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A Sociocultural Perspective

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THE LITERACY COMMUNITIES OF EMERGENT READERS AND WRITERS: A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

By

Virginia Jane Goatley

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

THE LITERACY COMMUNITIES OF EMERGENT READERS AND WRITERS: A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

By

Virginia J. Goatley

This study extends research on emergent literacy, focusing on early elementary students in Chapter 1 making transformations toward more conventional literacy. The research addresses: (a) our expanding knowledge of emergent literacy, focusing on events that lead toward more conventional literacy practices, (b) the role of Chapter 1 instruction, classroom teachers, parents, and peers in supporting struggling readers as they learn language conventions and literacy skills, and (c) students' beliefs and views about their own literacy. This study was influenced by research on emergent literacy, a sociocultural perspective, and learning communities. The questions include: (a) How does the Chapter 1 setting support students in their emergent reading and writing and transformations toward more conventional uses of literacy? (b) How does the language and related learning opportunities among the community settings support Chapter 1 students in their literacy learning? and (c) What are students' beliefs about literacy instruction and learning?

A Chapter 1 classroom was the analysis unit for a case study, focusing on first and second graders. Data collection occurred primarily in the Chapter 1 setting, with additional data from students' regular classrooms, other school settings (e.g, library), and parent/teacher conferences. Data sources included

fieldnotes, transcripts, and videotapes of classroom events and discussions; interviews with students and teachers; audiotapes of parent/teacher conferences; and students' written work. Qualitative analyses were ongoing and focused on testing emerging patterns and categories to develop explanatory examples connecting grounded theory to literacy development.

This study challenged traditional definitions of emergent literacy, suggesting that students' learning occurs over a broader period of time and includes many aspects of literacy (i.e., book-handling knowledge, print awareness, views of literacy, phonemic awareness, strategic literacy, and literature response). Four overlapping themes (i.e., decision-making, opportunity, choice, and engagement) created situations where adults (i.e. teachers and parents) either mediated or apparently hindered students' learning. The findings provide a better understanding of the language support for literacy transformations and redefines current perceptions of emergent and conventional literacy.

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I met Susan Florio-Ruane during deadlines associated with a grant proposal and appreciate that experience due, in part, to the conversations we initiated. During the next few years, I was fortunate to attend two of Susan's courses and have the experience of watching her teach and learning about literacy, culture, and discourse analysis ideas that shaped and influenced this dissertation. Susan not only influenced my teaching and writing, but also my golf swing! I am sure that many of the trees at Forest Akers are most grateful. I

value Susan's friendship and our many conversations, where she took interest in my ideas and pushed me to think about additional issues and concerns.

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INTRODUCTION: LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR CHAPTER 1 STUDENTS

Elementary students are at a critical age for the development of life-long attitudes and abilities. This is particularly important in the area of literacy where successful literacy interactions will lead to long-term positive views about literacy and life-long habits of engaging in literacy. We need to be particularly zealous in our attempts to provide a learning community with powerful initial educational experiences for early elementary students who are given an academic label (e.g., Chapter 1/Title I) associated with low achievement. Recent research on emergent literacy (e.g., Teale & Sulzby, 1986) has the potential for changing early school instruction so that it will build upon students' early (i.e., home) literacy experiences. However, some children enter school with a home discourse that differs from the academic discourse associated with school learning (Gee, 1989). While many of the early emergent literacy experiences found to be important for developing literacy abilities (e.g., story reading, interactions with print) may have occurred for their peers, we must guard against making assumptions about previous learning that may inadvertently contribute to students' school literacy failure. Instead, we need to provide literacy experiences to help such students experience multiple uses of

literacy. We must initiate connections between the home and school literacies and discourse that support students' emergence as readers and writers.

The purpose of my study was to examine a learning community of readers and writers initially struggling with emergent forms of literacy and then as they transformed this literacy into more conventional forms. The students in this study qualified for Chapter 1 services. Chapter 1 (Title I for 1995-96) is a government-funded compensatory-education program designed for low-achieving students in low-income districts to help them become successful in literacy events. Without such support, many of these students continue to fall further behind their peers (Stein, Leinhardt, & Bickel, 1989). Specifically, within this study, I looked at the literacy learning of Chapter 1 students, focusing primarily on the discourse and activities surrounding their early literacy learning and acquisition. I explored their experiences within the context of the Chapter 1 instruction that they received and extended my observations to the broader school community (e.g., regular classrooms, school-home communication).

Rationale for the Study

This study focuses on the importance of the following areas within early literacy instruction: (a) the development of emergent and conventional literacy, (b) a sociocultural perspective on literacy, (c) and the classroom literacy communities in which Chapter 1 students participate. Each of these areas is described below.

Emergent and Conventional Literacy

Sulzby and Teale (1991) define emergent literacy as "the reading and writing behaviors that precede and develop into conventional literacy" (p. 728).

Characteristics associated with emergent literacy include the child's awareness of print and book-handling knowledge. In 1990, Sulzby defined these behaviors as "both the external behaviors and the underlying concepts that the behaviors signify" (p. 85). In a later definition, Sulzby (1992) further defined conventional reading and writing to mean, "that the 'person on the street corner,' witnessing a child writing or reading would assent that the child was 'really' writing or reading" (p. 130). With the expansion and clarification of an emergent literacy definition, certain aspects become easier to identify (e.g., associated behaviors or characteristics), while other aspects become problematic in relation to theoretical perspectives (e.g., agreement on conventional literacy).

Several research studies on emergent literacy that relate to Sulzby and Teale's definition have focused on the literacy events at home that precede schooling. These studies acknowledge and highlight the many language and literacy experiences that are valuable and necessary contributions to children's literacy development prior to school (e.g., Taylor, 1983; Teale, 1986). In addition, researchers have conducted studies in kindergarten settings to document continuing development within the school setting (e.g., Goodman, 1986; Mason & Stewart, 1990). Sulzby (1990) emphasizes that an emergent literacy perspective assumes the developmental process of children's writing, as well as the writing products themselves, are different from that of adults. An emphasis on emergent literacy assumes a different understanding of early literacy experiences, compared to earlier views of reading that focused on first grade as the place to start beginning reading.

In contrast to historical views of early literacy which emphasized grade one as the site for learning literacy, emergent literacy gives greater precedence to the home setting, early literacy acts and events (e.g., drawing, listening to stories), and parental influence prior to formal schooling. However, associated definitions of conventional literacy imply a uniform conventional literacy, with little consideration of the impact of school literacy expectations that may differ from home literacy conventions. Sulzby and Teale's definition suggests that conventional literacy is a well-defined acquisition and that it occurs at a certain point in development. In addition, Sulzby (1990) implies there are common assumptions associated with conventional literacy (i.e., agreement on "real" reading and writing), without giving much consideration to cultural or social differences among those viewing the literacy acts. Literacy instruction by parents, more than just simply exposing children to books, does occur in the home, though it may be of a form quite different from cultural and social influences associated with school literacy expectations.

Certainly, there are accepted standards that are attributable to literacy conventions (e.g., standard spelling, order of reading text within a book). This study questions the standard definitions of emergent and conventional literacy, and seeks information about language use that supports emerging literacy and students' transformations associated with conventional literacy. Existing definitions of emergent literacy focus primarily on basic print features, with little mention of critical aspects of literacy, such as comprehension and literacy response. When we broaden to a more encompassing definition of literacy, some literacy aspects are not easily distinguishable as conventional (e.g.,

critically responding to a text, comprehension related to readers' perspective).
Thus, conventional literacy does not appear to be an easily definable stage or
even one that is accomplished after children understand basic literacy skills.

The current definitions of emergent and conventional literacy, while
pushing the field in terms of the interconnections among the written and oral
language, do little to help one appreciate the vast differences in cultural and
social influences on literacy. I define emergent literacy as the reading and
writing characteristics and attitudes that lead toward more conventional uses of
literacy. For the purposes of my study, conventional literacy is defined as
consistent and intentional use of accepted literacy standards associated with
multiple literacies. This study challenges earlier definitions and characteristics,
the developmental levels at which emergent and conventional literacy occur,
and the notion of one conventional form of literacy. In addition, my definition
includes an emphasis on literacy attitudes, an important inclusion based on
recent studies that emphasize a need to combat aliteracy--ability to read but not
enjoying or choosing to read.

Within an emergent literacy perspective, we need to learn more about
students who enter first grade showing little evidence of previous opportunities
to engage in the school-like language and literacy that supports development
of conventional school literacy (e.g., Wells, 1986). In particular, the traditional
emergent reading and writing behaviors documented by other researchers had
not occurred for the student participants in this study by first grade, nor did the
conventional use of most traditional emergent literacy characteristics on the
part of the second graders mean that they were mature, literate people.

A Sociocultural Perspective on Literacy

One way to shift our understanding and definitions of emergent and conventional literacy is to connect the concepts to a theoretical perspective that takes into consideration cultural differences and calls into question an assumed agreement about the child's literacy abilities. Recent emphases in the educational field on the role of language use within a *sociocultural perspective* encourage changes in styles of literacy education and instruction within schools. Sociocultural theory has powerful dimensions that can add to our understanding of the types of opportunities that might support students as they start to emerge as readers and writers and while engaging in important transformations that lead to conventional literacy. Scholars in the field of educational psychology have begun to broaden their perspectives about how students learn. Shifts toward constructivist and social constructivist perspectives are in striking contrast to previous views of early literacy learning (i.e., reading begins in first grade).

A sociocultural perspective on emergent literacy learning has the potential to inform instructional practices. In this study, I draw upon three key areas of the perspective, based upon positions advocated by Vygotsky (1978; 1981), Wertsch (1985), Moll (1990) and Gavelek (1986). This perspective focuses on the Vygotsky's (a) genetic analysis, (b) social origins of mental functioning, and (c) social mediation.

First, sociocultural theory focuses on the *processes* associated with higher forms of mental functioning. In his genetic analysis, Vygotsky (1978) suggested development occurs in qualitative shifts, rather than in a set of

quantitative increments that other psychologists advanced. Compared to earlier reading readiness models based on quantitative increments, emergent literacy is more closely tied to qualitative shifts. Further, Vygotsky advocated the importance of multiple forces on development and the social factors influencing processes associated with the development of higher mental functions. Within an emergent literacy perspective, the parent and community social influences prior to formal school are valued contributions to literacy learning. However, the conventional literacy definitions need to be reexamined to avoid quantitative expectations for literacy development and to consider the multiple forms of conventional literacy.

Second, sociocultural theory focuses on the social origins of mental functioning. Language is a primary social means of supporting students' learning, leading to their further development (Gavelek, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). The language that occurs during social interactions is key to individuals understanding new concepts and ideas. As students become engaged in social situations around literacy topics, they are in a position to internalize concepts and make them their own. Documenting such social interactions and individual use later of the concepts learned within the social realm woul make a valuable contribution to our understandings of transformations related to emergent and conventional literacy, particularly with respect to language and instructional opportunities that support such change.

Consistent with this social origin of thought, more knowledgeable members of a community can assist others in learning (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Within school settings, teachers have the responsibility and peers have

the potential to engage learners in instructional discourse that furthers their acquisition of language. Such interactions between people who have a strong grasp of literacy conventions and those who are just emerging as readers and writers might strengthen the learning of the emergent reader. This study has the potential to provide such data, informing educators about the critical interactions between teachers and learners and among learners with respect to literacy transformations. In this manner, one purpose of this study is to document the discussions and activities that supported the students' transformations to conventional literacy forms, in relation to their social interactions and discussions with more knowledgeable others.

Learners' interactions with more knowledgeable others are situated within settings that may differentiate across the school community and outside of the school. The conversations and instruction in which teachers and students engage are situated within a particular activity or event. There may be opportunities present or teacher communication in one situation that leads to social interaction, while other settings may focus on individual activities.

Consistent with the two previous areas, a third part of a sociocultural perspective involves the role of social mediation by tools or signs. Vygotsky (1978) wrote about psychological tools (e.g., language) that support or mediate learning. These tools are essential for transforming an individual's thought and their use of language. Students' literacy learning is transformed by language associated with literate actions. For example, as teachers engage students in discussions about literature, the language becomes a communication tool that will affect students' thought and response to the literature. In this manner, the

language is a tool that facilitates students' thoughts and actions related to literacy. A focus on the social mediation that supports students' learning will enable us to understand better how the types of language and associated actions influences students' literacy development.

Chapter 1 Instruction Within School Communities

Students' learning is situated within a home community and a school system. There are many people in any school community who may support students' literacy learning (e.g., classroom teachers, Chapter 1 teachers). Similarly, research on home environments show that students engage in literacy learning outside of school (e.g., Teale, 1986). Recent views of literacy, such as emergent literacy, portray literacy as a complex concept, in which a large number of people share responsibility for students' learning; that is, children engage in social interactions within the home, school, and larger community, all areas that potentially mediate or hinder students' learning.

There have been discussions over the years about the problem of isolated teachers working individually within their classrooms (e.g., Lortie, 1975). Dewey (1900) suggested that we move toward viewing the school system as a social unit in which the participants work together toward common aims. In effect, communication among the adult members of the school system not only leads to less isolation, it potentially has an impact on students' learning as teachers are able to talk with each other about their students and related instructional goals.

This suggestion for greater communication and connections across classroom settings is particularly relevant for Chapter 1 programs in which

students are typically pulled from one classroom setting to another. Concerns related to this practice center on the need to maintain a community rather than provide students with separate and potentially unconnected instruction in two settings (i.e., Chapter 1 and regular classroom). Historically, this pullout situation often meant that the students were in situations where the instruction differed drastically from their regular education peers and where instruction often focused on isolated skills and an overemphasis on simple phonemic strategies (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989). In this study, I explore an opposite scenario, in which the pull-out Chapter 1 instruction is more holistic in nature and designed to meet the individual needs of the students. Related questions focus on the role of the broader school community in mediating students' learning and the instructional connections made between the Chapter 1 and regular classroom settings.

Educational researchers are also focusing on the need for better connections between home and school communities (e.g., Heath, 1983; Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982; Purcell-Gates, 1995). These studies have centered on discourse rules and congruence among the two locations, with an emphasis on cultural differences. Gee (1989) suggests that students have a primary and secondary form of discourse, dependent upon their acquisition and learning of literacy. He suggests that *acquisition* occurs subconsciously, through modeling and trial and error, without formal teaching. *Learning* requires more formal teaching and a process of conscious attention to attainment of knowledge. In this respect, students may come to school with a primary form of discourse

acquired at home, while learning a secondary discourse upon introduction to school literacy.

Snow (1991) suggests an additional factor, in that home settings vary greatly in terms of literacy support provided to children. Snow found that students from settings she labeled as high-literacy homes were much more successful in school than students from low-literacy homes. The school community plays a potential role in educating parents within lower literacy homes about emergent literacy and helping them support their child in his/her literacy transformations. Thus, for students starting first grade with little experience or interactions with text, the school can play a role in informing and instructing parents about appropriate school-like literacy activities and concepts. In addition, schools need to be more cognizant of students' home literacy experiences to help them make connections among literacy ideas. This may occur through school-led events, such as parent/teacher conferences or by communication among parents and teachers through written documents and school presentations. My purpose in exploring this home connection is not to enter the home and examine differences in discourse, but rather, to examine attempts made by parents and teachers to bring students into the school literacy community.

Within a school community, students also have an important voice in speaking about their instruction. An increasing body of research has focused on examining the learning situations of students and their viewpoints of their own learning and their perceptions of the instruction (Dyson, 1993; Knapp, 1994; Michel, 1994; Taylor, 1993). Documentation of conversations with

Chapter 1 students who cross settings within the school community help us better understand their beliefs about literacy and their views of instructional contexts designed to support their literacy transformations.

Research Questions

In this study, I intentionally selected a setting with low-achieving students engaged in various emergent literacy activities. The instructional setting allowed for research insights into appropriate early literacy instruction for Chapter 1 students, their emergent and conventional literacy transformations, and the role of the broader school community in supporting their transformations. The primary questions guiding this study were as follows:

- How does the Chapter 1 setting support students in their emergent reading and writing and transformations toward more conventional uses of literacy?

- How does the language and related learning opportunities among the community settings support Chapter 1 students in their literacy learning?

- What are students' beliefs about literacy instruction and learning?

The setting for this study was a Chapter 1 classroom in an ethnically diverse, low-income urban public school. The teacher had a master's degree in reading instruction and developed a holistic literacy program for the students attending her classroom. I collected data between September and December, 1994 and I focused on two groups of Chapter 1 students: four from a first/second-grade split and four from a second-grade classroom. The study presents their uses of literacy as they move toward learning emergent and conventional uses of and positive attitudes toward literacy within Chapter 1 and other school settings.

Dissertation Organization

In the six chapters that follow, I detail my research as I explored the three research questions. In chapter 2, I present a review of literature, discussing definitions of emergent and conventional literacy, especially as they relate to views of literacy instruction. I outline the theoretical framework (i.e. the role of language within a sociocultural perspective) in relation to emergent literacy. Finally, I explore the notion of a community in relation to instruction for Chapter 1 students, including pullout programs, school/home connections, and students' understanding of literacy. In the review, I define terms that I use and explore research related to the main issues surrounding the questions framing this study.

In chapter 3, I present the research methods, describing the school, participants, and classrooms, and outlining the research methods and analyses I used to investigate my questions. My analyses drew on literature about qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983), case study methods (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1988), and sociolinguistic analyses (Cazden, 1988; Florio-Ruane, 1987). I observed the students as they participated in their regular classroom, Chapter 1 classroom, and other school settings (e.g., library, recess). Data sources included fieldnotes and videotapes of classroom events; transcripts of audiotaped discussion in classrooms; interviews with students, Chapter 1 teacher, and classroom teachers; audiotapes of parent/teacher conferences; and students' written work. Qualitative analyses were ongoing and focused on testing emerging patterns

and categories and developing explanatory examples connecting grounded theory to school literacy development.

In chapter 4, I present my analyses tracing four themes related to literacy learning for the students within the Chapter 1 setting. First, I show students' literacy abilities in September, November, and January and explore the instructional emphases that helped to support their learning and growth. Then, I examine their literacy transformations in terms of four themes (decision-making, opportunity, choice, and, engagement). These four themes provide a framework of categories and characteristics to focus on the instruction and activity supporting the transformations or movements toward learning emergent and conventional uses of literacy. These themes are not isolated; instead, there is overlap across the themes (e.g., some examples might fit under both *choice* and *engagement*). In all of these examples, I display the types of discussion taken from transcripts, fieldnotes, and interviews in terms of teacher and peer support of the literacy uses.

In chapter 5, I shift the setting to focus on the role of the community, further exploring how adults mediate and hinder transformations to conventional literacy in terms of the regular classrooms. The analyses focused on students' use of literacy across the school settings (e.g., making sense of literacy experiences, their ability to "transfer" the ideas from one setting to another). This included more formal communication among the teachers (e.g., weekly letters between the teachers). I also expand on information about literacy transformations by examining the students' beliefs about their own literacy activities and definitions.

In chapter 6, I focus on the home/school communication. Drawing upon data from parent/teacher conferences and written communication among parents and teachers, I explore how the school and home community worked to support students' literacy learning. Four types of communication that emerged included bringing the parents into the school community, school communication to parents, instructional information to parents, and parents reactions and responses to the communication. In chapter 7, I summarize the study, address its theoretical and practical implications, and discuss both its limitations and questions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

VIEWS OF EMERGENT AND CONVENTIONAL LITERACY

This study deals with students who are experiencing difficulty with school literacy and details how educators might support their learning of emergent and conventional literacy. My questions for the study reflect issues I have attempted to understand within my own teaching and research experiences. Throughout my career as a classroom teacher, an educational researcher, and a teacher educator, I have been concerned about students who have difficulty learning to read. My concerns focus on how we as educators might help these students, what kind of instruction might be appropriate, and how to build community support for them. These concerns led to this study and the questions reflect both my work within classrooms and my reading of professional literature.

Three areas influenced the focus of my research questions. First, while teaching first grade, some of my students began each year having already "mastered" many of my literacy goals. Yet, others, who became the students that I "worried about," appeared to have had little opportunity to interact with text prior to school.[1] I wondered how literacy instruction could be shifted to meet the emergent literacy needs of students. Second, from reading about sociocultural perspectives on learning and literacy, I learned that such a

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[1] See Michalove, Allen, Shockley, & West (1991). They use the term "students we worry about" in place of labels such as "at-risk."

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perspective emphasizes the importance of social interactions that mediate learning and development and a strong consideration for the cultural and social influences on knowledge. Our sociocultural backgrounds and interactions underlie how we "construct" knowledge and make sense of the world around us. This perspective led me to question the tendency for remedial instruction to stress isolated language activities, rather than meaning and authentic communication. I started to make connections between the principles of sociocultural theory and the transformations that students make in their early literacy learning. In this review, I discuss how the principles that underlie a sociocultural perspective can be connected to and support transformations that students make to more school-like conventional literacy use.

Third, I wondered about community support for students who are having difficulty with reading, believing that students should feel safe and positively progress in their learning. There are many different types of communities (e.g., discourse, interpretative, knowledge, language) that attempt to capture the dynamic range of schooling. For my purposes, I am define community as a *literacy community*, one in which the discourse and interactions among the teachers, parents, and students encourages members to work closely together as a social unit and share a common interest and responsibility for the literacy education of all students. I have worked with students in special education settings, tutored struggling readers, and talked with parents about supporting their children within school. These interactions with community members have raised issues related to congruence between instructional settings in the school (e.g., inclusion versus pullout instruction) and connections between the

literacy and discourse learned in school versus literacy and discourse acquired in the home. I address these debates and discussion with regard to communities in this review.

Review of the Literature

In chapter 1, I described three areas underlying the rationale for my study: (a) development of emergent and conventional literacy, (b) a sociocultural perspective on learning, and (c) learning communities that potentially support Chapter 1 students. In this chapter, I provide a focused discussion of related research literature detailing those concepts and research studies foundational to my study.

Emergent and Conventional Literacy Within the Larger Instructional Views

In the past decade, researchers have described and documented cases of emergent literacy. These descriptions of the types of literacy in which students engage prior to formal schooling and during their kindergarten and first-grade year have created a shift from previous perspectives about early reading and writing. This shift acknowledges the many contributions to literacy development that extend beyond the walls of a school and into the home and community. The shift also reflects different perspectives about learning and development than in earlier years. In the following description of a shift to an emergent literacy perspective, I show how educators views of literacy have changed, reflected in the underlying views of learning, literacy and related instruction.

The shift in literacy perspectives and instruction is critical to this study for two reasons. First, these shifts suggest that emergent literacy is a relatively recent view of literacy. As such, we still have much to understand. The concept of emergent literacy raises many questions about the literacy students bring to school, especially for students who enter school without early experiences with text, which prepare them for the school experience. Second, the newer perspective of emergent literacy is in sharp contrast to some of the earlier views of literacy. This contrast raises questions about how we might change instructional activities to draw upon students' entering literacy abilities or to introduce them to simple literacy concepts to further their transformations toward more conventional uses of literacy.

A Historical Perspective on Early Literacy Instruction

Definitions and views of literacy and literacy instruction have changed in many ways within this century. One way that we, as educators, can have an impact on the future is to understand the past better. Emergent literacy represents one perspective that differs radically from the developmental perspectives of earlier decades. Table 1 provides a chronological sequence of thoughts and beliefs drawn from the work of major researchers of early literacy. In this section, I explore the ideas displayed in the table.

A review of these ideas from a historical perspective reveals four major changes in emphases: (a) reading has shifted from a developmental perspective in which at a certain age students were deemed "ready" to learn reading to one in which learning experiences lead to developmental changes; (b) early descriptions which focused specifically on reading, over time have

Table 1

Historical Views of Early Literacy

Edmund Huey, 1908	"Such views take form in assertions that reading, except at least as an exercise entirely incidental to other activities and interests, should *usually be deferred until the age of eight*, or as some put it, *until the age of nine or ten*. Such expressions have been made by many representative educators and scientists...." (p. 303).
Mabel Morphett & Carleton Washburne, 1931	"Consequently, it seems safe to state that, by postponing the teaching of reading until children reach *a mental level of six and a half years*, teachers can greatly decrease the chance of failure and discouragement and can correspondingly increase their efficiency" (p. 503).
Arthur Gates, 1937	"Representative data gathered by the writer indicate rather clearly that statements concerning the *necessary mental age* at which a pupil can be intrusted to learn to read are *essentially meaningless*. The age for learning to read under one program or teaching method may be entirely different from that required under other circumstances. The *crucial mental age will vary* with the materials; the type of instruction; the skill of the teacher; the size of the class; the amount of preceding preparatory work; the frequency and the treatment of special difficulties, such as visual defects, and other factors" (p. 42).
Marie Clay, 1966	In her doctoral dissertation, Marie Clay first used the term "*emergent reading*"
Jeanne Chall, 1967	"My analysis of the existing experimental comparisons of a meaning emphasis versus a code emphasis tends to support Bloomfield's definition that the *first step in learning to read* in one's native language is essentially learning a printed code for the speech we possess. It does not support the prevailing view that sees the *beginning reader* as a miniature adult who should, from the start, engage in mature reading. Early stress on code learning, these studies indicate, not only produces better word recognition and spelling, but also makes it easier for the child eventually to read with understanding...." (p. 83).

Table 1 (cont.)

William Teale & Elizabeth Sulzby, 1986	Conclusions in regard to early childhood literacy development: "1) literacy development begins long before children start formal instruction, 2) literacy development is the appropriate way to describe what was called reading readiness: the child develops as a write/reader. *Listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities develop concurrently and interrelatedly*, rather than sequentially, 3) literacy develops in *real-life settings for real-life activities* in order to "get things done.", 4) children are doing critical cognitive work in literacy development during the years from birth to six, 5) children learn written language through active engagement with their world, and 6) although children's learning about literacy can be described in terms of generalized stages, children can pass through these stages in a variety of way and at different ages" (p. xviii).
Yetta Goodman, 1986	" Labels such as 'early reading and writing' or 'beginning reading and writing' have been unsatisfactory to explain the complexity of the development of literacy in children. Such terms have allowed teachers and curriculum developers to believe that the beginnings of reading and writing can be stated as a specific point in time that is visible and measurable... ..no one has ever been able to pinpoint the exact moment when a child begins to talk or listen. In the same way, no one know when a child begins to write or read" (p. 2).
Leslie Mandel Morrow, 1989	"Emergent literacy assumes that the child acquires some knowledge about languages before coming to school. Literacy development begins early in life and is ongoing. There is a dynamic relationship between the communication skills; each influences the other in the course of development. Development occurs in *everyday contexts of home and community* " (p. 72).
Elizabeth Sulzby & William Teale, 1991	Emergent literacy is described as "the reading and writing behaviors that precede and develop into *conventional literacy* " (p. 728). Emergent literacy is concerned with the earliest phases of literacy development, the period between birth and the time when children read and write conventionally.

Table 1 (cont.)

Marilyn Adams, 1990	"Skillful reading is not a unitary skill. It is a *whole complex system* of skills and knowledge. Within this system, the knowledge and activities involved in visually recognizing individual printed words are useless in and of themselves. They are valuable, and in a strong sense, possible only as they are guided and received by complementary knowledge and activities of language comprehension. On the other hand, unless the processes involved in individual word recognition operate properly, nothing else in the system can either (p. 3)"
Jana Mason & Shobha Sinha, 1993	Four areas associated with a *shifting perspective from reading readiness to emergent literacy*: "1) literacy emerges before children are formally taught to read, 2) literacy is defined to encompass the whole act of reading, not merely decoding, 3) the child's point of view and active involvement with emerging literacy constructs is featured, and 4) the *social setting for literacy learning is not ignored* (p. 141)."
Carol Lyons, Gay Su Pinnell, & Dianne DeFord, 1993	Emergent literacy research "indicates that *the social setting is an important factor* in literacy learning. In every interactions surround literacy events, parent, caregivers, and teachers are demonstrating or telling children something about the complex actions that make up reading (p. 89)."
Richard Allington & Patricia Cunningham, 1994	Seven signs of emergent literacy: 1) pretend reading, 2) write and read what they wrote even if no one else can, 3) track print in left/right and top/bottom, 4) know critical jargon (e.g., word, letter, sentence), 5) recognize concrete words (e.g., names, poems), 6) recognize if words rhyme and can make up rhymes, and 7) can name many letters and tell words that begin with common initial sounds.

changed to include writing, and eventually, speaking and listening; (c) models associated with early literacy learning shifted from *reading readiness* to *beginning reading* and then added *emergent literacy,* and (d) the context in which early literacy takes place has shifted from the classroom primarily to include the home and community, with a related increase in appreciating the importance of social settings and activities. I discuss these changes in the following chronology of early literacy instruction.

The assertions by Huey (1908) and the research by Morphett & Washburne (1931) focused on developmental ages at which reading instruction should start. Huey believed that children should not start reading until age eight or older, basing his opinion on his reading and interactions with scholars such as John Dewey (1898). The physician Gesell (1925) also advocated waiting to teach children to read until they were more physically mature. Morphett & Washburne (1931) supported this developmental perspective by conducting a research study in which they proclaimed that six and a half was the ideal age to start reading instruction. In summary, during the first few decades of the 1900s the early literacy debate focused on the age at which students were ready to read.

While Gates (1937) challenged those developmental age markers, consistent with others of that time period, he appeared to believe that literacy learning occurred within the school setting, with teachers as the agents of instruction. Gates was among the first to emphasize that there was more to the success of a child's reading than simply the child, raising issues related to instruction, materials, and settings. In this sense, he moved away from a view

of the development as a static period of time to give greater consideration to the tools and methods that could assist children's learning.

Moving into the 1960s, the emphasis on *reading readiness* started to be integrated with a *beginning reader* concept. Chall (1967) recognized the many debates that were occurring within the reading field at the time. She noted in regard to the age to start reading, "There has also been a swing toward an earlier start in reading instruction, whereas just a few years ago most educators were convinced that the later the child began learning, the better" (p. 2). In her research, Chall compared various methods of instruction. Based on her study, she offered five recommendations: (a) a code emphasis to start children on reading, (b) a reading content preference for folktales and fairy tales for first and second grade, (c) a reevaluation of grade levels and associated vocabulary in reading materials, (d) new tests that provide measurements in each component of reading, and (e) research that focused on definitive answers rather than repeating studies on the same issues. Chall's recommendations were similar to Gate's suggestion that we need to look at the materials and instruction in relation to students' progress in reading. However, the focus was still on reading rather than the other language arts, grade levels and testing seemed closely tied to developmental levels, and literacy learning seemed to remain situated within the school setting.

While Downing & Thackray (1971) still advocated a *reading readiness* approach, their definition shifted the focus a little more in terms of the factors that influence this readiness. They argued that, "reading readiness is defined as the stage in development when either through maturation or though

previous learning, or both, the individual child can learn to read easily and profitably" (p. 10). The authors were quite adamant about readiness being the result of learning and that there were many stages of readiness through the period when one learns to read. Downing & Thackray focused on additional factors that influenced readiness, including physiological, environmental, emotional, and intellectual factors. Acknowledging these factors was an important contribution to broadening early reading beyond school instruction.

While Marie Clay (1966) first used the term "emergent reading" in her dissertation to describe children's initial play with literacy practices, it was several years before a shift to an *emergent literacy* perspective within the United States. The publication of Teale and Sulzby's (1986) <u>Emergent Literacy: Writing and Reading</u> led to several changes in views about literacy instruction. This included a greater emphasis on all of the language arts as connected and supporting each other, rather than a focus primarily on reading. In addition, researchers gave more significance to the literacy learning that precedes formal schooling. They argued that learning led to developmental changes, rather than reading abilities starting at a certain developmental age. Later publications further emphasized the importance of the social settings (e.g., Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993) and began to detail signs of emergent literacy (e.g., pretend reading, tracking print; see Clay, 1982; Goodman, 1980).

Mason and Sinha (1993) advanced theoretical ties to emergent literacy, suggesting that prior early reading instruction had often been atheoretical. They drew on work by Vygotsky to apply what they termed as a "Vygotsky model of learning and development" (p. 137). Within this model, Mason and

Sinha suggested that the instructional tools of scaffolding, modeling, and mediating learners would help to support their learning of early literacy.

Even with this emphasis toward the valuing emergent literacy, it is important to note that beginning reading is still an prominent conceptual framework for many educators. For example, the *Handbook of Reading Research* (Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal, & Pearson, 1991) contains chapters for both emergent literacy (Sulzby and Teale, 1991) and beginning reading (Juel, 1991). Other educators suggest that emergent literacy is chronologically associated with the time period before school and beginning reading starts in first grade. For example, Templeton (1995) argued that emergent literacy occurs prior to school and beginning conventional reading starts during the first-grade year. In this manner, he combined beginning reading with conventional literacy and attached characteristics such as developing sight words, reading out loud, and being aware of print in word segments. Further, Templeton suggests that readers enter a transitional phase for second and third grade in which they focus more directly on meaning and maintain a balance between word identification and comprehension.

Within schools, teachers use the basic principles of reading readiness, beginning reading, emergent literacy, or some combination of these models to develop their reading programs. As a result, reading instruction takes on many forms. This is likely due to the many positions argued by these earlier reading educators. Cunningham (1991) noted,

Throughout the years, these four major approaches--phonics, basal, literature, language experience/writing-- have been in and out of favor. Generally, one approach has predominated for just long enough for people to recognize its shortcomings, and then it has been abandoned in favor of a different approach with different shortcomings. The question of which method is best cannot be answered because it is the wrong question. Each method has undeniable strengths. (p. 579)

These changing perspectives about reading readiness, beginning reading and emergent literacy are directly related to the instructional practices within schools.

This brief historical perspective of early literacy shows many changes over the past several decades. Currently, the concept of emergent literacy is becoming a predominant way to understand early literacy learning and plan for instruction. With this emphasis on emergent literacy come two questions: (a) If we assume an *emergent perspective* on early learning, then what are the processes and language used within these social settings that serve to mediate students' learning more conventional uses of literacy? (b) How can we build on the initial work by Mason and Sinha to ensure that our early literacy practices are strongly tied to *theoretical* foundations and principles? Within the perspective of emergent literacy, several researchers had made substantial contributions to our understanding of early literacy.

Studies of Emergent Literacy

Sulzby and Teale (1991) have been a primary force behind moves toward valuing children's emergent literacy skills and appreciating the many literate activities that promote their development toward more conventional reading and writing. As noted in chapter 1, Sulzby and Teale (1991) defined

emergent literacy as "the reading and writing behaviors that precede and develop into conventional literacy" and that "it is concerned with the earliest phases of literacy development, the period between birth and the time when children read and write conventionally" (p. 728).

A review of key articles and books on emergent literacy suggest that there are several critical aspects or behaviors that represent children's emergent reading and writing.[2]   Emergent literacy (a) usually refers to reading and writing ability children learn in the home and community during the ages of 1-7; (b) includes the interrelationship among reading, writing, and oral language for young children; (c) overwhelmingly emphasizes the parent role, showing the importance of parents engaging children in a wide variety of literate acts; (d) focuses on the specific characteristics of awareness of print and book handling; and (e) stresses that an enriched social setting is critical to children's learning.

In the last decade, educational researchers have documented these aspects of emergent literacy including beneficial types of early experiences and children's development in literacy prior to school. Along with these studies, the concept of emergent literacy has grown tremendously in its use among researchers and teachers. These studies have informed us in many ways, including what home literacy may include, how home literacy is similar to or

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[2] Books and articles used to document emergent literacy activities and principles for this summary include Clay, 1982; Farr, 1985; Glazer & Burke, 1994; Gundlach, 1982; Hiebert & Taylor, 1994; Kawakami-Arakaki, Oshiro, & Farran 1988; McGee & Richgels, 1990; Ollila & Mayfield, 1992; Routman, 1988; Teale & Martinez, 1987; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Temple, Nathan, Temple & Burris, 1993.

different from literacy practices within schools, and how we can value the many literacy home experiences children have prior to and during school. The following studies explored these issues, prior to and during the past decade.

Denny Taylor (1983) contributed a detailed ethnography of six families in her book Family Literacy. In this study, she observed young children, all considered to be successfully learning to read and write during their family activities. She documented the various kinds of literacy which the families used (e.g., messages to each other, birthday cards, homework, storytime). Taylor argued that, "somehow we need to bridge the gap between home and school so that reading in the one is reading in the other" (p. 95). Her concern was that while the children were actively engaged in many literacy actions at home, these type of literacy experiences were much different from those encountered within school. Taylor's work played an important role in emphasizing the importance of the home environment in terms of supporting early literacy.

Gordon Wells (1986), although he did not label his work as researching emergent literacy, provided extensive information about the activities and language learning of young children in The Meaning-Makers. He conducted a longitudinal study of 32 children from just after their first birthday until the end of elementary school. He observed the children within a university setting once every three months and interviewed their parents. Wells focused on the manner in which the children learned to talk and subsequently how the talk helped them learn about the world. His findings centered on the role and responsibility that parents and teachers have to help "foster and enrich their [children's] meaning making" (p. 222). This work, while not directly about

emergent literacy, also strengthened conceptions about the critical and influential role of parent interaction and language use with children.

Yetta Goodman (1980; 1986) described the roots of literacy, asserting the significance of initial literacy for young children. She suggests the roots of literacy reflect the "complexity of the interaction of functions, forms, and conceptualizations that become part of children's knowledge about literacy as they develop" (1986, p. 2). Goodman stressed that early reading begins when children realize that they can make sense out of print. Through their exploration with written language, Goodman outlined five roots that were critical: (a) print awareness in situational contexts, (b) print awareness in connected discourse, (c) functions and forms of writing, (d) oral language about written language, and (e) metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness about written language. Within these categories, Goodman found that children under six are generally learning many aspects of literacy such as how to hold books and that the text moves from left to right. They also may read contextualized environmental print and understand that print carries a message.

Like Goodman, McCormick and Mason (1986) suggested the importance of children's interactions with text and a growing awareness of print. They designed a kindergarten intervention in which they purposely brought emergent literacy activities into the classroom. In their study, McCormick and Mason (1986) defined three levels in a hierarchy that were prereading concepts:

First, children must learn that particular and meaningful words and messages have printed counterparts (functional knowledge). When they have understood this concept (or set of concepts), they will be able to learn the letter-sound characteristics of the language (form and conventional rules). Further, we suggest that this hierarchy is not closely related to traditional views about maturational reading for school instruction and is practically acquired by many children prior to formal reading instruction in first grade. (p. 91)

In this statement, McCormick and Mason are suggesting that both form and functions of print are important beginning concepts for children and that learning these will lead to learning of conventional rules.

In their chapter on emergent literacy in the <u>Handbook of Reading Research</u>, Sulzby and Teale (1991) completed a comprehensive review of research on emergent literacy. They captured the main characteristics of emergent literacy: (a) storybook reading as an emergent phenomenon, (b) emergent writing, (c) emergent literacy and the home, and (d) metalinguistic awareness. These characteristics involved *children's engagement with storybook reading and writing* in relation to such areas as their ability to "read" the books in a nonconventional manner, their interactions around text as they became more familiar with it, and their use of discourse patterns during interactions with parents. Sulzby and Teale's review further stressed the importance of social interactions around text and the importance of literacy in many settings.

Together, these studies and reviews have brought greater attention to the concepts and characteristics associated with emergent literacy.[3] They have provided a solid foundation to support current assertions about emergent

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[3] See also, Bissex, 1980; Dyson, 1985; Sulzby, 1985; Teale, 1986

literacy, particularly related to students' experiences prior to formal schooling and formal reading instruction. With such understandings, it becomes critical to connect children's preschool experiences to the type of instruction that occurs within the elementary school.

Researchers are now suggesting that the transitions students make from emergent to conventional literacy warrant the same careful study that emergent literacy has experienced over the past decades (e,g,. Dahl, 1994; Sulzby 1992). For example, Elizabeth Sulzby (1994) responded to a question about research priorities, stating,

> Even though we think of literacy as changing, there is still a very important unanswered question in early literacy development. Given our new knowledge about emergent literacy, how do children shift from being "emergently literate" to being conventionally literate--able to read other people's texts written conventionally in a given script (for the U.S., alphabetic script) with understanding--I have been phrasing this as the transition into conventional literacy? (One will assume that I am rejecting the "just add decoding to everything else" position.)

Thus, with the information available about emergent literacy, we need to understand better how children use that knowledge to become more conventional readers and writers. In addition, we need to understand how school settings can support the development of emergent literacy for young children, prior to formal schooling, who have not acquired many of the literacy characteristics of their peers.

In this study, my intent is to examine what Sulzby termed "the transitions" into conventional literacy. The growing history of emergent literacy was critical for providing a research foundation that outlined key characteristics of children's use of literacy, rather than agreeing to the assumption that children

are nonreaders until entering formal schooling. This background in emergent literacy raises many questions about what does happen for students once they enter school, particularly for those who have not experienced school-related forms of literacy at home. In comparison to emergent literacy, we do not have a broad research foundation about *conventional literacy* or the *transitions*. As such, one theoretical problem is educators who link emergent literacy prior to school to beginning reading associated with the early primary grades. The underlying principles of the two models seems to conflict in terms of development, role of out-of-school contexts, and language areas (e.g. reading versus reading and writing).

The use of the word *transition* seems to be related to this problem. A transition is often attached to movement or shift between two stages (e.g., emergent and conventional). I find the notion of the two types of literacy as stages to be problematic because children more often seem to be moving along a continuum that is not easily definable as emergent or conventional. In this sense, they are regularly making changes in their thoughts about and uses of literacy to *transform* what they are learning as they acquire new knowledge and literacy strategies.

One way to gain better access to these transformations and supportive environments is to examine the relationship of theory to emergent literacy, conventional literacy, and literacy transformations. Mason and Sinha (1993) asserted the need for a theoretical perspective to support the concepts associated with emergent literacy. In contrast to the reading readiness and beginning reading models, an emergent literacy perspective gives greater

precedence to areas such as the social setting, the role of learning in leading to development, and the interconnected nature of written and oral language. In this manner, the reading field seems to be moving closer to a sociocultural perspective of emergent literacy. However, the emergent literacy framework needs to be explored theoretically, particularly with regard to the social and cultural dynamics of learning. In addition, the principles associated with a sociocultural perspective suggest a need to redefine conventional literacy and to account for students' processes or transformations while they engage in literacy acts. The perspective shows promise for helping us to understand the types of mediated language opportunities that might support students' transformations during early learning acquisition. I explore these ideas in the following section.

A Sociocultural Perspective on Literacy

A sociocultural perspective on literacy learning has strong implications for how we view early literacy acquisition and associated instruction. It has the potential to inform us not only about how learning occurs for young children prior to formal schooling, but also for those in early elementary school as they interact with and use language as a tool that leads them to acquire a standard, or school-like, usage of written language. My review of the assumptions associated with a sociocultural perspective come primarily from the work of Vygotsky (1962; 1978) and from Wertsch's (1985) writings about Vygotsky. The complex nature of Vygotsky's work has informed numerous areas of educational research (e.g., Moll, 1990) and literacy perspectives (Scribner & Cole, 1981).

In this review, I explore three themes within a sociocultural perspective, focusing on areas critical to understanding early literacy learning and definitions of emergent and conventional literacy. First, I discuss Vygotsky's *genetic analysis* and associated assertions about elementary and higher mental functions. Next, I examine the *social and cultural influences* on learning. Finally, I explore *semiotic mediation* critical to students' growth. These three themes are interconnected and closely tied to one another. However, I discuss each of them briefly to highlight the unique factors that potentially inform emergent and conventional literacy transformations.

Genetic Analysis

In this study, my primary interest is on the transformations or processes that underlie learning and students' continued development of higher mental functions. Within schools, educators have the responsibility for providing ways for students to increase their use of higher mental functions, as well as assisting in the formation of these processes. As Vygotsky (1978) noted, "We need to concentrate not on the *product* of development but on the very *process* by which higher forms are established" (p. 64). Vygotsky's theory of genetic analysis is his attempt to understand the origins and genetic relationships between individual and social processes and the qualitative shifts or transformations in human mental functioning and development that result.

Vygotsky's genetic analysis involved genetic domains including phylogenesis (i.e., evolutionary changes in development) , sociocultural history (i.e., historical changes), ontogenesis (i.e., overlapping forces influencing development), and microgenesis (see Wertsch, 1985, for a complete

description of genetic domains). Of these domains, microgenesis was the least explored by Vygotsky but seems particularly relevant to understanding the processes associated with emergent and conventional literacy transformations. Vygotsky argued for the need to study these microgenisis processes; that is, the short-term developmental formations and what Wertsch (1985) called, "the unfolding of an individual perceptual or conceptual act" (p. 55). To this end, I focused my study on the activities and acts associated with *microgenesis*. As such, the methodological framework, which focused on discussion transcripts and students' comments and questions, provides a means to examine the microlevel processes and purposes of activities particularly related to students' literacy development.

Elementary and Higher Mental Functions. One core distinction of Vygotsky's work is the notion of *elementary* and *higher mental functions*. Vygotsky suggested that mental functions (e.g., memory, thought) start in an elementary form and are reorganized into higher mental functions through social interactions (see Wertsch, 1985). Even early forms of literacy involve a move away from elementary to higher mental functioning with qualitative shifts occurring in the higher level processes. Vygotsky maintained that natural development leads to elementary forms, while social and cultural influences lead to changes toward higher forms.

The distinction between elementary and higher mental processing applies to early literacy practices. Once children engage in characteristics associated with emergent literacy, they have made a shift from elementary processes to a potential long-term engagement with higher mental functioning.

Vygotsky further clarified the higher mental functions as involving two extreme poles, which he labeled as rudimentary and advanced higher; that is, after the shift from elementary to higher mental processing, there are also shifts within higher processes. Similarly, the higher mental processes associated with literacy have qualitative shifts, those which we might view as emergent and various forms of conventional literacy.

Vygotsky's criteria for distinguishing between elementary and higher mental functioning informs us about influential factors contributing to changes in processes. The natural development associated with elementary forms is different from the social and cultural influences on higher mental processes. It is this social and cultural aspect that leads us to question the natural development of literacy, with Vygotsky suggesting that it is the social and cultural influences that lead people to develop literacy.

Criteria to distinguish mental functions. In relation to the changes between elementary and higher mental functions, Wertsch (1985) summarized Vygotsky as follows:

> Vygotsky touched on four main criteria that he used to distinguish
> between elementary and higher mental functions: (1) the shift of
> control from environment to the individual, that is, the emergence
> of voluntary regulation; (2) the emergence of conscious realization
> of mental processes; (3) the social origin and social nature of
> higher mental functions; and (4) the use of signs to mediate higher
> mental functions
> (p. 25).

The four areas have the potential to help us understand the higher mental functions associated with emergent and conventional literacy and the qualitative shifts in development that associated transformations might involve.

First, one way to describe conventional literacy is to focus on students' ability to self-regulate their own learning and literacy activities. Students' conventional use of literacy is related plausibly to their ability to regulate their use of literacy and the processes associated with it. A conventional use of literacy might entail students' use of literacy to regulate activities within their environment rather than only reacting to environmental events. Students' self-regulation may take different forms depending on the context in which they are using their literacy and the form or function of the literacy purpose (e.g., home versus school). In this sense, literacy involves a self-regulation that does not occur for the attributes associated with elementary functioning.

Second, similar to the work on metacognition (e.g., Garner, 1987), Vygotsky's second criteria suggests a possible aspect of higher mental functions for both emergent and conventional literacy is students' abilities to monitor their literacy processes consciously and to develop higher forms of intellectual behaviors. This aspect connects with students' ability to use various strategies and to make meaningful choices among strategies based upon their context. This growing ability to develop strategies and monitor their use is one possible qualitative shift within higher mental functioning. Students become more conventionally literatre when they are able consciously and intellectually to make literacy choices associated with the situational nature of a literacy event or practice.

Third, the focus on social origins and nature of these functions is critical to how we envision both emergent and conventional literacy. The social interactions in which students participate enable them to access more

conventional forms of literacy and to engage in higher level discussions with others. The intellectual processes that are social in nature lead to situations in which the students may gain access to new language, experiences, and information.

Another particularly important piece of the social nature of learning is to understand that everyone might not view literacy characteristics in the same manner. The processes that certain groups of people use to understand literacy might differ drastically from others based upon their social purposes and functions for literacy. What appears to be conventional literacy for one person may be viewed differently by another person. Students who engage in emergent literacy within the social and cultural boundaries of their home and then extend that knowledge into the classroom may experience different expectations and definitions of literacy dependent upon the social norms of the various settings.

Fourth, Vygotsky's emphasis on psychological tools, or signs, is critical to helping us understand the transformations that children encounter while engaged with various tools (e.g., language) associated with literacy learning. He stressed the importance of psychological tools mediating the development of an individual's learning. Language was one such foundational psychological tool. It is within this realm of the importance of psychological tools and related social mediation that I believe we might best be informed of the language mediation that supports students' literacy transformations.

In the following two sections, I expand upon (a) social and cultural influences on learning and (b) social mediation. These two areas seem

particularly relevant for understanding the nature of qualitative shifts in literacy development and to inform our definitions of literacy.

Social and Cultural Influences

The social and cultural interactions in which children engage are foundational for their learning. Within the realm of higher mental functions, children engage in social acts that further their development toward self-regulation and higher learning processes. One means of supporting children in their early uses of literacy is to engage them in conversations as they attempt more conventional uses of literacy.

The Vygotsky space. Harré (1984) drew on the work of Vygotsky to generate a model to explain how people engage in social discussion to support their learning (see Figure 1). As students engage in interactions about concepts in a public forum, they move to appropriating and transforming information about concepts they encounter in social interactions to internalizing that information and making it their own. Eventually, this individual thinking will lead to the child using the concept again within a public domain.

For example, a student may hear or read a new word (e.g., squash) while engaging in a book-reading discussion with a peer or teacher. The student may question this word, the teacher may expand upon its meaning, relate it to personal events or prior knowledge, or no discourse about it may occur. Regardless, this initial experience with the word in a public domain (i.e. quadrant I) provides the opportunity for the student to become familiar with it. After repeated exposure to the word or continued discussion about it with other individuals, the students is likely to use the word publicly again in verbal or

The Vygotsky Space

Public

|

Conventionaliztion

Social —

Publication

IV | I

— **Social**

Appropriation

III | II

Transformation

|

Private
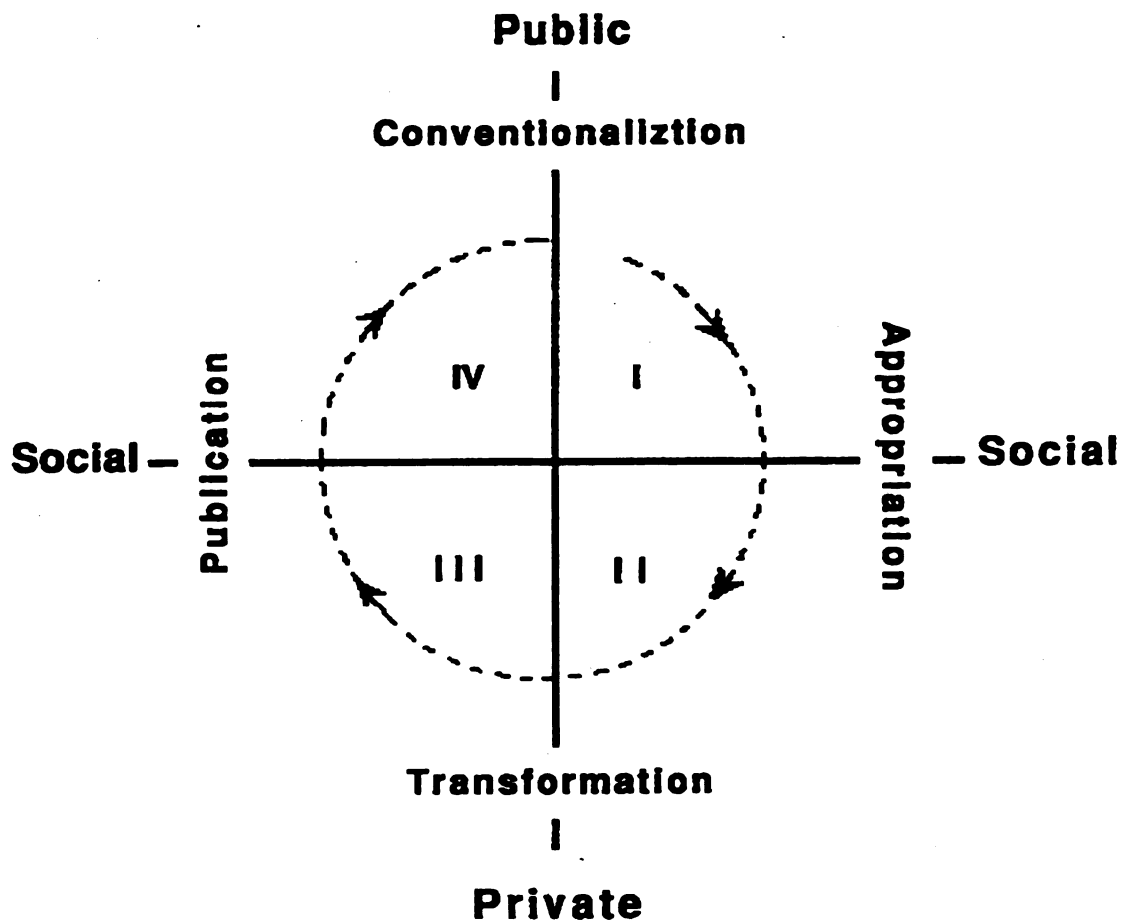
Figure 1. The Vygotsky Space.

written language (quadrant IV), thus indicating that the student has appropriated the word and transformed his/her knowledge about it (quadrant II and III), and internalized the meaning of the word in a manner that enables the student to use it again. Throughout the learner's lifetime, continued interactions with the word and use of it in different contexts will change the learner's perceptions of the word and situated use of it.

Harré's model (i.e., the Vygotsky Space) is a visual tool to help understand the dynamic connections among social/individual and public/private domains and the processes that generate the connections among these areas (see also Gavelek & Raphael, in press; McCarthey, 1992 for a description of this model). One critical feature of the model is the emphasis on the role of language in supporting student learning. Theorists have argued that language is essential to the acquisition and use of, higher psychological processes (Gavelek, 1986; Wells, 1993; Wertsch, 1985). In his general genetic law of cultural development, Vygotsky (1981) suggests that "any function appears on a social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First, it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category" (p. 163). The language between people is a primary means of facilitating the learning.

For early literacy activities, students may start to learn conventions by engaging in social discourse as noted in quadrant I. Interactions with peers and adults engaged in literacy acts will enable the students first to be introduced to and learn about literacy concepts. At some later point their

transformation and conventional use of a literacy event may be noted or made available publicly.

The assertion that any function appears on a social plane raises issues about the nature of the setting in which that social interaction occurs. In some classrooms, there might be rich environments that support social opportunities. In other cases, more isolated or individual activities in the classroom may limit the opportunity students have for interchanges. The type of social opportunities necessary within the first quadrant are an essential factor to consider in relation to schooling and how we can create settings in which students are actively engaged in social interactions. These settings may influence students' development of emergent and conventional literacy in terms of their opportunities for interactions around language and text.

Vygotsky's emphasis upon social origins involved the role(s) of teachers, knowledgeable peers, parents, and other adults as crucial to early readers and writers in terms of mediating individual learning (Rogoff, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). For students who are emerging as readers and writers, literacy transformations are a process in which others play a crucial role of mediating the students' interactions with print. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) describe a tutoring situation in which a tutor used "scaffolding functions" as she engaged 3-5 year-olds in a block building task. The tutor played a vital role in keeping the task manageable, providing direction, and demonstrating solutions.

Bruner (1978) also described this important aspect of the role of adults in relation to children's acquisition of language from interactions with their mothers. He studied the interactions between mothers and their infants or

toddlers (i.e., ages 10-24 months), arguing that, "acquiring language appears to be either inexplicable or miraculous, but close observations indicates that baby and mother work together and the role of the mother is crucial" (p. 42). Thus, the social interactions between the child and adult tutor was important in assisting the children's learning of the concepts. An emergent literacy perspective recognizes that children have social interactions with parents at home or other adults in the community, supporting the notion that literacy learning is ongoing from birth, rather than something that students start to acquire within first grade. In this sense, the adults are *mediating* the learning of the children by providing guidance and support.

In the Harre model (see Figure 1), the connections between the social and individual planes is a result of processes the children engage in as they appropriate and transform their literacy knowledge. These processes are dependent upon the social context and type of interactions between the child and a more knowledgeable other. As such, the process may be different in the home than in school or change as a child moves from one room to another within a school building.

Zone of proximal development. The reading readiness and beginning reading literacy models assume that children need to reach a certain developmental age to be successful with literacy. Vygotsky (1978) questioned this developmental perspective in his examination of interactions among children and adults and the relationships among learning and development. He explained his view of learning by emphasizing that learning leads to

development within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). For Vygotsky

(1978), the ZPD was

> the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by
> independent problem solving and the level of potential development as
> determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in
> collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

He further clarified this zone defining the functions in the process of maturation.

This view contrasts with the reading readiness and beginning reading models

which waited for a certain developmental level before beginning reading

instruction.

Within classroom settings, Vygotsky's ideas have been utilized in

connecting his theories with classroom practices and dialogue (Dyson, 1993;

Wolf, 1991). Indeed, if we observe students over the course of a day, we would

find that these zones are continually created through dialogue, some that

effectively take into account an individual's actual and potential development in

his/her position as learners, while others place the student in the position of the

more capable peer. The transformation process seems to be one area where

ZPDs are created with adult or peer guidance to engage students in learning

that furthers their development.

Mason and Sinha (1993) connected the work of Vygotsky to emergent

literacy in relation to learning and development in the early childhood years.

While Mason and Sinha made strong suggestions about possible connections

between Vygotsky and emergent literacy, there is a need to document this

connection with supporting concrete examples. They contend that the

principles associate with Vygotsky's work (e.g. modeling, scaffolding, zone of

proximal development, adult support) have too often been misinterpreted by early literacy teachers, leading to more direct instruction rather that allowing student exploration combined with adult support. When this happens, the processes take on a different form and the *psychological tools* and *mediation* may shift from a language focus to more individualized manner of teaching.

Semiotic Mediation

In his explanations of higher mental functions, Vygotsky included the use of psychological tools as one means of understanding the learning process. Psychological tools, or signs, included language, symbol systems (e.g., algebra), maps, and so forth. Vygotsky argued that, "psychological tools are not viewed as auxiliary means that simply facilitate an existing mental function while leaving it qualitatively unaltered. Rather, the emphasis is on their capacity to transform mental functioning" (Wertsch, 1985 p. 79). This is consistent with his focus on the social origin of learning, with language and symbol systems being the means of support for transforming mental functions.

This focus on psychological tools gives greater importance to the language opportunities that occur in learning situations than was associated with earlier models of reading. The concept of mediation focuses instructional practices on the use of scaffolding and modeling as a social means to use language as a psychological tool to support students' learning processes (Cazden, 1986). Diaz, Neal, and Amaya-Williams (1990) suggest that

> in line with Vygotsky's and Luria's formulations, we believe that the regulation of a child's behaviors is, first, a shared act, an interpersonal phenomenon. Since the human infant is immersed from birth in a sociocultural environment, the child's functioning and behavior are

externally regulated by the adult caregiving interactions. We propose further that self-regulatory capacities develop within the context of adult-child interactions, especially when the caregiver sensitively and gradually withdraws from joint activity, allowing, promoting, and rewarding the child's takeover of the regulatory role. (p. 129)

Thus, children are not individually responsible at a certain biological or developmental point to start regulating their actions. Rather, the adult plays a critical role in using language while interacting with the child to provide initial support and withdrawing that support as the child progresses in his/her abilities.

For Vygotsky, the mediation occurred with the use of psychological tools or meaningful signs, with the tool causing the transformation related to a mental function. For example, a teacher may create a learning opportunity or theme unit designed to elicit students' thoughts about a particular concept (e.g., the characteristics of a cat). Using extended language opportunities (i.e., psychological tools) to engage the students in discussions and problem-solving interactions as they develop a sense of patterns or characteristics associated with the cat, the teacher is mediating students' understanding of the concept by immersing the students in the language and offering supportive discourse. This planned communication between students and teacher and among students has the teacher specifically using that language as a tool to direct students' learning. In other cases, the students' less formal interaction with the concept within their regular social and cultural encounters are also critical to their developing thoughts about the concept (e.g., talking with a friend after school about the alley cats).

Given the importance of language as a psychological tool, and its role in

mediating students' learning, it is perhaps not surprising that there is also

increasing use of discourse analysis in research and recognition of the

important role of the types of dialogue that occur in educational settings in order

to document the role of the language in connection to learning. Wells and

Chang-Wells (1992) emphasize this point in the following excerpt:

> When one adopts a sociocultural–as opposed to an individualistic–
> perspective on education, talk, far from being an unimportant
> accompaniment to the real business of learning and teaching, is seen to
> be a central and constitutive part of every activity. In a very important
> sense, education *is* dialogue. (p. 32)

Connected to the role of social interactions within learning processes described

in the previous section, the role of dialogue is one form of psychological tool

used to mediate learning. Vygotsky also noted the importance of monologue

during which individuals continue to think about concepts, in a sense engaging

in an individual dialogue, but one that is critical to their transformation and

appropriation of concepts.

Arnett (1992) suggested that language may make us aware of what is

seemingly obvious knowledge, but also how our interpretation of the

information may differ from others. The dialogue we use, or the semiotic

mediation in which we participate as learners and more knowledgeable others,

informs all of us:

> The basic premise of dialogic education is that the learning and the use
> of our knowledge involves us and others, recognizing that our
> interpretation of information is governed as much by our value
> orientation as by the facts assembled. (p. 9)

This idea tends to support a perspective in which we construct our knowledge through social interactions with others. This also brings out the important forms of signs we encounter, which may be face-to-face communication or dialogue (e.g., formal learning situations), or may be experienced as a product of the larger sociocultural domain (e.g., opportunities to acquire cultural information).

In relation to literacy, this acknowledgement of differences in viewpoints in relation to mediation that might occur, highlights one of the problematic aspects of current definitions of conventional literacy. Arnett stressed both the "facts assembled" and "our value orientation" as important to our interpretation. In many cases, conventional literacy may seem to represent facts, when in actuality how individuals view those facts may vary. As such, it is the interactions with others, the tools used to mediate learning, and eventual collaboration and consensus that governs the conventions that are formed.

Teacher who make decisions about their literacy instruction and what they "count as literacy" (see Heap, 1991), will influence the type of environment or social setting they provide for the students. This may include the sense of community, type of activity, availability of literacy materials and so forth. The form of mediation they use is dependent upon their view of literacy, and similarly their use of psychological tools, such as language, will depend upon their understanding and openness to the importance of mediation. Similarly, the type of language used and forms of mediation that occur at home may be similar to or quite different from the language and mediation associated with schooling and school literacy.

Vygotsky (1978) recognized that the use of psychological tools has

implications for how we view instruction in literacy, including for teaching

written language:

> Practical pedagogy, despite the existence of many methods for teaching
> reading and writing, has yet to work out an effective, scientific procedure
> for teaching children written language. Unlike the teaching of spoken
> language, into which children grow of their own accord, teaching of
> written language is based on artificial training. Such training requires an
> enormous amount of attention and effort on the part of teacher and pupil
> and thus becomes something self-contained, relegating living written
> language to the background. (p. 105)

One implication of this problem is that teachers may need to develop an

understanding and ability to use language as a tool to mediate students'

learning. Vygotsky's statement about written language as different from

spoken language is somewhat similar to Gee's (1989) assertions about

learning and acquisition. Gee suggested that teachers often focus on formal

learning situations and instruction rather than placing students in settings and

discourse in which they might acquire literacy.

To understand the *transformations* that students make in their literacy

progress, a sociocultural perspective lends information related to the

importance of the social origins, psychological tools, and underlying beliefs of

the transformation processes. The work of Vygotsky and others raises

questions about the role of the community surrounding student learning. This

raises several issues for struggling readers and writers such as: (a) How can

teachers engage Chapter 1 students in language learning that might support

literacy *transformations*? (b) How might that support differ for students who

come to school without many previous opportunities to engage in literacy

discussions with adults or peers? (c) How does language play a role in helping students to learn both emergent and conventional literacy characteristics? In the following section, I discuss learning communities and how the language and instruction used across these communities may influence student and teacher learning.

Negotiating and Learning in Various Communities

Within both an emergent literacy and a sociocultural perspective, two important common themes are the social setting and interactions between adults and children. These connections acknowledge and highlight the important role that the communities in which children interact are crucial to their literacy learning and development. Children engage in social interactions within the home, school, and larger communities, all areas that serve as *mediating influences* on students' literacy learning and development. One can think of mediating influences as a continuum from positive to negative. At the positive end of the continuum are influences that support students' literacy learning and development, as well as contribute to positive attitudes and dispositions toward engaging in literacy. At the negative end of the continuum are influences, consciously enacted or not, that work against or hinder students' literacy development or negatively influence their attitude and dispositions toward engaging in literacy. Students' literacy experiences with adults and peers in the home, the school, and the community are not uniformly supportive, but rather, reflect a continuum of positive and negative influences.

In this section, I describe the concept of a community with a particular interest in communities in which struggling readers and writers interact. I focus

on: (a) defining and describing types of communities, (b) potential similarities and differences across communities, (c) the relationship of the Chapter 1 program within an educational community, (d) the beyond-school community, in particular, the potential home-school connections that could support students' literacy, and (e) the students' themselves, specifically their beliefs about literacy and literacy learning as they participate as members within their communities.

Defining and Describing Types of Communities

Within the educational field, the term community is often used. Learning, discourse, interpretive, literate, and knowledge are just a few of the forms associated with community. For my purposes, I am define community within a literacy community, one in which the discourse and interactions among the teachers, parents, and students encourage members to work closely together as a social unit and share a common interest and responsibility for the literacy education of all students.

Swales (1990) suggests two forms of community that seem similar to Gee's assertions about a primary and secondary discourse. For Swales, there is a separation of a speech community from a discourse community, "A speech community typically inherits its membership by birth, accident or adoption; a discourse community recruits its members by persuasion, training or relevant qualification" (p. 24). In this sense, the home seems more congruent with a speech community in which the children are absorbed into the practices of that community. The school seems more reflective of a discourse community in which the educators have the responsibility to "train" or instruct students for a purpose similar to an occupation, learning school literacy. In this sense, a

discourse community may be a problematic concept for describing school learning in that the notions of "recruitment" and "training" imply a one-way transmission of information from the teacher to the student for a specific form of conventionalized literacy. In this regard, I prefer to focus more directly on a *literacy community* in which the purpose is to help students acquire a secondary discourse that will enable them to be successful in many environments and with multiple uses of language.

Differences Across Communities

Currently, struggling readers and writers receive support through a range of programs, from extra instruction within their regular education setting to extra instruction in pullout programs (e.g., remedial or compensatory education, outside tutoring, special education programs; see Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993; Taylor, Strait, & Medo, 1994). Thus, struggling readers often participate in the same classroom and school communities as their regular education peers (e.g., library, computer room, lunch room, playground, classrooms attending in the previous grades) as well as in support communities such as Chapter 1, special education, and resource rooms (e.g., Hiebert, 1994). In addition, the social worlds outside of the school (e.g., home, church, public libraries, day care, sports, scouts) are also places where students experience literacy events. All these interactions impact upon the students and their uses of literacy, particularly given the importance of language opportunities for children's literacy development.

Differences across instructional communities or school classrooms may be related to how educators have or have not been successful in moving theory into practice. Beck and McKeown (1984) suggested that

> The relationship between theory and instructional practice is not necessarily straightforward. One of the reasons there is not always a direct link is that the development of theory is not necessarily pursued for the purpose of influencing practice. (p 63)

This problem is related to changing instructional beliefs and practices (i.e., reading readiness, beginning reading, emergent literacy), leaving some teachers still clinging to earlier beliefs while others advocate changes they believe will improve the quality of instructions for their students.

Theoretical understandings of discourse communities may help to explain the existence of potentially drastic differences across school communities, while at the same time explain why other communities are more congruent. Swales (1990) describes six features of a discourse community (see table 2). These features include common public goals, intercommunication among members, participatory mechanisms, communicative genres, specific vocabulary, and members with relevant discourse expertise. These features directly influence the discourse used by the members of the community and thus might include or exclude certain people. Swales suggests that "a discourse community recruits its members by persuasion, training, or relevant qualifications" (p. 24).

When this discourse community framework is applied to teacher learning, conflicting methods of instruction and views of learning may be accounted for by looking at when teachers received their formal training and

Table 2

Swales's Six Features of a Discourse Community

• A broadly agreed set of common public goals

• Mechanisms for intercommunication among its members

• Participatory mechanisms primarily for providing information and feedback

• One or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims

• Some specific lexis

• A threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and
  discoursal experience

From: Swales, J. M. (1990). <u>Genre analysis: English in academic and
  research settings</u>. Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge University Press.

whether or not they continue to be a part of the ongoing discourse about instructional practices. Thus, they have either not be "invited" into newer discourse about literacy, they have not made efforts to join such discourse, or some combination of both. Perhaps, some teachers are not familiar with the discourse (e.g., vocabulary, goals) about concepts such as emergent literacy and how it might apply to their classrooms.

Even though members may appear to have community agreement about issues such as literacy instruction (e.g., all value students' emerging literacy), the way in which they view an idea or concept may be quite different. For example, in her study of 64 journals, Bergerson (1990) found definitions and descriptions of "whole language" varied widely, particularly how it was used by school and university-based authors. Heap (1991) focused more directly on the language we use and how our situated perspective influences "what we count as reading." Rommetveit (1980) described a scenario in which "Mr. Smith is mowing his lawn," and showed the potentially different perspectives and interpretations by various people of Mr. Smith's reason for mowing (e.g., exercise, keep up property values, avoid his wife).

The point is that teachers, parents, and peers within one community may have quite different perspectives about literacy and literacy instruction. More importantly, their perceptions of what might be needed to support students' learning might also be quite different. For Chapter 1 students engaged in literacy transactions, the language used and emphases on what reading and writing entails might be quite different across communities.

Communities for Chapter 1 Students

For students who struggle with literacy in some manner (e.g., qualify for special education or Chapter 1 services), the relationship across classes within a school community is particularly vital in terms of both the nature of the instruction and the way in which participation influences peer relationships. Arguments have been made questioning the effectiveness of pulling students out of one school setting for more specific instruction in another, with one concern being that the instruction is not consistent (Pugach & Wesson, 1995). Frequently, students identified as having difficulty with literacy acquisition and development are singled out as being "different," then removed from their classroom community and placed in another environment, isolated from their regular education peers and from contextualized literacy instruction (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989). Yet, such a scenario does not have to take place. It is possible to envision a resource room environment that is consistent with both sociocultural principles and that maintains the holistic and contextualized literacy learning practices that have been advocated for regular education classrooms (e.g., Englert, Raphael, & Mariage, 1994). Also, we can create effective programs that increase collaboration across other settings (e.g., library) to promote more consistency (Goldfarb & Salmon, 1993; Richek & Glick, 1991).

Allington (1983) suggested that instruction differs depending on the reading ability of the students. He argued, "good and poor readers differ in their reading ability as much because of differences in instruction as variations in individual learning styles or aptitudes" (1983, p. 548). Allington outlined

several factors that influence this different instruction, including allocation of instructional time, engaged instructional time, instructional emphases, quantity and mode of assigned reading, and teacher interruption behaviors. In response to these problems, Allington made recommendations that centered on more opportunities for the readers, an improved instructional environment, and different assignments.

Shapiro and White (1991) conducted a study in which they compared first through seventh grade students in two schools on their attitudes about and perceptions of reading. The two schools differed in the reading instruction programs they used, one with a more traditional basal program and one without any formal reading instruction. Instead, students spent reading time in the library reading independently and in shared reading with a partner. The students in the basal instruction program tended to have more negative views of themselves as readers, were less likely to enjoy reading, and viewed reading as more decontextualized than their nontraditional peers.

Bean, Cooley, Eichelberger, Lazar, and Zigmond (1991) examined the instruction for fourth- and fifth-grade students in either inclusion or pullout remedial reading programs within the same school. They found that students in both settings were engaged primarily in skills-based instruction, spending most of their time on worksheets. The pullout group had more direct teaching experiences within their small group, while the in-class students received more individual tutoring.

In all these studies, there is some indication that the instruction struggling students receive across a school community might be different from

that of their regular education peers. The Chapter 1 setting has the potential to provide instruction that is enriched, but that remains consistent with holistic and contextualized approaches currently advocated as being beneficial to all students (Pinnell & McCarrier, 1994). Such instruction can be environmentally rich with print and texts in contrast to earlier models which led to isolated skills practice. The Chapter 1 setting has the capability to provide struggling readers and writer more individualized instruction and to work more directly within their ZPD. In this manner, the focus of the instruction is on the processes (e.g., transformations) directly related to their literacy products at appropriate levels of support.

Home and School Relationships

Educators are also examining the need for better relationships between home and school communities (e.g., Heath, 1983; Shultz, Florio, & Erickson, 1982; Snow, 1991; Taylor, 1983). The school community may play a crucial role in drawing literacy connections from the home into the school. Alternatively, teachers may play an instructional role educating parents about literacy concepts and activities to use with their children, especially for children who appear to be have difficulty in this area.

There has been an abundance of research in recent years on programs that link the home to school communities,. Morrow and Paratore (1993) described perspectives on family literacy and efforts to increase family involvement in early reading experiences for children. Further, they describe three categories related to family literacy research: (a) home-school partnership programs, (b) intergenerational literacy programs, and (c) research that

explores uses of literacy within families. This research tries to draw connections between home and school and also to help the adults continue with their literacy learning.

Taylor's (1983; 1991) work and her book with Dorsey-Gaines (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988) supplied the field with vivid descriptions of the community role in student's literacy learning. She explored young children's interactions with parents, school administrators, teachers, and test administrators. Similarly, Heath (1983) explored children's language use within the home, and how that language was linked to education. She found many differences between the three groups (i.e., Roadville, Trackton, and the townspeople) and the language use within home and school. Michaels (1981) examined "sharing time" in a first grade classroom, and showed the interactions between a student, Deena, and her teacher. Deena's discourse during sharing time was more congruent with the discourse in her home, rather than the expected school discourse. These studies suggest that one area teachers need to consider is the way that language and literacy are used in students' homes and to consider ways to bridge from the home language and literacy use to that used in school settings.

Snow's (1991) study focused directly on the relationship between amount of support for literacy learning in home and schools and the impact such levels have on students' literacy development. She observed students from low-income families, examining the role of different classrooms, home environments, and support for literacy learning. She categorized home support into high and low; school support into high, mixed, and low. She found

that students with low home support still achieved well if they were from classrooms with high support. When students had high home support, they were less successful if their classroom was low support. Those with low home support and low classroom support, not surprisingly, were not as likely to make achievements. Snow's study suggests that in addition to building bridges to home language and literacy use, having a high level of support for students in schools is critical—particularly for students whose home literacy activity shows low levels of support.

Researchers have designed projects directly intended to improve literacy levels in homes. In the Book Reading Project, Edwards (1989) described a program to assist five lower SES single mothers learn how to read books with their children. Edwards videotaped book reading sessions between mothers and their Head Start children. She then talked with each mother about how to improve book reading interactions (e.g., asking questions, making comments, physical contact, relating text to life). In this case, the attempt was made to go beyond simply telling parents how to help their children with reading to a model of showing them.

These studies of home and school connections show that similar to the resource room instructional programs, the type of discourse and literacy within one setting may either be similar to or quite different from uses in other settings. Given that social interactions are foundational to learning, Chapter 1 students would seem to benefit from engaging in many language opportunities across all of these communities (e.g., home, Chapter 1 setting, regular classroom). Thus, we need to explore how these places might build relationships to

enhance ways to communicate with one another. With the goal to support

Chapter 1 students in their literacy transformations, the settings have the

potential to reinforce each other around this focus, or, if necessary, to ensure

that there is support for literacy learning that may not be available in all

contexts.

Students' Beliefs About Literacy

Within their school community, the students themselves have an

essential role in their interactions with each other and with adults. In essence,

these students form their own peer discourse community within the broader

community of the classroom and school, and as such, they may have a shared

system of beliefs, ways of talking about and defining literacy and learning, and

ways of understanding their own status within the community. Thus, students'

beliefs about literacy form an important basis for their learning and

development. A negative view of literacy potentially contributes to their

struggles or it may result from these struggles. Students' literacy attitudes likely

influence their engagement with the literacy activities designed to improve their

literacy skills.

By understanding these beliefs and attitudes, we are in a better position

to understand beliefs within the peer community and with this knowledge, to

directly mediate students' learning. Paley (1986) suggested that teachers

need to start "listening to what the children say" to understand better their own

teaching and their students' learning. Studies in the areas of student

perceptions and attitudes provide a sense that (a) students actively participate

in their own peer communities, (b) these peer communities interact within larger

communities (e.g., classrooms, schools, homes) (c) teachers and other adults convey messages to students that influence their beliefs of themselves and literacy in general, and (d) students have clear and strong perceptions about their own learning and that of their peers. Within these areas, interactions within the community directly or indirectly influence students' literacy learning. The following studies contribute to our understanding of these issues.

Michel (1994) was interested in first-graders perceptions of reading and the influences of their surroundings. She talked with the students about classwork, experiences at home, and their definitions of reading to determine their ideas and understandings related to reading. She gained information about the students' views of activities such as reading groups, reading tasks, and connections to other subjects. Michel found that students had strong perceptions of (a) reading group levels (e.g., high, medium, low), (b) their own progress (e.g., reading sentences versus words, hardback books are more difficult), (c) many purposes for reading (e.g., information or recreational). In her study, Michel used the students' views to share information with parents and teachers about how to support and listen to students to encourage continued reading improvement. She documented how adults perceptions differed from students, and suggested that adults may send both positive and negative feedback to students.

Similarly, Knapp (1994) conducted four case studies of first graders to obtain information related to students' perceptions of reading instruction within a reformed reading program. She was interested in students' views of instructional changes due to policy decisions. Both of the studies indicated that

students do have clear perceptions of their activities reflecting messages conveyed by adults and peers and an awareness of their own status within that community. As an integral part of a community, students interactions with peers and adults appear to influence their beliefs about literacy and their own learning. When we consider that students' transformations to conventional literacy includes a positive attitude, these perceptions are important to understand.

Studies about student motivation provide additional information about views of learners (Oldfather & Dahl, 1994; Schunk & Meese, 1992; Turner, 1993). Oldfather and Dahl (1994) conducted ethnographic studies in two whole-language classrooms, in their endeavor to "investigate children's perspectives of their own literacy learning processes and their constructs of themselves as readers and writers" (p. 139). They believed that students' perspectives provide an insider's view of the classroom culture and provide important information about students' motivation to learn. Oldfather and Dahl focused on the ways in which students' voices are honored within classroom procedures. The classroom culture that developed indicates that students have their own discourse communities within classrooms and their own interpretations of the activities within them. We need to understand better these students' communities and how they participate within them so that we can take advantage of these interactions to support students' learning. Students may choose to participate within classroom discussions, and the manner in which teachers react to their participation influences children's continual involvement within the community (i.e., if their voices are honored). Thus, students' may

define their role within a community in terms of their own progress, responses by others to their contributions, and related motivation and engagement issues.

Hansen (1992) described how she used students' evaluations of their own reading and writing to guide teachers as they initiated changes in their instruction. Hansen interviewed students in grades 1-5 to discover their views about content reading and writing and what they wanted to learn next. She shared her interview results with the principal who agreed to support her work with the teachers. In this case, the adults in the system used the information about the students' reactions to instruction to influence their later instruction directly. Thus, by gaining information about students' beliefs and sharing that with other members of the community, we can more directly and immediately make vital changes to support students.

Denny Taylor's (1993) most recent book, *From the Child's Point of View,* outlined her view of instructional practices, arguing against reductionist approaches toward a more unified theory. Her primary focus was a new line of assessment that moves away from testing and labeling students to one that more adequately addresses student needs within their situation. This tends to give students' the support that they need, especially when teachers interact with children to understand their stories and views about their own learning. This focus on a new means of assessment that considers more directly the social situations and individual needs of students is critical, particularly for struggling readers who may be given labels based on low test scores. Rather than perceiving deficits within the child, a more unified theory shows promise

for also examining and valuing the community role in providing strong instructional contexts and social situations to the children.

Dyson's (1993) book focused on classroom learning, as she observed students' social worlds within the classroom and extending to interactions at home and with peers. Her case studies showed the significance of children's activities to understand better the home, cultural, and classroom dynamics that are interwoven within and outside of educational settings. Dyson's use of many transcripts, writing, and interview information made the students' views about their learning both explicit and implicit in the way that she described each of the student case studies. This study increased our understanding of the many peer interactions that play a vital role in students' learning within a community.

This growing field of research on students' perceptions and attitudes provides a sense that students form their own communities, but are also members other communities (e.g., home, classroom). All of these communities directly influence student's emergent and conventional literacy transformations in terms of social interactions that support learning, messages conveyed to students, students changing beliefs about themselves as a result of community interactions, and how students learn to value reading and the end results of learning to read.

Concluding Comments

The literature review makes visible the progress we have made as a research field in detailing the learning and development that underlies students' literacy abilities. Within early literacy instruction, we have moved from a developmental model of readiness to a concept of a beginning reader and,

now, to an emergent literacy perspective. Emergent literacy highlights the active nature of literacy acquisition and the important roles played by the students, the participants in the communities in which they interact, and the language and instruction that constitute these communities.

By recognizing these valuable contributions of an emergent literacy perspective, it becomes clear that further research into the nature of the transformations students' make as they learn emergent and conventional literacy is critical . We need to understand how theory connects to emergent literacy learning, particularly as to the processes associated with the literacy transformations. For students who enter first and second grade already struggling with literacy, we need to reconsider our definitions of emergent and conventional literacy to be more expansive in our overall goals, rather than just immediate goals. Within any community, it is up to all members to educate the students. However, for students, such as those in Chapter 1 who may not have had enriched literacy backgrounds or whose home language differs from school language, we need to be especially diligent in our efforts to ensure their improvement and eventual success with literacy.

In chapter three, I move from this literature review to the details of my study, including the questions, research framework, and description of the participants and setting. In this study, I examine emergent and conventional literacy in regard to the social interactions and instructional issues that support students' learning. In addition, I consider how adults and peers provide mediated learning situations to add additional literacy support.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH CHOICES AND SELECTIONS

Shulman (1988) describes several different types of questions that researchers might ask about the study of reading, noting that the method used in a research study depends upon the type of questions. To this end, the questions I am concerned with may best be studied through the use of qualitative methods, specifically in the tradition of naturalistic inquiry, case study, and sociolinguistic analysis. If my focus were to conduct an intervention, identify outstanding methods, or predict reading success, I might choose data sources that lead to techniques successful for regression, correlation, or the analysis of variance. However, to investigate the literacy learning and interactions of primary grade Chapter 1 reading students in a variety of contexts, the use of group case studies provided an appropriate method for gathering data and documenting the daily experiences of the students in a manner that provides in-depth and descriptive information. Merriam (1988) noted that

> investigators use a case study design in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and its meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. (p. xii)

In some cases, the outcomes may be of importance to the participants, but for the most part the focus is on the process. This chapter of my dissertation describes the specific information related to the methods for the study.

Analyses examined the discourse and literacy activities within a school, centering on the Chapter 1 instruction and then broadening to include other

settings where the students used reading and writing. My primary source of information involved the fieldwork information that I gathered. This data collection process was similar to Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) description of an ethnographer:

> The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned. (p. 2)

Like the ethnographer, I spent time observing in the classrooms and over time participating directly in events to gain insight into classroom-related activities from an additional perspective. Combined with analysis of this observational data, I conducted sociolinguistic analysis of discussions among participants and discussions within classrooms to understand better the discourse among school educators, parents, and students.

This study extended research in literacy development, focusing on Chapter 1 students in their broad learning community. It addresses concerns about (a) our expanding knowledge of emergent literacy, focusing on events in primary grades that lead toward more conventional literacy practices; (b) the role of the extended community including classroom teachers, parents, and Chapter 1 instruction in providing support to struggling readers as they learn language conventions and literacy skills; and (c) student interest, motivation, and views about their own literacy learning. As described in the earlier chapters, this study was influenced by literature and related research in

emergent literacy, learning theories, and learning communities. The specific

questions include the following:

- How does the Chapter 1 setting support students in their emergent
  reading and writing and transformations toward more conventional uses
  of literacy?

- How does the language and related learning opportunities among the
  community settings support Chapter 1 students in their literacy learning?

- What are students' beliefs about literacy instruction and learning?

I designed this chapter to provide insights into the classrooms,

participants, data sources and data analyses that were critical pieces of my

study. The first section focuses specifically on the participants, including a

description of the school, classrooms, teachers and students.

Setting a Community Context for Instruction

This study took place during the 1994-95 school year. Primary data

collection occurred from September to December, with additional data

collected only as needed in the later school months. This study involved many

members of the school community, all of whom participated in assisting the

focus groups with their literacy acquisition. The primary location was the

Chapter 1 room, where the focus student groups participated in the majority of

their literacy instruction. The participants for this study included: (a) a Chapter 1

reading teacher (i.e., Mrs. Casey), (b) two groups of students in her resource

room, (c) these students' regular education classroom teachers (i.e., Mrs.

Duncan and Mrs. Walston), (d) the students' parents or guardians, and (e) any

additional school staff who interacted with these students in literacy learning.

Figure 2 represents the various locations and influential people that were a part of this study.

The principal at the school was contacted, informed about the research proposal, and asked for permission to conduct the study within the building. The research plan was submitted to the school district, following their requested procedures, to ensure that the research study was acceptable and beneficial to the school, district, teachers, and students. Similarly, I obtained the appropriate research permission from Michigan State University. Consistent with this procedure, all names of students, teachers, and schools used in the study, with the exception of my own, are pseudonyms.

School Setting

Oakgrove Elementary

The study occurred within one school setting (i.e., Oakgrove). Oakgrove school is in a midsized midwestern metropolitan district, on a main street that is a central site for most of the traffic that runs through the city. Most of the students walk to school, coming from nearby neighborhoods of one- and two-story houses and apartments, with many students crossing the overpass that goes over the busy main street. During their walk, the students may go past a gas station, pizza restaurant, insurance building, ice cream shop, state-owned business buildings, and/or another elementary school within a few blocks. The back road to the school is also usually busy with parents dropping off students from their cars, especially during the colder weather. The fifth-grade safety patrols are routinely in place by the parking lot, at the street corners, and on the overpass to assist the younger students in their journey. During my study,

Regular Classroom

Home

Mrs. Walston
Mrs. Duncan

Parents
Guardians
Parent as Partners Program
Social Worker

Chapter 1 Classroom

Mrs. Casey
District Administrators

Other School Activities

Library
Music
Gym
Lunch
Recess
Computers
Art
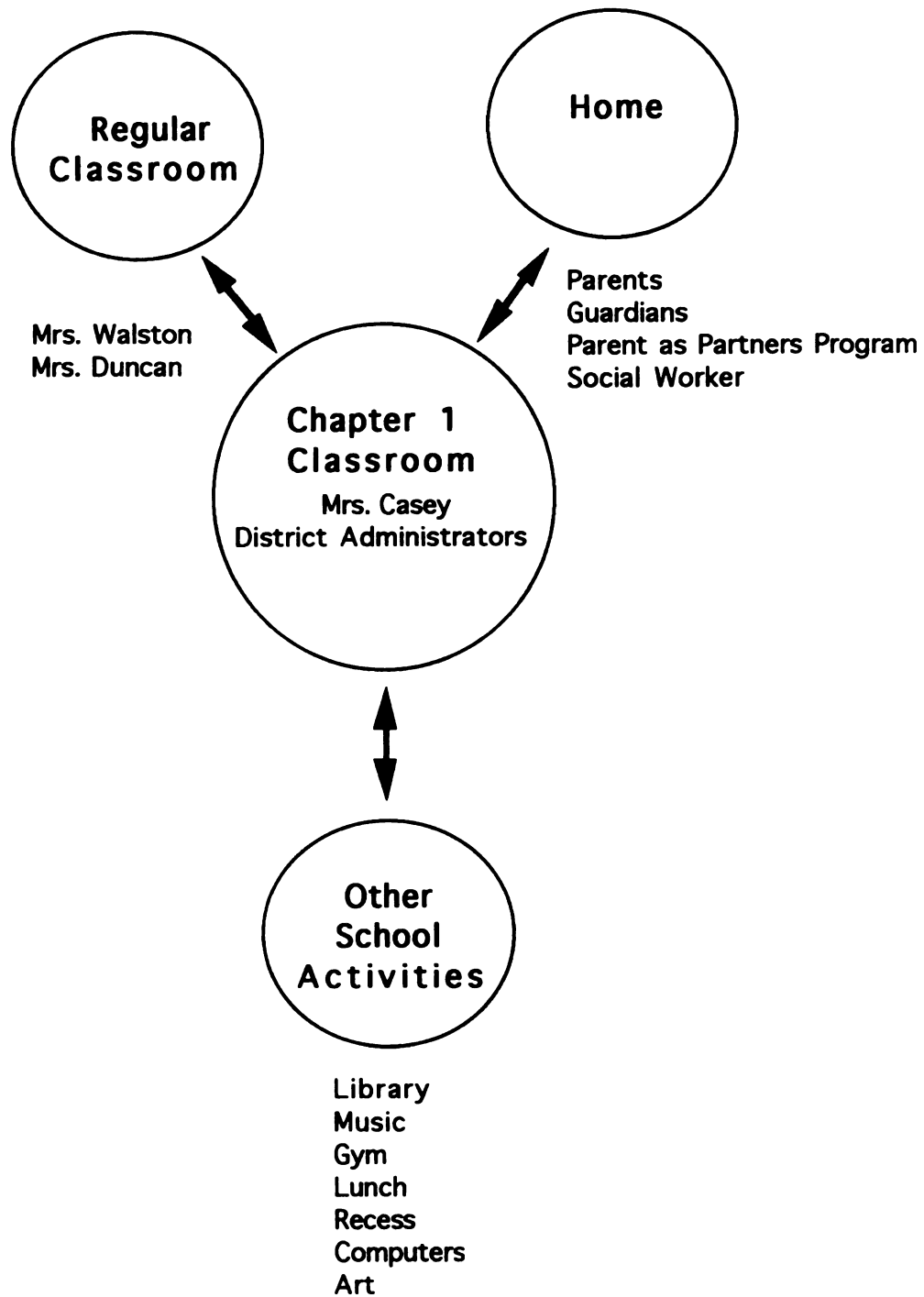
Figure 2. Oakgrove's settings and people influencing students' literacy learning.

construction workers were replacing water pipes and repaving the nearby side street.

In Spring 1994, Oakgrove had an open house to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the school opening. Politicians, parents, teachers, current students, and past students all joined together to honor their school and participate in celebration activities. Consistent with its age, the school has wooden floors, four levels, old coat racks, wooden chairs, and a strong brick structure. Within the building, modernization has occurred with the introduction of marker boards replacing chalkboards and insulated windows to keep out the cold air. The heater makes a loud clanking noise as it turns on in the colder months. A few of the rooms, including the first grade and Chapter 1 room, have attached coat closets and rest rooms, while other rooms (e.g., the second-grade room) have coat closets hidden in the room and rest rooms across the hall. A playground in the back of the school consists of two equipment areas (e.g., swings, monkey bars) and a large blacktop area regularly used for kickball.

When I walked into the school each day, I saw students eating their free breakfast in the gym area, where they also had a hot lunch at noontime. Greeting visitors at the school's front door are a variety of announcements regarding student's birthdays and upcoming events. In addition, there are two posters with vocabulary words and definitions, one each for the upper and lower grades. The vocabulary words started with the letter "a" the first week and progressed through the alphabet each week. The office is close by, containing more announcements, mailboxes for teachers, and a phone regularly is used by the teachers. The principal's office across the hall, also

generally has students and staff members walking in and out. A student-of-the-month bulletin board hangs outside of the principal's office, replaced monthly with new students from each classroom.

The building has several layers of floors, often requiring going up or down a half stairway to get to another level. The basement contains the teacher's lounge, the computer room, and maintenance rooms sometimes used for musical activities such as band practice. The main floor includes the gym, school offices, kindergarten, and media center/library. The younger students are on the second floor and the oldest students and Chapter 1 room on the top floor. Students are regularly seen pushing the swinging doors and playing games with the handrails as they move throughout the building.

The school provides breakfast and lunch to low-income students, with 69% of the students qualifying for free and 6% for reduced priced meals. The school reflects the ethnic diversity of the larger district, including students of Caucasian (63.1%), African-American (18.5%), Hispanic (14.2%), and Native American (2.7%) backgrounds. The principal of the school was in her first year as a principal after teaching for 20 years as a kindergarten teacher.

There is a parent-teacher organization, whose president is a working father of two children in the school. The organization runs several activities for the school, including a gift program around Christmas. This organization also volunteered to help during the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) book selection and hosted a book fair in October. The social worker invites the parents of Chapter 1 students to participate in the Parents As Partners reading program

(Edwards, 1993), in which the students bring home a new book every Wednesday to read with their parents.

Placement of Chapter 1 Students at Oakgrove

Although in an earlier year, Oakgrove had tried inclusive education for Chapter 1 students, Mrs. Casey reported in a September interview that the teachers, parents, administrators, and students had not found this to be as beneficial to the students as they had hoped. Inclusion had been suggested by a new principal and, at the time, Mrs. Casey supported the idea. However, she quickly discovered that while working with all students in each room resulted in some positive literacy experiences, students struggling the most in their literacy development were missing instruction directed at their needs. Thus, the teachers and principal met and discussed these issues, which led to a return beginning in the 1993-94 academic year to a pullout program.

One concern about pull-out programs has been the inconsistency across classrooms, the instructional time lost by the students while switching rooms, and the traditional nature of the literacy instruction (see Cunningham & Allington, 1994). In Oakgrove, the latter two problems were not an issue, with Mrs. Casey ensuring that the students knew routines and rules for making quick transitions from one room to another, as well as using holistic instruction within the Chapter 1 setting. Since the students attended two classrooms, there was potential for supportive or disruptive communication across the settings.

Each September, the teachers in Oakgrove and the district administrators had to make decisions about which students were eligible for and should attend Chapter 1 instruction. This decision changed the type of instruction for

the students, led to the placement of official remedial instruction records in their permanent school folders, and meant that they were pulled from their regular classroom to attend instruction in another room in the building. Administrators and teachers based their selection of students upon standardized test scores, kindergarten objectives, regular classroom placement, and open spaces in the Chapter 1 room. The eight students described in this study were working with only a few other students with a low teacher/student ratio (1:4) which might lead to benefits for increasing their literacy abilities.

Selected students attend Chapter 1 reading instruction for 45 minutes per day, four days a week. In addition, on Fridays, there is a Writer's Workshop for these students in the computer room, encouraging students to write and publish their own book for display and use within the school.

The decision about placement was not in itself a definite indication that the students would automatically show growth and become conventional readers and writers. Rather, the decision about placement opened up activities, instructional help, and a smaller class size to provide an alternative environment to support these students in ways that were different from and possibly more effective than their earlier instruction.

Chapter 1 Teacher

I selected Mrs. Casey's Chapter 1 classroom for several reasons: (a) Mrs. Casey has a master's degrees in reading instruction, (b) she participates in her own inquiry about her practice and policies, (c) she received district recognition for her outstanding literacy instruction, (d) she teaches in a school that qualifies for federal Chapter 1 and at-risk program funding, (e) the students

within her school represent a wide diversity of ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds, and (f) the school staff has struggled with issues surrounding inclusion and pull-out programs. Mrs. Casey has initiated her own inquiry about her practice, using techniques she learned in her MA program coursework, and making choices about her instruction based upon her discoveries. Last year, she published a study in a state reading journal about one aspect of her practice (reference omitted for confidentiality purposes). She is in the process of writing for publication about a second study.

When I conducted my first interview with Mrs. Casey in the fall and discussed my timetable and plans, we met at her home. We also met there on a separate occasion to discuss test scores for some of her older students. It was apparent to me that Mrs. Casey spends a great deal of time working on school activities at home. She had her own desk in the carpeted basement, with a computer and numerous file drawers. Her desk was covered with her lesson plans, children's literature books that she was reading, professional journals (e.g. *The Reading Teacher*) and textbooks (e.g., Cooper's 1993 *Literacy: Helping Children Construct Meaning* text). In addition, her desk had notes and drafts of the manuscript she was in the midst of writing. Such professionalism is also apparent at her classroom desk; it contained professional texts and notices of district, state, and national conferences and programs related to literacy instruction. Mrs. Casey subscribes to several professional journals and regularly copies the table of contents for distribution to teachers in the building who may request copies of articles.

Mrs. Casey's caseload and program schedule are dependent on two groups of people. First, the classroom teachers regularly meet each year to discuss Chapter 1 resources and what they think would be appropriate instruction for students. Second, the district administrators regularly oversee the entire Chapter 1 and at-risk funding, making the recommendation as to who should be in Chapter 1 and requiring funded teachers to attend regular inservices. While Mrs. Casey has policy documents related to her Language Arts program written by the school district, she has no formal documents describing or outlining appropriate Chapter 1 instruction or curriculum.

At the beginning of the school year, I met with Mrs. Casey to discuss the potential Chapter 1 students from all of the first and second graders. She had a preliminary list and started Chapter 1 instruction with these students. This list was based upon student's test scores from the previous year, kindergarten objectives, and teacher recommendations. However, she was required to wait until early October for an official list of students from the district. The district determined who was on the list by students' test scores. If the classroom teachers felt a certain student should be participating in Chapter 1 instruction, they wrote a letter to the district summarizing their reasons and suggesting that the student be added to the list. During this time period, I observed the preliminary students in order to gain insights into their early instruction. In addition, I talked with the regular classroom teachers to determine their willingness to participate in the study.

The overall Chapter 1 program included three people: Mrs. Casey, an instructional aide for the older students, and an instructional aide for the

younger students. Mrs. Casey's instruction was strictly in the literacy area. The instructional aides met with Chapter 1 students qualifying for math services and students who were not a regular part of Mrs. Casey's schedule to help them with their classroom reading assignments. Mrs. Casey's schedule included six groups of students (i.e. third, second, and first graders in the morning; two fifth grades and the other first grade in the afternoon), each meeting with her for a 45- minute period four days per week. The groups were primarily comprised of students from within one classroom, although some individual students went to groups from other classrooms if the scheduling worked best in that manner. From these six groups of students, I selected one first and one second grade for the following reasons: (a) they received Chapter 1 instruction from Mrs. Casey as opposed to one of the aides; (b) they were from the early elementary grades, consistent with my question about emergent to conventional literacy; (c) their regular classroom teachers were willing to participate; and (d) the students and parents agreed to participate.

Mrs. Casey's classroom is designed to accommodate the needs of several grade levels of students. Her classroom has several instructional locations and a large storage area (see Figure 3). Mrs. Casey planned her room to include a main area for instruction, but also to include several separate areas for certain purposes (e.g., listening to tapes, computer reading activities, partner reading, cut-up sentences). The storage area is a time capsule in many ways, with numerous shelves of old basal readers and instructional activities, left behind as teachers adopted new practices or basals. There are also sets of literature books, many purchased with Chapter 1 funds, although Mrs. Casey

Side of school
by parking lot

Closet

Table

Storage

Storage

Storage

Storage

Windows

Computers

Software Mrs. Casey's desk Books

Tape recorder table

Windows

Front
of
school
by
main
road

Cut-up sentence and partner reading table

Book and poem table

Reading

Sink and drinking fountain

Movable pocket chart

Stairway
to
first
floor

Bookshelves

Main table

Holidays

Door

Door

Marker board

Word wall

Bookshelves

Main
hallway

Filing cabinet

Storage space

Door

Restroom

Classroom

Figure 3. Mrs. Casey's Chapter 1 room.

stated that she also used her own money to buy supplemental instructional materials and books. These areas are explained in more detail in later sections and chapters within the context of their instructional uses. They are also discussed as they reflect the instructional tensions and differences among the teachers in terms of the type of instruction and materials they each use within their own rooms.

Chapter 1 classroom routines. Mrs. Casey purposely kept a fairly regular routine of activities for two reasons. She felt consistency was important for her students. Further, it helped her make the best use of time when her students knew the instructional routines. Table 3 displays the regular literacy activities in which the student participated on a typical day. Chapter 1 instruction for the first-graders started at 9:35, with Mrs. Casey quietly appearing at their classroom door. The kids or Mrs. Duncan whispered to each other about Mrs. Casey's presence and then the students left their room quietly to avoid disturbing the other students. Once upstairs, the students moved directly to the pocket chart, where they routinely practiced vocabulary words currently being used in connection with their regular classroom activities. Mrs. Casey placed these vocabulary words on a word wall located in the corner of the room and the students regularly referred to the board for writing and reading purposes. Next, the groups read through the selected poem for the week, reading it each day and progressively moving from whole group to individual reading. Mrs. Casey used instructional activities with the poems to encourage students to learn the words, think about comprehension issues, and connections across activities.

Table 3

Chapter 1 Classroom Literacy Activities

Daily Activities
*Reading poetry together
*Reading familiar books
*Re-reading familiar materials
*Writing (e.g., special word books)
*Word pattern/rhyming games
*Strategy Instruction (e.g., comprehension)
*Vocabulary words from classroom
*Integrating emerging literacy uses (e.g.,
    cereal boxes, print awareness)

Occasional Activities
*Reading new books (Monday)
*Partner reading (Tuesday/Thursday)
*Independent activities (e.g., computers,
    games-- Tuesday/Thursday)
*Cut-up sentences (Tuesday/Thursday)
*Writing workshop (Friday)

Next, the students moved to the main table, spending a few minutes working on word patterns, rhyming, letters' names and sounds, and other activities to support phonemic awareness. Then, they started to read a book selected by Mrs. Casey. Early in the year, they were often pattern books and word books with familiar words. Throughout the fall, the books increased in difficulty. Usually one book was used for an entire week, purposefully designed to ensure repeated reading of books and increased recognition of sight words (see Appendix A for a complete list of books).

Students wrote daily in their special word books, choosing one of their vocabulary words to write in a sentence and illustrate. The instructional period often ended with students in independent or partner activities, such as re-reading earlier books, putting words into sentences, putting letters in alphabetical order, and listening to books on tape. On certain days, there was more time for the independent activities, particularly when Mrs. Casey wanted students to read books onto tapes. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Mrs. Casey worked with the first graders on cut-up sentences, an activity in which she talked individually with each student about their special word book sentence, helping them to edit and giving them cards with the words in the sentence to take home and practice reading.

This overall structure was the general pattern, although some days varied slightly. One day after they ran out of time, Mrs. Casey started with the special word books, causing Daniel to call it "a backward day," a term subsequently used on days in which they did not follow the regular routines.

The second-grade group followed similar routines, only they engaged in more advanced literacy activities and did not complete cut-up sentences.

As a part of her decision-making about the curriculum, Mrs. Casey went to bookstores and the district reading center, deciding which books to use with the students. This was apparent by the bags of books she occasionally brought into the classroom and left on the back table. She selected books that appeared to be interesting and at an appropriate reading level for the students to learn some new words but also to become successful at reading each book.

In addition to the use of literature in her classroom, Mrs. Casey made the decision to include numerous activities promoted by literacy researchers. For the first-grade group, this included activities such as environmental print (e.g., cereal boxes), oral language connections (e.g., reading aloud, rhyming), focusing on book-handling knowledge (e.g., modeling left to right, top to bottom), and print awareness (e.g., word-to-word matching).

Regular Education Classrooms

Mrs. Duncan's first/second-grade classroom was on the second floor, with a back door leading directly to the playground. In her neat and organized classroom, there were centers for activities such as computers, games, puzzles, books, and listening to books on tape. The desks were in rows, with the first graders on one side and the second graders on the other. Art work filled the back bulletin boards, changing with each holiday. Mrs. Duncan's instruction included a combination of traditional reading instruction (e.g., use of the basal, daily worksheets, boardwork, weekly spelling tests) and activities such as

journal writing, invented spelling, and students working together at appropriate times.

Mrs. Walston's second-grade room was full of art projects and social studies/science bulletin boards and information. The students were constantly in the middle of projects, with the side shelves full of their work and the clothesline draped across the room generally having their work hanging from it. Mrs. Walston also used fairly traditional reading instruction (e.g., basal reading, daily worksheets, boardwork, spelling tests). However, she also integrated her content area instruction in thematic units with many activities such as fieldtrips, meals, art projects, and reading texts that fit together.

The Students

Eight students were selected for participation in the study based upon their qualification for Chapter 1 reading instruction. The students included a first-grade group and a second-grade group (see Table 4).[4] For each group, the participants were the only students in Mrs. Casey's room at that time. I did not select certain students within a group to follow; instead I included all four students in each group. Mrs. Casey and the administrators selected the Chapter 1 students in late September and early October when the classroom populations stabilized, the district administrators sent their recommendations,

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1 For purposes of convenience and clarity in writing, I am separating these two classroom as the first-grade group and the second-grade group. However, the first-grade group is actually from a first/ second split classroom. Mario is the only second grader from this classroom to attend the Chapter 1 group. All of the instruction with this group is intended for early readers.

Table 4

Mrs. Casey's Chapter 1 Students

Teacher	Student	Age in Sept.	Grade	Gender	Background
Duncan	Mario	7.0	Second	Male	Hispanic
	Daniel	6.9	First	Male	Caucasian
	Molly	6.4	First	Female	Caucasian
	Jared	7.6	First	Male	Caucasian
Walston	Tanisha	7.10	Second	Female	African-American
	Breanne	7.10	Second	Female	Caucasian
	Paul	6.10	Second	Male	Caucasian
	Trevor	7.3	Second	Male	Caucasian

and the teachers scheduled regular times for Chapter 1 instruction.[5] To display

a sense of the diversity and similarities among the Chapter 1 students, I

describe each in turn in this section.

First-Grade Group

Mario. Mario, from a Hispanic background, is a second grader in Mrs.

Duncan's first/second-grade split. From an Hispanic background, Mario's

parents went through the district schools of choice program to request

specifically that Mario be placed in Oakgrove. Mario's father had attended the

school when he was in elementary school. During conferences, Mario's father

told Mrs. Casey that his son had transferred from another building in the district

and a classroom in which 9 students were retained for another year of first

grade, possibly the result of a series of long-term substitutes. While Mario was

not recommended for retention in first grade, he was noticeably behind his

peers upon entering second grade in Oakgrove. In early October, Mario was

one of 8 students who transferred from the large 30-member second-grade

classroom to Mrs. Duncan's first-grade room which previously had only 15

students. The teachers selected Mario to be moved from a second-grade

classroom to the first/second split, thinking that it would be beneficial for him to

participate in and be exposed to some of the first-grade activities again. At the

same time, he was recommended for the Chapter 1 instruction.

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[5]At the beginning of the school year, there were 30 students in both
second-grade classrooms and only 15 in each first-grade. After the fourth
Friday state funding count when the school confirmed attendance records,
seven of the second graders were moved to the Mrs. Duncan's class and a new
student was placed in her room a few weeks later.

Mario is a creative seven year-old-boy, with big brown eyes and dark hair that he usually pushes out of his eyes. He routinely uses his paper, scissors and glue during extra time in his classroom to create hats, games, and art work, often to take to his grandmother's home after school and give to his three-year-old sister. Mario has an extended family including an aunt and uncle in his home and his grandparents only a few blocks away. According to Mario, his father is a construction worker and his mother works at night in a bar. In early October, Mario started taking Ritalin, a drug the doctor thought would help him to focus during schooltime. Both Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Casey noticed improvement in Mario's engagement in school activities and a decreasing need to enforce disciplinary procedures. Mario seemed to be respected by his peers, often leading the football games on the playground and being the leader in changing the game or the rules.

Daniel. Daniel is a six-year-old Caucasian, with blond hair, and a great fan of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. Daniel has an older sister in the school, who received honors because of her report card grades. Daniel's mother, who works during the day in a restaurant, is involved in the parent-teacher organization and helped during the Christmas program. His father, a car mechanic, also regularly attended school events, including the open house, conference, and special programs. His mother was quite concerned about his education, calling his teacher when she received the letter about Chapter 1 instruction, and then calling Mrs. Casey to talk about Daniel's instruction in the program, including an interest in what he might be missing from his regular room.

Daniel has a wonderful sense of humor, often causing those around him to laugh. He enjoys making sense of language, often attempting to say big vocabulary words, though not always pronouncing them correctly nor even sure of their meaning. Daniel tended to volunteer for classroom activities. He seemed eager to learn new words, many times forgetting the rules of the classroom as he jumped out of his seat to point out connections across words or show how he remembered something from a previous day.

Molly. Molly, a Caucasian, has freckles covering her cheeks and nose, with stringy brown hair that almost reaches her waist and long bangs that cover her eyes. Along with Daniel, she is a member of her classroom Power Rangers Club. Molly appears to be the leader of this group, in that she seems to keep the group together at recess. Within the classroom, the Power Rangers Club turns into "the marker club" with Molly making sure that all members share their markers. Her status in this group allows her to decide who may and may not play with those in the group and who is able to use Daniel's markers within the classroom. Molly has an older sister, a student whom Mrs. Casey previously taught. Molly walks home from school with her older sister, where her mother stays at home with Molly's three-year-old sister. Her father fixes houses, including painting and woodwork. Mrs. Casey was familiar with Molly's family since Molly's sister had attended Chapter 1 instruction in previous years. Molly's family moved in late April out of the school district.

Jared. Jared, a Caucasian, has an older sister and a younger brother attending Oakgrove, and another sister in middle school. Mrs. Duncan was particularly concerned about Jared at the beginning of the year. She

considered having him tested for special education services almost immediately. Her concerns stemmed from his difficulty with holding and writing with pencils, constant word and letter reversals, and his quick frustration at seemingly easy tasks. However, both she and Mrs. Casey recommended that Jared have a complete eye examination and his new glasses prescription proved to be important and helpful in assuring Jared more successful experiences with print. Both of Jared's parents worked in the same grocery store, with his dad working at night and his mother in the morning.

Jared's red hair and big smile greeted me in the morning as he always politely said hello and called me by name. In contrast to Daniel and Molly's apparent acceptance within a social group in the classroom, Jared appeared to be an outsider to the group, rarely playing along with the others and never able to share the markers that the others were using. He often played alone at recess or on the playground equipment. However, for the most part, this social isolation did not appear to bother Jared, as he continued to play happily and grow confident in his increasing literacy skills.

Second-Grade Group

Tanisha. Tanisha, an African-American, was with the group only until late-October. She also attended Mrs. Casey's Chapter 1 room in first grade. During early October, Mrs. Casey, Mrs. Walston, and Tanisha's mother decided to recommend special education testing for Tanisha. She qualified for special education services in mid-October and started attending the special education resource room instead of Chapter 1 for a part of each day. However, within a

week, her mother moved and placed Tanisha in a different school within the district.

Breanne. Breanne lived next door to Tanisha, in the same apartment building. Both girls spent most of their classroom time either talking together or fighting about something. After Tanisha moved, Breanne became much more focused on her schoolwork. Breanne's mother and baby sister often pick her up from school to take her home. Her father works as a cook in a local restaurant. Breanne, a Caucasian with dark hair, is quite conscious of her clothing, trying to look nice and dressing carefully. She was quite amusing to watch when observing videotapes of herself, commenting initially on the clothes that she wore each day and knew in some cases the exact date based upon the dress she was wearing.

Paul. Paul is the youngest of five children, with most of his siblings qualifying for special education services, and one third grade sister attending Mrs. Casey's room. Paul also attended Mrs. Casey's room in first grade. Paul experienced severe asthma problems in September while on a field trip with his class, ending up of spending time in the hospital and a three-week period in October at home with a visiting tutor. Paul's family qualifies for public assistance. His mother walks with the aid of a crutch as a result of a car accident. The teachers held their conference with her on the first floor, rather than expecting her to walk upstairs.

In September, Mrs. Casey reported that his father went back to school during welfare reform changes, requiring the applicants to either be working or in a program to gain job skills. Later in the year, Paul mentioned that his father

worked at a local convenience store at night. Paul's aunt lives nearby and often helps his mother to read the newsletters and school information that come home. Paul usually avoids completing his schoolwork. He is often told by Mrs. Walston that he will be staying after school if he does not finish his work or can be seen completing his work in the hallway while the class has moved on to other activities. He has a friendly manner and wants to talk with adults in the building about his interests.

Trevor. With blondish-brown hair and many freckles, Trevor is usually quiet, although he smiles and participates when asked questions. A Caucasian, he lives with his brother, mother, and her boyfriend. Trevor's brother also attended Mrs. Casey's classroom during the afternoon. His mother works at a pet supply store, so that on some days Trevor walks to his grandparents' house rather than home. Trevor was quite methodical about his work and activities. Once he started to engage in an activity, he rarely strayed from his task, preferring to keep going until it was done or until he needed some help from someone else. In the Chapter 1 room, Trevor took quite a bit of time to think about his answers, both in oral and written form, letting others wait as he decided how to answer something.

Data Collection

The questions associated with this study required data collection that covered a broad area of the school settings, while focusing specifically on certain students. This breadth and depth provided important information about the learning community of the students. In this section, I focus on the data sources that were collected and my process of data analysis.

Data Sources

Data collection included the following sources: (a) *observations* of classroom activities between teachers and students, where I took written fieldnotes, (b) *videotapes* and/or *audiotapes* of classroom events, with portions of the tapes transcribed at a later date, (c) audiotaped *discussions* and/or *interviews* with parents, students, Chapter 1 teacher, classroom teachers, and other school staff (e.g., librarian, computer room aide), (d) *audiotapes* and/or *videotapes* of parent/teacher conferences, and (e) copies of students' *written work*. I gathered these sources by using a variety of techniques for comparison as outlined in the following table (see Table 5). Specific data collection involved numerous observations of classroom activities. Table 6 displays the specific data that I collected. I brought my various pieces of equipment gradually, starting with writing fieldnotes on paper to eventually bringing in a computer and initially using only tape recorders to later bringing a videocamera. I waited until I felt the students and teachers understood what I was doing with the equipment so as not to disrupt the instruction. In the following section, I describe each of the data sources in detail.

Fieldnotes

I took my portable computer to the Chapter 1 room, using it at my desk in the room during all the observation periods and then I expanded upon the notes after leaving the observation location. In the other school settings, I used written notes, typing these into the computer and expanding on them at that point. I generally sat in the same places each day, with the students quickly becoming used to my presence and expecting me to be in my work area.

Table 5

Data Collection Techniques

Events	Techniques	Purpose
Classroom observations	Fieldnotes Audiotapes Videotapes	To record and document events and discussions within the classroom activities. The notes include a written record of participants, activities, discussions, and materials. These are supplemented by separate interpretation and inquiry comments.
Formal interviews	Fieldnotes Audiotapes Videotapes	To ask similar questions and initiate topical conversation with all participants.
Informal discussions	Fieldnotes Audiotapes Videotapes	To ask and record participants' viewpoints either immediately or within a short timespan in regard to activities and events.
Written work	Copies	To document students' work including journals, stories, worksheets, spelling, etc.
Assessment measures	Fieldnotes Audiotapes Copies	To record ongoing assessment of students including report cards, inventories, reading tests, and informal note-taking.
Written communication	Fieldnotes Copies	To document communication among participants.
Parent/teacher conferences	Fieldnotes Audiotapes	To access parents' and teachers' views, concerns, and thoughts in relation to students' progress.

Table 6

Data Collection Locations and Amount

Events	Location/People	Amount/Frequency of data collection First	Second
Classroom observations (In 45 minute blocks of observation time)	Chapter 1 room	40	30
	Regular first grade	26	
	Regular second grade		17
	Library	3	3
	Computer room	2	2
	Gym	1	1
	Music	2	2
	Recess	8	8
	Art	3	4
	Special events (e.g. RIF)	4	3
Formal interviews	Chapter 1 teacher	3	
	First-grade teacher	1	
	Second-grade teacher		1
	Chapter 1 students	4 each	4 each
	Regular education students	1 (7 kids)	1 (7 kids)
Informal discussions	Chapter 1 teacher	D	
	First-grade teacher	A	
	Second-grade teacher	I	
	Chapter 1 students	L	
	Regular education students	Y	
Written work	Chapter 1 room	Daily	
	Regular second grade	During focus periods	
	Regular first grade	During focus periods	
Assessment measures	Chapter 1 room	Three time periods/ Sept., Nov., and Jan.	
Written communication (Total memos)	Among parents and teacher	11	11
	Among teachers	10	0
Parent/teacher conferences (Total conferences)	With Chapter 1 teacher	2	
	With second-grade teacher		1
	With second-grade and Chapter 1 teachers		2

Using notes, I recorded the progression of events within all of the observation settings including the Chapter 1 classroom, regular education classroom, other school locations (e.g., computer room, library), and student/teacher interactions with parents. As a participant observer, I used these written notes to focus on documenting the events in the classroom, the interactions of the students with one another and the teacher or parent, and literacy lessons. In addition, I expanded the notes to include separate remarks indicating my thoughts and ideas about the events as a part of the ongoing analysis. Appendix B shows one page of my fieldnotes, written on October 13, 1994.

I made regular observations three times per week throughout the fall. In addition, there were two periods of focused observations for a weeklong period specifically to collect information about students' literacy activities. These occurred in mid-October and mid-December. I observed students during various parts of the school day, recording their use of literacy across the curriculum. These fieldnotes and related written work at all school locations were an important source for documenting cases where students may be involved in literacy events and their reactions to these events.

Work Samples/Portfolio

During the course of their day, teachers and students generated numerous pieces of writing. I collected these samples and copied them for analysis. Student work samples included Chapter 1 special story books, journals, worksheets, spelling pages, and stories. Teacher work samples included planning notes, lesson plan book, teacher reflections, parent newsletters, and written communication among teachers. Occasionally, the

writing/work samples were used as the basis for discussion with the writer. These items provided potential evidence of student growth in literacy and the purposes for which events may occur. For teachers, the written work provided potential evidence of their lesson plans and purposes for the literacy activities.

Throughout the period of October to December, Mrs. Casey and I asked the students to maintain a portfolio containing their writing texts generated at home. Students were to include in their folder all activities they completed outside of school related to literacy (e.g., at home, with friends, at day care, at Sunday school). This packet contained a reading list to record book titles they read at home. The first graders also had a sheet to list when and with whom they practiced their cut-up sentences at home. A third list served as a tool and a reminder about possible types of writing in which the student may engage (e.g., grocery lists, letters, stories).

Assessment Measures

Mrs. Casey used formal and informal assessments to evaluate students' progress. She created her own report card to describe students' progress to parents. Since her assessment system was comprehensive, no additional assessments were given as a part of this study.

Formal assessments. Mrs. Casey selected the formal assessments to provide her with a means of assessing certain areas of literacy. She used Clay's (1979) emergent literacy Concepts about Pring test with the first graders to gain information about students' awareness of text, book-handling knowledge, and print awareness. She also conducted tests to determines the letter names, letter sounds, and sight words familiar to the first graders. With

the second graders, she used the Slosson Oral Reading Test to determine their growing sight word vocabulary. With both groups of students, she selected a reading inventory to gain access to their views of reading and writing.

Ongoing assessment. Ongoing assessment took many forms including: (a) notetaking, (b) tape recording, and (c) portfolios. Mrs. Casey had a clipboard of notecards, one for each student. On the notecards, she dated and recorded comments related to students' progress. Once per week, she had the students read a book into a tape recorder, which she listened to and documented problem areas and successes of the students. Mrs. Casey kept two separate portfolios for the students, one with her notes and comments and the other containing their writing and a list of books they read. All of these samples were copied and used for analysis.

Interviews

Throughout the data collection period, I conducted interviews and discussions with the teachers, parents, students, and other school staff. Some of these discussions were informal, while others were more formal interviews. The discussions were related to recent events that occurred in the classroom to document the multiple views of the literacy events. The interviews focused on specific overall questions of all students. These discussions and interviews were audiotaped and/or videotaped with the permission of the participants and documented with written fieldnotes.

Student interviews. At four points during the school year (i.e., early October, mid-December, late December, and April), I interviewed each Chapter 1 student. In the first interview, I asked the students about their reading and

writing interests and practices at school and at home. In the second interview, I asked the students to describe the use of their take-home folder, questioned them specifically about school reading/writing activities, discussed the importance and interest related to items in their desks (e.g., reading books, worksheets, library books, writing, personal notes), and the their perceived purpose of educators in the school (e.g. librarian, Mrs. Casey). Thus, I asked students questions related to my research interests, such as definitions of reading and writing, engagement with literacy activities, and reading/writing completed within and outside of school. I designed certain questions ahead of the interviews (see Appendix C) for all of the students, while there were also follow-up questions based upon student answers to the original questions.

During the third interview, I had each of the Chapter 1 groups all together (i.e. one group from Mrs. Duncan's room and one group from Mrs. Walston's room). We viewed videotapes from their Chapter 1 instruction, with questions centering on their ideas as to the purpose of the literacy activities, their perceptions of such activities, and their motivation to complete and participate in the literacy events. This group interview contributed insights into their collective views of their literacy events and to examine the impact of sharing their ideas about the literacy instruction with one another.

During the fourth interview, I asked the students questions pertaining to their views of reading and writing, their interactions in their classrooms, and about their families and spring break. I also used this interview to ask students questions I had missed in earlier interviews or questions about their earlier answers that needed to be clarified.

Given the nature of the Chapter 1 setting, with only three or four students in the classroom at a time, the setting was conducive to less formal discussions on a regular basis. I occasionally worked directly with students to discuss their work and help them progress in their assignments, providing me with additional information about their views of the activities with which they were engaged and in-depth assessment of their learning needs.

In addition to the Chapter 1 students, I interviewed several other members of their classroom. These interviews had two purposes: (a) to understand other students' perceptions of the reading activities in their classroom and their views about who helps with reading instruction within the school and (b) to avoid separating out the Chapter 1 students from the others so that many students met with me, rather than only a designated few.

Teacher interviews and discussions. I conducted one formal initial interview with each teacher that included a focus on their classroom activities and the Chapter 1 students. Informal follow-up discussions occurred frequently (i.e., often daily when observations occurred) to tie together the events in the classrooms with the underlying reasons that the teachers were using for structuring the literacy activities in their classrooms. These ongoing classroom events discussions often occurred during lunch or between classes. Toward the end of the study, another formal interview occurred with the Chapter 1 teacher and the regular classroom teachers to provide information about their views of Chapter 1 instruction and reasons for the literacy events they use in their classrooms to improve students' literacy abilities.

Parent/teacher conferences. The purpose of audiotaping the

parent-teacher conferences was to obtain information about parental views of

the literacy learning of their children, and their views and understanding of the

literacy events in which their children engaged in the school setting. In

addition, the conferences allowed for documentation about the types of

discourse among teacher and parents. The taping of the parent/teacher

conferences occurred only if permission was granted by the parents and

teachers involved. Given the nature of conferences, most of these occurred

within one evening. I was not able to attend all of the conferences, as several

took place at the same time. The first-grade teacher held separate conferences

from the Chapter 1 teacher, resulting in the parents having much more time (i.e.

about 30 minutes) to talk with Mrs. Casey about their child's progress in reading

and writing. The second-grade teacher chose to have Mrs. Casey attend the

conference with her; thus both teachers were present at the same conference.

Audiotapes and Videotapes

The use of audiotapes and videotapes to record classroom events and

discussions were a crucial technique for data collection. Given the importance

of the dialogue for sociolinguistic analysis, the tapes were catalogued and

selected tapes transcribed for further analysis. I used a consistent pattern of

symbols for all of the transcripts.[6] Events that were taped included

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[6]Explanation of Transcript Symbols
///	= pause in speaker's turn, with each / indicating a second
[]	= indicates overlapping talk
,	= a slight pause in discussion
()	= author's comments or interpretations
inaudible	= words or phrases not deciphered
italics	=word or phrase stressed by student

observations, discussions, conferences, and routines among the students, teachers, and parents. I transcribed audiotapes to obtain information about the language used by students and teachers to discuss their literacy activities. For example, the analyses focused on the discussions among teachers and students, between teachers and parents, and among parents.

I used the tapes to accurately capture these discussions so that they might be closely examined for the tone, topics, and language used during the discussions. Some of these tapes, particularly the interviews and parent/teacher conferences, were professionally transcribed. I carefully edited all transcripts to ensure that the participants and their words were accurate, overlapping talk identified and segmented, and used videotapes and fieldnotes to clarify nonverbal communication or confusing lines. The videotapes provided a record of the student and teacher interactions, motions, and physical actions. In particular, the videotaping was used during the interviews to record and reference the written work associated with the discussions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis draws on qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983), specifically using naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985), a case study method (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1988) and sociolinguistic analyses (Cazden, 1986; Florio-Ruane, 1987). Given the theoretical framework for the study and the emphases of the questions, analysis of the language use among the participants was a crucial piece of information. Analysis was ongoing during the data collection and continued more formally after I collected all the data. This type of analysis provides a means to

understand better the underlying questions for this study, by focusing on the content of the discourse, views of the numerous participants, and evidence of literacy learning. The analysis at times occurred at a macrolevel, in that I was looking for main categories or themes and coded the data to lead to main and subcategories. However, given my interest in the discourse processes associated with student learning and consistent with a sociolinguistic approach, the analysis also occurred at a microlevel, in which I was particularly interested in the turn-taking, roles assumed by the participants, and use of language within and across instructional settings.

Analysis of the data occurred through several phases: (a) initial preparation for cataloguing and referencing data; (b) ongoing data analysis during data collection; (c) looking for emerging patterns and defining categories and subcategories; (d) segmenting and marking transcripts; (e) confirming or disconfirming these patterns, based on use of triangulation including comparison across data sources to access various angles on the same topics; and (f) respondent validation. I worked in both an inductive and a deductive manner, trying to go back and forth between the theories and literacy ideas that led to this study and the emerging patterns that developed. In the following sections, I describe each of these areas.

Prior to and during initial data collection, I prepared for data analysis by carefully cataloging my data in terms of date, setting, activities, key words, and participants. I designed audio, video, and fieldnote logs to take notes on pertinent events and discussions so as to find and access particular activities easily at a later date. Ongoing analysis was an essential component of the

study. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Merriam (1988) indicate that ongoing analysis helps the researcher in various ways, such as narrowing the study, making decisions about further data collection, and conducting follow-up interviews with the participants about observations. For example, in my study, the ongoing analysis was critical for writing later interview questions, deciding on necessary additional observations, and conducting conferences with the teacher about previous observation periods. In my fieldnotes, ongoing analysis included writing separate interpretative comments in addition to documenting observational accounts. Analytic memos were written to describe events and my interpretations, attempting to pull together pieces of information across the data sources to identify developing patterns.

To determine emerging patterns and develop categories, I went through several procedures. First, I reviewed my study proposal and ongoing writing regularly, to keep in mind the focus of my study and to relate my findings to my initial reasons for conducting the study (Spradley, 1980). Second, I read through the data both chronologically and within sources, in essence "holding a conversation with the data." The chronological viewing involved assembling the tapes, transcripts, and written documents for each day to revisit the events and activities and take notes about aspects of the data that related to my questions. The within-sources viewing required reading or listening to a particular source of data inclusively (e.g., reading through all the fieldnotes, viewing students' written work exclusively to look for changes). The purpose of both viewings was to identify patterns, mark areas of data for further transcription, take notes about observations, and become deeply familiar with

all of the data. At the same time, I attempted to make the familiar data "strange" by looking at it from many viewpoints and avoiding initial assumptions about the content (Garfinkel, 1967).

Another form of analysis involved triangulation of data. Initially, I kept the data together and sorted through it both chronologically and by topic. Use of these sources and the notes I wrote about them were essential for triangulation. During this process, I identified units of information (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for use in confirming and disconfirming developing categories. I used a constant comparison approach as described by Glaser & Strauss (1967), in which the basic rule is "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (p. 106). In this regard, data sources were compared to one another, rather than focusing on only one source of information. For example, a classroom trip to the library could include data sources such as written fieldnotes, audiotaped discussions with the students, teacher, and librarian about the time period. All of these pieces of information led to more valid descriptions and units for categorization, rather than simply relying on one of the pieces.

The units of categorizations that I developed are further described in chapters 4 and 5. However, to provide a visual example of the categorization levels, Figure 4 depicts a domain analysis (Spradley, 1980) of the main categories and subcategories that relate to the four main transformation themes

Major Analytic Category	Themes	Characteristics
	Decision-making	Instructional preferences and decisions
		Curriculum decisions
		Scaffolding
		Modeling
Themes of transformation	Opportunity	Individualized instructional opportunities
		Spontaneous opportunities
	Choice	Choice of participation
		Choice of strategy
	Engagement	Planned engagement activities
		Student engagement and interest

Figure 4. Domain analysis of transformation themes in Chapter 1 room.

surrounding emergent and conventional literacy. The analysis led to developing patterns, to creating overall themes, and then characteristics that further explained the themes. The overall themes related to the major categories of analysis, while the characteristics reflected examples of those categories. In chapter 4, I describe each of these themes, characteristics, and give examples from the data to support the overall framework.

Given this overview of the participants, data sources, and data analysis, the following chapters focus on the analysis. In chapter four, I focus my analysis on students' literacy transformations. I provide an overview of their initial uses of literacy in September and their more conventional uses in January. Then, I describe how the Chapter 1 program supported their learning of more conventional literacy uses in terms of four themes (e.g., decision-making, opportunity, choice, and engagement). Chapter 5 extends this analysis to examine the themes of how their regular classrooms support students' literacy transformations and their own beliefs about their literacy learning. Chapter 6 further extends the analysis to cover issues associated with home and school communication.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING EMERGENT AND CONVENTIONAL LITERACY
IN A CHAPTER 1 SETTING

In this chapter, I focus on emergent and conventional literacy

transformations for both the first-grade group and the second-grade group

within Mrs. Casey's Chapter 1 setting. First, I explore students' use of six

literacy characteristics (i.e., book-handling knowledge, print awareness, views

of reading/writing, phonemic awareness, strategic literacy, and response to

literature) in terms of their emerging and conventional awareness of reading

and writing in September and January. Next, I examine their transformations

toward more conventional literacy in terms of four patterns of support for these

transformations (i.e. instructional decision-making, opportunity, choice, and

engagement).

Emerging Awareness of Reading and Writing

Given previous definitions of emergent literacy explored in chapter 2,

some might assume that most students had acquired conventional means of

using several emergent literacy concepts by first and second grade. To explore

such assumptions, the first part of my analyses involved the assessment

measures and observations collected in September to examine the students'

use of emergent and more conventional literacy. Mrs. Casey assessed the

students in early September for three purposes: to determine if she agreed with

the placement, to understand better the students' needs, and to decide on

beneficial instructional activities for the students. She administered the

assessment measures individually with each student for evaluative purposes and conducted group activities for informational and instructional purposes.

From my analyses of these assessment measures and my own initial observations of the students during September instruction, I developed six categories that best described the areas where the students seemed to need instructional support for emergent literacy characteristics: (a) book-handling knowledge, (b) print awareness, (c) views of literacy, (d) phonemic awareness, (e) strategic literacy, and (f) response to literature. Each of these major characteristics for consideration included subcategories that helped to define the larger categories, explained more thoroughly below.

I based these categories on how the first and second graders used various skills or strategies in a continuum containing a broad spectrum of emergent and conventional literacy characteristics. The first three categories were more inductive in nature, in that those categories resonant well with previous aspects of emergent literacy described in chapter 2 and draws from work by other researchers (e.g., Clay, 1982; Y. Goodman, 1986; Sulzby & Teale, 1991). The last three assume a more expansive (i. e., strategic literacy, response to literature) or controversial (e.g., phonemic awareness) definition of literacy, in essence redefining emergent literacy to include additional aspects of literacy beyond the basic beginning procedures. Phonemic awareness has been controversial in terms of its inclusion or exclusion within early literacy instruction and use with emerging readers and writers (e.g., Adams, 1990; Cunningham, 1991). Strategic literacy and response to literature are growing

aspects of definitions of literacy, and have developed extensively since initial

definitions of emergent literacy (e.g., Keifer, 1995; McGee, 1992).

Due to the nature of these six characteristics, I believe that both the first-

grade group and second-grade group were important units of analysis. The

traditional first four characteristics matched well with the needs of the first

graders, with the last two being especially new concepts to these students. As

such, the first-grade group became my primary unit for data collection due to

their emergent nature for all six characteristics. The first-grade group provided

a means to appropriately examine the transformations associated with learning

emergent literacy and their subsequent use of these characteristics as they

learned more conventional literacy. However, to suggest one is a conventional

reader or writer if able to consistently use the first three or four characteristics,

seemed inconsistent with recent views of literacy. The second-grade group

showed a few areas where they were still somewhat emergent in terms of the

first four categories, and many areas where they were quite emergent in using

literacy strategies or responses to literature, showing a need for a

nontraditional definition of emergent literacy characteristics. Thus, the inclusion

of the second-grade group provided insights into an expanded definition of

emergent literacy and a reexamination of the nature of conventional literacy.

Emergent Literacy Characteristics

Though the students varied somewhat across areas, in most cases they

were behind what many educators might expect or hope for at their age and

grade level, thus possibly confirming their placement in Chapter 1 instruction.

To provide concrete examples of the students' abilities and emergent/

conventional literacy characteristics, I focus on two areas. First, I provide the students' scores on assessment measures that led to their placement in Chapter 1 and trace those scores throughout the year. Next, I summarize the literacy knowledge in each of the six characteristics for both groups in September and in January. I also provide a chart to display the students' progress within each characteristics.

Formal Assessment Scores

Table 7 displays the first-grade group students' scores on measures designed to assess their knowledge of letter names, consonant sounds, and vowel sounds. In addition, I listed their score on Marie Clay's (1979) *Concepts About Print* (i.e., using the *Sands* book) emergent literacy test, designed to assess their book-handling knowledge and print awareness.

The second graders did not have the formal tests in September that Mrs. Casey administered to the first-grade group. Rather, the tests they had taken the previous spring were the foundation for their Chapter 1 placement. The district administered the Metropolitan Achievement Test in April to all students in the school. A score below the national percentile of 30 meant that students qualified for Chapter 1 instruction (see Table 8). In November and January, Mrs. Casey administered the Slosson Oral Reading Test and a comprehension measure. However, observations, inventories, and questioning within the regular activities of the classrooms elicited quite a bit of information about the other characteristics. I explore these in detail for each literacy characteristic.

Table 7

First-Grade Group Assessment Measures

	Molly			Daniel			Jared			Mario		
	S	N	J	S	N	J	S	N	J	S	N	J
Clay's print awareness: Sands (20)	9	17	18	12	15	19	11	19	19	n/a	18	20
Known letter names (24)	14	17	20	13	20	22	20	23	24	n/a	24	24
Known consonant sounds (19)	2	14	15	4	17	19	1	19	19	n/a	19	19
Known vowel sounds (5)	0	2	2	0	3	4	0	2	4	n/a	2	3
Metropolitan Achievement Scores--*April '95* National %	Total Score=24			Total Score=24			Total Score=32			Total Score=19		

S=September; N=November; J=January

Table 8

Second-Grade Group Assessment Measures

	Breanne			Paul			Trevor		
	Nov	Jan	Mar	Nov	Jan	Mar	Nov	Jan	Mar
SORT Grade Equivalent	1.8	2.9	3.5	2.0	2.7	4.1	1.4	2.2	3.4
Metropolitan Achievement Scores--*April '94* National %	Total % Score = 15			Total % Score = 15			Total % Score = 17		
Metropolitan Achievement Scores--*April '95* National %	Total % Score = 51			Total % Score = 51			Total % Score = 34		

S=September; N=November; J=January

Book-Handling Knowledge

In *book-handling knowledge* (see Table 9) there was a large discrepancy between the first-grade and second-grade groups. In the first-grade group,[7] the students had some awareness of book-handling knowledge, though none of them appeared to be conventional in terms of consistent and intentional uses of the characteristics. All of the students had difficulty showing that text was read left to right, moving from the top of the page to the bottom, and from the bottom of one page to the top of the next. Daniel and Molly seemed to know where the front of the book was, though Jared sometimes had difficulty with this. In the second-grade group, the students had complete awareness of book-handling knowledge, appearing to use these sub-categories in a consistent and conventional manner.

By January, the first-grade group members were able to identify consistently the front of the book, read from left to right and top to bottom, and recognize that one reads from the bottom of one page to the top of the next. This finding in January for the first-grade group suggested that it was perhaps not surprising that all of the second-grade group members were already conventional in this area in the fall; that is, the quick pace at which this particular characteristic became conventional for the first-grade group, likely occurred for the second-grade group the previous year.

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[7] Mario did not join the class until mid-October, thus there is not any initial assessment information for him.

Table 9

Book-Handling Knowledge Characteristics

September

| | First Grade | | | | Second Grade | | | |
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Knows front of book				N/A				
Left to right in sentences/books				N/A				
Top to bottom of page				N/A				
Bottom of page to top of next				N/A				

November

| | First Grade | | | | Second Grade | | | |
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Knows front of book								N/A
Left to right in sentences/books								N/A
Top to bottom of page								N/A
Bottom of page to top of next								N/A

January

| | First Grade | | | | Second Grade | | | |
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Knows front of book								N/A
Left to right in sentences/books								N/A
Top to bottom of page								N/A
Bottom of page to top of next								N/A

Emergent ← – – → Conventional

Print Awareness

Of the *print-awareness* categories, for the most part, all three first graders were unable to recognize punctuation, distinguish letters from words, identify capital and lower case letters, or recognize first and last letters (see Table 10). The word-to-word matching was particularly difficult for the students. Daniel did seem to be aware that the text told the story in a book, rather than the pictures, though Molly and Jared did not seem to recognize this distinction.

As with their book-handling knowledge characteristics, the second-grade group showed appropriate use and identification of letters, words, and books to indicate that their *print awareness* was also conventional. Their only problem area was using some types of punctuation (e.g., quotation marks, exclamation marks) in texts, although they were able to identify these punctuation symbols.

By January, the first graders and second graders were able to distinguish letters from words, and first and last letters from each other in a conventional manner. A few of the students had some difficulty identifying capital and lower case letters, which was particularly noticeable as they interchanged them in their writing. The first-grade group showed tremendous growth in being able to match printed word to spoken word as they were reading text. Though all students were showing progress in their use of punctuation, they were not yet conventional either in writing or in identifying all punctuation uses within text.

Views of Literacy

All of the first graders repeatedly mentioned that they were not readers and they were not writers (see Table 11). They did seem to enjoy when others

Table 10

Print Awareness Characteristics

September

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Shows text as telling story				N/A				
Identify capital and lower case letters				N/A				
Awareness of first and last letters				N/A				
Distinguish letters from words				N/A				
Awareness of punctuation				N/A				
Word-to-word matching				N/A				

November

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Shows text as telling story								N/A
Identify capital and lower case letters								N/A
Awareness of first and last letters								N/A
Distinguish letters from words								N/A
Awareness of punctuation								N/A
Word-to-word matching								N/A

January

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Shows text as telling story								N/A
Identify capital and lower case letters								N/A
Awareness of first and last letters								N/A
Distinguish letters from words								N/A
Awareness of punctuation								N/A
Word-to-word matching								N/A

Emergent ← – – → Conventional

Table 11

Views of Literacy Characteristics

September

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Likes to read				N/A				
Likes to write				N/A				
Like to be read to				N/A				
Views self as a reader				N/A				
Views self as a writer				N/A				
Awareness of writing audience				N/A				

November

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Likes to read								N/A
Likes to write								N/A
Like to be read to								N/A
Views self as a reader								N/A
Views self as a writer								N/A
Awareness of writing audience								N/A

January

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Likes to read								N/A
Likes to write								N/A
Like to be read to								N/A
Views self as a reader								N/A
Views self as a writer								N/A
Awareness of writing audience								N/A

Emergent ← – – → Conventional

read a story to them, displaying a more conventional attitude in that respect. Daniel and Molly did appear to like to write on occasion, though they did not see themselves as writers.

In contrast to the first-grade group, the second graders felt that they were readers and writers. They all indicated that they liked to read and only Breanne said she did not like to write. They seemed to enjoy when others read a story to them. Both of the girls liked reading to other people, while the boys preferred to read to themselves only, with Trevor indicating he would also read to his mother. All four students said that their parents read at home, however all four also remarked that they themselves rarely read at home.

By January, Molly was often proclaiming that she was a reader. Similarly the others in the first-grade group had moved a long way toward viewing themselves as readers and writers and enjoying these activities. With the exception of Breanne, the second graders had not changed as much in terms of growing to appreciate reading and writing. Breanne enjoyed writing and often wrote stories to give to other people.

Phonemic Awareness

Table 7 displayed the first-grade group students' scores on measures designed to assess their knowledge of letter names, consonant sounds, and vowel sounds, measures of phonemic awareness. Table 12 depicts the students' characteristics in additional areas of phonemic awareness: knowledge of letter names, consonant, and vowel sounds; use of work attack skills; and recognition of rhyming words. The first graders had difficulty using rhyming words, or providing sounds for the letters they encountered. When

Table 12

Phonemic Awareness Characteristics

September

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Knows letter names				N/A				
Knows consonant sounds				N/A				
Knows vowel sounds				N/A				
Uses word attack skills				N/A				
Recognizes rhyming words				N/A				

November

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Knows letter names								N/A
Knows consonant sounds								N/A
Knows vowel sounds								N/A
Uses word attack skills								N/A
Recognizes rhyming words								N/A

January

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Knows letter names								N/A
Knows consonant sounds								N/A
Knows vowel sounds								N/A
Uses word attack skills								N/A
Recognizes rhyming words								N/A

Emergent ← – – → Conventional

Mrs. Casey said the name of a letter, all three students were eventually able to identify the letter, especially after looking at the letter chart in the front of the room. In many cases, they could match a letter to its name by starting with a, b, c, and continuing through the alphabet until they reached the letter they wanted to use.

The second-grade group also had difficulty with rhyming words. Although they had little trouble with letter names and consonant sounds, they did have trouble distinguishing among the vowel sounds, particularly long and short sounds.

In January, the first graders had a much stronger grasp of letter names and sounds, made attempts at word attack skills, and recognized the presence of rhyming words in language. They were able to converse using the letter names and sounds, generally recognizing a letter when mentioned. The second graders already had a grasp of these characteristics, but showed progress in skills to decode words and identify rhyming words.

Strategic Literacy

In September, the first-grade group students did not use strategic literacy even as an emerging characteristic (See Table 13). Strategic literacy included: using strategies for unknown words, appropriate invented spelling, and contexts clues; reading fluently and with understanding; and distinguishing narrative and informational text. Given many of the factors described in the earlier categories, it is perhaps not surprising that the students had little awareness of text, its purpose, or how print worked to provide a context for

Table 13

Strategic Literacy Characteristics

September

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Uses strategies for unknown words				N/A				
Uses appropriate invented spelling				N/A				
Uses context clues				N/A				
Reads with understanding				N/A				
Reads fluently				N/A				
Distinguishes narrative/informational				N/A				

November

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Uses strategies for unknown words								N/A
Uses appropriate invented spelling								N/A
Uses context clues								N/A
Reads with understanding								N/A
Reads fluently								N/A
Distinguishes narrative/informational								N/A

January

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Uses strategies for unknown words								N/A
Uses appropriate invented spelling								N/A
Uses context clues								N/A
Reads with understanding								N/A
Reads fluently								N/A
Distinguishes narrative/informational								N/A

Emergent ← − − → Conventional

constructing meaning. Thus, the use of context clues, fluent reading, and theother subcategories were inaccessible for assessment purposes.

The second graders were emerging in the characteristics associated with strategic literacy. While the students were fluent at reading connected text at an easy reading level, they did not draw on a wide range of strategies for figuring out unknown words. In most cases, they simply skipped the words or asked someone else to tell them the word. Reading for understanding was not a priority, in that they spent most of their time determining if they had read a word correctly. They were somewhat hesitant to use invented spelling, preferring instead to write sentences that contained words from their books or displayed in the classroom leading to easy access for checking spelling.

By January, the second graders were developing literacy strategies, while they still were not using them consistently and on their own. They had a better sense of the importance for reading for understanding and being aware of whether the text was making sense as they read. The first-grade group started to appreciate that they could construct meaning from a text and were emerging in their ability to use strategies for reading and understanding text.

Response to Literature

In terms of the response to literature, all students did show emerging signs for all of the characteristics if a story was read to them (see Table 14). They showed interest in stories, provided some evaluation and critique of the text, and expressed their feelings when appropriate and when given the opportunity to do so. However, early in the year for the first-grade group, much time was spent on nursery rhymes, nonsense stories to initiate word play, and

Table 14

Literature Response Characteristics

September

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Shows interest in stories				N/A				
Evaluates and critiques text				N/A				
Identifies with characters				N/A				
Expresses feelings related to text				N/A				

November

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Shows interest in stories								N/A
Evaluates and critiques text								N/A
Identifies with characters								N/A
Expresses feelings related to text								N/A

January

	First Grade				Second Grade			
	Molly	Daniel	Jared	Mario	Breanne	Trevor	Paul	Tanisha
Shows interest in stories								N/A
Evaluates and critiques text								N/A
Identifies with characters								N/A
Expresses feelings related to text								N/A

Emergent ← – – → Conventional

literature that contained animals as main characters. This type of literature and text that they read themselves (i.e., easy and rhyming text rather than more critically oriented literature) made it difficult for me to document authentic opportunities for depth of response.

Of the four second-grade students, Paul was most likely to orally respond to literature on a regular basis, often connecting it to his own life or interests in some way. For the other students, Mrs. Casey generally had to ask direct questions or remind them of possible connections to their lives (e.g., asking Breanne about her little sister and situations similar to a baby in a book). They did not readily volunteer their ideas verbally or share them in written form. As did the first graders, the second graders tended to be much more responsive to literature that was read to them as opposed to books they read on their own.

Throughout the fall, the students continued show transformations in response to literature characteristics, particularly in terms of showing interest in stories that were read to them. They remained more focused on the reading and comprehending the text, rather than responding to it as a whole. For the most part, they were more likely to relate the text to events in their own lives in January and to express their feelings about the text in some manner.

Summary of Assessments

My analyses revealed that in September, the first graders had only minimal understandings of most categories. In particular, two categories traditionally associated with emergent literacy (i.e. book-handling awareness and print awareness) were particularly relevant for showing how the first-grade group were exhibiting emergent characteristics, while most of the second-

graders showed signs of conventional usage in these areas. The second graders did seem to have a good grasp these basic literacy skills and used them conventionally. However, they had few strategies for reading text successfully and responding to literature. Based on expanding views of literacy and what might constitute a conventional reader and writer, it did not appear that simply being aware of book-handling knowledge and print awareness made a student a conventional reader and writer. For this reason, the second graders remained a critical part of my study. They were showing emerging signs in crucial literacy areas (e.g., strategic literacy, response to literacy) not generally associated as emergent literacy characteristics.

Overall, the initial assessments and observations of the first-grade group students in September resulted in findings suggesting that: (a) the students did not exhibit many of the emergent literacy characteristics generally attributed to kindergartners and early first graders, (b) one of the students (i.e. Daniel) had a stronger grasp on some of the characteristics than did other students, and (c) the lack of emergent literacy abilities seemed to confirm their need for a placement to receive instruction to help them reach the literacy abilities of their peers.

By January, these students had made a great deal of progress toward conventional literacy, as noted in these areas: (a) had a conventional use of book handling knowledge and many print awareness categories, (b) became more likely to consider themselves readers and writers and express interest in these activities, (c) recognized an overall sense of text as telling a story, (d)

used phonemic patterns associated with letters and words, and (e) started to develop strategies for understanding text and responding to literature.

For the second-grade group, overall findings about their initial literacy understandings in September led to three conclusions: (a) they showed conventional use of a few emergent literacy characteristics (e.g., book-handling knowledge, print awareness), but were showing emerging abilities in other areas (e.g., strategic literacy) not traditionally considered as a part of emergent literacy yet are crucial aspects of literacy, (b) like the first-grade group, for the most part they were all having successes and difficulties in the same general areas, though certain individuals were more advanced in particular areas, and (c) the students appeared to need additional help with literacy areas, thus indicating that extra instruction might be beneficial to them.

By January, the second-grade group had also showed progress in their use of conventional literacy. They were continuing to learn strategies for understanding text and resolving unknown words. They strengthened their use of phonemic awareness as one of several strategies for deciphering words. They showed evidence of appreciating reading and writing, particularly with books they read successfully.

Support for Learning Language and Literacy Conventions

That students exhibited emergent, conventional, or a transformational literacy in these six characteristics is an important framework for beginning to understand their literacy learning. My question related to this issue specifically involved how the Chapter 1 community supported these emerging literacy students in their transformations and movements toward more conventional

literacy. Knowledge that the students exhibited emergent or conventional acquisition of certain concepts provided a window into their abilities at certain points during the year and their continued progress. However, we need to understand better the events and activities that supported their transformations. With this in mind, I turn now to an analysis focused on aspects of the Chapter 1 room that supported students in learning these literacy characteristics.

The analysis revealed four major themes (i.e., decision-making, opportunity, choice, and engagement) that were most in evidence as important for enabling students to learn or draw upon emerging literacy abilities in their attempts at more conventional uses of literacy. I refer to these categories as themes because of their pervasive nature, as they were not categorically totally separated from each other; rather, although the themes did have many unique traits, they also had a unifying aspect and connection that made complete classification of an event or transcript as only one theme somewhat difficult.

Each of the four themes and supporting examples are discussed in detail in the following section. However, to give an overview of the differences across the four themes, Table 15 outlines the major themes, the characteristics of the themes and an example for each theme. This chart is based on major categories and subcategories that I developed in relation to the analyses described in chapter 3.

The four themes are not mutually exclusive. In fact, there are many overlapping instances where two or more of the themes are present in one event. In some cases, there may be a particular theme from the perspective of one participant, with another theme the focus of interaction for the other

Table 15

Four Themes Supporting Literacy Transformations

Theme	Characteristics	Examples
Decision-making	Types of instruction by teacher 　-scaffolding 　-modeling Decisions about curriculum Decisions about Chapter 1 placement	Using contextualized emergent literacy activities Using poetry charts to engage students in left to right text use
Opportunity	Individualized instruction Teachers taking advantage of spontaneous opportunities presented in the classroom Types of activities available	Teacher follow-up on student questions
Choice	Students' use of strategies Choice of participation	Learning to use several different means to figure out a word Choosing a library book
Engagement	Interest in activity Engagement in literacy events	Focused on literacy task Participating in literacy events

participant. Nor is it the case that these four themes are the only areas that helped the students with literacy. In the following pages, I will describe specific examples of each category and then show how the categories are overlapping.

Themes Supporting Transformations

In this section, I provide a descriptive analysis of each theme, drawing on examples from the data to support my assertions. To provide insight into both the individual nature of these themes and the unifying/overlapping connections among them, I build upon each theme as my description progresses, such that the later examples show the relationship among the themes. In general, the *decision-making* often resulted in *opportunities* for the students. The *opportunities* led students to make *choices* about their literacy practices. Underlying these initial three themes was the students' *engagement* with literacy. Figure 5 depicts the connections among these four themes, with the first three more directly related to each other, while engagement was foundational to every literacy event or activity. This general pattern was most common, although the themes also were more overlapping at times.

Instructional Decision-Making

Instructional decision-making involved decisions made by the teachers or other adults that directly influenced the literacy learning of the students. In most cases, these decisions related to instruction. As Mrs. Casey made decisions about instructional activities, literacy events, and necessary instruction for the Chapter 1 students, the adult decision-making potentially had both an immediate and long-term impact on the students. An immediate impact was noted in the actual lessons and shown in the transcripts below, indicating
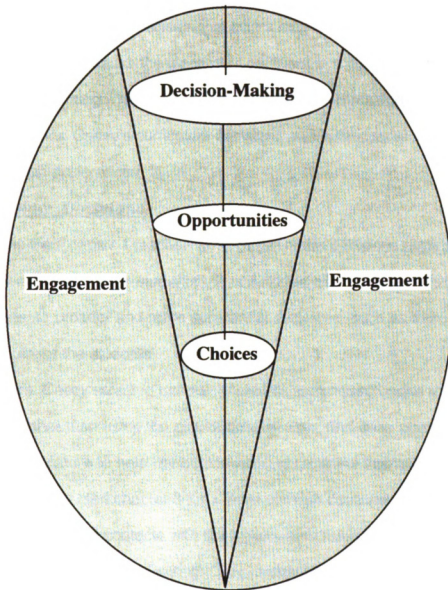
Figure 5. Overlap and connections among themes.

that students received the help that they needed. The long-term impact was observed by noting the transformations over the four-month time period.

Early decisions about placement of the Chapter 1 students (see chapter 3 for description) was a decision that had a long-term influence on the students' uses of literacy because the placement put them in a different type of instructional setting. The primary aspects of decision-making focused on two areas: (a) Mrs. Casey's curriculum decisions and instructional tools and (b) her instructional preferences.

Curriculum Decisions

As the Chapter 1 teacher, Mrs. Casey made decisions regarding the literacy activities for her students. This included basic decisions, such as daily materials, to broader and more substantial decisions, such as the overall curriculum for the students.

Mrs. Casey selected her own materials, purchased books with Chapter 1 funding rather than using the district basal reader, and drew upon current research literature to help her decide upon appropriate instructional activities for her students (see chapter 3 for a more detailed description). Mrs. Casey actively maintained contacts with the literacy community through journals, conferences, and her own writing. This meant that she was usually reading about new literacy ideas for Chapter 1 students. She became quite interested in Reading Recovery (see Clay, 1979; Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993). While the district did not have the funding to allow her to take the training in the Reading Recovery program, Mrs. Casey went to observe another teacher using this technique and went to conference presentations on the program. Her

professional reading and the conferences she attended led Mrs. Casey to incorporate some of the instructional ideas from Reading Recovery into her program (e.g., cut-up sentences, running records). Thus, her inquiry about her curriculum led to *decision-making* that directly affected the instruction for the students.

Mrs. Casey made numerous decisions related to assessment procedures, engaging in continual and ongoing assessment of the students, rather than relying on the district testing and report cards. The assessment, including many of the information measures described in chapter 3, involved taking notes on the students, using tape recorders to have a record of their reading progress, writing her own report card, and maintaining portfolios. This ongoing assessment about the instructional needs of the students led to instant and long-term changes related to curricular and instructional decision-making.

Mrs. Casey's assessments helped her to design her curriculum to match the literacy needs of the students. Thus, an important piece of her assessment decision-making was her focus on the students' use of emergent literacy activities. For example, in early September, she decided to include activities that helped the first-grade group with print and phonemic awareness, areas where they were mostly emergent. This led to certain activities, such as finding words on cereal boxes, practicing identifying the ABC's and putting them in order, playing rhyming games, and reading text aloud while pointing to the written words. One such activity that Mrs. Casey designed was to have the kids pick out some words on cereal boxes, to practice reading environmental print. She used the cereal boxes regularly, about once per week. This particular

activity enabled the students to use several print-awareness and phonemic-awareness characteristics.

In the following segment of fieldnotes, there is evidence that this curriculum decision led to a situation where the students engaged in several literacy characteristics around the letter name and sound (i.e., *w*),

> 10:42 Mrs. Casey tells the first graders that today they are going to talk about the first letter in wipers, taken from the book *The Wheels on the Bus*. She asks what letter it is, and they say w at once. Mrs. Casey passes out the cereal boxes to the kids. Molly comments, "Wow." Daniel has a Trix box, Jared had Cheerios, Mario has Cookie Crisp, and Molly has an Apple Jacks lid from the school breakfast program. Mrs. Casey tells the kids to find a word on their cereal box that begins with *w*. Mario finds "what," says it is "wand" leading Mrs. Casey to ask him get the word from the word wall and compare it to the word on the cereal box to see if they are the same. This spurs the other kids into more anticipation on their faces, with Daniel and Molly commenting "I can find one." They all read "what" together. Mario finds another word and Mrs. Casey helps him decode the word "with." The other students have not found any yet, and Mrs. Casey says she sees one on the first side of Jared's box.   The word is "whole" and Mrs. Casey talks with the kids about how you do not hear the *w* sound when you read that word and that it sounds like an *h*. Daniel points to a word, but wonders if it is an *m* and then says "no it is not a *w* word." Molly finds wt. and Mrs. Casey says it stands for weight. Daniel finds "wild" and guesses the word as "willed". (Fieldnotes, November 14, 1995).

Mrs. Casey continued this lesson by asking the students to "find one word that you can tell me on your cereal box."   Daniel reads "Trix", Jared finds "honey", Mario reads "toys", and Molly finds "Jacks".   Mrs. Casey helped Molly to take away the final *s* in her word and compare it to the name they read in *Jack and Jill* and *Jack Sprat*.

In the lesson described above, Mrs. Casey's decision-making about her curriculum led to a situation in which the students were practicing several of the emergent literacy characteristics within a short period of time. These included

recognizing letter names and sounds (i.e. *w*); distinguishing letters from words; realizing that text contains meaning; encouraging enjoyment of reading; finding known sight words (e.g., "Find a word you know"); and reading environmental print. In this manner, Mrs. Casey brought emergent literacy activities into the classroom to provide a different way to help the kids learn to read. Other examples of curriculum activities designed to elicit conversation about the emergent literacy characteristics included activities such as daily poetry reading, writing sentences in their special word books, reading books, listening to tapes, and computer reading games.

For the second graders, Mrs. Casey designed activities that would reinforce what they had already learned, while focusing on the problematic areas for the students. For example, the second graders struggled with comprehension when trying to figure out new words. Mrs. Casey used a poster in her room with eight strategies for comprehension (see table 16). She mentioned these verbally, while also referring to the chart on occasion.

Mrs. Casey's purpose, to continually reinforce comprehension strategies, was based on her *decision* that since the students did not have a firm grasp of possible strategies, her decision to include strategies as a part of her curriculum, would enable the students to become more successful when in challenging reading situations (from a September 28 informal discussion). Each of the eight strategies were included as instructional pieces of her curriculum.

Mrs. Casey also included other comprehension activities in her classroom, such as practicing sequencing the events in a story to have a better

Table 16

Comprehension Strategies

1. Stop when something does not make sense.
2. Ask yourself the question, "What makes sense?"
3. Look for smaller words in the larger words.
4. Look at the picture clues.
5. Look at the beginning sound, the ending sound,
      and the vowel.
6. Ask yourself the question, "What makes sense?"
7. Look at the picture clues.
8. Ask for help from the teacher, your friends, or a
      family member.

understanding of the meaning the text was conveying.   She worked on other literacy characteristics, such as selecting some books or poetry with rhyming words to be read aloud to help the students distinguish and recognize vowel patterns and word characteristics.

While these curriculum decisions were conceptually important, on a practical level, the manner in which they were carried out within the classroom had the most direct impact on the students' learning.   To examine the decision-making in this area, the next section describes the instructional preferences and decisions made by Mrs. Casey to support the students.

Instructional Preferences and Decisions

The curriculum decisions-making described above led to certain instructional practices.   Students' transformations toward more conventional literacy activities involved an instructional component that recognized the importance of associated developmental and learning aspects.   Two cases of this pertained to the interactions between the teacher and student in regard to scaffolding and modeling.   Mrs. Casey articulated her theories of learning early in the year, mentioning scaffolding and modeling as important instructional practices for her (September interview).   Such practices were consistent with a social constructivist perspective on learning.

Specifically, Vygotsky (1978) explained his view of learning by emphasizing that learning leads to development within the zone of proximal development.   Vygotsky defined the zone of proximal development as,

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

The type of dialogue that occurred between the adults and the students were particularly relevant in the analyses, especially when viewed from a social constructivist perspective.

The dialogue became an opportunity where the ongoing instructional decisions by the adults could influence the learning of the students. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development has particular relevance with relation to emergent transformations to conventional literacy. The scaffolding consisted of Mrs. Casey providing temporary support to students by initiating instruction on tasks and eventually encouraging the students to take charge of the tasks on their own. While supporting students in a manner consistent with scaffolding, the teacher has to make numerous decisions about what type of instruction to provide and when to let the student take on more ownership of the task. For modeling, Mrs. Casey routinely demonstrated many of the literacy characteristics to the students as a part of her discussions with them. In the following section, I supply several examples of scaffolding and then modeling in relation to Mrs. Casey's instruction.

Uses of scaffolding. For all students, Mrs. Casey made several *decisions* in an effort to support the students as they made attempts to progress with literacy concepts. She used scaffolding associated with many literacy activities of the curriculum, including students' using book-handling knowledge while reading poetry from a chart, suggesting that students relate a story to

their personal experiences, or helping them to figure out an unknown word. I describe in detail Jared, as a representative example, as he made progress with his writing. Mrs. Casey used many scaffolding techniques with Jared's first-grade group peers.

Every day, Jared sat at the table writing in his special word book. These books are somewhat like journals, in that the students write a sentence daily, but the word book's content is more controlled than many forms of journals because the students are required to use one of the words from the word wall in their sentence. Jared moved through four initial phases of support with his word book: (a) initial scribbles written on his own, (b) guidance from Mrs. Casey as she recorded his dictated sentence, then had him trace it (see Figure 6 from September 21), (c) Mrs. Casey guiding Jared's hand as he wrote his own letters/sentences (see Figure 7 from October 3), and (d) Jared completely writing his own sentences (see Figure 8 from October 17). During this time, Jared appeared frustrated and was struggling at being able to form the letters, compounded with broken glasses he was unable to wear and ongoing vision problems. Invented spelling was used throughout these four phases, with Jared aware that the task was not to have a sentence with everything spelled right, rather one that reflected an idea. In fact, a view of his writing shows the sentences he wrote on his own as having the most "conventional" errors, yet the instructional support before that was important for enabling him to try writing on his own.

Mrs. Casey used a form of scaffolded instruction as she navigated these various temporary levels of support. One important aspect was the language

dog
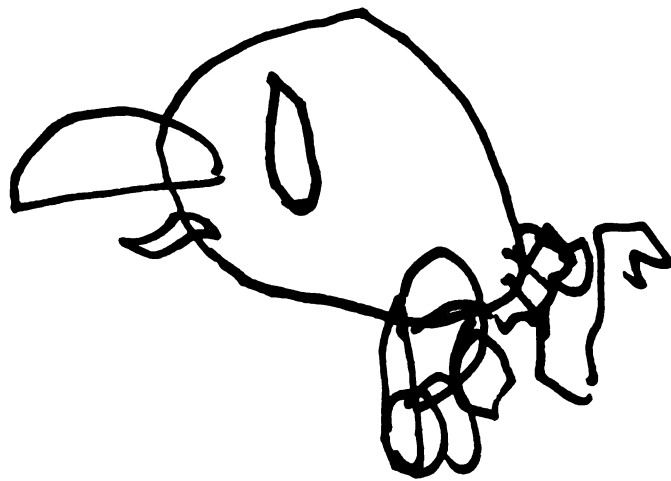
I have to feed
my black and browr
dog.

Figure 6. Jared's September 21 journal entry.

lotst

I/9have of lots

Fo Fish

Figure 7. Jared's October 3 journal entry.

eat

I will eat

adlheebow

wjd

(I will eat a bologna sandwich.)

Figure 8. Jared's October 17 journal entry.

used during these various levels, including how Mrs. Casey initially talked to Jared when she wrote the words he dictated and how her support changed as he tried to write the words on his own. In addition to the language Mrs. Casey decided to use, another aspect of her decision-making related to scaffolding involved the timing and purpose for the instruction.

For example, on October 3, 1994, Jared was initially supposed to write his special word book sentence completely on his own (Figure 7). However, he was not engaged with the task and generally disconnected from writing his sentence. He was often simply looking at the others or staring around the room. Mrs. Casey prompted him throughout the 10-minute period, between working with other students. First, she asked him what word he selected and she helped him to read "lots". A minute later, Mrs. Casey looked at the word he was writing, and commented that "lots" only had one *t*, leading Jared to erase his second *t*. This was consistent with her expectation that the students should spell their main word correctly since it was written on a card in front of them. Then, when he had not written anything, Mrs. Casey asked Jared what he could write for "lots" and he was not sure. She repeated her question a moment later, and Jared replied, "I have a lots of...". At this point, the others joined in to try and help him:

Mrs. Casey: What can you say for "lots?"

Jared: I have a lots of ////

Molly: Candy (completing Jared's sentence).

Jared: I have a lots of //

Daniel:	MONEY! (also completing Jared's sentence). Money will make you rich.

Mrs. Casey: You worry about yours, okay? I have--

Jared: --Fish.

Mrs. Casey: a lot of, what could you say?

Jared: [I have a lots of fish.

Daniel: [I have a lot of fish.

Mrs. Casey: A lots of fish, or a lot of fish?

Mrs. Casey continued by helping Jared write the first word, but then moved to help Molly with her sentence. She came back to Jared several times to encourage him with his writing. She then helped him by guiding his hand through the letters, stopped occasionally to let him write on his own (e.g. lots), but consistently monitored his progress to ensure that he was not getting frustrated.

In this situation, Jared needed more instructional support and of a different nature than his peers. The small number in the group allowed Mrs. Casey to work closely with Jared and to help him to write a sentence successfully, giving him a great deal of praise when he finished. This example showed how, within one lesson, Mrs. Casey made immediate decisions about levels of support, moving to more direct help when needed, but at the same time trying to encourage Jared's independence.

Mrs. Casey used similar scaffolding for the second graders, though on a different level. The second graders were beyond the need for assistance in moving from emergent scribbles to more conventional sentences; however,

they did need some support in terms of writing coherent, important, and original sentences. Mrs. Casey made the decision to focus on issues related to strategies for deciding on spelling, building complete sentences, and writing important ideas. All of the second graders tended to write sentences strongly related to the literature they were reading, in some cases taking sentences from books and writing them verbatim in their word books.

For example, Paul wrote sentences that appeared to be conventional and more advanced than those of the first graders (i.e., he wrote separate words rather than a string of letters). Yet, he often wrote basic ideas with little relation to his life and using nonconventional spelling patterns (e.g., all words contain a vowel, proper use of capital and small letters).

Figure 9 displays Paul's October 20 sentence. This sentence was taken almost verbatim from the book his group was reading. He used capital letters in the middle of words. Mrs. Casey initiated a period of direct discussion about sentence topics (e.g., sentences about themselves) and continued contextualized instruction about punctuation, capitalization, and uses of print. The students started to draw on their personal experiences to write about and to use more conventional forms of writing.

A month later on November 21 (see Figure 10), Paul wrote "i have a lots oF cages at my horse [house] For My Dogs [s reversed]" While this sentence still has numerous errors in terms of conventional literacy (e.g., capitals within the sentence, first word is not capitalized, reversals), it is an improvement for Paul over his October 20 entry, in terms of creating his own sentence, writing about his own experiences, and moving toward less capitals within the

odd

will You u mak that
Pop CORN PoPR Stop
BE For iT fil ls
The Town?

Figure 9. Paul's October 20 journal entry.

cage

i have alots
oFccagesatMy
horse For My
DG 92.

Figure 9. Paul's November 21 journal entry.

sentence. Since the words were not taken directly out of his reading book, this sentence likely was more representative of Paul's spelling patterns on his own without copying from a book.

In these situations in which Mrs. Casey used scaffolded instruction with the students, the discourse between the teacher and student led to more conventional uses of language for the students. For Jared and Paul, Mrs. Casey had numerous instructional decisions to make, particularly as to when to remove support and when to help them more actively. In addition, she talked with the students about their writing (e.g., What could you write?), providing encouragement and necessary guidance. To move toward conventional uses of language, providing temporary support to the students enabled them to have goals as to what conventional forms might entail, while allowing them to work where they were successful at an emergent level.

Uses of modeling. Modeling was another important instructional technique that Mrs. Casey used with her students. Modeling involved her showing and regularly using conventional aspects of literacy with the students. Mrs. Casey continually modeled many literacy characteristics for the students. For example, when the students read poetry each day, she modeled book-handling and print-awareness characteristics (e.g., left to right, word-to-word matching), by using a pointer and following each word as the group read aloud. In this manner, Mrs. Casey's example was one way for the kids to see literacy characteristics in action.

Mrs. Casey made decisions about how to use modeling in a manner that focused around her goals for instruction. There were several ways that she

used modeling effectively throughout the day. To continue with the poetry example, Mrs. Casey routinely modeled several book-handling techniques (e.g., left to right, top to bottom) and print awareness (e.g., word-to-word matching). Over the weeks, the students took turns leading the poetry readings, taking the pointer in their hands and following along with the words. They imitated the modeling initiated by Mrs. Casey, with the students exhibiting more conventional readings of texts after episodes of watching her. Similarly, the students started a new book each week. Mrs. Casey often read passages aloud on the first day, using big books so they could read as a group, initiating response discussions about the books, and modeling fluency and possible questions related to comprehension and response.

Mrs. Casey modeled strategies for figuring out unknown words by talking aloud about possible strategies when helping one of the students. She also modeled the eight strategies list previously in Table 16. The students started to imitate Mrs. Casey, in some instances asking their peers similar questions to those Mrs. Casey asked of them. This imitation occurred in relation to strategies she modeled, questions she asked, and expressions she used.

For example, Mrs. Casey often modeled important questions for the students to ask when reading text, such as "Does this make sense?" "Do you see that word there?" and "What could I do to figure out the word?" These questions started to appear in the interactions among the students. I first noticed this explicitly during an October 19 event when Mario was partner reading with Molly. They were reading Molly's I Can Book, containing pictures of Molly and sentences she wrote. However, the discussion between the two

students had Mario acting more as a teacher than a peer. He had appropriated some of the strategies that Mrs. Casey modeled as seen in his response to Molly when she had difficulty reading a word.

Molly was reading the pages quickly as she often did when she was not sure of all the words. Mario told her she read the page too fast and encouraged her to slow down. When Molly stumbled on the word "can", Mario asked her what made sense and then further probed as to how the letters in the word sounded when she still could not read it. A few pages later, Mario stopped Molly, pointed to the word she had just read, and commented, "I don't see that word here." Then, he pointed to each word and read them with Molly.

If we consider Mario's action in relation to the Vygotsky Space (Harre, 1984, described in chapter 2), it appeared that Mario appropriated many of Mrs. Casey's modeled strategies. These strategies were apparent in this discussion among the two students and in several similar discussions at other points in the year. Mario was able to help both himself and Molly in this instance with the characteristics associated with strategic literacy.

In a similar manner, Mrs. Casey worked with the second graders on comprehension activities. She also worked with the second graders on rhyming words as a part of phonemic awareness. Trevor had a particularly difficult time hearing rhyming words and understanding vowel patterns. Consequently he often had trouble relating new words to others with which he was more familiar. Mrs. Casey routinely modeled aspects of word families, using contextual clues, and other strategies to help the students develop their own strategies. She used a metal board with magnetic letters, showing Trevor

how he might compare an unknown word that he could not figure out with contextual clues to a word that he did know by rhyming. Such modeling enabled Trevor to broaden his range of strategies.

Mrs. Casey's decisions centered around curricular and instructional aspects of her teaching. Her decisions led to short-term impact (e.g., Molly's recognition of words) and long-term ramifications (e.g., students using the pointer while reading poetry in a more conventional manner including left to right and word to word; Mario appropriating modeled strategies). Mario's appropriation of Mrs. Casey's questions she routinely modeled was made public again in his discourse with Molly, during which Mario acted as a more knowledgeable other. Thus, Mario appeared to have acquired these strategies, or at least to recognize the strategies as an option for making sense of text.

The *decision-making* by Mrs. Casey led to *opportunities* for the students. These opportunities had the potential for placing the students in situations that furthered their literacy progress.

Learning Opportunities

During my observations and data analysis, a critical factor for supporting students in their literacy transformations involved the learning opportunities that were present. Some opportunities were preplanned events, while most opportunities in this sense were informal occasions that resulted as part of ongoing interactions in the classroom. While "Opportunities to Learn" (see Guthrie & Gambrell, 1994; Porter, 1995) has become an overarching theme in relation to academic standards, my definition of opportunities does not draw from that literature or construct. Opportunities in my analyses were situations in

which the students were in a position to learn appropriate uses of literacy, through interactions individually or with other people, in which the participants took advantage of the situation, rather than ignoring or overlooking the potential benefits. In relation to the Vygotsky Space described in chapter 2, the opportunities often became the situated context for discourse opportunities between the teacher and student or among students.

The pull-out program nature of instruction led to opportunities that were associated with the students Chapter 1 placement for literacy instruction. My observations and analyses of these opportunities led to findings related to issues surrounding opportunity in the area of (a) individualized instructional opportunities and (b) unplanned opportunities.

Opportunity for Individualized Instruction

The Chapter 1 students appeared to be provided with extra opportunities in the Chapter 1 room that they were not getting in their regular room. First, the reality of having only 4 students rather than 25 resulted in situations where the students could potentially become highly involved in individualized discussions and have more turns to share with others when in a group. Second, the students seemed to be more accountable for their learning in that there were only 4 students with one teacher monitoring their progress, resulting in more one-to-one help. Third, there was a better opportunity for individualized instruction to occur, focusing on the particular needs of one student.

Individualized instruction occurred on a routine basis and with all of the other students, as the example with Molly in the following transcript shows. Individualized instruction occurred in situations, for example, when Mrs. Casey

read one-to-one with a student, worked on a cut-up sentence in relation to the journal entry of one student, or began a minilesson on a particular concept with which one of the students was struggling. The following is a description of one such individualized instructional opportunity, in which Mrs. Casey was holding Molly accountable for reading the book, but provided the guidance that Molly needed to be successful.

While the other students were listening to a book on the tape recorder, Mrs. Casey took the *opportunity* to have an extended reading with Molly on her first book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Martin, 1967). Molly had read through the book a few times previously and was excited that she was able to read the book. She had memorized most of the words. Mrs. Casey *decided* to work with Molly to make sure she learned and matched the printed words to go with the phrases she had memorized. In the following transcript, Mrs. Casey modeled strategies and patterns of print.

126	Molly:	(pointing with her finger to each word as she reads it.) I see a blue horse looking at me. What do you see? (Mrs. Casey helps Molly move her finger up to the top of the next page). I see a /// green///
127	Mrs. Casey:	Skip it. Skip that word and go over here. (Mrs. Casey is pointing to the words, and at times guiding Molly's finger directly under the word so the word she is pointing to matches what she is reading.)
128	Molly:	frog,
129	Mrs. Casey:	looking
130	Molly:	looking at me.
131	Mrs. Casey:	Now, go back up here. What is that?

132	Molly:	green frog (Molly is pointing to "looking" as she reads frog).
133	Mrs. Casey:	(taking Molly's finger and pointing at frog.) Here's frog. Green frog. Look. Frog begins with fr.
134	Molly:	(Pointing to the page). I see a green frog, looking
135	Mrs. Casey:	Here, give me your finger. (She takes Molly's finger and they point to the words together and read them.)
136	Molly:	[I see a green frog, looking at me.
137	Mrs. Casey:	[I see a green frog, looking at me. (October 6, 1994)

In this transcript, it appears that Mrs. Casey is able to work with Molly on word-to-word matching (line 133), left to right (line 135), bottom of one page to the top of the next (line 126), decoding words (line 133), and reading sentences fluently (line 136/137). The small class size allowed for the *opportunity* to have an extended time period where Mrs. Casey and Molly could work closely on these emergent literacy areas, giving Molly beneficial individualized attention. The discourse between the two participants allowed for discussion within Molly's zone of proximal development, so that Molly was getting the specific assistance with book-handling knowledge and print awareness that she needed to read more conventionally.

Unplanned Opportunities

Both the students and Mrs. Casey took opportunities to use emerging literacy skills to an advantage in ways that were not preplanned or formally prepared. In some cases, the participants took advantage of opportunities involving resources in the room. At other times, it was uptake on conversation or questions that led to learning situations that otherwise might have been

ignored. These unplanned opportunities occasionally occurred within a lesson, but more regularly occurred in more informal discussions.

The following example was an unplanned opportunity in which the participants used strategies and resources that were not always available. Their discussion helped Molly with the letter name and sound for *h*. Molly was having difficulty on October 26, remembering the letter *h*. Mrs. Casey started a game where she listed several words starting with *h* and asked the first-grade group to tell her what letter was at the beginning of all the words. Molly said *b*, while Jared correctly answered *h*. As the game continued, Mrs. Casey used riddles with the students trying to find *h* words that answered the riddle. When Molly was asked, "Something that each of us has in us", she answered "bones". This answer fit the riddle, yet indicated her ongoing confusion about the difference between *b* and *h*.

First, Mrs. Casey reinforced that her answer did make sense for the riddle. Then, she decided to point to Daniel, who was wearing his "Achy Breaky Heart" t-shirt. Mrs. Casey used that phrase and the red heart on Daniel's shirt which were familiar to Molly to help her figure out which letter was the *h* and what word might answer the riddle and start with the correct letter. In this case, the *opportunity* related to taking advantage of environmental print, relating the literacy task to an idea that Molly already knew (i.e., Achy Breaky Heart), and communicating strategies from the teacher by thinking aloud possible strategies for figuring out an unknown word or letter. Daniel's opportune choice of clothing that morning helped Molly, and in subsequent days I observed her remembering *h* by using the heart.

These learning opportunities designed either intentionally or unexpectedly occurring during discourse enabled the Chapter 1 students to engage in a wide range of events and to benefit from the result of the opportunity. To learn both the emergent and conventional uses of literacy, such opportunities for the Chapter 1 students helped them individually and collectively to make sense of text and to move toward more mature interactions with text. *Decisions* made by Mrs. Casey led to *opportunities* for literacy learning. However, within these *opportunities*, the students often had to make *choices* that supported their own learning.

Literacy Choices

The students had many *choices* to make during the course of each day. They could choose activities in which to participate or avoid, how to answer a question, whether to ask a neighbor or adult for help, and many others. In some cases, the choice involved choosing among strategies. In other cases, it might be a choice about participation. The choices made by the students varied greatly, dependent on their individual preferences and strategies. In most cases, the *choices* by the students seemed related to the instructional *decisions* by the adults or the *opportunities* that were present for the students.

Choice of Strategy

As described in the earlier sections, the students were learning many strategies, including comprehension strategies, strategies for writing, and strategies for figuring out unknown words. As they moved toward more conventional uses of literacy, there appeared to be an increasing awareness

on their part about the need to make sense of the text when reading and to use appropriate language so that others could understand their intent in writing.

The students developed their own strategies, in some cases choosing among a variety of options. This need to make strategy choices from several options occurred on a daily basis, such as when the students wanted to spell a word while writing, read unknown words from a text, or determine correct answers in a word game.

The following example of Molly's choice of strategy is characteristic of the many choices made by the students. I selected this example because Molly had to make several choices around the same words within a short time period. In her Chapter 1 special word book, Molly decided to write a sentence containing the word "blue." She had encountered that word as she was completing a worksheet in her first grade room earlier in the day. The following descriptive summary is taken from my fieldnotes:

> I watched as Molly had to make a choice in deciding what word was in front of her while in her regular ed room (it was the word "blue"). On her worksheet, she was required to color the bird blue. She chose to try and sound it out, look at her color chart, and then match the letters b-l-u-e on her page to the letters b-l-u-e on the crayon. For the next word green, she chose to simply look at her neighbor's paper. About a half hour later upstairs in the Chapter 1 room, Molly was making up a sentence and included blue in it. Now, she had to write the word blue. She chose to think about the spelling for a little bit, then asked Mrs. Casey, and based on Mrs. Casey's suggestion, she found the word on the word wall and copied it letter by letter from there. In her word book sentence, she wrote "Ishorseblue." and read it to me as "I see a blue horse." The book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* has a similar sentence about a blue horse--thus a probable basis for her sentence (Fieldnotes, October 24, 1994).

In this example, Molly had a range of strategies she has developed for figuring out the words she had to read and the word that she wanted to write. Some of

Molly's *choices* appeared to rely more on her own strategies and those modeled by her teachers (e.g., sound out the letters, match to known words), while other choices were more efficient for her purposes without requiring much effort (e.g., copy from a neighbor).

Similar events took place with the second graders in relation to making choices about strategies to use when encountering unknown words. They had to make choices about strategies to use when reading text to decide whether it was making sense and if they were reading fluently and with expression. As a part of her ongoing assessment, Mrs. Casey kept an audiotape for each student and routinely (i.e. about once per week) had the students tape themselves reading a book. After listening to these tapes and taking notes, Mrs. Casey had a ongoing written record of the choice of strategies used by the students.

The following example illustrates the types of choices made by Breanne. I selected this example as a contrast to Molly's early choices that were more emergent in nature. For Breanne, we can see that she is more aware of the conventional nature of the text and that certain words are accurate. When Breanne was reading *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Johnson, 1955) on December 21, 1994, she had little difficulty with most of the words. However, at several points during the reading, Breanne made the choice to stop to re-read certain sections for fluency or to make sure the sentence made sense. Specifically, she read "the sunny beach" and then went back to correct it to "the sandy beach." She read "trim little boat" twice, switching little and trim until she read it in the correct order. These examples indicated that Breanne was making the choice in late December to read the book in a conventional

manner--stopping to use strategies to ensure she read the correct words in the right order and that what she read made sense to her.

Choice of Participation

Choices for the students took the form of asking questions, playing with words, and seeking solutions to literacy problem areas. Within the Chapter 1 setting, Daniel, Paul, Breanne, and Mario were more inclined than their peers to pose questions or be involved in conversation. Jared, Tanisha, and Trevor generally did not lead or initiate conversations. Molly often participated in discussions about topics other than those with an academic focus. In this manner, the following situations were more typical of Daniel and Mario's many conversational interactions and choices to participate in small group conversations.

Daniel and Mario were particularly interested in larger words, and often tried them out with their peers, playing with the words. On November 2, Mrs. Casey asked Mario "Who cleans out our building that begins with a /" as a part of a game the students were playing. Mario's reply of "a custodian" led to a discussion about a janitor. A week later, in this November 7 transcript, Daniel tried this new word that he had learned.

(The school wide lunch bell rings, although it is mid-morning and not lunchtime.)

Molly: [What is that?

Daniel: [They're just call, they're just calling the Canadians, or whatever.

Mrs. C: (clearly perplexed) Calling the Canadians?

Daniel: (shrugging his shoulders) I don't know what their name is.

Molly: (giggling with her hands across her mouth) CusTOdians.

Mrs. C: Custodians.

Daniel: (nodding in agreement and giggling) Yeah.

Daniel's choice of word was important in two respects. First, he was trying out a new word he had previously heard, making public a word he learned during a previous conversation. Second, the others in the room were supporting this inquiry in that the students could laugh with each other about mistakes, rather than at each other. That helped to set up a situation where students were comfortable in taking risks often associated with choices to participate.

The examples of choice presented are related in the idea that when students attend school each day, their activities are based on the available choices and the decisions made within this choice range. The *decision* may be made by teachers (instructional activities), parents (placement in school/reading at home), administrators (Chapter 1 student selection), or the *choice* by students themselves (Daniel's choice of words, Molly figuring out "blue" using a variety of strategies). In the transformation to conventional literacy, these choices provided a means of expanding or limiting access to literacy practices.

Engagement With Literacy

Students' themselves obviously played a major role in their own learning. Engagement relates to students' interest, involvement, and

commitment to literacy activities.[8] Engagement was a critical theme within the other themes of decision-making, opportunity, and choice. For example, whether or not the students chose to participate often seemed related to their engagement with the discussion or activity. With some activities, they appeared to be engaged in the literacy acts, while at other times they appeared either disinterested or frustrated. Mrs. Casey was particularly concerned about this issue for the Chapter 1 students, in part because of their possible limited interactions with text in previous years. She designed certain activities specifically to help the students become engaged in their learning, while other activities led to active engagement or disengagement unexpectedly. *Engagement* seemed to be directly related to the *decision-making* of the teachers, the *opportunities* for the students, and the *choices* made by the students themselves.

Planned Engagement Activities

One important emergent characteristic was for students to find enjoyment in reading and writing and to help them become lifelong learners. Mrs. Casey planned events specifically to engage the students in literacy and to help them enjoy and be attentive to text. The activities included having students write their own books, using oral language games attached to text, and acting out written text to focus on its meaning. These types of engagement activities were not a daily activity, although Mrs. Casey used these about once per week.

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[8] I separate the definition of engagement from motivation. Motivation seems to deal more directly with attaching goals and purpose to an event, or prompted by a certain event leading to an urge for the person to have a purposeful act. In contrast, I define engagement as being occupied or attending to an event, with or without a personal purpose or goal.

In early October, Mrs. Casey designed one successful engagement activity intended to connect reading to the experiences of the first graders. She took five photographs of each first-grade group member as they participated in various activities around the room. When the pictures were developed, the students made *I Can Books*, pasting a photograph of themselves and writing a sentence to go with it on each page. The personalized nature of the activity and a focus on their own interests led to eager anticipation on the part of the students to request to read their book regularly.

Another type of planned engagement activity involved connecting the students to the books by enacting events from the stories or poems within the classroom. For example, after reading *The Popcorn Popper* (Nelson, 1992), the second-grade group made popcorn in the Chapter 1 room, reading the directions and ingredients carefully. Mrs. Casey also used Reader's Theatre with the second graders, having the students take turns reading pieces of text from a story. This oral language activity assisted their read-aloud fluency and expression as they read for an audience.

A third example was reading and acting out the directions of a poem, where the focus was to understand the meaning of the text, while attaching movement to the activity. The students started each day by reading a poem. During the week of September 19, the second graders read Shel Silverstein's (1974) "Band-Aids" poem. This poem described how a person had to put band-aids over his body, giving certain numbers for various places (e.g., "One on my heel, and two on my shoulder, Three on my elbow, and nine on my toes [pp. 140]."). Each day, Mrs. Casey and the students expanded on their reading of

the poem. First, they read it all together. The next day, they took turns reading passages. On Wednesday, Mrs. Casey worked with the students to count the total number of bandaids. The next day, as they read through the poem, they placed 70 bandaids on a figure, using a box of bandaids in the process.

This poem engaged the students both in carefully reading each line of the poem and helping them with vocabulary words associated with their bodies. For example, the engagement with this poem, led to a vocabulary learning situation for Trevor. Trevor initially pointed to his elbow for the word "wrist", and to his hips when he read the word "thighs"; with the activities related to the poem, he learned these distinctions. While these activities appeared simply to be fun, the students remained quite attentive and engaged throughout which contributed to aiding them to comprehend the text and gain strategies in several other literacy areas (e.g., oral language, vocabulary, sequence).

Student Engagement and Interest

As we might hope, some activities not designed specifically with this intent, led to students becoming engaged with literacy. These were regular or routine projects that, on particular days, led to heightened engagement by the students. The following description of an alphabetical order project by the first-grade group is one example of how engagement led to events that went beyond the original intent of the activity. On this day, an individual activity became a group event in which the students worked cooperatively with some questions by Mrs. Casey to help them.

On October 5, Daniel and Jared were engaged in an activity using large letters and putting them in alphabetical order on the floor. Their engagement

throughout the activity enabled them to put the letters in order, work cooperatively with each other, and helped them with the characteristics of using left to right movement and top to bottom when they had to start a new row.

The following day on October 6, during the last 10 minutes of Chapter 1, Jared was again using the large letters on the floor, while Daniel worked on a similar activity with small letters at a table, Molly read with Mrs. Casey, and Mario wrote in his book. As Jared progressed with putting the letters in order, Mario joined him at about the letter *G* and Molly entered the project by the letter *J*, both of them choosing to join Jared after finishing up their other activity. Mrs. Casey encouraged them to work quickly because they were almost out of time. She suggested that they take turns, with each person adding one letter, both capital and lower case, at a time. While they were adding letters, they gave the name of the letter, and all three of the students used the ABC board at the front of the room to help them decide which letter came next.

Mario placed the *Mm*, Molly the *Nn*, and Jared the *Oo*. Then, Molly placed *Pq*, first putting the *p* as *b* and then reversing it to *q*. After Molly put down these letters, the following conversation occurred:

32	Mario:	I get to do *R*.
33	Mrs. C.:	Okay, what is after *P*? (Mario is moving to place the *R* in the row.)
34	Mario:	*R*. (Then, he looks up at the ABC board to double check his answer. Jared is picking up the Ss and Molly is looking at the board).
35	Mrs. C.:	*P* and then *R*? Are you sure?

(Jared stood up and moved over toward Mario, and both looked at and pointed to the alphabet chart on the bulletin board).

36	Mario:	*Q*!!! *q q q*. (moving quickly back to the letter pile to get the correct letters.)

37	Mrs. C.:	Okay, find the *q*'s.

(Mario placed *Qp* down on the floor.)

38	Mario:	(After looking at the *Pq* that Molly placed) That's a *p* or something.

39	Mrs. C.:	That's a *p* or something?

(Jared walked over to examine the letters. Molly started giggling for a long period of time. Daniel stopped his activity and sat at his chair watching the others.)

40	Mrs. C.:	Do you think/ Mario, go back and look at those.

Now, Jared had the *Rr* in his hands and moved to the other end by the

Aa to start a new row. Mario looked at the letters at the ABC board to figure out

the problem with the *p* and the *q*. Molly walked over to help him.

41	Molly:	(still giggling) That one doesn't have no stick on it. No line.

42	Jared:	What doesn't it have?

43	Molly:	It doesn't have no line on it.

44	Mrs. C:	Jared, what's wrong? All of you go back and look at those *p*'s and *q*'s. What's wrong here?

(Jared walked over to the *p* and *q*, made a small laugh, and moved the lower case *q* and *p* upside down so that they showed *b* and *d*.)

45	Daniel:	(Commenting from his table) That's still wrong.

| 46 | Molly: | No, that one supposed to go here (moving the *d* to become a *q* after the capital *Q.*) And this one is supposed to go here (reversing the *b* so that it is now a *d* next to *P*, then quickly flipping the *d* to a *p*.) See? |

| 47 | Mrs. C.: | That's it! What's after *q*? |

At this point, Daniel left his table, picked up the *Ss* and moved toward the end of the line. He handed the letters to Molly who said, "You guys, it is at the end of the line." The *Qq* were up against the wall and Jared had started a new line with *Rr*. Mrs. Casey asked, "Well, Jared came over here to put the *Rr*." Jared showed Molly where to put the *Ss* after his *Rr*.

This individual activity became a situation in which everyone in the room joined together to complete the task, helping each other and adding to the effort. The students appeared to be totally engaged in the task, empowering them to learn much about several literacy skills. The literacy skills discussed included learning the order of the alphabet, using the letter names in a contextual manner where they were important to know, practicing the correct formation of letters (not backwards, upside down), and arranging the letters from left to right and top to bottom. This activity was one they had practiced several times on previous days, while on this particular day, their engagement assisted them in problem-solving several issues.

In addition, there was a lot of discussion among the students and between Mrs. Casey and the students. This discussion both caused the students to reflect on their placement of letters (e.g., lines 35, 38, 44) and to assist each other in accurately completing the project (e.g., lines 45, 46). Mrs.

Casey played a role in supporting this effort. She restated their concerns to suggest that she agreed there might be a problem (e.g., repeating Mario's comments "That's a p or something in line 39). She encouraged the students to work together on the task (e. g., lines 40, 44). In this manner, she encouraged their engagement and focused them in on the literacy component.

Disengagement With Literacy

Other activities led to situations where the students were not engaged at all with their literacy, in some ways making them dislike the literacy tasks. Areas where the students appeared not to be engaged seemed to occur for two reasons: (a) possibly the task was too difficult for them and caused frustration and (b) the task was boring or seemed of little relevance to the students. In Mrs. Casey's room, the small class size, individualized instructional opportunities, and her planned engagement activities seemed to help keep the students engaged with their work at most times. However, there were a few occasions when the students appeared to be frustrated or bored with a literacy task. I explore one of these occasions, related to a sequencing activity with the second-grade group.

During a group activity in Mrs. Casey's room, the second graders appeared to become frustrated and bored with an activity. Mrs. Casey decided to have the students do a sequencing event, where they put together the events of the story by placing the sentences in a sequential manner. Her intent was to have the students practice reading the sentences from the book without relying on the pictures and to help prepare them for understanding sequencing, consistent with the district's tests. She also wanted to reinforce that text had a

purpose and meaning by leading a discussion at the end about the importance
of the story events.

On October 5, numerous sentences from *Little Bunny's Lunch* (Nelson &
Weissman, 1992) were out of order on a pocket chart. After reading through
each sentence, the students took turns placing one sentence at a time in a
numbered list. In contrast to most forms of discussion in her room, Mrs. Casey
led this discussion in a formal manner (e.g., students raised their hand, were
called upon, and contributed an answer). The discussion showed many signs
of a traditional Initiation-Response-Evaluation discussion sequence (see
Cazden, 1988); that is, she asked them questions like "what comes next?" and
the students raised their hands and gave an answer. Then, Mrs. Casey made
a comment (e.g., "okay", "good"). However, she did not correct the students if
they put the wrong sentence down, preferring instead to led the other students
make different suggestions. This led to a series of debates, sentences that
were not in the right order, and general confusion and frustration on the part of
the students. Toward the end of the lesson, Tanisha was not participating,
Trevor had physically moved himself away from the chart, and Breanne was
playing with her eraser. The following transcript showed how Mrs. Casey had
to work hard to keep them engaged in the task:

| 388 | Mrs. Casey: | Well what do I have down here on the floor that would make sense after that one? |
| /// | | (Three-second pause. None of the children answer). |

| 389 | Mrs. Casey: | Breanne, which one do you think will make sense? / Could I have that please? I told you before not to play with that. (Mrs. Casey leans over to take a small eraser from Breanne). // |

At this point, the children are not answering Mrs. Casey's questions.

She had to specifically ask Breanne to participate (line 389), and then realized

that Breanne was playing with something and not following the discussion.

Mrs. Casey asked that Breanne not play with the eraser and the discussion

continued:

> 392   Mrs. Casey: Breanne, what would be next?
>
> / / / / (Breanne read the last sentence and looked for the next one.)
>
> 393   Mrs. Casey: What will make sense?
>
> / / /   (Breanne continued to look. Trevor pulled himself farther away
> from the chart.   Tanisha moved around on the floor, though staying in
> the same location. Breanne picked up a sentence.)
>
> 393   Mrs. Casey: Okay, put it in there. Trevor, are you listening,
> Does that make sense?
>
> 394   Trevor: (rejoining the conversation) That happened in the
> middle.

There were numerous indications that the children did not appear to be

engaged in the task.   Breanne played with her toy, no one attempted to answer

unless called upon, and Mrs. Casey had to specifically request and tell students

what to do.

The following day, Mrs. Casey started this activity again.   This time, the

students appeared much more engaged, possibly because: (a) she made the

task easier by reducing the number of sentences and encouraged the students

to take more responsibility by not leading the discussion, and (b) the students

expressed possible changes in strategies and worked more closely together.

Tanisha walked into the classroom saying "I thought about this some more last

night," suggesting that she was ready to try a different tactic for completing the task. When the sequencing started again, Breanne moved some of the sentences around, then Trevor got up and changed a lot of them around causing Mrs. Casey to ask him to explain his reasons. Within a few moments all three students were working on it together, in contrast to the individual attempts the previous day. Mrs. Casey backed away from the discussion, letting the students make the decisions about taking turns and appropriate sentence order. Tanisha suggested they get the book to help them and see if they got them right, and Mrs. Casey proceeded to let them figure out all of the pieces, with only minimal help from her when needed.

The disengagement on October 5, was in contrast to the engagement on October 6. This engagement seemed to occur because of minor revisions to the task and from encouragement that the students work together rather than taking individual turns. In addition, Mrs. Casey let the students take more ownership for the task, leading to more responsibility for the students and less interference on her part.

The cooperative nature of the students' interactions on the second day seemed to increase the discourse among the students. In this case, it seemed that teacher instruction was not as necessary as the discussion among the students as they debated the order of the sentences. They acted as more knowledgeable others by helping each other to understand their reasons for sentence order and to encourage others to be engaged in the activity.

Overlap of Themes

These four themes have many important connections among them. In some cases, it may be a particular theme from the perspective of one participant, with another theme the focus of interaction for the other participant. When Molly and Mario conversed about their book, an overwhelming aspect of their discussion was that Mario displayed evidence of internalizing Mrs. Casey's modeling. However, their conversation existed for at least two reasons: Mrs. Casey decided to include partner reading within her instruction and both Mario and Molly appeared to be engaged in the reading.

The choices by the students were often related to teacher decision-making or opportunities that arose (e.g.., students choice to participate, choices based on strategy taught by the teacher). For example, Molly's choice about how to read and then spell "blue" reflected Mrs. Casey's decisions about strategies to teach the students. In other cases, the connection was within the perspective of one person. For example, the teacher's decision-making was often tied to opportunities she presented for students. In all cases, analyses led to these main themes in that they supported student's literacy learning.

Thus, throughout the examples presented in support of the assertions about the themes, there were recurring instances where the students were involved in discourse that supported their learning of the six emergent literacy characteristics described at the beginning of this chapter. Decisions to use poetry charts, unison reading, and alphabet games led to opportunities to growth in print awareness and book-handling knowledge. Similarly, individualized instructional opportunities and unplanned opportunities led to

reinforcement of and more conventional uses of book handling knowledge and print awareness (e.g., Molly and Mrs. Casey reading *Brown Bear*). Opportunities and decisions led to situations that helped the students develop phonemic awareness (e.g., using cereal boxes, comparing *h* to Daniel's t-shirt, playing the alphabetical order game). Growth in strategic literacy related to the choices by the students (e.g., Breanne's self-corrections when reading), decisions by the teacher (e.g., Mrs. Casey's strategies chart), and opportunities to work with peers (e.g., Mario teaching Molly). Students' engagement with the literacy events was an underlying theme that related to all of the examples shown. Their engagement led to a potential for stronger connections and subsequent transformations on their part. Similarly, their engagement potentially probed or extended the basic concepts and encouraged a greater opportunity for them to progress toward conventional uses of language.

The students' transformation to conventional literacy appeared related to the four themes when associated with Mrs. Casey's classroom. The formal language opportunities, instructional activities, and social interaction within these themes seemed to support students' transformations within the six emergent literacy characteristics. The next chapter further explores these themes as they extended to the students' literacy activities in other settings. In chapter 5, I switch from the Chapter 1 setting to the broader school community. I focus on literacy learning in the regular classrooms, school-to-home connections in relation to literacy practices, and the students' beliefs about their literacy learning.

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CHAPTER 5

SUPPORTING LITERACY LEARNING ACROSS SCHOOL SETTINGS

In chapter 4, I explored four themes (i.e., decision-making, opportunity, choice, and engagement) that supported the Chapter 1 students in their transformations related to emergent and conventional literacy within the Chapter 1 setting. In this chapter, I extend my analysis of students' transformations by exploring the potential of settings beyond the Chapter 1 classroom. Specifically, I focus on how the adults and peers in other settings mediate students' literacy learning; that is, some social interactions among the participants tended to support and contribute to the children's learning, while other social interactions either did little to support or, in fact, appeared to inhibit students' transformations. The analyses explored the potential mediation of students' literacy learning within two areas: (a) students' literacy-related experiences in regular education settings and (b) students' own beliefs about themselves as learners. Within the regular education setting, I examined the degree to which decision-making, opportunity, choice and engagement helped explain the nature of the mediating activities. These four themes were not always relevant within the students' beliefs about literacy; thus the analysis of students' beliefs is explained more directly in a later section of this chapter.

Mediated learning was a concept that appeared across settings. I define mediation as interceding or intervening in some manner. A mediator may (a) convey a message or (b) be the catalyst upon which an action occurs or participant depends. While *remediate* tends to imply a remedy is in order or that something needs to be fixed within the children, the term *mediate* extends

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to other people or situations that can intercede or intervene in a more supportive manner. Chapter 1 settings are often referred to as "remedial reading" programs, with the implication that something is wrong with the child that must be remedied. In contract to this reference, *remediate* may also mean to mediate again, such that the child is engaged in discussions and instruction with adults or peers intended to further mediate their learning. Thus, a remedial setting may be one that is supportive of the students, with the teacher acting as a mediator to reinforce or strengthen the child's learning.

I use the term *hinder* to describe situations where students' learning was either not mediated or seemed to be impeded or held back in some manner. For example, an adult may hinder childrens' learning by sending them negative messages about literacy practices. Across this chapter, one part of the analysis was to explore the various ways that adults or peers *mediated* and/or *hindered* students' learning. In addition, I was interested in how the teachers across the settings worked together to build a community in which the mediation complemented rather than hindered the student's progress as they moved from room to room.

In the following description around each of the two main areas (i.e., regular classrooms and students' beliefs), the analyses included the manner in which interactions mediated or hindered students' literacy learning. This focus on mediation was particularly relevant for exploring students' literacy transformations so we might learn more about the process and language that supports their learning of emergent and more conventional uses of literacy.

Regular Education Classrooms

The analyses in the regular education classroom in chapter 5 are consistent with the initial analyses for chapter 4. In that respect, I developed the four themes in a manner that included the data from the Chapter 1 and regular classroom settings. There were several additional characteristics that were relevant to the regular classrooms that did not appear within the Chapter 1 classroom. In Table 17, I again display the themes shown in Table 15, adding characteristics (in italics) related specifically to this chapter.

In the regular education settings, I trace positive and negative mediating influences in terms of language use and activities related to the four themes (i.e., decision-making, opportunities, choice, and engagement). In this setting, decision-making focused on how Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. Walston, and Mrs. Casey made decisions to connect instruction between students' literacy learning in the Chapter 1 setting and regular education classroom. In this section, I explore three main characteristics that emerged from the analysis. Teachers' *decisions* seemed to influence students' literacy transformation by (a) building congruent activities across settings, (b) discussing students' progress, and (c) communicating specific instructional information.

As did the teacher in the Chapter 1 room, teachers across the school created *opportunities* that were both planned and spontaneous. These opportunities influenced students' literacy processes by adults or peers taking advantage of situations to assist a student directly with an emergent literacy characteristic. Planned opportunities attempted to connect literacy learning between such settings as the computer room, music, and Chapter 1 and regular

Table 17

**Four Themes Supporting Literacy Transformations
in Regular Classrooms**

Theme	Characteristics	Examples

Decision-making	Types of instruction by teacher
	    -scaffolding
	    -modeling
	Decisions about curriculum
	Decisions about Chapter 1 placement
	Decisions about classroom connections
		Using contextualized emergent literacy activities
		Using poetry charts to engage students in left to right text use
		Use seatwork

Opportunity	Individualized instruction Teachers taking advantage of spontaneous opportunities presented in the classroom Types of activities available *Communication with parents* *Communication among teachers*	Teacher follow-up on student questions *Activities across settings*
Choice	Students' use of strategies Choice of participation *Choice of books* *Choice of activity*	Learning to use several different means to figure out a word Choosing a library book *Partner reading* *Selecting library books*
Engagement	Interest in activity Engagement in literacy events *Disengagement from literacy*	Focused on literacy task Participating in literacy events

education classrooms. Unplanned opportunities occurred within interactions in these settings, among teachers and students and between students.

Within these opportunities, students had to make *choices* that empowered them to further their literacy learning or disempowered them by missing opportunities to be engaged with text. Choice of books and free activities were two areas where students had to make direct literacy choices. Finally, students' *engagement* with literacy activities were directly related to all of the other themes, but most closely tied to interactions with peers and the instructional decisions of the teachers. I analyzed the theme of engagement in terms of tasks and interactions that conceivably contributed to students' involvement in literacy learning outside of the Chapter 1 room.

This analysis provided insights into the ways in which the members of these various communities contributed to or worked against the powerful literacy learning opportunities that became apparent in the analysis of the Chapter 1 room. While students' most substantial block of time for literacy instruction occurred within the Chapter 1 room, two other primary settings included Mrs. Duncan's first/second-grade room and Mrs. Walston's second-grade room. Within these classrooms, students' took part in several types of language arts activities (e.g., spelling, sharing time, basal reading, seatwork). These literacy curriculum activities and the language interactions surrounding them had the potential to support or hinder their literacy transformations. In the following sections, I reexamine each of the four themes in terms of my analyses of the regular classroom and connected school settings (i.e., library, gym, music, computers).

Decision-Making

The literacy instructional decisions in the regular rooms were somewhat different that those in the Chapter 1 room. As noted previously, both the first-grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan and the second-grade teacher, Mrs. Walston, used a basal reading program as the literacy curriculum for their students. This included an anthology of stories, accompanied by a teacher's manual, and used in conjunction with daily seatwork selected by the teacher. While the use of a basal may predict an automatic disparity in the instruction students received compared to that in the Chapter 1 setting, Mrs. Duncan's instruction was relatively congruent with that of Chapter 1, while Mrs. Walston's was characterized by a relatively separate curriculum. When students are pulled out of their classroom to receive instruction in another location by a different teacher, there is concern as to whether the two settings reinforce each other or simply maintain separate activities. In the following analysis, Mrs. Duncan's instruction appeared to be more congruent with the reinforcement while Mrs. Walston's seemed to exemplify a separate curriculum.

Curriculum and Instructional Decisions

Mrs. Duncan made several combined curriculum and instructional *decisions* that led to connections across the settings and seemed to provide the students with additional support in their transformations to conventional literacy. These *decisions* included (a) using a few activities within her room that Mrs. Casey used in Chapter 1 (e.g., special word books, partner reading), (b) discussing students' progress with Mrs. Casey, and (c) communicating her weekly vocabulary and spelling words to Mrs Casey for reinforcement. In this

manner, Mrs. Duncan's decisions positively mediated students' transformations. Her interventions in their literacy activities helped make connections across rooms and focus on the characteristics that reflect conventional literacy. Specifically, her decision to value and seek opportunities for communication enabled her to keep current on students' progress, from Mrs. Casey's perspective, on their transformation to conventional literacy and to support her instruction within the regular education classroom.

The following description represents how Mrs. Duncan's *decisions* about communication helped mediate students' transformations. Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Casey often talked with each other about students' progress. While I was not always there to observe these discussions, Mrs. Casey almost daily reported to me information she obtained about the students from Mrs. Duncan. On a September 27th half-day, I directly observed one such interaction during a planning afternoon without students. Mrs. Duncan decided to use an extended block of her planning time to discuss two students' progress with Mrs. Casey. First, she discovered that Mario was moving to her room and his prior teacher recommended Chapter 1 support. Mrs. Duncan wanted to discuss adding him to the Chapter 1 instruction placements.

Second, Mrs. Duncan wanted to discuss Jared's recent lack of writing progress with Mrs. Casey. Both teachers were excited about Jared's progress in reading and his emerging skills, discussing how he was starting to understand left to right and could recognize many letters that were difficult for him the previous week. However, Mrs. Duncan noted the difficulty and frustration Jared was experiencing with writing in her room. They took out his

writing folder from the Chapter 1 literacy activities and began an extensive discussion of Jared's problems and possible instructional solutions. They both wondered if Jared's scribbling was related to a vision problem and discussed recommending an eye exam. I did not observe nearly as many informative interactions between Mrs. Walston and Mrs. Casey, although the impromptu conversations did occur on an occasional basis as reported by Mrs. Casey.

Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Casey also meditated the students' progress by informing each other of their instructional activities. Mrs. Duncan made the *decision* to inform Mrs. Casey of weekly basal and spelling words the students were practicing in the regular education room. Mrs. Casey wrote weekly Chapter 1 instructional goals on a memo and Mrs. Duncan supplied her with basal and spelling words she planned to teach (see Figure 11). In contrast, Mrs. Walston received a similar letter each week, but did not return it to Mrs. Casey. In the May interview, Mrs. Duncan commented, "I make sure to let Mrs. Casey know which words I am using so that she can reinforce those with the students. I usually give them to her earlier than we learn them so that they become familiar to the students" (Interview, May 17, 1995).

Mrs. Duncan's interview comment revealed a reason (i.e. reinforcement, student familiarity) for her decision to return weekly communication letters to Mrs. Casey. She appeared to believe in the importance of building some connections across the two settings for the students. This decision about written communication enabled the teachers to be informed about the literacy characteristics that might be a focus that week (e.g., letters *a-e*, pattern books). The decision also led to several opportunities within both classrooms where the

Teacher   Duncan

Date   9/12 - 9/16

Vocabulary

1.. red
2. blue
3. yellow
4. fish
5. cat

Please return by noon on Friday.   Thanks!

Spelling

cat
fat
at
sat
bat
am

I plan:

Book: Marked yet.
What's oversee.

Mrs Casey   Alphabet Recognition.
                A - E

Teacher   Duncan

Date   9/19 - 9/24 '94

Vocabulary

1. Dad   6. she
2. can
3. Mom
4. dog
5. he

Please return by noon on Friday.   Thanks!

Spelling

pat   jam
hat   man
ran   [the]
can

I plan:
Auditory/visually
- recognizing
         F-J

- Green Bear

Figure 11.   Mrs. Casey's weekly memo.

students expressed their knowledge of the words in a more conventional manner.

To provide an example of the connections that students made across the setting, I selected the December 13 lesson as one of several examples of the Chapter 1 students showing engagement within words connected to both settings. With each week, the students started to make more connections and increased participation in the regular education discussions about the basal words. Thus, while this transcript of the basal word lesson was not unique in showing that students' knowledge of words, the December date reflected greater participation by the students than occurred in September or October. In addition, on this particular day, Daniel's participation reflected a shift that differed from previous discussion of basal words, participation that seemed connected to the type of discussions in Mrs. Casey's room.

The three first graders participated in a routine basal lesson in Mrs. Duncan's room. Mario did not participate since he was completing his second-grade work. Mrs. Duncan usually followed a regular basal instruction pattern of introducing vocabulary words, asking the students to repeat them, introducing a story with questions, reading the story together, and asking follow-up questions with an attached worksheet page about the story.

The lesson illustrates how the intended connections across the two rooms were of benefit to the students (e.g., Mrs. Casey's room reinforced the vocabulary words). During previous observations, I noticed the students were increasingly recognizing the basal words within Mrs. Duncan's room. This transcript provided a window into the language learning of the Chapter 1

students, as Daniel brought discourse rules from Mrs. Casey's room into Mrs. Duncan's room.

Mrs. Duncan started the lesson by saying that the students were going to read a story called, "On the Bus" (de Paola, 1989). She brought out her vocabulary flashcards and proceeded to show each one, one at a time. The Chapter 1 students practiced these words on three prior occasions with Mrs. Casey. The other class members had never seen the words in Mrs. Duncan's prior instruction. Mrs. Casey practices reading the words in her classroom each day, and these were the words that the students drew upon to write in their special word books.

Mrs. Duncan's routine started as usual. She showed a card containing the word "off. Molly, Jared, and Daniel raised their hand and Molly gave the correct answer when called upon. For the second and third words, (i.e. down and sat), Molly and Jared raised their hands and Jared correctly gave the third answer.

During this time, Daniel stopped participating in the whole class routine nature of the event. Rather, he arose from his seat on the floor, moved toward the pocket chart, took the two cards "sat" and "down" and moved them together, explaining to Mrs. Duncan that he made a sentence. Mrs. Duncan broke from her regular routine, expressed surprise at Daniel's sentence, and told him that yes, he did make a sentence. She said she thought that was quite clever. Daniel's break from a more regular routine matched the type of activity from Mrs. Casey's room, in which she encouraged the students to make sentences

out of the words. It also displayed Daniel's growing awareness of the need to understand text and make sense of it.

The lesson continued as both Molly and Jared raised their hands for the word "bus." All three raised their hand for "looked" with Jared commenting that "This is one of the words in Mrs. Casey's." For the next word "stopped," Molly and Jared were the only two students to raise their hand to indicate they knew the word, with Jared correctly reading it. The leadership in giving answers and participating (i.e., raising their hand and/or giving a correct answer) showed apparent *engagement* and knowledge on the part of the Chapter 1 students.

During this time, Daniel again strayed from the discussion, preferring instead to make his own sense of the words. For the next word "nuts," Molly and Jared raised their hands. Daniel, however, interrupted and stated:

Daniel: I made, I made a sentence!

Mrs. D: Daniel. What did you make up?

Daniel: You drive me nuts.

Mrs. D: What does that mean Daniel? That's a different meaning of nuts, isn't it.

Daniel: Maybe, when you are in the car and your mom and dad are driving, and the kids are really loud in the back, then they say that.

Mrs. D: Who says that? Your mom and dad?

Daniel: Yeah.

The conversation continued about the meaning of the phrase and other students participated in sharing their views of the word within a sentence. For

the last word, "love" Molly recognized it and told Mrs. Duncan she already knew it from upstairs (i.e. Mrs. Casey's room is upstairs).

For Mrs. Duncan's instruction, interjections such as Daniel's were not usually allowed or encouraged. However, his strong engagement with making sense of the words led her to make the *decision* to stop her focus and instead go along with Daniel's sense-making attempts. In this case, she was mediating Daniel's progress by encouraging his strategies and supporting his method of participation.

This transcript revealed several encouraging aspects of the possible connections that students were making across classrooms. First, in contrast to their regular education peers, the Chapter 1 students appeared to know these words in a conventional manner. Since they had not previously seen the words in Mrs. Duncan's class, a plausible conclusion is that the three days of interaction with them in Mrs. Casey's class supported their ability to recognize and read the words. Second, the Chapter 1 students appeared to be leaders within this classroom of literacy events. In all cases, they seemed to know the words, and at one point were the only ones in the rooms to know one of the words. Third, the students' verbally indicated the connections they made across the rooms. They realized and expressed to Mrs. Duncan that they learned the word in Mrs. Casey's room. This seemed to indicate that the students were able to transfer their learning from one setting to another. Fourth, Mrs. Duncan's willingly made the decision to allow and even encourage Daniel's sense-making attempts, even though this was not generally a part of her routine.

The *decision* on the part of Mrs. Duncan to maintain written discourse with Mrs. Casey and to use oral discourse during the instructional period appeared to be an important aspect of (a) strengthening the connections across settings, (b) assisting the Chapter 1 students in having successful participation with their peers, and (c) helping the students with literacy characteristics, including the ability to recognize and match print when viewed in different contexts. Mrs. Duncan's *decision* also seemed to encourage students to be *engaged* and to *choose* to participate, perhaps due to their successful attempts. Thus, this is an example of the overlap of themes, though it seemed clear that the opportunity, engagement and choice to participate all resulted from Mrs. Duncan's decision to communicate and make classroom connections with Mrs. Casey. As for the students, their *engagement* seemed related to the connected instructional contexts and their apparent success within these contexts.

The Chapter 1 students in Mrs. Duncan's room were fortunate in that both she and Mrs. Casey decided to work together to help bridge the literacy instruction and learning across the two settings. There appeared to be evidence (e.g., students' knowledge of the words, attempts at sense-making) that such communication enhanced the students' literacy transformations. In addition, it appeared that both teachers were successfully building a literacy community in which the students were regularly in situations where they were both *acquiring* literacy characteristics and attitudes and *learning* direct literacy principles from their involvement within this community.

While the students in Mrs. Walston's room were also growing in their literacy characteristics and attitudes, they were not part of the literacy

community depicted for Mrs. Duncan's students. Mrs. Walston was different in that her *decision-making* often led to many community activities for her students such as field trips, theme units, group art projects, and making food. The students worked closely together on these projects. However, it was not like the literacy community of Mrs. Duncan's class. Mrs. Walston rarely tied these units and projects to reading and writing instruction, often separating that instruction to a certain time period. Mrs. Walston's *decision-making* appeared to do little to strengthen the connections across settings. I rarely observed the students engaging in activities similar to their Chapter 1 instruction nor did Mrs. Casey include their classroom reading activities in her room.

Mrs. Walston often used reading and writing in a manner that seemed to suggest she was keeping the students busy, while she worked with small groups on the larger projects. For example, during Thanksgiving week, the students spent most of the morning working individually in their desks, receiving extra worksheets to occupy them throughout the entire morning while the teacher worked with small groups of students to prepare the Thanksgiving food. The resulting dinner with parents brought into the classroom appeared to be a beneficial community event, but the enormous time spent on this project meant that literacy activities of any form were minimal in the previous weeks. Thus, Mrs. Walston's decision-making led to a community in the sense of providing a bridge across home and school and in having the students work together on projects, but there seemed to be little community building for her students across the school literacy settings.

Learning Opportunities

Just as both planned and spontaneous opportunities arose within the Chapter 1 room (e.g., Daniel's heart t-shirt), they also arose in other settings. Both Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Walston seemed to appreciate the need to plan learning opportunities and to take advantage of spontaneous opportunities to mediate students' literacy learning.

Planned Opportunities

There were many situations across the school that led to adults supporting and encouraging students' learning of the emergent literacy characteristics. For example, in the computer room, the keyboards had the lower case letters printed next to the capital letters. This enabled the first graders who had a better grasp of lower case letters to participate actively. It also gave them another opportunity to use these letters in an authentic manner so that they were learning the letter names to complete a goal (i.e., win the game) or to converse with another person (e.g., asking about the purpose of a letter key for the game rules). The classroom teachers used the computer room as an opportunity to reinforce the literacy characteristics they were working on, by selecting the games to match their instruction. For example, Mrs. Duncan requested that Mr. Bob put a game on each computer to let the students practice rhyming words. She used the same words in her classroom and wanted to reinforce the words. Volunteers (e.g., parents, neighborhood

adults[9]) helped to keep the adult/student ratio low so that students had extra help focused on their particular needs.

During both gym and music, numerous oral language opportunities arose, such as the need to follow directions, listen carefully to the meaning of the rules, and follow along in a book while singing the music. During one observation, two nursery rhymes were the basis for a song. The Chapter 1 students had just read those selections with Mrs. Casey. They appeared to be quite engaged in the activity and eager to show their peers that they already knew the words. In this case, the music and gym teachers were supporting the students' progress in several literacy characteristics (e.g., left to right, page turning, reading fluently, paying attention to text meaning). While these were planned opportunities for the two teachers, they were perhaps not intentional planned for literacy purposes. Regardless, they did appear to support the students' literacy interest and oral language connections.

Mrs. Markey, the librarian, intentionally placed special books near her desk, related to holidays or a theme. Many times, these selections matched the read aloud books used by the classroom teachers. Mrs. Markey knew that Mrs. Walston routinely used Jack Prelutsky poems and which books Mrs. Duncan read to her class. She allowed and encouraged student access to

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[9] This was one example of the school community involving members from the larger neighborhood community. Volunteers and some instructional aides often had direct connections to the school. The grown children of one computer room volunteer had attended Oakgrove. She had a grandson who currently attended the school. Similarly, the children of an instructional aide, who retired in 1995 after 30 years of teaching in the school, attended the school in previous decades.

those books. She was aware of which students attended Chapter 1, although she did not seem aware of the literature they were using in Mrs. Casey's room.

As for the emerging characteristics of literature response, during library time, students often had planned opportunities to engage in response oriented conversation. Every week, the students either saw a film about library rules/ practices or listened to a book. When listening to a book, Mrs. Markey usually started a conversation encouraging response-oriented discussion (e.g., What did you think about this book?). For example, during a December 9 observation, Mrs. Markey encouraged an opportunity to have Chapter 1 students engage in literature response with their peers. Mrs. Duncan's students were listening to David McPhail's (1993) *Santa's Book of Names*. When Daniel tried to interject a few comments (e.g., he noted that "doll" was one of their spelling words) Mrs. Markey asked him to hold his comment because they were running out of time. When she finished reading the book to the students, she then encouraged the students to critique the book, comment on it, and share what they would have done in the situation of the characters. In that respect, the discussions she initiated were helping them to develop literature response characteristics.

Across these school settings, planned opportunities were created that supported students' transformations related to emerging and conventional uses of literacy. This included areas such as reading fluently (e.g., music texts), learning letters (e.g., computer keyboards), critiquing text (e.g., library). Such opportunities seemed to reinforce literacy characteristics for authentic and practical reasons.

Spontaneous Opportunities

Spontaneous opportunities included areas such as taking up on student's questions or using a resource in the room as a tool to learn. Many times, these spontaneous opportunities seemed to occur during informal discussions or individual conversations. My analyses revealed numerous cases of social interactions about literacy characteristics that appeared to support students in their literacy transformations. I provide one example, chosen to exhibit the unplanned nature of the opportunity.

During the following transcript, Daniel was sharpening his pencil, a regular routine but not one that we might expect could lead to a great deal of literacy learning. However, Mrs. Duncan followed up on Daniel's question about a lunch calendar and made good use of an unplanned opportunity to reinforce literacy characteristics related to left to right, sequential patterns, and one-to-one matching in addition to a focus on figuring out the meaning of the calendar:

52 Daniel: (sharpening his pencil and looking at the bulletin board next to the sharpener) Look, Mrs. Duncan. You did this calendar wrong because, [be

53 Mrs. D: [I didn't make it go 1 through 5, you know why it goes 1 to 5? Somebody else made it because Saturday and Sunday they don't show on the calendar, Daniel. They only have Monday, Tuesday, [Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

54 Daniel: [Does that mean, (pointing to the numbers on the calendar), does that mean? 1, 2, 5

55	Mrs. D:	(pointing to the days on the calendar with Daniel) Friday is the second. The third is Saturday, the fourth is Sunday, and then it starts on the fifth. Isn't that interesting? They skipped the weekend.
56	Daniel:	But, but, it's because, I think for the lunches.
57	Mrs. D:	(Winks and nods at Daniel with a smile on her face.) (Transcript, November 7, 1994)

Daniel's pencil sharpening was a routine part of the day. However, due to Mrs. Duncan's decision to follow up on Daniel's comment, an opportunity developed to work on several literacy skills.   Perhaps more importantly, Daniel tried to make sense of a text and Mrs. Duncan supported his attempt to understand why the calendar was designed as it was, focusing on the meaning of the text in addition to the skills necessary to understand it.

Literacy Choices

In Mrs. Casey's room, students' choices focused on their participation and strategies. These categories were also important within the regular classrooms. For example, in Mrs. Duncan's basal lesson the students' choice to participate was apparent. Molly made a choice among strategies for how to spell "blue" in the regular education class in addition to the Chapter 1 room. However, there were two separate categories (i.e. choice of activity and choice of books) that seemed to pertain to students only outside the Chapter 1 room.

Choice of Activity

Each day, Mrs. Duncan's students were able to choose their own activities. Sometimes, they chose literacy activities and other times decided to complete nonliteracy activities.   Given the structured and timed nature of the

Chapter 1 room, usually the period focused on the daily activities led or decided upon by Mrs. Casey. In Mrs. Walston's second-grade class, the Chapter 1 students rarely engaged in choosing free-time activities, since they usually worked until lunch to finish their morning assignments. Thus, choice of activity was an issue primarily in Mrs. Duncan's room.

In Mrs. Duncan's room, the first/second-grade combination and her intentional planning allowed students' to have a free choice of activities at certain points during the day. They were able to choose among several options such as listening to books on tape, reading silently or with a partner, completing puzzles, playing with word games, and completely earlier unfinished work. Each of the four Chapter 1 students chose separate and unique activities.

On most days, Mario chose craft-related creative activities, including making a hat for his little sister, making a game out of paper, and coloring a paper he brought from his Sunday School class. He rarely chose to read books. If he did choose to read, Mario read with a peer, rather than individually as many of the other students were doing. Once he worked on his spelling words, reading them and to his friend to spell and then spelling them as his friend read the words to him. This was a choice that Mrs. Duncan had suggested earlier in the morning and Mario used.

In contrast, Molly regularly chose to read books. Her favorite books to read were *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Martin, 1967) and the stories out of her basal readers. This is, perhaps, not surprising because in terms of *engagement* and feeling successful at reading, the conventional manner in

which Molly read these books helped her to consider herself a reader. At certain times, Molly chose to complete a puzzle or listen to a story on tape. On all of the days I observed her, Molly regularly initiated conversation with her peers, talking or fighting with them about social issues within the classroom (e.g., who would play with whom at lunch).

Daniel varied daily about his choice of activity. During my observations, he selected each of the activities at some point. Like Molly, he read his basal reader and he worked on the puzzles. He was a close friend with Joshua, one of the other boys in the room and often played games or read books with him. Mrs. Duncan described Joshua as one of the better readers in the room. Thus, Daniel's choice to partner read with Joshua, potentially placed him in a regular social interaction setting with a more knowledgeable peer.

Jared's general status during free time was to make it free--in many cases choosing none of these activities and preferring to go play in the restroom, at the sink, or simply to walk around the room. He often disturbed other students until Mrs. Duncan started him on an activity. When he did select an activity on his own and appeared on task, it was generally to complete a puzzle. On one occasion, I observed him taking out his basal reader and reading the story silently.

These choices of activity are potentially an important piece of supporting students' growth toward conventional literacy practices. In this sense, the students themselves were playing an active role in their own learning. Their choice of activities also seemed to suggest that they enjoyed or felt success with some of the routine literacy activities (e.g., reading the basal).

Choice of Books

Teachers and parents conveyed messages about literacy when students were in a position to *choose* books. For some students, the adult intervention seemed to hinder students' progress toward characteristics related to views of literacy. There were a few occasions during the school year for students to select books of their own choosing. One obvious place was during their weekly library time. Opportunities for students to select books also occurred during the Parent Teacher Association book fair and three Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) visits to the school. These special events also sent mixed messages to the students. All three teachers encouraged the students to read and referred to them as readers in support of emergent characteristics related to helping students view themselves as readers. However, in other situations the students were essentially being told that they nonreaders or could only read easy books; that is, the adults directed certain students to easier books, rather than the books that the students themselves wanted to read.

During the fall RIF period, the books were laid out on the table by grade level. The parent volunteers expected the students to select books only from certain tables. When Paul attempted to take a dinosaur book from the third-grade table, he was told to by a parent to put it back and select a different book. He came to me and asked if there was a Jack Prelutsky book, and I helped him to select Prelutsky's (1981) *It's Christmas* book. Similarly, Mario was quite excited to select a book. He picked out Jack Prelutsky's (1984) *The New Kid on the Block,* a book with poems he read in Mrs. Casey's room. Again, one of the parents, apparently not realizing he was a second grader within the first/second

split, told him that he had to pick an easier book. Mario seemed quite upset at not being able to take the Prelutsky book, most notably in his slumped shoulders, frown, and questioning look toward the adult. After that incident, Mario was the last person to select a book after looking through many others and eventually selected a book about sharks, a favorite topic of his. In both of these cases, the choice of books could have been a positive experience, but resulted in disappointment for the boys.

The other Chapter 1 students had more successful selections, ending up with a book of their own choice. Whereas the parents could have played a stronger role in mediating positive views of literacy for the students, the opposite occurred. The parent in charge told me that she thought students should only select books they were able to read and arranged the books by grade level. However, she did not work with these students and was not aware of their actual reading abilities or interests. Thus, instead of furthering students' progress toward developing a positive attitude toward reading, the messages sent to the children seemed to hinder their growth.

During library time, the students had a little more freedom in terms of selecting books. However, their choices were not necessarily based on the text of a given book. For example, Molly tried to reach a book on the top shelf. She told me she wanted it because the girl on the front was pretty. Paul had certain topics in mind, often selecting dinosaurs or sharks as his topic. However, if either Molly or Paul took a library book, they were not allowed to take it home because they had not returned other books. In these examples, the parents

and teachers, likely unknowingly, were essentially hindering the students' positive attitudes toward reading.

Engagement With Literacy

As with their engagement in Mrs. Casey's room, the Chapter 1 students showed episodes of apparent engagement and disengagement in other settings. The students regularly became involved in literacy events directed or started by the teachers. In the following analysis, it is also apparent that the students' themselves have their own literacy needs and purposes. Thus, their literacy acquisition seemed influenced by their engagement in formal instruction and their engagement with informal literacy practices. Within the regular education settings, informal interactions with peers led to extended engagement with literacy activities. Some of the instructional decisions by the teachers created extended periods of disengagement. In the following sections, I explore how peers and adults potentially mediate students' literacy learning by *engaging* the students in meaningful literacy activities. They also may convey messages to students that hinder positive attitudes associated with conventional literacy.

Student Engagement and Interest

In both Mrs. Duncan's and Mrs. Walston's classrooms, the students appeared to be engaged in literacy tasks that were not officially sanctioned by the teachers. When I interviewed Mrs. Duncan's students, I found what I

labeled recess charts (see Figure 12 for example) in several desks.[10] Both

Daniel and Molly had a chart in their desk and their names were included on

several other students' charts.[11] Katie, a first-grade peer, told me the charts

were for, "people who pick other people to play with them at recess." Students

wrote their names on the papers, listed other students, and sent the charts

around the room for students to indicate if they would play at recess that day or

not. This literacy task engaged the Chapter 1 students in writing characteristics

that potentially increased their progress in awareness of a writing audience and

writing to communicate. The initiation of this writing activity by the students

themselves was an important indication of their engagement. In addition, this

was an critical source of information about students' own purpose for literacy

and their abilities to acquire literacy outside of the more formal learning

directed instruction by the teachers.

In Mrs. Walston's room, considerable time was spent by the students on

individual seatwork. Each day, the teacher distributed four papers, in addition

to a daily journal entry, spelling task, and boardwork (e.g., using the dictionary

to find the definitions of five words). During my observations, Breanne

generally remained engaged with her work and completed most of it. Even

though she was not supposed to talk with others, Breanne often consulted with

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[10] After my interview with these students, I asked Mrs. Duncan if she knew about their recess charts and she was not aware of them. She seemed surprised that she did not know since I found them in the desks of several students.

[11] Jared did not have one in his desk, nor did I ever see his name listed on another chart.

Shukeyna, the student across from her. Shukeyna and Breanne were partners when completing most work, sharing and debating answers.

For both Shukeyna and Breanne, this peer interaction seemed to mediate the girls learning of several literacy characteristics, depending upon the nature of the assignments. For example, one boardwork assignment required them to place 12 words in alphabetical order and write the definitions of the words. They looked up words together in a dictionary, traced the order of the alphabet and figured out the unknown words they encountered. By working together, the two girls seemed to be engaged in the tasks and successfully completing them. If Breanne did not complete her work, it was generally because she had to leave for Chapter 1, not because she not working when she was supposed to work.[12] In contrast, Paul and Trevor did not respond well to the responsibility of completing all of this work. I now turn to circumstances in which the teachers seemed to hinder students' literacy transformations, particularly in relation to their attitudes as exemplified in the views of literacy characteristic.

Disengagement

At some point, each of the students appeared to be disengaged from their literacy tasks. With the exception of a few activities (e.g., the sequencing

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[12] Mrs. Walston supplied a piece of disconfirming evidence to my observations. At the parent/teacher conference for Breanne, Mrs. Walston suggested that Breanne was not getting her work done because she was talking with a friend. My observations contradicted this statement, in that I often found the conversations to be directly related to her assignment and seemed to be helping Breanne to complete her work. While I doubt it was the case, I am not sure if Breanne was acting differently during my observational periods, leading her to be more focused on her assignments.

event) this did not occur within the Chapter 1 room, perhaps due to the small numbers of students that led to almost constant talk or activity. In Mrs. Duncan's room, the students completed short assignments in between reading basal stories and selecting their own projects. This led to greater choice of activity on their part and, with the exception of Jared, their choices seemed to engage them in literacy opportunities.

However, in Mrs. Walston's second-grade room, a large amount of seatwork time seemed to hinder students' engagement with literacy. Paul and Trevor both seemed disengaged from literacy in almost every observation of their morning reading time. Mrs. Walston's *decision-making* led to instructional practices that often resulted in individual seatwork focused on isolated skills sheets. This decision-making seemed directly related to the disengagement of the students.

Paul's response to the seatwork, for example, was simply to refrain from completing his work by playing with toys, going to the restroom, or watching other students. Observations of Paul indicated that he generally sat at his desk, played with some of the toys in it, and wrote on a paper about 1 minute out of every 10 minutes. For example, during a November 22, 1994, observation from 9:16 to 9:35, Paul only wrote his name and the date on his boardwork page. In general, any minimal attempts on his part were typically immediately after Mrs. Walston said something directing him to finish his work. Paul also avoided work by spending extended periods in the restroom across the hallway. Paul often spent the afternoons in the hallway completing his unfinished work, sometimes missing recess periods.

During a December 15 interview, Paul and I pulled out over 100 unfinished papers from his desk. When I asked him why he had unfinished papers, Paul replied that he "forgot to finish them a long time ago." I asked him if he was supposed finish them at home and/or recess, he nonchalantly said no. Paul quickly changed the subject to the upcoming holidays. During the November 22 conferences, Paul's mother said she worked to help him finish a packet of papers sent home by Mrs. Walston. However, his mother reported that Paul resisted this work and wrote unreadable answers. Regardless of the reasons that Paul did or did not complete his work, other than during Chapter 1 instruction, Paul spent most of his reading time disengaged from literacy tasks.

Trevor tried a different means of avoiding the seatwork tasks. He seemed to be quite aware of whether or not he would be accountable for completing a literacy task. The easier papers (i.e., those that involved a lot of coloring) he generally completed correctly. However, on several papers, he often appeared never to read any of the words, instead merely making guesses about answers. In this manner, Trevor completed the responsibility of turning in his work. To provide evidence of these assertions, the following is a segment from my fieldnotes, followed by my informational discussion with Trevor. During a November 22 observation, I worked directly on a paper with Trevor after I noticed he was having trouble reading the words:

> Trevor finished his boardwork paper where he put the 12 words in ABC order. After putting it in the basket, he started working on a paper that is labeled critical thinking at the top. He is to separate the people words, insect words, and all other words. He opened his desk, took his pencil out, looked at the paper and then just started writing words on each line. He finished within a minute and turned in this paper, although none of it

was correct. When he started his next paper, on categorization, I walked over to his desk and asked him what he was supposed to do. He said put the words by the lines. I read through each word with him and helped him to read the names of five months (e.g., May, December) and place that word next to it. Shukeyna asked me for some help on her paper. After helping her, I turned back to Trevor, who was finishing up his paper, with only 1 of the remaining 3 answers correct (Fieldnotes, November 22, 1994).

After this observation and period of helping Trevor, I initiated the

following conversation with him:

Ginny: If you turn one in and get some wrong on your paper, do you have to redo them?

Trevor: No. (shaking his head).

Ginny: Do you take them home and do them at home?

Trevor: (shaking his head).

Trevor's answers seemed to reflect his recognition that he was not accountable

for finishing his work correctly. However, in January, he told me that he did

have to redo the papers, suggesting that this strategy was no longer working for

him. For Travis, his disengagement was related to a strategy he assumed to

help him cope with the assignments and tasks, rather than being engaged in

the work itself. Mrs. Walston did respond to both boys by offering encourage-

ment when they completed an assignment correctly.

Both Trevor and Paul confirmed their dislike of the seatwork tasks during

a December 16 interview. I asked the students if they were a teacher, which of

the activities they would do with their students. Both boys were quite firm in

their insistence that they would not have boardwork or papers. I explore in

greater detail their beliefs about these activities later in this chapter.

Mrs. Walston's suggestion to both of the boys that they needed to "work on completing your reading" seemed to convey a message to them that reading was equivalent to seatwork.[13]   Further, the seatwork appeared to be leading the students away from a conventional attitude about reading that might entail enjoyment and lifelong commitment.   Not only did it appear that Mrs. Walston was negatively impacting certain literacy characteristics (e.g., views of literacy), but the time that they spent on these tasks was, for the most part, not positively mediating the other characteristics either (e.g., strategic literacy).   For example, other than in Mrs. Casey's room, Paul and Trevor spent most of their mornings disengaged from their literacy assignments, resulting in little opportunity to either acquire or learn literacy characteristics.

Difficult or frustrating tasks.   In Mrs. Duncan's room, both Mario and Jared displayed signs of disengagement on occasion, but not daily as did Paul and Trevor.   For Mario, there were many times when he was supposed to be engaged with the second-grade work that simply seemed to be too hard for him.   On a few occasions, I worked directly with Mario on his assignments.   He often had difficulty reading the words and comprehending the text.   Thus, he seemed relieved to have my help with finishing the assignments and understand what he was required to do.   His difficulty with his assignments

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[13] During Breanne's parent/teacher conference, Mrs. Walston made a similar comment. She told Breanne's mother, "I am concerned with her reading, /// because with her reading as with some of her other work, you know, we're continuing to work on it, but it only gets done when she chooses to do it" (Conference, November 9, 1994). As the conference continued, Mrs. Walston made several additional comments about reading, all connected to the seatwork.

seemed to lead to several behavior problems, including regularly leaving his desk, talking to his neighbors about unrelated topics, or simply turning in the work even though he knew there were errors. For example, when Mrs. Duncan worked with the first graders, I observed Mario often talking with his neighbors and copying their answers or not completing his own paper when they would not help him. In this sense, Mrs. Duncan's assignments were hindering Mario's literacy development.

However, she seemed to recognize this problem and started giving him easier assignments or those that were still somewhat challenging yet at a level where Mario could also experience success. This decision was made at a point when the adults started discussing the possibility of Mario repeating second grade. Mrs. Duncan decided to take advantage of the first/second-grade split classroom, where Mario could work with others on tasks that were more appropriate for him.

Jared experienced similar frustration that led him away from the literacy tasks and into behavior problems. Jared's problem appeared related to his extreme difficulty with small motor coordination, such that any writing was laborious for him. Sometimes, he would start to write something and then stop, occasionally starting to cry. Mrs. Duncan often mediated Jared's progress by stepping in to provide some type of scaffold for Jared (e.g., writing his dictated sentence, letting him verbally give answers to spelling tests). However, in a class of 25 students including two grade levels, she was not able to provide the individualized instruction or attention that Jared seemed to need. In this sense, Mrs. Duncan was not necessarily negatively affecting Jared's learning as a part

of her regular routine, but she was not in a position to give him regular support.

For Jared, his disengagement seemed closely tied to an eye problem. Early in the academic year, both Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Duncan noticed that he appeared to have a vision problem and worked with his parents to get him to see an eye doctor, an appointment that led to new glasses. Subsequently, the visual tasks became easier for Jared. His perception problems did remain to some extent, but because he did not qualify for special education services and neither the Chapter 1 funding nor his parent's medical insurance covered vision expenses, additional medical attention was not sought.

These examples of disengagement within the regular classrooms were an important aspect to consider in relation to the students' learning. In situations where the students were engaged in the tasks, they were increasing their chances for learning conventional forms of literacy. In situations where the students were disengaged from their tasks, they were placing themselves at a greater risk for falling behind their peers. In some cases, the students had a *choice* about whether to be *engaged* with the tasks. Their frustration or awareness of not being accountable for the tasks led them to make choices that did not support their literacy growth. In most cases, this responsibility for engagement rested in the decision-making of the teachers and their views of what should comprise reading instruction.

Individual versus groupwork. One interesting aspect of their engagement related to the language opportunities that were associated with the literacy events. When the second graders were working individually, they were more likely to be disengaged from the task. From a sociocultural

perspective, two concerns regarding Paul and Trevor's seatwork activities were apparent to me. First, they worked individually, with discussion with peers discouraged by the teacher. Second, the assignments were test-like in nature, with the expectation that the work be completed with little, if any, instruction from the teacher about what to do or the purpose of the assignment. The emphasis seemed only related to the written product with little consideration or discussion about the learning process.

This was evident in their individual seatwork, but also in the group sequencing group event with Mrs. Casey (see chapter 4). When the students were working together and talking about the task, they were more engaged in it. Similarly, for the first graders, the alphabetical order task in Mrs. Casey's room led to much more engagement when they were all working together than when they were working on the same task individually. In this manner, the peers mediated each others' learning.

Student Beliefs' About Literacy and Literacy Activities

In the previous sections, I explored how participants supported student's literacy transformations, in relation to various themes and characteristics. Now, I turn to the students' beliefs about their participation within this community. I found this to be of particular importance to the findings of the study in relation to the theme of engagement. In this sense, when students were engaged in an activity, they often appeared to support their own learning. When disengaged, they seemed to hinder their own learning. The students clearly played a large role in their own learning, especially in relation to the *choices* made by the students and their *engagement* and interest in literacy activities.

Exploration of the students' beliefs was important to this study for several reasons. First, within their classroom communities, the students interact with many adults and peers. These interactions lead to a possible shared system of beliefs, means of discussing and defining literacy, and an understanding of their own status within the community. Second, students' negative and positive beliefs about literacy potentially contribute to their transformations to conventional literacy in terms of their attitudes about text. Engagement with literacy, as shown in previous sections, appeared critical to students' progress. Thus, by understanding students' beliefs and attitudes, we have better access to understanding their views about their literacy and literacy instruction and, indirectly, have evidence to understand how students interpret the messages conveyed by their parents, teachers, and peers.

To explore students' beliefs, three primary lenses enabled me to gain information from the students: (a) data from their interactions with Chapter 1 peers, (b) data from observations with their classroom peers, and (c) formal interview and informal discussion data. Each of these areas provided a unique opportunity to access and understand better students' views of literacy. The data from these three areas are not addressed separately, rather they are triangulated within an overall framework based on patterns that developed from the data. In this section, there were three main categories: (a) students' views of reading, (b) their instructional views of learning literacy skills and strategies, and (c) their views of themselves as learners.

Across all three categories, the most striking finding was the difference between the first-grade group and second-grade group in their ability to

articulate and critique their views of literacy and the activities in which they engaged. The first-grade students consistently accepted their literacy instructional activities as "givens," and gave simple, short answers about when asked about literacy or literacy instruction. The second-grade students gave more in-depth and critical statements to the same questions. For this reason, the second graders are more visible in the analyses in terms of their statements, simply because the first graders seemed to be content and accepting of their daily activities.

Students' Views of Literacy

Students' rationale for learning to read and its long-term importance provided insight into their views of literacy and reasons for learning. Within the community, messages appeared to be conveyed to students with regard to the importance of reading and learning. For example, it appeared that the first-grade group held a community-wide message that first grade was the place where they learned to read. I am not sure if this was related to their kindergarten, home experiences, or both.

Consistent with my assertion that the first-grade group seemed to accept their activities, all four students basically stated that you learn to read because you have to learn. Molly said it was something "you learn in first grade." Daniel and Jared both had similar views to Molly, with Daniel adding that to get good at reading, "you practice a lot." In various interviews and discussions, Mario repeatedly returned to his theme that you had to read "to get the harder books" suggesting that to him, a reason to read was simply to read harder books.

The second-grade group's answers were more complex and reflected a broader spectrum than just the events occurring within their classrooms. It appeared that parents and teachers were conveying messages to them about the need for reading and staying in school. For example, when Paul was asked why the students were reading a book, he said because it helped you to get smarter:

> If we are not smart when we grow up, we won't be able to have a job. Then, we won't have enough to buy a house and have our own tv. We won't have a lots of money left so we, and we have to pay for the house insurance. But if we don't have enough of money, then how are you supposed to, uh, keep us from gettin' out on the streets. And we can't eat every day (Interview, December 16, 1994).

Like Paul, Breanne's reason for learning to read indicated a long-term commitment for staying in school. Referring to a videotape clip she was watching of her group reading a book, Breanne stated:

> You have to do these things so you learn to read so you go to high school. My mom dropped out of high school. I'm going to learn these to read, so I can go to high school (Interview, December 16, 1994).

Her reason incorporated a goal of further education, and indicated that her mother was likely encouraging this view.

Trevor's reason for reading also seemed to relate to advice he was hearing from his mother. During her parent/teacher conference, Trevor's mother talked about Trevor's homework,

> He doesn't do it and I tell him to do and he doesn't, I tell him you're gonna pay down the road. You know, if you end up failing second grade because you're not completing the work, there's nothing I can do. You know, cause I can't sit there and force him to do it (Conference, November 9, 1994).

Considering this view, it is perhaps not too surprising that Trevor thought he should read, "So you can go on to the next grade. Getting your reading done helps you keep learning it" (Interview, December 15, 1994).

The views of the first-grade group, while simple and straightforward, seemed to be quite reasonable given that reading was new to them, they did practice a lot, and eventually read harder books. Consistent with their emerging characteristics of needing to learn book-handling knowledge and print awareness early in the year, their perceptions of reasons for learning to read seemed to focus on simply accomplishing the task of "learning to read," a belief that early in the year most of them viewed as something they did not do.

For the second-grade students, their conventional use of some basic literacy concepts led them to situations where reading was more complex, with a focus on understanding the text and being prompted by community members (i.e., teachers and parents) as to the need for engaging in text. Since the strategies they were learning and the discussions in which they engaged were at a different level than the first graders, they potentially were at a place where they felt they were readers to a larger extent than the first-grade group. From this view of accepting themselves as readers, they appeared to be trying to extend their views of reading beyond simply being able to do it.

Students' Instructional Views

Within their school community, the students encountered several different instructional views of reading; that is, they engaged in more holistic instruction in Chapter 1, while spending more individual seatwork time in their regular classrooms. Their participation in this activities led them to have explicit

views of the various instructional activities. During the interviews, I asked the students, "If you were the teacher, what would you have kids do to help them learn to read?". Their answers and the reasons for the answers revealed a few patterns. The first-grade group said they would teach every activity they were doing during their reading time. They did not suggest any changes, with the exception of Jared who would not have students do the worksheets.

In contrast, the second-grade group had several suggestions for change. When directly asked about specific literacy activities, the students indicated whether they would or would not use activities as depicted in Table 18. The activities included big books, rereading books, special word books, reading poetry, listening to stories on tape, computer reading games, worksheets, spelling, boardwork and morning journals.

Students' suggestions for literacy activities were revealing in several aspects. Consistent with their apparent disengagement while completing worksheets, spelling, and boardwork in the morning, Trevor and Paul did not think these were important for learning to read and would not recommend them as literacy activities. Both Trevor and Breanne said they wanted to be teachers when they grow up, with Trevor expressing his wish to "give them [his students] fun stuff to do, like fun books." They recognized one of Mrs. Casey's goals with the big books and poetry, with both Trevor and Breanne stating they were important for helping kids to follow along with the reading.

These instructional views were revealing in relation to students' engagement with literacy within their community. First, they tended to appreciate and value the activities they could complete within a group or with a

Table 18

Students' Suggestions for Literacy Activities

Activity	Trevor	Breanne	Paul
Big books	Yes	Yes	Yes
Re-read books		Yes	Yes
Special word books	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reading poetry	Yes	Yes	Yes
Listening to stories on tape	Yes	Yes	
Computer reading games	Yes	Yes	Yes
Worksheets		Yes	
Spelling			
Boardwork			
Morning journals	Yes	Yes	Yes

partner (e.g., big books, reading books) over individual activities (e.g., worksheets, boardwork). This suggested the strong influence of the peer community in relation to learning. Second, their negative views of some activities seemed to confirm the evidence of disengagement presented earlier. Paul and Trevor did not think seatwork was valuable, shown in both their verbal expression of this and in the observational data.

Students' View of Themselves As Learners

Within the community, students seemed to acknowledge their growing awareness of themselves as readers. In some cases, this metacognitive awareness was verbally expressed within classroom routines. For example, Molly stating in mid-October that she could read two books, then proudly stating to her peers in late November while lining up, "I AM A READER!!" In other cases, direct questions to the students and observations of peer interactions, showed that all seven students indicated an awareness that they had learned a lot about reading over the four month period.

They expressed their view of themselves as readers most noticeably during the December viewing of themselves on videotapes from the earlier points during the year. The activities they watched prompted them to discuss this change. For example, the first-grade group watched a videotape of Mario and Molly reading Brown Bear, Brown Bear (Martin, 1967) together. They started to giggle while watching themselves, and Mario commented to Molly that she couldn't read very well then. Molly nodded her head in agreement, and further giggled as they realized both Mario and Molly used a strategy on

the videotape of turning the page in the book to figure out the words from the pictures on the next page in <u>Brown Bear,</u> rather than reading the words.

A few minutes later, they watched themselves putting the letters in alphabetical order. Daniel started to giggle as he saw himself put two letters in the wrong place, saying "I hardly knew my ABC's then." This awareness of their part seemed additional confirmation of their literacy transformations. More importantly, it led to verbal expressions that they viewed themselves as readers and writers within their community. This was an important literacy transformations in relation to their views of literacy characteristic.

I asked the second graders, "Do you think you are a better reader now than at the beginning of the year?". All three loudly stated "yes." When asked how they knew that, Paul commented that they had learned a lot. His focus was on the content they learned, including information about dinosaurs and sharks. Trevor followed Paul's lead and added tornadoes as another support for information they had learned about by reading.

Across the three categories related to students' beliefs, it became apparent that the students did have definite views about literacy learning within their communities. They acknowledged their reasons for reading, activities in which they thought students should engage, and that they saw themselves as growing in their literacy abilities. In some cases, the adults and peers seemed to be positively mediating students' beliefs about themselves as literate (e.g., Molly's statement that she is a reader), while others times seemed to be sending more negative messages (e.g., worksheets as reading). This

information directly related to their literacy transformation in terms of emergent characteristics in the areas of literacy views.

Concluding Comments

In this chapter, I shared data analysis related to (a) students' literacy related experiences in regular education settings and (b) students' own beliefs about themselves as learners. These two areas seemed critical for supporting students' transformations related to emergent and conventional literacy. This occurred in the form of in school opportunities and opportunities designed to influence out of school activities. In the next chapter, I turn to an analysis of the communication between the school and the home in regard to students' literacy learning.

CHAPTER 6

SCHOOL AND HOME COMMUNICATION

Within a sociocultural theoretical perspective, it becomes apparent that learning is situated within a location, time period, and social/cultural context; that is, students' literacy learning may vary greatly depending upon the setting and learning situations in which they engage. Some students enter school with a rich literacy background and set of experiences on which to draw that makes their early school literacy learning a successful experience (e.g., Goodman, 1986; Teale, 1986). For others, the connections between home and school literacy learning may seem more disparate (e.g. Heath, 1983; Snow, 1991).

As I noted in chapter 2, Gee (1989) suggested that children's primary discourse (e.g., home discourse) may be different from their secondary discourse (e.g., school discourse). In some cases, students acquire a primary discourse at home that is congruent with literacy in school. For other students, the primary discourse acquired at home might be quite different from the literacy expectations of American schools. Further, Gee noted, "Beyond the primary discourse, however, are other discourses which crucially involve social institutions beyond the family" (p. 5). Thus, students acquire a primary discourse at home, but how to use it to build their secondary discourse within school may differ substantially if the two forms are incompatible. To help students with disparate experiences between home and school discourses, school situations need to be designed to connect students' secondary and primary discourse. Given Gee's definition of literacy as control of language uses within this secondary discourse, it is necessary to help students with

connections that enable them to more readily access a secondary discourse. Early emergent literacy characteristics that develop as students transform their literacy practices into more conventional uses are closely tied to their ability to acquire a secondary discourse.

In Figure 13, I combine the primary discourse with emergent literacy in the home and the secondary discourse with conventional literacy associated with school. This framework is useful for thinking about how students often first encounter various forms of literacy within the home and how the functions of that literacy may change within the school setting; it is not an attempt to separate out emergent and conventional literacy as two separate stages that children encounter. Similarly, Swales's (1990) definition of a speech community seems more closely aligned to home, while the purpose of schooling seems to include the need to help students understand and use the conventional discourse associated with a working community.

One reason that certain students might be recommended for special services though Chapter 1 is that they come from homes where the literacy is quite different than school literacy discourse; that is, their primary discourse is incongruent with the secondary discourse expectations of schools. In such situations, it would seem to be important for teachers to consider ways to enhance the school and home communication, most notably to bring home literacy into the school and school literacy into the home.

In this chapter, I explore potential benefits for the students as Mrs. Casey, Mrs. Duncan, and Mrs. Walston attempted to work between students'

Learning/
Acquiring
Conventional
School
Literacy

Secondary
Discourse

Discourse
Community

Congruent | ‡ Incongruent

Acquiring
Emergent
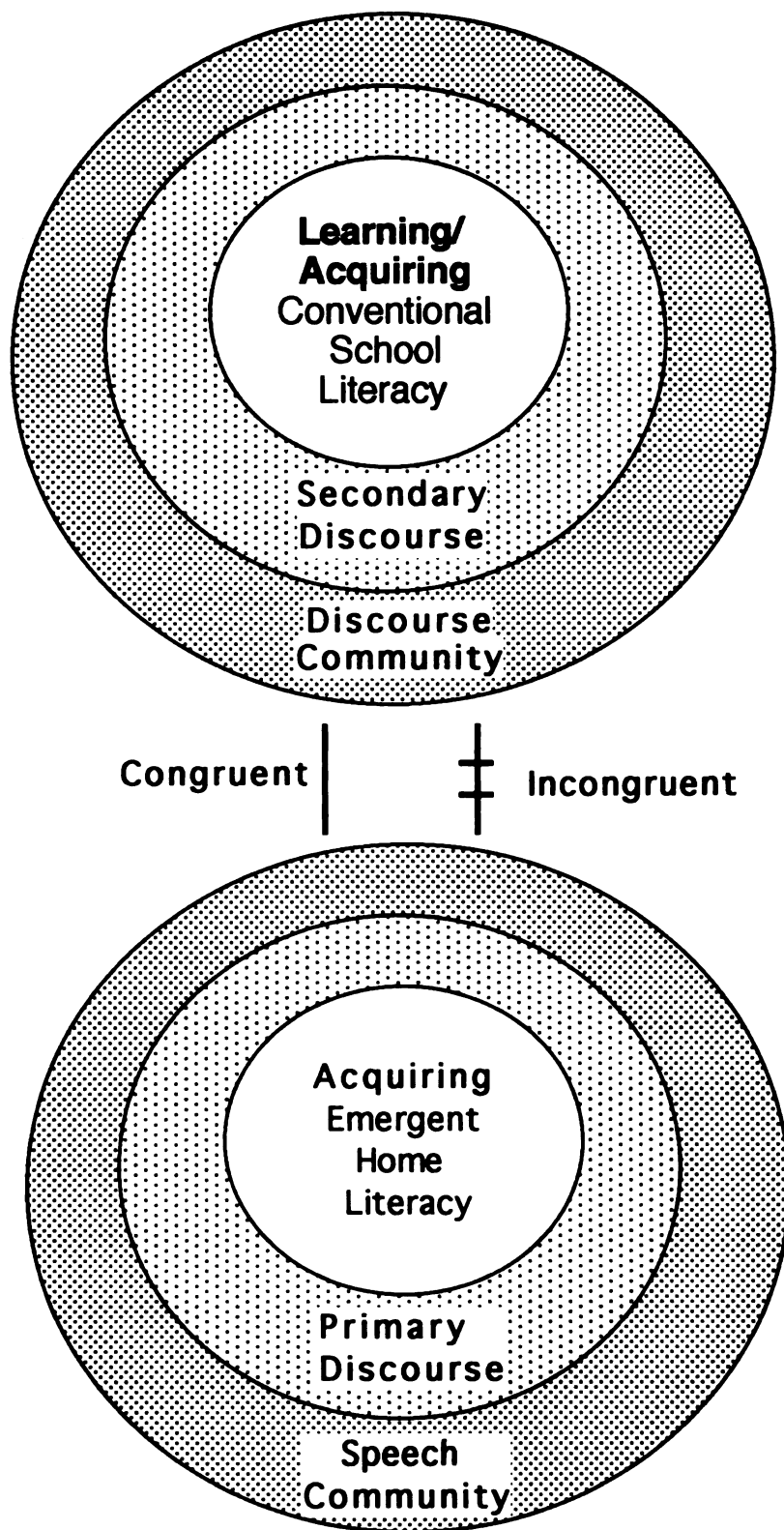Home
Literacy

Primary
Discourse

Speech
Community

Figure 13. Acquiring and learning literacy.

school and home literacy experiences. Consistent with the shift in emphasis from the classroom-based literacy to issues of connections between the home and school, my data set for this analysis differed from the other settings. I draw primarily from data sources related to written communication between teacher and parents or guardians (e.g., newsletters) and oral communication (e.g., parent-teacher conferences). Thus, I analyzed these data based upon the opportunities for communication among the two settings (i.e., home & school). Within this section, I again included data from Mrs. Casey's room connected to parental (i.e., home) communication.

Prior to data collection, I considered entering the students' homes to interview parents and compare that information with my observations in the school. However, since my interest was more closely tied to the communication between the parents and the teachers, I decided instead to participate in and collect data from the parent/teacher conferences. This was the primary, and, in some cases, the only formal means of oral communication between the home and the school. A focus on this discourse potentially showed how the two separate areas attempted to reach common ground. At the same time, I collected data on the type of communication from the teachers to the parents and any instances of communication from the parent to the school. This potentially provided information about more informal communication between the two settings.

To analyze this data, I focused my attention on the transcripts of the parent/teacher conferences. I analyzed the transcripts in terms of parent-

initiated and teacher-initiated topics. Within these *topics*, I noted the emphasis of the topics (e.g., academic, social, literacy-oriented). Further, I was interested in *forms* of discourse opportunities that arose (e.g., instruction, information, reactions). For both the topics and forms, my primary focus was on how the discourse might impact the literacy learning and transformations of the students. Similarly, with the written forms of communication, I focused my analysis on the purpose of the communication and the probably relation to students' literacy development.

Four Types of Communication

Overall, in the data analysis there appeared to be few attempts to draw *connections* among the school and home settings, with the focus more directly on *communication* between the settings. In this section, I focus on four types of communication that emerged from the data analysis: (1) attempts to bring the parents into the school setting, (2) communication from the school designed simply to inform parents about literacy activities within the school setting or to invite parents to describe home literacy activities in which students engaged, (3) communication from the school designed to teach parents how to create *opportunities* for literacy learning within the home, opportunities that parallel those of the classroom, and (4) parent reactions and responses to seek or share information with the school. Overwhelmingly, there were several attempts by the teachers to *inform* and *instruct* the parents about school literacy, with little attempt to include home literacy within the classroom. There was *reaction* from the parents to the school-based literacy practices. Within

these four types of communicating, I examine the situations and activities that led to communication and the degree to which literacy learning opportunities emerged from this communication.

The school, particularly the Chapter 1 room, served as a place for informing and instructing parents about possible literacy interactions they could use at home with their children. This information and instruction potentially enabled the parents to understand better the purposes of the literacy instruction within the school. More importantly, the information from the school conceivably was meant to help parents practice similar activities at home to support their child in transformations toward school-related conventional literacy. In this section, I explore the four communication areas in terms of the support they provided for students' learning.

Bringing parents into the school community

In the school, teachers and the principal planned events intended to bring the parents into the school, including an Open House in September, a Thanksgiving Dinner hosted by the second graders in November, and the Christmas Show in December. These events allowed parents to view students' work on the walls, talk with the teachers, and participate in a community-building activity. Daniel's mother came to the Open House and was able to meet Mrs. Duncan and talk extensively about her son's possible placement in Chapter 1 and his progress during the first month of school.

In connection with a social studies theme unit, Mrs. Walston and her students prepared a Thanksgiving Dinner, inviting the parents to join them for

lunch. Both Breanne and Trevor told me that their parents had to work at lunch and could not attend. Breanne invited me to attend the dinner and Trevor invited another teacher to join him. Paul's parents did attend this event. In the classroom, the students had placed many of their assignments and art projects, nicely displaying the information about the original Thanksgiving and the situations and people that surrounded it. Adults and students conversed throughout the meal.

For the Christmas show, Daniel's whole family attended and his mother worked at the Christmas gift sale sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association. Trevor did attend the second part of this event with his mother to see his brother performing with the band. However, none of the other students or parents attended these events.

While these school events did not pertain directly to literacy instruction, they were an important piece of community within the school and an opportunity for discussion between the home and school, or an opportunity for the parents to understand the routines and goals of the school. For the Chapter 1 students, one might assume that, with the exception of Daniel, the parents appeared not to appreciate the importance of these events. However, the students themselves seemed aware of reasons their parents could not attend, including work schedule. A review of the jobs held by the parents (see chapter 3), also indicates that many of them worked at night, meaning that attendance at these events might have resulted in lost wages.

Informing Parents of Literacy Activities

All three teachers expressed to me, during discussions, interviews, or both the importance they placed in communicating to the parents. Mrs. Casey reported that during previous years she tried several different means of contacting and communicating with parents. These included attempts to elicit information about home literacy, encouraging home reading, and talking with other teachers and the social worker about students' homes. However, she seemed to find this a frustrating task, one in which she often had little response back from the parents. During the study, she was trying a few new ideas to share literacy information and practices with the parents, as she tried to establish connections between the two settings. Similarly, Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Walston engaged in activities to communicate with the parents, in some cases already having had long-term interactions with certain parents after teaching siblings of the Chapter 1 students (i.e., Paul, Trevor, and Molly). The teachers used three different methods to inform parents about school literacy activities: (1) Mrs. Casey sent home a newsletter, (2) all three teachers sent home "work" folders containing notes and message, and (3) Mrs. Casey introduced activities that students could use at home.

In the Chapter 1 room, Mrs. Casey regularly sent home information to the parents. This included Chapter 1 newsletters, awards indicating books read by the students, students' work, and a take-home folder of activities for students to record their home literacy activities. Mrs. Casey designed the Chapter 1 newsletters to provide an opportunity for parental access to information about

students' learning within her room. Figure 14 is an example of one newsletter. This form of communication included questions for parents to ask their child, an update on the books they were reading, weekly instructional focus (e.g., letters a-e), and announcements.

Similarly, Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Walston regularly sent home students' work with them. The teachers sometimes felt the work needed to be explained to the parents, based primarily on earlier interactions with other parents who did not understand the teachers' purposes for certain literacy activities. This created an opportunity for written language that could be instructional for the parent in terms of the language used by teacher with the children in school. In this sense, the teachers were mediating students' learning by explaining instructional practices to the parents and trying to elicit the parents help in supporting those practices. In the regular classes, this happened on an occasional basis. For example, both classes used journal writing where invented spelling was both allowed and encouraged if students did not know how to spell something. For Mrs. Duncan's students, the cover of their journal contained the following note:

> Dear Parents,
> This is my "special" book. I draw pictures, write alphabet letters, words, and sentences in it. My "special" book allows me to practice thinking and creating skills. When I learned to walk, talk, and eat with a spoon, you didn't tell me I was wrong every time I tried. In my "special" book nothing will be marked wrong because my thoughts and ideas are important. Someday I will be more grown-up... then I will write just like you do. Now I can draw and write my own way... ask me to read it to you.

One intent of this note was to inform the parents of the journal's purpose so that they might encourage their child, rather than commenting only on grammatical

Chapter One
First Grade
News

October 21, 1994

What We've Done

Students made as many words as they could using all the letters of the alphabet.

Students recognized the words, "Jack, the, and be" in the nursery rhyme, "Jack Be Nimble."

Past sentences that were cut-up were reviewed. Also, new sentences were cut-up.

Cat On The Mat by Brian Wildsmith was read and discussed.

The sound of "s" was reviewed this week.

Questions To Ask Your Child

What did Jack jump over in "Jack Be Nimble?"

Was the cat angry in the story, Cat On The Mat? Why?

What animals tried to stay on the cat's mat?

What We're Going To Do

Short a and i words will be identified in "Jack Be Nimble."

Cat On The Mat and all past books will be re-read.

School Bus by Donald Crews will be introduced.

Continue to review vocabulary and sentence structure through cut-up sentences.

Announcements

Please have your child arrange his/her cut-up sentence for you. Their sentence was sent home in a baggy on Thursday.

Figure 14. October 21 Chapter 1 Newsletter

and spelling errors. In that manner, the written communication was intended to instruct and inform the parents of emergent literacy characteristics (e.g., invented spelling, enjoying writing) to help them mediate their childs' literacy transformations.

Starting in October, the first-grade group had a take-home folder to carry their cut-up sentences. The second-grade group started a similar folder in November. The intent of this folder was for the students to have a place to keep their weekly cut-up sentence and encouraged them to keep a record of their literacy activities at home.[14] This included a list to record when and with whom they practiced their cut-up sentences (see Figure 15), a writing log to list books they read at home (see Figure 16), and a writing log to keep track of what they wrote at home (see Figure 17). Students were encouraged to place any of their home writing within the folders as well.

Daniel was the only student to use the logs consistently in his take-home folder. The fact that the cut-up sentences were gone each week from the other students' folders indicated that the first-grade group actually took the folder home. In the second-grade group, Breanne had a record of completing these activities at home, but not on the regular basis as did Daniel. Breanne brought in her written stories, some with text taken verbatim from a book and others she

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[14] At some level, I intervened in this communication. Mrs. Casey wanted to send home the cut-up sentences for students and parents to use at home. She said that in previous years she sent home lists for students to record books they read at home. I worked with her to decide on reading, writing, and cut-up sentence lists that the students might take home with them. I was interested in this folder as a possible data source regarding home literacy activities.

Daniel

I practiced my sentence!

Date	With
Oct. 27, 1994	mrs. Casey
" "	my mom
Oct 30, 1994	Mom
Oct 31, 1994	- Big sister
Nov 2, 1994	mom
Nov 3, 1994	mom
Nov 4, 1994	mom
Nov 6, 1994	mom
Nov 9, 1994	mom
Nov 14, 1994	Mom
Nov 16, 1994	mom
Nov 17, 1994	mom
Dec 3, 1994	mom
Dec 5, 1994	mom

Figure 15. Daniel's cut-up sentence list.

**EVERY TIME YOU READ A BOOK, OR
SOMEONE READS A BOOK TO YOU,
COLOR ONE OF THESE BOOKS!**

Date	Title of Book	Read With:
Nov. 25, 1994	Curious George	Mom
1994 NOV 17	MOTHER GOOSE	mom
NOV	APPLE TREE	MOM
1994 NOV 44	HOT TO4 HARRY	MOM
1994 NOV 45	JUST A DREAM	mom
1994 NOV 46	mollyslies	mOm

Figure 16. Breanne's writing log page from take-home folder.

My Writing Log

Keep track of what you write and draw:

Shopping Lists	Stories
Letters to Friends	Letters to Family
Cartoons	Journals
Holiday Writing	Poems
New Cut-Up Sentences	Create New Things
Pictures	

Date	Writing	With
Nov. 16	A Cut-Up Sentence	Mrs. Casey
Nov 17	Spelling words	DAD
Nov 20	A Letter to Cousin	mom
Nov 23	Christmas List	Mom
Nov 27	Christmas snowflakes	mom
Dec 4	Xmas Pictures	Sisters
Dec 5	Homework - Spelling	mom + DAD
Dec 6	Homework	mom

KEEP YOUR WRITING IN THE FOLDER!

Figure 17. Daniel's writing log from take-home folder.

created on her own. During Breanne's parent/teacher conference, Mrs. Walston commented to her mother that she enjoyed the stories that Breanne wrote and home and gave to her in school. Mrs. Walston encouraged Breanne's mother to continue supporting this type of writing.

Molly seemed reluctant to bring her folder upstairs each week, appearing somewhat embarrassed that she had not added to it during the week. I occasionally started to read with Molly, Mario, and Jared during the last few minutes of their Chapter 1 class to add to their book list. This seemed to be encouraging to them, especially Mario. He regularly asked me to read with him and seemed proud to be able to add to his list. Paul was quite upfront about saying that he lost his folder and subsequent replacement folders.

The previous forms of communications (e.g., newsletters, folders) were designed explicitly to inform parents. A more implicit form of communication was Mrs. Casey's use of classroom activities that students might bring into their homes. In addition to sending home the cut-up sentence and take-home folder, she included activities connected to the home, such as reading from cereal boxes, and eliciting information about students' personal experiences in response to literature (e.g., "Breanne, does your baby sister act like that?"). In this manner, Mrs. Casey was potentially encouraging students' to engage in similar literacy practices at home that encouraged their transformations in the six characteristics (e.g., practice print awareness with cereal boxes, practice book-handling knowledge by reading books).

The teacher intended that the three types of information sent from the school to the home assist the parents with activities at home that might support those completed within school. The forms of information seemed to assume that the parent had a literacy level so that they were able to read the letters and had a basic understanding of some forms of school activities. In the following section, it is not clear that all of the parents did understand the school nature of these activities, leading to areas where the teachers made the decision to give more formal instruction to the parents. In some ways, it seemed that the teachers designed the information to bridge the disparity between home and school, though it may have involved assumptions about the parents' literacy levels and understandings of the school-based literacy functions.

Creating Opportunities to Instruct Parents

The written communication described above was one way to *inform* parents of literacy activities. The teachers also wanted to instruct the parents directly in school-based practices so that they might understand the purpose and use it at home. The parent/teacher conferences became one setting where the teacher and parents talked directly about activities and practices. Teachers engaged parents in instructional discussions of literacy topics designed to help parents understand literacy concepts to try with their children. The conference was a social interaction in which participants initiated topics, started communication, and worked together to understand the student.

Instruction of School-Based Literacy Activities

During the parent/teacher conferences, Mrs. Casey raised the take-home folder as a topic with Jared's father and Daniel's parents. Both of these students' parents chose to have individual conferences with Mrs. Casey. For the other students' conferences, she sat in conferences with the regular education teachers f.[15] There were key periods in Jared and Daniel's conferences in which Mrs. Casey took an instructional lead and explicitly explained literacy activities.

With Jared's father, Mrs. Casey raised the topic of the cut-up sentences. She positioned herself in an instructional form of discourse, essentially telling Jared's father each step of a classroom activity he could do at home with Jared. The father's response indicated that he was somewhat familiar with the "cut-up sentences" activity that Jared brought home. Following a discussion of Jared's writing, Mrs. Casey initiated a topic change to the take-home folders and cut-up sentences. In this transcript, notice how Mrs. Casey described at length the purpose of the cut-up sentences in her classroom, how she used the sentences within her room, and her intention for what should happen at home.

> 103   Casey: Now, he brings home a folder on the week, on Thursdays. Yellow, and it has those cut-up sentences in 'em and it comes in a baggie.

> 104   Father: Yeah.

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[15] I did not have permission to attend either Molly or Mario's conference. Tanisha had already moved. I attended and transcribed the conferences for the remaining children.

105   Casey: Okay. Keep practicing those with Jared. And another thing I would suggest is now that, where you can combine a couple of 'em to make a larger sentence, have him figure out if he can combine some of those words to make a longer sentence and I'm gonna send those home every week.

106   Father: Okay.

107   Casey: Every week you're gonna be getting those, one, you know, one sentence at a time. You can just keep increasing and mixing 'em up.

108   Father: *He didn't say they were a sentence. He just said look dad. You know, these letters in a bag, you know.*

At line 108, Jared's father indicated that he was familiar with the materials for the activity that the students were supposed to complete regularly with their parents. However, he did not appear to understand their purpose and Jared had not been forthcoming as to how he used them in school. Mrs. Casey changed from more informational suggested uses of the materials to instructing Jared's father explicitly in a step-by-step manner, using Jared's book and notecards in front of her on the table.

109   Casey: Yes. Yeah. They're words. They're words in bag. *I'll show you.* Here's one that I'm gonna send home with another child, okay. And where I get the sentences are from their book. I read, what I do is I write it the correct way, like here is what Jared said on this one. It says "I sleep in my room." Okay, so what I do is I write it out on a card like this. He reads this to me. I close the book and I, I say, "Okay, now this is what you said." "I," and then he helps me with the letter sounds. And I do it. And so what you're supposed to do with these is turn them over and then they turn them up and they tell you the word. "need I". And then they have, and then this is the period. So then they have to start out with I, and you ask them what, "I what?" "I need." "What do you need?" "A note. And then period." And then you have them read it.

And then he has about three of these already at home now. And so you can start mixing them up and say let's make a bigger sentence here. See if we can make a big sentence, combine these and see if you can make one.

110   Father: Okay.

In this passage, Mrs. Casey is providing Jared's father with detailed instruction related to a specific literacy activity associated with school. Jared's father makes few comments, only indicating "okay" as Mrs. Casey proceeded with her instruction. Then, Mrs. Casey shifted from instruction with materials to instruction about the purpose for the activity. In the following few lines, she discussed enjoyment, vocabulary, spelling, and creating sentences.

111   Casey: And it's a lot of fun. They think it's a lot of fun. And they're getting, they're getting how to put a sentence together. They're getting vocabulary. And they're getting exposed constantly to words spelled correctly. And believe it or not, it does affect their spelling later.

112   Father: Okay.

113   Casey: They start to pick up on how to spell the words correctly. And these are all the words that, they're from their books. But one of the words is from their spelling, their reading books that they are reading a story out of downstairs. And this was read, they had to learn the word read.

114   Father: Okay.

115   Casey: And when they come up, they create the sentence. And it's just a great tool that I've found that really works. They're in a baggie and that's what you're supposed to do. Practice them. And then there's a, um, a place for you to sign it, or somebody to sign it, that you did it with them.

116   Father: Okay. He gets very upset when his brother or his little sisters get a hold of these letters, you know.

117   Casey: Okay.

118   Father: That's what he calls 'em, his letters.

119   Casey: Oh, okay.

120   Father: "Look, dad (imitating Jared). Look at my letters."

With his comment in line 120, Jared's father indicated that he was familiar with the materials associated with the activity. However, it appeared that either Jared did not tell his father how he used the words in school, or Jared's father did not attempt to enforce a school-like usage of the words at home.

Mrs. Casey maintained control of most of the instructional discourse in this interchange, pausing occasionally as Jared's father said "okay" to indicate he understood Mrs. Casey. At two points (i.e. line 108 and 116), Jared's father produced information to add support to Mrs. Casey comment.

In this instructional interchange, Mrs. Casey decided to spend an indepth period of time sharing school-structured literacy events with Jared's father. She included an explanation of the activity purpose in relation to literacy characteristics (e.g., making sense of words, print awareness) to help potentially mediate Jared's use of these characteristics at home. This gave Jared's father the opportunity to learn how to interact with Jared regarding a school activity brought into the home and allowed him potentially to understand the school reasons for such an activity. While these attempts to instruct Jared's father about the school literacy practices might have eventually helped Jared, it was apparent that Mrs. Casey was the person leading this conference. Jared's

father said little more than "okay" and Mrs. Casey did little to elicit information from him about Jared's literacy practices at home.

Similarly, in Daniel's conference, the subject of the cut-up sentences was initiated by Mrs. Casey toward the end of the conference. She mentioned that she noticed Daniel worked on the sentences at home. This led to a series of questions by Daniel's mother about the sentences. Mrs. Casey's responded by inviting Daniel to the front table with his parents. They enacted together exactly how they used the cut-up sentences to instruct his parents on some of the routines and model language they might use with Daniel. In contrast to the conference with Jared's father, the instructional manner shifted as Daniel himself became involved in the discussion, actually taking some words and making a sentence. Both his mother and Mrs. Casey interjected comments in the process providing different means of support. In this sense, Daniel was instructing his parents, with the approval and help of Mrs. Casey.

In contrast to Jared's father, Daniel's parents seemed more familiar with the activity. In fact, Daniel's father (line 260) commented:

> We did that with his spelling words today. Just took the spelling words and made a sentence out of just his spelling words. So it didn't turn out real, uh, like something you'd wanta repeat in school but it turned out okay (Parent/teacher conference, November 1994).

This comment also indicated that Daniel's father was trying to adapt and integrate the school-like forms of literacy into additional activities to support Daniel's literacy transformations. He seemed to suggest an awareness that the literacy conventions in school may discourage certain forms of literacy, such as

sentences that "turned out okay" but not in a form that was appropriately conventional or possibly school-like.

Interactions Related to Shared Concerns.

In Daniel's conference, another type of exchange occurred that led to an instructional conversation led by Mrs. Casey. In this case, it was directly related to a shared concern on the part of both teacher and parents. Daniel's parents wondered what types of books they should be reading at home. Both parents and Mrs. Casey discussed the possible books. His mother was trying to balance easy books Daniel could read to her with books she read to him:

46	Mom:	You know, most of the words that he can pick out, I will let him read.
47	Casey:	Right, that's a great way to do it.
48	Mom:	But uh
49	Casey:	You read and let him help you.
50	Mom:	*He gets a little frustrated at times, too, so*
51	*Casey:*	*So he does get frustrated?*
52	Mom:	Yes.

At this point (line 50), Daniel's mother introduced a topic that had been of great concern to Mrs. Casey during that week. The mention of frustration led to uptake by Mrs. Casey because she had been concerned about his frustration in class, particularly in relation to his writing. She brought out Daniel's report card, on which she had a paragraph describing her concern (see Figure 18). Daniel's previous creative sentences had shifted to short sentences containing

Reading and Writing Progress Report
Chapter One Remedial Reading

Date: _____ Nov., 1994 _____

Name: __ Daniel _____

Grade: ___ 1 _____

READING

Applies word attack skills	—	*Daniel is beginning to realize his errors while reading.*
Uses context clues	-	
Uses structural clues	++	*He really contributes to our class discussion*
Self-corrects	++	
Shows growth in vocabulary	+	
Enjoys books and stories	++	
Reads with understanding	+++	
Discusses reading material	+++	
Reads fluently	+	

WRITING

Shows growth in vocabulary	+	*Daniel is doing a great job constructing his sentences.*
Applies word attack skills	++	*He seems to be too concerned with his spelling instead of his thoughts. He will say a nice constructed sentence, but will not write it because "it is too long" or "I need help with the spelling." He knows that print yields meaning and that his speech can be written down*
Is developing correct capitalization, punctuctuation, and sentence structure	+	
Is beginning to revise	—	

STUDY HABITS

Completes work on time	++
Works independently	++
Works cooperatively	+
Follows classroom rules	++

* High Achievement
+++ Very Good
++ Good
+ Improving
- Needs Improvement/Requires considerable assistance

Mrs. Casey

Figure 18. Daniel's November Chapter 1 report card.

only words that he could spell. The conversation proceeded at this point, with

Mrs. Casey doing most of the talking:

53	Casey:	Okay. That's one thing that this long paragraph that I have here is (pointing to report card), but I had a long talk about it yesterday, and I saw an improvement. (inaudible). In the book that he has, I go over the words that Mrs. Duncan has in her classroom; it goes along with her reading. She gives them to me and we reinforce them in here. Now they're not to be mastered in here; they're just reinforced. We go over them, we talk about once in a while what the first letter sound is. But they're not to be memorized. I just expose more.
54	Mom:	Okay.
55	Casey:	And from that, they go to the pocket chart, they choose a word that they want to write about for that day
56	Mom:	Okay.
57	Casey:	And then they write the, (to Daniel) can we see your book? Okay. And then they write that word at the top of this book and then we talk about what can you say about that word. And then he writes a sentence.
58	Mom:	Okay. On his own?
59	Casey:	On his own.
60	Mom:	That's, that's what this is about.
61	Casey:	Now, at the beginning of the year, he would tell me what he wanted to write. I wrote it and he traced.

At this point, Mrs. Casey described several phases that she used with the

students to help them with their initial writing (see chapter 4 for a similar

description of Jared's progress). She used the special word book and showed

the parents each of the entries, indicating evidence of Daniel's progress. She

showed Daniel's parents a recent log page in which Daniel wrote "I am fine,"

then scribbled over the 'fine' indicating that he really was not fine and seemed

frustrated with his writing (see Figure 19). Mrs. Casey explained to his parents

that Daniel had been progressing well, until a certain point:

67   Casey: And they do this every day. And then all at once, I saw Daniel saying "I don't think I wanta write that any more. That's too long of a sentence." He would tell me this beautiful sentence. "Daniel, go ahead." "That's too long. I don't think I wanta do that."

68   Mom: Yeah.

69   Casey: So I'm real concerned, and he's too concerned about making sure every word is spelled right, and I'm trying to get him away from that. I would rather him get his thoughts down than worry about the spelling of every word.

70   Mom: Okay, well, that's *probably has a lot to do with the spelling tests at the end of each week*. That is a big focus at our house.

At this point (line 70), another substantial shift in discourse occurred. Daniel's

mother initiated a possible explanation for the change in Daniel's progress.

The discourse became more interactional in that his mother took over control of

the discussion for a moment and supplied a glimpse into aspects of Daniel's

home instruction. She continued by explaining his progress on spelling tests.

71   Casey: Okay.

72   Mom: The first of the year we, let's see, the first week, I studied with him every day. He did fine. The second week, we had some, I don't know, parent, family crisis, or something but we didn't study. He didn't get any words. So Dad took over. Dad works with him every night, after he gets home from work. So you know, this is an every night thing and you know, of course, he's, he gets stars on all of his spelling words, so maybe he's concerned

Figure 19.   Daniel's November 2 journal entry.

you know, that the spelling tests he has to get all the words right on the spelling test. *Maybe he's concerned, you know, another test,* too.

After finishing showing Daniel's parents his word book examples, a few exchanges later in the conference, Mrs. Casey agreed with Daniel's mother.

77   Casey: But I think he was just too concerned about the spelling and I told him not to be.

78   Mom: Yeah.

79   Casey: Right, what I want him to do is just learn how to write a sentence.

80   Mom: Sound em out, yeah, sound em out. Yes, you may say something (to Daniel).

81   Casey: Okay. Um, so I saw great improvement, then I saw him go backwards, and now I think we're starting to go forward again.

In this conference, Mrs. Casey maintained a great deal instructional control, as she displayed report cards, Daniel's work, and her classroom routines. Her apparent intent was to help the parents understand her views about Daniel's frustration and possible attempts on her part to help him move further in his literacy progress. In this sense, she was mediating Daniel's literacy learning within his home, by providing practical means and views of instruction that might support him. The parents had the opportunity to learn about the classroom routines and to understand the paragraph on the report card, providing them with information about literacy progress and what they might watch for and encourage in Daniel's writing.

It is important to note that these conversations occurred with Daniel's parents because of their attempts to have an individual conference with Mrs.

Casey, as opposed to only meeting with Mrs. Duncan for the typical 15-minute conference. When Mrs. Casey joined Mrs. Walston to have conferences together, this type of instructional and informational discourse was much more limited because of time constraints.

These instances of informing and instructing parents were attempts by teachers to communicate school-literacy practices to parents. In this sense, information was often directly related to school-like activities with the intent seemingly for parents to adopt those activities at home. Now, I shift the focus to explore parents' responses and reactions to this school instruction.

Parental Response and Reaction

The informational exchange was not always unidirectional from the school to the parents. In the previous section, I showed examples of Mrs. Casey taking control of the discussion for instructional purposes. However, parents also initiated topics during the parent/teacher conferences and at other points in the year. In this manner, the teachers were potentially able to have a glimpse of students' home literacy, although they did not always seem to take advantage of this opportunity. The topics initiated by the parents focused on family situations, concerns with instruction, and special education/retention concerns.

Family Situations

The parents informed teachers of successful home literacy situations and explored reasons for problem areas. Within the conferences, the teachers tended to have more control of the topics and the parents seemed to encourage

that control. However, teachers routinely asked and encouraged parents to ask questions or make comments. For example, Mrs. Walston asked Breanne's mother to share any concerns. She replied, "Okay. Sorry she's missed like a lot of days but we've been sick and the baby and I just came down with ..." (November 9 conference), to which Mrs. Walston followed-up with a question as to whether Breanne is usually sick in the winter. Similarly, Jared's father was concerned with Jared's attention problems mentioned to him by Mrs. Duncan. He asked Mrs. Casey if Jared's problems might be related to recent changes in the adult attention he received. His grandmother, who generally spent a lot of time with Jared, had recently had her own baby.

Similar family concerns were raised by the other parents as possible explanations for students' learning and behaviors. These responses provided additional insights into students' learning for the teachers. This type of interchange, while not always directed at literacy learning, allowed the teachers to have a better insight into what the students experienced after school hours. The interchanges also led to teacher advice or suggestions to help the parent. Because she had taught siblings of some students in previous years, Mrs. Walston seemed to be particularly aware of family situations and drew on this information to support her answers to parents concerns.

Concern with Instruction

Similarly, there were rare occasions in which the parents contacted the school for a particular purpose, such as to learn more about the instructional practice or to respond to a form of communication. These contacts were not

typical, and in most cases it was Daniel's or Paul's parents who initiated the

contact. For example, during a fire drill on September 30, Mrs. Casey and Mrs.

Duncan discussed a phone call from Daniel's mom, as depicted in the following

section of fieldnotes:

> During the fire drill, Mrs. Casey talked briefly with Mrs. Duncan about
> Daniel. Apparently his mother has called to talk with Mrs. Duncan. She
> is concerned about what Daniel is missing when he leaves to go to the
> Chapter 1 room. Mrs. Duncan told her that they do some of the same
> things upstairs, especially with the special word book. Apparently Daniel
> has not been getting his morning work done and his mom was concerned
> about this. Later in the day, Mrs. Casey also had a note from the mother
> and called her back, prepared for the questions that she encountered.
> (Fieldnotes, September 30, 1994).

In this case, the contact by Daniel's mother led her to have a better

understanding of Chapter 1 purposes and the type of instruction in which

Daniel participated.

Special Education/Retention

Similar to Daniel's mother's concern about Chapter 1 instruction, parents

responded to students' reading difficulties by wondering if special education

placement or retention might be possible "solution" for their child's learning.

During the parent/teacher conferences, Trevor's, Paul's, and Jared's parents all

brought up the issue of special education. Daniel's and Trevor's parents

wondered about retention. The opportunity to discuss these issues led in some

cases to the parents having less concern or to specific ideas for helping the

student to improve in their progress. In this respect, the teachers tended to

switch the conversation to instructional practices the parents could use to help

their children, rather than further discussion of a problem within the child. The

parental use of this topic seemed to be related to concerns expressed by the teacher or parent as to the students' progress or lack of progress. Thus, whether or not they were learning conventional literacy became an issue and the parents often tended to consider another academic label as a possible solution to a problem they perceived their child having.

In most cases, the teachers told parents that retention decisions were initiated in January or that special education did not seem appropriate. As such, they were acting as more knowledgeable others in response to parent questions in terms of the purpose and use of retention and special education. This also led to more instructional discourse as described above to empower the parents directly to take initiatives to practice literacy characteristics at home with their child.

During Paul's conference, his mother expressed her concern about his progress. This was typical of how the other parents reacted to concerns about students' progress expressed by teachers. Mrs. Walston started Paul's conference by stating he was not completing his work, did not talk much, or give reasons for his answers. Drawing on her knowledge of the family, she wondered if Paul too often had others talking for him because he is the youngest of four children. She ended her comments, stating, "But I am kind of worried." Paul's mother followed that description by suggesting:

> I was gonna ask if you thought maybe, um, I don't know if a special ed thing would help him or not, because I've noticed even at home when he was off sick, getting him to do his homework that he had and, and what

not is like, that lady[16] spent hours trying to get him to do it //
(Parent/teacher conference, November, 1994).

Rather than following up on the special education topic, Mrs. Walston focused on the reading tutor and wondered if she was still coming to the house. She continued by suggesting several activities that Paul should do at home.

The four areas of initiating communication between the home and school (i.e., bringing parents into the school community, literacy instructional formal communication to home, informing parents about literacy activities, creating opportunities to instruct parents, and parents responding and reacting to school practices) all reflect opportunities created among the adults that indirectly supported students' learning. In this sense, it was not that these discussions among the adults were influencing the students' in an immediate way. Instead, discussions were allowing for learning to occur among both parents and teachers in ways that likely influenced the children more directly in days that followed.

Both teachers and parents made intentional decisions about topics to discuss and questions to ask. By creating opportunities and making decisions, the adults directly influenced each others perceptions about topics such as special education, literacy progress, spelling, and ideas for literacy use at home. They also exchanged information about the children, such as understanding family situations or hearing more detailed examples of students' daily routines.

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[16] "That lady" referred to the school tutor that worked with Paul for the three weeks in late September and early October after he was hospitalized and had to remain at home for an extended period.

Communication Versus Connections

One area that I initially expected to report in terms of data analyses was the *connections* made between the home and school settings, rather than a focus on the *communication* occurring mostly from the school to the home. During my many observations, I saw little, if any, attempts by the teachers to gain access to or incorporate literacy practices from the home within the school setting. The practice generally occurred in the opposite direction with teachers using school activities intended for the students to take into the home. There was no direct intervention on the part of the teachers to take advantage of students' home experiences to support their literacy transformation or to try and break a cycle of family need for Chapter 1 services. Similar interventions have successfully occurred in attempts directed at home-school connections (see McCaleb, 1994; Swap, 1993).

While I have no information to suggest that parents *hindered* their child's literacy learning, there were some indications that the parents did not necessarily *mediate* childrens' school activities. For example, even though Mrs. Casey discussed the take-home folder with Jared's father, during the two months after the conference Jared did not have any additional entries on his lists. One possible explanation is that Jared's father did not understand Mrs. Casey's instruction to him nor the school expectation that Jared complete these on a regular basis at home. Similarly, Paul, Trevor, Molly, and Mario rarely, if ever, seemed to work on the list activities at home. If they did, the parents either did not encourage them to note the activities in their folders or the students

forgot to take the folder home (i.e. Paul's reason). In contrast, Daniel continued to regularly bring in his folder with completed lists, which was consistent with his parent's apparent awareness of school-sanctioned forms of literacy.

Perhaps, these school-like activities were also unfamiliar to the parents and they did not know how to interact with their children using them. Similar to Gee's (1989) assertions about a primary and secondary discourse, the school-like nature of the literacy activities placed expectations on the parents that they might not have understood or associated with their child's literacy. With the exception of the parent/teacher conferences, they was little or no initiation on the part of the parents or the teachers to communicate with each other orally about students' progress or potential areas where students' primary and secondary discourse build upon each other.

That parents' did not use the take-home folder may not accurately reflect the degree to which they actually used literacy practices in the home. Most of the children (i.e. all except Trevor and Tanisha) came from two-parent homes. The parents had jobs in restaurants (e.g., cutting the vegetables or waitressing), in stores (e.g., grocery clerks), and in automotive service (e.g., changing mufflers). Because these were relatively low-income jobs, both parents generally had to work outside the home. Thus, the students often went to the home of grandparents, aunts, uncles and other extended family members. They engaged in literacy activities in communities outside of their home and school, potentially adding additional literacies and discourse to their growing interactions with written text.

I know that Breanne wrote stories and Mario completed reading activities at his church. Daniel's mother had enrolled him in tutoring the previous summer. While some studies of low-income homes suggest little use of reading activities (e.g., Edwards, 1989), other researchers have described specific home language and literacy activities from low-income homes (e.g., Teale, 1986). While I did not collect data to access information within their homes, I do know that the students in Chapter 1 classes had other siblings who had been in Chapter 1. Older siblings of Trevor, Molly, and Paul had all been in Mrs. Casey's room in previous years. This might be an indication that school-like literacy practices generally were not used within these homes or that the literacy practices that were used contrasted with those within the school. The long-term nature of literacy problems for these families suggest a missed opportunity by the school to initiate broader support in an attempt to improve the apparent ongoing disparity between these homes and school literacy.

The topics of the communication among school and home seemed to focus on information and instruction associated more directly with Gee's (1989) *learning* opportunities rather than situations supporting literacy *acquisition*. For example, there was not much discussion about ideas such as reading books at night, having books readily available, and so forth. Rather, the conversations focused on specific instruction designed to improve direct literacy characteristics or special skills. One way to start to build connections across these settings might entail discussion and communication about home literacy and associated school-literacy activities.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study explored transformations related to students' learning of conventional literacy usage. To study this transformation, I focused on first and second graders who qualified for services within a Chapter 1 classroom. I was interested in how the Chapter 1 teacher, classroom teachers, parents, and peers support students' transformations related to emergent and conventional literacy. I framed this study in terms of three questions: (a) How does the Chapter 1 setting support students in their emergent reading and writing and transformations toward more conventional uses of literacy? (b) How does the language and related learning opportunities among the community settings support Chapter 1 students in their literacy learning? (c) What are students' beliefs about literacy instruction and learning?

To access information regarding these questions, I observed the two groups of students within a literacy-enriched Chapter 1 setting and extended my observations to their regular classrooms and other school settings (e.g., library, recess). I collected data (e.g., fieldnotes, discussion transcripts) on these two groups (i.e. eight students) from early September through late December.

This study suggests that the two groups of students made substantial progress in using both emergent and more conventional forms of literacy. In terms of the six characteristics outlined (i.e. book-handling knowledge, print awareness, views of literacy, phonemic awareness, strategic literacy, and

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literature response), the students showed literacy transformations in these areas over course of the fall semester. The focus of this study was to document these transformations in terms of the nature of students' school community. The students engaged in learning opportunities and language interactions that seemed critical to helping them to make transformations toward more mature literacy usage.

I framed this study within both an emergent literacy and a sociocultural perspective. There are several common ideas within these perspectives including: (1) learning leads to development, (2) social interactions are crucial to learning, (3) learning is situated in many communities. However, a sociocultural perspective expands our definition of emergent literacy and challenges conventional literacy. In my study, I concluded that there were four main themes that led to social interactions and situations where adults, peers, or both within the community mediated students' learning; that is, the themes (i.e. decision-making, opportunities, choice, and engagement) were critical for leading to and supporting learning situations that enabled students to interact with others in a manner that furthered their literacy learning. For example, instructional *decisions* made by Mrs. Casey led to periods of social interactions (e.g., reading poetry together) that supported students' learning of the literacy characteristics (e.g., reading from left to right). In this sense, the theme of decision-making led to an instructional tool that directly supported students' transformations to conventional usage of literacy characteristics.

Scholars (e.g., Mason and Sinha, 1993; Sulzby and Teale, 1991) have begun to work on creating a theoretical basis for understanding emergent literacy. Rather than focusing primarily on emergent literacy, my study extends this work to focus directly on the learning situations and processes associated with *transformations* associated with emergent literacy. I showed the critical role of various members of the students' communities. These roles included more knowledgeable others engaging the students in language situations to work within their zone of proximal development, initiating supportive social interactions, and starting conversations focused on literacy topics.

In this chapter, I revisit my framework from chapter 2, exploring the conclusions from this study in terms of students' literacy learning in three areas: (a) redefining emergent and conventional literacy, (b) a sociocultural perspective on learning, and (c) learning communities in which Chapter 1 students participate. Within these three underlying areas, I further address issues related to students' literacy transformations in the settings of Chapter 1, regular education, home, and peer communities. Then, I share theoretical and practical implications for the study. Finally, I suggest possible limitations of the study and questions for future research.

Defining and Redefining Emergent and Conventional Literacy

At the beginning of this report, I asserted that emergent literacy is a relatively new area of early literacy learning. As such, we have a lot to learn about the perspective, particularly with regard to students' transformations toward more conventional literacy. I suggested three critical pieces of

emergent literacy that were in contrast to earlier perspectives of literacy: (a) learning leads to development, (b) reading, writing, listening, and speaking are interconnected, and (c) early literacy learning occurs in many contexts outside of school.

In earlier views of literacy, scholars engaged in developmental arguments about the age at which children should start to read (e.g., Huey, 1908). In emergent literacy, the focus has greatly reduced this developmental readiness perspective by valuing and encouraging literacy experiences with young children, typically ages 1-7. This guideline suggests that first graders should be conventionally literate; however, my findings indicate that this may be an overestimate of their conventional literacy development. The second graders receiving Chapter 1 services in my study were still struggling with strategic literacy and literature response, two important aspects valued in today's conceptions of literacy. Although they knew how to handle a book and had a fairly strong knowledge of print characteristics, these accomplishments did not mean that they could consistently use language conventionally nor did it suggest they had a positive attitude about literacy. For example, Paul, though a second grader, was still using unconventional spelling patterns and making little association between texts and his personal experiences. Similarly, Trevor struggled with figuring out unknown words, particularly in recognizing and connecting rhyming words and word patterns.

In this respect, an emergent literacy definition of "the reading and writing behaviors that precede and develop into conventional literacy" (Sulzby &

Teale, 1991 p. 728) raises questions about definitions of conventional literacy. In this study, it appeared that conventional literacy varied according to the literacy characteristics being examined. For example, children quickly acquired some characteristics (e.g., book-handling knowledge), while others took more time (e.g., strategic literacy). However, a broader definition of literacy that encompasses comprehension strategies, response to text, in addition to the traditional print features, means that emergent readers and writers continue to develop conventionally well into second and possibly later grades. The students in this study were still showing characteristics associated with emergent literacy.

In chapter 1, I defined emergent literacy as the reading and writing characteristics and attitudes that lead toward more conventional uses of literacy. This definition expands beyond "behaviors" to consider more personal views of literacy (i.e., attitudes) and distinguishing features of students' behaviors (i.e,. characteristics). I defined conventional literacy as consistent and intentional use of accepted literacy standards. Given this definition, if I had considered only the book-handling knowledge characteristics, all of students would have been considered "conventional" by January. Using the more encompassing literacy standards reflective of others' definitions of literacy (e.g., Gee, 1990; Heap, 1991), students have much to learn before becoming conventionally literate. With this broader perspective of literacy, I expanded emergent literacy to include more than the traditional standards. Analysis of the data revealed none of the students would have been considered

conventionally literate once areas such as comprehension and literature response were included as characteristics of a broader literacy definition. As such, conventional literacy seems to be important in terms of planning goals and visions of what a literate person might be able to do, but attaching an age expectation or limiting conventional literacy to simple basic concepts seems to trivialize the complex nature of literacy and learning.

In my definition, students' attitudes toward literacy formed a component of emergent literacy. Students' were in situations where adults and peers conveyed messages about views of literacy and literacy abilities that seemed to influence students' attitudes toward reading. For example, Mrs. Casey, Mrs. Duncan, and Mrs. Walston all referred to the children as "readers". Yet, when the students attempted to choose a Reading Is Fundamental book, other adults sent more negative messages about their reading ability in relation to their book selections. Paul often showed that he liked to read (e.g., books), but did not like to "read" worksheets, boardwork, and other seatwork tasks assigned to him. These conflicting views of defining readers and reading seemed apparent to the students based on their responses (e.g., disappointment, disengagement) to these messages and expressed views about literacy. During elementary school and beyond, a positive attitude about literacy seems to be an important characteristic to develop with children.

Overall, this study provides significant insight into our continuing definitions of emergent literacy and conventional literacy. Specifically, I suggest that we need to expand our definitions of both constructs, pay greater

attention to the transformations which occur as students' literacy develops, and move away from age/grade expectations toward a more encompassing view of children's ongoing literacy development.

A Sociocultural Perspective on Learning

A sociocultural perspective on learning highlights the vital social interactions between more knowledgeable others and children (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). In this study, the students' transformations were directly tied to their learning processes, where the language they heard and used to talk about literacy and literacy practices influenced their literacy development. In this section, I explore the study conclusions in relation to their connections to three primary areas: (a) genetic analysis, (b) elementary and higher mental funcationing, (c) social and cultural influences, and (d) semiotic mediation.

Genetic Analysis

Conventional literacy is not acquired at a certain developmental level. Students brought earlier literacy experiences to school and continued to build upon them as they engaged in opportunities to interact with text. The students were continually moving along developmental lines, but this appeared to be related to their social interactions around text and the instructional conversations in which they engaged. For example, the first graders worked together, talking with each other and Mrs. Casey about the order of the alphabet and the names of the letters. Mario helped Molly to read her book, using instructional phrases that had been modeled by Mrs. Casey. These interactions helped students to progress in literacy characteristics such as print

awareness and strategic literacy. In essence, as we focus on the

transformations that they students made, the role of the teachers' instructional

decisions (e.g., by scaffolding and modeling), curricular decisions(e.g.,

literature, language arts connections), and students' language opportunities

(e.g., peer discussion) seemed a key means of supporting literacy learning and

development.

The type and purpose of instruction that Mrs. Casey used depended upon

the individual needs of the students. While she used many group activities, she

was able to spend individualized instructional time with each student during

various times of each week. During these instructional periods, Mrs. Casey

was more able to work directly within the zone of proximal development for

individual students; that is, she could focus directly on the literacy needs of

particular children, provide guidance to help them understand the literacy task,

and support their growing knowledge of literacy in general. Thus, the

interactions between Mrs. Casey and the students took advantage of a

language opportunity to explicitly discuss literacy principles. For example,

when Mrs. Casey read with Molly, we saw how she guided Molly's hand in the

conventional manner of reading print (e.g., left to right, top to bottom),

suggested strategies for decoding words (e.g., look at the letters), and matched

spoken words with written words (e.g., pointing to "frog" as they read it).

In this representative case, Mrs. Casey was working directly with Molly to

engage her in attending to basic literacy characteristics to help Molly realize

the significance of the text. Mrs. Casey did not wait until Molly seemed

developmentally "ready" to learn these literacy principles. Rather, Mrs. Casey worked to help her learn these principles to further her literacy development. Similarly, Mrs. Casey worked with Jared on his special word book. She focused on helping him to create a sentence that made sense and to print his spoken thoughts. While Paul could print words instead of scribbling, he did not seem to personalize his writing and used unconventional spelling patterns. Thus, for these two individuals, the focus of the instruction and the nature of Mrs. Casey's interactions with them differed to meet more directly their particular developmental needs.

The Chapter 1 setting provided additional opportunities for students to be engaged in learning that furthered their development. Within the class, opportunities arose to help students with concepts with which they were struggling (e.g., Molly using Daniel's t-shirt to remember the letter *h*). Mrs. Casey played an important role in providing uptake on such situations and engaging the students when the opportunity arose. Mario played a role as more knowledgeable other when he helped Molly to read her *I Can Book*. Similarly, in the regular classroom, Mrs. Duncan helped Daniel to understand the lunch calendar and related literacy characteristics (e.g., sense-making, left to right). It was not a matter of waiting until Molly or Daniel reached a certain age when others could start teaching them to read. Rather, it was the social interaction among the students and more knowledgeable other that helped them to learn an idea, and as a result, to progress developmentally in their acquisition of the emergent literacy characteristics. In all of these examples, the

social interactions and mediated learning were essential for engaging students in learning situations that furthered their literacy development.

Elementary and Higher Mental Functions

Decisions, opportunities, choices, and engagement all led to critical social interactions, a foundational aspect of learning related to both a sociocultural perspective and emergent literacy. The language opportunities available to talk about concepts, the interactions among peers and between adults and children, and the instructional or mediated nature of the language used within some situations all seemed to increase students' engagement with and subsequent access to learning conventional literacy.

If we consider the Harré model (i.e., Vygotsky Space, see Figure 1), the students engaged in many social interactions within quadrant I. These included conversations among the students and between adults and students. Students appeared to appropriate concepts initiated in the quadrant I, to transform them and make them public at a later time. For example, the first graders spent three days learning the basal words for "On the Bus" in Mrs. Casey's room. This involved writing Special Word Book sentences with some of the words, making sentences out of the individual words, discussing what the words meant, and so forth. During this time, the students started to appropriate and transform their knowledge of the words. Within the week, they made public their growing knowledge of the words by recognizing them in a different context (in Mrs. Duncan's room) and using a similar means of social interaction with the words (e.g., Daniel trying to make them into sentences). When Mario and Molly

were partner reading Molly's *I Can Book,* there were places where Molly struggled with words or missed a word. Mario appeared to appropriate instructional and comprehension tools that Mrs. Casey modeled. His public use of these phrases (e.g., "Does that make sense?" "I don't see that word here") seemed to indicate that he had appropriated, transformed, and made public, ideas that he first engaged in within social interactions.

In both of these examples, the *processes* of appropriation, transformation, publication, and conventionalization were directly related to the students' *transformations.* Mario's literacy transformations within these process appeared to help him develop several strategies for understanding text (e.g., "Does that make sense?") and a growing understanding of print awareness (e.g., "I don't see that word here"). While these transformations did not necessarily mean that the students were "conventionally" literate about the literacy topic, the process did seem to further there growth in the literacy characteristics.

Instruction within a language-based discussion method as opposed to an individual or direct instruction method seemed to be of benefit to the students. Mrs. Casey attempted to teach necessary skills (e.g., phonics) in a contextualized manner that was also useful for the students. For example, students' growing knowledge of phonemic tools was one of many strategies to use while reading. This is in contrast to Chapter 1 instruction traditionally offered in which learning a phonetic code was the primary purpose of instruction (Johnston & Allington, 1991).

Mrs. Casey preferred to teach phonemic awareness in relation to the other literacy characteristics. She brought cereal boxes into her room to engage the students in reading for a purpose and finding words they knew, drawing on their knowledge of letters and sounds as one means of reading the words. Similarly, she taught phonemic patterns within discussions of the students' own writing (e.g., having the students write sentences and then making"cut-up" sentences for them to practice reading). The focus here was phonemic instruction within authentic uses of literacy (e.g., writing) and while engaged in a language opportunity to discuss the phonemic patters (e.g., the first-grade group putting the letters in alphabetical order).

Extending this focus on language-based instruction to another example, it appeared in the second grade sequencing activity that the teacher-led, rule based discourse did little to empower the students to engage in the task. Yet, when the students were given more opportunity to interact among themselves about the task and took more ownership, the engagement increased. Similarly, the seatwork task without social interaction did little to engage the students (i.e. Paul and Trevor) in learning. Students' engagement in these cases was similar to arguments made by researchers studying the area of motivation (e.g., Gambrell, 1992; Turner, 1993). Turner (1993) suggested that

> Open tasks, because of the flexibility they allow, are more conducive to promoting student collaboration than tasks in which only one approach or answer are prescribed. Students who must work alone are deprived of these opportunities for sharing, modeling, and group problem solving. In addition, the very students who need to learn how to ask for academic help may never have that opportunity when literacy is presented as a solo activity. (p. 160)

Turner suggested that motivation behaviors, connected to social interactions versus individual learning, are related to students' engagement with literacy tasks.

As was true of their regular education peers, the students' own choices and engagement within the Chapter 1 setting played a critical role in supporting their learning. When they were engaged in the literacy tasks or activities, students appeared to be more actively questioning their choices and engaging one another in social interactions to solve problems. These choices (e.g., Breanne's self-correction while reading) and engagement (e.g., putting the ABC's in order with the help of peers) furthered the students' literacy transformations by focusing them directly on literacy characteristics (e.g., using strategies, learning letter names, left to right sequencing).

Semiotic Mediation

Within literacy *transformations*, the language opportunities and related social interactions resulted in situations where the adults or peers could mediate students' learning (Rogoff, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). This mediation took the form of creating or taking advantage of opportunities for learning and directing instructional conversations to the individual needs of the students. The students' responses to the experiences also played a role in their learning, especially in regard to the choices they made and their attempts at being engaged with the activities.

Within the Chapter 1 room, social interactions developed from Mrs. Casey's instructional decisions, the opportunities presented, students' choices

and students' engagement in literacy activities to support literacy transformations. Mrs. Casey used instruction in the form of scaffolding and modeling (Cazden, 1988; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). With this instruction, she used language as a tool to work closely in the students' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) to give them the support they needed when learning new concepts.

For example, Mrs. Casey took opportunities to work individually with students. Similarly, she encouraged the students to work together in their learning with peers assisting each other (e.g., partner reading). In this manner, many of the examples I discussed in relation to genetic analysis seemed directly connected to Mrs. Casey's instructional talk and the mediated learning situation. She also encouraged the students to talk with each other about their literacy ideas and engaged them in discussions about these ideas. In this manner, Mrs. Casey's decision-making led to supporting students' literacy transformations both at an immediate and a longer term level. The immediate transformations occurred through instances where students quickly mastered a principle (e.g., Molly's associated of *h* with heart led to a useful tool for her to quickly learn that letter). The long-term transformations were most noticeable over the semester. For example, figures 9-14 displayed numerous characteristics where they made remarkable progress in a short amount of time.

Chapter 1 Students' Learning Communities

Children engage in language opportunities across various settings daily (e.g., Chapter 1, regular classroom, home). These social settings both

appeared to reinforce one another and to hinder certain aspects of literacy; that is, the social interactions within various settings seemed to differ in terms of the literacy messages conveyed to the students. Attempts to build relationships across the settings were somewhat encouraging (e.g., Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Casey), but also reflected needed changes to create more communication and interaction (e.g., school and home). In this section, I discuss my conclusions around three areas: (a) relationship between communities within the school, (b) communication between school and home, and (c) peer communities and their relation to student beliefs.

Relationship Among the School Communities

The Chapter 1 setting within this study provided an enriched environment and holistic form of instruction that is atypical of most pullout programs (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989). Mrs. Casey drew upon her knowledge of emergent literacy and a sociocultural perspective to provide the students with instructional interactions directed toward encouraging their use of print. Her class was different from many resource rooms that have been criticized in the past (e.g., Calfee & Drum, 1979; McGill-Franzen, 1994). She made connections among the language arts (e.g., choral reading of poetry, daily writing) to engage the children with literacy in a holistic manner.

Outside the Chapter 1 setting, students engaged in many different forms of literacy. This included literacy interactions within their regular classroom, other school settings, home, and so forth. In some cases, there appeared to be a relationship between locations, while in other instances, there remained

separate, and somewhat isolated, literacy practices. Such similarities and differences influenced students in both directions (e.g., encouraging engagement and/or disengagement).

Proponents of inclusion models of instruction for struggling readers often criticize the separated nature of pullout instructional programs (Johnston & Allington, 1989; Pugash & Wesson, 1995). While this has been related to the separate types of instruction (e.g., Allington, 1983), a primary criticism has been the unsuccessful coordination of instruction across settings. The relationship between Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Casey seemed to be conducive to supporting and reinforcing the students' learning. In contrast, the apparent separate instruction of Mrs. Walston from Mrs. Casey's room led to more isolated instruction.

Regular communication was one means by which the teachers tried to build connections across classroom. Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Casey communicated with each other about instructional plans (e.g., basal words), congruent activities, and students' progress. This communication appeared to support the students by helping them make connections across the Chapter 1 and regular education settings, most notably in recognizing and matching print in different contexts. It also focused their attention on specific emergent literacy characteristics (e.g., practicing certain letters, using similar pattern books) that were a main focus during each week.

This type of communication did not occur at such a regular pace between Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Walston. The lack of communication between

these two seemed to be a missed opportunity for providing additional support. The regular seatwork activities in Mrs. Walston's room did seem directly to hinder students' literacy growth. The seatwork led to disengagement on the part of both Trevor and Paul. The isolated activities led to little social interaction with others about literacy, either conceptually or instructionally.

One possible explanation for the disparate educational views seems related to the notion of discourse communities. Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Duncan appeared to have closer shared beliefs about the nature of literacy instruction. While Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Duncan did not use exactly the same instructional methods, Mrs. Duncan did seem to share an interest in moving towards a more holistic approach to instruction (e.g., use integrated writing, valued activities such as sharing time). In this sense, they shared some of the same goals, communicated with each other about their instruction, and use similarly vocabulary, all areas consistent with Swales (1990) features of a discourse community. Mrs. Walston and Mrs. Casey did not share the same views.

One significant finding of this study was that the pullout program did seem to be a positive literacy experience for the students. Mrs. Casey's instruction in the Chapter 1 class enabled students to engage in many social interactions around text that supported their conventional literacy transformation. Thus, rather than being critical overall about pullout programs in general, the study indicated several means (e.g., individualized instructional opportunities, holistic instruction) in which a pullout program was extremely beneficial given the community making connections across school settings.

Communication Between School and Home

The communication between school and home occurred when teachers informed parents about literacy activities, the school created opportunities to instruct parents, and parents reacted and responded to school information. With written communication and parent/teacher conferences, Mrs. Casey often placed herself in an instructional role with the parents, informing them about her literacy practices and suggesting literacy activities for home. For example, Mrs. Casey directly showed Jared's father how to help Jared with his cut-up sentences at home. She brought Daniel into the conference with his parents and proceeded to engage him in school literacy activities (e.g., cut-up sentence, decoding words). Her intent was to inform the parents about these activities. Parents tended to focus on sharing information about the children's home experiences and wondered about their child's literacy progress.

There were several attempts for unidirectional instruction from the school to the home and little sharing on the part of the parents. Given the emergent literacy perspective on the importance of home literacy, one area missing from this Chapter 1 and school setting were better opportunities to learn about the experiences of the children within their homes and to build on that emerging literacy. Ada (1994) claims that, "the lack of ongoing contact between the school and the home and of an authentic incorporation of the child's reality into the curriculum perpetuates the idea that parents cannot contribute to their own children's education" (p. vii). In this setting, it appeared that communication *to* the parents occurred, while an appreciation for literacy

information *from* the parents was minimal. Studies suggest that direct school contact with parents could lead to a better sense of community among the parents and school (e.g., McCaleb, 1994) and understanding by the parents of their vital literacy role (e.g., Edwards, 1989) .

The parent/teacher conference was the place where most of the interaction between home and school occurred. Yet, this was generally only 15 minutes per students, and included all academic and social areas. Mrs. Casey was fortunate to have extended time with a couple parents who chose to meet with her individually. Given the fewer amount of students she taught, she was able to spend an extended time with them. These conferences did lead to some sharing between parents and teacher; however, the conferences tended to be dominated by the teacher. As schools start to build better connections between the home and school, it seems important to take advantages of such opportunities for teachers to understand better the uses of literacy in the home which could be used as an instructional tool in the classroom.

Students' Beliefs and Roles Within the Communities

Within their school community, the students' beliefs about literacy seemed to be revealing in terms of their views of literacy, literacy activities, and themselves as learners. The Chapter 1 students interacted with each other and with adults. The first graders seemed to be agreeable to all of the literacy activities they encountered. They tended to think that one learns to read simply to be able to read. They thought that reading was something one learned in first grade, viewing themselves as nonreaders in early September. This

attitude of a nonreader was similar to findings of other researchers. For example, Hansen (1983) asked 23 first graders "Can you write?" and all said yes. When she asked the same students "Can your read?" only two said yes. At some level, it appears that first graders have an understanding of reading as something you learn to do in first grade. Unlike the students in Hansen's study, these Chapter 1 first graders did not view themselves as writers either, perhaps because the school seemed to label them as such.

In contrast, the second graders were more knowledgeable, or at least, more articulate, about their reasons for reading. Paul related reading to job security for necessary items including a home and food. Breanne thought reading was important to being successful in high school. Trevor's view was not as long range, instead focusing on a need to read in order to progress to the next grade level. The students' beliefs seemed tied to guidance by their parents about the importance of reading. This suggests that adults play an important role in helping students to set goals for their own education and literacy development.

Students' literacy attitudes seemed to be related to their engagement with the literacy activities designed to improve their skills. Both Trevor and Paul reinforced their dislike of seatwork, stating that they did not think such activities were important. The first graders tended to think positively about their literacy activities and expressed recognition of their own transformation toward conventional literacy. A look into students' beliefs about their literacy learning

was important for gaining information about their attitudes, an important aspect of conventional literacy.

The students' peer community was integral to their literacy learning. Regular education peers engaged the Chapter 1 students in literacy activities, both for reasons of completing an assigned task, but also for more authentic purposes of writing. Breanne broke the rules and worked closely with her friend to complete seatwork in Mrs. Walston's room. The first graders in Mrs. Duncan's room sent written messages around the room requesting recess partners. Similar to the "unofficial literacy" described by Hubbard (1989), the students were engaging each other in literacy acts for authentic reasons. In this case, it was to determine recess play. In this manner, the regular education peers appeared to play a role in engaging the Chapter 1 students in relevant literacy activities within the peer community.

Theoretical Implications

This study has several theoretical implications. First, the study reinforced the social and public nature of learning. As I described in the sociocultural perspective section, similar to concepts associated with the Vygotsky Space (Harré, 1984), the social interactions were essential for supporting students' progress. There were many situations that encouraged social interactions, most notably related to decisions by the teachers and opportunities available to the children. The students' choices often either led them toward internalizing and individually thinking about the concepts encountered in the social realm; that is, as the children participated in social interactions, based on decisions and

opportunities, how they individually conceived of and made sense of those social interactions seemed to be reflective of the choices they made. Their engagement was related to all four quadrants of the Vygotsky Space. If they were engaged in social or individual interactions, they were more likely to internalize the concepts and use them again at a later time. Thus, the social context, social interactions, students' attitudes and choices, and teacher's decisions all worked together to support students' learning.

Second, the notion of a transformation in literacy focuses on the *process* not the products of literacy learning. Teachers, parents, and peers set up zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) for the Chapter 1 students. In this manner, the processes they were encountering led to their further transformations toward more conventional usage of text. This suggests that we not only need to assess students written and verbal products (e.g., word books, journals, read aloud fluency) but also to keep in mind the *processes* students use to complete these products. Mrs. Casey used both scaffolding and modeling as instructional tools. Scaffolding was an important means of working to help students individually with transformations and better understand the processes in which they are engaging.

Third, a sociocultural perspective shapes how we look at students' literacy transformations in relation to how each of us define literacy. Mrs. Casey tended to include emergent literacy principles in her class and included many language opportunities as a means to support early reading and writing within her definition of literacy. In contrast, Mrs. Walston focused more on the literacy

materials (e.g., basals, worksheets) as "reading". Their expectations for what students need to accomplish in terms of literacy use was different: Mrs. Walston seemed to think that accomplishing their reading work was the important factor in their learning while Mrs. Casey focused more globally on their progress in literacy characteristics such as strategic literacy.

These different views of "what counts as reading" (Heap, 1991) seemed related to the theory underlying discourse communities, in that the understanding of literacy for these two teachers was quite different. Within schools, this implies that we might need to include more opportunities for teachers to engage in intellectual discussions about literacy concepts so that even when they maintain a separate curriculum, they have an understanding of the curriculum used by other teachers. Also, a criticism of the discourse community concept has been to explain how participants enter or leave those communities. This study implied that joining and leaving communities might be related to participants willingness, availability for, and interest in establishing such contacts.

Practical Implications

In this study, the first practical implication relates to our definition of emergent and conventional literacy. I asserted that we need to expand these definitions to encompasses purposes of and attitudes toward literacy. The second graders were still quite emergent in some areas. Activities and instruction designed directly at the emergent literacy needs of students that focus on the processes related to transformations were critical. Thus, we need

to address better emergent literacy practices *within* classrooms, such as connecting written and oral language, recognizing related characteristics, and mediating students' positive views of literacy.

Next, we need to understand emergent literacy in relation to "at-risk" students or those who are struggling with literacy in some manner. Although we know that for many students, whether from low- or high-income homes, rich literacy experiences potentially occur prior to school (e.g., Gee, 1990; Heath, 1983; Michel, 1994). If students come to school exhibiting few related emergent literacy characteristics, we can change our instruction to support them in this area. However, we should also be trying to make closer links to their home literacy so that we can help them to make connections to school literacy. For Chapter 1 settings, a next step would be to focus more directly on what the children do know to help them learn something new.

A third implication involves the parents. Many of these students came from two parent homes, where both parents worked at low-income jobs (e.g., cutting vegetables, quick-serve automobile repair). This meant that some of the children went to homes of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and babysitters after school. In addition, many of the older siblings of the students had attended Chapter 1 in the current or previous years. These resources of parents, siblings, and extended family needs to be viewed as just that—a resource. Rather than continuing a process of families remaining in Chapter 1, we should focus more directly on helping the extended families to recognize their important role. Schools need to examine what responsibility they might have

for families where students repeatedly enter school without the preparation they need to succeed in developing literacy abilities. One option that seems to make sense it to try and include home literacy activities in the school goals.

Fourth, debates about pullout or inclusion programs seems superficial on their own. It seems that the underlying issue is the type of instruction provided to the students. In this setting, the Chapter 1 instruction reflected many of the features articulated by researchers as holistic and authentic practice, while the instruction in the regular classrooms seemed more closely tied to traditional methods, particularly that of Mrs. Walston. I suggest that we need to explore beneficial instruction for struggling readers and writers rather than the location.

Finally, I included the role of attitudes within my definition of emergent and conventional literacy. As educators, we need to work directly and consistently to encourage students to read and write, and to value their literacy progress. Students who are deemed at-risk by the school seem to be particularly in need of developing an attitude that includes an understanding of the benefits of literacy and a practical means to reach that goal.

Limitations of the Study

With any study, there are limitations and this study is no exception. The study includes five limitations: (1) length of the study, (2) selection of participants, (3) lack of information about prior education, (4) omission of parent interviews, and (5) relationship between the teacher and researcher. First, I collected data for a four-month period. In terms of transformations the students

made (see figures 9-14) this was a relatively long period. However, following the students throughout the year or into the next grade may have provided additional insights. In that sense, a question for future research may be to ask the same type of questions, only to work in a research setting that would allow access to the students from the preschool through early elementary years in order to obtain more longitudinal data.

Second, the ethnicity of the students who participated in the Chapter 1 program from these two classrooms was not representative of the school as a whole. Since the district administrators determined which students attended Chapter 1, the students were selected for me. Although a little over one-third of the school's students comes from a minority background, only two of the eight Chapter 1 students (i.e., Mario and Tanisha) were members of a minority group. Mario did not join Chapter 1 until October and Tanisha moved in late October. Thus, I do not have a full set of data for either of these students. While this does not make the study any less beneficial, it does limit the study in terms of information about these minority groups.

Third, while I was able to obtain some information about the students' prior schooling, particularly for kindergarten, I was not able to get specific information about their preschool experiences. Since I had not observed the first-grade students when they were in kindergarten, I did not have this data to draw upon. For Paul, Breanne, and Trevor, I had observed them in their first-grade classroom the previous year, although I did not draw upon this data within this report.

Fourth, this study attempted to view the role of the parents within the context of school, specifically in the parent-teacher conferences and in the written communication between school and home. In that sense, there was parent data that directly related to the perspective of the teachers, in terms of how the parents came into or conversed with the teachers.

I did not go into the homes of the children or directly interview their parents for three reasons. First, my study across the school settings, with two groups of children led to an extremely large data set. Given the questions I was addressing, I felt that visits to the students' home were not essential to the study. More importantly, earlier research in emergent literacy has already provided substantial data about they types of literacy environments in the home. Second, the parents appeared somewhat wary about who I was and what I doing. While all of the parents mentioned in this study signed the permission slips and appeared willing to participate, two asked that they not be videotaped and wondered how much time it might take on their part. They were quite relieved when I said the permission slip was primarily so that I could participate in and audiotape the parent/teacher conference. In this sense, their participation was granted, but they did not seem to want to commit to a large block of time nor did I have permission to pay them for their time. I was concerned that the parents associated me with the school and that entering their homes or invading their privacy would further alienate them from the school. Third, the students themselves were able to provide much information about their homes in what appeared to be an accurate manner. In relation to

this, the parent/teacher conferences were limited in some respects, in that I mostly drew on data from them that was possible to confirm or disconfirm from other sources.

The final limitations was my acquaintance with Mrs. Casey prior to this study. I initially went to visit her classroom based upon my previous interactions with her about literacy instruction. I think this previous interaction helped Mrs. Casey to feel comfortable and free to ask me questions about my plans and purpose for conducting the research within her room. I made many attempts not to let this previous association influence my data analysis or my views of the other teachers.

Questions for Future Research

While this study helped to inform the education community about several theoretical and practical issues, it also raised questions for future research. The first question is related to the long-term nature of learning. Some long-term studies (e.g., Dyson, 1993; Wells, 1986) about language and literacy have informed us about students' progress over several years. We could learn more from the same type of studies looking directly at the issues of emergent literacy and following students' progress toward more conventional literacy throughout elementary school.

Second, Mrs. Casey's interactions with Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Walston were quite different in terms of discussion of the instructional practices and students' progress. If we consider that some students moved from Mrs. Duncan's room to Mrs. Walston's room for second grade, while attending Mrs.

Casey's room, it appeared that they were interacting with three different uses and definitions of literacy. A study directed at either working with teachers to draw tighter connections across classrooms or to examine the students reactions to these different practices would inform us about teacher communities and influences on learning.

Third, I focused my study on students' who were having difficulty with literacy. Yet, even for students who are more successfully engaged with print during their first- and second-grade year, there have not been many studies that examine how students build upon their emergent literacy skills and strategies to become more proficient readers and writers. In this sense, the foundation work of emergent literacy still has questions to answer in relation to conventional literacy for all students, not only those initially struggling with school literacy.

Finally, we need to learn more about how to engage parents, teachers, and children in literacy activities that build upon the communities that cross locational boundaries. This study suggested that teachers tried to impose school-based literacy into the home, but rarely tried to bring home-based literacy into the school. We would benefit from additional studies where schools cross these traditional boundaries so that emergent readers and writers are making connections across communities.

EPILOGUE

My primary data collection with the Chapter 1 students stopped in December as they headed toward winter vacation. However, I remained interested in their progress and occasionally went to visit them in the winter and spring, collecting some additional assessment and interview data. During this time, I also shared some of my data analysis with the students and teachers to hear their reactions and take into consideration their questions and comments.

With any Chapter 1 student, a remaining question tends to be: Did the student test out of Chapter 1? Does the district consider them to no longer be "at-risk" and more evenly on grade level with their peers? In a school district where retention is common and Chapter 1 instruction is widespread, the end of the year progress does indicate both some distressing and hopeful news.

All three of the second graders (i.e., Breanne, Paul, and Trevor) scored above the 30 percentile on the Metropolitan Achievement test at the end of the year. Their scores meant that they "tested out" of Chapter 1 and will not go to Mrs. Casey's class next year (1995-96). Breanne has been doing exceptionally well and will attend third grade next year. Trevor is continuing to make progress and has not been recommended for retention; he has however been placed on the list for special education testing. This testing had not started during this school year and is expected to take place in the fall. It was recommended that Paul repeat second grade because he was not getting his work done during school. He was tested for special education due to a request by his mother, but at the spring conferences both Mrs. Walston and Mrs. Casey

said that they did not think he would qualify because his scores were too high. Mrs. Casey is inclined to have him advance into third grade because he is doing well in reading and writing and thinks that finishing his work is a separate problem. Tanisha is in special education at another school in the district. I have not been able to obtain information on her progress.

Jared will be moving into second grade and also "tested out" of Chapter 1 instruction for next year. He has made progress this year and, because he attended kindergarten twice, he is not eligible for retention. Of the four students in Mrs. Duncan's class, Jared was the only student who did not receive a retention letter in January. By May, there had been much discussion about Daniel among the teachers and parents as to whether he should move on to second grade. His mother eventually requested that he remain in first grade, perhaps due to the success of his fifth-grade sister who seemed to benefit from repeating an earlier grade. However, in May, Mrs Duncan consulted with Mrs. Casey, talked with Daniel's mom and it was decided to move Daniel on to second grade. Both Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Casey were concerned that Daniel would be quite bored in first grade for another year, leading to behavior problems. They felt he was doing well enough in the academic areas to move on. His test score (i.e., 24%) means that he will be working with Mrs. Casey again next year.

All participating parties agreed that retaining Mario in second grade would be beneficial for him. Since he was the same age as many of the first graders and because he was struggling with all of the second grade work, he

only started doing the first grade work in April and immediately became more successful and engaged in the activities. Molly moved to another school district in April. It is not certain whether she will be in first or second grade next year.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Chapter 1 Children's Books

Carle, E. (1973). Have you seen my cat? New York: Philomel.

Christelow, E. (1989). Five little monkeys jumping on the bed. New York: Clarion.

Crews, D. (1984). School bus. New York: Greenwillow.

Duke, K. (1984). Guinea pigs far & near. New York: Dutton.

Elting, M., & Folsom, M. (1980). Q is for duck: An alphabet guessing game. New York: Clarion.

Gelman, R. (1977). More spaghetti, I say! New York: Scholastic.

Gift, P. (1992). Best friends. Cleveland: Modern Curriculum.

Hollander, C. (1992). When the alligator came to class. New York: Modern Curriculum.

Hollander, C. (1992). Who said boo? New York: Modern Curriculum.

Hutchins, P. (1968). Rosie's walk. New York: Macmillan Publishing.

Johnson, C. (1955). Harold and the purple crayon. New York: Harpercollins.

Keats, E. J. (1962). The snowy day. New York: Viking.

Kitamura, S. (1985). What's Inside?: The Alphabet Book. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Kovalski, M. (1987). The wheels on the bus. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Langstaff, J. (1974). Oh, a-hunting we will go. New York: Aladdin.

Lobel, A. (1977). Mouse soup. New York: Harper & Row.

Lobel, A. (1981). <u>On market street</u>. New York: Scholastic.

Martin, B. J. (1967). <u>Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?</u> New York: Henry Holt.

McMillan, B. (1988). <u>Growing colors</u>. City: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Nayer, J. (1992). <u>City rhythms</u>. Cleveland, Ohio: Modern Curriculum.

Nayer, J. (1992). <u>If I could</u>. New York: Modern Curriculum.

Nayer, J. (1992). <u>What do you see?</u> New York: Modern Curriculum.

Nelson, J. (1992). <u>The baby who got all the blame</u>. New York: Modern Curriculum Press.

Nelson, J. (1992). <u>The popcorn popper</u>. New York: Modern Curriculum Press.

Nelson, J. (1992). <u>When it snows</u>. Cleveland: Modern Curriculum Press.

Nelson, J., & Weissman, B. (1992). <u>Little Bunny's Lunch</u>. Cleveland, Ohio: Modern Curriculum.

Ormerod, J. (1986). <u>Joe can count</u>. New York: Mulberrys.

Peek, M. (1981). <u>Roll over! A counting song</u>. New York: Clarion.

Peek, M. (1985). <u>Mary wore her red dress and Henry wore his green sneakers</u>. New York: Clarion.

Phillips, J. (1987). <u>Norma Jean, jumping bean</u>. City: Random House.

Potter, B. (1985). <u>The adventures of Peter Rabbit</u>. Nashville: Ideals Publishing.

Rey, H. A. (1958). <u>Curious George flies a kite</u>. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Russell, B. (1976). <u>Spider on the floor</u>. New York: Crown.

Shaw, N. (1986). <u>Sheep in a jeep</u>. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Stevens, K. (1978). <u>The beast in the bathtub</u>. New York: Harper & Row.

Ward, C. (1988). <u>Cookie's week</u>. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Wildsmith, B. (1991). <u>All fall down</u>. New York: Oxford UP Childrens Books.

Wildsmith, B. (1986). <u>Cat on the mat</u>. New York: Harpercollins.

Williams, M. (1990). <u>The velveteen rabbit</u>. New York: Scholastic.

Zion, G. (1956). <u>Harry, the dirty dog</u>. New York: Harpercollins.

APPENDIX B

Goatley Fieldnotes
Date: October 13, 1994
Students: Second Graders/Chapter 1 room

While I set up my equipment, I talked with Mrs. Casey. She is going to MSU this afternoon to talk to a group of undergraduates about writing. She is taking some examples of fifth-grade writing-- their own versions of If I were in Charge of the World. She is also taking examples from Special Word books, including Jared's. We talked at length about his word book yesterday, with Mrs. Casey still concerned about vision problems. Yesterday, Sandy and I talked about Hiebert & Taylor's new book and she asked if she could borrow my copy. I brought it in today.

9:48 Only Trevor and Breanne are here today. I'm not sure why Tempresse is not here. Paul is home from the hospital but cannot come back to school yet.

Mrs. Casey introduces the sixth part of the Halloween poem. They started this poem on Monday, adding to it each day. They read through the poem and then sing through it. At times, Mrs. Casey stops reading and the kids take over, doing quite well with reading the words.

Mrs. Casey seems to be moving in and out on while choral reading often. At some points, she jumps back in, talking louder to help them with a word, while other times, lets them read all of the sentences. Especially, for the early paragraphs in the poem, that the students have not read several times, she does not participate as much. Somewhat like a scaffold, removing her support when they don't need it anymore.

The students are reading the Popcorn book. While reading, they take turns. *Is the turn-taking today because of both Tanisha and Paul being absent? It was somewhat like a partner reading, only Mrs. Casey jumped in and helped out, also taking turns to read pages.*

9:54 Trevor had a lot of trouble with a sentence (p. 10). I think when he mis read the word "Watched" then he continued to have problems. *He appeared to be reading for meaning because he stopped at watched both times, saying it didn't make sense.* Mrs. Casey starts a conversation with Trevor, suggesting several strategies to use. She verbally takes him through the list on the side wall. *It might be a good idea for analysis to take the words they are having difficulty with and see the various strategies that Sandy uses to help the students figure out the word. Strategies as a convention category??*

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Student Interviews:

<u>Tell me about your family</u>.
Who are the people in your family?
When you go to school in the morning, what does your mom do?
What does your dad do?
Where do you go after school?
Who is helping you learn to read and write?

<u>Writing</u>
What kinds of writing do you do in school?
What kinds of writing do you do at home?
How does someone become a good writer?

<u>Reading</u>
How do you think kids learn to read?
Who is a good reader in your class? How come?
What kinds of reading do you do in school?
What kinds of reading do you do at home?
Is reading the same or different in Mrs. Casey's room from Mrs. Duncan?
Does Mrs. Walston teach reading different that Mrs. Duncan did?

Think about how you feel most of the time in class--is the work that you do in
    class too hard, too easy, just right?
Where do you get the books that you read? (prompts: school library, public
    library, teacher, parents, friends, Mrs. Flowers)

Do you like to read? Do you like to write?
What kind of books do you like to read?
If your teacher next year asks you what you think it means to read, what would
    you say?
Who are the people in this school that teach students to read?
Do you read the same kind of books in both rooms?

Questions about Items in Desk:

Why do you think Mrs. Duncan had you do this paper?
Why did you pick this book at the library?
What do you learn from this book (e.g., special word book, basal reader)?

This has some interesting writing (e.g., social writing, non-academic writing).
Tell me about it.
Do you like to do this kind of paper?
Do you like to read from this book?

Interview questions for other students in the class:

Who do you people in this school that help kids learn to read and write?
If you think of a really good reader, who's a really good read that you know?
Who are some of your really good friends in your class?
How do you think that kids learn to read?

Videotape Interview:

What are you doing in this picture? Tell me about it.
Tell me what is happening in the picture?
Why did Mrs. Casey have you do this?
What are you learning when you do this activity?
How does this activity help you to learn to read?
If you were the teacher, what would you have kids do to help them learn to
    read?
If you were the teacher trying to help kids learn to read, what activities that you
    do right now would you not do?
Do you think you are a better reading now than at the beginning of the year?
    Why?

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