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A new focus on the social side of literacy: Community, play, and heterogeneous grouping in an after school, student publishing program

Irene Helen Wellman
University of New Hampshire, Durham

A NEW FOCUS ON THE SOCIAL SIDE OF LITERACY: COMMUNITY, PLAY,

AND HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING IN AN AFTER SCHOOL,

STUDENT PUBLISHING PROGRAM

BY

IRENE HELEN WELLMAN

Master of Education in Elementary Education, Keene State College, 1990

THESIS

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_____
Thesis Director, John Carney
Professor of Education

_____
Grant Cioffi
Associate Professor of Education

_____
Ruth Wharton-McDonald
Associate Professor of Education

_____
Date   July 30, 2007

DEDICATION

In Memory of John Carney

For Edie, Mike, and Rose:

Supportive, inspiring, caring

For Dana, Ruth, Janis, and Rikki:

True to the warm spirit of education

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PREFACE

As I came to teaching later in my life (aged 36), I brought with me a personal history of experiences and studies in several subjects. I studied both English Literature and Anthropology, and have written, edited, and published poetry. Also, as the daughter of socio-cultural anthropologists, I experienced field work in Africa and Ireland. As a result, my study of the after-school student publishing enrichment program, which I founded and directed for four years, shows both literary and socio-cultural influences. I believe that this background has given me useful tools in looking back at the organization and goals of the program.

When I took a role as participant observer after passing the program on to another director, I was able to record and examine it from a socio-cultural perspective, and observe its progress as a component of the school's broader literacy environment. I speak, then, from the position of teacher as social researcher, looking back at my project as a historic case-study and having, in this past year, conducted an ethnographic study of the program as it progressed under different leadership. My data involves personal narrative, as well as supportive documentation and interviews. I also support my analysis with the theories and studies of educators who also have taken a socio-cultural perspective on literacy instruction.

My aim in this study is to provide as complete a picture of my program as possible from both a theoretical and practical point of view. It therefore consists of the interweaving of subjective reflections and more objective documentation. I believe that

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only in this way can I analyze the experiences of people involved in the program and how it progressed. My methodologies—personal narrative, interviews, field notes, and historical documentation combine to show a consistent and integral pattern that attempts to explicate and clarify a complex educational situation.

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This qualitative study pinpoints the particular circumstances surrounding special teacher-created programs and projects, both in classrooms and in after-school settings, showing how such programs operate under social conditions and engage social processes not generally found in routine public school instruction. For that very reason these are able to include an emphasis on community, play, and heterogeneous grouping. The case considered here is that of an after-school student publishing program in the Northeastern United States, and follows the history and progress of the program. The program in this elementary school was created and organized to develop and extend student literacy. It culminated each year in a school-wide literary magazine, open to contributors among all students, Grades K-4, and it was widely distributed to the school's community. The study specifically traces a series of program meetings in 2006, leading to the publication of that year's literary magazine. In the after-school classroom, involved adults played the role of guides leading the students through a process towards a productive, collaborative goal.

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The study analyzes the role of such special literacy programs in providing students with social opportunities to extend and explore literacy activities and be heard and supported by the wider educational community, in this case, through their student literary magazine. The implication of these findings is that special, goal-oriented literacy programs and projects, in the classroom, and before and after school, serve as an important balance to the routine school instruction in that they provide educators with the necessary opportunities to extend, develop, and—what is of major importance—to celebrate student literacy activities.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Problem, Aim, and Focus

In this thesis I discuss the significance of the social factors of community, play, and heterogeneous grouping in developing elementary student literacy, using as example an ethnographic study of an after-school student publishing program in a rural New Hampshire K-4 school. I base this study on the theories and studies of educational scholars and teachers who have consistently argued for attention to the social aspects of literacy. Though they come from different perspectives, they agree that one cannot divorce literacy from the social conditions under which students learn to read, write, listen, speak, and view. I will argue that special teacher-created programs or projects tend to embody the social conditions that produce a different perspective on student literacy and how it can be maintained and developed in the early years of schooling. My aim is to show that the value of these programs is that they act as a balance to everyday, routine instruction.

I take this position partly based upon the studies of educators concerned with developing student instruction in reading and writing in public schools. These studies have found that special teacher-created programs, as an addition to the regular instruction, enable extended literacy instruction, especially in regard to disadvantaged students. The scholars have noted several important aspects of these programs, partly

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social, partly organizational, that shows results that may not be found in day-to-day instruction. An analysis of these aspects, in their studies and in my own study, will, I hope; enable further understanding of the optimal conditions for literacy instruction in elementary schools today.

Special teacher-created programs provide several unique social opportunities. They tend to emphasize community and cooperation, in that the students are asked to work towards a common goal, such as putting together a newspaper, or putting on a play based on their own writing and research. They incorporate many aspects of play and are perceived generally as being enrichment activities rather than work, though students may work hard to achieve the common goal. They tend to involve heterogeneous grouping. Grade levels, ages, gender, socioeconomic status, or academic achievement levels are mixed more frequently. Most significantly, involved adults play a different role vis-à-vis the students than they do during the regular daily classroom lessons. While they retain regular school rules, their approach is more casual and informal. They act as guides and coaches, leading the students through a process towards a commonly accepted goal.

Special literacy programs are also organized in such a way as to bring about the social opportunities described above. For instance, these programs tend to flourish apart from the structure of the school day, spilling into after-school or before-school hours. Students who might otherwise never interact are given the opportunity to collaborate. Such programs, being temporary, also tend to display a certain structure, with a defined beginning, middle, and end, with some form of celebration on completion of the project or program. Students undergo a social process, as well as a learning process, packed into a finite span of time. Students are expected to interact with one another and with the

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teacher more fully. Discussion and debate are encouraged so that the aims of the program can be more effectively carried out.

Review of Research

A search through the educational literature will reveal many instances of educators describing and promoting special teacher-created literacy programs and the social and organizational features they exhibit. Writing process researchers, such as Donald Graves (1983) developed writing workshops leading to student publication that focused on student interaction. According to Graves (1983), teachers could help students develop writing skills very early in schooling, not waiting for them to spell correctly words they didn't know, but leading students through the stages of writing from prewriting all the way to authorship and publishing. He urged teachers to create a safe and predictable workshop environment for students and to allot a defined time in each day for the students to delve into writing activities. He also saw writing as a social activity involving conferencing between student and teacher and among students. For Graves, learning the art of writing needed to be an organized process, guided by a caring teacher, with a goal of sharing the writing, with publishing as "an important mode of literary enfranchisement for each child in the classroom" (p. 55), regardless of socio-economic status or ability.

Graves' seminal studies inspired other educators, such as Romano (1987), and Harste, Short, and Burke (1988). Harste, Short, and Burke (1988) write about "the authoring cycle," encouraging students to see themselves as authors and to acknowledge

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authorship in many aspects of their education. They described the authoring cycle as it would be implemented in a publishing program, with clearly defined phases of learning, the goal being the publication of a newspaper, magazine or book. As described, during the first few weeks the students participate in uninterrupted reading and writing activities. The completed writing is placed in Author's Folders. Then the students participate in the Author's Circle, where they confer with each other and with the teacher and proceed to rewrite, revise and self-edit their pieces, which they present to a friendly group of outside editors who help them to do further revisions and editing. The last phase involves the publication of the students' works together, celebrating the social interaction and community of authors that has evolved in the process.

Tom Romano (1987) delved even further into the sense of motivated community that can spring up during the writing process, and not only for the students but for teachers as they explore their own writing. He believed that in order to understand the writing process and demonstrate it to students, teachers should write, too, in a community of writers.

He describes his own experience of the community that evolved when his academic peers shared their writing, "I've never seen the like of it. Seventeen people, all believing in the value of the written word enough to make themselves vulnerable, to take their best shot at putting words on paper and then to read those words to their peers. They had learned to do this confidently. For they knew that after the sharing of writing, would follow support and cheering and help" (p. 179). He summed up, "When creative energy is generated in your classroom, in your peer writing-teaching groups, you will know it too. It is unmistakable. You will feel it and see evidence of it in the good works

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of your students and colleagues. Minds open. Spirits rise. Voices gain assurance. The animation spreads to every member of the group. The bright moments come again and again. And you'll know you have it right" (p. 181).

By making room in the academic day for the writing workshop with the goal of publishing and sharing writing, these scholars and teachers discovered a different perspective on literacy. Social aspects such as a sense of community, more discussion, and heterogeneous and inclusive grouping were emphasized. The structure of the workshops allowed for more time to complete the writing cycle with sharing and publication. Celebration of what was produced was emphasized. The teacher acted as a guide, respecting the efforts of the students and their individual voices. The role of "author" allowed for a sense of play and animation. Creativity was emphasized over spelling errors, which could always be cleared up on the final editing.

More recently, educators have taken up the idea of creating special projects devoted to the goal of student publication. They, too, speak in terms of community, play, inclusive grouping, and the structuring of writing projects towards a common goal of publication. Peter Elbow (2002) describes how student publishing can be a positive way for students to speak through their writing to the large audience, which he calls, "the gift of actual readers" (p. 5). He believes that publishing goes hand in hand with the method of teaching writing that encourages what he calls " freewriting," an exploratory writing involving early drafts that helps the younger students to "use scribbling and 'invented spelling' to get any of their thoughts on paper" (p. 2). He emphasizes that publication motivates the students to develop their drafts into revised, coherent, and polished pieces. The children, "learn in the most vivid, felt, and realistic way about the difference between

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exploratory early drafts for themselves and final drafts for a wider audience" (p. 6). He also states that publication is important in developing each student's sense of voice, and in being able to recognize and appreciate voice in the writing of fellow students. Publication, for Elbow, is a simple method of celebrating the community of individual, confident voices that the learning process in writing has engendered. In this light, publication becomes "a doorway into literacy" (p. 3) for all students. The creation of the goal of publication, he says, is highly motivating because it brings the students through a process that culminates in the new status of published authorship.

Chris Weber's (2002) call for more emphasis on student publication takes on a new role in light of what we now know about writing and the writing process and its role in literacy in general. Weber supports student publication and special projects that lead to student publication for many reasons. He has gathered several essays to this effect and presents several descriptions of successful publishing programs in schools. Swartout and Denstaedt (2002) stress the collaborative nature of writing for publication, and how it builds a sense of a community of writers. They describe student publishing models, such as classroom newspapers, juried school literary magazines that "will raise the level of writing in the school and set a standard for the future" (p. 139), contests, and writing for local, state and national publications that accept children's writing. Weber describes many ways in which special writing projects have led to publication, including service-minded projects and web-page projects. In all these examples the chief role of the teacher was to model and develop a spirit of collaboration. As Swartout and Denstaedt state in discussing their student publishing project, the Communication Arts Center of Clarkston High School, "We learned quickly that trust was the primary ingredient in

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developing community, so we forged personal bonds with each of our students. We preferred to listen more than we talked. We negotiated learning goals respecting their decisions as writers, and, at the same time, we encouraged them to experiment and stretch themselves" (pp. 133-134).

Weber's point is that the goal of student publication fulfills an important role in literacy in schools from the elementary level all the way through high school. He also encourages teachers, as Romano does, to write and share their own writing with their students, their school, and the wider community. My argument is that these student publication projects are very good examples of what is possible, in terms of their social aspects, in developing school literacy. They are goal oriented, finite, emphasize community and play (often in the form of role-playing), and tend to be inclusive. Moreover, the teacher takes a role as guide through the process from planning to publication. The students emerge in the end as published authors, in works that celebrate that authorship and the individual voices that went into them.

Those who have studied Vygotsky (1986, 2002), such as Susan Miller (2003), have also described special reading and writing projects that emphasized social and organizational factors in such a way as to create a distinctive sense of community within the more structured and formal routine of the school day. Miller, in her studies of teacher-mediated open-forum text discussions, describes how successful teachers constructed zones of proximal development "through their approaches to literature and interactions" (p. 312). According to Miller, the teacher's essential role "was supporting students' responses to the text and each other, guiding attention, and providing instructional assistance for students' questioning, monitoring, and elaborating" (p. 312).

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Over time, these strategies provided a structure that allowed the students to progress from outward initial responses to more "dialogical strategies" that "moved inward to become part of the students' repertoires for meaning-making" (p. 312).

Miller (2003) also notes that three important factors emerged as the teachers created open-forum discussions as Zones of Proximal Developments, or "ZPDs" as she puts it. First, the students reported that the teachers showed them deep respect as human beings who were quite capable of tackling challenges with support. Miller notes that "teaching in the ZPD requires personal-emotional relationships with students, not simply cognitive attention" (p. 312). Second, the students came to see themselves as a group, a "we," this sense of themselves as a learning community coming about through discussion. Third, Miller notes that the discussion reached a turning point when the students began to pose their own questions to the class. She also describes how these kinds of contexts that promote teacher support and communities of learning can "open social spaces for constructing knowledge through dialogical activity" (p. 313).

Zuckerman (2003) adds an interesting comment in her discussion of the zone of proximal development in elementary education. She believes that it is the job of elementary school teachers to "stretch the ZPD of elementary school children toward reflective intelligence" while "the means and methods of interaction with partners (both teachers and other learners) become as important a consideration for teaching as the curriculum content (concepts and skills)" (p. 177). She suggests that teachers spend time guiding students in learning cooperation based on inquiry and reflection, and that they develop the conditions for this through whole class and small group discussions that create "communities of inquirers" (p. 177).

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These arguments emerged from special projects in reading and writing and emphasize the necessity for certain social and organizational conditions to be put into place in order to develop student literacy. According to Miller and Zuckerman, the teacher needs to be aware of these social and organizational factors and understand their significance. Literacy, for them, means creating cooperative student communities of enquirers. The goal is to lead the students more effectively through phases of intellectual and emotional development, rather than the more concrete one of increased reading and writing leading to student publication, espoused by Graves, and those advocating writing workshops. However, the similarities in the use of terms are striking. Relationships between students and between students and teacher are deeper, and the organization and structure of the programs are constructed to ensure that students undergo a dynamic process. Moreover, students see that they have a voice, both orally and in writing that they might not otherwise have expressed.

Another strong advocate for special programs that promote literacy is Peter Woods, a British educator who is also interested in the connection between studies in anthropology and education. Woods describes successful special programs and projects as "critical events," events that have a strong effect on both students and teachers, transforming their perspective on what it means to learn optimally. Woods (1993a) concentrates on the positive examples of critical events and the effect they had on teachers and students. According to Woods, critical events "...promote children's education and development in uncommonly accelerated ways." He describes them as "...times of outstanding advance, be it in terms of attitudes towards learning, understanding of the self, relationships with others, acquisition of knowledge, or

development of skills" (p. 357). Teachers, he says, were surprised by the students' achievements, and observed a holistic quality in the students' development. This effect is in contrast to, "the gradual cumulation of learning and development that takes place at other times, which both consolidates and is informed by critical events" (p. 357).

Woods also describes how critical events affect teachers. He says that critical events are "intended, planned and controlled" (p. 357) and contain within them "seeds for growth and scope for opportunity" (p. 357). The events, he claims, give teachers the opportunity to be more than technicians and to use their creativity and powers of observation and inventiveness. Critical events, for Woods, have a lasting inspirational effect on the teacher involved, other teachers, and the general educational community.

Woods employs the research method of historical ethnography to examine four events: the construction of a children's book, the making of a film of a village community, the planning and design of a heritage center, and an outstanding drama production (Godspell). He describes the learning in these critical events as "real learning," that is learning that is not "compartmentalized, sectioned, disembodied, striated, unrelated to other forms of knowledge or areas of learning or aspects of life" (1993a, p. 359). For Woods, the needs of both students and teacher are met in that everyone feels ownership over the process and feel that their actions and planning are leading to a final, defined goal. Woods also talks of the relationships in critical events as collaborative, the group growing together, developing "a group identity and culture" (p. 362).

Woods makes his point further by referring to the theories of Victor Turner, an anthropologist who coined the word "communitas," a group experience of heightened

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community that Turner first noted when studying rituals in Africa. Communitas, according to Turner, occurs during rituals but also at other times socially when the conditions are ripe. He says, "The bonds of communitas are antistructural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, nonrational, existential I-Thou...relationships" (Turner, 1974, p. 174). He continues, "In human history, I see a continuous tension between structure and communitas, at all levels of scale and complexity. Structure, or all that holds people apart, defines their differences and constrains their actions, is one pole in a charged field, for which the opposite is communitas, or antistructure" (p. 174). He makes clear that, "communitas" does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion" (p. 174).

Woods describes the special projects as creating the social conditions under which "communitas" as an extension of community can flourish. This stands in opposition to routine lessons when students are expected to produce only for the teacher or are being tested, and separated during the typical school day. He further examines the role of special projects in the larger educational context. He calls for an understanding of their importance as a balance to more routine schooling, and the necessity of supporting these teachers who often spend much time outside of school making these events possible. He believes that these teachers work hard to create a classroom climate that promotes creativity, while giving the students "a feeling of control over the learning process." (1993b, p. 326). From the position of student learning, he wonders how schools can do without these special projects, that they are far more integral to teacher and student effort

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and motivation than one might think. He calls for making such projects a legitimate part of school instruction, even more generously embracing principles that indeed ensure that "no child is left behind." His collaborative study of a program called, "Day 10" (Woods & O'Shannessy, 2002), shows that a routine of project, goal-oriented enrichments can be established during school time. Every other Friday afternoon, the primary school studied dropped its regular curriculum and divided the students into special interest groups that created art work and crafts, and literary projects. It was deemed a success the first year under study.

Woods' argument is, I think, particularly relevant when it comes to disenfranchised, disadvantaged, and struggling students, and to a certain extent, as I will show, when it comes to boys who might not otherwise feel engaged or be motivated to produce as readers and writers. Several scholars have pointed out the necessity for special teacher-created programs within the school system that include and engage such students. Herbert Khol (1967) found that when teaching sixth grade students in a school in Harlem during his first years of teaching, he had to develop particular social conditions in his classroom that would encourage the students to read and write. He allowed the students to ask questions, discuss, argue, and interact with each other. He gave the students opportunities to play games and create their own projects, and brought in his own books for research. His aim was to develop the students' literacy by encouraging them to write about their own lives. His book shows how the students found their particular voices in writing to the point of writing and "publishing" chapter books.

Kohl "tried to teach the official curriculum," but came to the conclusion, "It was hopeless." The students were bored and restless and he felt that he was getting nowhere

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in teaching them. It was only as he began to observe and guide them that he was able to make inroads. He created a classroom quite different from those of the rest of the school where the students could sit where they wished and develop their interests as he supplied them with science material (that he found unused in a closet), social study books and other books from his own library, and plenty of avenues for writing.

Kohl understood that the regular structure of routine classroom life would not work well in improving his students' literacy and learning. He developed a small, safe community where learning and work could, as he said, slowly and incrementally flourish, and where the students grew less afraid to express their individual voices in discussion and writing. But this would not have occurred unless he had created the social conditions apart from regular school life to enable the students to question and discuss, and to work towards particular, defined goals.

Peter McLaren, a cultural anthropologist, in his study of a boys' school in Canada (1986), found that the Portuguese students, who were of lower socioeconomic status than the rest of the school population, experienced learning in the regular classrooms as stultifying and boring. He described teachers in the school as mostly falling into the categories of "teacher-as-entertainer" who focused on keeping students interested by entertaining them, or teacher as what he called, "hegemonic overlord," meaning the kind of teacher who controls students with discipline and excessive management. In either case, he maintained, these disaffected students were left out and were unable to undergo a fulfilling learning process.

Like Woods, McLaren refers to Turner's theory of "communitas," as he describes the Portuguese students' street corner life after school. He found that it was in this

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setting outside of school that the students were able to express themselves freely and perceive themselves as a vital community. McLaren noted that, within the school, one religion teacher relaxed the usual rules and encouraged community and interaction between students. He called this kind of teacher, a "liminal servant," borrowing the term, "liminal," again from Victor Turner who used it to describe a social state of being betwixt and between, apart from normal social structure, when "communitas" tends to flourish, the mood is subjunctive (as if), and the usual social structures do not apply.

In general, I will argue that special projects and programs, when carefully constructed, create the social conditions for learning, engagement, and student production that regular school work cannot always provide. The examples I have described exhibit common themes—community or "communitas," play, and inclusion. Moreover, the students are given a certain time and "liminal," separate space in which to explore, discuss, and express themselves in their own voices. The teacher's role is to bring the students through a process and to celebrate that process through a reachable goal. In the case of literacy, the goals tend to be some kind of writing based upon reading, research, and student experiences, worked on together, and ultimately published for other people to read. The element of play is significant in that students are given more choice and more physical freedom. They are still working but not in the conventional way. Their engagement in reaching a goal motivates them to become active rather than passive members, and enables the more passive students to begin to take interest in what is offered by the teacher. Inclusion and heterogeneous grouping tends to occur more often in these special programs. Students who are disadvantaged are given opportunities to express themselves, and social status differences are not as much a concern. What are

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important are the individual efforts that the students put in to realize their goal and the

enthusiasm and interest they display.

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CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND IMPLIMENTATION OF PROGRAM

Questions

This has been a generalized description of the social aspects and conditions of special programs. My study of the special program (the TAS Program) that I began myself and passed on to another director examines some of the particulars of such a venture—its difficulties and successes as I observed them. My questions, formed as I observed the students, consisted of analyzing the strains and pressures on such a program and how such a program evolved through adjustments to its organization and social conditions. Moreover, I asked myself whether this program achieved what it set out to do. Did it create a greater sense of community in the program and through its product, the literary magazine? Did it succeed in including students who might not otherwise be involved in such an enterprise? Were the individual voices of the students heard in the final product, the magazine? Did the students enjoy the program and were they motivated to read, research, and write? What role did the program and the magazine play in the school's culture and its goals in giving further opportunity for student literacy?

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Beginnings

My study includes a description and analysis of the beginnings of the program and my role as its director and teacher, and my observation of the program in the year that it transferred to another teacher/director. During the time of study, I was able, as a participant observer, to examine more closely the events of the program, and to note differences and similarities to my original approach. This gave me more insight into how such a program works and how the original program could hold up to the test of new personnel. I found that there were interesting similarities and differences between my approach and the new director's approach, but that, in general, the social aspects of the special program were enhanced rather than diminished with fresh input.

The program I began in 2001 was a student publishing program. I conceived the idea that the school needed a school-wide literary magazine containing the writings and drawings of students from kindergarten to Grade 4 which would be edited, designed, advertised, and produced by a small group of students, recommended by classroom teachers, and drawn from Grades 1 to 4. The teachers would recommend the students on the basis of capability and interest in writing, as I wanted students who enjoyed writing, though I was deliberately vague in my criteria for inclusion in this group in order to include students who were not necessarily the best writers academically.

My plans for this special program worked well. Every year, a new small group of students under the guidance of myself and adult and student helpers met once or twice a week to decide on what students' works should be included in the magazine. The students also served the function of creating posters, asking for student submissions over

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the school intercom, writing, designing, and helping with publication and distribution. A copy of the magazine was published for each student in the school to take home, as well as a copy for each teacher, teaching assistant, and members of the administration. I named the magazine after a train that used to run through the town of Ashford in central New Hampshire. Here, I will call the magazine "TAS," an abbreviation for "The "A" Special," and the after-school program, the TAS Program. All names in this study are pseudonyms.

History and Setting

I cannot discuss the social inner workings of my study of the TAS Program without placing it in the wider social setting of the community and the school. Therefore, I will go into some depth on its setting, as well as its history, based on personal narrative and documentation.

The wider physical and social contexts of the TAS Program will provide some of the answers to my questions. The half-day K to Grade 4 public school, which I will call by the pseudonym, Ashford Elementary, has a population of approximately 300 students. The town of Ashford's population is approximately 5000, with two main trailer parks, many small, older family homes, some larger, newer family homes, some streets of large old apartment buildings inhabited by transient families, a small business town center, and a factory. Ashford used to be a thriving cotton and wool mill town, and the empty brick mills still stand imposingly near the large river. The population is mostly white, with a significant number of families of French Canadian descent who had originally migrated

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from the Canadian province of Quebec to work in the mills in New Hampshire. Several members of the school staff remember working as children and teenagers in the mills, and I used their accounts as a basis for the theme of the second issue of the TAS magazine.

The history of the schools in that area corresponds mostly with the influx of the French Canadian population. A large Catholic school was built to accommodate Grades 1-8. A regional public Catholic high school was built around the same time. Ashford Elementary (now K-4) was then built in the 1960s, and a large addition put on soon afterward. Another addition was built not long before the time of this writing to accommodate two spacious kindergarten rooms and other smaller special rooms.

School funding for the area comes out of town property taxes and, because this town has a small property tax base, it has suffered from lack of school funding for a long time, a typical problem for small towns in this state. Several classroom teachers who began their teaching career in Ashford in the 1970s and 1980s are still teaching there, although many have retired.

Ashford Elementary School is typical of many rural schools in New England. State education statistics for such a school at the time of the study would reveal a student population of about 250 to 300 students, with approximately 30% of the students deemed eligible for receiving free or reduced lunches and Title 1 support, at least 10% higher than the state average. Reading proficiency level might fall as low as 10% below than the state average (School Matters: A Service of Standard & Poor's, 2007).

I was first employed as a new Reading Recovery teacher at Ashford Elementary in 1995. The Reading Department was then housed in a classroom trailer in front of the

school. The four of us who worked there, myself, the new half-time reading specialist, the Title 1 coordinator, and another Title 1 teacher trained in Reading Recovery, found that we had much to discuss about reading and writing. When we were moved into the school building, we stayed together and built up a reading program that focused on supporting every struggling reader, with an emphasis on Grades 1 and 2. We enjoyed both formal and informal discussions, and learnt much from one another. When the opportunity arose for me to start the TAS Program, I felt supported and encouraged by this group and by the staff in general.

The TAS Program was originally supported by federal grant money provided in 2000 for rural and inner-city schools for after-school programs, as part of the Education Department's 21st Century Community learning Centers program. The funds were meant to help "plan, implement, or expand after-hours, in-school projects that benefit the educational, social, cultural, and recreational needs of the community" (Branigan, 2000). These funds in Ashford ran out for the most part in 2004 and have not been substantially renewed, and have now been subsumed under the umbrella of No Child Left Behind. For a few years, the funding enabled several programs to spring up in the local area: a community recreational center, an in-home educational reading program for parents with preschool children, and a homework tutoring program. I proposed the creation of The TAS Program and the publication of a yearly student literary magazine. It was accepted and the program began in the fall of 2001.

The TAS Program emerged for several reasons. Having conducted similar but much more limited programs in the past (such as summer enrichment programs) I felt capable of this kind of directing and teaching. I focused it on student publishing and

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called the students in the program "editorial assistants," while I acted as the "editor." As I planned it, the program would culminate in a school-wide literary magazine that would feature submissions from students throughout the school including kindergarten, and even submissions from the staff. All staff members and all the students would each receive a copy. The magazine would also go to the school board, directors of the funding in the high school, and to the middle school principal. This meant that the school system and the community would receive the magazine. This was important to the goals of this program and the spirit in which it was conceived.

Program Goals

I had several goals for the program. First, because there was very little money set aside for general enrichment at that time due to cuts in spending, I believed that this program would serve as a small but effective form of literacy enrichment for the school. Enrichment, as a way to support or encourage student proficiency or giftedness, has a long tradition in education. I intended it to support the literacy learning of less proficient students, as well as to encourage the gifted. My aim was to expose students to learning beyond their classroom curriculum, but still with teacher support. Second, I believed that this was one of the ways to develop the school as a literate community. Writing of different genres and different styles would be included, giving student-created examples. The arts (music, fine arts) would be included also, if possible. Even math could be incorporated in the form of student surveys. Social studies and science would be integrated through the annual themes. My goal was to include many different aspects of

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literacy in the term *literary*. Technology, as it relates to literacy, also came into the picture in that I would design the magazine in Microsoft Word, and use a version of Print Shop and various clip art. Students could bring in writing and art they had done on their home computers and I would teach some aspect of computer-based, publishing design during the after-school program.

Third, I wanted to stress the social aspects of the program and magazine. The magazine was meant to involve the whole school community and reach out to the larger community that included other schools in the district and the students' families. The program, like the magazine, would be multi-age and multigrade, and the helpers would come from the school staff, high school students, middle school students and/or students who had already been in the program. The program would reflect the school; the magazine would reflect the literacy efforts of the school; and the relationship between community and school would be strengthened. I tried to honor the town's history by calling the magazine "The "A" Special" (TAS) because of the trains that once ran through the town. Moreover, I decided to create different themes for each magazine involving local color, environments, and history. I wanted to bring a socially and personally meaningful focus to each issue. Table 1 lists the themes for each of the issues, including the last issue directed and taught by the school librarian.

Table 1

Themes of Issues of The TAS Program

Date	The TAS Program Theme
Winter 2001	Local trains

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Spring 2002	Children in the mills
Spring 2003	Native Americans of New England
Spring 2004	New England nature
Spring 2005	Arts, crafts and games of New Hampshire
Spring 2006	Space and the solar system

My fourth goal was to ensure that this program continued in whatever way possible, in order to make it a traditional aspect of school culture and its vision of itself as a literate community. Cunningham and Allington (2003) discuss the importance of these programs in extending the amount of time that students are engaged in literacy activities, and as I have shown, other educators have emphasized those students of low socio-economic status benefit from such programs. But I believed that unless this kind of program played a continual role in the school's culture, it would not have much substantial effect. I will discuss this further, but suffice it to say, in setting up the program, I felt that its structure and the social aspects stemming from this structure were critical to its longevity.

As a result of these goals, I was constantly fine-tuning the program to make sure the program stayed within certain, social parameters and fulfilled its The TAS Program as a special program. Only eight students were enrolled in the first year of the program. My idea was to develop a core group who would act as editorial assistants and get to know each other well. I asked the kindergarten teacher if I could use her large room for the program, and I would go into her room before every meeting to put two rectangular tables together. The students in the program would sit around these tables, and for the

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first 15 minutes would involve a snack and general talk. After that, most times, rain or shine, I and the helper, a younger teaching assistant, would take the students out onto the playground for ball games or tag games for 15 minutes. Both these activities were meant to help the group come together as a community in talk and play before the more serious work of writing and editing began. I never regretted this schedule. Once the students were fed and had had time to play, they got to the work quickly and easily and concentrated until the end of the meeting. Moreover, discussion around the table led to ideas that could be shared and transformed into writing. I also encouraged the students to talk to their parents about the theme. As a result, parents brought in information themselves and talked to me about their interest in the theme and what they knew about it. In this way, there was more interaction across the usual structural lines that tend to separate students from one another, students from parents, and parents from teachers.

Program Schedule

The first year, the program met twice a week for 1 1/2 hours each session from late November to Christmas vacation, and again twice a week from late January to April vacation. The second school year it met twice a week from January to April. Thereafter, it met only once a week from 3-5:30 pm for 2 1/2 hours, and started in January and ended in April. The average number of sessions for each issue of the literary magazine was 12 sessions. Table 2 shows the number of students listed in each issue as attending the program each year, according to gender, as well as the number of helpers, according to adults and students. This includes 2006, the year of the study.

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Table 2

Students (Male and Female) and Helpers (Adults and Students) in each TAS Program by School Year

School Year	Students in Program		Helpers in Program	
	Male	Female	Adult	Student
2001-2002 (Winter)	3	5	1	0
2001-2002 (Spring)	3	7	1	0
2002-2003	3	7	0	1
2003-2004	4	8	0	2
2004-2005	4	8	1	2
2005-2006	15	7	2	3

Both the program and the magazine were multi-age throughout their history.

Some students were represented in the magazine issues several times, but this was not

common.   The average number of submissions published in the magazine for each

school year from 2001 to 2006 was 60. The magazine issue for the school year under

study, 2005-2006, contained 53 entries. Appendix A shows a breakdown of student

membership in the TAS program and number of published student submissions to the

magazine for each school year by grade level, beginning in 2001.

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Social Factors

What came out of these yearly teaching experiences? If one examines the program in terms of the social aspects of special programs already discussed, one can see that the emphasis on community, play, and the necessity for inclusion gave the program and the magazine its energy to support students in researching, producing writing, and developing their individual voices as writers.

Community was significant from the start. The students felt free to discuss each other's writing and to help each other in research and writing projects. The large table brought them together as a unified group, and the various group play activities strengthened their commitment to and interest in one another. They connected with the school community by creating posters and advertising the magazine in various ways. And the wider community got involved. Parents began to ask how they could help, and because the first issue was about the train that used to run through the town, research led to talk with the teachers and staff who remembered the train. This ended up involving a newspaper reporter who wrote an article about the program and the magazine in the local newspaper.

The sense of community progressed with each program and this was increasingly reflected in the magazine issues. In the first issue, little of what we did in connection with the larger town community was apparent in that magazine. However that 2001 issue set up the conditions for further issues. For instance, it introduced a theme and prizes for the best works in a certain genre, in this case, short stories, which were judged by me, the

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principal, and the reading specialist. The theme for each magazine dealt with some aspect of local life that encouraged the students to talk to adults in their community and ask questions about their social and natural environment. That first year we went on field trips (to the high school to get tips on computer design of newspapers or newsletters, and on a walk in the neighborhood to find old railroad tracks), and we invited a guest speaker, the custodian in another school who collected memorabilia of local trains. While these events were not mentioned much in the first issue, in the subsequent issues, field trips to a city library, an art gallery, a farm, and guest speakers, such as a storyteller, were all featured in the magazine. As a result, the later magazine issues reflected student awareness of community in general and how the small community of the program could impact and be impacted by the wider communities in which it was imbedded (see Appendix B for group writing about program field trips).

Play was also an important aspect of the program and led to much playful and delightful writing in the magazine issues. I gave the students in the program a special play time together in order to get to know one another and work together more effectively as a group. The effect was that dialogue became more open, and the younger and older students came to view each other more as siblings than as students, the older students helping the younger ones in play and work. Outside we played variations on tag, and when it was too cold or rainy to go outside we played hunt the thimble and other group games. Another aspect of play that I emphasized was that of giving the students roles, such as "editorial assistant" or "copy editor," "researcher" or "distributor." In the magazine issues I called the program students "editorial assistants." I called students who wrote a lot of poems, "poets," and the term, "authors" was frequently used. The

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students could play these more adult roles without having to take on the full responsibility of the roles. The fact that the program did not occur during school hours also put it outside school work routine and gave it an atmosphere of fun and freedom of expression.

The magazine issues reflected this playfulness in many ways. Among the writing and drawings that were submitted, the program students were quick to choose those that were playful and amusing, and I found myself entering into the spirit of fun as the ultimate arbiter. The magazine issues became a place where students' voices of all kinds, however silly or fantastical at times, could be expressed.

This leads me to the heterogeneous and inclusive aspect of the program. From the start, I wanted the students in the program to come from different classes and grades of the school. I enrolled mostly girls the first year but subsequently tried to balance it with more boys. I also wanted students who were not considered good writers or readers to join the program in order to make sure the program reflected the school population and was not exclusive. I asked teaching assistants and high school students to be my helpers, as well as students who had participated in earlier programs. All this supported my efforts to make the program inclusive and multi-age, in contrast to regular school life with its divisions by grades and classes. The results were again reflected in the magazine. Any student could write for the magazine and we would often receive writing submitted by a student without any teacher or parent intervention or support. The prizes encouraged students to come up with writing on their own in a particular genre. Some teachers encouraged the students to write for the magazine, and those pieces were chosen that revealed a fresh voice and that did not sound overly teacher-controlled. Title 1

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teachers encouraged their students to write for the magazine, and we received writing from special needs students. Boys, as well as girls, wrote, and all ages were represented, from kindergarten up. Appendix C shows several pieces written by students with special needs, reflecting the results of the inclusive aspects of the program and the magazine issues.

The social aspects of the program and its organization led to student writing that revealed voice and individual expression, and this in turn became part of the school's and the community's literary cultures through published print. Without the program and the magazine, those voices might not have been revealed or read. It tapped into a different potential in the school's development of literacy, and brought out skills and abilities that might very well have not been acknowledged publicly elsewhere in school life. I was particularly pleased that every year, a student in the program began to see him or herself as a writer and would bring writing to me that had been written at home with no guidance or pressure from parents or teachers. Several students declared themselves to be writers or poets during each yearly program. They wrote in their writing books more often and wrote at home, proudly showing me what they had done when they brought them back. They took more part in the editorial discussions. Two students volunteered to come back as helpers the next year. The program had provided them opportunities to shine and to produce more writing. For instance, Sara (pseudonym) began to write poetry almost every day in her notebook and became interested in Robert Frost after I had discussed his "The Swinger of Birches" with the group. She ended up helping me the next year even though she had graduated to Ashford Middle School. Other students set nature poems to music and sang them at the school concert (see Appendix D).

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I also felt successful in the way the issues revealed the particular individual voices of the students. This confirmed for me the idea that the program and culminating magazine would encourage students throughout the school to express themselves as individuals contributing to a common, and "community" literacy. The following examples from different issues show how particular students drew on their experiences and on literary genres to create writing that is surprisingly rich in "voice."

I Am Cold

John, Grade 3 (Spring, 2003)

I am cold! I am very cold
I am very, very cold.
I have gloves.
I have a hat.
I am still cold.
I am tired.

Finally, hot chocolate.

The Abenakis

Cathy, Grade 4 (Spring, 2004)

My great grandfather, and his son, my mother's dad, are part of the Abenakis tribe. When I go to his house, he tells me about them. He shows me his wolf skin, bear skin, otter skin, and more. He has a tooth necklace, but it only has a little bit of teeth on it because the teeth keep breaking when they try to make holes in it. His house is full of Abenakis memories and it smells strange, like fire and skin. He catches fish from down the road and eats them. He asks me if I want some. I say NOOOO thank you. He tells me it is part of my heritage so I finally try some. I like it! Sometimes he takes me in his Abenakis boat. We both love to just relax and spear fish.

I learnt his Abenakis name. It is Mighty Fox, and his son's name is Little Mighty Fox. My Grammy's name is Windweaver and he named me Youngso because I

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like to sew and I'm young. I'm proud of my name. I love this part of my heritage!

These pieces show that student writing at an early age can be very expressive, while still retaining the innocent qualities of childhood. (See Appendix E for more examples of voice in a variety of genres.)

This resulting independent interest and desire to write, along with the development of "voice," made me want to delve further into what made this possible. How did community, play, inclusion, and heterogeneous grouping have this effect on student reading and writing? Where did it break down? In what way could it be enhanced?

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CHAPTER III

PARTICIPATION AND OBSERVATION

My study of the program during the school year 2005-2006 examines these and other questions pertaining to the social aspects inherent in special programs. The study prompted me to analyze how a teacher/director of a special program needs to handle its social aspects most effectively. Social pressures from outside and within can effect any special program. A program's sense of community can be weakened, for instance, if the program takes on an overly peripheral role in the school or is not sustained over a sufficient amount of time to make its presence felt. If program students are expected to compete or are separated into smaller groups, rather that working and playing together as a whole group, they will not enter into discussions as readily, nor work as enthusiastically towards a common goal. The number of students in the program may have an effect on its sustainability. If the group is too large, for example, it may separate into cliques and factions. Also, the wider community needs to be involved as much as possible and to be able see the results of the program. Where schools find special programs playing a significant role in student literacy and learning, it is up to the organizers and teachers of the program to make sure that the program impacts school life in some meaningful way. The personality, organizational ability, and teaching style of the teacher would make an important difference in shaping the community and bringing the program students through a satisfying and energizing process.

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Other questions about the social function of play in special programs also arose. In what ways was play significant and how much play and what kinds of play and role-playing occurred during program sessions? Again, how the teacher organized play time could impact the duration and intensity of time on The TAS Program, in this case, reading, writing, and developing the literary magazine. Did the magazine issue reflect the playful nature of the program?

Last, I examined the significance of heterogeneous grouping in the program under study. How much inclusiveness was there, and how did it affect the students' reading and writing? Was it reflected in the magazine? Did the teacher/director manage it well? Were program students of all ranges and abilities able to express themselves and give voice to their own ideas and creativity?

In order to discuss the program under study in the light of these questions, I will first describe its personnel at that time and its general organization. At the end of the previous year, I had asked the school librarian, Carol, to take over the program and she had agreed with enthusiasm. Carol had been a guest visitor for one meeting during the previous year's program. Her energy and interest in improving school literacy as the librarian made her a good candidate to take over the program, and she knew all the classroom teachers and most of the students in the school. She had just completed a Masters degree in Library Sciences and she already had a Masters degree in town planning. I acted as a participant observer, helping at times, observing and taking notes at times. The Special Education teacher, Lois, also helped out with her daughter, Mary, and her daughter's friend, June, both of high school age. Carol invited a local special needs high school girl to be helper. Thus, she had four helpers altogether. She enrolled

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22 students in the program: 15 boys and 7girls, many through her contacts with them in the library,　There were 4 students in Grade 4, 7 in Grade 3, 10 in Grade 2, and one in Grade 1. Two Grade 3 students, a boy and girl, were special needs students.

The setting for Carol's program was a Grade 2 classroom containing several round tables instead of desks. Carol seated the program students at these tables, usually 4 or more students to each table. She generally stood at the front of the class to make announcements or give lessons. The helpers stood around the edges of the classroom until they were needed. The classroom contained a small alcove where some teacher materials were kept, with enough room for some students to sit on the floor.

I had given Carol a rough idea of how I had organized the program and conducted meetings, but I did not go into detail, leaving it up to her to decide on how to direct and teach it. She had decided that the theme of that program and magazine should be "Space and the Solar System" and she had devised several activities to help the students learn and write about this theme. She showed me a collection of activities that she thought group would enjoy, involving a variety of subjects, such as art, streaming video, math and science. Unlike me, she would not have separate time for play but would incorporate play into those activities. Carol told me that her philosophy was that children's literacy develops through hands-on activities and many forms of media. In her opinion, because of her media background, literacy included technology as well as books, and she thought the program would provide the opportunity for the program students to learn about the stars and planets without the pressures and expectations of the regular classroom environment. She believed that play was an integral aspect of learning, not only a preparation for, or relief from, learning.

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Carol kept to much the same schedule as I did. She began in early February and held the meetings on most Tuesdays from 3 pm to 4:30 pm. She allowed a short snack time at the beginning and then went straight into a business-like meeting. An activity came next, involving some kind of reading, and writing followed until the parents picked up the students. This schedule was varied as necessary, according to the activities and goals for each meeting.

I will describe the meetings in chronological order as I recorded them in order to analyze them in terms of the social aspects of community, play, and heterogeneous grouping as they developed and fluctuated over time, and their effect on the students' reading and writing. My aim is to attempt to delve into the complex interrelationships between social factors and literacy, based on the studies already described dealing with the significance of special programs within the school environment.

Meetings

My record of the first meeting gives a sense of the order of events, the environment, and the discussions and thoughts as they unfolded.

2/7/06 Meeting

I greeted Carol in the library where she works as a school librarian. She has a degree in library science as of December 2005. She told me that the count of students for the TAS Program is up to 21 students, almost double what I have had in the past. She said she could not say "No." I myself have had trouble with this in the past. The question is how to decide who would be in the program? Anyway, the point of this is to leave it up to Carol's judgment. She has a different perspective and knows the children in a different way, as a librarian who also runs much of the school testing in the library. She told me

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that during the first snack time she would run a streaming video movie through her computer on the solar system.

We went down to the room where the program is to be held, a large Grade 2 classroom with round tables rather than desks. The students in that class were just getting ready to leave. Several adults came in. Mary, the high school daughter of the Special Education teacher, was returning to help. She has helped in this program (last year) and in the summer literacy program. She is quiet and always nice, and her role here is to work with special needs children in the program. The other helper, Deb, I do not know much about yet.

The children came in and Carol and Deb helped them put away their book bags and line up for the bathroom. The students were quickly settled into seats around the tables. I counted 14 boys and 7 girls, which surprised me as in past years the program has attracted mostly girls. Teachers have recommended girls over boys most frequently. On questioning Carol, she said that classroom teachers this year had tried to make sure boys were represented. I will have to ask her about this. Also the theme (on space and the solar system) might have contributed. I will have to ask Carol how these children came to be chosen as choice and number of students may be an important factor in several ways. The students are mostly 2nd and 3rd graders, with fewer 1st and 4th. There are three children of African-American descent.

Carol began the meeting by putting three words on the white board—respect, classroom, teachers. She talked about how this program required students to have respect for each other and help each other. She talked of having respect for the classroom. "We are lucky to have this space. Otherwise we might have been working out in the hallway." (This brings up where a program like this might be held. I found that teachers friendly to me and the program were most likely to offer their classrooms.) And she introduced her helpers. She said that I was studying at the university and was helping out. She did not introduce the children to each other with any "getting-to-know-you" activities, and I realized afterwards that this would have been a good step. I will write to her about it via e-mail for next time, which will be in two weeks.

Carol also talked about how the students would be involved in writing and editing for the magazine, and showed them the notebooks. She asked them to take them home and write every night. She said "Writers write every day." I didn't send the books home myself for fear of them getting lost, but this might be a good move. It establishes the homework part of this program more firmly. She also showed them folders with special star-related activity sheets in them that would be kept here. She talked about how we needed to let the school know that the TAS Program was looking for submissions, and asked the students what we might do. The answers from the students who

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raised their hands were "by letter," "e-mail," "posters," and "tell someone."
She told them we would be making posters later.

Activities

During snack the children watched a streaming video about the nine planets,
pitched at about a Grade 4 level. Vocabulary words involved were "gravity,"
"hot gases," "and the speed of light." The children were engrossed in the
movie. After, several students asked some interesting questions, such as,
"What does it mean by seeing the light of the planets and stars" Carol replied
that we can never actually see the stars but only their light as they are so far
away. Other questions showed some understanding and interest in the movie.

Scavenger Hunt

Carol divided the students into pairs (not friends) and asked them to look in a
book on planets, she provided for each pair, for the names of the planets and
objects or words in the room that began with the same letter. She provided a
paper for this. This activity seemed to work well. All the pairs wrote down
the names of the planets and found at least 4 objects or words beginning with
the same letters. The helpers helped as needed, with directions, etc. Noise
level was not too high and the students were on task. Afterwards, Carol
wrote the names of the planets on the board. A student offered this comment,
"In 2005, they found a new planet." Carol asked what it was called. The boy
answered, "Planet X, until it's named."

Carol passed out the notebooks and folders and talked of the poetry that could
be written. One child asked if she could write a haiku and another child
asked her what that meant by that. She explained it, and I said we would
bring some in for them to look at and listen to. Carol said that one of the
roles of the group was to "illustrate," and suggested that we have a drawing
competition for the cover, to be judged by the adults.

Posters

The children then made posters, some in groups and some by themselves as
they chose. They used pencil, markers and crayons. Carol was going to call
the theme, "Shooting for the Stars," but after discussion we decided that
"Shooting" might not be appropriate, so we changed it to "Reaching for the
Stars." I modeled for the teachers by actually helping to color and contribute
to the posters, especially with the posters done by students alone. I believe
that students can learn from directly watching as a teacher plans and makes

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something that they are doing at the same time, a sort of parallel teaching. Teachers should not always be onlookers, above the students.

Clean Up

The students tidied up during the last 10 minutes, and the parents came to get the students. Quite a few of the students are in the regular after-school program and were sent there. The regular program is mostly a homework and play program with few special activities.

Reflection

I then made some notes reflecting on the meeting. Carol told me she began the program with the video and emphasis on the planets to "load them up with information, so that later they can put it out in their writing." I would have liked this session to be more of a get-to-know- you session but I see her point. It's like the idea of beginning an article with a high interest introduction. I just want to be sure that the emphasis is not on work or activity sheets and allows more room for discussion and reading and writing. I think this will come.

Literacy activities I did see were the streaming video (nonfiction), though with not enough discussion afterwards, fact-recording (the scavenger hunt), the thoughtful questions and comments from some of the students, and Carol's encouragement of the students to see themselves as writers.

I gave Carol my work on *Stargazers* by Gail Gibbons on comprehension and text analysis. I want to steer her a bit more into the books and writing part of literacy—learning to think through books and by writing. Critical thinking skills and strategies can be taught. Choices in organization and activities just have to be made.

This account reveals the significance of the social factors of community, play, and heterogeneous grouping at the beginning of this special program. Although this was a large group, Carol brought it together as a community in several ways. She introduced the helpers and established rules of behavior based on respect. She described all the students as writers and editors, and discussed the goal of creating a magazine with its theme, "Reaching for the Stars." Most significantly, she invited the students to ask questions and contribute to discussion after watching the streaming video. The

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atmosphere of the room was excited and cheerful, and she took on the role of guide through the process, presenting food for thought and interesting activities in a relaxed manner.

My notes show concern over the large size of the group, and also that I wished that the students had been introduced to each other. I wondered if this would be detrimental to the community spirit. However, in pairing students who were not friends in the scavenger hunt, Carol had taken steps for students to get to know one another during a thematic play activity. Unlike me, she integrated play time activities into the theme. Her organization of the program allowed for the students to learn as they played, thus emphasizing their roles as active researchers.

Heterogeneous grouping was significant in this meeting. Students of all grades were represented. There were more boys than girls, but the girls were not outdone and contributed enthusiastically to the group. There was a range in abilities. Although not privy to the reading levels of these students, I knew two of the students present had been in the Reading Recovery program, and at least two students had special needs. Carol had accepted students who had come to ask about the program in the library and she had been loath to turn them away. This was not an exclusive group of high readers and writers. Also, the helpers, although all female, were of different ages and skills. Their roles, too, were not so much to teach as to be guides or "liminal servants" as McLaren put it, supporting the students through a process different from that of the regular classroom.

In all these ways, the first meeting displayed many of the social sides of special programs devoted to developing literacy. I noted in my reflections in what ways literacy activities were occurring, such as the viewing of the streaming video and the questions

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and discussions. However, I should have noted the scavenger hunt as research, another literacy activity. I was concerned about the use of work sheets, but these were a means of organizing the students' thinking and writing. The students were also using and reading library books. Posters were another way of organizing written material and the accompanying drawings helped to reinforce the writing. Also, Carol provided the students with notebooks to record what they were learning about the stars and space, and folders to keep papers in, again promoting research and writing from the start. The first meeting was geared to begin the process of supporting the students in further literacy activities. The social conditions made the students feel safe and supported, promoted a playful, imaginative atmosphere, and had begun to develop the social conditions for the students to express themselves in their own individual ways as part of a special program community.

The next program meeting, as I recorded it, brought the social factors of community, play, and heterogeneous grouping more into alignment. One could see that Carol was orchestrating the activities to this effect. She did not follow my advice of holding a large group circle time, but she made sure the students mixed together as much as possible and heard one another speak during the all the activities.

2/21/06

This was a good meeting in that the students were excited and involved
and the time flew by. Also, the students seemed more relaxed and were
eager to share what they had written. I went into the classroom early and
talked to several of the students as they came in for the session. The class
where the meeting is being held is a Grade 2 class, and some of the
students had not been dismissed yet, so preparation time for the TAS
Program often occurs (as it did when we held it in the kindergarten room)
while the teacher and students are still present. However, this is not a bad
thing, as the students of the class are exposed to what is going on, and
often show interest in joining the program the next time it is offered.

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Several children, including Ada (who was in the program last year and whose mother asked Carol if she could join last week) showed me their notebooks. Ada, an excellent reader for her age, had written a page that she later she read out loud to the group. When all the students were gathered, Carol invited the students to share what they had written. However she also said, "You don't have to share if you don't want to. Some writers never share their notebooks." Some children looked relieved about this. Carol has set up this activity with the stipulation that the students each write one sentence each a week, at least. But we are not going to check up on this. I wonder if this will work. But in the context of ours being a voluntary program, the pressure should be off. Carol's idea here is to remind, but not demand. I should ask her about this. The success of this will rest in whether all the students eventually feel comfortable in sharing in the end, in one way or another. I'll keep tabs on whether this happens. A sense of inclusiveness is, I think, an important part of these meetings.

I suggested to Carol that we have a get-to-know-you time in a big circle, as I have done. She felt that the group was too big for that. Her solution was to have Deb create name tags with pictures of different space objects, such as "asteroids" on them and hand them out ceremonially. We have a student, Jeb (not his real name), who has a rare disease that makes him appear very skinny and rather odd-looking (pale). I had worked with him with Reading Recovery. She gave him the only "sun" tag and announced that we all revolve around him. This inclusive gesture was much in the spirit of the meeting.

Carol asked the students to break into pairs, (again, mixing ages and pairing better readers with less good readers), and they did a KWL (what we Know, what we Want to learn, and what we have Learned) on "Space," which I had suggested. They did the K and W parts. Some pairs of students recorded facts and figures and some were more into the social history. They all worked very well together, and came up with some delightful Ks and Ws.

When this was done we went to the gym and divided into two groups. I led one group, although I let Deb take charge. She was good at making sure every student got to speak. The two other high school students, Mary and June, were also present, and they helped out too. Carol and Lois worked with the other students. Lois was both Mary's mother and a Special Education teacher for Grades 1 and 2. In our group, we put up a big sheet of paper on the walls and wrote a group KW, with Mary recording it. These group activities went very well. Our group had 11 and the other group had 10 students. The students read off their Ks and Ws, and some suggested some more. We didn't record everything they had

written. We discussed the idea that one child had raised that the sun didn't move. I talked of the movements of the galaxy and the universe, but he did not seem convinced.

We then came together as a large group and made a large group KW. Then Carol asked the students to find out some of the questions each at home (2 or 3). She later typed the big group K and W and sent them home with the students to work on "over vacation," thus including the parents in the activity. I suggested that with parental help, they look up some of the information on the internet. Carol said she would send home with the students an extra library book on space topics. This shows the usefulness of having the librarian conduct this program, as access to books can be a problem for some children.

Carol had planned an activity with toilet rolls in the gym to measure the distances between the planets and the sun. She explained it rather too quickly, but it mostly worked out, although the toilet paper sometimes broke. The students were very involved in this activity. The noise level in the gym was quite high, but there was much excitement and interest in the activity. She did not compare the different groups' efforts at the end, but put the focus on the process of measuring the solar system as a whole roll of toilet paper. The groups were divided into two or three students with an adult. I had Tess (Grade 3) and Ada (Grade 2), whom I knew, and another girl whom I did not know. Tess was a former Reading Recovery student. She stayed with the activity the longest, and was most interested in figuring out the lengths, but all the students were involved. I wish I had observed this rather than participating, so as to see more of the group dynamics, but at the same time, I wanted to participate enough to get a feel for the activities.

When the parents picked up the students some discussed what they knew about the stars etc. I asked several parents to find out if there was an amateur astronomer in the local area. Carol and I will plan a Saturday visit to the planetarium anyway on a Saturday, perhaps in early April.

A sense of community was expressed strongly in this session. Some students shared what they had found out and written about the stars and space, but it was not obligatory. The emphasis was not put on individual evaluation or accomplishment, but on discussion. During the recording of the KW, interesting questions emerged, and the students seemed eager to talk about what they knew already. I initiated another aspect of

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community by asking parents who came to pick up their children if they knew any amateur astronomers who might share their knowledge with the students. I wanted to include the parents more in the program, and in so doing, widen the community beyond the school walls.

Carol also had focused on inclusion by making Jeb the center of the solar system, the sun. His face had lit up at this gesture, and the other students had cheered. Moreover, each student received a planet or star badge ceremonially, emphasizing their inclusion in our special group.

But it was the measurement activity that pulled together the social factors of community, play, and heterogeneous grouping. As I was participating, I experienced it subjectively although I also tried to keep an objective point of view. I noticed a great deal of laughter, talking, and sense of fun. Helpers and students were all absorbed and focused on the activity, and the large space of the gym allowed for free movement as the students on each team unrolled the toilet paper and counted out the squares to represent the distances of the planets from the sun. The groups, mixed by age, gender, class, and grade worked well together, but it did not feel like work. When the time was up, Carol did not declare a winner, and the meeting ended with a feeling that time had flown. This combination of conditions was, I felt, very like what Victor Turner had referred to as "communitas," a heightened sense of community, brought on by special circumstances. Peter Woods also describes "communitas" in discussing the special programs and events in education. I subsequently wondered what effect this would have on the students and on Carol. Would this high energy level and enthusiasm be maintained and act as a catalyst for the further development of literacy in the school?

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The next week was February vacation so the program did not meet. At the meeting on March 7th, Carol started out by saying that she had just returned from a visit to the Kennedy Space Center during her vacation and had learned a lot about the astronauts there. She said, "I brought back bookmarks for all of you and a package of star material." She also told the group, "They plan to go back to the moon. In this room could be the first commander of the first manned flight to Mars!" The students cheered at this idea. She also gave each child a space postcard bookmark.

Then the sharing of writing and drawing began. Each student came up before the group to share one at a time. The kinds of works shared were a coin dollar pasted into the notebook representing Planet X, the 10th planet (astronomers are now in the process of trying to define the term "planet"), and a science dictionary with space facts, ("There are 37 constellations"). Other children produced more facts about the solar system and a student described why Uranus had a strange orbit. Another child talked about Mercury, and one more went through answers to a whole list of questions from the KWL that Carol had typed up and sent home with the students before vacation. This sharing went on for some time, encouraged by Carol. Another student shared his star finder and an atlas of the universe his parents had bought him. He showed us a picture of three spots on Saturn's northern hemisphere. Another child showed a chart of that day's constellations. Carol then passed around a variety of children's magazines from the library for the students to look at. She wanted them to come up with interesting pages for The TAS Program. After she had modeled how to look through the magazines and find ideas and after much discussion in small groups the students came up with these suggestions:
Minibook page
Penguins in Space

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Planet Maze, Planet crossword
Drawing about the Earth
Photographs of the moon and planets
Our own spaceships and satellites
Dogs in space
Maze
Book Review Page
Comic Page
Comedy Joke page
Word search page
Aliens and sea monsters
Critter doodles
Comets, Planets, Asteroids facts
Dot to dot page of planets
Project page of the solar system
Silly page of sea creatures
Dehydrated food in space
Photo of team, Index

Carol also suggested that the fourth grade boys do a fact page. She then passed out a choice of days for a planetarium trip for the parents. One girl's mom brought in a solar system paper for everyone, and items about space were sent home with each child. I talked to this mother and praised her for bringing in the information. She replied that she was a Girl Scout leader and was used to it.

At this meeting there was no organized play activity. However, the results of the previous meeting's focus on community were apparent in the form of discussion and the sharing of writing and information. Most of the students wanted to share something, and Carol strongly encouraged this activity. Some students had written a great deal in their notebooks. Most had taken home a book from the library on space and many had looked up information on the internet. Some students brought artifacts about space from home. Everyone asked questions and the discussion was lively.

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When it came to planning for the magazine, the students came up with lots of ideas. By providing them with magazines from the library, Carol exposed them to another form of literacy media. She recorded their ideas without trying to control them or change them. Younger students' ideas were accepted in the same way as those of the older students. At the end of the meeting, parent involvement was also apparent. The wider community had been also tapped in the form of artifacts, internet use, and help with reading the library books. Carol's own experiences and artifacts set the tone of sharing and connection with the even wider community of USA space exploration.

In terms of the development of literacy, students in the program were by now fully engaged in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. They viewed themselves as researchers, writers and designers of the magazine. They were working together towards a common literary goal. Because grades and tests were not an issue, they freely came up with ideas and questions. The heterogeneous grouping in many ways made it almost unnecessary to compare the students or deem one student more capable than another.

I wanted to find out how Carol was experiencing the program. Was she seeing the same results? I interviewed Carol on March 17th. I was interested in finding out how she viewed the program and her experiences of it. She described herself as "a book person" who had always loved books and loved to share them with children. Then I asked her about the program and how she thought it was progressing.

She said, "I think that the students are enthusiastic. I see them coming into the school library every week now to take out books on Space. I've had more space books taken out in the last month than anything. They like it and I think they're going to keep liking it as long as their enthusiasm stays high. We lost one student after the first week

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because he thought the "Y" program was better. That's bound to happen. But everybody's coming and people look forward to it."

Carol found that it was difficult to plan activities for such a range of grades. She felt that her challenge was to meet the needs of the students in each grade "and still provide some level of educational value and entertainment so that they leave the program with the same level of enthusiasm and they'll want to do it again." When I asked for the easiest aspect of organizing the program, she replied, "How the students take the program and run with it, and how they have stepped up to the plate and provided us with more information than we expected. They've taken control of the program without wondering who's in charge, and they're very self-directed." She described the motivation of the students to read and write and share their work, such as "the two young coded students who wrote so much in their journals and stood up in front of a small group to read from them, and another student who forgot to do his regular homework because he was too busy reading and writing for this program." Like me, she showed that she had experienced the sense of community in the meetings, "It's twenty or so people who are having a good time. It's the energy, the high! Suddenly it's time to go home, but I think the students could have gone on for hours, because they want to do it."

I replied that I liked the idea of having different people from different parts of life coming together. She said, "Twenty plus people can be loud sometimes, but it's because they have something to say. Also they've been very polite, and they don't forget to raise their hands. They listen to each other."

Carol had noticed the effects this special program had had on the students and how engaged they were in the process. She was surprised by the positive self-directed

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energy of the students and how even the special needs students were willing to share in this situation. As with the other special programs I've discussed, the teachers/directors saw that students were behaving and learning in unexpectedly positive ways.

Carol was worried that she would not be able to sustain this effect because of the differences in ages and abilities. She saw herself as the teacher-as-entertainer who must keep the students interested. However, the social conditions of the program allowed her and the other helpers to act more as guides and supports, teachers as "liminal servants" as McLaren had described that role. The students, given those conditions, could be self-directed and enthusiastic. They could entertain themselves.

This brings me to the fourth meeting on March 21st. I decided to observe two of the students more closely, examining how the social aspect of play operated in these circumstances. The activities included more sharing of notebooks and other information, another streaming video of the planets and space, a time to work on pages for the magazine, and an art activity, putting colorful swirls on coffee filters and wetting them, so the colors would run. Carol planned on the students cutting them into the shapes of planets and galaxies when they had dried. Also, she asked if some students would like to write out what they might say on the intercom to advertise for the TAS magazine submissions.

The first student I observed was Ada (already mentioned in my notes), a second grader, and a bright, articulate student with a fiercely independent attitude. She had been in the TAS Program last year and had always shown up early and ready for anything. Her mother was a very supportive parent and encouraged Ada to write a lot at home. Ada, in the group of girls who had volunteered to write a message for the intercom, set to

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work immediately, even before I had fully explained what was needed in the message, which was to ask for submissions for this year. During the course of the time (about 20 minutes) allotted, she revised three times, partly on my advice as I read each revision for her. Here are my notes from the meeting of 3/21/06 on her writing:

Her first draft reflected her lack of understanding about the assignment.

She wrote,

Do you want to be an asturnt? Go to space and study planets? Next year, sign up for The "A" Special Program. Write poems, draw pictures and do anything for The "A" Special Magazine. Have fun if your imagination runs WILD! The "A" Special ROCKS! *("ROCKS" in very large print)."*

Her next draft said:

"Do you want to be a scientist? To discover the planets? If you want to, write for The "A" Special next year? You can be an artest about the Solar System or you can be an asturnt to go to the moon. You can study all the ten Planet too. Don't forget Planet X. The "A" Special ROCKS. Bring your informashing to the library.

Eventually she wrote a final piece with a large drawing of a heart on it actually asking for submissions for this year.

Ada's piece evolved into a more informative piece but left out relevant information as she revised. She also got engrossed with the rainbow heart and refused to stop coloring it. Under these circumstances, Ada was not willing to wait for a teacher model or to be told what to do. She wanted to get to her writing right away. This meant that she had to revise as she reread her work and as I read it and gave it back to her. The piece took shape over time as she worked on it. But I did not get the impression that she felt this to be work. Her very language in the piece expressed enthusiasm and interest. The drawing of the heart, rather than being a waste of time, was symbolic of her feeling

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about the program. She used both writing and drawing to express herself in her own individualistic way.

I also observed Jeb, a student with a chronic, genetic disease. Jeb began by drawing an alien who was being shot at with a gun by "The Exterminator," as he explained to me on inquiry. He revised the weapon to a sword, on my suggestion that it would not get published if it were a gun and, also on my suggestion, added a few cartoon words and another picture showing the alien dead with the sword in his heart. He ended up making a comic strip and telling a story. Jeb also wrote a much longer story in a later meeting which he kept adding to, and he eventually brought it home to write at home. He wrote action space stories with a fair amount of violence and included himself and his friends in the story. Most of the other boys and some of the girls wrote their stories in this way.

Because there was no restriction on what the students wrote except for guidance given by the adults, the students, especially the boys, chose to write in a dramatic and playful way, with fantasy and action themes. Thomas Newkirk (2002) sheds light on this kind of writing:

> Literacy too often seems unappealing and inactive to boys. It gets in the way of the need to move, to talk, to play, to live in and with one's body. In one sense, reading and writing represent the choice of language over physical action, the vicarious over the actual. But writing time often provides the open space (outside of recess) in the curriculum—a space to enact fantasies of power, adventure and friendship. And as many boys claim, when they are writing these adventures, they feel themselves physically inside the stories. Rather than denying the physical needs of boys, writing can employ that energy—if we can keep the space open for their play. (p. 178)

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Newkirk advocates that regular classrooms should tolerate this kind of playful writing for the sake of encouraging boys to write. However, as I have indicated, this kind of writing is more likely to emerge in special programs designed to encourage and guide it along. The resulting student works reveal the sense of play and fun necessary for good student writing, and especially voice. Moreover, as with Ada, revision becomes an attempt, under gentle adult guidance, to make the writing more accessible and interesting.

In this situation, it was not entertainment these students needed, but the conditions so that they could entertain themselves as they wrote, a double advantage. Both Ada and Jeb were thoroughly absorbed in what they were doing in their different ways. For Newkirk, to interfere with this kind of engagement or to censor it too much would be to destroy the living experience in it. Newkirk echoes McLaren's and Woods' descriptions of learning at its best, as an active, lived, and flexible process, and not the result of either authoritarian or simply entertaining instruction.

Teacher guidance and planning played an important role in the continued maintenance of the social aspects of community, play, and heterogeneous grouping in the program. It became obvious that without monitoring and effort on the part of the adults, the community would easily fall into the same structured patterns as regular school life. For instance, during that fourth meeting on March 21st, I observed that the fourth grade students were all sitting together at one table and that the girls were all, except one, seated at another table. My notes show that there was some erosion of the sense of community at that meeting. Social and structural differences inherent in the regular school day began to emerge, such as gender differences in the approach to writing, and social and grade differences. This occurred partly because of the physical setup of the

classroom and the number of students, which led to the students being clustered in groups around the second grade tables. Carol did not organize the groupings as heterogeneously as she had done earlier, because she decided that the activities would be divided into interest groups. This meant that the students spent most of their time with students from their own grade and of their own gender. There were some children who felt comfortable crossing those lines, but not many. Also Lois, the Special Education teacher, took the special needs students off into a corner to work with them for an activity, and thus separated them from the rest of the group. The fourth grade boys except for Jeb sat together with one third grader, while all the girls except one sat together. The Grade 2 and Grade 3 boys sat together, but one of them sat alone, until he was drawn into a group. However, Carol made sure that after that meeting, genders and ages were mixed at the tables. The special needs students, although separated at times from the main group, were also returned to participate in the other activities, and so did not miss the activities in future meetings.

At the next meeting (3/28/05), the students were well into their stories. Deb and I sat at two tables that had been pushed together with grades and genders nicely represented. I observed that the students watched each other as they wrote and sometimes copied each other, but apart from one student who had difficulty starting, most of them wrote energetically. Carol was conducting the art activity, so students entered and left the group after a time. This actually added to the writing group's energy as fresh students came in with more ideas. The students not only watched each other, but talked as they wrote, sharing their stories and giving advice to one another. The main theme in their writing being aliens and space, they were focused on plot. What to write next?

How to extricate their heroes and their friends from tight spots? Drawings flourished to illustrate the events. At least some of the stories would appear in the magazine, and if not, they would be taken home to be proudly read to parents.

The inclusiveness of the grouping was marred at first when the older students noticed that the younger students were copying their ideas and writing, and they complained about this to Deb and me. However, I explained that younger kids often copy older kids and that it was normal and rather flattering. The older students took it well and made suggestions to the younger students to change what they had written. On looking at the final versions, I saw little copying except when the younger students had imitated the older students by adding their own friends into the story.

The teachers and helpers always needed to be aware of how to guide the social interactions and maximize the sense of inclusion—through seating, verbal directions, and support of those who were less able or motivated. By allowing discussion during writing the teachers helped the students to generate ideas, leading them to write more and to be more creative. The students were excited about telling their space stories both verbally and then in writing. Moreover, the art activity gave them a break from writing. Play and work were intermingled to the point that it was hard to tell which was which.

As time went on in the program, I developed some concerns. First, I wondered if the students were seeing themselves as editors. They were creating pages for the magazine and discussing their work with each other, but they hadn't looked at other students' submissions very much, if at all, nor learnt how to make editorial judgments about them. I had always emphasized this in past programs, knowing that this was a higher level evaluative skill to which the students should be exposed in the meetings.

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True, the students were sharing their writing and thinking. Would this be enough? At least they were seeing themselves as authors and researchers.

A second concern was that Carol was so busy that she might not have time to do the job of making sure submissions came from other students in the school. She asked the students to talk about the magazine in their classes, but this was not followed up. I told her of these worries and she did ask some teachers to give her works by their students. Towards the end I was worried that there would be the kinds of glitches in the publishing process that I had experienced myself.

On the other hand, the program as a whole was going well. The students in the program were writing and we had several more activities to come. One of them was an outdoors activity because the weather was improving. We had also planned for one of the Grade 2 students to show us his father's telescope that he had brought in that day. At the meeting before, because his father had mentioned his interest in amateur astronomy and that he had a large telescope, we had asked him to bring it in, and his son, Ian, wanted to talk about it at the next meeting. Carol also had another art activity scheduled.

At the meeting on April 4th, it was enjoyable to go outside and feel the warm sun. The children played on the playground equipment and ate their snacks. Ada and some other younger children sat with Carol and me around a little table. Ada shared with us a mnemonic she had made up to remember the order of the planets, "My Very Excellent Mother Just Served Us Nine Puny Pizzas," the last one, "pizzas" being the newly discovered Planet P or X. (This was before Pluto and Planet X were declared by scientists to be less than real planets.) I made a note that this was a cheerful, talkative group, excited about the upcoming activity.

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The activity itself went well. My notes tell the story:

Carol then gathered everyone together for the activity. Deb and Mary were present as helpers, but not Lois (the Special Education teacher). Carol explained the activity, which was for each child to hold a balloon to represent a planet, to divide into two groups (there were 18 students present), and for two children to be the sun. She chose the students by the first letter of their first or last name. I helped out with the group led by Deb. Sam, the only first grader, was the sun. He held one end of a long rope and I held the other. The students blew up their balloons, and then each child held onto the rope in order of their planet. There were problems, of course. Some students couldn't at first blow up their balloons. The rope was tangled and Deb had a hard time untangling it. Sam kept moving instead of standing in one place. However, we overcame these problems and the students walked around the sun holding onto the rope. Then they ran, which was fun for them and worrying to me, as some students ran faster than others. Afterwards, I gathered them together to talk about it. I asked them about what had happened. One of the students said, "Some of us took longer to get around the ones on the outside." "Yes, the outer planets have further to travel," I replied.

Deb then pretended to be an asteroid bombarding the planets and chased several of the "planets" around the field. Carol gathered us together and asked the students to pop their balloons which they did with great satisfaction.

All in all, this was a good activity, although we had to shout more and ask some of the more bouncy children to behave. Carol and I discussed this later and concluded that outdoor activities were more of a problem in terms of behavior but that the children are cooped up and this is a good release for them. In fact, during other years with the TAS Program I had routinely took the students out in all kinds of weather to let off steam after they had had snack at the beginning of each meeting, and they had enjoyed it. Our games then had not been related to the theme but it was great for social bonding.

This activity gave the students the opportunity to move their bodies and be active as they learned about more about orbits of the planets through experience. There could have been more follow-up on this subject, but we went in right after to have Ian show us the telescope.

Again, my notes give the picture:

Back inside, Ian showed his telescope. I introduced the activity, and then gave Ian the floor. He did quite well explaining the parts of the telescope and the star-finder. He adjusted the star finder to this month and read out the constellations one could see, such as Ursa Major—the three stars in a row,

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and answered questions. Some of these were about the machine, the view finder, for instance, and the lens. Words like "magnification" came up, and "bacteria" which Ian claimed was what one could see close up if pointing the telescope into a room. Carol suggested that we take the telescope into the hallway and point it down the hall and have everyone look through it to note the magnification of distant objects. During this activity, I stayed behind in the classroom to supervise the students as they came in.

The students asked many questions, and as with other guest speakers, interviewing techniques were practiced. I had learned to create whole pages in the magazines devoted to these guest speaker activities, but this did not happen in the final copy of the magazine this time. The writing activity involved stories about aliens and monsters. Even Ada wrote this kind of story, and I asked her father about it when he came to pick her up. He said that he thought it was the influence of television and didn't seem particularly concerned. Jeb had written a long story about Martians and wanted to take it home to finish. Two fourth grade boys were writing a story together, with much discussion and relish at the plot.

This meeting exhibited many aspects of play, especially. As it was outdoors for part of the time, the students could move their bodies more freely. The students were also enjoying writing their stories about aliens and monsters, subjects that might only be allowed in some more tolerant classrooms. But also, the elements of inclusion and community were present; a younger boy had shared his father's telescope with older children, and everyone had been able to ask questions and look through the telescope.

I discussed this meeting with Carol afterwards. We talked about the stories and Carol decided to use her best judgment about which ones to publish. She also decided to return the stories to the students to take home and revise and complete, if they haven't done so, and then submit later. Carol decided also to gather up the students' notebooks or

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copy some of what they had written for the magazine. Carol decided, on my suggestion, to have them do some final activity that was somewhat of an assessment of the group's understanding of what they had learnt about the planets. I asked if each of the students could write a poem about the solar system which I would model first.

The last meeting (4/11/06) at the school seemed to come too quickly. We had another activity outside which involved matching descriptions of the planets with the pictures and names of the planets. I then had the students each write a poem about space beginning with the words, "If I were..." and after I had modeled it a little, they sat and wrote to the music of *The Planets* by Gustav Holst. I wanted to be sure that we had some more poems. We all went around encouraging the students as they wrote and drew, and in the end, I designed and published two pages of these poems.

During that meeting's culminating activity, Carol asked the students about their reaction to the program and what they would like next year. Carol said, "We're going to write a "Dear The 'A' Special Program" letter. First, we're going to write about something we enjoyed about The "A" Special Program. She wrote and tallied their replies, the numbers representing the number of similar responses:

All: 3
Activities: 3
Writing (poems etc): 4
Drawing: 1
Going outside: 2

Carol then asked the students the one thing each would do differently. Here are the results:

More coloring or drawing: 1
Playing outside more: 1
More writing: 3
No rules or different rules: 2

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I asked what they would like to learn next year if they were in the TAS Program. Their answers were interesting: animals, marine life, more planets, World War II, monsters, and inventions. They seemed excited about the prospect of what they would study next year and they all expressed a wish to be included in future TAS Programs. In this meeting, the students were able to voice their interest in the program and their own ideas for its future. While this particular community would be soon ending, the program students apparently continued to see themselves as part of a significant and lasting experience, much in the same way as Miller (2003) had noted in her study of reading groups.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

Endings and Publication

I could not attend the program's culminating field trip to the Christa McAuliffe

Planetarium. However, I asked Carol about it in another interview after the magazine had

come out. She said it went well and several parents attended, mostly fathers, and they

had ice cream afterwards. I had asked her and the students to take notes on it, but

circumstances made it difficult—it was pouring with rain the whole time. The ending of

the program had already been essentially celebrated with the culminating "Dear 'A'

Special letter," as I have described. The endings of my own yearly programs had been

more formal and ritualized, with a cake, party items, prizes, and award certificates for

being in the program and for the helpers. However, there was no time for this at the end

of the program this year, 2006. Nor was there a publishing party, which had brought all

the concerned parties together for a few hours in past years.

This lack of formal celebration worried me. I had emphasized this last phase of

the program in the previous years for several reasons. I wanted the program participants

to feel successful and to be recognized by the school as successful authors and editorial

assistants. I had asked those students to stand up to be acknowledged at the year's final

school assembly, and had given out gift certificates for the local book store as prizes at

that time. I had not analyzed why I had felt this was necessary at the time, but my

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subsequent study of this year's program and the theories of educators who had studied special programs confirm that my desire to celebrate the program and the accomplishment of its goal was not unfounded. I knew that Carol would get the magazine done despite her busy schedule, but I was anxious, nevertheless, about the fate of the program and the magazine's fate. I wrote her several e-mails as the end of the school year approached, but she reassured me and did not take up most of my offers of help.

Eventually, Carol e-mailed me to tell me that she had sent the finished design to the copiers and a few days later, it came back, spiral-bound. I received a copy a few days later and enjoyed its contents. It had the freshness of the students' own words and ideas. There were sections for particular topics, such as Jokes, Space poems, and Short Stories, and there were pages for the stories and drawings of the kindergartners. The young authors and artists were not mentioned in terms of grade level, except in the pages I had designed (see Appendix G). I was a little disappointed as I felt that it was useful for the readers' evaluation and enjoyment of each piece to know the age of the student. However, this issue proved to be whimsical and funny, and the pictures of planets and aliens expressed the spirit of the program. The particular voices of the students also emerged, from the laconic voice of one fourth grader to the silly volubility of a third grader, to the more serious research on the theme of the magazine (see Appendix F).

Clearly, despite my concerns, the social aspects of the special program—community, play, and inclusiveness—had been maintained and strengthened enough to produce a magazine that reflected all these aspects. *The product contained the process in a concentrated form.*

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Last Interview

My next question was whether the 2006 "A" Special Program had made a significant impact on both the students and teachers involved. I talked with Carol, the program director, about the program again at lunch (6/23/05) once the school year had ended.

It was determined that the last half of the program had gone exceptionally well, with much the same level of enthusiasm as the first half. The students had kept coming to the program and wanted to be there. They had all looked forward the meetings and they were all sad when it ended. Positive aspects of the program and proof of its success had emerged. First, the students were consistently interested in the final product, the magazine, and showed pride in being published. Second, at least half of the students wanted to join the program again and three older students wanted to come back as assistants. Third, the two special needs children had produced writing every week for the magazine and both had read their writing aloud to the group. The program had been particularly important for those children because they had taken risks in sharing their writing and everyone had shown support for them. These students received small prizes for their efforts, celebrating their achievements and consistent motivation.

Input of student works and design of the magazine on the computer was also proved to be a reasonably easy task, "easier than I thought, a hands-on learning experience" as Carol told me. The structure I had created in terms of reading and writing activities was very helpful, allowing her to plan ahead and solve problems as she went

along. The program had inspired new ideas for future years. Carol and the art teacher, with the support of the teachers and administration, hoped to have a Multicultural Evening the following February, and show off the program students' work for TAS both in the classrooms and in the library. Thus the TAS students' works could be displayed (that is to say, "published" in another way) more prominently in the school. Ideas and plans such as these helped to make the program less peripheral, and more central to the politics and funding of the school proper. The magazine would still be published in paper form but would be incorporated into a larger, what Peter Woods would call, "critical event," the Multicultural Evening, and also develop more multi-literacy capabilities. For instance, there were plans for the theme of the magazine next school year to be "Homes and Habitats," and to have the students interview their parents and grandparents about their cultural origin and display this in Power Point presentations. The students might write poems about the animals that lived in the countries of the students' ancestral origins, and, in another segment, write short stories. According to the plan, tapping into what would be going on the classrooms would not be difficult because the third graders in any case would be studying community and the fourth graders would be doing a unit on animals. The organization of the materials needed some sensible structuring. Every student would have a work folder, and they could pick out what they wanted to see published. Furthermore, it would be necessary to start the program earlier in the year to give it more time to develop.

These plans show how a director of such a program could become invested in its possibilities and in expanding its influence in the development of student literacy, as was the case with both myself and Carol. I found that the director would be most empowered

if he or she already played a important role in promoting literacy, for instance, as a reading specialist, librarian, or media specialist, capable of drawing on students that had a range of abilities and making the time to set up the appropriate social conditions and processes that would allow the program to flourish. Other possible director/teachers of this kind of program might be drawn from the pool of enthusiastic classroom teachers, or parents with a special literary background. It would require a person who was dedicated to supporting literacy education and who felt an affectionate and professional connection with the students. As Carol said, smiling, "I see the kids in the library at least once a week, and I know what they like to read. They know me as the 'crazy lady.'" This echoes the thoughts of teachers/directors of projects described by Peter Woods who found that the hard task of juggling the needs of students of such a range of ages and abilities while keeping everyone involved was fully balanced by the rewards of this enriching process.

My real concern for the development of each student's literacy in this program was always that the whole school and the community would be involved. My solution was to send home a copy of the magazine to every child and staff member. It was possible that Carol would find more money and time to do this the next year. Also, the idea of a Multicultural Evening would lead to students bringing their parents into the school to show them their accomplishments. The "A" Special Program had brought parents (especially fathers) in through field trips, home projects, and interesting themes, and if nothing else, to pick up their child from the program. The next year, there would be even more room for parents to see the value of literacy in the motivation and pride in their children's eyes.

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It would be important that the program would not become another place for structured lessons echoing the current school curriculum too closely, as this would destroy its purpose as a way to give children another way, without the onus of testing, to see themselves as creative writers, artists, and editors, and to enjoy one another's company in interesting playful activities. My guidance and concern during the year of study was meant to ensure that the program steered away from attempts to structure it and organize it too much. Instead, the program rested on the social conditions which would allow teachers and students to develop as a community,

In summary, it proved possible to pass such a program on to another director while retaining the sense of play, the importance of heterogeneous grouping, and the creation of an active, learning community. The product, the magazine, had a smaller audience that year, but Carol put copies of this issue and past issues in the library to be borrowed and read by all. She had included more children in the after-school program which meant that it was more difficult to find and teach activities that they would all enjoy, and the round-table discussions were not possible. However, she had made sure that the students shared their writing and pictures and that the activities were relevant and meaningful. Her hands-on, child-centered approach gave the students room to be actively involved, and the theme itself lent opportunities for the students to envision themselves as active participants, especially in the case of boys writing about aliens.

The inclusion of many more boys in the program legitimized the program for the boys, redressing the gender imbalance of past years. As Newkirk (2002) says, schools need to keep boys, especially low-SES boys, invested in literacy and motivated to produce. The 2006 issue of TAS reveals their participation and production. It is not hard

to hear in the published pieces the particular, amusing voices that boys can bring to writing (see Appendix G). These show that, once energized and encouraged in a supportive social environment, boys at the elementary school level are just as likely as girls to write creatively and enjoy being read by a wider audience.

Most significantly, it became apparent the success of such a program depended on the program director's role and other involved teachers' roles as "liminal servants," guiding the students through the learning process and developing a community of learners that sometimes experienced "communitas" during the program followed by meaningful celebrations. By the end of the program, Carol had realized the importance of celebrating the students' role in the school and community culture. Her idea of including the TAS Program as part of the Multicultural Evening and having the students display their works through Power Point, etc, was a way of making the program more fully part of the school community.

My personal experiences and that of the program director also reveal how we felt and responded to the social aspects of the program. Our experiences of the easy and enjoyable nature of the meetings are indicative of our involvement in the social process that was unfolding. Rather than standing outside of the learning process as authority figures or entertainers, we were able to connect with the students at the level of community, and, what is centrally relevant to motivation, "communitas."

In conclusion, the impact of the 2006 program and the production of the TAS magazine were to further energize the program and integrate it more fully into the school culture. Optimization of the necessary social conditions resulted in further student literary production. The collaboration that took place between Carol, her helpers, and the

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students resulted in the dialectical conditions that would enable TAS to survive and improve. Gallimore and Tharp (1999) see productive instruction as coming out of the roots of teacher discussion and collaboration, rather than the result of supervision from above. I would emphasize that the increase of literacy we are seeking arises from the human connections that create a community, and, best of all, a "communitas" of learners, only achieved through the careful orchestration of the social conditions under which the students learn.

While the program I studied was, in several ways, different from my previous efforts, as I have shown, the basic social aspects, community, play, and heterogeneous grouping, were maintained, and even strengthened. The product, the magazine, reflected the process and revealed the students' voices. Limitations in production and distribution could be rectified in future years, as long as the program could be maintained and supported in the same spirit.

Summary

This study indicates that the development of student literacy is sensitive to social conditions and that if teachers are more aware of how social conditions play a part, particularly in terms of student motivation and production, they will be able to maximize them and legitimize them in the school culture. The TAS Program, as any developing, viable program, has a long way to go in ironing out the wrinkles in its organization. Gender balance, the number of students appropriate for round table discussions, a clear definition of the students' roles as editorial assistants, designers and producers of the magazine, some organization of the writing and drawings produced, as well as interesting

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activities and field trips, are all important aspects of the program that need to be refined and developed. However, the basic organization of the TAS Program and its focus on widening literacy in the school allow it to continue despite difficulties, as long as the school culture accepts it, and as long as the inexorable advance of more structured reading and writing programs instituted through state and federal government control do not force it into a peripheral and ineffectual position.

This brings me to a discussion of the wider implications of setting up and maintaining these kinds of special programs or projects, especially in terms of providing an adequate literacy education that motivates low-SES students. As I have described, the town of Ashford's history and demographics show that there is a relatively high percentage of transient and low-SES students attending Ashford Elementary School. The TAS Program extends the time that these students are engaged in literacy activities. Cunningham and Allington (2003) discuss how to provide more time for reading and writing by extending the school day to "enriching after-school activities" (p. 262). They continue, "In schools with high concentrations of poor children, current federal program guidelines allow those schools to use categorical program funds to extend the school day" (p. 262), and they advocate that schools recognize the importance of adding to regular reading and writing time in the classroom. Portes and Vadeboncoeur (2003), discussing the necessity for mediation in cognitive socialization, argue for "academically-oriented afterschool programs" that "also help compensate low-SES students for the mediation often provided in middle-SES homes" (p. 386).

One can see the value of the role of after-school programs in supporting low-SES students. Yet Woods also believes that such projects tend to spill over naturally into

after-school hours due to "the subject matter of the projects and the enthusiasm of the participants" (Woods 1993b, p. 367). What is important for Woods is that the everyday, highly structured classroom curriculum, in his case, England's National Curriculum, was balanced by special projects and programs that make the best possible use of time. "High levels of awareness, full engagement of the senses, deep personal involvement, exercising of creative talents, ensured that more was crammed in the time available than might be the case in routine work" (p. 367). One is reminded of the heightened enthusiasm and engagement connected to the writing process workshops and projects of Graves, Romano and Harste, Short and Burke, described earlier.

Broadening the theoretical perspective even further, I believe that the study of literacy education in the United States may well profit from an understanding of the social forces that underlie educational practices, as described by McClaren (1986), Woods (1993a, 1993b, 2002), and like-minded educators interested in promoting educational opportunities to organize and develop what I am calling appropriate social conditions for literacy that focus on student creativity. Perhaps, when educators discuss the need for balanced literacy, they are actually looking for a balance between structure and antistructure. Where state testing and federal policies impose guidelines and structure from above, based upon particular philosophies of education and certain kinds of research, teacher-created programs and projects need to provide an antidote of much-needed "anti-structural" social conditions for learning that engage and motivate the children and lead them to greater student literacy production. As McLaren points out, if too much is skewed towards the top-down, over-structured and routinized method of teaching, schools can end up with disaffected, unmotivated students and teachers. At the

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same time, the more beneficial teacher-created or directed projects and programs, however large or small, should have meaningful goals and products, and be carefully attuned to how social conditions affect student participation and learning. The publishing cycle of Harste, Short, and Burke (1988) has such defined phases and goals, and Weber (2002) argues for student's writing and publishing for a wider audience as a clear goal for student publishing projects. In these cases, the relationship between students and teachers tends to be collaborative, and students see themselves as part of a learning community, sharing ideas and discussion, with less emphasis placed on SES, ability, or grade level.

My study of the TAS Program attempts to show that the social factors within its organization need to be constantly adjusted. Whether the TAS Program succeeds in maintaining its role as an agent for literacy in the school may well rely on how a program director organizes it in the future. However, there is evidence from Carol's own words and plans that she understands the social processes that enable the program to survive and how she can further improve and legitimize them.

Further studies along these lines might look at how classroom teachers and other members of school staff create the social conditions for literacy. Other studies might further examine the dynamics of community, play, and heterogeneous in the special program setting. How necessary are these social factors in special programs, and if dispensed with or de-emphasized, would the special program begin to look too like regular school instruction and lose its free-flowing quality? Can prospective classroom teachers be encouraged to understand that the way in which they work through the social conditions of learning deeply effects what Myers (1992) calls the development of

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"authentic literacy." This would mean being sensitive to the possibility that an authoritarian teacher or overly entertaining teacher could easily disrupt the sense of community and collaboration necessary for the accomplishment of the goal of student literacy. Au and Raphael (2000) describe the effective teacher of literacy in the future as needing to be both skilled and experienced, and also adequately trained in developing the "skills and knowledge necessary for collaborating with other educators, parents and community members." This further gives attention to the importance of understanding that the school is nested in a wider social environment that can feed into, and be fed by, school and home literacy activities. It would be useful to look more closely at highly effective classroom teachers and how they are able to create a balance in the school routine between special projects that take a social shape similar to the one I have described, and more routine daily lessons.

As I have shown, the benefits of special projects and programs, such as the TAS Program, outweigh any difficulties involved with their orchestration. In the case of the TAS Program, throughout its five years of producing an annual literary magazine, student's voices were raised and heard in a way that was not possible previously. Elementary student writers and artists were given an avenue for their unique expressions. The program's own sense of community was able to spread out into the school and the town. The students in the program felt empowered to think and write creatively under the guidance of teachers through the group discussions and activities that ensued. The program cut through traditional educational social structures, bringing about the possibility of communitas, as a more intense form of community. In this atmosphere,

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students, boys and girls, expressed the high level of production, pride, and enthusiasm that emerged clearly in the resulting magazine.

In summary, I have attempted to describe the social aspects inherent in a special literacy program and how such a program enables students' voices to be expressed and heard as they contribute to the larger community of school and town. The need for greater awareness of the importance of the role that social conditions play in literacy education is the starting and ending point of this thesis. School literacy culture is a factor to be considered deeply, and it affects how much, and in what ways, all our children learn.

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APPENDICES

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STUDENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE TAS PROGRAM AND NUMBER OF STUDENT
SUBMISSIONS TO TAS MAGAZINE ISSUES FOR EACH SCHOOL YEAR BY
GRADE LEVEL

School Year	2001-2002				2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005		2005-2006	
Program/ Issue	Program	Issue 1	Program	Issue 2	Program	Issue 3	Program	Issue 4	Program	Issue 5	Program	Issue 6
K	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1		2	0	17
Grade 1	1	2	1	5	2	9	2	14	2	6	1	1
Grade 2	1	6	2	7	2	16	2	5	4	17	10	15
Grade 3	3	9	4	6	3	16	5	24	3	9	7	11
Grade 4	3	15	3	14	3	13	4	20	3	24	4	6
Total	8	32	10	33	10	60	13	63	12	68	22	50

Table 3

TAS PROGRAM WHOLE GROUP COMPOSITION

This excerpt from TAS Issue 3 was composed by the program students as a whole group, and was recorded and revised on a large sheet of chart paper over the course of several meetings. I used this method of research and writing in every issue because it brought the students together to work for a common goal. It also served, through teacher guidance, as a model for presenting information in writing.

The Dawn People

Imagine you are back in time with Little Wolf and Little Leaf who are two Native American children of the Abenaki Tribe (The Dawn People). They live in a long house holding three families and made of elm bark and animal skins. Every day when they wake up, they hear the sound of corn being pounded. When they get up, they eat corn pancakes with maple syrup. Then they do their chores. While Little Wolf helps clear the land, Little leaf goes off to plant corn, beans and squash (or The Three Sisters). Then Little Wolf goes hunting for elk, deer, beaver, moose and turtles. He puts on camouflage to hide from the animals. Because his father is the fire keeper, Little Wolf helps tend the fire. Sometimes he goes fishing for salmon in the spring in the Merrimack River with the other boys, or ice fishing on the big lakes in the winter.

Little Leaf helps her mother tan the deer hides for blankets and masks for the big festivals. She also helps make fur vests and pants for the family. With her friends, she goes down to the river to fetch water, or picks berries of the season in the woods.
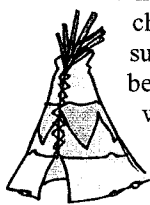
When the two children are not helping with chores, they sometimes play lacrosse in the summer, or snow snake in the winter, or the bean game inside when it's raining. In the winter, they make bark toboggans and ride down the hills. They love to listen to stories told by the elders of the tribe about how the Abenaki tribe began long ago. Most of all, they love to dance, accompanied by wooden drums and singing, around in a circle, counter-clockwise.

While times have changed, children in New Hampshire still enjoy doing many of the things Little Leaf and Little Wolf once loved to do. The Dawn People have shown us the way.

By the editorial staff and Mrs. Wellman
Picture of Little Leaf by Sarah, Grade 4
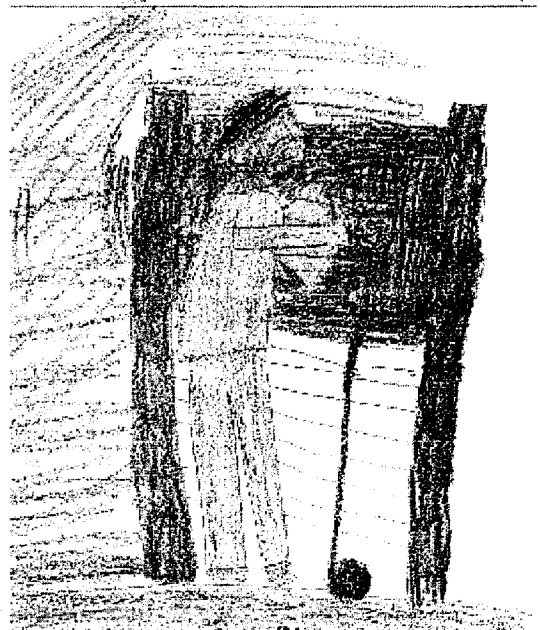
APPENDIX C

POEMS BY SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

These are examples of poems by special needs students in Issue 5, 2005. Clip art was used in the magazine issues, as well as student drawings.

FROGS
Jordan, Grade 2

frogs

Green   slimy

Jump   sleep   swim

Eat   green   grass

Amphibians

Dinosaurs
Zeke, Grade 2

Scary   meat-eater   Big

Lived   long   ago

Fight   eat   dinosaurs   eat plants

T Rex, Apatosaurus

FROGGY
Alan, Grade 1

Froggy

Green   slimy

Eat   bees jump away

Froggies   like   the   water

amphibian

Cub Scouts
David, Grade 2

Cub scouts

Fun   seven   children

Make   games   have parties

Boy scouts   have snacks

Boy scouts

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APPENDIX D

TAS POEMS SET TO MUSIC

This poem, set to music by the student's father, with computer notation by another student's father, appeared in Issue 4, 2004. It represents how student program projects often involved family members, especially fathers, and shows how special programs and projects can reach out to the wider school and town community. These and the poems on the next page were also set to music and performed at the Spring Concert. I often included introductions to sections, such as the one below.

Songs

Ms. Brown, our music teacher, helped us work on poems to make them into songs for the Spring Concert. The music to the song, "The Spring is Coming", with lyrics by Cassie, was composed by Fred Smith, her father. Kath's father, Ken Selby, made the computer musical notation for the song. Mary Perkins made up her own music. Ms. Brown composed the music to the other songs, and these were all sung at the Spring Concert. Thank you to all the lyricists and composers and singers, and an especial thanks to Ms. Brown for her time and effort in bringing these poems into the form of beautiful music!

Third Prize

The Spring is Coming

Moose
Mary, Grade 3

All the big forests are filled with moose.
There are bulls and cows and baby calves.
They are huge and weigh thousands of pounds.
They eat twigs and shrubs and trees in halves.
There are so many of them, they are sounding like laughs.

Nature
Cassie, Grade 4

The sun sets, the moon rises,
The moon sets, the moon rises.
Each day is a beautiful day,
Nature is beautiful in its own special way.
Flowers bloom and buds sprout,
Springtime is coming about.
This day, next day is coming near,
Playtime, springtime is near.

Early Spring
Diane, Grade 3

I see a lot of birds that are ready to fly,
It is as hot as the sun beaming in the sky.
It is as cold as the ice in spring lemonade,
I would do anything for a little shade.

I can see birds in the trees. They are chirping in
the spring breeze.
I sit on the beach in my favorite chair, in my
tank top and carps.
The wind blowing in my hair, my two best
friends on each side,
Talking about boys. It's definitely spring!

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF VOICE

*These are more examples of voice as expressed in student writing. "You are You and I Am I" appears in Issue 3, 2003, and the story, **My Mom**, appears in Issue 4, 2004.*

You Are You and I Am I

Karen, Grade 3

You are you and I am I. Together we are we.
No matter what you think of me, you'll always
be you!

Whenever I get lonely, all curled up in a ball,
and no one stands right near me, I feel so left out.

I don't know what to do. I don't know what to say.
I feel so left out, and I am not O.K.

When the sun is rolling high, the moon is rolling low.
I get a scary feeling, no matter where I go.

My Mom

Jane, Grade 3

I met my mom when I was born. She has blonde hair, blue-green eyes, loves make-up, and she laughs very funny. She is skinny and likes to wear shorts. Mom always plays with her hair and makes it curly. She says, "Clean Up Your Room Now!"

My Best Day with My Mom Is My Birthday

"It is my birthday, Mom," I said. "You'll only get one birthday present to open now," she said. "What is it?" I asked. It was a new outfit! "When will we go to Canobie Lake Park?" I asked. "Right now," my mom said. "Awesome!" I said.

We drove to Canobie Lake Park. I sat in the back seat. When we got there, we hopped on the old-fashioned cars, and the cars wobbled madly. I hung upside-down on the corkscrew roller coaster.

When we drove to my mom's friend's house, we had strawberry, chocolate, and vanilla ice-cream. I opened presents. I got a visor, a bow and arrow, a karaoke, an outfit, and a guitar.

I love my mom for no reason. I just love her.

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EXCERPTS FROM ISSUE 6

These are excerpts from Issue 6, 2006, the result of the program under study. As with other issues, a page or more was devoted to the theme and to the research conducted by the program students. On this page, the students' grade levels were not added.

The sun is only one of over 100 billion stars. The sun is yellow. The sun is not the hottest star. The hottest star is white and blue. The Milky Way is only one of over 100 billion galaxies in the known universe.

Earth: The Earth is where we live. The Earth is round and blue and green. Please try to keep it clean. Do you know where you live here on Earth?

Uranus: Uranus is blue and it spins up and down. It is the 6th planet from the sun.

Mercury: Mercury is the first planet from the sun. It is two colors. It is the fastest planet.

Venus: Venus is light brown. It has no rings. It is the 5th from the sun.

Jupiter: Jupiter has a ring. It spins side to side. It has more than one color.

Mars: Mars is brown. It has no rings. It has more colors than one.

Jake and Jeb

The solar system has nine planets. Mercury is the closest planet to the sun. It has a small orbit. Venus spins in the opposite direction from all the other planets. This means that the sun rises in the west and sets in the east. Earth is the only planet that has life on it.

Mercury is cool. I like Mercury because it is cool, really cool. Venus has volcanoes. Earth is the best place. I like Earth because I live on this planet.
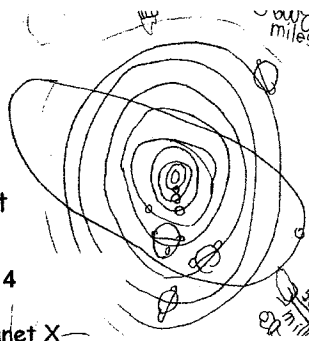
Max and Peter

MORE EXCERPTS FROM ISSUE 6

These are examples of student poems and drawings from the TAS program under study, Issue 6, 2006.
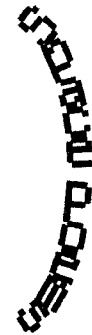
Phone Fight

John, Grade 4

If I were Planet X—
I would...
You don't want to hear?
OK, I'll tell you anyway.
..Are you sure?
OK, but I still want to tell you..
Nope, now I won't tell you...
Too bad....
Well, you told me you don't want to hear..
TOO BAD!!!!
NO!
NO!
Did you hang up on me?
Hello? Hello? Hello-o-o???

You Guess

Ada, Grade 2

If I were a planet,
I would rotate **so** much,
I would get really dizzy.
I am farthest,
I am Mickey Mouse's dog,
I am so cold.
I am covered with ICE!
WHO am I?

Pluto

Sally, Grade 3

If I were Pluto,
I would be very small,
I would rotate faster
Blue
Cold
Farthest from the sun
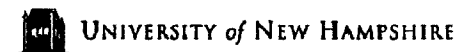I'm part of the solar system

Neptune

Mark, Grade 3

If I were Neptune,
I would have more storms than Jupiter,
I would be dark blue and light blue!
No gases!
I'm part of the solar system.
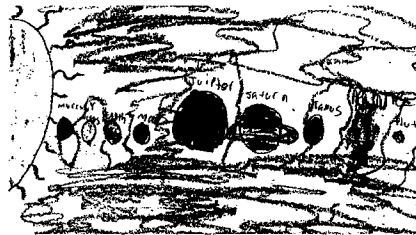
APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE

January 11, 2006

Irene Wellman
Education, Morrill Hall
186 Dunbarton Rd., #23
Manchester, NH 03102

IRB #:   3592
Study: Publication For All: A Student Publishing Program in an Elementary School
Approval Date: 01/10/2006

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed protocol for your study as Expedited as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 110.

Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol for one year from the approval date above. At the end of the approval date you will be asked to submit a report with regard to the involvement of human subjects in this study. If your study is still active, you may request an extension of IRB approval.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects.* (This document is also available at http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/irb.html.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or Julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,

Julie F. Simpson
Manager

cc: File
         John Carney

**Research Conduct and Compliance Services, Office of Sponsored Research, Service Building,
51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585 * Fax: 603-862-3564**

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