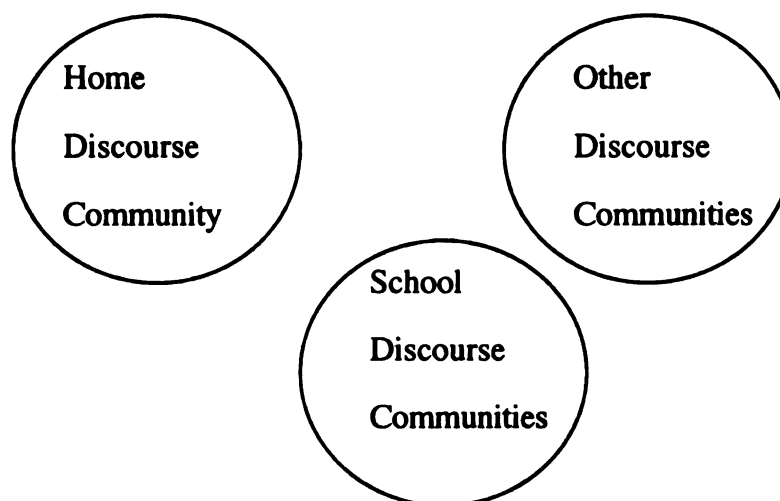
“That’s your autobiography,” I say. Marco says he thinks it’s his book club diary. I ask where his autobiography is. David suggests they are the same thing.

Marco leaves to look for the diary again. I look in the book club’s loose-leaf binder, and notice a “diary” entry on the lined paper in the binder rings.

“Marco, I found it.”

Marco returns and sits down. I put the diary in front of him.

In this vignette, Susan asks the children to *write* a record or report of their book club meeting. For me, the “book club diaries” were familiar literacy activities outside of school, comparable to literacy practices such as taking minutes or keeping records of the meetings of a club or organization. But the diary does not seem familiar to Marco or David. Marco and David’s reaction to Susan’s instructions about the “book club diary” indicate that “real life” literacy events are not always the same as family literacy events. The social literacy practice of “writing a record of what you did today” is not a familiar literacy practice for Marco and David. Such records represent the discourse of social communities including clubs, organizations, work groups, etc.



Although “writing in the book club diary” is similar to many out of school literacy events, it could be perceived as a school exercise if Marco and David do not see it as making sense within their own experiences with social literacy practices. When Susan invites the children to join “Book Clubs,” she is involving children in the social experience of a club. The “Book Clubs” immerse children in the discourse of clubs in a way that builds connections from familiar language practices to new ones.

The “book club diary” encourages club members to report and define their own progress. While the diaries may be used to evaluate the progress of each group, the diary writing is not organized for the major purpose of evaluating how well group members read or write. The group members are the subjects of their own evaluation. In contrast to the nearly invisible writing of the “math list,” the writing process also becomes very visible as Marco, David, and I collaborate on the diary entry. I decide to help Marco in a fairly direct manner, perhaps because Marco and David have already been writing for their book club project for the past thirty minutes.

Marco returns and sits down. I put the diary in front of him.

“Put the date.” I say.

Marco looks at the diary page. He points to the previous entry. “This the day?”

“This is the 2nd. You need to write the date here. Three..” I hint.

Marco looks up at the front board where today’s date is written. “Three seven dash ninety four,” Marco finishes.

Marco writes the date on the page. I say, “Who was here today?” Marco says, “Marco and David.” He writes his name and looks up at me.

“How do you spell ‘and’,” he asks me.

I pronounce the word carefully, “/æ:nd/. How do you spell ‘and’?”

Marco mouths the word ‘and’, and thinks for a moment. “That’s an ‘N’?” he says. He writes n’ on his paper.

“Is that how you spell it?” he asks me.

“That’s fine,” I say.

Marco writes David’s name, remembering it from an earlier exchange where David spelled it out for him. He says, “I know how to spell David’s name ‘cause he taught me. D-A-V-I-D”

Marco brings writing strategies from other discourse events to his writing of the diary. The book club diary already contains one entry, perhaps recorded by the absent group member, Patrice. Marco’s initial strategy is to use that entry as a model to copy the date. When I point out that “This is the 2nd,” Marco understands the implications and

looks up to the chalkboard where he knows the date will be printed. Marco remembers how to spell David's name because David "taught" him by spelling the name out for him.

Marco views me as a resource for the spelling of "and." I insist that he invent a spelling and he decides on "N." As I have mentioned earlier, the "n" in and may be easier to hear because it sounds like the letter name "EN." When Marco asks "Is that how you spell it?" I tell him "that's fine." My response is intended to encourage Marco in using his own spelling strategies for writing. As I mentioned in the last chapter, Lauren was able to write longer texts without assistance in part because she was willing to use invented spellings. Writing is a laborious task for Marco.

I ask, "Now what did you do today that you want to tell her? What did you get done?"

"We got done two envelopes and we did... three envelopes?"

Marco offers me the pencil to write, but I refuse. "I'm not taking your pencil. Ask David to help you. He's a good speller."

"How do you spell 'we'," Marco asks David who is cleaning up the table.

I say, "W:e. What do you think it starts with?"

"What did you say now?," David asks.

I say, "We made three envelopes."

Both boys sit and think for a few moments. David guesses 'r'.

"Okay, 'we'," I say.

"Oh yeah, we."

I spell it "W - E"

Marco repeats the letters while he writes.

I say, "And you want to write 'made'. How does 'made' start?"

Marco thinks for a while. He mouths the word 'made'. He guesses 'k'.

I say the word slowly, "/mmai:d/. Do you know any words that start like 'made'? How about Marco- 'Marco', 'made'. Do they sound the same?"

Marco shakes his head.

I say, "You don't? All right. Well it starts with an 'M'. Okay, what else?"

Neither boy makes a guess. Marco begins playing with the rings in the binder. He turns his body towards the window.

"All right, I'll write it for you this time."

I write 'made' and we discuss the rest of the sentence. Marco decides to write "three pockets" rather than "three envelopes."

I say, "You can write the three, right?"

Marco takes the pencil and writes the numeral "3."

"Here's how you write 'pockets'" I say, showing Marco the word on the cover of the book club book.

Marco says the letters aloud as he writes. David watches Marco.

When I pushed Marco to continue with phonetic spelling strategies, his attention began to wander and his behavior changed. As I have said before, Marco impressed me throughout the day by being attentive. He worked diligently and meticulously on a variety

of assignments and projects. I had just watched Marco and David work very hard on a writing project for thirty minutes. Now Marco was restless and inattentive.

When I ask Marco to focus on the sounds of words, I am pushing him to do something that is beyond his linguistic understandings at this time. The questions I'm asking him are complex and abstract. "W" is a difficult phoneme to hear, and the letter name "Double U" doesn't help the writer. David's guess of "r" is not so far fetched since he may hear the near vowel qualities of the liquid /r/ and the glide /w/. When I ask Marco if "Marco" and "made" sound the same, he says "no." In fact the only similarities are the initial phonemes. Otherwise the words differ a good deal in sound and syllable.

When I pushed Marco beyond his developmental abilities, he became incompetent and restless. At the end of the exchange I return to familiar writing strategies that work for Marco, using other people as a resource ("made"), writing words he "knows" ("3"), and using another text as a model ("pocket"). Marco is once again a capable writer. I spoke earlier of the need to place Marco in situations that push him to read and write. The "book club diary" does just that. After reading and writing for thirty minutes, Susan asks the children to write down what they've just done. But the book club diary is more than a writing exercise. Susan has placed Marco in a community where people record their activities.

James Gee (1991) proposes that if reading and writing are social practices, we can only learn to read (or write) a text within the social world in which the text is normally embedded:

...a way of reading a certain type of text is only acquired, when it is acquired in a 'fluent' or 'native-like' way, by one's being embedded (apprenticed) as a member of a social practice wherein people not only read texts of this type in this way, but also talk about such texts in certain ways, hold certain attitudes and values about them, and socially interact over them in certain ways. (Gee, 1991, p. 41)

Susan has introduced the social world of "clubs," and then brilliantly exploits all the possibilities for reading and writing that are normally embedded in this social context.

The diary also makes learning processes explicit by asking children to reflect upon their activities during the Book Club meeting. The conversations around writing the “book club diary” entry make language processes more visible and explicit as well. Susan encouraged these conversations by suggesting that the club members help each other with the writing.

The “list of math choices” suggests building bridges between home and school supports literacy learning. The “book club diary” illustrates the role of schooling in building bridges between children’s home literacy practices and the literacy practices in the larger community. Since learning to read a text involves understanding the social practices surrounding the text, reading instruction that engages children with whole texts in “real life” social contexts brings these social practices into the classroom.

Figure 16

Building bridges between home, school and other communities

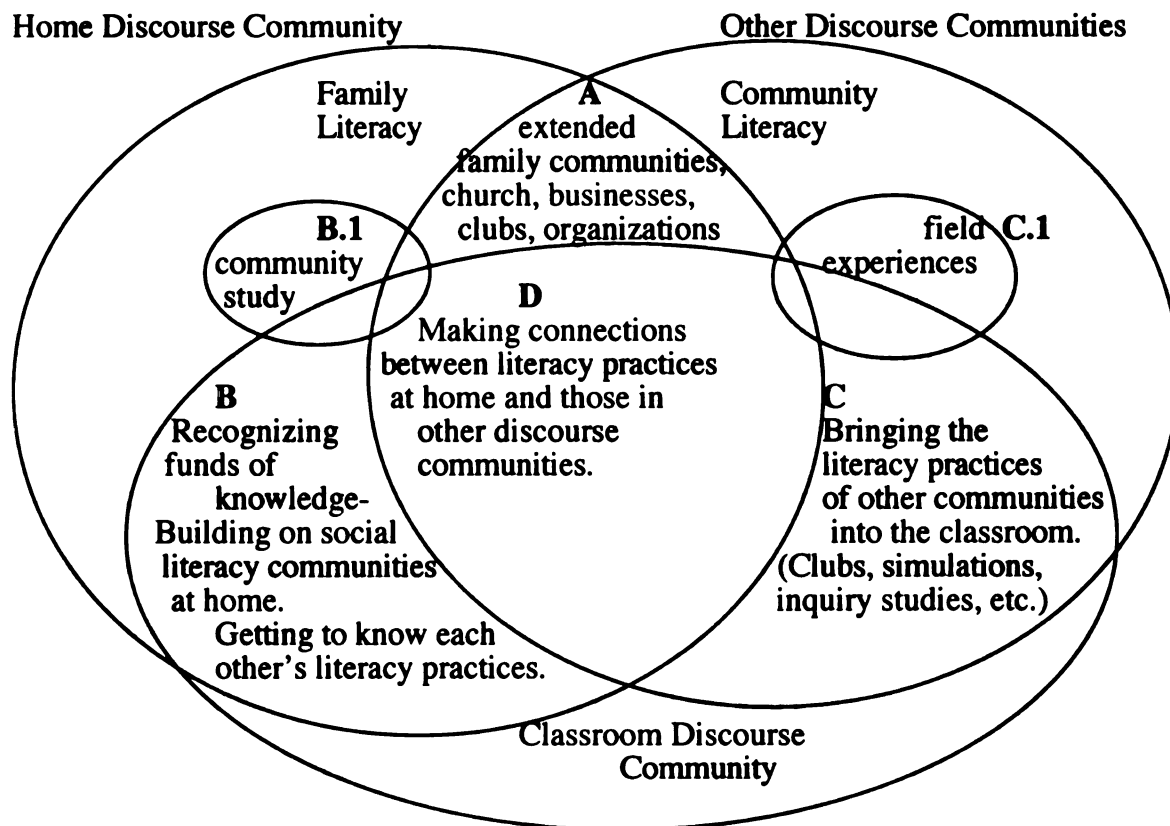


Figure 16 is a model of classroom discourse that illustrates possible intersections between the social worlds of home and family and the social worlds outside of the home. The model represents the potential of schooling to build bridges and maximize intersections between discourse and literacy communities. Each of the intersections (A-D) represents a connection between children's home world and the discourse and literacy of other communities.

- A. Intersections between home discourse and other communities. Even before children come to school, they are immersed in literacy events of communities outside of school such as church, stores, recreation areas, relatives and friends' homes, parents' workplaces, etc. Family members and other adults mediate literacy events in these communities. Children's experiences with discourse communities outside of school vary a great deal from family to family. Discourse communities familiar to the child are a good place to start building bridges between family literacy and the social literacy in the wider world (D).
- B. The intersection between home discourse and school discourse. Recognizing the "funds of knowledge" (Moll, 1988) in children's home literacy communities, classroom literacy events can uncover and build upon the familiar literacy events and practices of home and family. An example is the children's adept responses to the classroom practice of *listing*. Sharing family literacy experiences connects children's home literacy practices with practices of other families in the classroom.
- B1. Family studies and local community studies take children outside of the classroom and into the home community.
- C. The intersections between school literacy practices and practices in the wider world outside of school. The Book Clubs bring the discourse community of the larger world outside of school into the classroom. The language and literacy of social worlds outside of school are also brought into the classroom by drama and simulation (i.e. a classroom store) and by the literacy practices represented in literature and films.

C1. Field studies (and field trips) take children directly into the discourse communities outside of school.

D. In this intersection, the classroom community serves as the bridge between the home world and other social worlds.

The intersection between home, school and the larger community is what education is all about. Too often school practices require families to serve schooling, for example pushing children to spend long hours doing “exercises” at home, often at the expense of recreational activities or family activities. Instead classrooms can support families by helping children to maintain the language of home and family, while making connections to many other language communities. The intersections between home, school, and community can provide spaces in classroom, like “Book Clubs,” in which children experience how people read and write texts, talk about texts and “hold certain attitudes and values about them” (Gee, 1991) within similar discourse communities outside of school.

After establishing these overlapping social worlds in the classroom, teachers have key roles in making the underlying language and thought processes explicit that help learners understand “what’s going on” socially and linguistically. This involves introducing the discourse of wider communities (readers, writers, scientists, etc.) into the conversation. But it also involves revealing the child’s own strengths and strategies. Once apprenticed in the discourse of “book club diaries,” Marco is able to use many of the strengths and strategies he used in more familiar social contexts.

Lisa Delpit argues that “If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier” (Delpit, 1995, p.24). I share Delpit’s belief that school literacy events are politically charged. I also share her concern about cultural miscommunications between teachers and African American children. However, I’m not sure that this miscommunication has to do with indirect language or instruction. Susan’s directions to Marco and David were quite clear. It is the

opportunity to participate in a discourse community where participants keep a diary that assists the boys in understanding the rules of “book club diaries.”

The discourse of traditional direct instruction often involves meaningless and artificial language that does not exist once a child leaves the classroom. This is not the kind of “direct instruction that Delpit advocates in *Other People’s Children*. What she suggests is explicit instruction in the “language of power.” However, the linguistic rules of the “culture of power” Delpit wants children to attain are embedded in the discourse of communities outside of the classroom.

Building bridges between home discourse and the language of wider communication creates possibilities for observing how literacy works in real life social events and discourse communities. Reflecting and discussing the processes behind literacy events makes the underlying processes more explicit. One social process that children might examine is the power relationships embedded in literacy events.

Implications for Research

The intersections between home, school, and community suggest many areas of research. Where do classroom literacy events fit in these intersections? What does it mean to make processes explicit when talking about academic discourse or scientific discourse, for example? The issue of listening and selective listening is one worth further study, expanding it to observing the larger population. Who listens, and when? Does listening vary according to gender or economic background? Is selective listening developmental? Is it related to reading proficiency?

In terms of my own future research with this longitudinal data collection, I will include more of the longitudinal data, tracing Marco and Lauren’s development and seeing whether the issues I’ve identified are consistent with other school days. I will also expand the case studies and include some of the other children, particularly in looking at certain aspects of literacy events such as listening, reading and writing. Since these days were

influenced by a standardized test, it would be interesting to contrast them with other days during the year.

Crafting literate Identities: the Social Experience of Literacy

Literate identities are constructed in the interplay between creative processes and social practices within contextual worlds of home and school. Ken Goodman (1996) describes language development as the tension between personal invention and social convention. The creative, constructive process is like a centrifugal force shooting the learner out on a journey of invention and discovery. The conventions embedded in literacy events, social events involving texts, are the centripetal force that pulls the individual back into the social circle.

However, as I bring together the ethnographic and transactional lenses to consider language as both process and practice, the interaction between personal and social seems much more complex and multifaceted. I have described, for example, the “sociolinguistic understandings” that Marco brings as resources to the literacy event. However, these understandings are not fixed bits of knowledge, but are current representations of the child’s experiences with previous social (and linguistic) events and the child’s observations and interpretations of the events. The current representations of Marco’s understandings are also socially constructed within literacy events involving other participants. In addition, the texts within these events also have a multifaceted social history.

The child’s “understandings” are one thread within the literacy event. Other threads involve the “understandings” of other participants, the social roles and relationships of participants, the social history of texts, the “ways with words” (social strategies) that participants employ around these texts, and so on. During the literacy event, participants engage in social action (do something with language), communicate meanings in various ways, construct social roles and relationships, and construct new social “understandings.” These social understandings also include many threads related to the content or action of the event, the ways that language works socially within the event.

Within this milieu language development is another thread - an ongoing process though not the focus of the event.

In this study I unravel some of these threads in an attempt to “look beyond the literacy event and the linguistic and the linguistic transactions that take place” (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988, p. 200). I feel I have created windows into the complexities of the “uniquely human experience” that is literacy. However, as I struggle to record these images of literacy in writing I find that any representation of literacy events loses much in the translation from social event to written interpretation. The term “literacy event,” while essential for description and analysis, is a simplification of a complex social fabric where literacy might be seen as strands and textures in an interwoven pattern. These events are not “literacy events,” in the sense that they ultimately focus on literacy, but social events where literacy has an important role.

I have also had to stop and reconsider every time I refer to Marco and Lauren. As a veteran teacher I am comfortable referring to Lauren and Marco as “students,” “young readers and writers,” “language learners,” “meaning makers,” etc. However, each of these descriptors implies that the purpose of the social event is to be literate, construct meaning, or learn language and literacy. I have shown that Marco and Lauren are learning language while participating in these social events, and I believe strongly that participation in “real life” social events is the ideal social setting for language learning. However, as I will explore later, literacy events are most authentic when the focus of the event is NOT on language instruction, but when literacy use occurs within a variety of social activities (including construction of literary works).

In an effort to avoid positioning Lauren and Marco (from my vantage point as researcher) as language learners within these events, I tend to describe them as “participants” in literacy events and as “members” of a classroom community. Marco and Lauren are positioned and position themselves in a fluid range of roles within events. They are constructing literate identities in relationship to other members of their school and

home communities. Their ongoing perspectives and understandings of what it means to be literate within this classroom community emerge as they negotiate social literacy events in the classroom.

Lauren

In the following vignette, Lauren moves from one literacy event to another, involving four different texts and genres: the math worksheet, the name book, the team behavior chart, and Lauren's self-authored books. I have described each of these literacy events before, but include them again in this longer narrative to show the rich variety of literacy experiences in Lauren's Day.

Lauren studies her math sheet. She says, "Can I see your pencil?" and takes a pencil out of Amber's hand. She writes on her paper, and rolls the pencil back to Amber.

Lauren says the numbers as she finds them and pastes them down, "twenty five, thirty.. this is it."

"I only got /two \more," she says. She leans back and puts her hands on her head.

Danielle looks over at Lauren, and Lauren repeats, "I only got two more. See, look. One, two. One, two."

Lauren continues working. "Now I got one more."

Danielle is looking at her answer pieces, "five, seven."

Lauren glues the last piece down. "Got it. I got all of them right."

Alyssa comes over to the table and leans over to look at Lauren's paper.

Lauren says, "Here, I'm done with it. Alyssa, I'm already done with mine."

Alyssa picks up one of Lauren's strips.

Lauren says, "Now you put that back." and laughs.

Alyssa mimics, "Now you put that back." She leans close to Lauren.

Lauren says, "Do you know what Alyssa means?"

Alyssa says, "yes." She pretends to slap Lauren, but does not touch her.

Lauren says, "My mama got a name book. What does it mean?"

Alyssa says, "I don't know what it means. I know what Lauren means."

Lauren asks, "What?"

"It means soft and gentle and meddlesome and (?¹⁷blavely?)."

"No, it doesn't." Lauren tells what her name means.¹⁸

Alyssa repeats Lauren's definition and laughs.

Lauren says, "Yeah. I got a name book. So you're a liar." She smiles at Alyssa.

¹⁷ Question marks within parenthesis indicate speech I was unable to discern from audio or videotape. Where applicable, I include the speech I think I hear within the parentheses. After repeated listening, I believe "blavely" is an Alyssa's invention, perhaps a malapropism.

¹⁸ Lauren is a pseudonym so I have not included the definition she gave.

Alyssa leans backward. She leans forward again. "My aunt has a name book and she told my mama what Lauren means. But then I forgot."

Lauren plays with Amber's pony tails, counting them as Amber works. The girls look at the board, where Susan is giving out team points.

Lauren says, "I'm going to finish writing my (??) book." She begins pulling things out of the cubbie in her desk until she finds a "book" made from folding blank paper and stapling.

As I stated before, Susan's classroom is a place where literacy events are squeezed in between other literacy events. For example, offering "Silent Reading" as a break between "Read Aloud" and "Book Club Presentations"; or gathering for the "Morning Meeting" with an illustrated songbook. In this case, it is Lauren who squeezes two quick literacy events between math and writing. But the social contexts of this literate classroom community provide the opportunities for multiple layers of social reading and writing.

Lauren socially constructs a literate identity in relation to the children around her. Within this literate community, Lauren is a "student." She writes to get her school work done, and reads to see how her "team" is doing. She is a "story writer," who pulls out her current draft when she has a free moment. She is an authority, able to quote from texts to prove her friend is "a liar." And she is a friend, using language and literacy to communicate and extend her relationships with the other girls. She is Lauren: "soft and gentle and meddlesome and blavely."

Marco

As illustrated earlier, Marco expressed wise and complex commentaries on literacy during the debriefing interview. Interestingly, he describes literacy as both a language process and a social practice. Marco describes himself as a "good reader." When I ask how he can tell, he uses the book "*What's in My Pocket?*" (Williams, 1994b) to describe the meaning making process.

D: Are you a good reader, Marco?

M: Yeah.

D: How can you tell?

Text: Pocket, pocket, What's in My Pocket? Something that's square.

M: Because... how can I tell... because that I can tell... because I see this word okay... and... that when... when they had draw the pictures and I had... and I had put.. I had saw it... it had to be something square. I saw this shape, cause it's going like that and like that.

(Picture - outline of a square inside the pocket.)

And so I thought it might be "pocket." I might saw this one.

(Points to word "pocket")

Cause that's a pocket (points to pocket on man's jacket in illustration.)

And so, "*Pocket, pocket what's... and what's in my pocket.*"

(Points to each word) *Something square.*

(Runs finger under sentence, points to square.)

Something that's square.

(Re-reads pointing to each word.)

So that's how I learned how to read. I look at the words first.

D: You look at the words first? And then what do you do?

M: Then when I get done practicing words. When I get done reading that one time... then I just go back to it. And keep on reading, and keep on reading it over. And then I look at the next page. And keep on reading it over and stuff

D: How do you figure it out the first time you see it?

M: Um. The pictures.

D: You look at the pictures?

(Marco nods, yes.)

In this exchange, Marco describes a strategy of looking closely at the picture, and then looking at the text for key concept words (square, pocket) related to the concepts presented in pictures. He uses pictures to trigger his semantic strategies. Next, he describes a "keep on reading it over" strategy where he employs syntactic and syntactic strategies to construct meaningful sentences. Marco views himself as is a good reader because he is able to use all the available cues and strategies to make meaning with text. He is also a good reader because he is in a classroom where good readers are readers that search for meaning, using all the resources available. Marco is a participant in many literacy events where these views are explicitly stated by Susan and other classroom members.

The description above describes Marco's transactions with texts, providing a view of literacy as a language process. However, since Marco did not yet read unfamiliar texts independently, I wondered how he initially learned to read the text "*What's in My Pocket?*"

D: How'd you learn to read this book? (*What's in my Pocket?*)
M: From my friends.
D: Like who... who helped you read it?
M: David... uh (thinking)... David and Patrice
D: So you, David and Patrice read it together?
M: Yeah (nods)
D: And now you can read it by yourself?
M: Yeah (nods)
D: So that's how it works, learning to read in this room?
M: So... and then I read the first page, (turns book back to front cover) like this. I read this page (shows D first page of story text) and then=
D: =When you're reading, I'm sorry... go ahead
M: And then when I get done reading that page, then David goes.
D: Oh so you take turns?

Marco's initial meaning making of the book "*What's in my Pocket?*" is supported by two other readers, each contributing their experiences and strategies. Here literacy is a social practice where participants share expertise and resources as they negotiate reading a new text together. Marco is learning to read and write, and he is learning how to talk about reading and writing. At the same time, and perhaps more critically, he is learning how people come together to create social meanings.

Post Script

What happened to Lauren and Marco after Second Grade?

In writing this study I deliberately describe how Marco and Lauren *are* readers and writers. Both children had amazing strengths and abilities as meaning makers. I had observed Lauren and Marco starting in kindergarten, and I knew they had both progressed enormously in their language development. The text in Lauren's kindergarten book included three, seemingly random, letters on each page, which she "read" as several sentences. Marco wrote his first name on his picture, but did not include all of the letters in his last name. I believe that literacy learning is developmental as well as experiential. You can't rush development, although you can certainly pad the learning experiences with richly contextualized opportunities for meaning construction.

Still I was concerned about what would happen to the children, particularly Marco, as they went into third grade. I didn't follow them closely after the second grade because

they did not have experienced whole language teachers. In fact, in third grade Lauren and Marco suffered the fate of too many inner city classrooms and had a string of substitute teachers for most of the school year. When Marco and Lauren were in fourth grade, I went back to talk with them. They were both in the same fourth grade classroom.

Lauren was doing very well in school, according to both her own report and her teacher's. She was able to read and retell several texts in her eloquent storytelling style. Her teacher had "sustained silent reading" and she was reading literature books in school as well as at home. She told me that she was still writing, and had a thick folder full of her writings at home. Her writing folder at school had only assigned topics and some worksheets (letter writing format, etc.) so I wasn't able to see how her original work had progressed. She was her usual happy and talkative self.

Marco's teacher told me she had recommended that he be tested for special education classes. She said he was not doing well in any area. This surprised me, since he always seemed to excel in math. Marco's teacher reported that he didn't follow directions and never seemed to know what was going on. He had become a behavior problem. As a result, his desk was placed near hers and away from his classmates. He had few opportunities to "overhear" other children read and write or talk to them about reading and writing.

When I interviewed Marco he had made progress in his independent reading abilities. He was able to interpret unfamiliar texts using graphophonic cues as well as syntax and semantics. However, he was very reluctant to make predictions, and would stop and seek my help. Marco had regressed in his view of himself as a reader. He told me he was a poor reader. When I asked him to write, he said didn't have anything to write about. His reading and writing were slow and painstaking, which discouraged him more.

I asked Marco what he remembered about learning to read, and he said he learned to read in third grade. I believe he was describing his development of the alphabetic relationship between written language and oral language in English. I'm not surprised that

he “learned to read” in third grade, since he was beginning to explore alphabetic relationships when I worked with him in second grade. Based on my experiences as a reading specialist, I think third grade may be the upper end of “normal” reading development if we only had a system that allowed children to develop literacy normally.

I went back for several visits and worked with Marco. Although he said he had nothing to say, he found many topics for writing once we got started. I webbed out the topics as we talked, and he used the web as a reference for concept words as he created several personal narratives. I looked for simple stories that would interest a fourth grader, and found that he especially liked folk tales. They were predictable since he already knew the story. I bought him several books and left them with him, but I don’t think he read them while I was not there. After several visits his teacher told me his behavior had improved.

What Marco needed in third grade was the rich immersion in literacy events that he had from kindergarten through second grade. What he got was one string of substitutes after another. By fourth grade he had acquired a label and a chair in the corner by himself. I’m sure Marco’s teacher was doing what she felt was best for him. His teacher recommended him for Special Education because there was no classroom support for children like Marco who needed extra help. As school activities became more and more challenging, Marco just stopped trying. This fed into the perception that he was slow. In addition, his lack of reading and writing practice further slowed his development. And, because he had time on his hands with nothing to do, he began to act out in class.

Marco and I made some progress together, but my time was limited. As I was working with Marco in fourth grade, I was watching the second grader on video-tape. Marco, who loved listening to stories. Marco, who wiggled like a snake and made a prediction. Marco, who applauded Jackie’s wonderful speeches. Marco, who was so confident and attentive. Marco, who invented an outline. Marco, who was so capable when he was working with other children.

Sitting alone by the teacher’s desk. It breaks my heart.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWING PROCEDURES

This appendix provides greater detail about the components included in “reading and writing interviews.”

- **Book handling:** The book handling task gets young children talking about the form, function, and language of books. Children are asked questions that elicit understandings about concepts such as page, cover, author, illustrator, etc. The researcher reads the book with the child and gauges the child’s awareness of print concepts such as text as message carrier, directionality, and reading strategies such as prediction and retelling. The interview questions I used are printed in the appendix of a pre-school study conducted by Goodman, Altwerger and Marek (1989). The researchers adapted these procedures from Marie Clay’s Sand Test (1972). I used the book handling interview procedures until children were reading independently (in some cases this occurred in kindergartners) and then moved to miscue analysis procedures.
- **Print Awareness:** This interview gauges a child’s awareness of “environmental print” such as signs, logos, advertisements, etc. I conducted these interviews in first-grade following a unit where children were asked to make posters or books of things they “could read.” The procedures for this interview were also based on the study *Print Awareness in Preschool Children* (Goodman, Altwerger, & Marek, 1989) and research procedures are detailed in the appendix of their book.
- **Miscue Analysis:** In this interview, the child reads a text without any assistance from an adult, and then retells the “story” they have just read. The procedure is described in detail in the book *Reading Miscue Inventory: Alternative Procedures* by Goodman, Watson, and Burke. (1987) In debriefing interviews, I generally used texts that the children had read or written that day, a variation from miscue procedures. However, I

asked each child in the study to read and retell unfamiliar texts. I also used miscue analysis procedures to analyze the reading process of texts read and written during classroom literacy events.

- **Writing analysis interview:** These interviews focused on a sample of a child's writing. I asked the child to read her or his writing and to talk about the writing and art work. Initially, I was interested in the child's awareness of forms and functions of writing and distinctions between drawing and writing. In addition, I was interested in the composition process and later interviews focused extensively on how children got ideas, how they assessed their own writing, etc.
- **Reading and Writing interview:** These interviews are designed to understand how readers (and writers) perspectives on literacy. Questions probe children's attitudes towards literacy and towards themselves as readers and writers. Questions included: Are you a good reader? What makes someone a good writer? Other questions ask children to describe their own reading and writing processes, such as: When you're reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do then? These interviews were based initially on Carolyn Burke's "Reader's Interview of the Reading Process" (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987) which has been adapted and used widely by many teachers and researchers. I often used these values and process questions in my own classroom teaching, and found it natural to ask such questions during debriefing interviews and during class time.
- **Debriefing Interviews:** The debriefing interviews occurred at the end of a day of observation. During the interview, I asked the child to talk about the events of the day. I was particularly interested in how the child perceived events, and what they thought were the functions and reasons for various activities. I also asked the child to re-read texts they had read and/or written during the day, and talked with them about the meaning construction process. I also used the interviews, as time allowed, to ask the child general questions about literacy and schooling.

APPENDIX B

MARCO'S DAY

This observation takes place on March 7, and begins at 9:30 am after “Things to do”, an informal opening to the day where children select from a list of assignments and choices on the chalkboard. One of today’s assignments, labeled “handwriting”, was to copy a short poem from the chalkboard.

Transcription notes follow Appendix C, Lauren’s Day

Language Event 1 - Three Toed Sloth

Susan Austin, Marco’s teacher, stands at the front of the room. Jack Prelutsky’s poem *The Three Toed Sloth* is printed on the chalkboard. A picture of a sloth hangs next to the poem.

The Three Toed Sloth

The three-toed sloth is in a deep
and curious wakeless sleep.
The boughs and branches bend and break
but seldom does the sloth awake.
The noisy jungle far below
is not for three-toed sloths to know.

Jack Prelutsky

The children are sitting at table groupings with their “handwriting” copies of the poem in front of them. Susan refers to the first two lines of the poem, explaining that sloths sleep about 18 hours every day. Alyssa does some rapid figuring, and says that the sloth is only awake for six hours out of the day. Susan asks, “How did you figure that out?”

Alyssa says, “I counted from 18 to 24.”

Susan repeats, “She counted from 18 to 24. So a sloth is awake six hours out of the day.”

Susan reads, “*The noisy jungle far below is not for three toed sloths to know.*”

She explains the sloth “hardly ever goes down on the ground” because it has long claws, good for climbing but not walking. Susan points out a greenish tinge on the sloth’s fur in the picture. She asks if the children have seen algae in fish tanks. She wonders if the green-brown fur makes it hard or easy to see sloths in the rain forest. Jonathan responds with, “hard.” Susan suggests that algae is good camouflage.

Susan says. “Julia and Brent were trying to figure out, today, which vowels we’re going to look for in the poem.” After reviewing vowels discussed previously, Susan says, “We’re looking for the long “O”, or when we hear it say...”

Children call out, “O”, or “Its name.”

Susan continues, “Its name. We talked about this yesterday, your mouth makes that oo:oo shape.” Susan asks what words in the poem have the “long O sound.” Alicia

suggests, “toed”, and Susan circles it on the board. She circles other “long o” words as children call them out. The children circle the words on their papers. Susan walks around assisting.

The camera shifts to focus on Marco who sits at the “square team” table, between David and James. He is wearing a red plaid shirt and has a fade style haircut, shaved short on top and even more closely on the sides. He holds his pencil poised to write; peers closely at the board and then down at his paper. On Marco’s right, James is circling words on his paper. Marco looks at the board, moves his mouth, and looks down at his paper again. He points at the paper with his pencil, and says something to David. He glances over at the camera.

Susan says, “Okay let’s see if you can do this one.” After praising the class for choral reading abilities, Susan leads a choral reading of Three Toed Sloth. Marco recites the title and first line, which also begins “*The three toed sloth....*” After the first line, Marco holds his pencil poised and listens to his classmates. Next to Marco, James reads from his paper while Terrence reads from the board. Destine, who also sits at Marco’s table, is drawing a picture on her paper.

Susan says, “Would the daily helpers please come up?” She tells the children to put their work in their “things to do folders.” Students begin to move and talk. Alyssa comes over and picks up James’ pencil and then puts it down. Marco says, “She took your pencil.” James says, “no”, but Marco insists disagrees. James explains, and Marco nods. Marco puts his pencil on his paper as if ready to write. When David gets up, Marco gets up and begins walking towards his “assigned seat” at the “triangle” table to put his work away.

As he walks, he shows his paper to David, saying, “I did all those.”

Language Event 2- Morning Meeting

The students gather on and around the 6 x 9 rug defining the classroom meeting area. The “daily helpers”, Alyssa and James stand in front of a bulletin board waiting for classmates to get settled. The bulletin board holds a teacher-made calendar, and a number line, written in children’s handwriting, indicating the “days of school.” Above the number line is a computer banner with the message “peace” and pictures of civil rights leaders.

Amber, Lauren, Alicia, Darryl, Jonathan, and Terrence sit in the front row facing the daily helpers. Marco sits on the floor near the rug, next to Terrence. Other children are scattered around the area rug, with a few sitting along the North wall. Darryl makes a comment just before the meeting starts:

Darryl: Miss Austin, they put twelve zero zero. {On the “days of school” number line}

Susan: You know what, James got confused. He thought nineteen and thought 20, and got excited and put two “O”s=

Terrence: =Twelve=

Susan: =and made two hundred=

Terrence: =twelve hundred

Susan: So I just Xed out one of the zeros. It’s one hundred and twenty.

(Jackie stands up, raising her hand, then sits back down.)

You can see. There’s the one, the two, and the zero.

Susan: Jackie?

Jackie: That’s how you learn cause you know

How (? the line is?)

I did that before but I thought about it

And I crossed it out.

But before I crossed it out, I looked at it a couple of times.

Susan: That's right. Jackie says, "That's how you learn."

Susan says, "James hold on a second. Let's wait until everybody's ready."

James begins the morning meeting. "Today's one hundred and twenty. It's a four, two, and a ten." The factors of 120 are indicated on the number line with symbols below the numbers: a square for multiples of four, two dots for multiples of two, etc. Children call out, "five" and James puts his hand on his head, miming "I knew that." Someone calls out "ten", and James says, "I said ten."

James walks over to the easel, but Alyssa pulls him away. He mouths, "Oh yeah." Marco looks at his feet. He has on new shoes.

The easel has magnetic blocks under the headings of hundreds, tens, and ones. There is a one hundred-square and two ten-strips. Alyssa says, "I took all the ones off and put a ten, and it's a hundred and twenty." Marco talks to Terrence and Jonathan.

Alyssa holds up a large cardboard model of a thermometer, with the temperature marked by a moving elastic. Alyssa says, "Today was 16 degrees."

Susan tells Alyssa and James to fix the line, "It looks like it's on the ten." Several children ask questions about how to interpret the temperature. Susan points out that each line is two degrees. She takes the thermometer model and shows it to group at the back of the rug, explaining that only the tens are written down, and then you have to count by twos.

James walks over to Susan's chair, to the south of the area rug. Susan says, "Marco, James is not feeling good about you talking."

Marco sits up quietly. Susan says, "Marco, what are you going to say to James?"

Marco says, "Sorry."

Latrice selects "Jambo", a Swahili greeting, for the attendance. Susan turns pages in a black loose-leaf binder with a record sheet for each child.

"Jambo, Alicia."

"Jambo, Miss Austin."

As Susan greets each child, Alyssa tallies students present and James tallies those absent on a tally chart on the chalkboard. Most children, including Marco, respond with, "Jambo, Miss Austin." However, some children are more creative.

Jonathan says, "Jambo Madam Miss Austin. Happy Good Morning."

Susan sometimes makes comments as she calls children's names. Sharonda "might come, but we have to mark her absent for now." Susan compliments Danielle on coming to school four days in a row, and says Danielle will be in school an entire week if she comes on Friday.

Students often chime in with responses to Susan's comments:

Susan: Sarina hardly ever absent.

Voice: I know.

Susan: She hasn't been feeling well. She told me she has a cold.

Voice: Every day she said it.

Susan: Rudy? No:o Rudy.

Chorus: No:o Rudy.

Marco watches the daily helpers as they tally the attendance figures. Jonathan shows Marco some candy in his pocket. Then Jonathan takes something out of Marco's hair, and strokes Marco's head a few times, like a brush. Marco strokes his own head. Danielle raises her hand and reports that Jonathan has food. Susan tells Jonathan to put the candy away.

Susan and the helpers begin to count the tally marks on the chalkboard. "Five, ten." Susan says, "I'm not going alone." She begins counting again, and the class chants with her, "Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty one, twenty two, twenty three, twenty four."

There are 24 children present and four absent. The daily helpers take the "missing person's graph" down from the chalkboard, and shade in four boxes for this day.

Susan says, "Stand up." The children stand up and begin singing:

I'm gonna shake, shake, shake my sillies out.
Shake, shake, shake my sillies out.
Shake, shake, shake my sillies out.
Wiggle my waggles away.

The children shake their bodies and walk around the room. Marco shakes his hands and sings with the group. The class sings "I'm gonna clap my crazies out." Marco struts around in a kind of dance: clap, step right, bend the knee and clap, step left, bend the knee and clap. Many children pair up and slap hands together as they clap. After two more verses, someone starts chanting. "Head and shoulders." Susan says "okay" and they continue chanting:

Head and shoulders baby, one, two, three.
Head and shoulders baby, one, two, three.
Head and shoulders, head and shoulders,
Head and shoulders baby, one, two, three.

As they chant, they touch their heads, shoulders and then clap three times. Many children clap hands together in pairs or small groups. Marco leans against a table. He joins in sporadically through three more verses: knees and ankles, touch the floor, and stand up - sit down. Children move around the circle area freely and everyone participates.

After this chant is over, Susan leads:

Teddy bear, teddy bear turn around.
Teddy bear, teddy bear, sit right down.

This is a signal for all of the children to sit down on the area rug. Susan says, "Face the East and look at Amber." Morning Meeting time is over and it's time for "Books to Go."

Language Event 3 - Books to Go

"Let's see who's ready first."

Amber is sitting in a chair near the door, waiting to read.

Marco gets up and walks to the back of the room to throw something away. As the children get settled, James quietly talks to Susan. Susan says, "Amber, you were going to read first, but James has a good idea. Your book is long. We might have to divide it up in parts. James' book is shorter. Is it all right if he goes before you?"

Amber agrees.

"Okay, James will go first. GOOD IDEA, James."

James goes off to get his book. As the children wait Susan says, "You are going to like these books today. Amber has an information book about my WORST thing."

Children call out, "Snakes."

Susan talks about the paper Anaconda that a group of children made the day before. It is a full length model, 25 feet long, and hangs from a wire going across the length of the room.

There is informal talk between Susan and various students as they wait for James to begin. It is still a class meeting. Susan reminds the children, "While we're waiting for James, this is not a time to get up and walk around." But children do not raise their hands to talk, and quiet side conversations develop.

When James is seated in the reader's chair by the door, Susan says, "James you can wait till everybody's done [talking]." James looks around at the class and then begins to read *If a Tree Could Talk*. The book is an ecology poem, with one line of verse on each illustrated page. James reads the text slowly and clearly, and then shows the pictures to the class.

The class is very quiet. The girls in the first "row" stare up at the book. Terrence and Darryl move towards James, kneeling and leaning in to the book. Marco sits behind Alicia with his legs folded. He faces James and looks up when each illustration is shown.

The children sitting closest to James assist him when they feel he needs help. At one point, they call out predictions:

James: *Help us to live. We w... w...*

Voices: *wish*

James: *wish to stay*

At another point when James appears "stuck", someone says, "James, show me." James holds the book out to the girls in the front. Amber holds the page so they can see. Lauren says, "every." James continues, "*Every day's Earth Day...*"

Marco plays with his shoes. He looks up each time James shows the picture. After about three minutes, James finishes reading. The children applaud. Marco holds his hands above his head and claps vigorously.

Amber leaves to get her book. Terrence and Darryl move onto the carpet, negotiating good spots with the girls in the first row. They talk as they wait. Marco is sitting on his knees. He flips onto his back, then sits down with his legs curled to one side. James sits down against the wall between Audrey and Terry.

Marco pulls up his sock and studies his shoe.

Susan and Amber look at the book. It's long and Susan wants her to read it "in parts." Since it doesn't have chapters, they plan how many pages Amber will read.

Amber begins reading, "*There are over 2,400 different kinds of snakes in the world.*"

The children gasp and look around at each other. Terrence and Darryl open their mouths wide, miming amazement. Marco looks down at his shoes as Amber reads, but up at the picture when she shows it to the class.

Amber continues, "*Snakes slither and slide on their belly.*"

Marco places his hands together in front of his chest like a snake's head. He makes a slithering motion with his upper body as Amber continues to read. He continues for a time, appearing to enjoy the movement. Amber shows the picture to the group. Darryl

holds the page to look closer. Alicia leans over to see. Marco looks at the picture. He makes a comment to Jackie. Marco is sitting with one knee up, one foot flat on the floor.

Amber reads, "*The giant of all snakes is the Anaconda.*"

Darryl leans back onto his knees, miming being impressed. Terrence points to the class model hanging across the room. Marco pulls up his knee sock.

Amber reads, "*It can be as long as a school bus. And weigh as much as two grown men.*"

Darryl says, "Jeesh."

Marco says, "Let me see the picture."

Other kids call out, "Ooo. Show the picture."

Amber shows the picture to the class. Children cry out in amazement, "Whoa!"

Amber reads the names of snakes from a page about snake sizes. She self corrects several miscues, such as "rat snake" to "rattle snake", but then holds the book out to Darryl and Terrence.

Darryl reads "*gator snake*", and Susan calls from the back, "garter."

Amber holds the book out and around slowly so that kids can look closely at the picture of many snakes. Children look at the illustration intently, and then turn to each other to share and gauge reactions. Marco studies the picture, pointing with his finger.

Amber continues to read. Some children (Darryl, Terrence, Jackie, Alicia) appear to be totally engrossed in the book. Others appear intrigued, looking at Amber intently although they do not react audibly. Marco squats on his shoes, biting his nails. He watches Amber closely.

Amber continues reading, seeking help from Alicia, Darryl and Terrence on two occasions. Children do not generally assist until Amber requests help by turning the book so they can look. At one point, she stops to work out the word "sense." Jackie walks over to stand behind Amber. Darryl and Terrence lean over to look. Marco carefully ties and reties each of his shoes.

Darryl says, "That word?"

Amber says, "yes", and Darryl supplies the word.

Later Amber reads, "*In a flash the rattle snake...*"

She stops and the boys stand up to look.

"Give her some time." Susan says.

The listeners wait, while Amber studies the text. Amber turns towards the first row and says, "Alicia." Alicia, Darryl and Terrence all study the page with Amber.

Someone says, "stricks", and Amber repeats it, but then stops and says, "Miss Austin, what's this word?"

Susan begins to walk around the children towards Amber.

Susan: Can you go on with the sentence. Let's listen to the rest of the sentence.

Amber: ...*the mouse.*

Susan: Okay, start at the beginning.

Amber: *In a flash the rattlesnake something the mouse.*

Susan: And I heard someone over here say "stricks",
I think that's cause it starts with s-t-r."

Terrence: (quietly) ssss sstrike.
Susan: So what do you think would make sense?
What's the rattlesnake going to do to the mouse?
Terrence: Strike.
Voices: STRIKE! (Loud staccato, like a snake striking a mouse)

Amber continues reading, "*It grabs it with its needle sharp teeth, then it...*"

"Swallows it," Marco whispers loudly as Amber pauses.

Susan says, "Marco has a prediction. Say it out loud Marco."

"Swallows it," Marco says.

"... *sinks it's fangs into the mouse,*" Amber continues.

James says, "Ooo. Dang!"

When Amber finishes reading the page and is showing the picture, Susan says, "I want to ask Amber something. Marco thought it was 'swallowed'. How did you know it was 'sinks' and not 'swallowed'?" Amber responds that she just knew the word. Susan goes on to explain that Marco's prediction made sense with what came before it, but not with what came after.

"Okay, did we get to 24?" Susan asks Amber.

"Miss Austin," someone says, "You said we would stop at page 23."

Susan says, "Okay, we'll stop at 23."

"I'm past 23," Amber shows Susan the book.

"Okay," Susan says, "you want to read those two pages? Okay, cause this is a pretty exciting snake. Then we'll stop."

"*Snakes that kill their prey by squeezing are called constrictors.*" Amber reads about the Anaconda.

Marco sits with his legs crossed looking at Amber as she reads. Brent says, "Miss Austin, that's like that other snake that we made." Kids clamor to hold the book as Amber shows them the picture. There is general discussion of the Anaconda, with many voices talking at the same time. Susan says, "Yeah! It's supposed to be the biggest snake in the world."

Susan tells Amber to put the book away. "Put a marker in it. Go get a piece of paper."

Susan asks Brent to explain how they made the paper model of an Anaconda hanging on a wire across the classroom. She tells how they estimated 25 feet by using five lengths of paper the height of Susan, because "I'm a little bit taller than five feet." She involves the class in the computation, five feet times five strips of paper equals twenty five feet.

Books-to-go ends when Susan walks to the chalkboard on the south wall and begins to give instructions for math.

Language Event 4- Small Group Math Lesson

Susan walks over the chalkboard and begins giving instructions for math. Someone asks, "Can we do writing?"

Susan says, "We'll do writing in a few minutes. I want the kids who were working on math with me to stay here today. Kids who don't have math sheets can choose."

Susan explains the choices as she lists them on the board. In one case, she demonstrates how a math game is played. James and Terrence signal each other silently, perhaps planning out their activities. Marco signals at Jonathan.

Susan says, "Okay, let me read the names of the kids who are going to stay with me. Get a clipboard and a pencil. If I don't call your name, you know you can make choices."

Children move around on the carpet as they listen. Marco gets up when he hears his name, and walks over to the math shelves to get his clipboard. Susan finishes calling the names, and the remaining children get up and move quickly to get materials for choices. Susan says, "You know what? Everyone stop. I made a mistake." She walks over to the table area, but sees the children have selected materials and tables without a problem. She says, "Oh you worked it out."

The teaching group is milling around on the gathering rug. Susan sits down on the floor holding a large bag filled with "unit blocks." Marco sits down on Susan's right and James sits down on her left. Jonathan sits down next to Marco. The other children form a loose circle on the floor except for Julia who lies on her belly behind Susan.

Danielle shows me her math sheet, "I wrote my name in cursive."

Susan gives Marco his math sheet with a comment, "Whoa! You got so excited, ((perhaps responding to how name is written on page)) MA:rc0." She sings out his name.

Marco puts his math sheet on his clipboard. He goes to get a pencil from his desk. Susan tells the kids to get a set of "tens and ones" from the large bag. Each child gets a baggie with orange plastic strips representing "tens", and small wooden cubes representing "ones."

Susan leaves the group and turns out the lights. Susan addresses the independent work groups. She clarifies makes sure each child is settled in one of the choices listed on the board.

Marco writes something on his paper. He carefully puts his plastic baggie under the clip on his clipboard and listens to Susan. He glances over at the camera. Terrence, Audrey, and James take out their ten sticks. James spreads his sticks out like a fan. Julia looks at her clipboard and begins working. Marco sits with one knee up. He taps his pencil on the clipboard and waits for Susan to finish talking.

Susan turns the lights on and returns to her spot next to Marco. Destine sits down next to Danielle. Danielle says, "I know how to do this." Audrey and Destine look at Danielle.

Danielle says, "Do you know how to use them? I'll help you."

Terrence studies his math paper. He says to James, "These ones down here going to be even."

When all of the children have clipboards and materials, Susan begins. She points out the first problem ($35+18$) and asks, "Can you make thirty five with your base ten sticks?"

Marco takes out his ten sticks. He lays out three tens.

Susan asks, "How many tens in thirty five?"

Marco looks around at the other children and what they are doing. He places three ten sticks on his clipboard. He puts five unit blocks near the sticks. He looks over to see what James is doing.

Susan asks, "What are we adding?", and kids call out, "eighteen."

Susan looks around at each child's work as she gives instructions. "Marco, put these over here so you can see them." Susan moves Marco's sticks off the clipboard and arranges them on the carpet where they are more visible.

Children repeat instructions and talk over their work. "Eighteen. She said eighteen." Marco silently takes out a ten stick, and then lines up eight one cubes on the right side as Susan did with the thirty-five sticks. Marco counts the unit cubes. He puts the extra cubes back in the baggie. He watches as Susan works with the other students, stopping to count his own blocks several times. The children in the circle are informally working in pairs or trios, but Marco watches and works without talking. Julia continues to work on her own behind Susan.

Susan instructs the children to count their ones, "What do we add first?",

Marco counts all his unit cubes (five and eight). He says, "I count thirteen."

Susan works with other children, making sure they are following the procedures. Marco watches Susan's interactions with other students.

Susan talks to the group. "Okay, thirteen. Now what do we have to do?"

"Trade for a ten," Marco says, looking down at his blocks. Then he picks up ten cubes and exchanges them for a stick. He has five tens and three ones laid out.

Marco says, "I traded."

Susan says, "Okay. Good, Marco."

Susan then explains to the group how to record the information on their paper, indicating the trade above the tens column. Marco looks over at other papers. He begins to write. He is sitting with his legs folded. Susan shows Marco how to record his answer.

The group proceeds to the next problem: $46 + 17$.

Marco counts out forty-six. He puts away his excess sticks. He says, "Miss Austin. Now I have forty six."

Susan says, "Okay, now we're making seventeen."

Marco puts away the forty-six and gets out seventeen. He says, "Now I got seventeen."

Susan is talking to Audrey, "No Audrey. This is forty-six. Now we got to make seventeen."

Marco listens and looks over at Audrey. He gets out more blocks. He makes forty-six and then seventeen. He picks up ten ones and trades them for a ten stick. He has six sticks and three cubes. Marco watches as Susan instructs Audrey. Susan looks over at his "work" and helps him record his answer.

Susan says, "Clear your tens and make twenty two." Marco puts all of his blocks away and then takes out two tens and two ones. He waits for further instructions. Susan says, "Make fifty one now." Marco puts out five sticks and one cube. Susan looks over and assists Marco. Marco looks around at the group. He writes something on his sheet.

Susan says, "Do you want to go on and do the next one yourself?" Julia is counting on her fingers behind Susan. When Susan turns to talk to her, Marco turns to observe the interaction.

James is working with Terrence, who has been asking Susan for help. "Terrence, you need help?"

"Yeah," says Terrence.

“Cause I can help you.” James begins giving Terrence step-by-step instructions for working the problem.

After a few minutes, Susan says, “Okay, you know what I want you to do. Put your sticks away. We’re going to clean up.”

Susan goes over and turns out the lights. She says, “Three, two, one, zero, thank you.” She gives instructions for cleanup. “Will everybody please clean up and go get set in your own seats so we can get out our writing folders.”

Marco puts his sticks away and sits holding the baggie. He looks at the floor as Susan gives instructions for cleanup. She sets a timer for two minutes. Susan says, “Okay, Marco. Put all the ten sticks away for us.” Marco picks up the baggies. He lines them up carefully with the tops together as he gathers them. Jonathan helps Marco put all the baggies in a large plastic bag.

Language Event 5- Silent Writing

Susan signals the end of math and beginning of writing simultaneously, “Would everyone please clean up and go get set in your own seats so we can get out our writing folders.”

Marco puts away the math materials and goes to the bathroom. When the timer rings at the end of cleanup, Susan begins calling the names of children who are “ready.” Susan tells the class that “we’re going to keep working on autobiographies.” While some children have finished, “a lot are still working.” She says that everyone has to have an autobiography, but if they are done, students can write something else. Susan asks the daily helpers to pass out writing folders.

At the “square” table, Destine and Terrence are already working on the “sloppy copies” of their autobiographies. They are using books made of unlined paper folded in half and stapled along the fold. Destine writes continually for the full twenty minutes of writing time.

James brings the writing folders (legal sized pocket files) to the square table. Terrence says, “Cool, cool.” He takes his folder from the file. David looks through the folders. James comes back and stands by his chair. He looks through the folders, reading the names out loud. David watches and then finds his folder.

Lauren wants to read an original story to me (the researcher). We sit down across from David and Lauren reads to the camera.

Marco returns from the bathroom. Susan calls him to her desk, “Are you working on your autobiography, Marco? The one in that little book I gave everybody?”

Destine and Terrence sit writing and/or drawing. In the background Ariel, Bruce, and Latrice sit working at the hexagon table. As Lauren begins to read her story, Susan says, “On your mark... Get ready, get set, write.” She sets a timer for 20 minutes. The room is very quiet as the children continue working. Hearing Lauren reading out loud, Susan asks about the noise, then notices she is reading to me and says, “okay.”

Destine turns to the page of her autobiography. She looks up at Lauren. She looks down and continues to work. Terrence puts down his pencil and leaves the table. David and James return to the table with supplies. Marco comes over and sits next to David. He sits down with a blank book and begins to draw on the cover. He does not look at Lauren as she finishes reading her story and then talks about the writing and illustrations.

James and Terrence return to the table and begin working. Marco looks over to David. He says something, holding his pencil poised above his paper. Marco goes back to drawing. Marco says something to David, pointing to his paper. He draws as David

watches, shaking his head as if amused. James talks to himself and spells out loud as he writes. Marco talks to David and reaches for David's eraser. He stands up and looks around, then sits back down. Marco and David work with their bodies slightly slanted towards each other, attending to each other's work. Next to them, James and Terrence sit in a similar alignment.

Destine looks up at me. "If I was in kindergarten when my brother was born and my brother is two now, what that mean?"

I ask, "What are you asking me honey? What do you want to know?"

Destine says, "When was he born?"

I talk through this problem with Destine. She knows his birthday, her birthday, and her birth year. I subtract from 1996 to determine the birth year. James leans over to hear what Destine and I are talking about.

James leaves the table. Marco continues to draw and interact quietly with David. David's lunch box sits on the table in front of Marco, who is using it as a model for his drawing. He looks up once at Destine, but does not closely attend the exchange. He leans over and says something to Terrence. He talks to David and draws. Marco laughs. He looks at David's work, and then goes back to his drawing.

Destine goes back to her autobiography. She writes, "My brother was born in 1992."

Marco laughs out loud.

"Excuse me," I say.

"Sorry," Marco says.

Marco tries not to giggle. He erases something from his picture. He draws or writes something on David's book. David sits facing forward, working on the cover of his autobiography. Marco's body and head are turned towards David. The boys glance at each other, and at each other's works in progress throughout the writing session.

I sit down across from Marco and David to get a closer look at what they're doing. I ask Marco, "Are you working on your autobiography, or did you finish?" Marco looks at David and smiles.

Jackie comes over to with an illustrated page she is writing about dinosaurs. Marco looks at her picture. He gasps and rolls his eyes back, miming fear. I say to Jackie, "You're into dinosaurs now, Huh?" I remember that Jackie has "BEEN working on dinosaurs, haven't you?"

Marco says, "Yep. They got... they go'n make a big book."

Jackie leaves to get the rest of her "book." I ask Marco, "A big book? How do you know all about it?"

Marco says, "I know because..." He thinks for a moment before continuing, "I just seen them write it." Jackie returns with a folder filled with many pages of writing and drawing. Marco says, "They... see there go the book."

Jackie begins to sift through the papers, showing them to me. Marco stands up to look at Jackie's book. Marco says, "This an information book."

I ask, "An information book? What kind of book is yours?"

"Biography." Marco sits back down and starts to draw again. He is still working on the same picture.

Jackie shows me the book *Digging up Dinosaurs* by Alik. She stands flipping through the pages and talks about how she has used this book as a reference. "I'm copying all this information." Marco continues drawing. David looks over at Jackie and back at his paper. Marco looks at David's paper. He rolls his eyes, miming amusement. Marco takes David's book and looks closely at the picture. David watches Marco.

Marco says to me, "Hey, you want to see this pretty picture?" He laughs.

David grabs at his book, but Marco holds it away. Marco starts to write or draw in David's book. David takes the book saying, "Don't draw on my..." Marco laughs.

Jackie sits down next to me, in the chair across from Marco, and talks about dinosaurs. "And then once dinosaurs was extinct they found these big heavy rocks and that's how... the book tells you about how they found them."

Marco and David look at Jackie. Marco applauds Jackie's talk. Jackie tells about her plans for the book she is writing. Marco draws. He looks up at Jackie. He tells David, "They been working on that book about twenty days."

Jackie talks about the people who found dinosaur bones. She wants to be a paleontologist. She talks about her great grandmother who told her that "if you look and see your dream... don't say you can't be anything you want."

Marco draws. He looks up and listens as Jackie continues talking about how fossils are found. Marco looks at David. He hides his picture in his lap, and continues drawing.

Jackie shows a picture of dinosaur teeth. Marco gasps. She talks about the biggest dinosaur teeth, "They have sharp teeth."

"Rats have sharp teeth," Marco comments.

Jackie shows me pictures and talks about the information in the book. Marco and David listen. Marco leans across the table to study the book illustrations. Jackie tells how scientists reconstruct dinosaur skeletons. Marco goes back to his drawing. David laughs.

Marco leaves the table. When he returns he says, "I didn't start nothing on my..."

David shows Marco his work, and Marco listens while David reads the page. I ask David, "With this page you're going to be one?"

Marco says, "I'm bout to write my page GOOD."

He looks at Debi, "You want to know my title?"

I ask why Marco hasn't started yet. He says, "I've just been thinking.

"What have you been thinking about?"

"I've been thinking I'm gonna write, *I was four years old... When I was four I had went... I mean six.*"

"I know where you went", Jackie says "It starts with an 'M'... Oh, Major Magic." Jackie reminds Marco about Major Magic, a pizza fun house. I ask Marco if he and Jackie know each other outside of school. He agrees, saying they know each other in school too.

The timer rings signaling the end of "silent" writing. The class gets noisy as children start to prepare for lunch. Marco gets up, but Susan asks the children to return to their seats and begins giving instructions for cleanup and lunch preparation.

Marco comes back and stands by the table. He turns to the first page of his book and writes, *"I."* He says, "How do you spell 'was'?"

I ask him, "What letter does it start with?"

Marco says the word to himself, "Wa:z Wa:z . Wa: s s s 'S'¹. I sound it out!"
"You hear an "S"? Yes there is an "S", that's right. Start with a "w", then put the "s."

David looks over as Marco writes. "Aint it 'W', 'A', 'S'?" he asks.

I agree, but suggest that "ws" is close enough for the sloppy copy.

Marco writes "4" next to the ws. He reads, "*I was four*", pointing to each word, and then completes the sentence orally, "*when I went to Major Magic.*"

He and David talk about how to spell "Major Magic."

James, the daily helper, calls Marco's name. He gets up and leaves for the bathroom. Terrence and Darryl come over and stand by the table. Terrence says, "Next I'm making a newspaper and you and James are going to have to help me with that." Terrence and Darryl sit down and write. Destine shows her book to the camera.

Marco returns. He walks over and studies the easel (word wall??), perhaps looking for a word spelling. Children continue to write throughout lunch preparations.

Susan calls, "If you can hear me and you want to buy lunch, please get in line."

Marco gets up and goes to get in the line of buyers.

Language Event 5 - Books to Go, part two

After lunch Amber takes the reader's chair with her Snakes book open, and children gather on the area rug to finish Read Aloud. Susan gives an overview of the afternoon. "Okay, we're going to listen to Amber. Then we're going to hear Destine. Then we're going to do book clubs. And they we're getting BACK on the magic carpet and we're going back to the rain forest."

There is a chorus of groans, "Ohhhh."

"Oh, you don't want to go?" Susan is surprised.

A few voices shout, "NO.", but many more vigorously call out, "YES."

"Books to go" continues. Susan is sitting near the front this time, and Amber is more likely to appeal to her for assistance. Children continue to be involved in the book. When Amber reads, "*A python can swallow a whole pig in one bite,*" children call out, "Whoa!"

Marco is sitting in the front, between Jackie and Kenneth. He has to crane his neck to look up at Amber. He listens attentively, and studies the pictures when Amber slowly shows them to the group. Sometimes he points to the book, or asks to see the picture.

When Amber reads that a snake's meal might last a month, there are many loud reactions. Amber smiles. Susan comments, "I wish that would work for me."

Later, Amber reads, "*Snakes shed their skin two or three times a year...*"

Marco looks over at Susan. He looks at the picture and says, "He changing."

He looks at Susan, "Miss Austin, why he changing?"

Susan says, "Cause he's growing. He doesn't fit his skin anymore."

"Cause he's... he's getting bigger." Jackie says.

¹ Quotation marks indicate the letter name is being pronounced. For example "S" is pronounced /Es/. Italics indicate the speaker is reading or writing.

Susan says, "Just think if every time you got... your mom says, "Oh you've grown, I have to get you new pants or shoes. Just think if your skin had to peel off and you had another skin underneath."

Kids laugh.

Alyssa has been counting on her fingers. She says, "If a snake were seven years old, it would shed its skin twenty times."

"How did you figure that out?" Susan asks.

"I just counted by threes."

Amber reads, "*The green snake is the same color as the grass...*"

Susan says, "This is important." She asks questions, prompting a brief discussion of 'camouflage' and ways that animals 'protect themselves'.

Marco interacts with Jackie and Terry, but turns around to look at the picture. He points, "What kind of snake... what's..."

Amber says, "It's a rattle snake."

Amber finishes reading and the kids all applaud. Marco holds his hands up to the side of the head and claps hard three times. Destine goes to get her book. Several children tell snake stories movies and TV shows. Other children talk to each other.

Susan says, "Class, I want to tell you before I forget. There is a great book around here somewhere called *A Snake Mistake*." She gives a synopsis of the book, a "true story" about a snake who ate a light bulb thinking it was an egg. Jackie and Terry immediately rush off to the book corner to look for the book. Susan tells them to come back, but there is discussion of where the book might be and what it looks like.

When Destine is ready, Susan says, "Let's give Destine respect. She practiced for us."

Destine reads *D. W. All Wet*, a book that the children have all heard several times. As she reads, several children mouth the words. At one point Darryl corrects Destine without Destine's request. I point out that Destine's miscue made sense, and ask Darryl to give her a little time.

Later Terry starts talking, and Darryl says, "Shh. Don't tell the story."

Destine shows a page to Susan, who tells her the word.

Susan says, "This is my favorite page." When Destine is finished reading, Susan talks about how much "we like this book" even though we've heard it over and over. "That's why it's a good book, cause you want to hear it again." Susan complements the children on listening, and asks how many learned something from Amber's book. Marco is playing with Jackie.

"What kind of book was that?" Susan asks.

One child shouts, "biography", but the rest call out "information. Susan says, "Okay, I see somebody who wants me to start on book clubs."

Language Event 6 - Book Clubs

Susan calls off the names of the book clubs, beginning with *What's in my Pocket?* Marco gets up when he hears the title. Marco has taken off his flannel shirt during lunch, and tied it around his waist. He is wearing a plain white T-shirt.

A child calls out, "Patrice is not here."

Marco says, "I here."

Susan says, "Marco, were you in this group? Okay."

Marco walks over to David, who is sitting on the floor by the door. Marco says something to David. David shakes his head, "No." Marco waves to David, "come on."

Susan calls the *Lunch Boxes* group. The group members get up and begin moving toward their group area. David gets up when he sees the other students standing.

After David leaves the gathering area, Marco plays around with Danny. Marco and Danny start hopping around the area rug with their legs bowed like cowboys.

Susan says, "Marco, time-out. Danny, stay here."

Marco goes and stands in the corner of the room by Susan's desk.

The room gets noisy as children move around, preparing for book clubs. Susan reminds the class that, "We're working on Project Two."

The *Lunch Boxes* group members get out construction paper and other supplies to make props for a dramatic presentation. Another group sits in the book corner. Alicia rocks in the rocking chair as the group talks about project plans. One group reads together in a circle on the gathering rug. Jonathan, Brent, and Kenneth read a book together on the floor next to the carpet. Amber sits alone at the "triangle" table reading the book *Follow the Drinking Gourd*.

David sits at the "square" table in his usual seat by the window. The book club folder, a loose-leaf binder, is open on the table in front of him. One pocket holds several copies of the book *What's in my pocket?* by Rozanne Williams. Marco comes over and picks up a book. David takes the book and puts it away. David talks to Marco about "what we're 'pose to be doing."

Marco leaves the table to confer with Susan. The camera picks him up at the supply table in back of the room. He returns to the table with a stack of white envelopes. He waves at David, who is getting something from another table. Marco calls David's name. Susan tells them not to shout across the room. David returns and sits down by the window, facing Marco.

Marco sits with the pile of white card size envelopes in front of him. He picks up an envelope and opens all the glued seams. Then he closes up the sides and neatly stacks the "finished" envelopes on a separate pile.

David leans over towards Marco. He has a large black marker in his mouth. David says, "What's that (??) Your mama something... She... something in 1998."

Marco says, "your mama got to skate. She (?hit the flo'?). Her (?bootie roll?) In nineteen ninety eight."

Marco continues to pull apart envelopes. David laughs at the rhyme. He looks at Marco and raises his eyebrows. Marco glances at the camera. He smiles.

Marco says, "You aint go'n help me?"

David looks over at Susan, "Oh Miss Austin got some paper."

David gets up and starts towards Susan's desk.

Marco calls, "But we already got the envelopes."

David says, "I know but she giving out paper."

David returns with a used, blue legal sized file folder. He looks at Marco and asks, "Why you doing that?"

“CAUSE. That’s what Miss Austin says we GOT to DO:O.” He shakes his shoulders to emphasize his words. “Then we put it in there and then we be... draw something in there and then we be done.” He indicates that the envelopes will go in the blue folder.

David says, “Then we go’n to make a triarama. I’m...”

“No.”

“I’m going to make a triarama.” David leaves and goes over to the supply table. He returns with green “handwriting” paper and begins to fold it for a triarama.

Marco folds down the metal prongs on the file folder so they lie flat. He says to me, “Look what we making. I’m going to draw a picture.”

“What are you going to do?”

“We making “*What’s in my Pocket?*” books like this.” He pulls a copy of the book out of the group binder. “And we got to draw in something. We can draw. We can get some of the ideas out of here [the book], but then when we don’t want to get the ideas out of here, we can just think of some.”

David has folded his paper down at an angle. He cuts the excess strip so that he has a square.

Marco explains, “We’re going to use these [envelopes] for the pockets.”

“Those are the pockets?”

“And this what we go’n put them in,” Marco says, pointing to the blue folder.

I ask how the group decided on the project.

Marco says, “The reason... because that... cause when we heard ... when we said, “*What’s in my Pocket?*”, I had thought of it. And then I decided to make this one up and so then I got it and then when we open it there’s going to be a little picture in there.”

I ask, “What’s David doing?”

Marco explains, “He making a triarama.” He looks over at David. “You got the wrong paper.” Marco takes David’s paper and tries to form a pyramid shape by overlapping two of the four sides. It works, but the paper is flimsy.

David says, “This will work.” He goes to get a stapler.

I ask, “What’s the triangle for?”

Marco says, “Another project. This project number two. We already did number one. And then [lunch box group] did the other one. They made (?bags?) And I don’t know what they’re [group in book corner] going to do.

Marco decides, “We go’n make a triarama too. I’ll go get a piece of paper.”

He goes to the supply table and returns with a sheet of stiff manila paper. He folds the paper and cuts off the side so it’s square.

David explains, “First you got to fold it, then you got to cut it.”

Marco folds the square cross wise so there is a cross creased across the middle. He cuts from one corner to the center.

I ask, “How did you learn?”

Marco says, “Miss Austin.”

Then he says, “Aint that one hard to make?”

David starts to write on his triarama with a marker. I suggest a pencil, but he is resistant.

Marco folds one side over the other, forming a pyramid shape. He staples the sides and sits it on one side so he can write or draw inside.

"Is that David's?," I ask.

"It's all of ours," Marco says.

He writes his name on the triarama. "So David, it's your turn."

David spells his name for Marco to write. "Don't write it sloppy," he says, "And don't write it that big."

As Marco writes, David begins to chant, "In eighteen eighty eight..."

Marco says, "Your mama tried to skate. She skate so well you couldn't even catch her."

He looks at David. "The other one that I got off that movie, it's a nasty one."

David says, "I aint saying that."

Marco and David talk and plan. Marco takes another piece of paper and draws a line. He draws a triangle, square, circle, and diamond on the line. As he draws, he looks up on the wall, where the square hangs marking their table, as a reference.

Marco says, "Okay, them the ones we going to put in."

David goes over to the supply table. He returns with some glue. Meanwhile, Marco draws a second line and adds two more shapes.

Marco says, "These the ones we're going to draw in there." He points to the envelopes.

David sits trying to open the glue. "Why we need glue?" Marco asks.

Marco studies the paper with the lines and shapes. "Okay," he says. He counts off six envelopes, moving them from one pile to another, while looking at the shapes. Then he counts the shapes, pointing to each one with his finger. He counts the shapes three times, and counts the envelopes once more.

"We don't need these," he says. He moves the extra envelopes to a corner of the table. David is still working on the glue. He looks over to see what Marco's doing.

Marco opens one envelope and places it on the table. He opens the book and reads, "Pocket, pocket. What's in my pocket? It's something round." He looks over the next few pages, and then turns back to the first page.

Marco starts to copy from the book to the inside of the envelope. He is using the thick, black marker.

I say, "Honey, don't you want to write that with a pencil?"

Marco shakes his head, no. "I'm writing this- pocket, pocket..."

I am sitting in the chair on Marco's right side. "Wait a minute." I take the envelope and close it up. "Do you want it closed like this, and then you open it and the surprise is inside."

David takes an envelope and glues it to the blue folder.

I say, "Let's see if we can plan that a little bit. What I'm thinking is maybe... what's going to be inside this one."

Marco says, "Marble."

"Okay. Draw what's going to be inside."

Marco draws a marble inside the envelope.

"Okay. So you want to write, "a marble."

Marco writes a marble, copying the words from the book.

"So on the outside." I write on the outside of the envelope. "*Pocket*. See I think a marker's going to be too fat to write all these words."

Marco reads the envelope as I write, "*Pocket, pocket, what's in my pocket.*"

I say the words slowly as I write, "*Somethi:ng... tha:t's... rou:nd*. Then you open it up."

Marco points to the text inside the envelope. We both read, "*a marble.*"

Marco takes the folder from David, "What did you do?" he asks. He laughs. "You posed to wait." David, Marco, and I talk about how the folder should be oriented. Marco wants it horizontal, "That way, cause that way we got more."

Marco suggests we might need tape. I say we can use glue, but should line the envelopes up. We take David's envelope off and wipe off the glue. "Glue this one down here so you can put more on."

Marco does the gluing, even though I suggest that David do it. He places his envelope on the left side, beneath the fold.

David says, "This time Ima do it. Let's trade seats."

Marco pastes David's envelope below the first one.

David says, "I don't get a chance to do nothing. Why you have to do everything?"

Marco says, "Now what we go'n write up here."

We decide on something square.

David says, "Write it, just like that." He points to the envelope that I wrote.

Marco says, "You know I can't write that neat."

Marco begins to copy from the front of my envelope to the one underneath it.

David leans over to watch.

"That's neat enough, huh?" Marco says, looking over at David.

David reaches for the pencil. "Let me see."

Marco hangs onto the pencil and continues writing.

"I don't get a chance to do nothing. All I have to do is..."

"You 'bout to do something."

"Why you get to do everything?"

Marco shakes his head.

I say, "Hey, David, where's your pencil. You can do this one."

I show him another envelope. David looks around for a pencil.

Marco says, "Hold on. I think I got a pencil." He finds a pencil for David, "This needs sharpening."

I sharpen the pencil as Marco goes back to writing. I bring the pencil back to David.

David sits for a few seconds. He says, "Pocket, pocket, what's in my pocket." He takes the envelope and starts to write.

Marco waves his hands in annoyance. He is concerned that David is copying from the same page that he is copying. He says, "You... you STOP. You got to do the next page."

David starts to turn the page in the book. Marco stops him. "I know. But I got to do this page."

Marco points to each word in the book as he reads, "All you do is write *Pocket, pocket, what's in my pocket*. That's all you got to write."

For the next few minutes, the boys write quietly. Marco copies from my envelope. David copies from the book.

As the boys continue writing, David notices I am drinking out of a McDonald's cup. "Y'all went to McDonalds?"

"Mhm."

"I wish I went."

The boys continue working as we talk. David asks for some of my drink. Marco laughs. I explain that I have a sore throat and apologize for drinking in front of them. Marco shakes his head. He complains about an ear infection.

After a time, Marco looks over at me. "I wrote... It say, '*Pocket, pocket, What's in my pocket*.'" He taps each word on the envelope with his pencil eraser.

Marco looks over at David's work. He moves David's pencil so he can see what he's doing.

I ask Marco, "Are you doing something square? Something that's square?"

Marco puts his pencil down. "You can write that," he suggests.

I refuse. "No. You go ahead. You're doing a really good job. You're almost done."

Marco continues to write, "*Something that's sq...*"

"I don't got enough room."

"Write 'square' down there," I suggest, "Erase the 's' and 'q'. See how I wrote 'round' underneath it."

Marco uses the book to copy the word '*square*'. "How's that 'p' look?" he asks.

"That's a 'Q'. It's like a 'P' backwards."

"I mean..." Marco starts to erase the Q.

"No, you got it. It's s'posed to be a 'Q'. S-q-uare." I emphasize the phoneme /k/.

As Marco writes I ask David. "You're going to do something different? What?"

"Something furry."

"I'm tired," Marco says. He leans back in his chair. Then he leans forward and erases something.

"I'm tired too," David agrees. He starts writing again.

"It's gonna take DAYS for this," says Marco.

Marco finishes the envelope. "See," he shows me. He opens the envelope.

"All right. What are you going to put that's square? You going to think of something different than the book?"

Marco draws inside the envelope. "That 'pose to be square."

"What's that?" I ask.

"A square." Marco says.

I suggest that he draw an object shaped like a square. Marco decides on a lunch box. I write "lunch box" inside the envelope. Marco starts to draw, using David's lunch box for a model.

Susan says, "Stop." She explains to the children that they are to "record what you did today" in their book club diaries. She looks around and decides to set the timer for eight minutes because of the mess.

Marco and David stop to listen, and then return to their work. Marco finishes his picture. I help David complete his envelope. Marco looks for the "book club diary." He gets out his autobiography.

"That's your autobiography," I say. Marco insists that his autobiography is his book club diary. David suggests they are the same thing. As Marco goes to look for the diary, I look in the group binder. I notice lined paper in the binder rings for a group log.

"Marco, I found it."

Marco returns and sits down. I put the diary in front of him.

"Put the date." I say.

Marco looks at the page. He points to the previous entry. "This the day?"

"This is the 2nd. You need to write the date here. Three..." I hint.

Marco looks up at the front board where the date is written. "Three seven dash ninety four," Marco finishes.

Marco writes the date on the page. I say, "Who was here today?" Marco begins to write *Marco and David*. He writes his name and looks up at me,

"How do you spell 'and'," he asks me.

I pronounce the word carefully, "/ae:nd/. How do you spell 'and'?"

Marco mouths the word 'and', and thinks for a moment. "That's an 'N'?" he says. He writes n' on his paper.

"Is that how you spell it?" he asks me.

"That's fine," I say.

Marco writes David's name, remembering it from their earlier exchange. He says, "I know how to spell David's name 'cause he taught me. D-A-V-I-D"

I ask, "Now what did you do today that you want to tell her? What did you get done?"

"We got done two envelopes and we did... three envelopes?"

"You going to do that?" David asks, indicating the diary.

Marco points to David's envelope. "He's a good artist, see."

Marco offers me the pencil to write, but I refuse. "I'm not taking your pencil. Ask David to help you. He's a good speller."

"How do you spell 'we'," Marco asks David who is cleaning up the table.

I say, "W:e. What do you think it starts with?"

"What did you say now?" David asks.

I say, "We made three envelopes."

Both boys sit and think for a few moments. David guesses 'r'.

"Okay, 'we'," I say.

"Oh yeah, we."

I spell it "W - E"

Marco repeats the letters while he writes.

"And you want to write 'made'. How does 'made' start?"

Marco thinks for a while. He mouths the word 'made'. He guesses 'k'.

I say the word slowly, "/mmai:d/. Do you know any words that start like 'made'? How about Marco- 'Marco', 'made'. Do they sound the same?"

Marco shakes his head.

I say, "You don't. All right. Well it starts with an 'M'. Okay, what else."

Neither boy makes a guess. Marco begins to look distracted. He turns his body towards the window.

"All right, I'll write it for you this time."

I write 'made' and return the pencil to Marco, who writes the numeral '3'. I point out to him that 'pockets' is in the book.

Marco says the letters aloud as he writes. David watches Marco.

Marco and David finish cleaning up and sit at the table, waiting for the next activity. Marco sings into the microphone, "Don't ask my neighbor."

APPENDIX C

LAUREN'S DAY

This observation takes place on March 13 and begins as children are walking in the door in the morning. Kelly, the sixth grade future teacher, is filming so I can take field notes. Although I asked Kelly to just film the students working, she provides a running commentary for the time she is filming. I stop her after about twenty minutes.

Transcription notes are listed at the beginning of Appendix B.

Language Event 1 - Things to Do (8:35 a.m.)

The room is a noisy buzz as many children talk and walk around. Kelly's presence behind the camera is distracting. She says, "Okay you guys, say 'hi.'" and then she tries to get the children to "Do your work." Susan is in the hallway helping children put their outdoor things in their lockers and supervising the entry process.

On the chalkboard is a list of "Things to do", and some children come in and look at the board to see the tasks for the day. Required items are marked with stars, and they are followed with choices. In the background, there is a voice calling, "What do we 'posed to do?"

Lauren comes in from the hallway at 8:39. Her face appears in front of the camera and she asks, "And why you're behind the camera?" She laughs.

Kelly says, "Because I am responsible, Christian."

Lauren gives her name.

Kelly says, "Lauren, you silly thing. Go. Go. Go. Everybody go do your work."

Lauren asks Kelly to sharpen her pencil with the electric sharpener. She walks toward the board, possibly reading the "to do" list.² A few minutes later, Lauren stands next to the hexagon group table. She is tapping her pencil on her back and looking at the board. She may be reading the "to do" list or studying the map sample on the board.

Lauren sits down in her chair and talks to Katherine. Lauren is wearing a black corduroy skirt, a white shirt with black collar and cuffs, and white tights. Her hair is in two small pony tails high on the sides of her head. Alicia comes over to the table. Lauren begins to work on her map of North America. Katherine sits next to her cutting out answers for her math work sheet. Lauren looks towards the board. She says to Kelly, "Move out of the way. I can't see."

Lauren leaves the table and goes to the front of the room. "I can't hardly spell Mexico."

Kelly says, "Mexico. There." Lauren returns to the table with the sample map of North America from the board. She is out of camera range for several minutes.

Kelly is talking to the camera and showing various things in the room. Upon Kelly's request, Lauren brings over the class trip book and holds it while Kelly reads it to the camera. Lauren has a crayon in her mouth. Lauren points to text as Kelly reads, but

² Underlining indicates instances where Lauren is reading, writing, or transacting with printed texts directly.

Kelly says, "Hey, get your finger out the way." Kelly has Lauren get another class book and Lauren and holds it up as Kelly reads it to the camera.

At 8:54, I take over the camera and direct it to Lauren's table. Lauren and Katherine are both working on math sheets. Katherine watches as Lauren uses the glue. The girls talk as they work. Katherine puts the glue down and Lauren brushes it away. Katherine appears irritated, but Lauren laughs. Then Katherine smiles. The girls exchange remarks in a mock argument.

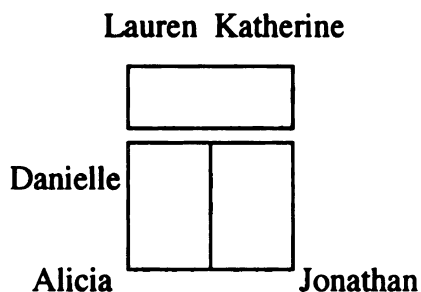
Lauren says, "I don't care."

Katherine rolls her eyes. Both girls are smiling.

Lauren has colored Mexico yellow and copies the name "Mexico" from the sample map. She looks over at Katherine's work as Katherine sits gluing her math answers down.

Jonathan and Alicia are also working at the table. (See MAP). Danielle comes in and clears a space for herself kiddy-corner from Lauren, pushing materials to the middle of table and placing her notebook on the table. I sit down next to Jonathan. Lauren cuts the strip of answers from the math sheet. She looks over at Katherine's paper, wrinkles her nose and then looks back at her own work. Katherine looks at her own paper and counts with her eraser.

Things to Do - map of "hexagon team" table



Announcements begin over the PA system, and Susan puts her finger to her mouth. The room gets quiet, but children continue to work as the assistant principal speaks. Lauren continues working on math, occasionally looking over at Katherine's paper. She pushes the purple crayon box towards Danielle. Danielle sits down to work on her map, and pushes the supply box out of her way. Lauren pushes it back. Danielle shakes her shoulders, miming "an attitude." She smiles. This mock argument has jostled my microphone. Lauren adjusts it so it faces her. Lauren looks at Danielle out of the corner of her eyes and smiles. She continues working throughout the exchange, now cutting the strip into smaller pieces.

On the PA, the assistant principal says, "Students from Mrs. Brassel's room will lead us in the school pledge." Susan says, "stand up please" as the school pledge begins. Lauren sits as she begins chanting, then stands. She stops pasting for a moment, then continues to work. Danielle and Alicia also continue working as they stand and chant the pledge. When the pledge stops, Lauren and Katherine continue to stand for a moment, engaged in working.

Lauren looks over at Katherine's work. She picks up the cut pieces from her math sheet and talks about them with Katherine. Alyssa comes over and picks up the glue. Lauren takes the glue from Alyssa. Alyssa pats at Lauren's pony tails. Lauren begins gluing pieces on her math sheet. Alyssa talks for a while and then wanders away. Lauren

picks up Katherine's paper, and reads Katherine's answers. She and Katherine laugh as they continue to work.

Susan says, "Um, class. Where is the map that was up here that I did?"

Lauren and Katherine continue working. Willie comes over to the table looking for the map. He starts to take it and Katherine reaches for it. Lauren grabs the map and holds it up, smiling as Susan says, "Somebody must know where it is."

Willie says, "Right there."

Lauren says, "Miss Austin, I got it."

Susan says, "Okay, thank you" and comes over to get the map.

Katherine picks up two answer squares from the table, looks at them and starts to take her paper back from Lauren. Lauren waves her hand around as Katherine tries to get her paper. Lauren holds Katherine back with her left hand as she reads Katherine's paper. She laughs. Alicia watches and laughs. Lauren gives the paper to Katherine and Katherine sits down to work. She says, "All right, where'd the glue go?" Lauren makes a raspberry sound and laughs. Alicia laughs. Susan asks how many kids have math papers done.

Katherine gets up and looks around for the glue. Lauren also looks for the glue and notices Danielle's personal supplies. "Can I see your glue?"

Danielle refuses. Lauren sits with her elbows on the table and stares at Danielle for a moment, miming disappointment.

Susan asks who has completed their maps. "All right, I'm going to set the timer for ten minutes, then we're stopping so you need to get right to work."

Although Lauren is done with her map, she doesn't raise her hand. Katherine returns with the glue and Lauren takes it.

Bruce, who is sitting at the round table behind the girls, calls out, "Miss Austin, I don't know how to do this problem."

Lauren turns around to face Bruce. "I know how to do it."

Susan asks the kids to put the completed North America maps in her basket. Alicia, Danielle, Lauren, and Katherine continue working and do not look up at Susan.

Susan asks about South America maps. Lauren says, "I took mine home." and then repeats more loudly, "I took mine HO:ME."

Susan comes by the table and Alicia hands her a South America map. "Can I hang it up?" Susan asks. "I wanted a couple to hang up."

Lauren repeats, "I took mine ho:me." She smiles, rocking back and forth with the rhythm of her speech.

Katherine walks over to Susan's desk with her math sheet. Lauren reaches out to Katherine. She turns around and looks at Susan, who is hanging maps on the bulletin board next to her desk. Sharonda comes over from the round table and asks for the glue. Lauren hands it to her. Lauren gets up and pulls Katherine back to the table, so that she can look at Katherine's math paper.

Susan says, "On zero, put everything down and look at me. Let's see who heard that. Three, two, one, zero."

Lauren and Katherine stand at their desks looking down at their math papers.

Susan explains that she is going over the math papers because some children need help. Those who are finished can work quietly on their maps. Lauren goes to the circle table and gets the glue. She returns to her table with a big smile on her face.

Bruce shouts, "Give us that glue back."

Lauren says, "I need to SEE it."

Susan says, "Lauren, put the glue back for them. We are not gluing. I am asking the class to stop and listen."

Susan then asks Brandon what he said to Lauren, concerned about his tone of voice. Bruce says Lauren took their glue, and Lauren explains, "But I let him see it."

Susan says the problem will be worked out "when we're done."

Susan asks the children to focus on the first problem on the math sheet. Katherine reads her paper and recites the answer with Susan. Lauren looks at her paper strip of answers, and looks up at Susan. Susan tells the kids to write answers in the box and then cut and glue the answers later. Lauren puts her arm on Katherine's shoulder and looks onto Katherine's paper.

Susan says, "Okay, let's look at 'B'. What are we counting by?"

Katherine responds, "tens." Lauren looks at Katherine's paper and then at her own paper.

As Susan continues, Lauren reaches in front of Katherine and picks up an answer square.

Katherine whispers, "STOP. Stop."

Lauren whispers, "That's MINE, cause I got my name on the back of it."

Katherine peels the square off her paper and looks at the back. She smiles and shows Lauren. Lauren reaches for the cut piece. Katherine holds it. Lauren holds her arm crooked in a circle around her head. She pulls at her hair band on one pony tail.

Susan is saying, "What comes after?"

Voices respond, "ten, twelve, fourteen." Katherine reads softly from her paper. She writes down the answer. Lauren leans over and watches. Katherine continues to respond to Susan's questions as they work through the problems. Lauren watches Katherine and writes answers on her own math sheet. She occasionally joins in as kids recite the answers. As the answers are provided, she looks at Katherine's sheet and her own sheet.

Susan goes through several problems and then tells the kids to finish quietly.

Lauren looks over at Katherine. "What's the last one?" She looks at Katherine's paper.

Susan reminds the children to put their names on their papers, and then tells Lauren that she can get the glue.

"Miss Austin," Lauren calls out, "Do I have to glue it?"

Susan says, "yes."

Amber comes in late to school and sits down where Katherine has been sitting. This is Amber's assigned seat. Katherine picks up her own stuff and moves.

Amber says, "Miss Goodman, I got my new glasses."

Lauren returns with the glue and says to Katherine, "Where are you taking my stu/ff?³ I told you all this stuff over here is mi/ne."

Katherine tells Lauren, "Look you already had this one."

They go back and forth with "No I don't"; "Yes you do."

Jonathan is working on math and Alicia is coloring her map. Amber asks Lauren and Katherine, "What are we supposed to do on this?", referring to the map.

Lauren says, "Amber, you have to do your math first."

Lauren studies her math sheet. She says, "Can I see your pencil?" and takes a pencil out of Amber's hand. She writes on her paper, and rolls the pencil back to Amber.

Lauren says the numbers as she finds them and pastes them down, "twenty five, thirty.. this is it."

"I only got /two \more," she says. She leans back and puts her hands on her head.

Danielle looks over at Lauren, and Lauren repeats, "I only got two more. See, look. One, two. One, two."

Lauren continues working. "Now I got one more."

Danielle is looking at her answer pieces, "five, seven."

Lauren glues the last piece down. "Got it. I got all of them right."

Alyssa comes over to the table and leans over to look at Lauren's paper.

Lauren says, "Here, I'm done with it. Alyssa, I'm already done with mine."

Alyssa picks up one of Lauren's strips.

Lauren says, "Now you put that back." and laughs.

Alyssa mimics, "Now you put that back." She leans close to Lauren.

Lauren says, "Do you know what Alyssa means?"

Alyssa says, "yes." She pretends to slap Lauren, but does not touch her.

Lauren says, "My mama got a name book. What does it mean?"

Alyssa says, "I don't know what it means. I know what Lauren means."

Lauren asks, "What?"

"It means soft and gentle and meddlesome and (?⁴blavely?)."

"No, it doesn't." Lauren tells what her name means.⁵

Alyssa repeats Lauren's definition and laughs.

Lauren says, "Yeah. I got a name book. So you're a liar." She smiles at Alyssa.

Alyssa leans backward. She leans forward again. "My aunt has a name book and she told my mama what Lauren means. But then I forgot."

Lauren plays with Amber's pony tails, counting them as Amber works. It is 9:18. The girls look at the board, where Susan is giving out team points.

³ ^ indicates a rising and then falling tone.

⁴ Question marks within parenthesis indicate speech I was unable to discern from audio or video tape. Where applicable, I include the speech I think I hear within the parentheses.

⁵ Lauren is a pseudonym so I have not included the definition she gave.

Lauren says, "I'm going to finish writing my (??) book." She begins pulling things out of the cubby in her desk until she finds a "book" made from folding blank paper and stapling.

Amber picks up the book. Lauren puts her other stuff back in her desk and looks up., "Where is.. EH!" Amber laughs and Lauren takes the book back. She looks at the board. "Oh. Check minuses."

Danielle says, "Everybody got a check minus." Alicia, Danielle and Amber are working on their maps. Lauren sits with her book on her desk and her pencil in her mouth. She looks at the board and then towards Susan. Danielle, Alicia and I start talking about where Detroit is on their maps. Lauren turns in her chair and is talking to the group at the round table. She also talks to Katherine, who is standing nearby. Katherine leaves and Lauren turns back to face the table.

Lauren opens her book and shows it to me. It is the same book she was working on during my last visit, one week earlier. She says, "Look, Miss Goodman. I'm on this page and I'm almost finished." Lauren writes something in her book.

She says to Amber, "Let me read this book to you. My Friend's Little Baby Sister."

Lauren holds the book in front of Amber's face. Amber smiles.

Lauren reads in a loud clear voice, "Me and my mama and my sister went to the mall. I saw my friend and her Mama and I couldn't believe my eyes. I saw her new baby sister."

Amber leans over to listen as Lauren reads. I ask, "Your friend's new baby sister?"

Lauren nods and continues reading, "But we didn't get to say 'hi' or 'bye' because we had.. it was time to go home."

Lauren looks at the picture in her book and looks at Amber with a big smile. "Amber drew this picture."

Amber says, "No, I drew the car and she drew the people."

Lauren says, "Why you say that, Amber?"

Amber shrugs and looks away.

Lauren continues, "Anyway. We waved 'bye', but they didn't see us." Lauren looks over at Amber and the girls smile at each other.

"Finally we got home. We ate dinner. After dinner we had to go to sleep." Lauren shows the book to Amber and me as she reads.

Susan talks to the class about behavior, "Excuse me. I'm keeping record. Not very good. No winning team yet."

Lauren continues to read, but more softly, "And my.. and Mama kissed us goodnight. We had to get up really early."

The timer goes off and Susan says, "Okay, clean up. Daily helpers, you can read if you want."

Amber stands up, but Lauren continues reading to me, "Mama had to pack our lunch so when we eat at school."

"Our teacher, Mrs. McGee, she is nice."

Amber says, "You said, 'McGillicutty'."

"Oh, I forgot. After school we walked to the playground." She holds the book teacher style, reading from the side and showing us the picture.

"My sister said, 'Why didn't you see your best friend.' "

Susan announces a two-minute cleanup. Danielle and Alicia are working on their maps. Lauren looks up but continues to read, "I don't know. Finally we were at the playground. My sister asked, 'When will mommy get here?' 'She will be here in a minute.' 'Good.' 'Mommy's here.' 'Yes,' said my sister. I couldn't believe my eyes.

Susan hears Lauren reading and asks if she is doing something with me. I say she can stop, and Susan tells her to stop reading. Lauren stops reading and leaves the table to join the class on the rug.

Language Event 2 - Morning Meeting (9:25 am)

As the children clean up from Things to Do, they gather on and around an area rug for Morning Meeting. Brent and Destine, the daily helpers, stand in front of the calendar board. Brent holds the book *Ten in the Bed* by Mary Rees. Danny comes up and talks to Brent. He gets *This Old Man* by Pam Adams from the basket of songbooks under the calendar table. He stands between Destine and Brent. Darryl comes over and stands next to Destine. The four children stand facing the gathering class, holding the book in front of them.

Brandon starts singing, "*This old man...*"

Darryl says, "Not now."

Brent says, "She said we could start reading as soon as we come up here."

Brent, Charles, Destine, and Darryl start singing *This Old Man*. The book is large and they hold it facing the class. This requires them to read from above and to the side of the book, looking at the print sideways or upside down. In the background, Susan is assisting with clean up. Kids gather on the carpet and join in singing.

Alicia, Sarina, Latrice, and Ariel sit in the front. Sarina, a first grader, points at the text with her finger as the group sings, "*This old man, he played four...*"

As the children sing, they make eye contact with each other. Danny grins at Brent, and Brent responds with a big smile. After the first verses, several verses are displayed on one page. "Here's six," Brent says, and they start singing.

Lauren comes over and sits down between Amber and Alicia.

A voice calls, "Miss Austin, they ain't doing nothing."

Susan stops the singers and asks the square team to come back to their table. Danny and Destine leave to finish clean up. Jonathan comes over to help Brent hold the book. He sits down on the chair. "*This old man, he played seven, he played nick nack on my heaven.*"

A voice asks, "On my heaven?" Jonathan stops for a second and looks puzzled.

There is talking and movement as the children sing the remaining three verses. Lauren sits close to Jonathan's chair, interacting with Amber.

When the song is finished, Jonathan puts the book into the basket of songbooks, under the small table of calendar supplies. Kids move around getting settled. Danny goes over and puts both arms up and around Susan. He stands just a little taller than her waist, and looks up at her.

"Can I please go first? Please!" He wants to be the first reader during Books to Go.

Susan nods, blows her nose. She appears to have a cold today. Brent and Destine stand at the front, ready to start calendar activities. But Susan says, "No, don't start Brandon. They are not ready." She tells the class she is not happy with their behavior that morning. There was too much talking, and children were not listening to directions. Some kids took too many math pages and two kids couldn't do the assignment. Children are not putting names on the papers.

Lauren is talking to Ariel. She turns to look at Susan. She looks at her lap and then up at Susan. Susan finishes saying, "I'm not in the mood to hear any more talking. I'm feeling way crabby about what I've seen. I hope the rest of the morning will be calm." Susan tells the class they should listen to announcements, so they would know that computer class was canceled. Lauren looks at Susan. She holds Alicia's braid. She interacts silently with Katherine. Susan calls Willie over to join the class. He explains he is cleaning. She says, "Thank you, but you have to join us now."

After Susan's talk, four children have hands up. Susan calls on each of them, and answers their question. "Darryl, what is it?" Darryl asks a question about morning meeting. Susan says, "I don't know, but I guess they'll explain that in a minute."

Brent and Destine hold the thermometer mode. Brent says, "It's forty degrees."

Brent points to the number line, indicating the days the children have been in school (124). "Today was a two." He taps Destine and points to the easel. Destine describes the hundreds chart for the class, which shows a model of 124 with unit blocks.

Next, Brent stand by the calendar, "I put thirteen on the calendar."

Destine points to two cups, labeled tens and ones, next to the calendar. She puts one straw in the ones cup.

Susan says, "Daily helpers, what are you doing? We need to hear."

Brent says, "Destine needs to put one more thing."

Susan says, "In the what?"

Brent says, "In the cup."

Susan says, "In the ones cup."

Destine removes the numeral "2" from under the "ones" cup, writes "3" on a piece of tag board and posts it under the cup. Now there are two cups, one with a bundle of ten sticks and one with three sticks. Under the cups it says "1" and "3" for March 13.

Lauren leans in towards Katherine, talking to her friend.

Susan asks, "What's the number of the Days of School. Lauren, look. I want you to see this. Do you see the two sets of ten and four ones? I'm not sure everyone's looking." Susan says the model is a good example of what they've been talking about during math time. Lauren, Katherine and Ariel look over at the easel, where Susan shows the hundred squares for the days of school.

Children make comments on the calendar pattern of four kites and two shamrocks, for the days of the month. Susan asks the daily helpers about the pattern.

Susan begins to take attendance. Today she greets each child in Spanish, with "Hola." Lauren plays with something in her hands.

As the children respond, Brent tallies those present and Destine tallies absences on a chart on the chalkboard. Several students respond in Chinese. Susan answers, "Oh, Happy New Year to you too. Thank you."

Willie responds, "Hola, senor, madam, Miss Austin. Happy New Year."

Lauren is talking to her friends. Susan says, “um.” Lauren looks over.

Susan makes personal comments to some students, “Hola Jessica. I’m glad you’re back.”

When Keith is called, Lauren looks up at Susan, anticipating her name. Patrice is next, and then Lauren.

Susan says, “Hola Lauren {last name}⁶

Lauren smiles, “Hola, Miss Austin.”

When Amber is called, she says, “Hola, Senora Austin” and Charles says, “Surf’s up dude.” Susan tells me that Charles is into Ninja turtles.

Alicia and Katherine lean in towards Lauren. Alyssa crawls over towards the others.

Danny says he wasn’t called. Susan says he didn’t raise his hand to speak. She says the attendance tally will indicate if he was forgotten.

Susan says, “Lauren {last name}, this is not your talking time.” Lauren looks at the attendance tally and back at Katherine. Katherine mimes concern.

The class chants the tally by fives as Brent points: “five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty five, twenty six, twenty seven”

Some children continue to chant, “twenty eight”, and Susan says, “and twenty eight with the one person absent.”

Alicia raises her hand to say, “Brent had made a mistake and put one more. It was 29 and he erased it.”

Susan says, “Okay. He FIXED⁷ it. All right”

Lauren and the girls cluster together, leaning towards Alicia and Alyssa.

Susan says, “Danny, if I forgot you, they marked you present.”

Danny suggests she called him, but he didn’t answer.

Susan says, “I’m sorry. I guess I just went on.” She continues, “I promised Danny he could start the Books to Go”, which signals the end of Morning meaning. Someone asks about the Daily News. Susan says she forgot and they’ll have it after Danny reads.

Language Event 3 - Books to Go

“Let’s see who’s ready.” Susan says. She explains what she means by “ready.”

Danny begins making his way to the reader’s chair. Lauren sits in a loosely grouped circle of six girls: Jackie, Amber, and Alicia in front with Alyssa, Katherine and Lauren sitting behind them.

Susan says, “Danny, read nice and loud so everyone can hear the story.” She tells the class, “You haven’t heard this one yet.”

Danny sits down in the chair near the door and begins to read *Who Sank the Boat?* There are comments and reactions after he reads the title. Alicia says, “Oh, I have this one.” Danny reads a page and then shows the picture.

⁶ Lauren is a pseudonym selected by Lauren herself. Her given name is a popular name of girls her age, and another girl in the class has the same name. Therefore, Susan addresses Lauren by her first and last name.

⁷ Capital letters indicate stress or emphasize.

Voices say, "He can't READ this."

Susan asks Danny if he want more time to practice at home. He says he just needs help with one part. He spells out a word for Susan, but she needs to see the word. Susan goes to stand by Danny.

Lauren is interacting with Katherine. She looks up at Danny and back at Katherine. Katherine shakes her head, indicating they should not be talking. Danny reads, and kids laugh in response. Danny reads very quietly. The children are quiet and look up at the picture. Lauren leans on her left arm with her right knee up. She plays with her bracelet.

Danny reads word "din." Susan says, "I want to stop for a minute there." She asks what din means. Katherine suggests commotion. Susan says there was a din in the room that morning. Voices call out noise. Lauren looks at Katherine during the discussion.

Danny shows the picture. He calls Marco's name to look at the picture. Lauren looks up at the picture and then at Alicia. She looks at her hands, then up at Danny. Katherine smiles at Lauren. The two girls interact silently as Danny reads, looking up at the pictures.

Jackie sits right under Danny, miming the story. Marco moves along the wall closer to the door. Danny continues to read very quietly. Some attention seems to wander, but the room is very quiet and many children appear to listen closely. Most children look up whenever Danny shows the picture. Danny calls the names of children who don't look up.

Danny reads, "*Was it the pig as fat as butter?*", and Lauren looks up and smiles.

Willie says, "Miss Austin, I know who sank the boat."

Susan says, "Don't tell." She complements Tiffany and Ariel for listening. Lauren looks at the two first grade girls. She looks at her lap, moves her legs from side to side, plays with Amber's braids.

Someone says, "Miss Austin, on one page is a page with color. On the other page is a page without."

Susan says, "Oh, I'm sorry, we can't hear." She asks Danny to speak up.

Lauren leaves her seat to get a tissue. Danny finishes reading and the kids clap. Lauren returns as they are applauding.

Willie says, "I didn't see the part where they sank the boat."

Susan talks about why kids might not see the picture and puts the book out on the chalk ledge where they can look at it later. Susan tells Sharonda to get her book.

When Danny finishes, children begin to turn to face the chalkboard for the Daily News. Susan tells them to sit back down, and Victor reminds her about the Daily News.

Susan says, "Oh, that's right. We're going to hear the news and then we're going to hear Sharonda."

The "Daily News" is a large sheet of butcher paper, where children have written personal news during "Things to Do." The news is written in boxes on both sides of the paper. Destine and Brent hold the sheet up against the board and call on readers. Since the news is written on a flat surface, they turn the sheet in many directions to find the messages.

Ariel, a first grader, reads, "*In two more months it is my birthday.*" Alicia applauds. Susan says, "Alicia is clapping," and other children applaud.

Audrey reads very quietly. Children say, "I can't hear", and several children repeat Audrey's message. There are comments about Audrey's use of yellow marker. Susan says, "It's hard to read but Audrey knows what it says."

Sharonda reads *Teddy Bear for Sale*. She sits in the reader's chair. She is wearing corn-rows ending in many thin braids with beads along the bottom that click as she turns her head. She has a big smile on her face. Lauren looks at Sharonda intently as she reads and shows the pictures. Susan stands behind Sharonda, who reads haltingly. Sharonda shows Susan the book and makes a guess. Susan nods. Sharonda reads in a loud voice and then shows the picture. Lauren looks closely at the picture.

Susan kneels next to Sharonda and helps on request. Mostly Sharonda looks for reassurance and Susan nods. The room is very quiet. Lauren and all her friends watch Sharonda as she reads. Most of the boys are sitting in the back of the room.

Sharonda reads, "*He jumps in a car. Off he goes.*" Someone makes the "EEERRR" of a screeching car. Lauren says something to Katherine, who raises her eyebrows. As Sharonda continues reading, Lauren plays with Alicia's hair. She moves closer to Alicia and begins to re-twist one braid.

Sharonda reads haltingly. Attention seems to wander but the group is very quiet. Lauren folds her arms. She looks up when Sharonda shows the picture. She and Katherine play with Amber's twists, tugging them down and watching them spring up.

Sharonda smiles at Susan as she reads. Lauren looks at her bracelet in her lap, and up at the pictures. She mouths words at Katherine. Sharonda asks for a word. Susan has her read to the end of the sentence and then reread.

Susan says, "Now what would make sense?"

Sharonda fills in a meaningful word.

When Sharonda finishes reading, children applaud. Susan complements Sharonda saying this was a difficult book for her. "Sharonda is growing," Susan says. Lauren smiles.

"Remember what Goofy says?" Susan asks.

The children chant, "Keep on growing, keep on learning."

Susan says, "When you get to your seats, I'm sorry, but we have to do some work in math books again." There are some groans and a few cheers, and Books to Go is over.

Language Event 4 - Math

Lauren and Amber are looking in the desk cubbies for their math books. They talk and whisper. Katherine comes over to talk with them. Katherine and Lauren clap hands, hold hands, and laugh. Katherine leaves as everyone prepares for math.

Marco comes over and talks to Danielle. He gets his math book and leaves. Amber finds her book and sits waiting. Jonathan is also waiting.

Susan says, "Willie, you need to come sit over here. We want team work."

The girls hold their pencils in their hands. Lauren starts looking through her book. Alicia comes to sit by Amber on the edge of the table.

Susan says, "Three, two, one, zero. Thank you. Let's see. First graders go sit next to a second grader."

A voice at the table says, "I hope she don't call me."

Susan gets the first graders settled. Lauren looks in her desk while Alicia and Amber look at Susan. Lauren holds up a necklace and waves it at Katherine.

I sit down next to Alicia and begin taking notes. The girls look at their books and interact quietly. Lauren and Amber write something in their books.

Susan asks the children to find page 354 and “do not tear it out.” The girls look in their books.

Lauren finds the page. “I got it.”

Amber looks at Lauren, “I almost had it.”

Lauren chants, “I have it. I have it.” She snaps her fingers.

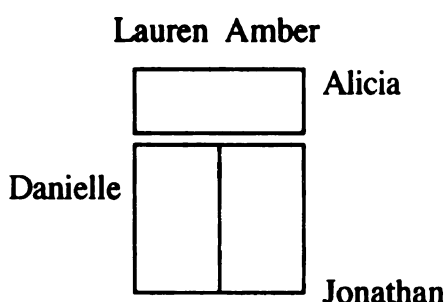
After several minutes, Amber and Danielle are still looking for the math page. Lauren asks, “Want me to find it for you?”

Susan asks for quiet and starts to give instructions, then asks if there is anyone who has not found the page. Danielle raises her hand.

Amber and Lauren write in their books. Lauren looks up when Susan says, “look up here.” but then continues to write when Susan continues to give preparation instructions.

Danielle says something to Lauren, and Lauren shows her book. Amber and Alicia converse with hand signals.

Math, Hexagon team, table map



About three minutes after Susan’s instructions, everyone has found the page. Susan says, “Okay I’m going to put a number on the board, and you don’t have to do anything.”

The girls all look up at Susan, who is standing at the front of the room (North wall) by the chalkboard. Lauren plays with her pencil. Susan asks students who can “read my number” to signal by placing their hands on their head.” She places magnetic unit blocks on the board. Two flat 10X10 squares representing hundreds, three 10X1 sticks representing tens, and three 1x1 cubes representing ones.

Lauren is holding her book up on the table. Danielle taps the book. Lauren smiles at Danielle and puts the book down. Danielle and Lauren write in their books.

Susan says, “Someone’s humming and that’s bothering me.” She finishes writing on the board and looks around. “Oh, I see a lot of good signals.” Alicia has her hand on her head. The other girls are writing in their books and not looking at Susan.

Susan calls on James to say the number. She asks how many hundreds, tens and ones are in the number. Alicia puts up her fingers as Susan asks each question. Lauren looks at her book, up at Susan and over at Amber. She writes something in her book and then erases.

Bruce calls out, “Where to put it?”

Susan says it’s not time to write. “Right now we’re just looking at the board.”

Lauren erases and writes something in her book.

It is very quiet as Susan places another number on the board. Bruce says, “Oo. Oooo. Lauren.” Lauren continues to write in her book. Amber looks at the board and

raises her hand. Alicia looks at the board and puts her hands on her head. Lauren has one arm around her head, playing with her pony tails. Susan calls on her. Lauren says, "I didn't raise my hand."

Susan says, "Oh I'm sorry. I thought you had the signal."

Lauren laughs. Susan calls on Katherine. Katherine gives the answer. Susan explains to the children how to write the answers in their books.

Danielle is concerned that Lauren is copying. She puts her notebook up between Lauren and herself. I tell her to put it down and we talk about copying. I suggest she is not paying attention since she is so worried about copying. Danielle puts her thumb in her mouth and looks down at her paper. Susan walks around checking children's answers. The group at the table sit and wait. Lauren tries to get Danielle's attention and show her book to Danielle.

As Susan writes another problem on the board, Sharonda goes up to complain about Bruce. Susan says, "Bruce, you know what I said about teammates getting along." Danny raises his hand. Susan says, "Danny is this important?" She tells Kenneth to "sit down and boss Kenneth."

Lauren sits with her pencil in her mouth. Amber and Alicia have their hands on their heads. Alicia is called to answer the question. She says, "Two hundred and eighteen." Lauren looks at her book. Susan asks how many hundreds? tens? ones? Amber chants the answer. Lauren looks over at what Alicia is writing. Susan tells the children to "Please write that in number two." Lauren looks at the book and up at the board. She writes in her book, glancing at the board for each number. She looks over at Amber's book.

Susan says, "When you're done, signal with your hands on your head or your arms folded." Lauren sits with her arms folded.

Susan says, "Okay, I'd like you to look at number three." Lauren looks at her book. Susan reads the instructions to the class and asks them to "Do that quietly by yourself and then give me a signal and we'll see what everyone has."

Lauren writes in her book and raises her hand.

Susan says, "Lauren, what number is that? Excuse me Marco, I couldn't hear Lauren because you were talking out of turn."

Lauren says, "Two hundred thirty four."

Susan repeats the answer and asks how many hundreds, tens, ones. The children chant responses. Lauren taps her pencil on her ear. She doesn't chant answers.

Susan continues with number four. Lauren writes, and raises her hand. Alicia raises her hand. Amber and Danielle write answers. Susan calls on Marco to give the answer. Lauren puts her pencil in her mouth, then on her nose. Susan asks how many hundreds, tens, ones. Amber, Lauren and Alicia join in chanting.

Susan says, "Now stop and listen." Lauren looks up from her book. Susan tells the children to tear out the page and work on it themselves. She tells them to raise their hands if they need help, and asks me to help with the tearing. The room gets noisy as the children follow the instructions. Lauren has her page torn out of the book before the instructions are over. She puts her book away. Alicia is tearing out Amber's page for her. Lauren looks over at them.

Susan says she's looking for a team where everyone has papers on top of their tables and math books put away. She complements Marco. Amber says, "OW", possibly from a paper cut. Susan asks, "Are you all right, Amber? Did you hurt yourself?" Lauren leans over to look as Amber studies the palm of her hand.

Susan asks the children to turn the paper over and gives instructions for doing the problems on the back. Lauren looks at Amber and then up at Susan. Amber responds to Susan's questions. Lauren sits with her pencil in her mouth. Danielle writes on her paper. Susan works through the first problem with the class. Alicia raises her hand. Amber writes. Lauren plays with her pencil.

As Susan gives instructions, Lauren begins circling answers on her paper. She says something to Amber. Amber looks over at Lauren.

Susan gives instructions for completing both sides of the paper and then tells the second graders to continue on their own. There are several interruptions for comments about behavior. Lauren taps her pencil on the table. She holds up her paper. Danielle shows Lauren her paper. Lauren circles answers on her paper. She looks over at Amber. She does not respond to Susan's questions, but looks up at Susan, leaning on her elbow.

Susan asks the first graders to meet her on the area rug. Lauren begins working. Susan tells the second graders to do the back first because the front involves gluing. She reminds them to share the glue. Lauren looks up as Susan talks. Alicia and Danielle continue working.

Danielle says, "I don't have to share." Danielle has her own glue.

(At this point the video stops and I rely on the audio tape and field notes.)

Danielle says to Lauren, "Why you looking at my paper, Lauren?"

Lauren says, "I'm not."

Danielle says, "Are too."

Lauren sings, "I'm on the back." She wrestles with the scissors. "Can you pass me some glue." She gets the scissors.

Lauren says to Danielle, "Here's these blanks."

Danielle says, "You better keep them, you might need them."

Lauren says, "No, you weren't paying attention. If you got Oh (zero), you can just leave it blank."

Danielle says, "No, you weren't paying attention."

The girls talk to about what Susan said. Amber is quietly working.

Jonathan says, "I do math at home. I'm a math boy cause I love to do math. I got a hard math book at home."

Susan announces, "When you finish your math paper you can get your writing out right away."

Lauren says, "Yes!"

Danielle is amused. "She was like, 'Yes! Yes!'"

Susan asks Danielle to switch seats with Bruce, who is having a difficult time getting along with his teammates. Sharonda says, "Yes!" in the background.

Danielle says, "Why they like that?"

Lauren responds, "They don't like Bruce." She lowers her voice and adds, "So why we have Bruce here?" The children quietly talk about Bruce.

Danielle gathers her things together. "I'll see you next year, Lauren."

In the background, Bruce is arguing with Susan.

Rudy and Terrence stand behind Lauren. Rudy says, "Terrence, I finished my autobiography. It was funny, you can ask Miss Austin. It was funny, wasn't it Lauren?" Rudy recites segments of his autobiography for Terrence.

{At this point, the second Video Tape begins}

The children are up turning in their math and preparing for writing. The girls are all standing or walking around the room. Jonathan continues to work at the table. Susan asks who's finished with math, and says there will be five more minutes. Kids who are done have a head start on writing. Bruce is making a fuss about moving. I take him out of the room for a talk.

Lauren comes over to the table and talks with Amber. She is holding the glue. Victor stands by Alicia's seat. Alicia takes him by the shoulders and moves him out of her way. I bring Bruce to the table. He sits next to Jonathan with his head on his fist, elbow on the table.

Lauren sits watching Amber work. Katherine stands next to Amber. Alyssa comes over and stands by Lauren. Lauren speaks harshly to Alyssa and the girls laugh. Jonathan leans over to talk with Bruce and encourage him to do his math. Bruce sits with his head resting on both hands.

Lauren takes the glue from Amber and glues something down on her paper. She takes her paper and walks off.

Susan announces that there are three minutes left for math. Lauren ambles back to the table and sits facing Amber and Alicia. She goes over to talk to Alyssa. Alicia goes to the writing table to get paper. Susan tells Lauren to go back to her table. Lauren returns to the table and gets out her book: *My Best Friend's New Baby Sister*. She puts her book on the table and sits down. She adjusts the microphone so it is facing her. Jonathan, Amber, and Alicia also prepare for writing. Brent sits with his head in his hands.

Lauren plays with strips of paper left from math. She opens her book to the first blank page. She asks if she can use my markers, and gets a colored pencil from my supply box.

Lauren draws something in her book as she is sitting down. Amber sits looking at her hands. Susan says, "Its time to get quiet. All right. I'm looking to see who's ready in one minute."

Language Event 4 - Silent writing

Alicia shows Amber her papers. They discuss whether Alicia's book should be wide or tall. Lauren looks through her book. She shows me a page she was working on last week. "I got that one done," she says. I ask if she wants to read to me "from where she left off" that morning. She reads the last page out loud to me, "...when we had got into the car, we saw my best friend and her mother and her baby sister. We had to drop them off because her mother had got off early. And I haven't finished this part."

I ask, "What are you going to do for that part?"

Lauren says, "I'm going to write about when they had got into the house and they had called my mother." As Lauren tells me about her book, Susan explains to the class that it's time to put everything away and get ready for writing "when I get to zero."

I said, "So you already know what's coming next?"

"Mhm," Lauren continues "And they gonna have a sleep over party"

"So they have a sleep over party?" I repeat. "And then what's gonna happen?"

"Then I think," Lauren begins to smile, "And their mother went on a trip. Their mother. And the baby had stayed at home with them. And she was a bad baby."

"Uh oh. That's what you're planning? So this is gonna be a very long book, huh?"

As we talk, Susan is counting slowly, "Ten... nine... eight..." Jonathan continues writing, and Alicia is working with large sheets of paper, making a book. The room is quiet, with some murmuring as children get settled.

"Go ahead," I tell Lauren.

Lauren starts to write as Susan says "six." She holds her book with her left hand at the top. She is writing on the left hand side, because she has started the book from the "back." Amber and Alicia are working on stapling their books together.

Lauren writes, "Wen tey gat in thr heme they het call my mommy." As she writes, she says the words slowly, "When they got in their home they had called my mommy"⁸

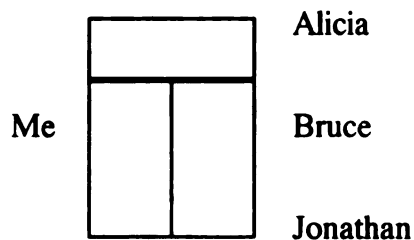
11:00 Silent Writing starts

Susan says, "Zero. Everyone should be writing now." She sets the timer and the room gets very quiet. Only murmuring and whispering can be heard. Lauren lies across the table, with her face leaning against her left hand as she writes. Next to her, Amber is picking at the stapler.

I am sitting at the table across from Bruce, who still holds his head in his hands. I talk to Bruce about making a decision to stop being unhappy. Lauren looks over for a moment and back at her work. She looks over her page and then continues to write. She says the words to herself as she writes, "mommy and ask can her daughter spend the night." Lauren writes, "mommy and ask can her dar sem aen² neyt."

Silent Writing, hexagon team, table map

Lauren Amber



Susan stops by and asks Bruce to finish his math. He begins going through the squares for gluing. Jonathan talks to Bruce, offering some encouragement. Lauren looks up at Bruce. She plays with her braid, and appears to be thinking. She gets a tissue. Amber is working at the top of a page in her book. Alicia sits with a blank page in front of her. Lauren returns to the table. She sits down and picks up her pencil. She asks me softly if I have seen a picture she drew.

Lauren looks over her page and says, "My mother said..." She begins to write, saying the words again slowly, "My:y... mo:mmy... sai:d... yes..." her voice drops as

⁸ The colon (mo:mmy:) indicates that the vowel sound is elongated.

⁹ The spellings of this text are from my fieldnotes. I don't have the original text, so can't verify the "aen" for "the".

she completes the sentence. Lauren lies across the table with her head resting on her arm as she writes. In her book, she writes: My mommy sed yes.

Amber and Alicia are still working with the stapler, trying to prepare their books. Amber leaves the table and returns with a staple remover. Lauren looks over the page and begins to draw a picture under the written text. I ask Amber if she needs help. She says, "It won't work," and hands me the stapler. Bruce begins to work on his math. Lauren looks up at me as I work on the stapler and then goes back to drawing.

In the background Susan says, "I'm not spelling, I'm sorry." Then Susan asks, "Does anybody have an extra pencil for Danielle?" There is some discussion as several children go to assist. Lauren looks up and then continues to illustrate her picture. After a several minutes, she shows me her picture. "This the telephone cord", she says. Amber and Alicia tear sheets of paper apart and continue to work on preparing books for writing.

The noise in the room starts to rise as children's murmuring increases in volume. Susan says, "Excuse me", and the children quiet down. Alicia begins counting the papers she has stacked in a pile.

Lauren turns the page in her book, and creases it so it lies flat. She begins to write as she says, "Then that night... she drove... ca:me... over... we:e... hat (had... to... go... to... bed." Lauren's distinct "t" sound at the end of "had" is reflected in her writing: Then thert neat she came over we het to go to bad."

Lauren illustrates her text, first drawing the bed. Nearby, Amber and Alicia are arguing playfully, "You wasting paper." As Lauren is working the timer rings announcing the official end of silent writing. Children groan, "Awww." The daily helpers begin calling children's names to prepare for lunch. Lauren finishes her picture and shows it to me.

I ask, "Are you sleeping in the same bed?"

She says, "Mhm"

I say, "One on one side, one on the other side."

Lauren agrees. We talk about the picture and I ask about some circles. She says those are "what holds the bed up."

"Oh, like the bedposts?" I ask.

Jonathan continues to write, and Alicia continues to tear pages from a pad of paper and then stack them in a pile. Lauren turns a page in her book and creases it so that lies flat. She looks up at Amber and they exchange smiles.

Lauren sighs loudly. Then she talks as she writes, "When we woke up we fe:lt .. kitchen. was a mess. The baby messed up everything." Lauren works at the writing with an intent expression on her face and no hesitations. Lauren writes, "Wen we weke up the ken was a pes. The baby miss up her thing."

Lauren begins illustrating the page. She looks over to the front of the room, perhaps gauging when the daily helpers will call her name. Alicia stacks papers into a pile. She takes a marker from Jonathan and smells it. She shows it to Amber and they begin smelling markers. Amber asks me if she has an orange dot on her nose. Lauren looks over and laughs.

Lauren goes back to illustrating her text. A voice calls out Lauren's name and she leaves the table for the bathroom. Alicia stakes the papers and staples to one side. Jonathan looks through the crayons. He has been drawing a picture of two block figures with a yellow sun in the corner.

Susan says, "Would you PLEASE clean up your tables. It's almost lunch time." Amber sits writing as Susan talks. Alicia appears to be thinking. Lauren returns to the table. We talk about her book I ask, "How many pages do you have in your story. (Lauren shows me three fingers.) Oh, you've only got three left? Is that going to be the end of the story then.

We talk about what elements of the story are "true."

Lauren: We do sleep in one bed, me and my cousin.
Debi: And you do have a little cousin like that.
Lauren: And we do go to school.
Debi: Does your cousin have a baby sister?
Lauren: Mhm.
Debi: What other parts are true?
Lauren: The dinner part.
Debi: Did you go to a mall and see your cousin?
Lauren: We actually wasn't in the mall, we were at the market. And my mother does make my lunch.

Susan asks if the children would line up silently. They quietly line up and leave for lunch.

Note: On this day, Susan has a planning time following lunch. The children come in around 1:10 instead of 12:20.

Language Event 6.1 - Read Aloud (About 1:10)

Terrence sits at the front of the room reading from *Two Dog Biscuits*, a large picture book by Beverly Cleary. Alicia stands at the front facing the class as Terrence reads. Lauren is sitting on the carpet behind Amber, patting at Amber's hair. She is in the second row of children nearest Terrence.

Terrence reads, "*Be on the look out for a dog,*" said mother. "*What does be on the lookout mean?*" says Jimmy. Terrence's voice conveys a humorous inflection and the children laugh. Lauren laughs too, and continues to smile as Terrence continues.

Alicia leans over towards Terrence. Terrence says, "Oh."

Susan says, "Is it Alicia's turn now?" Susan is sitting behind the group on the floor.

Alicia sits down and continues to read where Terrence left off. Marco is on his knees listening to the story. Lauren scoots back and is out of sight of the camera. A group of children sit in the front row: Rudy, Amber, Ariel, Sarina, Katherine, Danny, Danielle, and Kenneth.

Alicia reads, "*I don't like dogs that bark.*" "*Oh dear,*" said mother, "*I guess we'll have to find a dog that doesn't bark.*"

Victor says, "All dogs bark."

Alicia shows the picture to the class. The children look intently and make comments. Alicia, like Terrence, reads with little hesitation. She does not ask for help. She adjusts her voice for dialogue, conveying the emotions and emphasis of the different speakers. Alicia shows the picture again, and calls Willie's name to look up. He complies. Marco puts his T-shirt over his head. Terrence is standing near the front and pulls Marco's shirt down. Alicia and Terrence appear to feel some sense of authority over the class.

The class is quiet but somewhat fidgety, moving around as the reading continues. As the book draws towards a climax, they appear more interested and attentive. Alicia finishes the book and the children applaud.

Susan says, "Good job Terrence and Alicia. Thank you for sharing that book with us." Then she asks the class to "look over here and I'll explain what I want you to do." The children look towards her, though there is a feeling of restlessness. "You have book clubs that want to read to you today."

A voice whispers, "Yes."

Susan continues, "But I think you have given us a lot of listening energy. So what I'm going to do is, I'm going to send tables at a time to get something for silent reading. We haven't done it in a while. I'm going to give you a chance to sit where you like."

As Susan is talking, Jackie gets up and approaches her with a comment.

"Okay," Susan says, "Let's do this. Jackie just said something about silent writing. If you would prefer to write rather than read I will give you a choice. Only for the next fifteen minutes. And then we're going to listen to a book club."

"Square team, please go get your writing or reading.." The room gets noisy as children go off to get materials. Children go to the library corner and collect books, pillows and stuffed toys. Other children go to their desks and get writing materials. Lauren sits at the back of the carpet waiting. Susan calls the hexagon team, Lauren's table group, and she heads to the library corner.

Near the front door, Sharonda sits down in the reader's chair. She has a stack of four song books from the large plastic basket under the calendar table.

Jackie comes over to show me a wrestling book she is working on with Terrence. She says, "Miss Goodman, I made a chapter book. I even know this word."

Jackie shows me that she and Terrence are writing about children in the class but using "book names" instead of real names. I ask, "Why did you think of having a book name?"

Jackie says, "It was kinda simple. We didn't want our real names to be in the book. In biography books we want our names to be in them."

Marco comes over and looks at Jackie's book. He realizes I'm filming and moves out of the way. I encourage him to come back. He returns and stands next to Jackie so he can see the book as she is talking. Jackie talks about how they represented wrestling announcers in the book text. "Don't you know how they says 'and... AND... AA:ND'?" she asks me, imitating an announcer with growing excitement. She shows me the text: Johnny Cage vres Lukane and and and Lukane won.

By the door, Sharonda is reading *The Hole in the Bucket*, singing out the words with great enthusiasm. Susan asks the children to settle down and is counting backwards, "Five . . . four . . three."

At Lauren's table (the hexagon team) Amber stands working on the picture of flowers that she started right before lunch. The picture is for the front of Alicia's book, and Alicia leans across the table watching. Jonathan sits in his seat and reads.

Marco shows me a book that says "Pictionary" on the cover. "I'm making a dictionary," he says. Jackie calls from her seat where she is starting to write, "Miss Goodman, every two pages are a chapter in my book."

Susan has counted to “zero”, and tells a group in the back, “No, you can’t do this. This is Silent Reading. Not Read Aloud. Not Book Club time. This is not a talking time at all. Marco, Get something to read now. Or something to write.”

Lauren and Katherine have settled near the door with their backs against the northern wall of the classroom. They each have two pillows, one for their seat and one for their back. They are each holding a book, and seven more books lie on the floor between them. They also have a D.W. doll (a book character) propped on the floor between them. Lauren is reading out loud to herself, but Katherine is listening to Susan’s instructions.

Susan says, “Hurry and get what you (need). Everybody has to find a spot quickly.”

I place a microphone by the girls, attached to the tape recorder. Katherine, who is not accustomed to being taped, watches me. Lauren continues to read out loud. Katherine looks over at Lauren. She puts her book down and leans over to listen to Lauren reading. It may be she feels two of them reading will ruin my tape.

Susan says to them, “Girls if you’re whispering to yourself...” Katherine points to the taping equipment. Susan says, “That’s okay. But it’s not time to be talking.”

The girls confer and Katherine gets up and goes over to talk to Susan.

Sharonda asks Lauren, “Does this say (??)”

Lauren goes over to look. She says something to Sharonda. She is sitting down when Sharonda calls again. “*When...* is this ‘*when*’?” Katherine returns and both girls go over to look at Sharonda’s book.

Susan calls from the front, “Katherine, Lauren, and Rudy. Would you choose a book you want to be read to you.” Katherine and Lauren leave to see Susan.

In the background, children are complaining about pillows. Susan says, “Lauren and Katherine, just one, Okay? Give someone else a pillow.”

Marco and Keith come over and snatch the unguarded pillows. They are each holding white cradle mattresses. The girls come to stop them. Terrence also comes to take a pillow. There is discussion about the pillows and Susan says, “All you need is one cushion or one pillow.”

Lauren begins to sit down, but Katherine comes over to get her. Susan says, “Lauren, where’s the book you want to take home.” Katherine and Lauren go back to pick books out for the “Books to Go” bags. The bags will include one book to practice at home for reading aloud to the class. The other book is for their parents to read to the girls. There is also a form for their parents to fill out. Lauren, Katherine and Rudy stand by Susan’s desk as she prepares the bags.

In the corner near the door, Sharonda is reading her second book, “*If a Tree Could Talk*. She say uses great emphasis, “We WISH you would...” She looks up at me behind the camera and smiles. “What you see?” she asks. “Nothing.” I say.

Language Event 6 - Silent reading “starts”:

Susan says, “On your mark. Get ready. Get set. Read or write.”

It has taken ten minutes to get settled, but many of the children have been reading or writing for a while already. The class gets very quiet. Sharonda finishes reading *If a Tree Could talk* and picks up *This Old Man* from her stack of song books. Jessica sits on the carpet near Sharonda, leaning against the small calendar table. Audrey reaches past her and pulls a book from the box. I put the mike by Sharonda since Lauren is still at Susan’s desk. Sharonda hams it up for a minute: “*This old man came roooliiing*

hoooooommeee.” Then she returns to singing the words to the song as she goes from one page to another.

Sharonda appears very familiar with the song, and sometimes looks around the room (rather than at the book) as she sings. Sharonda swings her legs and sings to herself. After the verse “he plays six”, she turns the page and talks to herself about the picture. The verses from seven to ten are on one page. She points to the pictures and counts the object.

Sharonda sings another verse. When she gets to “This old man/ he played eight”, she stops singing and begins an enthusiastic chant, similar to a rap rhythm.

Jessica says, “Sharonda, would you quiet down.”

Sharonda finishes *This Old Man* and picks up the song book *Peanut Butter and Jelly*. This song has more complex language with less repetition, and Sharonda focuses closely on reading- rather than remembering- the text. She reads, *You pop it in the oven and you... bake it..*”

She stops and says, “Jessica, what’s this word?”

Jessica continues reading, mouthing the words as she goes along.

Sharonda gets down from her chair with a little huff. “What word,” Jessica says.

“Never mind.” Sharonda says.

She comes over and asks me for help with the word “bake.” I help her with it, not realizing she has already read it. As she continues to read, she asks for my help with several words and I help her by looking at this pictures or talking about what the actions are in the song.

Sharonda finishes her fourth book and goes to the basket under the table. She pulls out *She’ll be Coming Round the Mountain*.

Lauren and Katherine have put their “Books to Go” bags in their lockers and are now back on their cushions reading. Lauren is sitting against the wall with her feet straight out in front of her, crossed at the ankles. Katherine finishes a book and looks through their stack for another book. Lauren continues to read aloud. She appears engrossed in her book *Dragon’s Fat Cat* by Dav Pilkey.

As Lauren reads Marco and Destine are working on big sheets of paper, drawing basket ball courts. Marco goes over to talk with David, who is writing on the floor near the front wall.

Susan says, “Excuse me. I did not say we were done.”

Lauren stops and looks up as Susan talks. Then she goes back to reading, “*A dragon did not know what to do about all the (??) That is a stinky problem.*”

Dragon told to teach cat (pause) cat to use the toilet but cat did not understand.

James comes over to look through the books Lauren and Katherine have on the floor. He asks for a book by title. Lauren says, “You have to ask Sharonda.” Charles goes over and gets the book from Sharonda.

Lauren continues to read. “*One day the mouse came along. ‘P.U.’, said the mouse, ‘ Your house STINKS!’*” Lauren uses great emphasis on “P.U.” and “STINKS.”

“I know,’ said dragon, “my cat has a stinky problem.”

“That you need is a lit-ter box,” said the mouse.

Susan says, “Okay. Stop please and look at me.”

Both girls continue to read.

Susan continues, "Who's looking at me? Nobody. My feelings are hurt."

Lauren glances up after Susan's comment about feelings. Katherine leans over and asks Lauren for a word. Katherine is reading *One Fine Morning*. Lauren supplies the word and continues reading, "*A litter box will make that smelly problem go away.*"

1:45 Transition to Book Clubs

Lauren continues to read as Susan continues to ask for attention, "There's Sarina. Okay, great.. four people. I feel much better. Okay. Will you PLEASE put your books away and then go to the carpet and sit down and face the west. We are starting with *Lunch Boxes*. I need everything put away."

Katherine gets up and starts picking up materials. Lauren stops to listen to Susan's instructions, and then returns to her book.

Katherine, "Come on Lauren. We'll read tomorrow. Psych."

Lauren says, "I don't think she's coming tomorrow.. but she might."

The lunch boxes group is not sure about their presentation. Someone asks, "Miss Austin, we gonna read the book?"

Susan says, "What ever you guys decide."

The children talk about the presentation, "We just got to memberize the book," one person says."

"Well you better decide," Susan tells them.

Lauren comes over and asks me if I'm returning the next day. I say no, but I'd like to interview her during the movie Susan's class and another class will be watching at 2:00.

Lauren goes back to Katherine, who want her to "put that book up." Lauren says, "I gotta talk to Miss Goodman, so I gotta have the book."

Katherine says, "Well just finish reading... very quick."

Lauren says, "I caint. I can't disobey Miss Austin rules.

"I know you can't", Katherine agrees, "but you..." The voices become inaudible as the girls walk away from the camera.

The room is noisy as children clean up and prepare for the book club presentation. Susan says, "I'm going to read this and see who's up here reading with me." She begins singing, reading from *Ten in the Bed*. Children join in signing with her.

The Lunch Boxes group begins to gather in a row of chairs along the western edge of the carpet. They are talking and working out their plans for the presentation. Each girl wears a plastic bag on her back like a backpack.

Book Club Presentation, room map

Door

Calendar Wall

Front of classroom

(Area Rug)

Children gather facing group.

Girls are sitting

in small chairs: Tiffany Katherine Lauren Alyssa Ariel Audrey

Darryl has been passing out books to the children in *True Francine*. Susan tells him to put the books away, that she doesn't know if *True Francine* will present today. Susan says, "Okay, you know what? I'm gonna stop this book now. I hear a lot of talking. It's (the book) not helping people to come up. It's just getting noisier." Susan begins giving instructions for specific groups and children to put materials away and join the group. She says, "Excuse me. If you are on the carpet, ZIP. This group (the book club) needs to do some talking because they need to get ready."

Darryl stands on the carpet talking to the girls in the *Lunch Boxes* group. Susan says, "You know what, you're not bossing their group." Darryl sits down.

When most of the children are gathered on the rug and settled down, Susan says, "This is our first book club... I'll wait. This is our first Book Club presentation."

Darryl says, "Ain't this the second?"

Susan says, "No we haven't heard a Book Club yet. This is our first time."

Darryl asks about a similar activity that the class had in the fall. Susan says that was Guided Reading and not Book Clubs because she chose the books for the children. She reminds the group that she said she would start with *Lunch Boxes*. "We can't hear all of them today and we wouldn't want to." Susan says she is not sure if *True Francine* will go next, but everyone should be ready because she had told them that yesterday was the last day to prepare for presentations.

Susan shows the class an evaluation form, and says she is going to tell them how they did on: reading to the class, diary pages, project one, project two, and teamwork. Children ask about their self-evaluations, and she says that was their chance and this is her chance to evaluate the book clubs.

Since "this is the first" presentation, Susan asks the kids to stand up so "we can decide where the stage starts." She asks everyone to sit behind the carpet, or to the side of the carpet. There is discussion and negotiation as everyone settles down again. The group of children sitting in the first two rows includes: Jackie, Alicia, Rudy, Terrence, Marco, Amber, Salina, and Danielle. The *Lunch Boxes* group has rearranged themselves and are sitting in a row of chairs, from left to right: Audrey, Ariel, Lauren, Alyssa, Katherine, and Tiffany. Ariel and Katherine hold books, while Lauren and Alyssa hold one book between them.

Susan says, "I forgot to say what Latrice was worried about." Susan tells the class that Latrice was nervous about reading her book to the class. The children could select their

own books and some selected challenging books. But Susan explains that the groups will read together, "that's why you're in the club together, because you're helping each other. So you don't have to be worried about that."

Audrey stands up. Susan says, "We're not quiet ready." Audrey sits down.

Susan says, "Destine, can you show Audrey you're ready?"

Audrey stands up. "We're going to do a play and read." She sits down.

Lauren looks around and makes eye contact with the girls in the group. The girls in the outer four chairs look towards Lauren and Alyssa. Then Lauren starts reading, and the other girls follow, "*Lunch Boxes, by Fred Erlich.*"

The class is quiet as the girls read in unison, "*At old (??) school when it's time to eat, the teacher likes it when we're neat.*" Lauren and Alyssa hold their book between them. Tiffany looks on Katherine's book. Audrey appears to recite verses from memory, not looking at the book that Ariel holds.

After the girls read a verse, they show all three books to the audience so the other children can see the pictures.

"Miss Vanilla and Mr. Blare tell each child to take a chair. Everyone is in a happy mood as they sit down to eat their food."

On the following page, the girls come to a name and stop to confer. Alyssa pronounces the name, and the group goes back to reciting together. This page is hard to follow and voices say, "What?" Katherine repeats the line as they show the picture. Her group members say, "Shh."

"What's the use of dipping hot dogs in your juice."

Voices call out "EWWW", and children make comments as the book club group shows the picture. Susan says they can laugh, but should sit quietly. "You will have a chance to comment."

It takes a while to read each page and then show the picture. Amber suggests, "Miss Austin. Can't one group show the picture while the other reads."

Susan does not respond, and the group continues, "*When Rosa's mile spills on the floor, she tries to drink it with a straw. Maria takes her hard boiled egg and throws it to her best friend Craig.*"

There is loud laughing and children call out "ewww" and "yeech." The book club group smile at each other over the reactions to the text, and continue with even greater enthusiasm.

"Peanut butter in your hair. Stop that now says Mr. Blare."

As the group continues to read, children react with laughing and responses. The laughing gets bigger, sometimes sounding faked, but the audience seems to be enjoying the book. Also, the book lines appeal to the seven year olds.

"And I think that Miss Vanilla is sounding like a big gorilla."

One page shows Mr. Blare pointing as he says "*Put your garbage over there.*" Jackie points her arm in the stance of the picture and Marco follows.

See how quietly we pass out the door and back to class.

"The end," the group announces in unison, and the audience applauds. Audrey gets up and bows.

Susan says, "I don't understand.. how is this play supposed to be?" She tells the group they "needed" to either do a play or read the book. The girls look around. Alyssa says, "We read the book." Susan is puzzled because the girls have "costumes" and had planned to do a play.

Susan suggests that they show the lunch boxes they made, and explains to the class that this was one of their projects. "Start with Audrey."

Each of the girls takes a construction paper "lunch box" out of their plastic bag. Inside of the lunch boxes are "foods" that the children made out of paper and scraps. It is a slow process as each girl shows the foods in her lunch boxes.

Alyssa shows "hot-dogs" and candy, and the audience respond with "Ooo." Then she shows a "steak" and the kids laugh. I say, "That's my kind of lunch."

Lauren stands to show her "food", "This my lunch box. This my apple. This my Swiss cheese." Children laugh at some of the more unusual items.

The audience is interested in the girls' project but it becomes a bit tedious and they get restless. Members of the Lunch Boxes group start talking as other members present. Susan says, "The group is talking and that is not very polite. And the audience is not as quiet as they could be."

Tiffany is showing the items in her lunch box as Kathy's class arrives to watch a movie with Susan's class. Tiffany finishes and the Book Club time ends.

Transcription notes:

- When representing the language of speakers in direct quotations, I include the syntax and wording used by the speaker. I have tried to do this consistently for both children and adults. I also represent some phonological shifts, particularly if they involve a noticeable variation as in "posed" for "supposed". I use eye dialect, or spelling patterns, to suggest these features, rather than linguistic markings. These decisions are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, methodology.
- *Italics indicate reading texts aloud.*
- Underlined sentences indicate the case study child is reading or writing.
- "/" indicates a rising and "\" indicates a falling tone.
- Question marks within parenthesis (??) indicate speech I was unable to discern from audio or video tape. Where applicable, I include the speech I think I hear within the parentheses.
- : a colon indicates an elongated vowel sound.
- Capital letters indicate stress or emphasize.
- <> Indicates a very quiet tone of voice.

APPENDIX D

LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES OF MARCO'S DAY

APPENDIX D

LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES ON MARCO'S DAY

Language Events:	Marco's Day Literacy events	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
Three Toed Sloth	Overview: The teacher provides a whole class "lesson" on a poem "The Three Toed Sloth". Children have copied the poem from the board during the previous event.	The Three Toed Sloth by Jack Prelutsky. (on Chalkboard)	Poem	Note: a photograph of a sloth is posted next to the poem.
1a	Teacher discusses information about sloths using lines from the poem as well as a picture. Alyssa and others participate in the discussion.	The Three Toed sloth by Jack Prelutsky	Poem	Teacher leads discussion of scientific information based upon a poem.
1b	Teacher and children discuss the "long" vowels, and focus on the "long o". Teacher demonstrates and instructs students to circle the "long o" words in the text.	Chalkboard and Student copies of The Three Toed Sloth		Teacher and students identify phonetic patterns within a text.
1c	Teacher leads children in a choral reading of the poem.	The Three Toed Sloth		choral reading

Language Events:	Marco's Day	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
Morning Meeting	Literacy events Overview: A daily routine including calendar (the "daily helpers", lead classmates in activities related to calendar, "days of school" and weather) and Attendance.	Classroom calendar bulletin board	Charts, records	Ritual: The ritual nature of the event tends to highlight language math processes..
2a	Darryl asks about a mistake James made writing today's "Day of School" number on the numberline. Teacher and students discuss the error.	Numberline of the days of the school year written by students.	Chart (student writing)	Discussion of a writer's mistake. (mathematical error)
2b	Daily helpers lead discussion of the calendar and days of school. Students ask about various factors of the today's number.	Days of school numberline	Chart	Students use an aspect of their life (the <i>day in school</i>) as a focus for mathematical analysis.
2c	Daily helper explains model that breaks down the day's number into units.	Unit chart on magnetic board	Conceptual model	Students use <i>day in school</i> as a focus for mathematical analysis.
2d	Daily helpers show today's temperature on a large model of thermometer. Some students ask about interpretation (by twos). Susan explains.	Model of a thermometer	Model	Use of thermometer model to discuss today's temperature.
2e	Teacher turns pages in attendance book, exchanges greetings with each child, marks absences, comments on absences.	Attendance forms in looseleaf binder.	legal document - Official record	Taking attendance- legal record related to schooling.
2f	Daily helpers record absent and present on tallies. Class helps count tallies by fives and then ones	Attendance tally on chalkboard	tally- data collection (temp. text)	Use of tally as a temporary text in order to record information.
2g	The daily helpers transfer the number of children absent to a "missing persons graph"	Missing person's graph	bar graph	graphing official information
2relational systems	<i>Songs- children chant movement songs.</i>	(oral songs)	movement songs	<i>Singing as a group- oral language</i>

Language Events:	Marco's Day	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
Books to Go	Literacy events			
	Two children read to the class. Classmates and Susan listen and assist.			An ongoing program where children take books home and practice before reading to class.
3a	James reads to the class.	<i>If a tree Could Talk</i> (Author?)	Poetry book/illustrated	Child read to the class.
3b	Amber reads to the class	<i>Snakes</i> by Patricia Demuth	Non-fiction/illustrated	Child reads to the class.
3c	The "kids on the rug" help the readers when requested.			Reader seeks and receives help from peers.
3d	Amber appeals to Susan for help. Susan walks Amber through a reading strategy.			Teacher provides on the spot strategy lessons.
Math	The class divides for math activities into a group having choices and an small group teaching experiences focusing on addition with regrouping.			
4a	Susan provides choices, listing them on board and explaining them. Kids listen and react.	List of Math Choices	instrumental-temporary	Temporary text created to organize another learning experience.
4b	Small group gathers on rugs to work on problems. Use math sheet to read problems and record answers.	Math Sheets	Textbook	"solving the problem" with blocks and "recording the answer"- a different process.
4 relational systems	Children use unit blocks to solve problems.	unit blocks	"teaching tool"	related sign system.

Language Events:	Marco's Day	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
Silent Writing	Literacy events Children sit at desks and write "silently". They have ongoing projects, including choices. They are all expected to write autobiographies.			Classroom "silent writing". Students write "silently" for twenty minutes.
5a	James brings folders to the table. James and David find their writing folders.	Writing folder's labeled	instrumental	Reading labels/ organizing materials
5b	Marco, David, Destine, Terrence and James work on writing autobiographies. These will be published for an Author's Day Celebration.	Autobiographies- student made practice books.	biography- drafts	Students work at various stages of drafting and illustrating autobiographies.
5c	Destine writes steadily for entire time. She stops to ask ME about the birthday for her brother. I write problem. We have a discussion.	Destine's biography / my "math problem".	instrumental- temporary	Using resources to find information for drafting a biography.
5d	Lauren reads and discusses her story with ME	Lauren's Story / draft book	fiction- draft	Child author reads and discusses text with an adult.
5e	Jackie comes over to show me her work on dinosaurs.	Jackie's writings	non-fiction draft	Child author talks about her work with an adult.
5f	Jackie brings over a book she is using for her dinosaur work.	Digging Up Dinosaurs, by Alike	non-fiction book	Author talks about topic of interest with an adult. Others listen
5g	Marco talks about plans for his first page. He orally rehearses his text, discusses it with Jackie, begins writing	Marco's autobiography p. 1	non-fiction draft	Within a community of autobiography writers, Marco rehearses and begins drafting his writing.
5h	Daily helpers call names of boys and girls to go to bathroom.			Marco leaves when his name is called.
5 relational resources	Supplemental Resource	<i>Writing Table</i>	<i>writing tools</i>	<i>Writing formats such as "books", etc. facilitated.</i>

Language Events:	Marco's Day	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
Books to go 2	Literacy events Books to go is continued from the morning.			
6a	Amber reads to class	Snakes	non-fiction, illustrated	child reads to class
6b	Destine reads to class	DW ALL Wet	fiction, illustrated	
Book Clubs	Class divides into small groups, each focusing on a different children's book. Marco and David are in the "What's in My Pocket" book club.	Book club folders	organizational	
7a	Marco uses symbols to make a plan for his writing project.	Marco's "outline"	organizational-temporary	making a temporary text to organize a writing activity
7b	Marco writes names in triarama	"Triarama" - Names	label	constructing a written text together.
7c	Marco and David use book as model for writing three "pages" for group project	What's in my Pocket?, multiple copies	Riddle book/illustrated	Using a text as a model for writing
7d	David and Marco work on "Project Two" related to the <i>What's in my Pocket</i> bookclub.	Group Writing Project-unfinished	Riddle book/illustrated	writing a text together
7e	Debi and Marco work to write book club diary entry reporting group progress.	Book Club Diary	log/ record keeping	writing a "report" on a class activity

APPENDIX E

LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES OF LAUREN'S DAY

APPENDIX E

LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES ON LAUREN'S DAY

Events	Lauren's Day Literacy Events	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
Things to do	Overview: As children enter, they begin working on a list of tasks on the board. They move around and talk freely as they work.			
1a	Things to do list on board (by teacher) as kids enter. Children enter and refer to list. May also consult with or observe classmates who have read list.	Things to do list	list / instrumental	Reading a list to organize and regulate activities.
1b	Children "sign in" when they enter the room. (A daily "thing to do".)	Sign-in sheet	record keeping/ instrumental	Signing in to show you are present.
1c	Children color and label "Mexico" on a map of North America. Sample map posted on board.	Sample map posted/ children's maps	map/ labeling, instructional	Labeling and coloring a map, using a 'sample map' as a model.
1d	Kelly (future teacher) asks Lauren to bring over class books so she can read them to camera.	Class books	travel book/ pattern story	Reading class books made during class trip and event.
1e	Children work on a math sheet dealing with number patterns. Answers are cut from a strip and pasted in place.	Math Sheets- copies from commercial materials	worksheet/ instructional	Doing a worksheet. Cutting and pasting correct answers.
1f	Susan stops class and goes over math sheet with them.	chalk board- models for math sheet	models/ instructional	Reviewing worksheet procedures and concepts in a group
1g	Susan asks for South America maps, since she wants to display some on the wall.	South America maps	map/ instructional	Displaying children's work on bulletin board.

1h	My field notes??? Alicia asks about them. I ask how to spell her name.		
1i	Discussion of names and what they mean. Both Lauren and Alyssa refer to looking up name meanings in a "name book".	Name books (not present but referred to)	reference/ non-fiction
1j	Susan uses a chart on the board to give teams record team behavior. Children "read" chart and Danielle says "everybody got a check minus".	Chart on chalkboard	record keeping/ instrumental/ institutional
1k	Lauren takes her self-authored book out after work completed. Reads book to Amber and myself.	Draft of story book, dummy book	fiction draft
1l	Children recite school pledge with children on PA system.	Pledge on wall, large chart.	Oath, pledge, ritual
1m	Children gather on area rug for daily meeting focusing on calendar, weather, daily news, and attendance.		Ritual
2a	Daily helpers (and friends) select a song book and lead a class read/sing as children clean up and gather for Morning Meeting.	This Old Man, Pam Adams	song/ song book
2b	Daily helpers show the day's temperature (40 degrees) on the thermometer.	Thermometer Model- outdoor thermometer	model/ thermometer
2c	Daily helpers talk about the "factors" of today's "Day of School".	Days of School number line	chart/ number line
2d	Daily helpers talk about the calendar, and today's date: 13. Destine writes "1" and "3" on slips under cups. Discussion of pattern.	Calendar/ cups next to calendar	chart/ calendar
2e	Susan takes attendance, greeting each child in Spanish. Children reply.	Attendance book	record keeping/ institutional
2f	Daily helpers tally those present absent. Class "reads" tally together. Discussion of tally re: Brandon's mistake, and re: Danny being called.	Attendance tally	record keeping/ instrumental
2g			record keeping attendance using a greeting ritual.
2h			tallying attendance for class record of "missing person's"

Events	Lauren's Day	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
Books to Go	Children listen as classmates read from literature books they have practiced at home for reading aloud. On this day, daily news is included since it was forgotten during Morning Meeting.			
3a	Danny reads <i>Who Sank the Boat</i> , a picture book mystery, to the class. Children listen and comment.	<i>Who Sank the Boat?</i>	fiction/ picture book	reading a story aloud to the class, and listening to a story read aloud.
3b	Susan pauses reading for short discussion on meaning of word: "din"	<i>Who Sank the Boat</i>	word from book	
3c	Daily News: The daily helpers call on writers to read their news to class: Alicia, Lily, Aubrey	The Daily News - butcher paper, written by students.	newsletter	writing and reading personal news to classmates.
3d	Sharonda reads <i>Teddy Bear for Sale</i> . Susan sits nearby and assists if needed	<i>Teddy Bear for Sale</i>	fiction/ picture book	reading a story aloud, listening
Math	Susan provides whole class instruction on place value, using magnetic unit blocks. Class works through one page together, then work on own.			
4a	Susan has second graders find page in math books	Math books	text books/ instructional	finding the page
4R	Susan uses magnetic blocks to "put a number on the board" for the children to "read"	<i>Unit blocks</i>	<i>math model/ instructional</i>	
4b	Susan has children "read" the unit blocks. Calls on children to give answers. Has class write answers in boxes. Later children chant answers in unison.	Math books, chalkboard	worksheets/ instructional	reading a mathematical model, recording the answer in numerals.
4c	Susan tells children to tear out the page and work themselves. Gives instructions about back of page. Children tear out page (some need help) and work on it.	Math book page	worksheets/ instructional	working on interpreting math problems, recording answers, cutting and pasting answers.
4d	Rudy talks about his autobiography and tells a story from it.	Rudy's autobiography	autobiography	child tells about his own writing.

2

Lauren's Day			
Events	Literacy Events	Texts	Genre
			Literacy Practice
Silent Writing	Susan tells children they can start writing when they are done with math. For about 10 min. children finish math and begin writing. Then Susan sets timer and children write silently on a variety of projects.		
5a	Lauren's book. Lauren starts by re-reading her book to me. Then orally composes, writes, illustrates, and discusses three new pages.	Lauren's book: <i>My best friend's baby Sister</i>	Fiction/ picture book
5b	Amber's book. Amber spends time making a new practice book of folded paper. Begins writing towards end of class. Writes several sentences.	Amber's book	not sure
5c	Alicia's book. Alicia spends the entire writing time preparing and stacking papers for large book. Completes blank book as class ends, and Amber begins to illustrate cover with flowers.	Alicia's book	blank book (i.e. writer's notebook)
5d	Jonathan's book. Jonathan works on illustrating and writing the beginnings of his text.		
5e	Daily helper calls Lauren's name to prepare for lunch. Reading from list of girls.	List of girls	list/ instrumental
			Reading names from a list so that participants can take turns.

Events	Lauren's Day Literacy Events	Texts	Genre	Literacy Practice
6	Terrence and Alicia read to the class, followed by Silent Reading and Writing time.			
6a	Terrence reads from a longish picture book by Beverly Cleary. He stops at a preset time and Alicia continues.	<i>Two Dog Biscuits</i> , Beverly Cleary	Fiction/ Picture book	Reading to the class, listening to a story.
6b	Lauren and Katherine select about nine books, and sit down on cushions, with books between them. Each chooses one book to start with.	Books/ classroom library	picture books	selecting books to read
6c	Susan asks Lauren and Katherine to choose books for their "Books to Go bag". They take books to desk and Susan prepares bag.	books/ classroom library	picture books	Selecting books for home reading. One for reading to class, one for parents to read.
6d	Sharonda sits near Lauren reading from (five) song books. At one point, asks Lauren for help.	song books/ song book box	song books/ picture books	Selecting and reading song books to self.
6e	Lauren reads a picture book aloud to herself.	<i>Dragon's Far Car</i> by Pilkey	fiction/ picture book	reading a book of your choice
Book Clubs	Lunch boxes does a choral reading for the class, and shows an art project they did in response to the book. This is the first book club presentation.			
7a	Susan shows an evaluation form to the class and explains it.	Book Club evaluation form	form/ instrumental	explaining form which teacher will use to evaluate book clubs.
7b	Lunch boxes Book Club does choral reading of their humorous book.	<i>Lunch Boxes</i> by Fred Erlich	fiction/ picture book	Choral reading as performance, culminating activity
7R	Book club members show an art project they have done in response to the lunch boxes book.	<i>Lunch Boxes</i> by Fred Erlich	fiction/ picture book	responding to a text with art/ sharing responses with class.

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