Spring 1988

Types of worlds: Writing and reading genres in a first grade process classroom

Brenda Anne Miller
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TYPES OF WORLDS:
WRITING AND READING GENRES IN A FIRST GRADE PROCESS CLASSROOM

BY

Brenda Anne Miller

B. A., Michigan State University, 1982
M. A., Michigan State University, 1985

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Reading and Writing Instruction

May, 1988

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Someone once said there are two things you should never watch while they are being made--laws and sausages. I suspect if that anonymous someone ever wrote a dissertation, she would add it to that short list of messy processes.

I'm thankful to the many people who helped me with this project during those times when the work wasn't pretty. My family back home in New York throughout graduate school has helped sustain me with their version of the "4 C's": calls, cards, compassion and care packages. My committee (Jane Hansen, Tom Newkirk, Donald Graves, Deborah Stone, Douglas Fricke, and Patricia McLure) gave me nothing but support and encouragement throughout the project. I'm grateful that they applauded my risk-taking and tactfully overlooked some of my failures. I can't imagine having the freedom to do this kind of work anywhere else.

A long train of teachers near and far continues to inspire me. My own first grade teacher, the late Connie Lopez, mixed warm hugs with recommended books. In high school, Gerald Wild wrote poems right alongside me and other students in our exuberant little poetry workshop. In college and my master's program, Marilyn Wilson always found the time to listen to my questions and musings about research. And here in New Hampshire, Donald Murray has helped me find a voice as a teacher, researcher and writer. The patience and hard work of these teachers goes far beyond these pages in influencing what I value in education.

What I value includes schools like Mast Way Elementary School in Lee, New Hampshire. For three years, Mast Way has been a safe haven down a long country road. I will miss everyone there. But I will especially miss

Kindergarten teacher Florence Damon's sense of humor, Librarian Marcia Taft's warm enthusiasm, and Principal John Lowy's unwavering support of my research.

The terms "community" and "collaboration" are almost cliches in educational research, but they have come alive for me through my work with the doctoral students here. These students' voices are a part of me after three years of coffee and chatter in and out of seminars during many long afternoons. As I worked alone at the computer writing this dissertation, I could see Peggy Murray scrunching her forehead in confusion when I tried to toss off a theory too glibly. I could hear Elizabeth Strater exhorting me to "cut out the mush" when I got too poetic and removed from the data. Writing a dissertation can be lonely, and the doctoral community encouraged me, providing real and imagined audiences for chapters.

The hardest people to acknowledge adequately are dear friends Ruth Hubbard and Patricia McLure. Pat has made a place in her room and life for me for three years. One of Pat's best qualities is her ability to follow the lead of students. I have been her student for three years, and her ability to become excited about my research agenda continues to amaze me. Her keen insights have shaped the way I work with students.

Ruth Hubbard's insights have shaped the way I look at students and my data. She has been a confidante, colleague, and mentor. Ruth isn't afraid to firmly point me in a new direction when I'm about to pin the tail on the wrong end of the donkey while analyzing data, and I'm grateful for those challenges.

Finally, I need to thank the young students in this first grade class who so eagerly shared their hearts, minds and literacies with me. I am honored by their trust and willingness to teach me.

Somewhere between one book and another a child's passive acceptance had slipped away from me also. I could no longer see the world's array as a backdrop to my private play, a dull, neutral backdrop about which I had learned all I needed to know. I had been chipping at the world idly, and had by accident uncovered vast and labyrinthine further worlds within it. I peered in one day, stepped in the next, and soon wandered in deep over my head. . .

This was the enthusiasm of a child, like that of a field-working scientist. . .One took note; one took notes. The subject of the study was the world's things: things to sort into physical categories, and things to break down into physical structures.

Annie Dillard

(from An American Childhood, pp. 157)

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ABSTRACT

TYPES OF WORLDS: WRITING AND READING GENRES IN A FIRST GRADE PROCESS CLASSROOM

by

Brenda Miller
University of New Hampshire May, 1988

The concept of genre has long been fundamental in both literature and literacy studies. In this qualitative study of first graders' concepts of genre, the researcher observed and interviewed Patricia McLure's class of first graders for six months. The teacher uses a process (or response-based) literacy curriculum.

The children were watched and interviewed while they wrote and read texts. As they defined their texts collectively in small and large groups, genres emerged. Many of these child-defined genres are different than adult-defined genres. The children's categories and conventions in texts reveal what the children and the teacher value in and outside of the classroom. These categories also reveal fundamental differences in the reading and writing programs within this classroom.

Genre study provides a lens through which process teaching and the roles of students, teachers and researchers in response-based classrooms can be critically examined. In calling for further studies of genre in different classrooms, the changing roles of research participants are considered.

INTRODUCTION

Types of Worlds:
Reading and Writing Genres in a First Grade Process Classroom

> All words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life.
>
> Mikhail Bakhtin

Our world is filled with conventions. How we dress, speak and eat with utensils mark implicit cultural agreements about how we will live with others in this world.

Writing and reading are also marked by conventions. How we place a period, highlight a phrase, or choose a metaphor for a sunset reveals the literary culture we live in. Conventions in writing and reading are the product of negotiation. They chart agreements made over days, weeks or even centuries about how we might communicate through the written word.

First graders are in the process of exploring the world of conventions. They are trying to determine the rules or parameters around what it means to be a student, friend, reader and writer. Some rules are laid out for first graders by parents, teachers, and peers. Other conventions are open to negotiation.

The concept of genre is one world of conventions which is open for exploration by first graders. First graders who are allowed to make choices within reading and writing programs are in the process of determining what

constitutes a "type" of text. Adults like myself have lived for a long time with accepted types, or "genres," of writing. We ally ourselves with poets or mystery writers or essayists. Many first graders have yet to develop such allegiances. As they become exposed to poems, mysteries, or essays, they may accept certain conventions from these forms and write within these genres. They may also reject these genres as uninteresting, and form "Flower Story" or "Scary Book" genres.

Throughout the history of literacy research, the study of genre instruction has been important. Many genre studies have focused on adult genres and categories, and how these genres affect students. Genre researchers have attempted to determine how and why different adult genres should be taught to students. These studies can be seen as a "top down" view of genre--with predetermined adult forms presented to students and analyzed. My study is a "bottom up" view of genre. I begin with the children's categories, or types, of reading and writing texts. I viewed the class I studied, Patricia McLure's first grade students in Lee, New Hampshire, as a kind of literary "tribe," with its own unique emerging literacies and traditions.

This study has one major focus--the genre choices of children in one first grade classroom. But in a larger sense, this study is about the "context and contexts" of reading and writing. The teacher and students in this room work as a collective in creating, accepting and rejecting genres. Much of what I present in my findings is not the images of individual writers and readers toiling alone, but the sound of many voices talking around texts in large and small groups. LeFevre (1987) has argued for a collective perspective in literacy research. She challenges researchers to start with a

"new fiction of the collective" in formulating their research designs and procedures:

> What is it that we are trying to say about a writer's invention process when we say that at times it is most appropriate to take a collective perspective? Are we, in effect, to tell a writer that he invents by letting the collective think through him? That is perhaps no less extreme, however, than current views suggesting that a writer invents by releasing a mysterious, hidden entity. . .that he projects onto an outer world. Which is the greater fiction: the solitary individual existing apart from social collectives, or the abstract collective existing over and above individuals? Both fictions show us something about reality. The fiction of the individual has been with us for so long, however, that it is difficult to try the collective on for size, even though it may be instructive, perhaps revealing potential benefits even as it reminds us of the dangers of brainwashing and "group think."
>
> (pp.109)

The concept of genre provides a kind of lens with which to view the landscapes of the "new fiction of the collective," first grade culture, and process teaching methods. By viewing the way the children "type" the different social, academic, and literary worlds they move in, I was able to understand in new ways the purposes of literacy in one classroom.

Overview

Part I: "Methodology and Classroom Procedures" is an outline of my procedures and research philosophy, as well as the structure of the classroom and literacy curricula. In Part II: "Types, Essences and Species: Introduction to Genre Study," I present adult views of genre through three different arenas of debate. Adults debate how literature should be categorized, what genres are worthy of study, and children's capabilities in reading and writing different genres. Part III: "First Grade Life," is a view of first grade culture. Students I observed bring their interests and concerns

to the texts they read and write. These children are trying to understand, balance and define the worlds of friendship, academia, routine, and language. The texts of first graders need to be explored in the contexts of these interests and concerns.

Part IV: "Writing Genres," explores the writing genre choices of the children in two contexts. In Section 1, I look at how the children work together around texts in large and small groups, determining how conventions work within genres. I examine how one genre defined by the children, the "pop-up book," moves through the class. I also explore how two genres defined by small groups of children, "the flower book" and "the ghostbusters story," emerge within the class. In Section 2 of "Writing Genres," I look at the genres which Pat presents to the students outside of morning writing time, and contrast these teacher-assigned genres to the genres the children have created.

In Part V: "Work, Duds, and Live Mines: Reading Genres," I explore differences between the writing and reading programs, and how this marks the ways the students view genre.

Part VI: "Living on the Social Edge: A Case Study of Brad," is a look at one student's genre choices within the classroom collective.

In Part VII: "Genre, Process and Quality Instruction: Implications of the Study," I consider how my study of genre fits into a larger scheme of debates about quality in texts and instruction through process methods. I return to many of the issues of adult debates over genre and children's culture presented at the start of the study. I close the study with a look at some of the assumptions and metaphors underlying literacy research, and how changing views of the functions of research might affect future studies of genre.

I. METHODOLOGY AND CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Research Site

My study took place at Mast Way Elementary School in Lee, New Hampshire. Mast Way School is located three miles from the University of New Hampshire. There are thirteen classes of students from kindergarten through fifth grade in the school. The setting is rural. Many of the students in this school come from families linked in some way to the university (professors, students, office personnel). The parents of these students are primarily middle- and upper-middle class whites, and most are well-educated.

Mast Way School, like many small elementary schools in southern New Hampshire, has a rapidly expanding student population. The area's rural setting, proximity to mountains, the ocean, a major university and Boston are drawing many new businesses and residents to the region. School administrators expect the district school population to double in the next five years.

The school has an active parent organization. During the course of the research, the parent organization sponsored a visit by a children's book illustrator and numerous fund-raising events to support a new playground. Three years ago, Mast Way School received a certificate of excellence for its literacy program from the National Council of Teachers of English. The school was the site of a two-year research study conducted by Jane Hansen and Donald Graves of the University of New Hampshire Writing Process

Laboratory in 1983-5. The study documented how teachers change as they change their reading and writing instructional methods. Many of the teachers at Mast Way are active in professional organizations, presenting at local, regional and national meetings of groups like NCTE. I became involved with the school through my work with Drs. Graves and Hansen at the university.

This is my third year of research in Pat McLure's first grade classroom. Past topics of research have included children's collaboration around texts and the effect of media on children's reading and writing patterns.

Data Collection Period

The field data for the study was collected during six months of observations of morning writing and reading work periods. I was an observer in the classroom from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from September 2, 1987 to December 22, 1987. From January through February, I observed in the classroom on Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 11 a.m. I visited the class infrequently after February.

During this period, I was not the only researcher in the room. Ruth Hubbard, a colleague in the reading and writing instruction doctoral program, was collecting data for her study of children's symbol systems. In addition, my research in the past in Pat's room was collaborative with Pat, and this study was no exception. Pat's classroom notes and observations helped me refine and sometimes redefine my research procedures. One of the important contributions of process theory and method has been the

emergence of the teacher as researcher.[1] My research was undertaken with the understanding that my observations might inform Pat's teaching practices, and her teaching observations might inform my research practices.

Field Entry

I first approached Pat about the use of her classroom as a research site for my dissertation in September, 1986. I conducted a pilot study for the dissertation during the spring of 1987 (Miller, 1987b), and her classroom was one of two sites for the pilot. My previous work in her classroom established many of the procedures I used in working with the students. Pat, Ruth and I met formally in May, 1987 to share our dissertation proposals and discuss how we would work together in the room. In addition, Ruth and I talked to the principal of the school, John Lowy, to obtain permission to conduct the study.

Ruth and I sent out permission forms for the project after Pat, John, and the Human Subjects Board of the University of New Hampshire approved these forms. We agreed to code the names of all students in our final dissertation drafts.

Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study for the dissertation in the spring of 1987. The pilot served as a test for the methods I used in this study. The pilot study was conducted in Pat McLure's room and a first grade classroom at another local school. The study provided an orienting theory (Whyte, 1984), helping me to identify my own biases and the limitations of my data

---

[1] For recent accounts of teachers working as researchers in their own classrooms see Perl and Wilson (1986)

collection methods. After I completed the pilot, I decided I would need more tape transcription in this study, as well as daily collection of texts to confirm findings.

Establishing a Role in the Classroom

The first days of entry into the field were important in negotiating my role in the classroom. Shannon (1988), in her analysis of roles of participants in a study of a bilingual schools, notes that the negotiation of roles is ongoing in any qualitative study. Corsaro (1981) strived in his study of nursery school cultures to let the children define his role in the classroom. He would sit in the class, observing without taking field notes, waiting for children to respond to his presence.

In entering the field, I envisioned my role to take shape much as Corsaro's did--through the children defining my place in the classroom. I soon learned that this was impossible. Children early on assumed I was a teacher in the class, asking for directions or assistance. When I explained I wasn't the teacher, some children demanded to know what my role in the classroom was. I told the children I "was interested in learning more about how they read and write." The kinds of questions I asked children as they worked were similar to the questions they answered for the other adults who were sometimes in the room--a reading specialist, a teacher aide, the principal, and a language specialist who helped a bilingual child in the class.

Shannon found in her study that students were sometimes hesitant to talk to her, because they considered the role of any adult to be evaluative. I suspect some of the children felt the same hesitancy in working with me, since the roles of so many of the adults in the room were evaluative. The

children in the first weeks tested my role in the class through misbehaving, and then waited to see if I would respond with discipline.

As I continued my research, I found I had a number of different roles within the class. I led a reading group on Thursday afternoons, which was commonly a teacher's role. I sat near the children as they worked and chatted with them, sometimes writing myself as they wrote. On these occasions, my role was closer to that of a peer. I conducted more formal interviews with the children three times during the data collection period, and some of the children perceived "I was giving them a test" (evaluating) during these interviews. I think these different roles blurred my place in the class for the children. They addressed me by my first name, but took almost all their disciplinary and administrative problems to Pat.

In some instances, the children served as the "student ethnographers" Heath (1983) writes of. For example, when I was absent from class in early October, my case study Brad remarked to Ruth that it was too bad I was sick, because he was doing something I would be interested in.[2]

I gained a better sense of the students' perceptions of me when I talked to a parent in late February. His daughter was worried because her best friend would soon be leaving the class. He and his daughter discussed how she could work through her problem.

---

[2] The students also helped Ruth in her research. After hearing her frequent questions about the relationships between their pictures and words, the children began to regularly ask each other in small and large group sessions, "What did you do first, the words or the pictures?"

Field Notes Excerpt (2/10/88)

[Eric is talking to me about his daughter, Sally. I have just run into him at the university, where he is a student.]
Eric: She's worried about Sarah moving. So I said to her, "Could you make other friends?" But she's worried it won't be like Sarah. I asked her if she could talk to Mrs. McLure, but she said she didn't know how Mrs. McLure could help, since Sarah would still be moving. Finally, I asked her what we could do to help. She said, "Well, maybe you could talk to Brenda." And I said, "Okay. But what will Brenda do?" And Sally said, "The same thing she always does--nothing really. But she would sit by me and write about it."

Sally saw that I did "nothing really" in the class, but at least I was an interested observer. Like the other children, Sally didn't mind my presence, and expected me to take lots of notes.

Data Collection

I had six sources of data for the study: my field notes, transcriptions of whole class reading and writing shares, formal whole class interviews conducted three times during the study, Pat McLure's class records, Ruth Hubbard's field notes, and the children's texts and written records. Each of these sources proved useful in many different contexts.

My Field Notes

The length of my daily field notes varied from three to twelve pages. Normally the notes contained the general topics discussed by Pat, Ruth and me before and after data collection, interactions between my case study children, myself, and the class, and random notations about interactions with the rest of the students. I would re-read and fill in the gaps in these notes in the afternoon and evening after each visit to the classroom. The first two weeks of field notes yielded little which was useful to me in later analysis. About the only place I used parts of this information was in explaining the

structure of the classroom and curriculum. I had anticipated an initial period of "wandering around," with the students, Pat, and Ruth defining our roles together. As Whyte (1984) writes:

> The first days or weeks in the field generally yield little data of lasting value. It takes time to fit into the scene, adjust to people, gain acceptance, and begin to understand what is going on.
>
> (pp. 27)

At the end of two weeks, I picked two children as case studies, and this gave some focus to my field notes. Every set of notes after the first two weeks includes exchanges with these two children, and the interactions of these children with others in the class.

Transcriptions of Whole Class Reading and Writing Meetings

Ruth and I agreed at the start of our separate research studies that we would record some of the whole class writing share sessions. But we decided during the first week of data collection that both reading and writing shares would yield much interesting information about how the class worked as a community. We took turns on a weekly basis transcribing these share sessions.

Formal Interviews

I interviewed all the children in the class[3] three times during my research--during the last week of September, the first week of November, and the first week of January. During these interviews, I asked each child four questions:

---

[3] Three children became class members in October and November. I didn't interview these children during formal interviews, but they do appear in all other data sources as part of the classroom community.

If you could write with anyone during writing time, who would you write with?

If you could read with anyone during reading time, who would you read with?

What kind, or type, of stories do you like to write?

What kind, or type, of books do you like to read?

I asked each child to give me three responses to each question: first, second and third choices. But I wasn't able to collect three responses to each question from every child. Some children refused to give more than one or two responses to questions. Others refused to give any responses at all:

Field Notes Excerpt (9/24/87)

[For the second time, I approach Paul with my set of interview questions.]
Paul: How many times do I have to tell you? I don't want to answer those questions.
Brenda: Okay, but could you just try. . . .
Paul: I hate this. They're stupid. I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know. That's my answer to every question. Can I go now?
Brenda: Sure. Thanks.

At other times, I had to question the validity of the responses I was given:

Field Notes Excerpt (11/9/87)

I am interviewing Gwen. We sit alone at a cluster, with Sarah sitting in a desk behind us.
Brenda: If you could write with anyone during writing time, who would you write with?
Gwen: Let me think. . .
[Sarah leans back chair, until her head almost touches Gwen, listening to us]
Gwen: Hmmm. [smiles, acts like she is ignoring Sarah]
[Sarah grabs a pencil, knocks Gwen on the head with it]
Gwen: Oh, yeah. Sarah. I'd want to write with Sarah.

Few of the interviewees were as reluctant as Paul, and I tried to sit alone with the child being interviewed, to avoid incidents like the one between Gwen and Sarah. I did find the collective set of responses from the class useful in confirming data, but other sources were necessary for a full understanding of the children who had trouble responding to my questions.

In Whyte's (1955) study, Street Corner Society, he notes the limits of interview questions in providing data. He writes:

> [My principle informant told me] "If people accept you, you can just hang around and you'll learn the answers without even having to ask the questions." I found that this was true. As I sat and listened, I learned the answers to questions that I would not even have had the sense to ask if I had been getting information solely on an interviewing basis. I did not abandon questioning altogether of course. I simply learned to judge how and when to question.
>
> (pp. 21)

While interesting patterns or trends emerged for some children through analyzing these responses, for others these were not the right questions. There were different "right times" for questioning different children in the class.

Pat McLure's Class Records

Not all of Pat's records were open for me to read. Certain information and observations necessarily were confidential. But Pat would often share written recollections which confirmed or disputed my findings.

Pat's records include detailed summaries of share sessions. She writes down what the child reads, responses to the reading, and the way the child shares the text.

She also keeps records of every small group reading share, using a standard form she keeps in a looseleaf notebook. When Ruth or I led reading share groups on Thursdays, we also used this form.

Pat keeps a weekly summary of the books children select during the week for their reading work. In February, she also began a weekly list of her conferences with students during morning writing time. All of these records provided useful information in filling in field note gaps.

Ruth Hubbard's Field Notes

Ruth's field notes were much more detailed than mine. She adapted a system used by Corsaro (1981), in which she made field, personal, methodological, and theoretical notes. She also gave her notes to me only days or hours after her visit to the field.

Children's Records and Texts

The students in the class keep track of who will read during whole class share sessions. They also keep records of the books they choose for reading work.

I normally made copies of any student work I found interesting on the day it was written. I also made a copy of at least one page of any piece that was read during morning writing time. I made copies of almost all of the written work of my two case studies as it occurred.

Data Analysis

In analyzing my data from these six sources, I used a number of the techniques outlined in Miles and Huberman's (1984) Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods. I identified "themes or patterns" by looking for behaviors that happened more than once, and "[which] consistently happen[ed] in a specific way." (pp. 215) These themes and patterns were identified primarily through "binning" (pp. 218), a process of sorting and clustering to form categories within the data. Miles and Huberman also present guidelines for avoiding researcher and site biases. These include:

1. Avoid cooptation or going native by spending time away from the site; spread out site visits.

2. Consider coopting an informant who agrees to provide background and historical information when you are off-site.

3. Triangulate with several data collection methods; don't overly depend on talk to make sense of the setting.

4. Show your field notes to a second outside reader. Another researcher is often much quicker to see where and how a fieldworker is being misled or coopted.

5. Keep your research questions firmly in mind; don't wander too far from them to follow alluring leads, or drop them in the face of a more dramatic or momentous event.

(pp. 234)

I will put my methods of analyses within their framework of avoiding bias.

1. Spend time away from the site.

I left the field for a week in late November, and this time away was a period of reflection. In addition, my withdrawal from the field was gradual. After the first of January, I only entered the class for one morning per week. Trends were often easier to observe after a week away from the students.

2. Adopt an informant who can give you off-site or historical perspective.

Some important data points and trends appeared late in my research. On these occasions, Pat's classroom records were a resource I was able to turn to. This was particularly true after I completed the last set of whole class interviews. Many of the trends in these interviews were evident only after I had the final set of responses to the questions. Pat and I were able to trace the emergence of two reading genres during the data collection period through her records. While I had some field notes which I used to support

this finding, her records provided the bulk of dates, times and individual readings necessary for a full picture of the finding.

3. Triangulate with several data collection methods.

Webb et al (1965) are credited with the term "triangulation." In triangulation, a finding is supported "by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, don't contradict it " (Miles and Huberman, pp. 234). Triangulation was the most important aspect of my data analysis. I looked for patterns within one data source, and then tried to validate the patterns through other data sources. For example, I analyzed the different ways each of my case studies responded during whole class share sessions. I then looked for observations within my field notes which supported or disputed these findings. After finding two or more sources within my notes and transcripts which supported a finding, I would present the finding to Ruth and Pat. They would agree or disagree with the finding, based upon their own notes and observations.

I'm making the process sound a lot more formal than it was. Miles and Huberman make the same point in their analysis of triangulation:

> Perhaps our basic point is that triangulation is a state of mind. If you *self-consciously* set out to collect and double-check findings, using multiple sources and modes of evidence, the verification process will largely be built into the data-gathering process, and little more need be done than to report on one's procedures.
>
> (pp. 235)

I sought a research site where I knew the teacher in the room could serve as both informant and co-researcher, triangulating my findings. I also sought to be in the room at the same times as Ruth, in order to have another

set of critical eyes watching some of the same classroom events. Pat, Ruth and I met before and after each morning of field collection. In addition, Ruth and I met formally once a week to discuss our field notes on Monday afternoons. We also had many informal discussions of our findings. Triangulating research through the observations of Pat and Ruth was a natural procedure for me, developed during the two years I worked with them before this project began.

4. Have an outside reader for your field notes.

Ruth served as an outside reader of my field notes, and an inside observer of my interactions with the children. She was both inside and outside of my research, and so was able to give me invaluable insights into my biases. In addition, I wrote two progress reports which served as summaries of my research in late October and mid-December. These reports were distributed to my committee, and included excerpts from all my data sources, as well as preliminary findings. My committee was able to help me as my data was being collected. The progress reports also served as a "dry run" for my final write-up of findings. I knew I would have less than two months to write up my final report, and the progress reports helped me gauge the time and length necessary for a final summary. I followed Miles and Huberman's advice, taking only one day for analysis and two days for writing each progress report. Miles and Huberman advise researchers to "do [interim reports] rapidly and dirtily, then *think* about them with your colleagues." (1984, pp. 77). I distributed the reports to ten people, and received responses from most of these colleagues.

5. Keep your research questions in focus, and don't wander too far off course.

This was the most difficult piece of advise to follow. Shortly after I collected the bulk of my data in the fall, I decided I wanted to change my dissertation topic from children's sense of genre to children's use of conventions. I looked over my hundreds of sheets of data--children's work, field notes, transcripts--and realized a study of genre would cover only a miniscule amount of information I had collected and analyzed.

But soon after attempting to switch my focus, I realized a study of conventions would be too broad. In analyzing my data, I find new dissertation possibilities within these sources on a daily basis. I planned six weeks of analysis after the intensive fall data collection period to document findings, and also to figure out the best way of telling the story of genre in this class. I knew a relatively short data analysis and write-up period would force me to stay on course in my study. I didn't have the time to wander too far away from considering genre if I wanted to meet my self-imposed collection and analysis deadlines.

Writing the Final Report

The most challenging and perhaps the most important part of the study was the writing of this report. Committee members Jane Hansen and Tom Newkirk urged me to conceive the final report as a book. They encouraged me not to follow standard dissertation formats, but to strive for a readable text.

At the same time that Newkirk and Hansen advised to me strive for a readable text, my father told me the story of a friend in my father's doctoral program. His friend's mother requested a copy of his dissertation. She read it from cover to cover, even though her experience as a housewife gave her

little background knowledge for a three-hundred page mechanical engineering treatise. When her son asked her why she read the whole report, she replied, "Well, I looked at all those big charts and strange words and thought, 'My goodness--if a boy's mother won't read this, who will?'" The writing of the report is as important as the research, if this study is to have any audience beyond my committee and my mother. In presenting the findings, I considered the advice of some of my favorite writers.

Much of my data analysis won't appear in this text. Some of my best leads and insights had to stay off the page. I eliminated material and focused the study by considering the writing technique of John McPhee, one of the world's premiere nonfiction writers. He reads and analyzes his notes on any subject, looking for the "shape" of the final written piece to emerge. He is referring to a literal shape--some stories twist around like a spiral, others follow the straight angles of a "capital A." In analyzing my data, I looked for the shape of the final presentation. I experimented with different ways of presenting clusters of findings. The shape that finally emerged was a kind of "small case e"--starting with a straight line presentation of the class, procedures and genre theory, my text then curves around, circling different ways that writing and reading genres can be described in the class.

Ken Macrorie (1978) tells writers to look not just for details, but for "telling" details--incidents and images that will carry the text. I looked in my data for the "telling writing"--the verbal snapshots that could carry the story of the classroom, and built my presentation around these classroom images. Smagorinsky (1987) has criticized process research as being a kind of glorified amateur journalism, mistaking anecdotes for findings. In contrast to Smagorinsky's view, Brodkey (1987) and Rosen (1986) among others have demonstrated the fundamental importance of story for ordering

experience and research. Presenting research can be seen as a kind of story-telling. The "telling" anecdotes of the classroom serve as more than haphazard reporting--they are the roots of the findings.

In telling the story of the classroom, I also relied on some props from classroom stories I've told before. Nora Ephron, a novelist and screenwriter, has recounted how it took years for any screenplays she wrote to finally make it into production. She learned to write some of her best scenes into almost every screenplay, in hopes someday, somehow they could make it to the big screen. I have included a few favorite leads and quotes in the text that I developed elsewhere in unpublished articles and presentations. Since they've never been published, this may be the largest audience for them.

Finally, I was challenged in deciding how I would appear in the text. I think it would be intellectually dishonest for me not to write in the first person. This is my research, reflecting the biases of a researcher with my background. I could understand Annie Dillard's feelings when she wrote of her struggles with her memoir:

> The writer of any work, and particularly any nonfiction work, must decide two crucial points: what to put in and what to leave out. . .You have to take pains in a memoir not to hang on the reader's arm, like a drunk, and say, "And then I did this and it was so interesting." I don't write for that reason.
>
> (Dillard in Zinsser, 1987)

My voice and biases are necessarily strongest at the start and end of this study, when I am staking out my research territory and claims. But ultimately, I "put in and left out" with an eye toward letting the classroom voices be heard. This is Pat McLure and her students' story.

Classroom Structure

Much of the structure of Pat's literacy curriculum and classroom is revealed in later chapters. What I will share here is a brief outline of the day, and definitions of terms necessary for understanding this structure.

Daily Schedule

8:35 -	8:40 a.m.	Children enter room, give notes and materials from home to Pat, get writing folders and begin writing.
8:40 -	9:10 a.m.	*Morning Writing Time* Children write. They are allowed to move throughout the room and talk while they work (no child has an assigned desk).
9:10 -	9:30 a.m.	*Whole Class Writing Share* Children are allowed to share during a whole class sharing period once a week. They can choose between four designated "share times"--two slots right after writing period, one slot just after morning recess (when a book, not a piece of writing, is to be shared), and one slot late in the afternoon (when reading or writing can be shared). The child sharing sits in a special chair, an antique rocker, and reads her writing or shows pictures she has drawn. She then asks for "questions or comments," and calls on people as they raise their hands.
9:30 -	10:00 a.m.	*First Working Period* Pat gives instructions for working periods just after sharing ends, when children are still all together in the share area. The first working period almost always includes reading work, and often includes some math work.
10:00 -	10:15 a.m.	*Snack Time* Children eat snacks from home, and can buy milk or juice from the cafeteria.

10:15 - 10:40 a.m. *Morning Recess*
Weather permitting, children go outside to play.

10:40 - 11:00 a.m. *Whole Class Reading Share*
A child signs up to read a tradebook or a child's published book. Procedures for questions or comments are the same as in whole class writing share.

11:00 - 11:45 a.m. *Second Working Period*
Children receive instructions from Pat for the work period. The procedure is the same as for the first working period.

11:45 - noon *Spelling*
The class meets at the sharing area. Each child spells a word they have selected themselves. They can spell the same word as a friend, but it must be a new word for them. At the end of the year, each child will have spelled approximately 150 different words. Children are expected to put their spelling word in their own spelling booklet later in the day.

noon - 12:15 p.m. *Dismissal for Lunch*
The lunch person calls on children to line up for lunch. This job rotates daily, so each child has an equal number of turns throughout the year as lunch person.

12:15 - 12:35 p.m. *Lunch*

12:35 - 1:00 p.m. *Recess*

1:00 - 1:20 p.m. *Reading Share*
Pat reads a book to the class in the share area.

1:20 - 1:30 p.m. *Silent Reading Time*
Students read any book of their choice silently for ten minutes.

1:30 - 2:40 p.m. *Work or Choice Period*
The children may be assigned tasks, or they may

be allowed to make a "choice"--a self-selected fun activity.

2:40 - 3:00 p.m. *Whole Group Reading or Writing Share*
Child shares reading or writing with the class before dismissal for the day.

Classroom Language

Schools, classrooms and teachers develop unique and specific terms which define the curricula and classroom communities. Spradley (1980) notes the importance of identifying the language of the community being researched, and the researcher's own language. My research report contains many examples of terms defined and used within Pat's room and the Mast Way community. It would be difficult and impractical to define all the terms used in this community. But in order to understand how Pat McLure runs her classroom, I think it's important first to define at least a few of them.. They are a lexicon critical for understanding the classroom:

choice--a noun referring to choices in activities children can make in the afternoon after work is completed.
comments and questions--stock phrase used in whole class shares. After the child finishes reading a text, he uses the phrase to begin the response segment of the share session.
cubbies--plastic tubs in a moveable compartment next to the classroom door. There are no assigned desks in the class, and children aren't allowed to put items in desks. Each child has their own cubbie, and this is where personal belongings are stored.
folders (writing, reading, math)--Each child has a different folder for each subject area. Writing folders are blue, reading folders are red, math folders are yellow. These folders are stored in different areas of the room. The children use them only during designated work times.
job can--a small converted coffee can which contains a number of pegs on its exterior. On the interior are small plastic tags with the name of one child on each of them, and sheets listing jobs and the children in the class.
job person--the person assigned first thing in the morning to use the job can to distribute daily chores. Chores include checking the temperature, "sign-up person," cleaning the carpet at the end of the day, changing the calendar, "lunch person," "snack person," and sharpening pencils.

lunch person--a job assigned each morning by the job person. Just before lunch, the job person picks children one at a time to get their lunch tickets from Pat. The job is coveted by the children, because they like to be able to choose their friends first, and their enemies last.
meetings--the word used to describe large and small group conferences. Pat usually calls individual meetings with students conferences.
"need"--verb commonly used by Pat in giving a directive. (i.e. "You need to leave the circle now," "You need to pay attention.") When Pat tells a child they "need" to do something, it means it must be done immediately.
process--term for literacy theory and method, it never appears in the data recording interactions between Pat and the children.
published books--pieces of writing from morning writing time which are typed and sewn into wallpaper covers.
reading group--three or four children who read and talk about the books they have selected for their reading work during the week. The group is conducted by Pat or an adult she authorizes to lead the group.
reading work--a series of tasks which must be completed weekly, focused around a book selected by the child.
round table--the place in the classroom where Pat keeps many of her records, and conducts formal small group conferences with students
saving folders--plain manilla folders which store work from writing, reading and math folders after these are too filled. These are also kept in a storage area.
sentence paper--one page summaries of books read by the children. Each child has to complete one weekly.
sharing times--designated times during the day when the whole class convenes in the share area, and individual children or Pat share reading and writing.
sign-up person--a job assigned each morning by the job person. During morning writing time, the sign-up person uses a list to determine who will share reading and writing during designated share periods.
specials--curricula components conducted outside of the classroom by someone other than Pat, including gym, music and art.
work envelope--Plain manilla envelopes in which children take home work. Children can choose to take home a book they have read, or a piece of writing. Pat also puts permission slips and notices in the envelope. Envelopes normally go home on Monday, with the envelopes and contents to be returned on Tuesday.

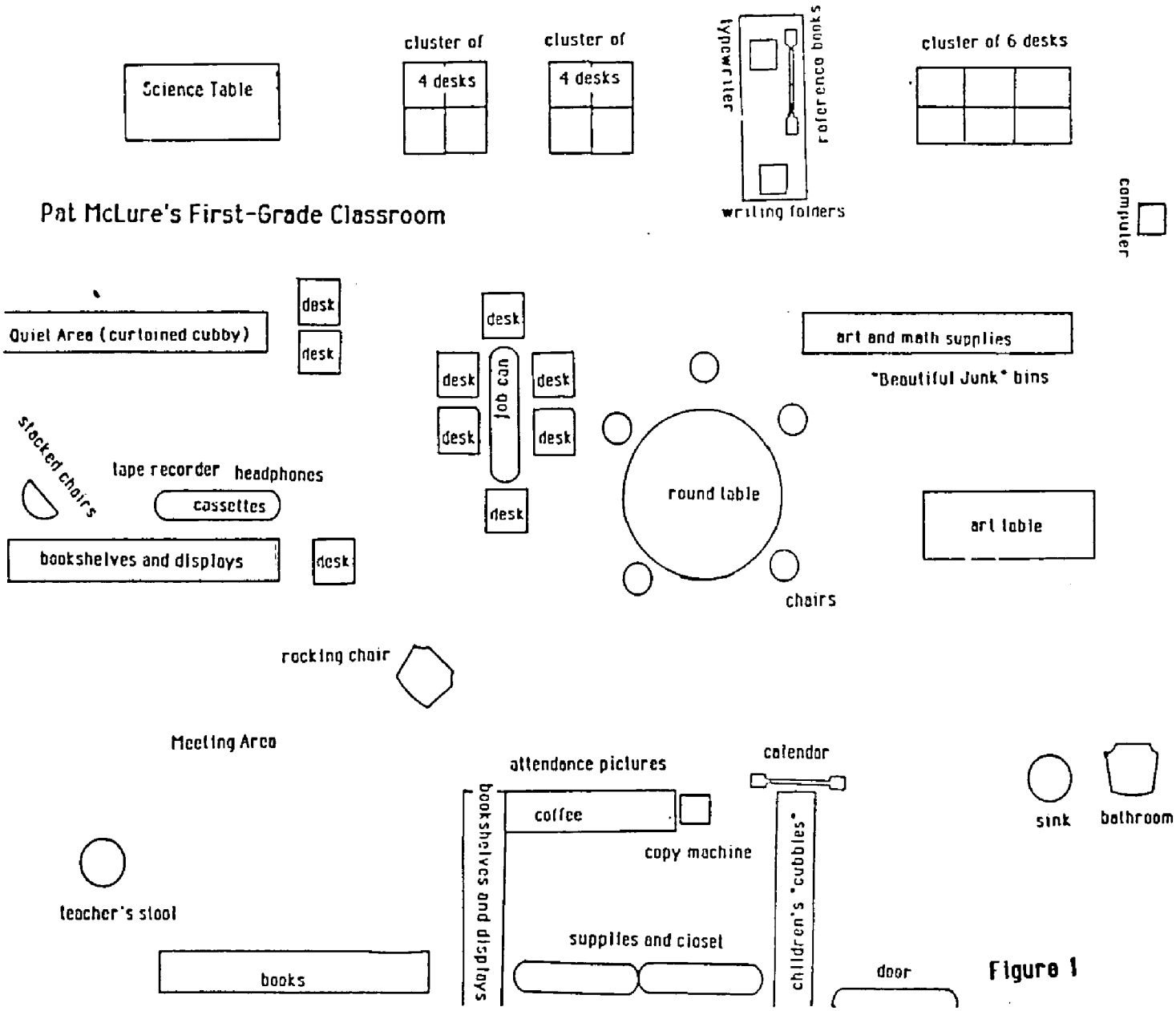
Science Table
cluster of
4 desks
cluster of
4 desks
typewriter
reference books
writing folders
cluster of 6 desks
computer
Pat McLure's First-Grade Classroom
Quiet Area (curtained cubby)
desk
desk
desk
desk
desk
job can
desk
desk
desk
art and math supplies
"Beautiful Junk" bins
stacked chairs
tape recorder
headphones
cassettes
bookshelves and displays
desk
round table
chairs
art table
rocking chair
Meeting Area
attendance pictures
calendar
bookshelves and displays
coffee
copy machine
sink
bathroom
teacher's stool
supplies and closet
children's "cubbies"
books
door

Figure 1

II. TYPES, ESSENCES AND SPECIES: INTRODUCTION TO GENRE STUDIES

> The evolution of genres is no less striking than their permanence. They seem to reflect historical periods, states, and stages of literature and culture. Just as the scientist no longer believes in immutable genres and species in nature, the literary scholar notices changes in his own universe.
>
> Jost (1974, pp. 131)

First grade life represents a certain "period, state and stage" of growth in many different respects. In order to understand the shifts and changes in these first graders' development of literary sense, it is helpful to look at the larger culture they are a part of. Genre study has literary, social, psychological, and philosophical roots. Because genre study has its roots in so many different fields, it's difficult to provide an adequate context for exploring genre emergence in children. In this chapter, I will explore some of these roots to provide a context for studying children's literary sense, and my own biases as a researcher. My analysis will focus on three aspects of genre study: the history of genre study in literature, debates about quality in individual texts and genres, and research involving children's sense of genre.

Genre and Literature

Genres categorize styles or types of writing. Without differentiation, even the best definitions of written work must remain vague. For example,

Paul Otlet (1965) provides this all-encompassing definition of what constitutes a book.

> Bulk of a certain substance and dimension, sometimes folded or wound, on which are conveyed representative signs of certain intellectual data.
>
> (in Escarpit, pp. 11)

To move beyond Otlet's definition is to discover a myriad number of ways to categorize texts. Genre is defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as a category, or type of literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content. Corti's (1978) definition of genre emphasizes relations:

> A literary genre may be defined as the place where the individual work enters into a complex network of relations with other works.
>
> (pp. 119)

Adult genres, like children's genres, emerge from literary traditions. The literary traditions of poetry, the essay, or short fiction are full of innovations and direct links to previous works. Reflected in the development of conventions in genre are the "context and contexts" of the societies where they form. Writes Corti:

> The literary genre is . . .a symptom of a culture and of the social group that produces, receives and distributes it. . .The very question of the relationship between literature and society would yield more fruitful answers if sociological critics were to focus not only on single texts, even if by the greater writers, but on the articulation of literary genres. Because of their "reality," and because even minor writers make use of them, genres are more linked to the sociocultural context and its stratifications than are single works.
>
> (pp. 119)

Corti's claim that genre studies have focused on single texts and single authors is verified by a survey of GENRE, the literary journal devoted to genre studies. During an eleven-year period, over ninety percent of the articles in the journal are devoted to individual texts and authors (i.e."A Psychoanalysis of Hawthorne's Style"; "Scott's Chivalric Pose: The Function of Metrical Romance in the Romantic Period"). Only three articles published during this time span deal exclusively with issues of what genre study is and should be. In "Literary Revisionism and a Case for Genre," Shawcross (1985) explores some of the demands of genre study:

> I suspect that the reason genre is often today ignored or even badmouthed is that it is not always neatly absolute and unchanging, allowing mundane minds to "define" it in fairly precise terms. Genre predicates an author and authorial presence, and in turn implies meaning for the reader. . .There is a communication between the author and the reader, saying that the reader is to recognize the genre and asking the questions, "Why is the poem put into this form?", What does this form add to the communication within its content?", "In what way does the text become a different text because of this form rather than another?" (pp. 426)

I disagree with Shawcross's implication that many scholars lack the mental acuity to study genre. (Given the scope of the field, ignoring genre would appear to be a wise choice.) But he is accurate in noting that genre study is dynamic, charting changes in relationships between authors, texts and readers. The concentration of many genre theorists on single texts and single authors often fails to thread together these relationships.

Critics of genre scholarship often cite the lack of recognition of these relationships as a failure in the field. Genres aren't studied within a social or current context. Links to the past may also be invalid. Writes Jost:

> Literary genology--the study of literary genres--needs a re-examination and re-evaluation. The main source of contradiction or confusion noticeable in genological studies lies in the fact that recent literary forms are often judged against the background of the classical genres, which no longer assume particular forms or shapes.
>
> (pp 133)

Literary genologists may debate histories of genres, and they also may debate placement of certain works within genres.

Only a few theorists have attempted a comprehensive ordering of genre theory. The studies of Heather Dubrow (1982) and Robert Connors (1986) are remarkably similar. Both cite Aristotle's Poetics and Northrup Frye's Anatomy as the seminal works in generating schemes for categorizing texts. They also cite the Romantic age (nineteenth century Europe) as a point of dissent among genre theorists. Depending upon what genre theorist you're reading, this is the age when the concept of genre solidified or dissolved.

Robert Langbaum (1963) is one genre theorist who credits the Romantics with ending strict adherence to concepts of form:

> The dissolution of genres . . .[is] best explained by what has been called the organic theory of poetry--the theory, which begins with romanticism, that a poem is not a deliberate rhetorical construction but a quasi-natural organism, a 'birth' as Nietzsche calls it, a kind of plant which the mind puts forth in accordance with the laws of its own nature."
>
> (pp. 233)

In the other camp, Peterfreund (1983) notes that the Romantics credited their poetic development to strict adherence to Virgil's classical model:

> . . .All of the Romantics, with the possible exception of Coleridge, founded their programs on the model laid down by Virgil in his classical progression of genres: one becomes a great major poet only by progressing from the lyric and pastoral forms, to the satire and (urban) social forms, to the modal and/or epic and visionary forms. (pp. 249)

This is only one example of the kinds of debates generated among literary theorists. I could continue to explore other areas of debate, including the rise and fall of theorists such as Frye. But if I limited my study to traditional literary schemes and genre hierarchies, I would have some of the same problems of narrowness demonstrated by theorists who work only with individual texts and authors. Genre study can involve many fields beyond literary theory, because there are many ways to explore texts within communities. Simon and Aghazarian (1986) used genre theory to study political discourse. In doing so, they noted the importance of moving beyond the confines of literary theory:

> Freed from the constraints imposed upon it by any one discipline or school of thought, the concept of "genre" can provide yet another bridge between the humanities and social sciences. . .Far from being just a critic's tool, it can be a vehicle for cultural and historical insights, and for theory-building and theory-testing as well.
>
> (pp. 19)

Literary and Popular Genres

One of the ways to expand conceptions of genre study is to expand conceptions of what texts are worth analyzing. There has traditionally been a distinction in literary studies between "good," or "quality" literature and "popular" literature in our culture. The genres within these categories are

studied in different ways, and often for different purposes. "Good" literature is primarily the domain of literary scholars. "Popular" literature also receives some attention from scholars, but it is primarily the domain of the masses who read romance novels, science fiction and the other genres defined as "popular." The distinction is similar to the one Mark Twain made between journalism and literature: "Journalism is what nobody likes and everybody reads, and literature is what everyone likes and nobody reads." The study of "literature" generally takes place within English departments at universities. These studies of genres start from a number of different frames of reference. Literary critics debate the quality and place of specific works, authors, and genres in history. Different schools of criticism (e.g. The New Critics, Deconstructionists) have widely different means of approaching texts.

Reading response theorists debate interactions between readers and texts. Response criticism cannot be separated from genre study, as Connors notes:

> Generic questions are finally unavoidable for reader-response critics, because one central element of response must always be preconditioning.
>
> (pp. 42)

Reader response theorists consider whether meaning is housed in the reader or the text, or through an interaction of reader and text. The distinction of where meaning rests is important in genre study, because this distinction fuels the debate about what constitutes "quality" literature. Response theorist Louis Rosenblatt (1984) has argued that the most important aspect of reading is the 'quality' of the interaction between the reader and text, as judged by the reader. For example, if the reader "engages" more with a

comic book than MacBeth, the quality of the comic book reading "event" may be higher.

These debates may influence literature specialists in part because genres, and specific works within genres, are often ranked hierarchically. Canons of great works (the necessary books to be read by the literary literate), are sources of heated debate among scholars. E. D. Hirsch (1987) and other proponents of the concept of cultural literacy argue that certain works, and the genres containing these works, need to be studied by all Americans to maintain a cultural unity and identity. Gerard Graff (1988) argues in opposition that such a canon has been debated for decades, with little agreement among scholars:

> [We hear] a great deal about the need to recover what Education Secretary William J. Bennett calls "a clear vision of what is worth knowing and what is important in our heritage that all educated persons should know." But whose "clear vision," and whose heritage? That has proved to be something of a problem.
>
> (pp. 48)

History has proven Graff correct. Authors, works, and whole genres rise and fall in worth as judged by literary scholars. Robert Escarpit (1965) has shown that literary genres (e.g. Elizabethan tragedy, realistic English novel) generally evolve over a thirty-five year period.[1] In a similar way, genres rise and fall in literary fashion. Over the past thirty years, Mark Twain and Stephan Crane's work as 19th century novelists has decreased in popularity as a subject for literary journals. But at the same time,

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[1]Escarpit's book is a fascinating compiliation of some novel approaches to studying literature. In addition to his statistical analysis of genre evolution, he plots where authors of different genres lived in communities in France from 1650-1900, the vagaries of the decision-making hierarchy in publishing and its effect on the ability of titles, and contrasts between American and Soviet publishing decisions

journalism has gained respect as a literary genre in many academic communities. Twain and Crane's work as newspaper reporters recently has received attention in academic journals. A literary critic who can anticipate such trends, or even bring such evolutions about through her analysis of work, is valuable to English departments and the editors of literary journals.

Debates over individual works within academic circles can be long and intense. These debates reveal some of the "hidden hierarchies" in genre study. For example, one of the most famous poems in the modern era of poetry writing began as a note on a refrigerator, William Carlos Williams' "This is Just to Say." Since the poem's publication in 1933, literary critics have debated its conventions, trying to decide what makes a poem a poem and a note a note.[2]

Debates over placement and origin of a work such as this continue for scholars, in part because the work is by a prominent writer in a genre (poetry) which is also highly valued by critics. There are many volumes of "best loved" or "greatest" poems of all time, but no one has produced a volume of "best loved" notes.

But what about "best loved" notes, formula romances, science fiction, or any of the other "popular" genres which occupy little place in any English department's canon? There are fewer studies of these genres. When such a study is undertaken, it falls into the domain of scholars of popular culture. Popular culturists usually undertake their studies of popular genres in much the same way that literary scholars explore "literary" genres--detached from the readers who value these works. Such analyses support the belief that

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[2] An example of this debate can be found in Jonathan Culler's Structuralist Poetics. Williams was aware of the debate during his lifetime and amused by it. He claimed the poem did begin as a note on the icebox. His wife replied, in writing, with a poem which was better than his--but Williams says it got thrown out with the trash

the critic knows more than the reader. This view is explained by researcher Jane Radway (1984):

> The true, embedded meaning of the [popular] genre is available, then, only to trained literary scholars who are capable of extricating the buried significance of plot developments, characterizations, and literary tropes. It is their specialized training that enables them to discern the nature of the connection between these tacit meanings and the unconscious needs and wishes the readers have. . .In this view, a literary text is a complex but fixed object containing several layers of meaning that can be peeled away like the shell and skin of an almond to reveal the text's true core of significance. Once that core has been articulated and made present to consciousness, it is assumed that an accurate reading has been produced.
> (pp. 5)

Radway challenges this view in her research involving romance novel readers. Radway studied a community of romance novel readers in a small midwestern town. Her chief informant was a bookstore clerk who was a trusted source for "good" romances to 50-75 customers. Radway's work challenges many assumptions of former genre studies. She found readers did make significant distinctions between variations in the formulaic romance genre, while critics didn't. The industry behind popular genres, while ignored by many critics, was a key factor in reading patterns. Availability of titles and authors strongly influenced reading patterns. Most importantly, Radway sought to understand what constituted a "romance novel" for these women--the core features which the women repeatedly acknowledged and sought in books. This proved to be the heart of her study:

> [The study] is founded on the basic assumption that if we wish to explain why romances are selling so well, we must first know what a romance ***is*** for the woman who buys and reads it.
> (pp. 11)

Radway's study is the only one I've found that puts genre within such a well-defined cultural perspective. In studies of popular genres, the researcher or critic's view of the genre being studied are frequently at odds with the views of those who read or produce works in the genre. Researchers or critics rarely start with genres valued by research subjects or informants, with an eye toward understanding cultural factors behind those values. Throughout history, this has led to dismissal by critics of writers or genres, even as they gain prominence with the public. Rod McKuen was one such writer who was roundly dismissed by critics at the height of his prominence in the mid-sixties. A teenage female fan responded to a stinging review of his work in the Detroit News. Her response points out the gulf between academic and popular appraisal of work:

> I was filled with compassion when I read the letter concerning Rod McKuen. I truly feel sorry for people who can't grasp the beauty and meaningfulness that he puts across. His poetry may not be looked upon as the best by English professors, but I may say, that to those human beings who love the simple, honest things in life, he communicates.
>
> (pp. 136 in Nye, 1970)

If academic and popular opinions clash over genres and authors, it may be in part because these communities never can be fully divorced from each other. The rise and fall of different genres in academic communities can sometimes be directly traced to social and economic conditions in the larger culture. Short fiction is an example of a genre which has become increasingly prominent in university writing and literature courses in the past two decades. Some critics credit this rise in popularity to the constraints of the academic term. Short stories can be written in academic semesters--a novel normally can't. In addition, revenues for fiction writers on a per capita basis have decreased dramatically over the past 30 years.

Many fiction writers have shifted their main source of income from book revenues to university teaching positions (where short stories are produced, and often consumed). Such a shift changes the literary landscape, as Rust Hills (1984) notes:

> Because [university writing programs] are sensible and successful, as far as writing goes . . .they grow and they proliferate. No one escapes this now. This system is totally unknown in Europe but it is pervasive here. There can scarcely be an American writer in his thirties who hasn't been involved in a university writing program somewhere, some time in his life.
>
> (pp. 31)

Some respected short story writers also refer to immediate economic and social needs in their development as short fiction specialists. In tracing his history as a writer, Raymond Carver writes about a moment of truth in an Iowa laundrymat in the mid 1960's. He loses a battle with an "old harridan" over a dryer and realizes his responsibilities as a parent will affect the work he can do as a writer:

> [Because of parenting], I usually didn't have the time, or the heart, to think about working on anything very lengthy. The circumstances of my life, the "grip and slog" of it, in D. H. Lawrence's phrase, did not permit it. They said if I wanted to write anything, and finish it, and if ever I wanted to take satisfaction out of finished work, I was going to have to stick to stories and poems.
>
> Carver (1983, pp. 39)

Toni Cade Bambera (1980) explains that she wrote short stories because they fit her temperament, but eventually constraints of academic and publishing industries made her concentrate on a different genre:

> . . .My druthers as a writer, reader and teacher is the short story. The short story makes a modest appeal for attention. slips up on your blind side and wrassles you to the mat before you know what's grabbed you. That appeals to my temperament. But of course it is not too shrewd to be exclusively a short story writer when the publishing industry, book reviewers, critics, and teachers are all geared up for the novel.
>
> (pp. 165)

Writers in our culture shape the literary, economic and social landscapes of genre--but they are also shaped by them.

Research Involving Children's Sense of Genre

I've identified only a few of the perspectives and debates possible for genre theorists and researchers. Coming to understand how genres emerge in a culture, identifying the many constraints and catalysts behinds those emergences, and clearly defining differences among readers, writers and critics is a mammoth task.

A researcher studying children's sense of genre would seem to be in a unique position to overcome some of the difficulties inherent in genre study. Young children have little sense of the debates about qualities of books. They don't have to antagonistically defend their preferences as the McKuen reader did, or hide their reading and writing choices (as Radway's informants often hid their books from family and friends for fear of being laughed at). In looking at readers of romance novels, Radway devotes a good portion of her work to looking at the publishing industry--the factors behind the acceptance and distribution of romance novels. A study of genres within a process classroom carries fewer constraints, since publishing decisions are

made "in-house," by the teacher and students. The authors of literary works, unlike the short story writers mentioned above, work together and live within a relatively small area. The "literary landscape" isn't America or Europe--it is one small room.

But studies of children's sense of genre are few and limited. Langer's often cited study of children's sense of genre (Langer, 1985) has a number of serious limitations.

Langer asked students to categorize differences between reports and narratives. While the children could cite differences in the genres, Langer gives little cultural background in the study. The reader is left with little impression of what the curriculum or classroom community was like, and how these factors affected the students' categorizations.

Schecter and Schecter (1987) studied the differences between second graders' understanding of science fiction and fantasy. While the researchers acknowledged and studied a "popular" genre, this genre may not necessarily have been important to **this** group of second graders. A more interesting study might have determined two genres which the second graders defined as important, and then determined similarities and differences between the genres.

In looking at a first grade class's sense of genre, I am seeking to overcome a number of limitations described above. Rather than working from adult categories or hierachies of genre, I am attempting to understand the children's categories and hierarchies. Texts are explored within the classroom culture--specific incidents are recorded as children select books and writing topics, support and challenge literary conventions in large and small groups, and explain why they prefer certain genres.

Such a study is rare at any age level. Shirley Brice Heath (1986) did a historical study of the evolution of the essay in America. In her analysis, she notes wryly that our obsessive "how-to" culture has done little to trace the history of the form and how "to adopt conditions appropriate to its emergence." In looking at different genres, Heath believes writing educators need to ask both What is it? and, What can it be?

Myra Cohn Livingston (1985) has made similar assertions in her critique of poetry instruction in schools. Livingston criticizes the meager amount of research exploring the integration of poetry reading and writing instruction. Research and literary criticism in the genre of poetry certainly has explored the questions of What is it? and What can it be? But when this research moves into the field of poetry instruction in schools, the question often seems to change to "Why isn't good poetry read, written and taught?"

In one such article in College English, "200 Million Poets," Phillip Appleman (1984) writes:

> It's impossible to have too many poets. A nation of 200 million people should have 200 million poets. The experience of a fine poem is an end product of civilization, a final satisfaction, [and therefore the reason] for the alphabet, for language, for books, [for the forty hour week] and for education itself. (pp. 456)

P. L. Hirsch (1984) also argues for the value of poetry in the face of its unpopularity among students by citing how poetry is the language of political revolts, and poets are often the first ones arrested and silenced during political upheaval. She writes:

> If poetry is a neglected genre, then teachers of poetry need reassurance that it is indeed fundamental, persistent, and practical; reassurance that the teaching of poetry is democratic

> and basic rather than elitist and superfluous, reassurance that it serves the needs of all students. . .
>
> (pp. 6)

The authors of these words, like myself, have found poetry to be a powerful tool and catalyst for change in their personal and professional lives. But at the same time, I think we have to acknowledge that Americans of any age are much more likely to be reading poetry from greeting cards than out of any literary journals.[4] I'm not attempting to trivialize the work of these scholars. Instead, I am trying to recognize the gap between "popular" and "good" literature, between scholarly and public genres, and the complex roots beneath these gaps. I first became interested in genre theory and instruction because I wanted to be able to teach children and adults to appreciate the poetry I love. It's taken me a while to abandon that egocentric quest. In the process, I hope my research begins to fill the white space between Heath's questions, What is it? and What can it be? Understanding what genres mean for readers, writers, teachers and researchers may begin with exploring how different types of words are categorized and defined within a reading and writing community.

Part of the reason behind the dearth of this kind of research may also be some slow-dying preconception of how and what young children can write. While Langer's analysis of genre was limited, she still started from the belief that children had the ability to differentiate between literary forms. For many years, researchers have started from the theory that narrative is the first and dominant genre for child writers (Moffatt 1968; Britton 1975). Gardner (1975) presented children with a series of tasks, and

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[4] The U S Postal Service verifies that almost 50% of personal mail items are greeting cards. In contrast, books of poetry are the least sought after by publishers, because it is extremely rare that these books are financially successful.

hypothesized their inability to categorize phrases proved they lacked "literary sense."

These assumptions are challenged by Newkirk (1986; 1987b). In his research, he demonstrates how different child writers have different preferences in genre, and may choose to write in one mode (i.e. fiction, argument) based in part on their interests and oral strengths. Dixon and Stratta (1985) have also studied and documented non-narrative writing in young authors, but few of their informants were from the primary grades, and the emphasis of their study was not on the emergence of genre.

In looking at first graders in my study, I am trying to avoid some of the hierarchies and assumptions of earlier studies. I'm not separating "literary" or "adult" genres from "popular" or "child-defined" work. Though different genres have different places in this room's curricula, notes or lists are no less valued or studied than poems, narratives, or short fiction.

In considering how genres emerge within a community of young writers, even as literacy emerges, researchers are in a unique position for learning about genres and convention formation within our larger culture. Conventions thrive and disappear among young children at a much quicker rate than they do in adult literary circles. These children are the authors and consumers of their genres. In many respects, they are a self-contained literary "tribe," ripe for analysis.

III. FIRST GRADE LIFE

Walking was my project before reading. The text I read was the town; the book I made up was a map. . .An infant watches her hands and feels them move. Gradually she fixes her own boundaries at the complex incurved rim of her skin. Later she touches one palm to another and tries for a game to distinguish each hand's sensation of feeling and being felt. What is a house but a bigger skin, and a neighborhood map but the world's skin ever expanding?

Annie Dillard, (1987 pp. 44)

It is mid-September, and I am sitting at the roundtable, alone. TJ walks up with his writing folder and asks for help:

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/15/87)

TJ: Brenda, if you were my age, if you were like six or seven and you were sitting here right now, what would you write about?

Brenda. It's hard sometimes for me to remember that age. Probably the same things you write about. .

TJ: I'll write about school. Except I might also make it an adventure. And if I do, I'll put Eugene, Brenda, and Ruth in it.

TJ, in the process of writing, is mapping out some of the territories of first grade life. The streets in this neighborhood include the routines of the school day, the adventures of fantasy lives, and claims for friendship staked out in written and spoken words.

"All thinking is sorting," writes I. A. Richards, and first graders have much to sort through as they adjust to full days in school. In order to understand these first graders' sense of genre, it's important to understand

first their values and concerns. Texts they are defining and categorizing are deeply rooted in these values. When TJ asks me to imagine what I would write as a six-year-old in this classroom, I realize that some of the experiences of these children are a mirror of my, or almost any middle-class American's, experiences as a child. Others have a unique place in the age these children live in, and in the rural middle class town these first graders call home. The language the children use is a part of their lives. As David Dillon (1985) writes:

> Language develops, not through any focus on language itself, but as we move through our lives, seeking to accomplish basic, yet profound, aspects of living. We try to figure out how the world works, how other people work, how *we* work, to establish and maintain social and emotional links to others, and ultimately to act upon ourselves and our world to transform our reality, leaving upon it the stamp of our personality, our contribution, our existence--all this through extended interaction with important others in our lives.
>
> (pp. 455)

What I want to present in this chapter are some snapshots of first grade life in Pat's class--excerpts from my field notes which map out the social terrains these children navigate, the "extended interactions with important others" in this classroom. The terrains which appear again and again in my observations include the children's fascination with language in all forms, the importance of learning new routines, explorations of the boundaries of friendship and the challenge of understanding the adult world. My brief excerpts can't begin to present a full picture of the landscape. But, as TJ reminds me, it's important for anyone interested in first grade life to remember these four terrains--and also to marvel at the differences between our childhood and theirs.

The Embrace of Language

"When my children first learned to speak, I felt like they had left my arms and entered the arms of another mother," writes Nancy McHugh (1986). For years before first grade, these students have experimented with and explored oral language. Language is almost new all over again as children decipher and create written texts. But fascination with oral language also continues in this first grade classroom.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/14/87)

Sarah: Hey Brenda, where do sheep go to get a haircut?

Brenda: I don't know

Sarah: The baa-baa shop. Get it, like it sounds?

Brenda: I think so

Many of the children participate in rhyming games, testing out chants they've heard from friends. Many of the rhyming games and other rituals have been passed down from older generations on the school bus and playground.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/29/87)

Ethan, Graham and Jimmy are taking turns with a rhyme which Ethan has started. Ethan points back and forth at Graham and Jimmy, and they say:

"I one the snake,
I two the snake,
I three the snake,
I four the snake,
I five the snake.
I six the snake,
I seven the snake."
and the chant ends with Jimmy saying, "I ate the snake!" Jimmy tries to continue, saying, "Now, Ethan, say 'I one the pee . .' Ethan says, "Yuk! Forget that!" and the game is over.

Much of the day in first grade revolves around different forms of language and play. "The earliest sources that creative individuals draw upon are linked to childhood play," writes Vera John-Steiner (1986),"to the many long hours they have spent entranced by nature, by the play of lights, or by a book." These children have a wide range of experience with books. Some can recite lists of favorite authors and illustrators. Others identify with one particular book which "cracked the code" for them. Jimmy holds a worn copy of Green Eggs and Ham through many reading sessions, long past the days when he can read other books. Like nursery children who hug old and worn blankets in nursery schools, first books are important, and represent a kind of security when the risks of new texts are faced. There is also a kind of security in the oral texts passed down on buses and playgrounds. The children are learning to define their interests and concerns through these written and spoken texts.

The Embrace of Routine

Language and play are important to first grade children, and they use them to grapple with new and difficult routines. First grade is a time when many children experience the embrace of the big and little hands of the clock. Shirley Brice Heath (1983) has documented the differences in home and school routines in three Carolina communities, and the need for students to understand and adjust to the rhythms of the school clock. Mast Way students also experience a gap between home and school cultures. Getting used to the strict time segmentation and set routines of first grade can be a challenge. Just getting through the school day is a chore for some in September. Children fall sound asleep on the rug during afternoon story

time, and rub their eyes all through morning writing time. Some wish for days when there was more time for play.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/7/87)

The children have just come in from first recess. It is 10:40 a.m., and Pat has them gathered in the share area to read them a story.

Pat to class. Does anyone know what it's time for us to do?

Joshua (hopefully): Get ready to go home on the bus?

Pat: [laughs, then lets out exasperated sigh] Joshua, we haven't even had lunch yet! The day is just starting!

The children are learning to mark time in new ways. There are more days of the week to be considered.

Excerpt from Field Notes (10/14/87)

Ming is talking about Mickey Mouse saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

Brenda: When did you see that?

Ming: I'm sure it was on Cartoon Day.

Brenda: Oh, when was that? Is that some special celebration?

Ming: Naw, it comes every week, I'd say.

Before first grade, the days of Ming's week included "Cartoon Day" and "Church Day," with the other days constituting "the rest of the week." As first graders, the children learn to include "Gym Day," "Music Day," "Brownie Day," "Tiger Scout Day," as well as many other planned activities in and out of school. Every activity brings different plans and adjustments--sneakers for gym day, skirts and beanies for Brownie day, 3:00 p.m. carpools.

But at the same time, months and seasons revolve around child-centered myths and activities. Longer stretches of time are marked by major events and the rituals that surround them--birthdays, Christmas, and Easter. These events include parties, gifts, and trips to favorite places. First

graders are slow to abandon the myths and mythic characters (i.e. Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny) surrounding some of these events. Many of their middle class families reinforce the children's methods of marking time through the rituals leading up to these events. Children set out carrots and seeds for the Easter Bunny, and sit on Santa's knee at a series of parties throughout December. Birthday parties and guest lists are planned weeks in advance. These seasonal events appear again and again in written texts and oral speech shared among the children. They are learning to balance the ordering of time through these events with the ordering of time through the ticking of the clock.

Exploring the Boundaries of Friendship

"Peer-interaction involves politics," writes Jurgen Streeck (1986). "Children (especially schoolchildren) like to fight over political issues such as ownership, alliances, status and power, social norms, prior agreements and broken promises. But they also like to travel in packs." (pp. 295)

First grade is full of long days with new routines, and these days are spent with a pack of peers. Children define who their friends and enemies are, and stake out psychic and physical turf in school for their friends. Makeshift forts appear on the boundaries of the school yard, and clubs with specific rules for membership are regularly formed.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/14/87)

The flies in the classroom are awful this week. The janitor and Pat complain before school begins. Eugene walks up to me just before writing share time.

Eugene: Guess what? Graham started a club called the Fly Swatting Club and I'm in it.

Brenda: Who's in it?

Graham: Eugene and me

Brenda Anyone else?

Graham Not so far

Brenda How could other people join it?

Graham Well, if there is a table with flies on it, and people are sitting at it, and they are into that sort of thing, they could join.

Sometimes it's hard to keep track of the alliances and broken promises in a first grade classroom. This is a time of fierce allegiance. . .and instant betrayal.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/16/87)

Sarah and Sally, self-described best friends through the first two weeks of school, have had some kind of a spat. Sally invited someone else from the class to her house, without inviting Sarah. I sit by them, wondering how the change will affect the stories they are writing about each other.

Brenda: So, you think you'll write about something else, Sarah?
[No answer from Sarah--she looks like she might cry]

Sally: I'm writing about something else. My little sister told me to write about her so that's what I'm doing.

Brenda: So are you guys still friends?
[They both shake heads "no."]

Brenda: So how come you sit next to each other?

Sally: Because we were friends a minute ago. I'm going to change this story from Sarah and me. I might put Sarah in some parts of my story, but not many. It's not going to be about me and her.

One of the ways to study promises, pacts, friends and enemies is to pay close attention to the line behavior of first graders. A whole dissertation could be done on line behavior in first grade--implicit rules surround "cutting" a place, methods of establishing friendship or power through line placement, and how close the children will stand to someone they like or dislike.

Through physical and psychological tests they themselves devise, the children are exploring how close and how far away you can be with others in

a community. Many of the children are just beginning to consider how friendships vary with the opposite sex. Boyfriends, girlfriends and even a sprinkling of love notes are a source of teasing and arguing.

Excerpt from Field Notes (10/1/87)

Jimmy and Ashley have declared that they are "in love," even though Paul says that he, too, loves Ashley. Paul is talking to Ashley during snack time, while Jimmy stands a few feet away.

Paul. Ashley, kiss Jimmy on the lips.

Ashley. No!

Paul. I hate 'em.

Jimmy. Who do you hate?

Paul. I hate you just a little cuz Ashley likes you. But I like you a little, too. I like you a little, I hate you a little. You know?

"I like you a little, I hate you a little, you know?" says Paul, asking Jimmy to understand the complexities of maintaining friendships when there are so many new issues to consider.

"We Volved From Monkeys Out of the Sea": Navigating Adult Worlds

First graders want to understand the origins of things. They want to know where they came from and where they are going.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/9/87)

A group of three boys and two girls are chatting just before going out for morning recess about evolution:

Boy 1: Yeah, we were like from the sea. You couldn't even see us.

Girl: Yeah, then we volved. We volved from monkeys.

Boy 1: It was like we were formed, we volved...

Girl 2: Yeah, and we were from monkeys. Monkeys are part monkey, but they're also part human.

These children are grappling with questions of what it means to grow, change and become an adult. They want to know how the world works. First graders eagerly question what they don't understand in the adult world, with a bluntness and naivete that can be painful.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/8/87)

TJ, who was in Pat's class last year, notices that I have also returned for another year.

TJ: So why did you decide to do this for two years?

Brenda: I think this is interesting, to watch you, and I like kids

TJ: But you coulda been a teacher. What's the matter--couldn't you find a school that wanted you?

These children know that adults are in control, and can cheerfully acknowledge different ways that adults work behind the scenes to manipulate them.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/2/87)

Pat is explaining how writing time will work [on this, the first day of school].

Pat: The first thing we will do in the morning is writing. You can pick out one of these booklets (holds up stapled booklets). . .

Kelly: In kindergarten, our books were bigger and bigger, and then they got smaller and smaller

Paul: Yeah, [Kindergarten Teacher] Mrs. Damon tricked us that way so we would learn to write smaller.

At other times, control of adults is very frustrating for children. The smallest decisions by adults can make all the difference in how much fun a first grader has. Four inches of bath water is the measure between a splashing party in the tub, or a boring scrubbing behind the ears.

Excerpt from Field Notes (10/22/87)

Brad, Claudia and Sarah are talking about their books with me in a small group. Brad has just read SING A SONG, a story about some tigers who have various adventures singing, sleeping, and bathing.

Brenda: Why do they look so happy?

Brad: Because in the bath they get to have the water so high. And they even get to splash and play in their bath. I never do.

Claudia: And they sleep together. No fair. Sometime, I [get to] sleep [with] my sister. But most [times], NO.

As the children "dress-up" and try on the roles of adults, they attempt to plan their futures.

Excerpt from Field Notes (12/3/87)

Nick: So, are you ever going to get married?

Ethan: No, I'm just gonna live with my friends, you and Aaron and Graham and Jimmy.

Nick: Not Jimmy--he's crazy.

First graders also see a filtering down of the adult world into their lives materially. The backgrounds of these children vary, and they recognize differences in material goods.

Excerpt from Field Notes (10/2/87)

Ashley and Susan [who are cousins] are sitting together during reading time. Ashley is reading a book titled AUNT ROSIE.

Ashley: I picked it because it reminds me of my grandma.

Brenda: Is that the same grandma you have, Susan?

Susan: No, that's Ashley's grandma who gots lots of money to buy her things.

These first graders explore how they are different from each other, and from the adults around them.

Above all else, first grade is a time of change. These students are negotiating among themselves, friends, fantasy and real worlds. And through it all, first graders wiggle their teeth. Loss, change, and competition with peers are expressed not only with, but in the mouths of first graders. These children are fascinated with their loose teeth, and brag about how many they are missing. On almost any day, at almost any time, it's possible to see a child wiggling a tooth in this class. Adult visitors are treated to views of teeth at all stages of wiggility--from almost rock hard immobile, to hanging by a bloody thread. As they lose their teeth, the children are also shedding habits from younger days. Afternoon naps, sucking thumbs, and picking noses slowly leave the scene, child by child. New habits emerge. One of the most important new habits the children and their parents hope for is the ability to read and create texts.

In the midst all these changes, the children are learning to talk, read and write about what matters to them in this "ever-expanding skin"--life in and out of the first grade classroom. These children have much to sort and think through as they begin to consider their texts, and the texts of others.

IV. WRITING GENRES

Many children begin to categorize their reading and writing long before they start first grade. I noticed students categorizing their reading and writing during the first weeks of data collection.

Field Notes Excerpt (9/2/87)

I sit down at a desk. Linda comes up to me. I ask her if she knows what kind of book she'd like to look at.
Linda: I'd like to look at an important book
Brenda: What is an important book?
Linda: Oh, like a book about how to drive a car
Brenda: What other kinds of books are important books?
Linda: Maybe like how to play baseball.

Field Notes Excerpt (9/14/87)

I am sitting next to Kelly as she writes.
Kelly: You know, I'm making this to look like an earthquake, like on the first page. This is a be continued book.
Brenda: Be continued?
Kelly: Like the tv show, Our House, is a be continued.

The children may have unique means of sorting through texts and determining conventions for texts when they enter first grade. But the structure of the class, with free exchange of ideas during writing time and frequent whole class share sessions, encourages children to explain and refine their definitions of texts collectively.

As I've shown in the last chapter, there's much to sort through in and around texts for these first graders. And there are an amazing number of texts in Pat's room--hundreds of new and worn books in baskets by the share area, cartoons of kid-published books from previous years, displays of large pictures books built around themes (i.e., butterflies, pumpkins).

My look at genre begins in another place in the room--a small stacked shelf that holds plain and lined papers. Also on the shelf are stapled blank

books with construction paper covers. These are the raw materials for the texts the children will create within the writing curriculum.

There are two distinct components in the writing curriculum. One type of writing occurs during "morning writing time" (8:40-9:30 a.m.). This is the time when children write stories and read them to each other, and Pat has conferences with students. Pat sometimes types up individual students' writing during this time. Each morning writing period ends with "whole class sharing."

But throughout the day, another type of writing occurs. The children are required to list, record and analyze through a variety of teacher-directed tasks. From the moment the children enter the room on day one and begin to write and organize nametags, two distinct functions for writing, with different work times, purposes, and convention regulations are set in place. I will explore the genres of "morning writing time" and Pat's "structured writing tasks" in the following sections.

Morning Writing Time

Pat passes out paper booklets bound with construction paper on the first day of school, and writing time begins. After twenty minutes of writing, children come together at the share area, and one child at a time shares their writing. Writing topics were never discussed. No brainstorming occurred in a large group, but individually, children do struggle to come up with topics:

Field Notes Excerpt (9/3/87)

A group of four children are sitting together at a cluster of six desks during morning writing time.
Paul: I don't know what to write about.
Sally: Yeah, but you already wrote something yesterday.
(Ming and Susan join table)
Ming: Oh, yeah, now I remember. What was I going to write about? Seasons.
Sally: [to Sarah] Tell me what to write about. Just tell me what to write about.
Sarah: I don't know.
Eugene: Bummer!
Susan: I know but I won't tell.

When Pat walks around the room during this writing period, she asks children to tell her about their "stories." This writing is usually referred to as "stories." The children are free to write about whatever they want to, however they want to. Some concentrate on drawing pictures, and others may write only letters. They grapple with understanding what writing is, and testing the limits of what they are allowed to do during this time.

Ground rules emerge over a period of weeks. In the first few days, the children learn they must write or draw for the whole period. They can talk to friends, but they can't play with toys or do other work.

They learn they can borrow ideas from friends, but the concept of "copying" remains important and vague through the duration of my research.

Whole Class Share Excerpt (11/10/87)

[Ming has read her "Baby Bear" story, and in response, children talk about copying]
Joshua: What did you write about that?

Ming: Um, let me think. Because I didn't have one thing to write about and then I was think about the three bears. You know when they showed that act, when the big kids did that? I was thinking of those. . .
child: And Goldilocks.
Ethan: But she didn't want to write about that.
Ming: I didn't want to write the same thing that would be kinda like copying.
TJ: You could do a different version of it.
Nick: But it is that.

In my pilot study conducted last spring in two first grade classrooms, I found many students had a clear sense of genres they used, and conventions within these genres. This study takes place earlier in the year. Much less clarity in genre formation and ability to explain genres is present. But in place of that clarity, I found the very beginnings of convention and genre emergence. Conventions blossomed into genres in this part of the writing curriculum when:

1. **Certain students emerged as the most influential writers in the class.**

The influence of a number of students could be traced to the whole class share sessions, where many conventions and new genres were first presented to the class. Two of the most influential students at the whole class shares were Megan and Graham.

2. **"Pop-up books" caught the attention of the entire class.**

The "pop-up book" evolved into a genre recognized by almost everyone in the class, and was attempted by many students.

3. **Certain works became archetypes, with their conventions adopted and adapted by others in the class.**

Many small groups of students developed texts with similar conventions. These "small group genres" flourished throughout the data collection period.

I will explore each of these findings in the sections which follow.

1. Key Writers, Key Works: Social Aspects of the Writing Community

> How long, I wondered, could you stretch this out? How boldly could you push an audience--not, in Mother's terms, to "slay them," but to please them in some grand way? How could you convince the listeners that you knew what you were doing, that the payoff would come?
>
> Annie Dillard (1987, pg. 54)

Social popularity and writing ability intersect when the class listens as a body to authors. If there is one place that a student can "really slay them," or boldly show that they "know what they are doing," it is during the whole class sharing period at the end of morning writing time. The sharing time explicitly serves as a time when a writer can read her work and receive response from others. It is the place where a child can receive "credit" from the whole class for a new idea or way of writing.

Implicitly, the whole class share is a marketplace for conventions and genres. Children vie for the floor and struggle to hold it. Writers "play it safe" with writing they know will please. They also risk new forms, which sometimes either catch on or are rapidly extinguished based upon class response. Changing patterns of response reveal the rise and fall of conventions and genres--and of the students who read their writing and ask for comments.

In Clifford Geertz's (1973) important study of Balinese culture, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," Geertz notes the many functions of attending a cockfight for the young Balinese. It introduces the young to a microscopic display of the larger culture, and in doing so, provides "a kind of sentimental education." Writes Geertz:

> What [the youth] learns there is what his culture's ethos and his private sensibility. . .look like when spelled out externally in a collective text.
>
> (pp. 449)

In attending and participating in daily reading and writing whole group shares, the children in Pat's class are also "spelling out" a collective text of their ethos and private sensibilities. Conventions in the share emerge and evolve in accordance with the collective and private values expressed among the group.

During the share period, two children each have a turn in "the author's chair." They read a piece of writing, and then ask for "questions or comments." In the first weeks of school much of the writing and response is brief.

Whole Group Writing Transcript Excerpt (9/10/87)

Eugene is sitting in a chair, ready to read.
Eugene: This is a crocodile, from "Crocodile Dundee."
Megan: I liked your alligator.
TJ: What gave you the idea to write about "Crocodile Dundee"?
Eugene: I don't know. I think it was cause I watched it.
TJ: Was that the only thing you could think of? Because I was sitting next to you and you were also thinking about a starship. You changed your mind.
Claudia: I liked the picture.
Ming: I liked your crocodile.
Ruth: What do you think you'll do next?
Eugene: I don't know.
Pat: Any more questions for Eugene?
Kelly: Um, I liked the way you made your crocodile.
Eugene: It's when he jumps out wearing the kangaroo suit.

This share is fairly typical for early in the year. A number of stock questions and comments are emerging. TJ, a veteran of Pat's class from the previous year, asks how Eugene got the idea for his story. Ruth, the other researcher in the room, asks what Eugene will do next. These questions demand both reflection and prediction by the writer, and many of the

children early in the year answer "I don't know."[1] Tom Newkirk (1987a) compares the stock comments and questions that occur during these shares to the opening moves in a chess game. Often these questions or comments don't spark much discussion, but when they do, they have the potential to be "the big move," opening up interesting avenues of discussion and reflection:

Whole Class Share Excerpt (10/8/87)[2]

Ashley has just shared her insects story.
Claudia: Where'd you get the idea?
Ashley: Well, I started to make a butterfly, and um, then I thought, why don't I make it about insects? So I did that and I did a few things and when I was at home last night, and we were going somewhere, I thought of what insects I could make today.

Whole Class Share Excerpt (10/19/87)

Owen: Why did you pick Little Red Riding Hood?
TJ: Well, it reminded me of a long time ago when I had my other classmates but I was still in this class. And I also could read this book, so I though, "Hey, why not? I could read Little Red Riding Hood."

Whole Class Share Excerpt (10/20/87)

Ethan has just finished reading a submarine story.
Susan: Where'd you get the idea?
Ethan: Oh, well, I didn't have anything to write about, and then I thought, why don't I write about a movie, so I thought of "Two Thousand Leagues," then I just decided to write about it.

These stock comments also have the potential for transformation. For example, many of the children comment "I like the picture(s)," and this phrase has multiple meanings.

---

[1] Many of these stock questions involving the children's processes in creating their texts can be traced to Graves and his associates' landmark study of composing processes of children at Atkinson Academy in New Hampshire (1979-81). The researchers noticed that the children would ask each other questions they had been asked by researchers, and both researchers and teachers found the continuation of the questions beyond the project fostered reflective growth in the students.

[2] In presenting findings, I will mark in boldface print sections of whole class shares which I refer to later in the text. The boldface markers don't refer to how writing was read or a comment was made during a share session.

Many children do enjoy the color and detail of the pictures. Others simply want to say something during sharing time, and "I like the picture" is a safe, generic response to writing. Some children respond with "I like the pictures" only after others in the class have made this response. It's a way to affirm a friendship after your friend has made the comment.

I gained a new understanding of this comment when Paul shared a story in late September which had no pictures. Many children responded with "I like the pictures":

Whole Class Share Excerpt (9/29/87)

Paul has just shared his tiger scouts story, with no pictures, and has asked for questions or comments.
Joshua: I like your [mumbles]
Paul: What?
Joshua: I like your pictures.
Paul: Jimmy?
Jimmy: I like the part where you said, "Tigers or questions?"
Brad: I like the pictures.
Gwen: There is no pictures!
[a few moments later]
Ming: I like your pictures [giggles]
Paul: Oh, thank you. [giggles]
Pat: Paul, do you have pictures?
Paul: Uh, no.
Pat: Then I don't understand. . .
Ming: I mean I like his words.
Pat: Then that's what you need to say.
Ming: I like your words.
Pat: You like his writing, or you like the way he puts his words together. But it doesn't make too much sense to say you like his pictures if he doesn't have any.
Paul: I know Cause I don't have any pictures. I don't have any pictures.
Pat: Any more comments or questions for Paul about his writing? Thank you for sharing, Paul.
Boy: [whispers and giggles] I like your pictures.

It appeared during this sharing that some of the children responding hadn't paid enough attention to Paul's story to realize the text contained no pictures. After their comments, others who did realize there were no pictures repeated the phrase, as a kind of joke. As my study continued, I

found the "I like the picture" phrase was the only comment that one child in the class, Bruce, ever made. He was called on less frequently, perhaps in part because the children recognized his response wasn't text-specific.

The children also have the power to set conventions about how the writing is shared. This class has adopted what Pat calls "two great time wasters"--showing pages immediately after they are responded to, and trying to "hold the floor" by giving two comments at once. These conventions waste time, because usually the children can all remember the pictures quite clearly, particularly pictures they comment on. It sometimes takes the writer quite a while to shuffle through the pages of a story and show the page that is being referred to. The children also have trouble holding two comments in their head at once. Holding the floor through the phrase "I got two things" often leads to generic comments from students who don't really have two comments to make. Even though these conventions "waste time" in terms of allowing children to respond in meaningful ways to each other, Pat allows them to continue. This is the children's time to determine **their** conventions, within **their** community.

The response to the writing is often bound by the quality of the writing, or the popularity of the writer. Two children who greatly influenced the whole class share sessions through their stories and their methods of sharing were Megan and Graham. Many of the conventions and genres in the class can be traced back to these two very different children.

Megan

One writer who early on showed an ability to "slay 'em" during share time was Megan. Megan wrote a series of stories about a dog. In the first days of whole class sharing, Pat would call on children and ask if they

wanted to share their writing. As many as ten children would share their writing in the fifteen minute whole group session. Megan was the first child to get many responses to a story during the first days of school. She engaged almost the entire class when she shared her dog story for the second time:

Excerpt from Writing Share Transcript (9/10/87)

Megan: (to Pat) Do you want me to read the whole story or just what I wrote today?
Pat: Maybe people would understand it better if you started right at the beginning.
Megan: Okay. "I'm a little dog. I like to play. That's what I do every day. I love to jump over rocks, especially when the sun's out. I love dogfood." I don't love dogfood, but my dog does!
TJ: You don't have a dog!
Megan: I know!
TJ: Then why do you say my dog does?
Megan: Cause in the story it is my dog.
TJ: Are you going to put yourself in it?
Megan: I don't think so. Except carrying the dogfood. And I'll have a little leash.
TJ: Aww, that's cute.
Megan: And he's saying ummmm, cause he loves dogfood. That's enough, doggy. I didn't do anything on this page, but I think I'm going to talk about when I'm catching him on a leash. . .
TJ: And is he trying to escape?
Megan: Yeah. And he doesn't notice the bridge. . .this story's going to be an adventure and he doesn't know the bridge has a hole in it and he falls through and he has to swim through a waterfall. It's going to be a a real good one and then. . .TJ?
TJ: If you had a dog, I have a dog at home and her name is Sheba and my father had her since she was a baby and guess what? He used to live in the garage in Portsmouth and now he selled it to someone else.
Megan: Were you really sad when he sold it?
TJ: Naw, I wasn't even born yet. Our dog wasn't sold yet. He isn't sold now because he's a good dog, a sheperd guard dog.
Eugene: Do you have a dog?
TJ: Are you going to get one?
Megan: I was going to get a dog, and my choices were a brown shaggy dog, but I made a choice and that's not my choice now, my choice is a dog that points.
TJ: Oh, is it also a guard dog?
Megan: No. Ming?
Ming: One time when we were just coming out of our barn from our house we eated like this treat for a dog. It was dogfood. And me and my brother tasted it.
Children: E-you!!!! (childhood expression of excited disgust--hard to transcribe phonetically)
Girl: I had catfood!
Ming: I know, one time I did too. It tasted like rotten bread.
Children: E-you!!! Yuk!
Girl: You can smell what it tasted like.
TJ: I can smell the taste of marigolds. They smell like tomatos.

Megan: Nick?
Nick: How did you get the idea?
Megan: Partly because I'm going to get a dog and a couple days ago I thought it might be a brown shaggy dog but I know it's not now so, but that gave me the idea. Kelly?
Kelly: I like the way you make your dogs.
Megan: Thanks. Brad?
Brad: Whenever I don't eat all my eggs my mom gives them to my dog.
Megan: What's her name? Claudia.
Claudia: I like the picture.
Megan: Thanks.
Ethan: Is that all she says?
Megan: What's your name? Bruce.
Bruce: I like your picture.
TJ: That looks like all of them.
Pat: Okay.
Megan: You had your hand up. Did you want to ask something?
Linda: My friend Shannon--she eats kitty food.
Children: E-you!!!
TJ: What's it taste like?
Linda: I don't know.
Ming: One time when we were watching tv and Mygyver was eating dogfood.
Megan: What? I didn't hear the first part cause they were talking so loud
Ming: Mygyver was eating dogfood.
TJ: Mygyver?
Ming: Yeah, on tv I saw him.
TJ: I saw the first time they met--his friend.
Jimmy: One time me and my brother was watching tv--my brother was eating dogfood sticks.
Children: E-you.
Ming: That's what I was eating when we came out of the shed.
TJ: What gave you the idea to eat that?
Ming: Do you know what my brother was doing when he tasted it? He said yummy yummy give me some more for dessert. Because he liked them so much, especially with mustard.
Children: E-you!!!! Yuk.
Pat: I think we need to stop now. That was a good share this morning. Very nice sharing.
Megan: Good thing that you chose me cause everyone was starting to talk about dog biscuits.

This lengthy share was important for the class, and Pat allowed Megan's reading and response to extend well beyond the prescribed time for a number of reasons. A number of children, including Brad, Jimmy, Linda and Eugene, responded for the first time during a share session, or gave responses that aren't generic comments (i. e. "I like the pictures").

The share, and events which transpire after the share, are notable for the "resonance" they provide to Megan. Harold Lasswell developed the term "resonance." LeFevre explains the concept:

> Lasswell notes that successful innovators often maintain "resonant relationships" with certain people in their social sphere. Those who are less successful innovators perhaps lack such "resonators" and may thus be more likely to succumb to the "dampening influences" of their environment. A resonator, for Lasswell, may be someone who acts as a friendly audience or someone who lends financial or emotional support. Resonance comes about when an individual act--a "vibration"--is intensified and prolonged by sympathetic vibrations.
>
> (LeFevre, pp. 65)

Megan receives many such "sympathetic vibrations." At the start of her reading, she asks whether she should share all of her writing. It may be she isn't sure what the rules are for sharing (in kindergarten, only the day's writing was read), or she may be acknowledging that time is running short. Pat encourages her to read the whole story. At the end of the share, Pat comments that it is "a very nice sharing."

Later that morning, Pat reads a story about a puppy to the class, and gives further recognition to Megan's dog story, by citing Megan's story as the inspiration for her selection.

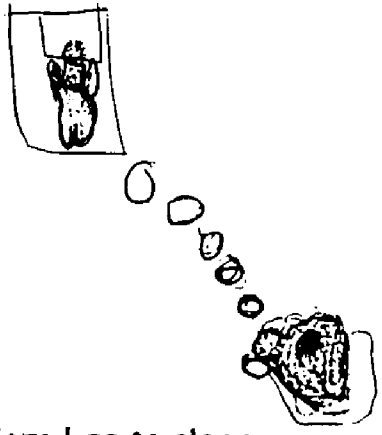
Figure 2: Megan's Brown Shaggy Dog Published Book

I'm a little dog. I love to play. That's what I do every day.

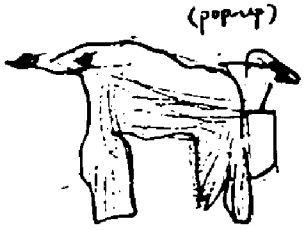
I love to jump over rocks, especially when it's sunny out.

MJ is bringing a big bag of dogfood. I love dogfood.

When I get home, mmm the food is good.



Now I go to sleep. Tomorrow I go to the circus.



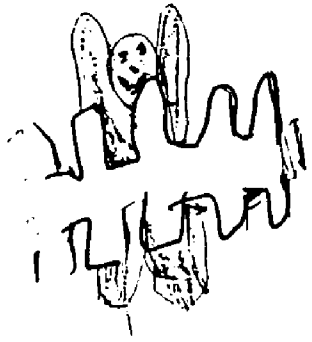
I spring up. Today is the day I go to the the circus.

I have fun at the circus. "Whopee!"

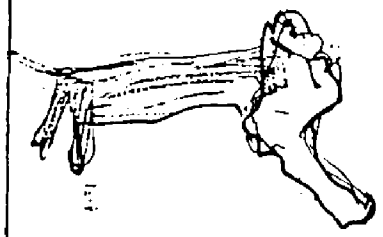
MJ is riding me. It is fun.

Figure 2 con't.

I love you MJ.

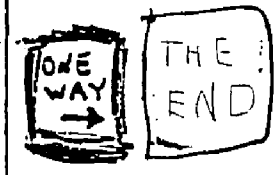


I am jumping over a gate.



A frog.

Bye. there is not any more books about the dog.



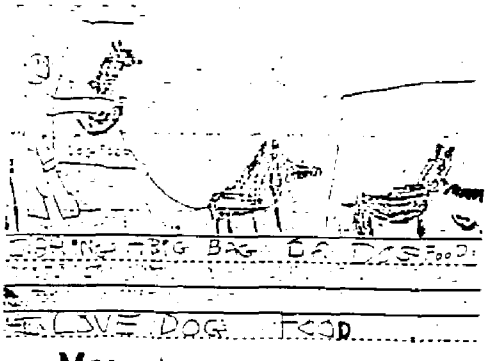
The end

In the next few days, a number of children adopt conventions from Megan's story. Kelly has a dog jumping:

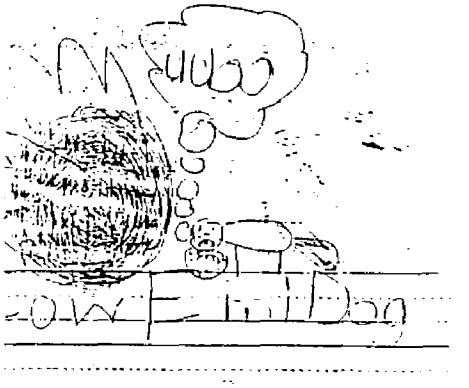
Figure 3: Kelly's Dog

Some children, including Brad, test out Megan's "ummm" dog response in their stories:

Figure 4: Comparison of Brad and Megan's Dogs



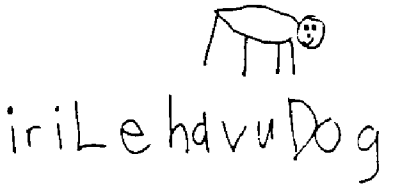
Megan's story:
note dog saying "mmm"



Brad's dog saying
saying uuoooo

And Brad, who has already written about his dog, includes this page:

Figure 5: Excerpt From Brad's Writing



"I really have a dog."

Perhaps he hears the echoes of TJ's question about whether or not Megan really owns a dog.

Others, like Joshua, tried to transfer the conventions of the share to other whole group meetings, with less success:

Tape Transcript Excerpt (9/29/87)

After whole class share, Pat is talking about some graphs the children are doing. They are suggesting different subjects that they could choose to graph.
Eugene: Favorite friends?
Pat: [nods] Favorite friends.
Graham: Favorite toys?
Pat: You could ask people about their favorite toys. Joshua?
Joshua: Favorite dog.
Pat: Favorite dog? What, the kind of dog they like the best?
Joshua: To eat!
child: No way!
TJ: Dogs can't be eaten!
Ethan: I think he means who likes to eat dogfood umm umm.
Pat: [murmurs no, shakes her head] Nick, what's your idea?

Megan establishes her influence in writing definitively with her inclusion of pop-ups with the story. I will deal with that sharing and development of the pop-up genre at length in a later section.

Whole class sharing sessions provide resonance. But they also can provide resistance, as TJ quickly learned. He knew the format and procedures in the room, and often instructed children about what to do and when to do it. TJ was dominate during the first half of Megan's share session, and he often dominated these sessions early in the year. After a few weeks, Pat challenged this dominance by stopping him if he had more than a few responses during a whole class share.

Other children in the class also challenged TJ's dominance:

Field Notes Excerpt (10/29/87)

TJ asks Sally if she knows how to spell "supercalifrajalisticexbealadoshos."
Sally: No, I don't.
TJ: The first graders last year used to know.
Sally: So what? Why ask me if you don't even know? You think you're the greatest first grader but you're not. I think you're the worstest.

And even as the children supported Megan's writing, they challenged her social behavior. Megan learned the children would adopt her conventions and test out her genres. But enjoying the writing didn't necessarily mean they enjoyed the writer:

Field Notes Excerpt (9/9/87)

Megan is in the listening area, sitting behind the curtains. Susan comes over, and also tries to sit on the ledge, but Megan won't let her.
Susan: Megan, you've got to share.
[Megan ignores]
Gwen is sitting close by, and pulls out an orange seat for Susan to sit on. Claudia comes over, and shows me the paint on her fingernails. Ashley shows the book she is reading to Susan and Gwen.
Megan: Ashley, can I see that book too?
[Ashley ignores the question]

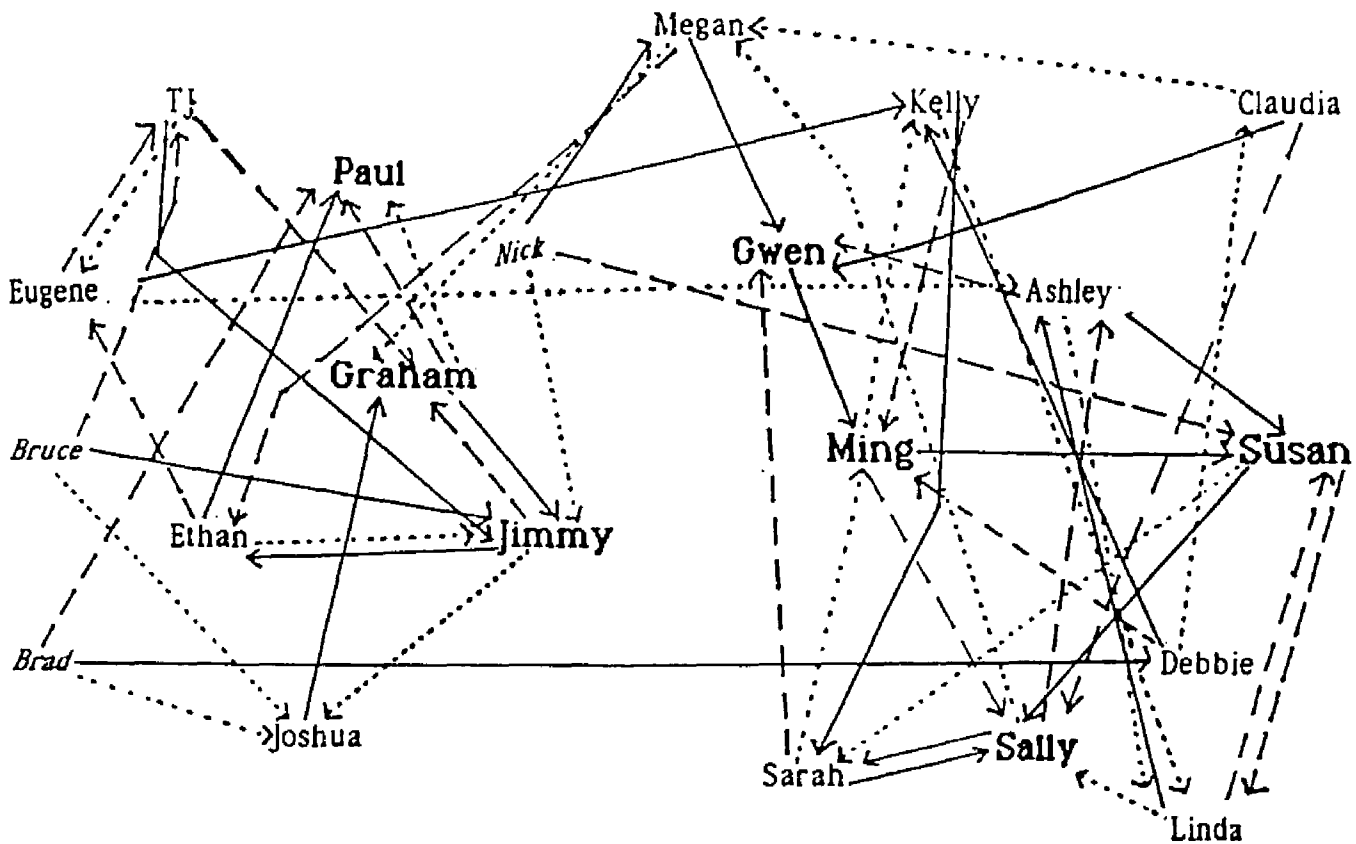
Field Notes Excerpt (10/29/87)

TJ: You're starting to be mean again.
Megan: Okay, tell me when I'm mean.
TJ: Can I borrow your eraser?
Megan: No.
TJ: You're not nice Megan.
Sarah: No, she's mean.
Susan: I hate her.
Ethan: Megan thinks she's hot.

Paul summed up the class's attitude toward Megan best in a small reading group, after he read her published book of the dog story she shared so successfully in class. "Megan's so good at everything with writing--her stories, her pictures," and then he paused, shaking his head. "But they all say she's the worst in the class."

Sociograms charted throughout the course of the research bear out Paul's judgment. Even as Megan's popularity as a writer rises throughout the data collection period, her social popularity falls. During share time, she is adept at pleasing the class "in some grand way." But outside of the performances of her stories, the class is wary.

Figure 6: *Students Answer Question: If You Could Write a Story With Anyone in the Class, Who Would You Choose to Write With? (9/24/87)*

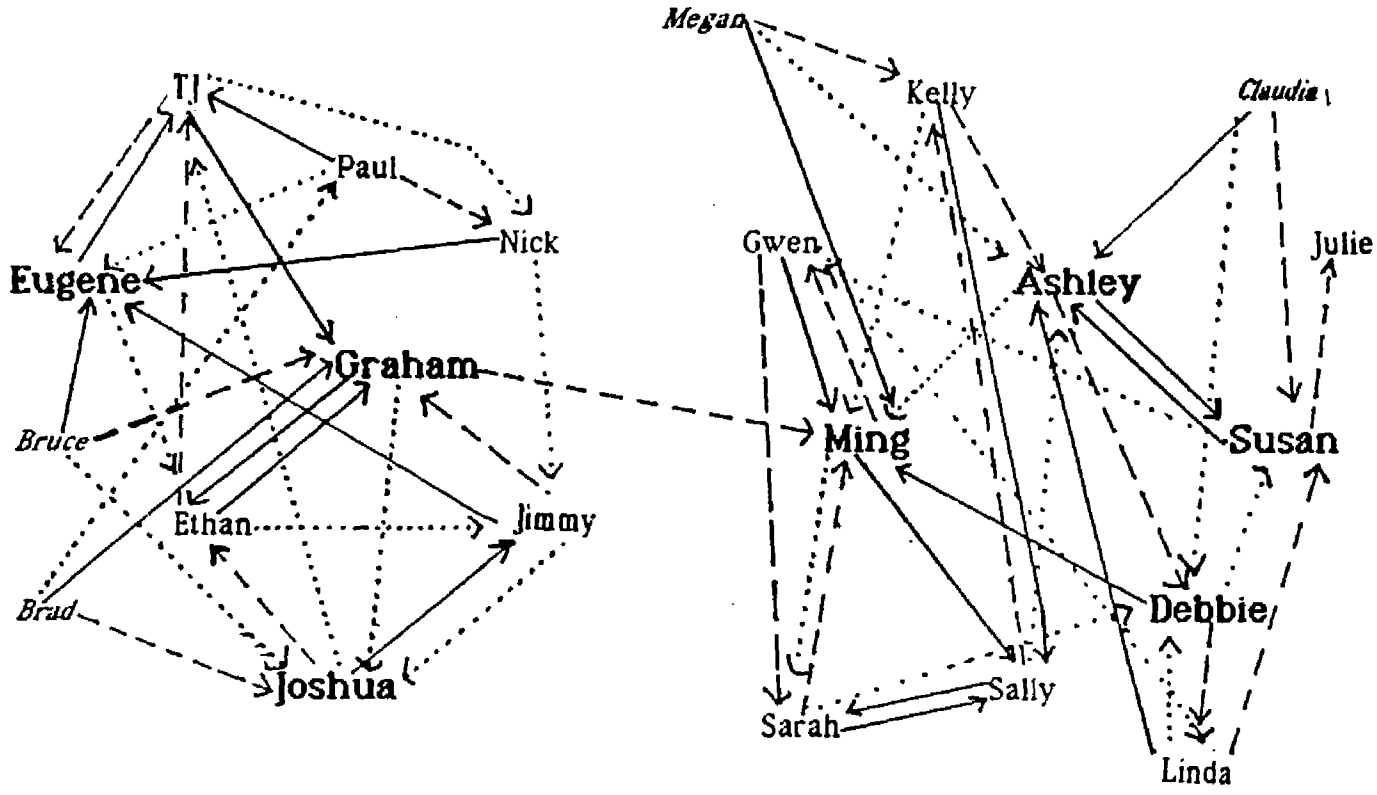


Stars (chosen by at least four classmates)
Mid-range (chosen by at least one classmate, but not more than three classmates)
isolates (not chosen by any classmates)

arrows point toward choice, away from child choosing

→ first choice
--→ second choice
·····→ third choice

Figure 7: ***Students Answer Question: If You Could Write a Story With Anyone in the Class, Who Would You Choose to Write With? (11/9/87)***

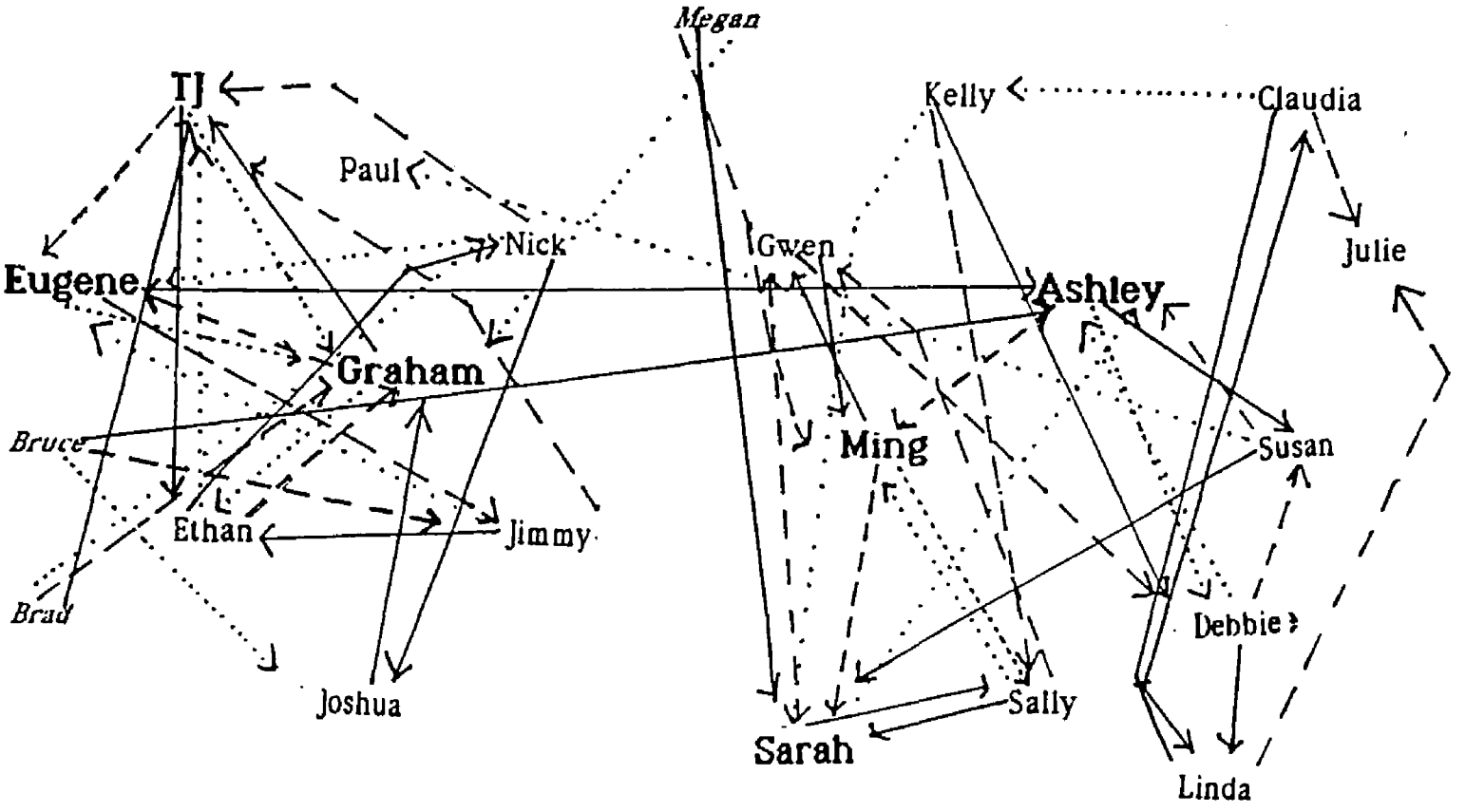


Stars	(chosen by at least four classmates)
Mid-range	(chosen by at least one classmate, but not more than three classmates)
isolates	(not chosen by any classmates)

arrows point toward choice, away from child choosing

——→ first choice
——→ second choice
·····→ third choice

Figure 8: ***Students Answer Question: If You Could Write a Story With Anyone in the Class, Who Would You Choose to Write With? (1/7/88)***



Stars (chosen by at least four classmates)

Mid-range (chosen by at least one classmate, but not more than three classmates)

isolates (not chosen by any classmates)

arrows point toward choice, away from child choosing

——→ first choice

– – → second choice

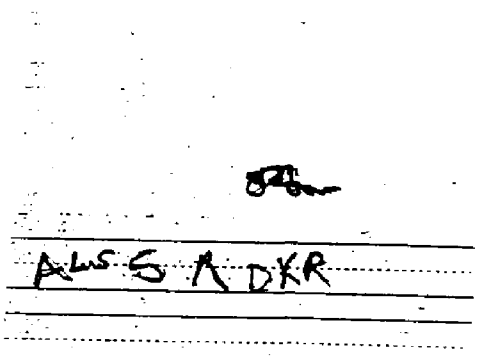
·····→ third choice

Graham

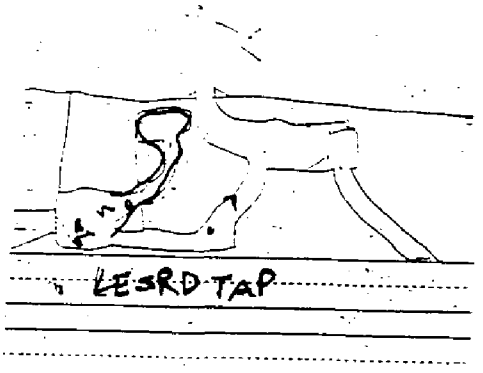
Graham is a key player during share sessions who is Megan's antithesis. Graham is the only boy in the class who remains a social star throughout the data collection period. Graham is a theatrical child--with heavy sighs, the arch of an eyebrow, or a roll of his eyes, he is easily able to send the whole class into a fit of giggles. Graham's popularity and personality helped establish the whole class share as a time of performance, with oral texts and readings extending far beyond what was written on the page.

But Graham's early sharing periods were almost all marked by a lack of audience awareness. All the stories he shared involved his pet lizards. As Graham wrote and drew these stories, he acted out adventures between the lizards. Much of the action didn't appear on the page, and Graham didn't choose to explain this action.

Figure 9: Examples of Graham's Lizards in Writing



"A lizard driving a car."



"A lizard trap."

He read these stories to the class in the same way he wrote them--acting out adventures while he mostly ignored the audience around him:

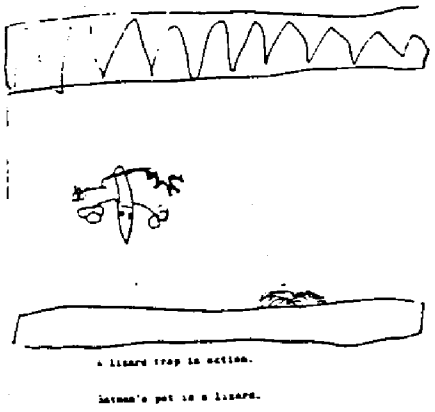
Whole Class Writing Share Transcript (10/19/87)

Graham: My lizards are cute (shows picture) **Yes. No.** (shows picture) **Oh, Ah! (doesn't show picture)** My lizards are crazy. **(doesn't show picture)** I am getting a new bike **(doesn't show picture)** Hornets (doesn't show) Hornet Nests, that's right here. (shows briefly) A lizard car. (turns page) Lizard trap. Questions or comments?
TJ: I like how, I got two things, the first thing is, I like how you read your book, and the second thing is, I like how you did your book, and showed the pictures, and um.
Ethan: He didn't show his pictures!
TJ: I mean, I mean how you, I mean I like how you read the book.
Graham: Nick?
Nick: Um, how come you shared that book two times in a row?
Graham: I didn't know I shared it.
TJ: You didn't want to share another part of the story?
Graham: Um, Joshua?
Joshua: Why did you write this about lizards?
Graham: Because I have some curly tail lizards. They are the cutest things. Uh, Ethan?
Ethan: You know how you had the curly tail lizards in your book? Well, I like how you make that lizard trap. . .I like you put the words under the trap. .
Graham: Um, Ming. . .
Ming: If I got that book, if I was writing, I would ride my bike with the lizard.
Graham: You mean this one?
Ming: Yes.
Graham: Jim?
Jimmy: I like the um, I like the lizard car.
Graham: (finds and shows) Uh, TJ?
TJ: What color is your bike? What color is it? What kind is it?
Graham: It's a BMX, with red and green on it.
TJ: I have a red bike with red on it.
Graham: Okay, Ethan.
Ethan: You know how you made the bike? Well, I have a bike that's almost. . . I have a red bike at home that it's a BMX, by the way, what was yours again?
Graham: BMX. Red.
Ethan: Oh!
Graham: With green lettering.
Ethan: Mine is white.
Graham: Mine's green.
TJ: Mine's red.
Graham: Paul?
Paul: I like the lizard trap.
Child: I like how you wrote the story.
Paul: Yeah, from the last time you shared it, I liked it.
Pat: Maybe just two more, Graham.
[several hands go up]
Graham: Well, that sure electrocuted everyone! Nick?
Nick: Um, I have a BMX.
Graham: (pause . .he deliberates a long time) Ethan?

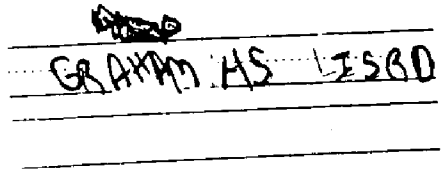
Ethan I can t raise my hand, 'cause I already had two turns. I wasn't raising my hand. I was just scratching my shoulder
Graham. Ming?
Ming: Um, I gotted my bike from Santa Claus, and I think it was the kind that Ethan has, but blue.

The children resist and resonate Graham's writing in a number of ways. In resisting, some children comment that this is a story that has already been read and enjoyed. Others focus on a very small part of the lizard story, Graham's bike. These comments would seem to encourage Graham to read something different, or develop another topic. But at the same time, the children are eager to respond to Graham, and comment positively on the pictures, even though he's made little effort to show them to the class. His playfulness comes through in comments like "that sure electrocuted them!". Like the conventions in Megan's story, Graham's lizards appear in the children's writing:

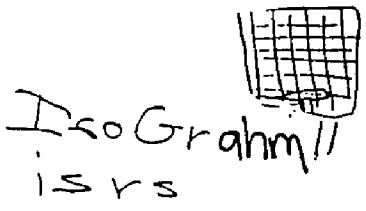
Figure 18: Examples of Lizards in Other Children's Writing



from Eugene's Batman story:
"Batman's pet is a lizard."



Kelly: "Graham has lizards."



Brad:
"I saw Graham's lizards."

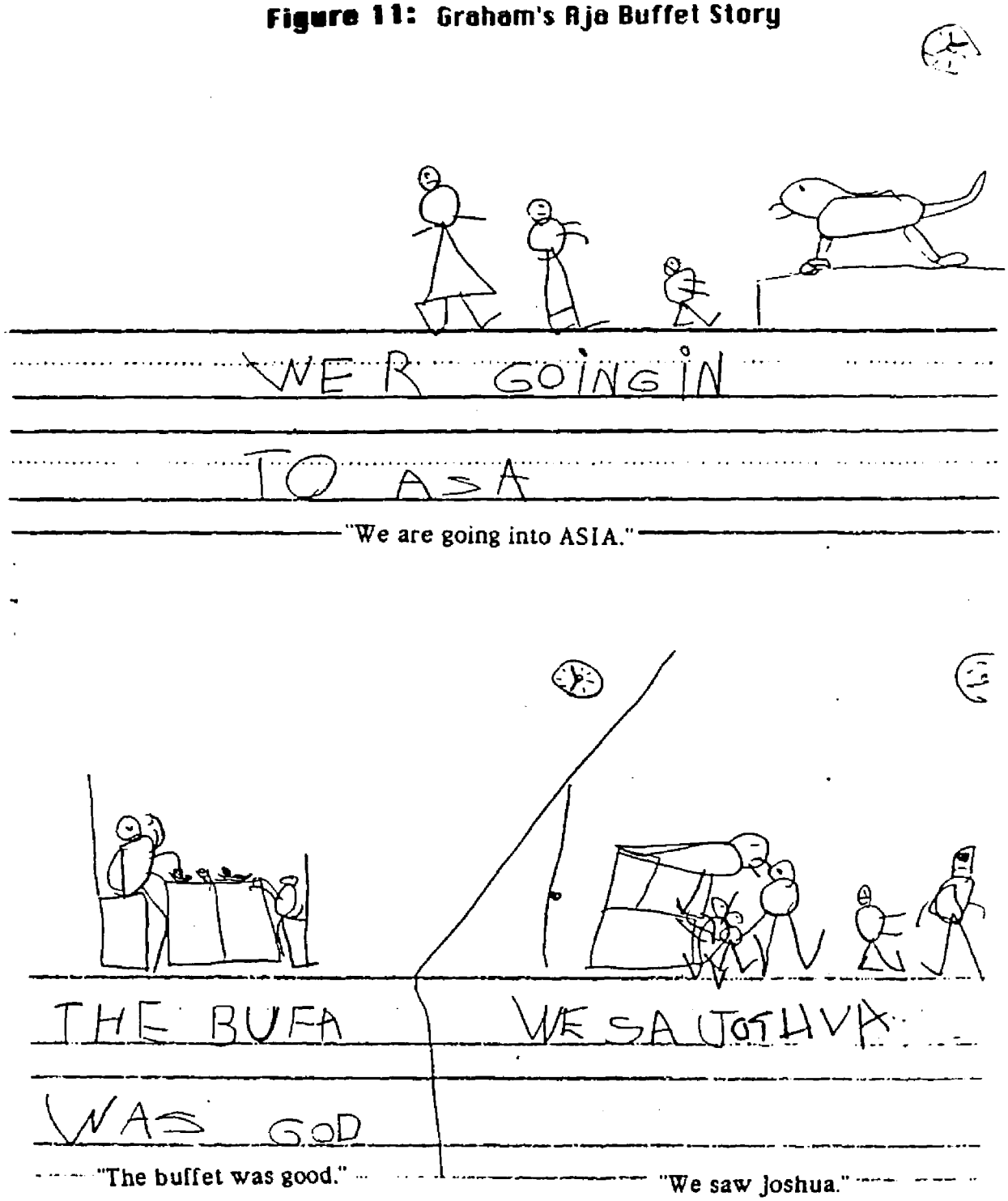
At times, Graham appeared to delight in violating whole class conventions and ignoring the audience. When Graham shared a book about a child having a tantrum during the whole class reading share session, he refused to show the pictures. The children challenged him, and Pat challenged his attempt to read another book to the class:

Tape Transcript (9/29/87)

[after Graham reads a story, not showing pictures, children respond]
child: you didn't show the pictures.
Graham: It does have pictures.
child: Then why didn't you show them?
Graham: You don't always have to show pictures in some books. Some people want to show the pictures, and some people don't. So, who wants another [book to be read]?
(children raise hands)
Graham: Okay, one two three four five six. . .[counting hands]
Pat: Graham
Graham: Seven eight
Pat: Graham! If you've finished reading, then you need to have comments or questions.

In an attempt to get Graham to share other kinds of writing and pay more attention to his audience, Pat stopped Graham from sharing a lizard story he had read many times before. In the following share, Graham finally was able to effectively transfer his oral and theatrical strengths to the whole class share while he reads. The piece he read included references to another child in the class (Joshua). Children were also confused by the name of the restaurant Graham visits, "Asia," since it sounds like the name of a second grader they know, "Aja." Graham used his short text and the details in his pictures as a kind of script for improvisation, with the performance taking shape as the children responded to him:

Figure 11: Graham's Aja Buffet Story



Excerpt from Whole Class Writing Share (11/19/87)

Graham: My lizards are cute. One's underground. They really do sleep underground.
Pat: If you're reading something that you've already read before, have you added information to it? Or have you made it somehow different from it?
Graham: Um, I don't think so.
Pat: Do you have some other writing that you could read to us?
Graham: Yeah? Yes, yes, I just did some . . .two pages. Two pages here. It's going to be a short book. We went to Pat's. Oh, wait. After school, we got into the car. We went to Pat's. He had to build a new house. We spent the, we slept at Pat, the night at Pat. . .we, we couldn't, could not watch tv because he didn't get very many channels. New story! This one's doing. . .**see, my mom's driving, but lookit that little guy in the back. That isn't my little brother because I don't have a little brother. That's me, I'm goin' (makes face)**
laughter.
Children: Let's see! (laughter)
Graham: See the little guy there? That's me? Goin'. . .(makes face) Well, now on the next page. We got in, we go, we are going in to Asia.
Child: Aja?
child: You're driving inside of Aja?
Ethan: No! We're driving inside of the. . .
Pat: Ethan, Ethan.
Graham: The buffet was good. And the tiny guy eating is about one o'clock, which is. . .
child: You have a little clock. . .
Graham: We saw Joshua at 8 o'clock, see I've got these little clocks on here.
child: 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock
Graham: questions and comments? TJ?
[later, after some children have commented on the pictures]
Graham: Joshua, I was going out, and you were going in. Well, see, the suggestion he made when I told him I saw him, was he thought I was smoking a cigar!
[laughter]
Graham: Joshua? Neither of us smoke. My dad or me, well, see. . .Joshua?
Joshua: That lion was smokin'
Graham: The lion was. No, he wasn't. The lion? Yeah, there' lion's here. See? There's Joshua.
[later, after a series of "I like" responses]
Nick: Yeah, but, how do you go inside Aja?
Graham: We didn't drive in, we walked in.
Nick: I know that, but. . .
child: It's a restaurant?
child: Yeah!
Kelly: There's a restaurant called Asia, not Aja.
child: Yeah, not Aja the kid!
Nick: Oh.
Graham: We aren't doctors! We don't do surgery! Hmm! It was a special event! We hadn't been there, for, I would say, years! Well, Kelly?
Kelly: Um, I like the part where you said that Pat didn't have many channels.
Graham: I know. But, actually, I think I wrote that too soon. You know why? Now he's got this big antenna.
child: Who does?

child. Pat!
Graham Pat My friend Pat He lives in New Durham I wasn't thinkin at that time!
Child Why not?
Graham: I thought he didn't get . . .last time I was there, he didn't get many channels. Much. But now, whoa! whoa! whoa! He's got a lot!

This share changed the way Graham presented his writing. He let the children in on his private play, and expanded the text far beyond the words and pictures on the page. Graham is an entertaining storyteller. His gestures (rolling eyes, jumping from seat) and word play ("whoa, whoa, whoa!" "we aren't surgeons!") encouraged other children to expand their explanations of texts within whole group share sessions. His later shares included pieces on crazy New York drivers and how too much time in museums can make you dizzy. He was as expressive and theatrical in these shares as he was when he explained the Asia buffet.

The view of the whole class share as a place for reading, response, and performance helped foster the emergence of the pop-up genre. Megan set many of the conventions within the pop-up text, and Graham was important in setting conventions used outside of texts in sharing with classmates. Whole class shares became a time for reading, movement and laughter. The pop-up genre combined reading, movement, and humor, which may be one of the reasons it flourished in a class that enjoyed the antics of Megan and Graham.

2. The Pop-Up Genre

A genre is less like a game than like a code of social behavior.
E. D. Hirsch

The "pop-up" genre was prevalent in the class throughout the data gathering period. Tracing the evolution of the "pop-up book" unlocks many of the social and literary codes which were important to these children.

In Genre, Heather Dubrow considers the functions of genre theory throughout literary history. She writes:

> . . a genre represents not only a pronouncement that a writer is making to and about the writers of the past, not only an injunction that he is delivering to the authors who may follow in his footsteps, but also a communication from the writer to his readers. He is telling us the name and rules of his code, rules that affect not only how he should write the work but also how we should read it.
>
> (pp. 31)

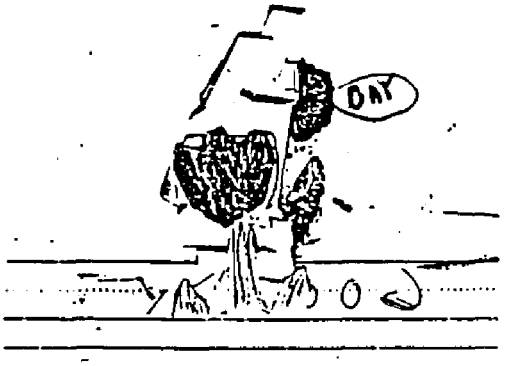
The naming of the codes for the pop-up book began when Megan added pop-ups to her "Brown Shaggy Dog" story. I've shown in the previous section that Megan already had demonstrated an ability to engage the class through her work, with "Brown Shaggy Dog" becoming a favorite story in whole class sharings. Megan's mother said that she first became interested in pop-ups while she was overseas at age four, and had been attempting to make them when she worked with paper and pens ever since. The class particularly responded to her pop-up insert of a tongue. This paper was inserted into the page when Megan read about her dog wagging his tongue and licking her in happiness. After she read the story in late September, many children remarked how much they liked that wagging tongue. More than half the class attempted to include pop-ups with their stories in the

week following Megan's sharing. Ming even asked if Megan might have this book typed up, or copies made, so that anyone in the class could read it. The children were aware of kid-published books from previous years already in the classroom, but Pat hadn't yet published anyone's book. Megan's work was so popular that Ming introduced the possibility of publication.

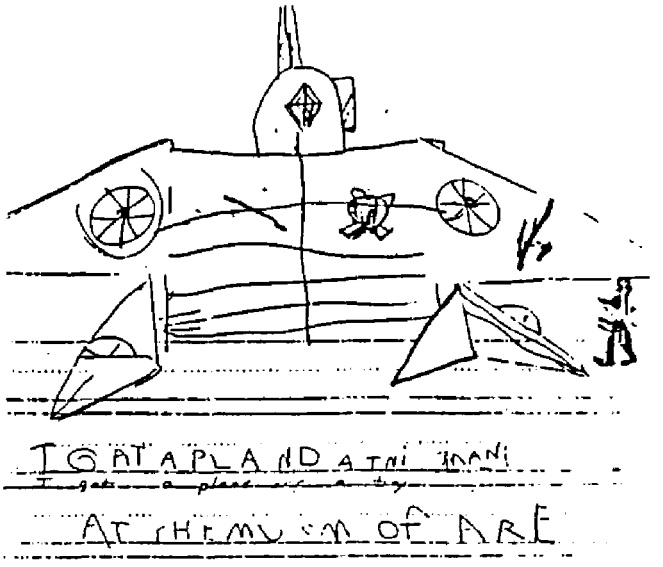
Jost (1974), Rosmarin (1985) and Lowes (1919) all catalogue the evolution of different genres. In looking at poetry, Lowes cites the rise and fall of the sonnet as a subgenre in poetry. The form began with the work of Petrarch, an Italian writer who lived in the fourteenth century. Petrarch's work was acknowledged and imitated by European writers, notably Shakespeare and other English writers. Writers tested out different elements of Petrarch's archetypes, refining and revising them. Gradually, standard conventions emerged. Eventually this form was parodied by writers. New forms were written which challenged the conventions of the sonnet.

The evolution of the pop-up book parallels the evolution of the sonnet. The genre begins with an archetype--Megan's "Brown Shaggy Dog" story. Many of the children attempted to use the pop-up convention. Use of pop-ups required two important skills--the ability to manipulate paper, tape, scissors and glue, and the ability to integrate a pop-up with the words and pictures on a page. Attempts at pop-ups during this experimental phase included:

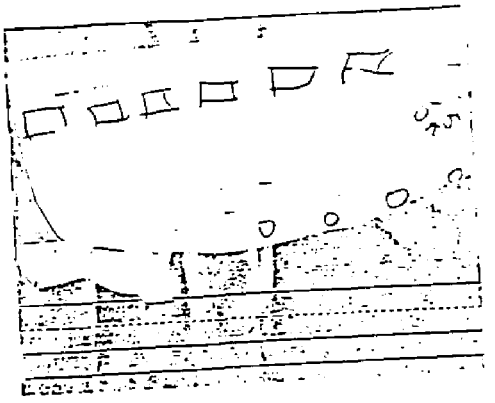
Figure 12: Examples of Early Pop-Up Attempts



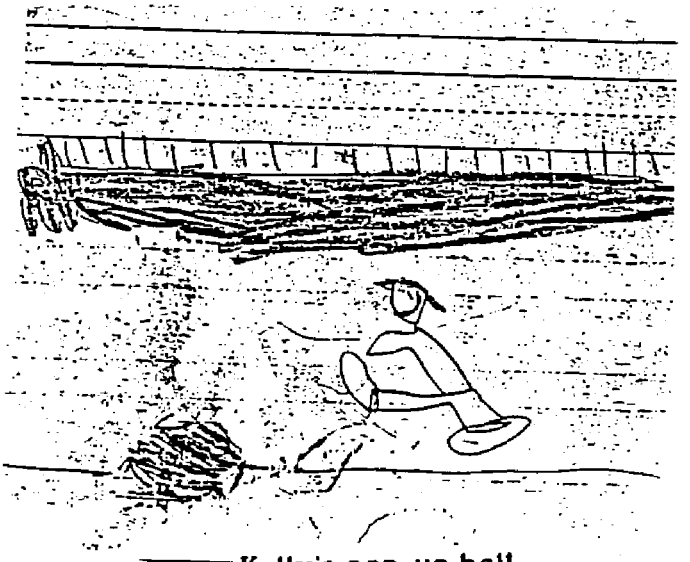
Ming's pop-up flower



Graham's pop-up museum:
"I got a plane and a tiny man at the museum of air. . ."



Claudia's cut-out bus



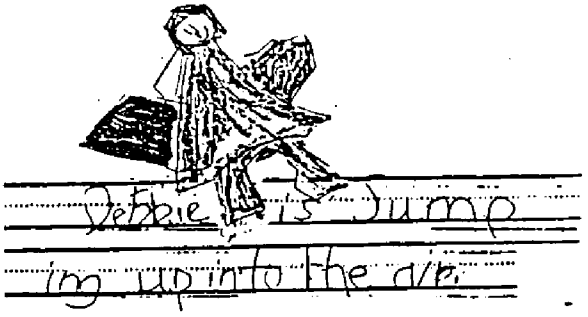
Kelly's pop-up ball

Joshua's pop-up snake.

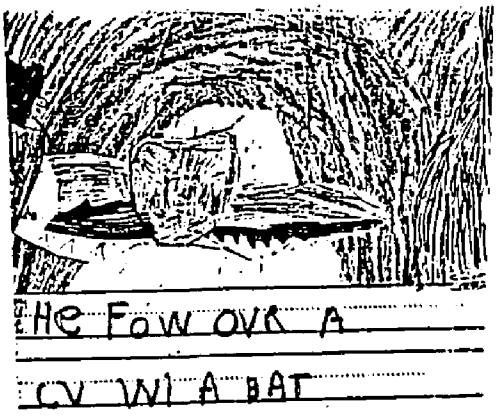
In initial attempts at pop-ups, the children integrated the convention into stories they'd already been working on. Flowers, lizards, space ships, and witches were all rooted in specific authors' interests. But as the use of the convention continued, the pop-up genre became more defined. Pop-ups were used to show motion.

A "pop-up book" became a book which has movement in it, expressed through pop-up action. Not all the children continued to do pop-ups. But those who did wrote and shared movement through the pop-ups:

Figure 13: Examples of Later Pop-Ups



Kelly's pop-up Debbie: "Debbie is jumping up into the air."



Sally's pop-up bat:
"He flew over a cave with a bat."

When Sally wrote a book about how to make cartoons, the children were confused. Sally was writing about drawing comic characters. The children thought "cartoons" were animated actions shows from television. She read the book on December 9th.

Excerpt from Pat McLure's Writing Log (12/9/87)

Sally: [reads] How to make cartoons. First make an ice cream cone. Then make eyes. Then make feathers and beak. Then you have a bird. Make a circle and make a nose and make whiskers and eyes. Then you have a cat.
Gwen: Why didn't you name it "How to make pictures" cause if you wanted it to be like cartoons you would have to make it a pop-up book with pop-ups so it would move.

Even though Pat had pop-up books displayed throughout the room which show a wide variety of uses for pop-ups (i.e., showing dimension), the class defined pop-ups as symbolizing motion.

The codes surrounding the making of "pop-up books" were also inextricably tied to the codes of whole class sharing. Pop-ups were entertaining during whole class sharing. The movement necessary to demonstrate a pop-up further promoted the whole class share as a performance. Reading a pop-up book was partially performance, partially decoding of words and pictures, and often, partially an explanation of the processes behind the creation of the pop-up.

Whole Class Sharing Transcript (10/29/87)

Paul is reading his rocketship pop-up book to the class.
Paul: Ten nine eight seven six five four three two one blast off. (moves pop-up rocketship upward on page) Bam! This is the planet. I put it here so the rocket ship doesn't move around and stuff. The rocket exploded. They built another rocket ship.
And then the rocket ship blasts off and then it sees all the aliens.
children: [laughter] and it goes down!
Paul: I had a hard time with this. The man went upside down. He went out of the rocket ship and went ohh! (moving pop-up man around on page) and floated upside down.
Nick: Bring a parachute with you!
TJ: Parachute won't do much good.

Paul: Me in the rocket ship the end. Here's the rocket ship sitting in space. Oh-oh. My rocket ship. Blasting off again. **That rocket ship always blasts off. I think I need another paper clip for the other one. The end of that one doesn't stick out so I couldn't paperclip it down.** Comments and questions?

Later, when Paul answered questions about his story, he acknowledged the influence of other pop-up authors on his work:

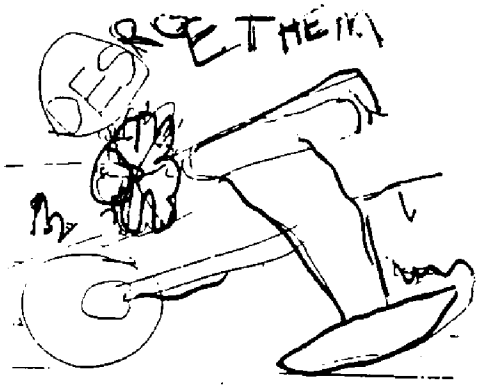
Ashley: How'd you get the idea to make that story?
Paul: Well, I was just, when I was done with my tiger scouts I was going hmmm, what could I make. And you know what I was thinking of? It just made me think of Winnie the Pooh [children laugh] and I was thinking what could I write about? **And I was thinking, maybe I could make a pop-up book. I was thinking, I was thinking of Megan's dog story. But I don't have a dog so I couldn't do that. Oh yeah, Ethan's space story. I could do the same thing. So I just did that.**

The importance of whole class sharing to these students also enabled the pop-up book to emerge as a "host genre" or "screen":

> One of the most significant functions of genre remains one of the most neglected. . .Especially interesting are the habits of what might be termed host genres, those forms one of whose roles is to provide a hospitable environment for the other form or forms that are regularly incorporated within it.
>
> Dubrow (pp. 116)

Certain writers, or certain types of writing received less response than others during the whole class share. Eugene often wrote about television shows, with response often limited by who watched the show, or who could follow the often convoluted plots from "Ghostbusters" or "Batman" which he presented. The use of a pop-up batmobile insured a response:

Figure 14: Eugene's Pop-Up Batmobile



Brad's problem was often not so much theme, as it was his means of presenting his work. He reads tentatively and nervously, and forgets to answer questions after calling on people. But he does want a response from people. Including pop-ups in his witch story was only part of a broad plan for a successful share:

Field Notes Excerpt (10/20/87)

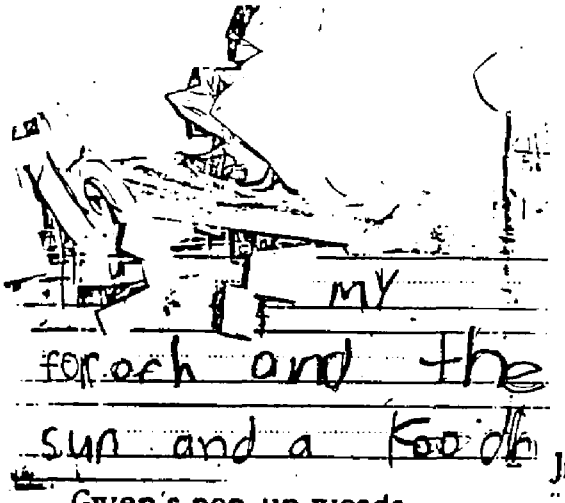
Brad is working on a Halloween story. JR has just signed him up to share in 10 minutes.
Brad: I want to make it pop-ups like the others (in the class). Gonna share this.
Brenda: Is this book going to be just pop-ups?
Brad: No, more words so I have more comments and questions. If you have more words, you get more. I like having comments and questions.

When Ming read her "baby bear" story to the class in mid-November, she stumbled and had trouble reading her spellings. Not many children responded to the story. Immediately after leaving the share area, she said, "I shoulda shared my pop-up Halloween book. They would have liked that one."

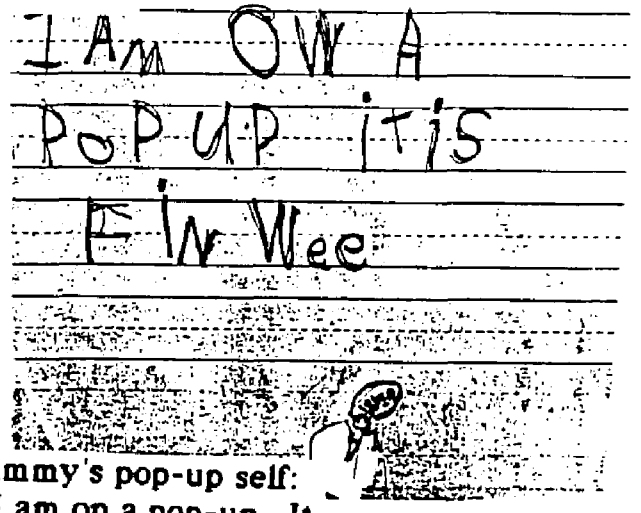
These children know that a pop-up book is a good host, or screen, for the less desirable aspects of their writing--an obscure or uninteresting story line, difficulty in responding to students, or problems with re-reading a text.

The pop-up book, like the sonnet, also reached the stage where it was parodied. Gwen made a book of pop-up "everythings," including words. Jimmy made a pop-up of himself as a pop-up, saying "weeee" as he popped off the page.

Figure 15: Gwen and Jimmy's Pop-Ups



Gwen's pop-up words



Jimmy's pop-up self: "I am on a pop-up. It is fun. Weee!"

Megan finished her published version of the pop-up "Brown Shaggy Dog" by mid-November. When asked if she was going to make her new story a pop-up, the originator of the form replied, "No, I don't think I want any more pop-ups for a while." By mid-December, an occasional new pop-up could be found in stories, but the genre was no longer dominate in class discussions.

Interestingly, the cycle of pop-up genre--archetype, experimentation, dominance and decay--closely parallels Arieti's (1976) theories of "creativity clusters," and the stages people who work together go through in

attempting any creation--formative, developed, florescent, and degenerated. The history of the pop-up book is connected not only to literary histories, but to patterns that emerge in studies of collaborative work.

The immediate success of the genre was due, at least in part, to the skill of Megan's execution of the pop-up. She had been practicing pop-ups at home for more than two years. Much of the formative groundwork for the spread of pop-ups was done by Megan before the year began. LeFevre also notes the importance of emulation in theories of creativity clusters, citing the work of Valleius and Arieti:

> Valleius suggested that people with similar talents might achieve success in similar pursuits at a given time because genius is fostered by emulation. People admire the work of another person and strive to emulate it. . .until the work reaches a state where further advances seem unlikely, at which point people turn to different pursuits.
>
> LeFevre (pp. 66)

Megan's success with "Brown Shaggy Dog" began before it included any pop-ups (see previous section). The resonance provided by Pat and the other students may have encouraged Megan to experiment in the story with the pop-ups. Children's emulations of Megan's pop-up conventions were only the continuation of a pattern set through earlier sharings of her dog stories.

The unique collective personality of this class and its key players enabled the pop-up genre to move through the class. No other genre was attempted by so many students. Much more common were small group genres, reflecting the interests of a few children who had similar interests. The story of the creation, imitation, and refinement of these small group writing genres is the topic of the next section.

3. Small Groups and Small Genres

I used my survey questions "What kind of stories do you like to write?" and "What kind of books do you like to read?" to explore trends in genre development. In this section, I will examine the whole class trends that emerged in answer to the first question, "What kinds of stories do you like to write?" I will then look at two of the small group genres which developed in the class.

Whole Class Survey

I found five categories of response to the questions, "What kind of stories do you like to write?" These categories included:

individual topic--the child responded with a topic they had never written about, or had only used once.

individual genre--the child responded with a topic or category which could include two or more texts that they had written, but the core features of the genre are not recognized or used by others in the class.

small group genre--others in the class can identify or write texts within the genre named, but the core features of the genre aren't recognized by the whole class.

whole class genre--a majority of the class can recognize and name core features of the genre.

miscellaneous--response doesn't fit into any of the above categories.

Examples of responses categorized under "individual topics" include "tulip," "apples," "boats" and "whales"--topics that appear once or never in the respondent's folder.

Examples of responses categorized under "individual genres" include "things that I have," "things I seen on tv" or "all kinds." Some of these

categories are all encompassing, but the core features of the genre aren't clear to anyone but the child responding.

Examples of small group genres include "adventure books" or "letter books." More than one child cites the genre, and a group of children who identify themselves as friends or work near each other can identify the core features of the genre.

Examples of "whole class genres" include "books about school" or "books about my friends." Core features of these books are identifiable by many children in the class, cutting across gender and friendship boundaries.

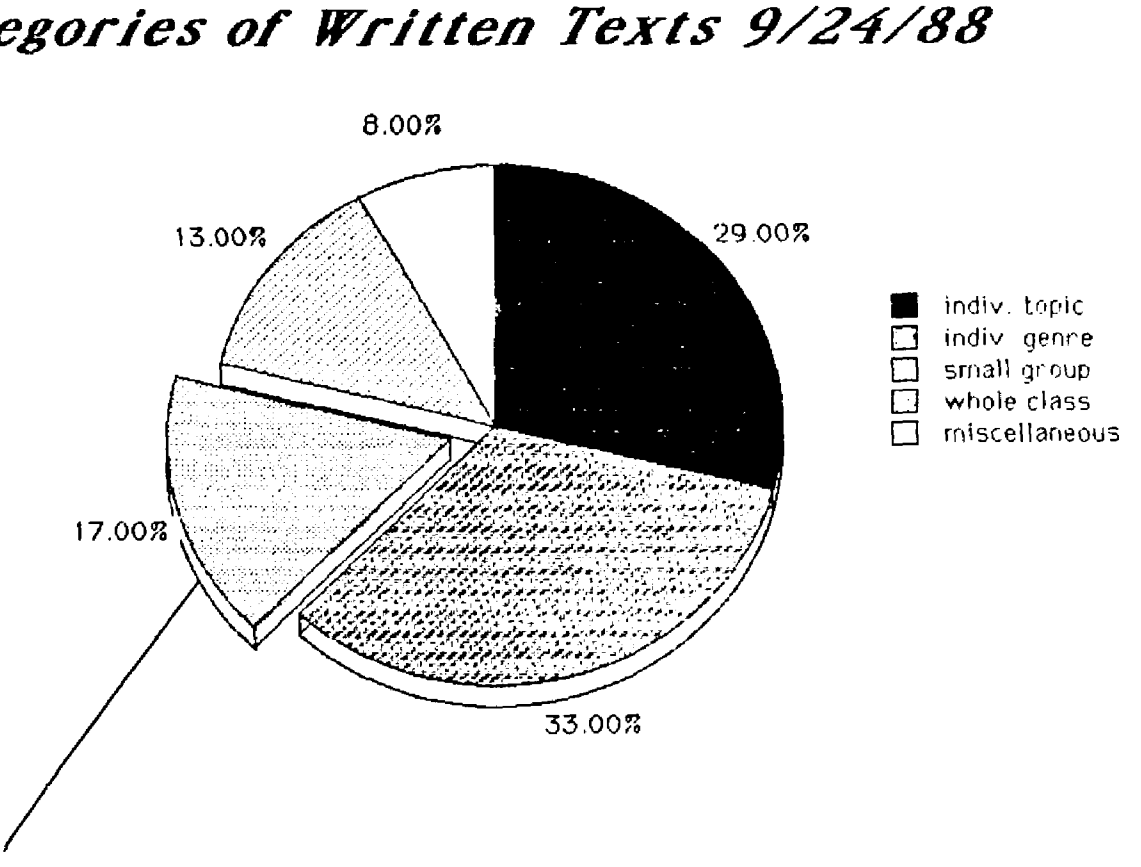
Miscellaneous responses include "I don't know" or the titles of books read by the child. A small percentage of responses like these didn't fit into any category.

As I mentioned earlier in the procedures section, these survey responses are interesting in determining class trends, or validating other data sources. But I don't give too much weight to them, because there are problems involved in interviewing six and seven year olds. For example, no child responded that they liked to write pop-up books in any of the surveys, even though this appeared throughout the rest of the data as an important and well-defined genre.

The differences between the categories are also somewhat murky. It was easy to define individual topics. The greatest difficulty came in separating individual, small group, and whole class genres. I used the writing folders, whole class share transcripts, and additional interview questions with the children to try to determine what the core features of genres were, and how widespread the understanding of these features was throughout the class.

Figure 16:

Students Respond to Question:
What Kind, or Type, of Stories Do You Like to Write?



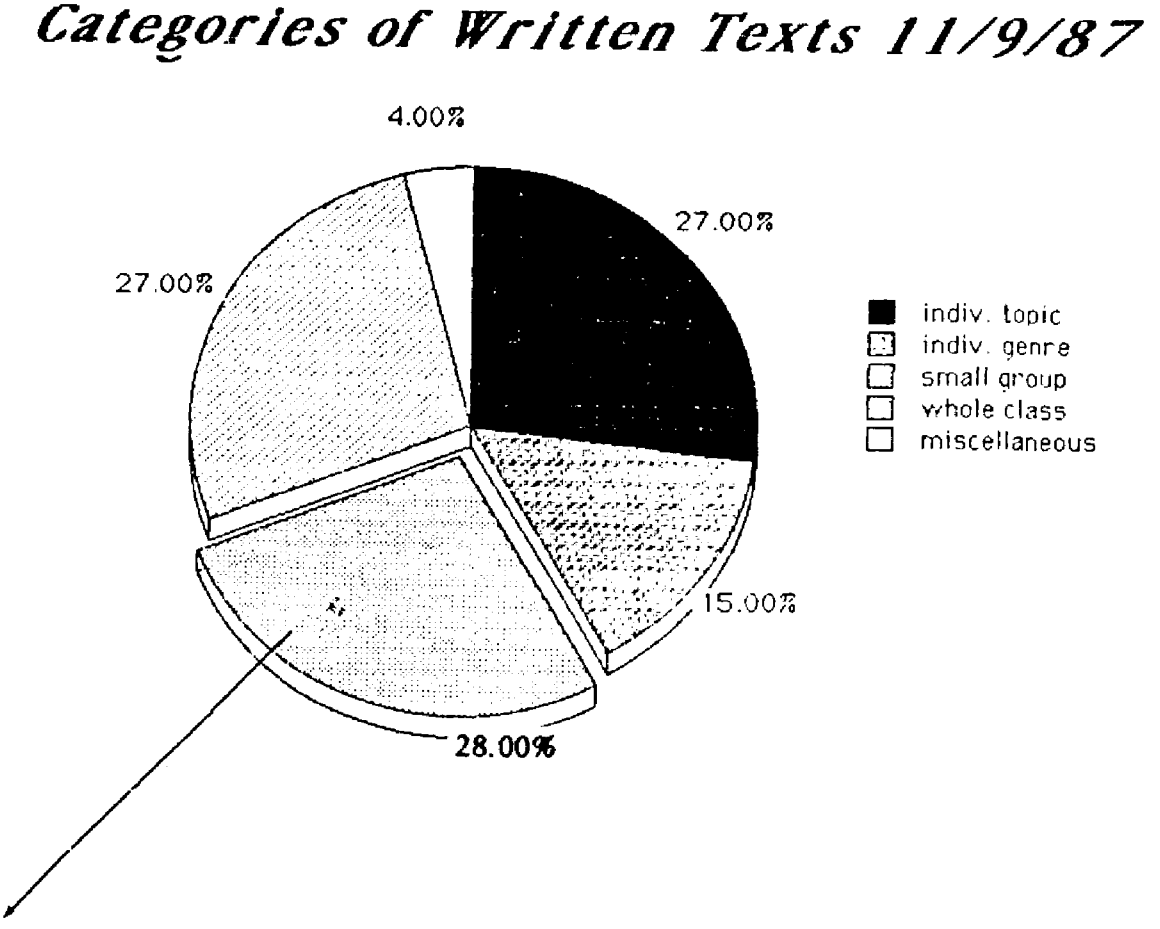
Small Group Genres

9 responses in category

adventures (2)
boat books (2)
dinosaur books (2)
letter books (2)

Figure 17:

Students Respond to Question:
What Kind, or Type, of Stories Do You Like to Write?



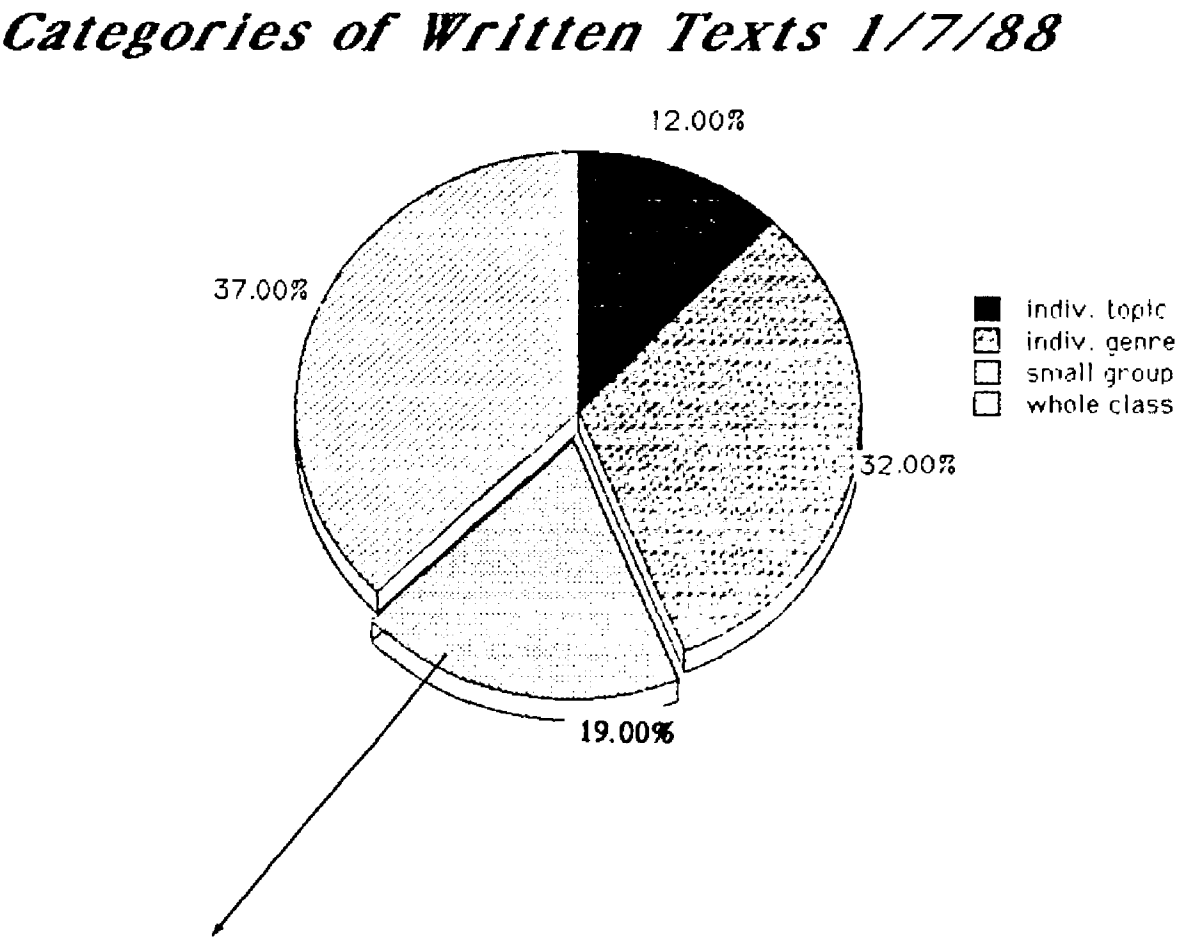
Small Group Genres

12 responses in category

about friends (4)
sick writing (2)
adventures (2)
television themes (2)
boats (2)

Figure 18:

Students Respond to Question:
What Kind, or Type, of Stories Do You Like to Write?



For example, when "adventures" appeared as a response from two children in September, I noticed these children were writing similar stories and often worked together. I classified this response as a "small group genre." But when two children who didn't work together responded with adventures in January, I asked a number of children to show me adventure stories they had written, and explain what an adventure story was. I also randomly interviewed other children besides the two respondents to see if there was any class consensus on what constitutes an adventure story.

Excerpt from Field Notes (1/7/88)

(I circulate through the room, asking children who aren't sitting together about adventures.)
Brenda: What has to be in an adventure?
Megan: You know, you have to go somewhere a ways away and it's like you have to go through this dirty water or something to do something.
Brenda: What has to be in an adventure?
Ashley: When you have to go all over the place to see and do something, and it's a place far off like California.
Brenda: What has to be in an adventure?
Ethan: When you have to go somewhere away and do a lot of things to beat someone.

Are there core features here for an adventure? Based upon interviews and written texts, I think so. "You" is always the person writing the story. An adventure involves travel, with a goal in mind that will require some struggle.

The process of categorizing the responses for writing and reading was difficult. With these limitations and the subjectivity of the categories in mind, it's still interesting to note the trends that emerge in the class.

In the September survey, the largest number of responses are within "individual topic" and "individual genre" categories. Both of these categories decrease with the November survey. Small group and whole class genres

increase. In the January survey, whole class and individual genres have increased dramatically.

The steady rise in whole class genres can be traced in part to the whole class share sessions. These regular and frequent discussions around texts spread the understanding of genres and conventions from individual and small groups through the whole class.

There may be a number of reasons behind the decrease of individual genres in November, and sudden rise in January. Some children who have listed writing topics as "kinds" of writing are beginning to sort and group the topics they have written about. Other children who have worked with the conventions of others are consciously attempting to come up with their own, unique definitions of texts. I saw this most clearly, not with the writing, but with the reading survey responses when I interviewed Megan.

Excerpt from Field Notes (1/7/88)

I am interviewing Megan for the third time
Brenda: What kind of books do you like to read?
Megan: Now, this is different. Don't write it down yet, because I have to explain it right. The first kind I like is adventures. But the second kind is when someone like me is in the book, so I feel like I'm her And the third kind I like is even harder to explain Don't write this yet, just listen. It's the kind of book when you don't see the person in the book, there isn't even really a picture of her, but you just feel like you're the person in the book, right inside of you. Do you know what that's like?

I did know what that was like, but it was like no other category that other children identified. The rise in individual and whole class genres may reflect the tension between the individual and group Vera John-Steiner (1986) has written about--the attempt to find individual definitions, and also to master class concepts and conventions.

The most interesting trend may have been the rise and fall of the small group genres. I've included a more detailed analysis of the small group responses on the whole class charts. The small group genres which

appeared most consistently and failed to move into the whole group category are the television genres explored by a small number of boys in the class. I will look at one of these genres, the ghostbusters story, to explore reasons why the conventions of television genres remain within small groups in the class.

I will also examine another small group genre, the flower book, which appeared in all my other data sources but failed to show up in the survey. Small group genres like the flower book develop quickly among children who work together, or admire writing shared with the whole group. These genres often just as quickly disappear. There are three important factors in the rise of small group genres:

1. Authors in the genre are emulating the work of an archetypal writer or work.
2. The genre marks a shared experience for the group of writers.
3. The experience behind the genre isn't shared by all students, so some students may be excluded from participating in the genre.

The Flower Book

The flower book genre was attempted only by a few girls, flourishing in October and disappearing by mid-November.

Many girls choose to write about flowers from the start of the school year. Most texts about flowers were simple statements (i.e. "I like flowers, "Here are flowers."). On October 13th, two girls shared stories which contained flowers. Susan had a tulip in her story, and the text read "tulip." Debbie had flowers in her "Kelly and Debbie" story, with the text "Kelly loves flowers and I do too." But the flower book genre really began the next week, when Linda shared her writing with the whole class. In contrast to earlier

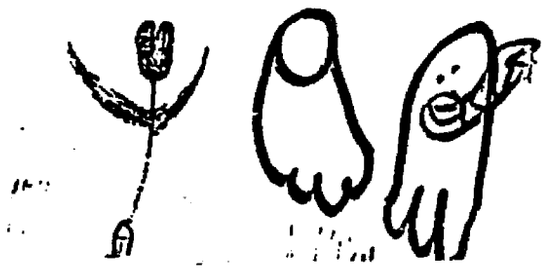
writing by others about flowers, Linda's flower book followed the birth, death, and rebirth of her flower:

Excerpt from Writing Share Tape Transcript (10/22/87)

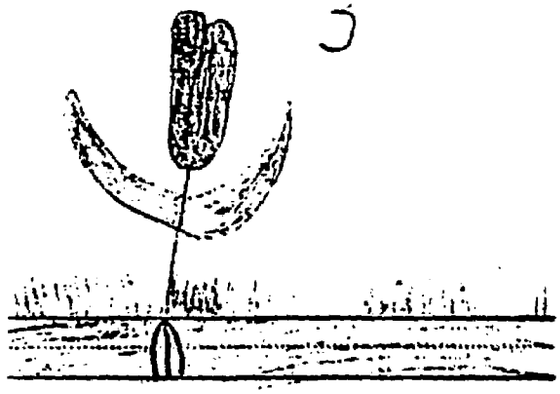
[Linda sharing flower story]
Linda: My rose. A bunny in my garden. My flower is pretty. My flower died because of the fog.
Child: What?
Linda: My flower died because of the fog.
Child: How could it get back to life?
Linda: The flower is happy because it is raining and it likes it.
Claudia: Neat.
Linda: Comments or questions? Ashley?
Ashley: I like the last part where you did your name
child: I like the clouds.
Linda: I know the clouds pop-up. I'll show how they work. If I can do it. See? When it hangs down, it's the rain raining. This one is stuck...oh ohh...I don't want to use glue. Sally?
Sally: every page starts with "My flower is..."
child: Why did you write about a flower?
Linda: Because I wanted to make a story so I could publish...Megan?
Megan: I like the part with the clouds
Sally: Oh, I forgot what I was going to say.
Claudia: Um, I like the way you make...
Child: Do you really have a flower?
Linda: Yes.
Jimmy: Why did you put a flower in the garden?
Linda: I got that idea
Nick: How could your flower die...
TJ: The fog.
Nick: How could your flower die and come alive?
Linda: Cuz the seeds stay in the ground. I planted another seed.
Nick: Oh.
Linda: I have a whole bunch of seeds. That's why I made them all different colors.
Bruce: I like your pictures
Claudia: Winter come...
Linda: What?
Pat: Winter's coming. Is that what made the flower die?
Claudia: Yes

In this share, the children focus on features in this book which will become the core features of the flower book genre. The rebirth of the flower fascinates the children, and they also enjoy how colorful the book is. Sally

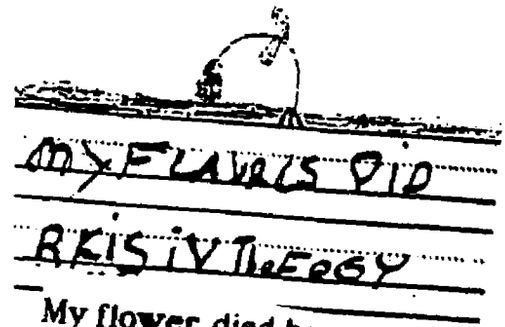
Figure 19: Linda's Flower Book



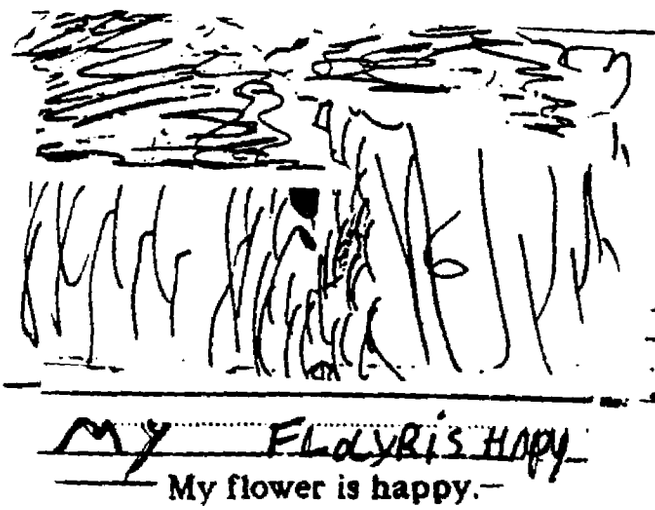
My rose.



My flower is pretty.



My flower died because of the fog.



My flower is happy.

My flower is all better.

identifies a linguistic feature of the text--some pages start with "my flower is."

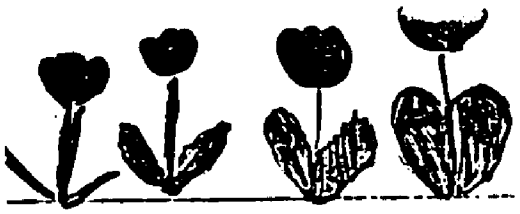
After Linda shared her flower story, Ming also decided to write a flower story. Ming's narrative is similar to Linda's. She includes the death and rebirth of the flower, and the pictures all focus on the flower, with each page stating, "my flower is." She shares her flower book a week after Linda has shared the archetype. She is challenged early in the share about her use of many colors in her story. Linda's explanation of her colors makes sense to the children, but Sally is confused by Ming's explanation.

Excerpt from Tape Transcript (10/27/87)

Ming has just read her flower story to the class.
Sally: How come when your flower is dead it's pink?
Ming: Let me find that one. Well, it's kind of purple and it's deader and when I was at my mother's I seen them brown.
Sally: I have another question. When um your flower's not done growing it's blue and when it's all grown it's yellow.
TJ: That's because it was a sunflower.
Sally: Yeah, but a sunflower's not blue when it's growing.
Ming: Well, it's that purple color.
Linda: Is this really true or make believe?
Ming: Well, it's make believe but I really do have flowers. Susan?
Susan: Um, I like the which part do you like the best?
Ming: The part when it's dead. Ashley?
Ashley: Where'd you get the idea to make a story about flowers?
Ming: Ummm, I'm not sure. Claudia?
Claudia: Is that sunflowers. Sunflowers die. My flower die.
Ming: You know what? One time in kindergarten we planted sunflowers and mine died. Ashley again.
Ashley: Um, I just heard you talking to Claudia about when you planted sunflowers in kindergarten. Mine died too.
children murmuring about their flowers also dying in kindergarten
Ming: You know why mine died? Cause it got bented. Linda?
Linda: When I heard Ashley, I remembered my flower died.
Ming: Any more?

When Ming shares her story, many of the children in the class are reminded of a shared flower experience--planting sunflowers in kindergarten. After Ming shared her story, Ashley and Debbie decided to

Figure 28: Ming's Flower Book



MYFRW IS MY

My flower is mine.

I MA PRT MY FRW

I am planting my flower.

MY FOW IS GRWN

My flower is grown.

MY FRW IS PRDE

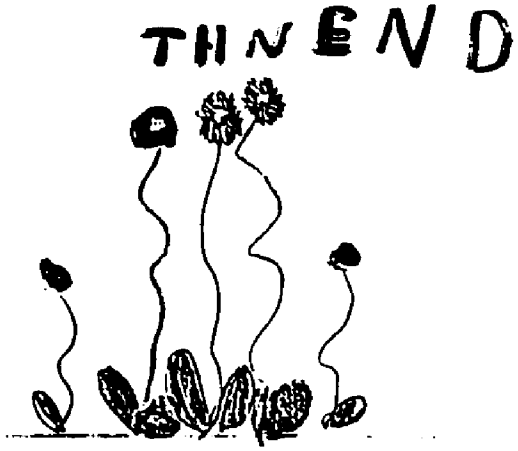
My flower is pretty.

MY FRW IS DRD

My flower is dead.

Figure 20 con't.

My flower is a sunflower.



The End.

write flower stories, this time following the conventions of the genre established by Linda and Ming.

When I interviewed Linda about her flower book, her responses revealed the conventions of the genre, and the widespread knowledge among the girls in the class of these conventions:

Excerpt From Field Notes (10/28/87)

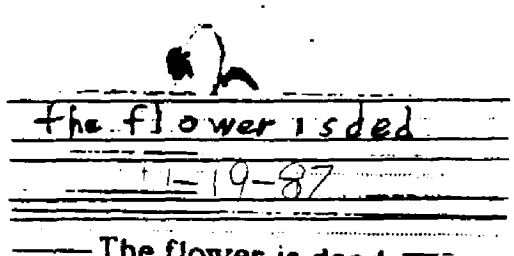
Debbie shows me a book she's writing about a flower.
Brenda: What has to be in a flower book?
Debbie: Seeds, it doesn't have to be a sunflower, but it has to have growing in it. It doesn't have to have rain in it.
Brenda: Who has written a flower book?
Debbie: Me, Linda, Ming, Ashley, Kelly
Kelly: [overhears, sitting at desk close by] I haven't written one, but I know what goes in it. You say what color it is, when your flower started, bloomed when the flower died.

Some researchers might argue that Ming, Debbie and Ashley have merely copied the conventions of Linda. But I think there is more at work here. In Hilliker's (1988) study of children's emergent writing, she found that the children were repetitious in their pictures, but there were subtle changes in these repeated pictures. Through repetition, the children moved from labelling to the beginning of narrative.

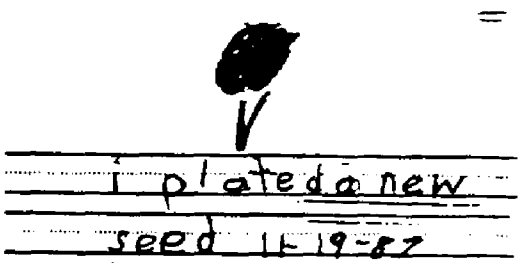
In repeating the text of Linda, Ming and Ashley consciously and subtlely alter the text. The children who observe these girls as they write and share their writing also sort through these subtle differences in texts. They consider small differences in phrasing, use of color, and pictures. They also consider collective and personal histories with flowers behind these texts. In imitating a friend's story, Ming and Ashley are trying to adopt the conventions of the text which are most interesting to them and their classmates. What they choose to repeat or eliminate in imitating establishes what the flower genre is. They attempt to put their personal stamp on the

Figure 21: Ashley's Flower Book

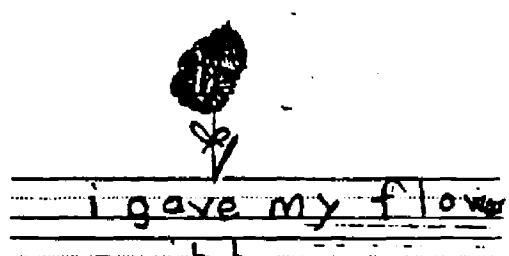
A flower.



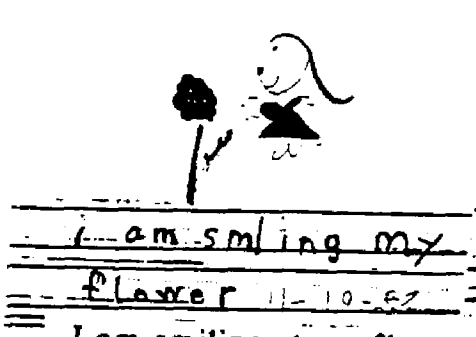
The flower is dead.



I planted a new seed.



I gave my flower a ribbon.



I am smiling at my flower.

I like my flower.

genre--through changing the kind of flower, or adding hands or images in the sky behind the flower. The concerns of these girls are the concerns of any writer working within a genre--maintaining a balance between collective and personal conventions.

The Ghostbusters Story

The ghostbusters story was only one of a series of television genres developed among a group of boys--TJ, Eugene and Jimmy, with occasional input from Graham and Ethan. Some aspects of the emergence of these television genres are similar to the emergence of the flower book. The boys share the experience of watching the ghostbusters story and play ghostbuster games on the playground. The children are also working from an archetype. In the case of the ghostbusters genre, the archetype is a movie which has been developed in a cartoon series. And like the flower book, the ghostbusters genre only interests a small, gender-defined group.

In my pilot study (Miller 1987b) I did an extensive study of the effect of media on children's sense of genre. I argued that the influence of media on the classroom was pervasive, and conventions within the television shows the children imitated sometimes severely limited plot and character development in their writing. Building upon the theories of Meyrowitz (1987), I explored how the values within media shows which served as archetypes conflicted with the values process teachers attempted to foster.

The influence of media in writing was not as evident in this study. There were no media archetypes present in the girls writing. The media archetypes in the boys' writing were confined to one small group of boys. In fact, much of the writing about media characters could even be traced to one viewing period--Monday through Fridays at 6:00 p.m. on a local station. In September, TJ, Eugene and Jimmy all wrote Star Trek stories. The television show Star Trek appeared during this time period. When Star Trek was cancelled, the boys began to write Batman stories. Batman was the series which replaced Star Trek on the local station at 6:00 p.m.

While many of the boys in the class didn't write Star Trek, Batman, or Ghostbusters stories, some of the conventions from these genres appeared randomly in their work. In this section, I will explore the appearance of these conventions through a frame of the Ghostbusters genre. These conventions say a great deal about how these boys perceive the world around them. The boys use these stories to identify and establish friendships, and they also reflect a fascination with technological change in our society.

The plot devices for ghostbusters stories come from three sources. Many children in the class have seen the movie "Ghostbusters," which was released in 1984, and has been available on videocassette for two years. In addition, there are two competing ghostbusters cartoons which the boys may watch on Saturday mornings. In the movies and both series, male ghostbusters fight ghosts with lasers, occasionally "getting slimed." In the end, they must battle the "marshmallow man," a huge white marshmallow which lumbers through a large city, intent upon destruction. The ghostbusters genre in Pat's class includes as conventions boys and their friends as the ghostbusters, attacks on ghosts, and the experience of getting slimed. Eugene's ghostbusters story is typical.

Excerpt from Whole Class Writing Tape Transcript (10/20/87)

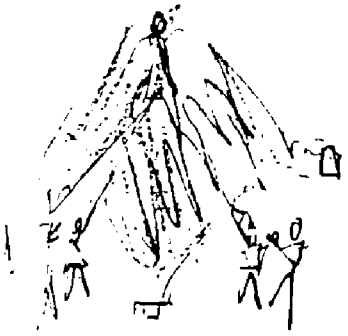
[Eugene is sharing a ghostbusters story]
Eugene: Marshmallow man. Here we're going back to headquarters. Here we're zapping bad people. here we're zapping the ghost thing. This slimer's going for a look around.
Ming: He's curious.
Eugene: And here's a picture of the ghost compactor. And here we're taking some ghosts into it. Here we're going up ghost mountain to zap a ghost. Here Egon is getting scared from the Bogeyman. The ghosts are going up to see the ghostbuster's boat. Here we're zapping all the ghosts. Comments or questions?
Graham: What gave you the idea to make a book like that?

Eugene: Well, it was because we were me and TJ were playing um ghostbusters.
Claudia: I like um. . .I like the the pictures.
Eugene: I like the part, I got two things the first thing you are um what are you gonna add onto the story?
Eugene: Well, I already did. Um, I don't' know what I'm going to add onto it.
TJ: The other thing was um I like the part when I like how you did that boat.
(more "I like the picture, specific pictures cited comments")
Pat: are most of your pages from the play that you and TJ were doing, or are they from the things you know from the cartoon?
Eugene: Most of them are made up.
Pat: Things you made up? Because you know about ghostbusters?
Claudia: Things you made up. Sometime.
Brenda: When you play, you and TJ, what parts do you have? Are you a ghost or a ghostbuster?
Eugene: A ghostbuster.
children: Thank you.

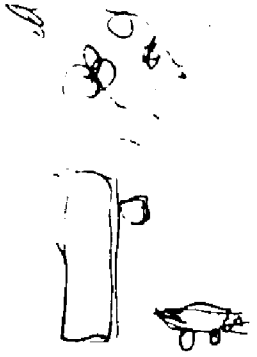
What is surprising in this share is the number of terms which are specific to ghostbusters and other media genres. Almost any child in the class can understand the action in a flower book. But "zapping," "sliming," and "defeating" are terms that are defined by the ghostbusters genre. If a child or adult isn't familiar with these terms, they can't follow the action of the story. Many objects and people are also identifiable only to those who are familiar with the ghostbusters archetype: "ghost compactor," "Egon," and "marshmallow man." The ghostbusters writers are distinguished from the rest of the group by their fascination with the story, and their ability to use the characters and actions from the archetype correctly. Dubrow (1982) writes that certain genres can be seen as a kind of slang:

> Working in a genre sometimes resembles following established rules of the language. At other points it is like choosing to speak slang: the process of writing in a form that is not currently established, like that of spicing one's vocabulary with slang expressions, both helps to create and helps to define an in-group. Those who write in such a genre, like those who speak slang, may discover that, with the passage of time, that same act comes to have very different connotations.
> (pp. 46)

Figure 22: TJ's Ghostbusters Story



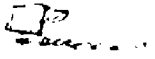
Me and Eugene and Graham and Jimmy are zapping a ghost



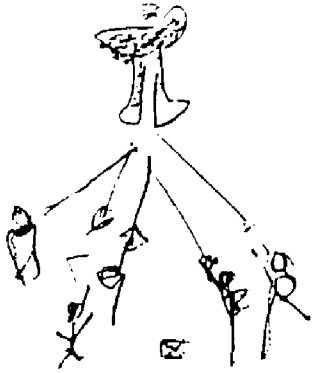
We are in the ghostbuster car to go back to headquarters.

But, we had another call and we went in the ghostbuster car to zap a ghost at 28 North

Avenue.



We are going fast to the place to get that ghost.



We zapped it and it is in the trap.

We got the last ghost of the day.

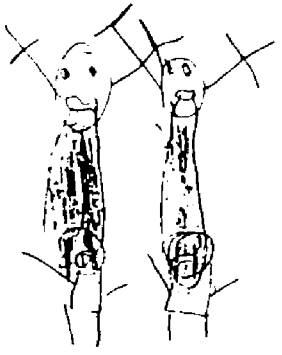
One of the most interesting bits of "slang" from the ghostbusters genre is "getting slimed." In the movie, a main character is covered with an oozing substance by a ghost. The act is both disgusting and funny. In the boys ghostbusters' genre, the experience of getting slimed becomes as joyful as playing in the mud. The people you slime are the people you like, as Jimmy's ghostbuster story illustrates.

Excerpt From Whole Class Writing Transcript (11/10/87)

[Jimmy is sharing a ghostbusters story]
Jimmy: Jimmy and TJ and Nick are chasing a ghost. I got a shield for my birthday and I wrote about it. TJ and Nick are defeating me.
child: What is defeating?
Jimmy: It means...
Ethan: You don't even know what defeating means!
Jimmy: It means you don't kill anybody. This is the haunted house. Oops. Ethan and Graham are sliming something.
[children laugh]
child: What are they doing?
Jimmy: sliming someone.
[children laugh]
Jimmy: Me and TJ are sliming something. Headquarters is slimed.
[children laugh]
Jimmy: Yeah, it got slimed all right. Me and TJ are getting a ghost. Bye Bye ghost.

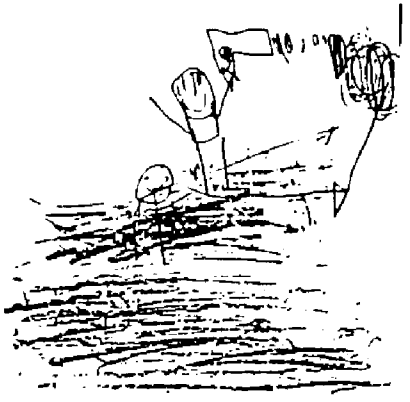
These stories all exclude girls. This is a convention the boys adapt from many of the media archetypes they explore. The Batman and Star Trek stories for the most part exclude women as key players, echoing the limited role of women in the shows on television. Many of these snows which emphasize conflict and technology are watched primarily by the boys in the class, and used by the boys to mark out their groups of friends.

Figure 23: Jimmy's Ghostbusters Story



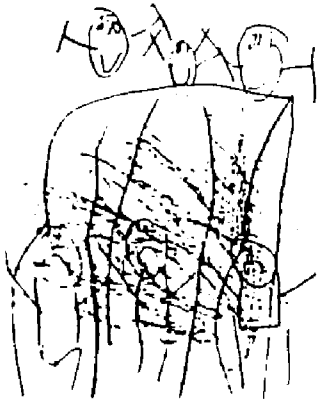
Ethan and Graham are sliming something.

Me and TJ are taking a a ghost which is the one Graham and Eugene slimed.

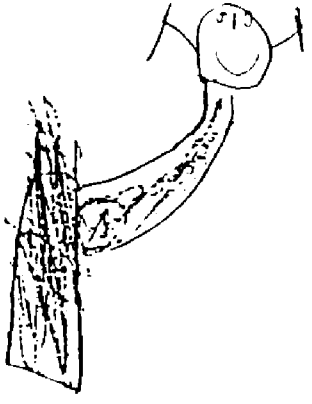


Me and TJ and Eugene are defeating the ghost.

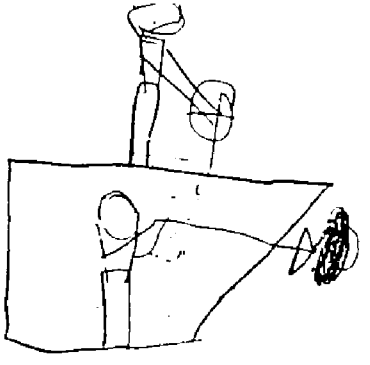
We are breaking through a wall and I am shooting a ghost.



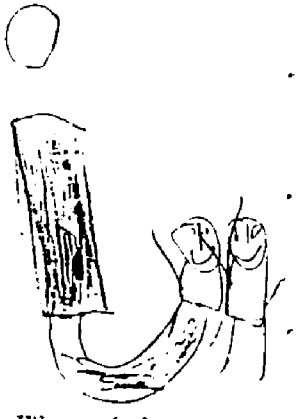
Me and TJ and Ethan are being slimed.



Headquarters is slimed!



Me and TJ are sliming are sliming something.



We safely got home

Ghostbusters, Star Trek and many television genres present a world where humans rely upon, and often are at the mercy of, technology. In my dissertation pilot, I argued that our age represents an unprecedented period of technological development. While this is true, living in an era of change is not without precedent. One era of dramatic change occurred almost one hundred years ago. It's interesting to compare the literacy patterns of young boys from that time with the interests of the boys in this class.

The United States went through tremendous social and economic change in the late 19th century. And like the television genres of the 20th century, certain texts and authors appealed to young boys at this time. One of these authors was Horatio Alger, a man who wrote hundreds of stories marketed at young boys. In Alger's stories, young boys travelled from the country to the big city, meeting many villains along the way. Nye (1970) analyzes Alger's influence, noting how he captured the concerns of his age:

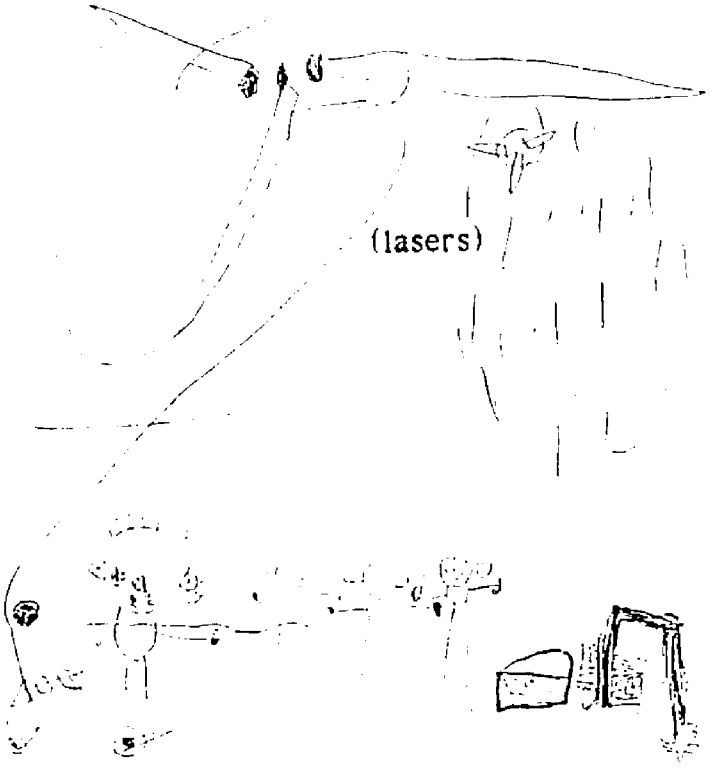
> This was the age of Rockefeller, Carnegie, Vanderbilt, Guggenhiem, Harriman, Gould, Fisk, and other multiple millionaires to whom riches came so suddenly and in such profusion that simply how to control wealth became one of the pressing ethical, political and social problems of the time. . .Alger knew this, and the majority of his books deal with questions raised by money--how one gets it, what one does with it, what happens when one does not have it. To Alger the pursuit of wealth could be challenging, exciting, and satisfying, as indeed it was to his generation, and his hero's progress toward his first million was the thread which held the majority of Alger's plots together.
>
> (pp. 67)

The boys in Pat McLure's class live in a different time. This is the age of the VCR, space shuttle explosion, and nuclear energy. A central theme in

many of the cartoons, texts and toys enjoyed by these children is the power of technology. How to control technology is one of the pressing ethical, political and social problems of **our** time. In children's stories in this class, space ships blow up, people are zapped, and planets are destroyed. But while this technology frightens many adults, for many of these boys it is often challenging, exciting and satisfying. This excitement with technology appears as the boys adapt and integrate technological conventions and images into their stories while creating personal and collective genres..

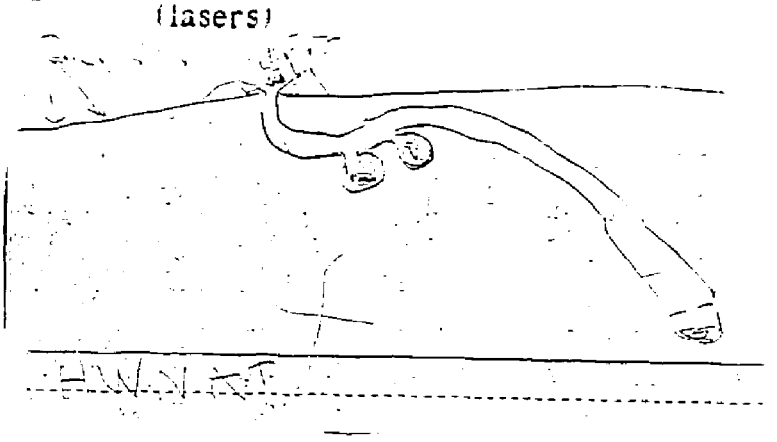
For example, a key technological instrument in our society and the boys' writing is the laser. Lasers are at the vanguard of change in many industries in our society and are used randomly in many stories boys in this class write. Nick has lasers shooting from the sky in his picture of his family on a boat:

Figure 24: Excerpt From Nick's Boat Story



Lasers also shoot toward Graham's lizard cage:

Figure 25: Excerpt from Graham's Lizards Story



Like the stories Alger wrote, the plotline of the media- and technology-based stories are simple. Good and bad guys are easily distinguishable, and the good guy always wins. Nye outlines Alger's means of developing characters in his stories:

> Alger's characters had no subtleties, and the young reader was able to distinguish good boys from bad in their very first words. When Andy Grant, a poor boy, meets Conrad Carter, a rich squire's son (evidence in itself), Andy says to him, "That's a new bicycle, isn't it?" to which Conrad replies, "Yes, I got tired of the the old one. This is a very expensive bicycle. Wouldn't you like to have a new bicycle?" "Yes," replied Andy. "Of course," said Conrad, "you never will." But if they lacked subtlety, Alger characters have the virtue of clarity. The reader is never at a loss to know what characters think and is never uncertain of their motives.
>
> (pp. 68)

In the boys' stories, characters are even less subtly defined, often simply labelled "good guys" or "bad guys." In the ghostbusters stories, the "good guys" are always the ghostbusters, who in turn are almost always children from within the class.

The boys who devoured Alger's simplistic and repetitive prose were as comfortable with change in their culture as their parents were uncomfortable. In adapting the ghostbusters stories and technological conventions to form genres, boys in Pat's class also show how comfortable they are with a future which presents rapid technological change. The "in-group" that these genres represent may be an entire young generation who expect and are excited by technological change.

Beyond Stories: Other Genres in the Writing Curriculum

It is late October, and Pat is feeling a little bit frustrated with the demands of the district administration.

Excerpt from Field Notes (10/22/87)

[The curriculum committee from the district wants information about the science program in first grade classes. We talk about this before school.]

Pat: It's really hard for them to understand how a program like mine works. They want all the first grade teachers to get together, and tell them something like, "Yes, all first graders will study periwinkles." Well, we will go to the beach, but I don't particularly care who knows what a periwinkle is after we go to the beach. But I do want them to write about the beach after the trip, and I want everyone to have the chance this year to do some nonfiction reporting and research.

Pat's curriculum in all subject areas emphasizes the processes of learning. Content knowledge is an outgrowth of these processes. For Pat, becoming a skilled writer means being able to write in a variety of contexts, and a variety of genres.

In this section, I will examine the genres which Pat assigns in her classroom. Writing is used extensively in the curriculum outside of the morning writing time. There are many purposes for this assigned writing. Three of the most important purposes of these other genres are to promote specificity, responsibility, and a sense of community among the children.

Specificity

The first genre the children analyze and attempt in entering first grade is not self-selected. Instead, they work with a list created by Pat.

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/2/87)

As the children enter the classroom, Pat leads them over to a cluster of four desks where she has laid out name tags. The name tags are on sturdy plastic, with a cord the child places around their neck. She tells them, "Find your name, and pick a sticker you might like to put on the back of your name tag and then put it on the back. You can write your name on another sticker (pointing to a cluster of desks behind the

name tags, where blank stickers and markers are), and put that name sticker on the cubbie you choose." Some of the children begin immediately to pick out their name tag and choose a sticker. Other are confused. A few start talking about a boy named Graham when they notice his name tag: "Graham isn't here yet. Oh boy, there's his name tag." The children seem to anticipate his arrival.

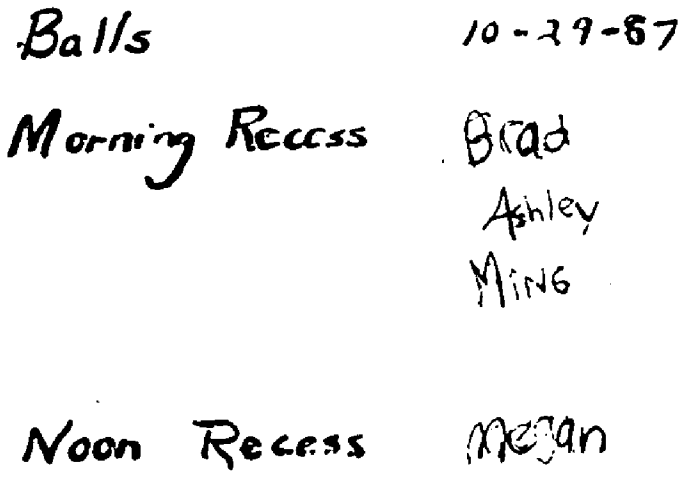
In tracing the history of genre study, Robert Connors notes the first records we've found are lists:

> The oldest written records we have are concerned with lists of cattle and goats, differentiating one from the other and thus allowing ancient Mesopotamians to regulate and control their property. . .From the very earliest times the creation of classes into which to fit things, and reasons for the fitting, has been central to all our thought.
>
> (pp. 25)

Like the Mesopotamians, the first graders initially use writing to create order in the classroom, and to reserve a space, "a cubbie," as their property.

Lists are prominent throughout the classroom. These lists are used to keep track of materials:

Figure 26: List to Keep Track of Playground Balls



They are also used to ensure that responsibilities and privileges are distributed fairly:

Figure 27: Sign-Up Sheet

Sign-up Sheet

Date: 2-23-88

Morning Meeting:

1. Brad writing
2. Ming writing

After Recess:

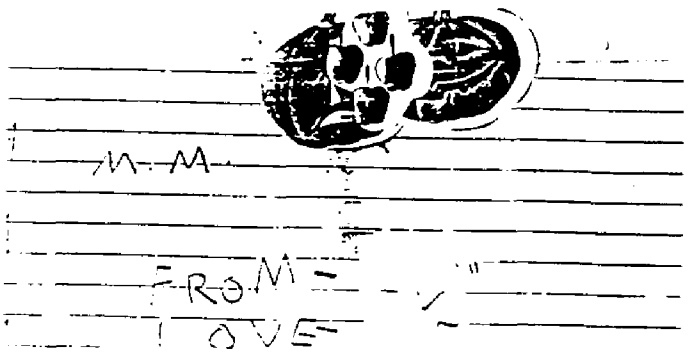
3. Graham reading

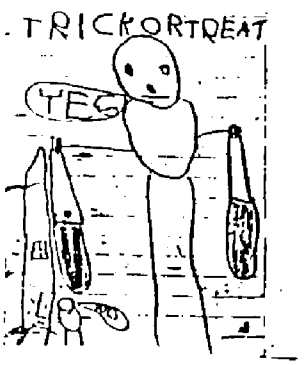
At the end of the day:

4. Joshua reading or writing

The children also are introduced to forms and notes. These forms enable the children to communicate with Pat when she isn't present. The children also like to experiment with the genre on their own:

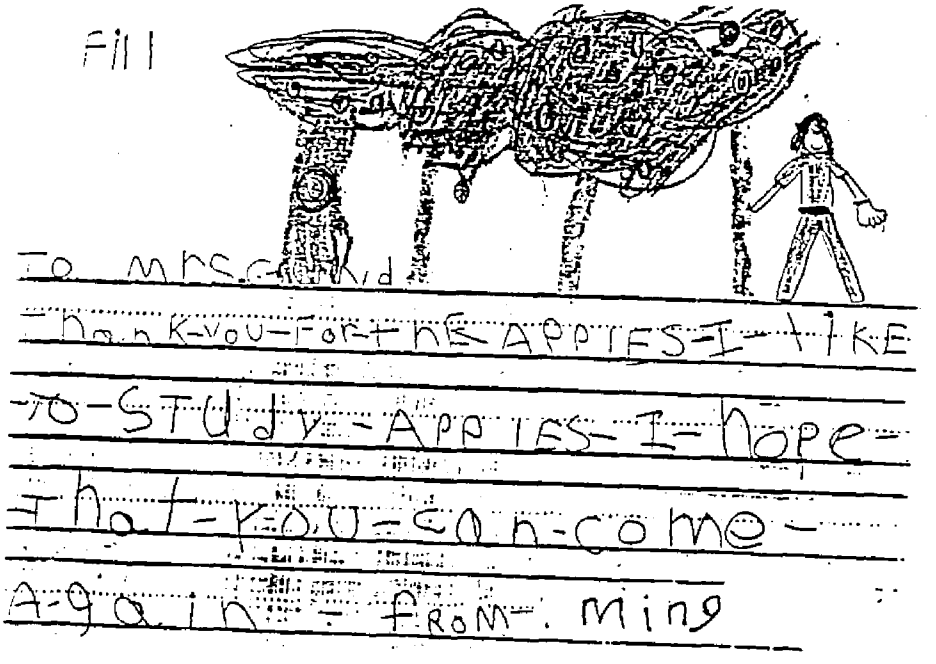
Figure 28: Examples of Children's Notes

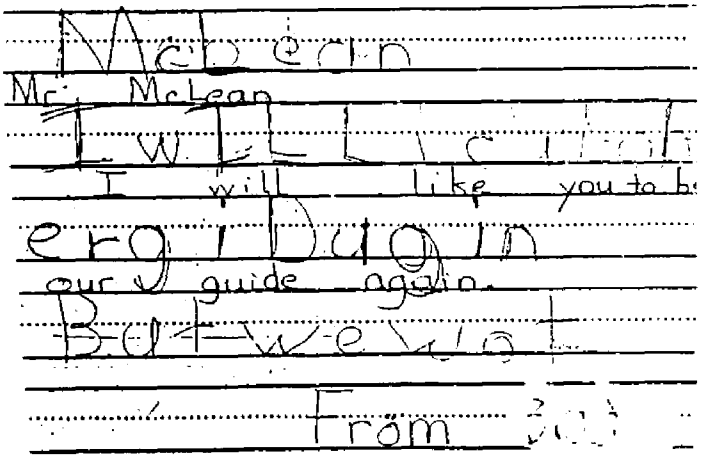




Pat also has the children write thank-you notes after field trips or visits by adults to the class. The children write a draft of the note, and then recopy it with conventional spellings:

Figure 29: Examples of Thank-You Notes





Another important early genre in the class is the "choice book." The first booklet all the children must write in besides the blank books used in writing time is this "choice book." During the afternoon, children can make "a choice." "Choices" are fun, self-directed activities. Children can go to the library, use the computer, play with blocks, read or write. Pat defines the purpose of the choice book:

Excerpt from Field Notes (9/9/87)

Pat: It's important for many of the children to really think about what they're doing. You ask a first grader what they did for the past hour when they've been playing, and they can't tell you. I need to teach them to be specific, and when they have to write it down in some way, then they have to remember what it is that they did. And I want them to try out all the choices, not just stay in one place or at one activity they like.

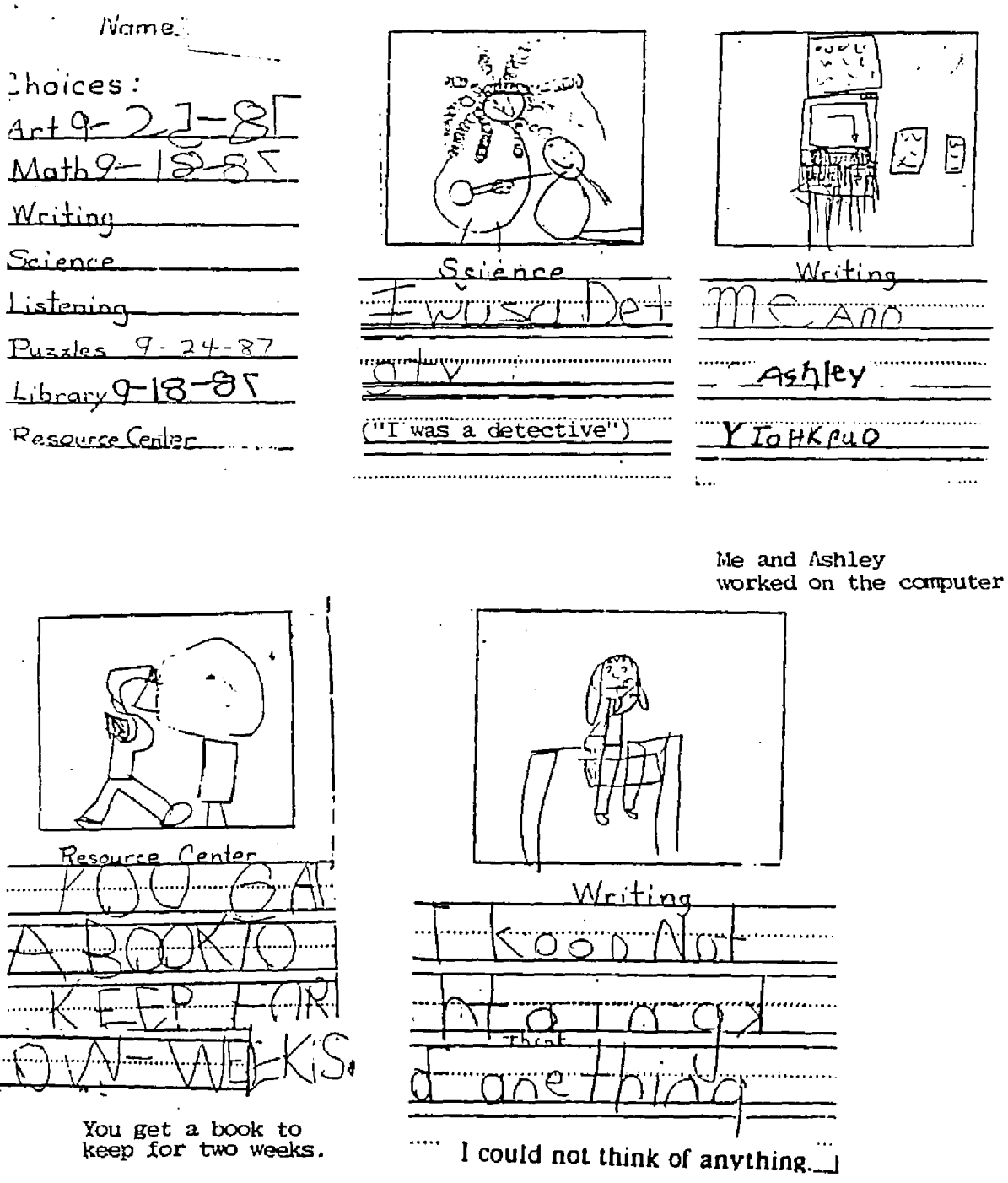
The term "specific" comes up again and again in Pat's curriculum. It's important in the choice books, because it's important throughout the curriculum. The emphasis on specificity, on careful segmentation of time and ability to articulate choices, is often evident in the classroom.

Field Notes Excerpt (9/15/87)

Nick G, Bruce and Ethan are rough housing by the share area after morning writing share. They are supposed to be picking out books to read. Pat walks up, grabs Ethan by the shoulders, and pulls him to face her.
Pat: What are you doing?
Ethan: I was going to look at a book?
Pat: (still calmly, but leans closer and spaces words) What are you doing?
Ethan: Bruce was hitting me with a book.
Pat: (eye to eye with Ethan, repeating words even slower) What are you doing?
Ethan: I need to look at a book.
Pat nods and walks away.

The children learn quickly that Pat will say directions very clearly, but she will only say them once. The class is very quiet when directions are given, because the children know that Pat will be specific, and there is little hope of a second chance of hearing them after routines are established in the first

Figure 30: Excerpts From Choice Books



weeks of school. When Pat asks questions, she expects specific response, and will wait until that response is given.

Field Notes Excerpt (11/2/87)

Nick G is sharing his circus story. He calls on nine children, then Pat.
Pat: You added information from the last time you shared. Are you going to keep adding information or are you just getting to finish?
Nick G: Mrs. McLure, do I have time to read another story?
Pat: No, I don't think so.
Nick G: But can I...
Pat: You didn't answer my question. Are you going to add more information about the circus?
Nick G: Yes.

The children know that there are different, specific expectations during the different time periods of the day. During "work times," assigned writing work normally has a clear deadline--one entry has to be made in a science journal by the end of the day, a "sentence paper" has to be completed by the end of the week. These writing assignments are far different than "stories" written during morning writing time. Unlike writing done during the morning writing time, assigned genres have deadlines, some content and style limitations, and different rules for sharing or completing a task:

Excerpt from Field Notes (10/29/87)

It is the end of the whole class writing share, and Pat is giving directions.
Pat: During the first working time some people need to work on their sentence papers and some children will have a chance to share at the round table. And also, would you check, I know everybody didn't have a chance to finish their directions yesterday for how to carve a jack-o-lantern. So would you spend a little working time today finishing up that? You have sentences to do, sharing, writing directions, and I know some people still have some pattern papers.

The segmentation of the writing genres and work times in many respects reflects Pat's own lifestyle and work values. Pat's is very specific with herself in segmenting work and personal time. She arrives at school by 7:00 a.m. on most days, and often doesn't leave before 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. But she rarely brings work home with her. Time at school is designated as work

time, time at home is for personal needs. She maintains two households with her husband, who is a golf pro during summer months and a tax auditor through the winter. Summertime is time off for Pat, and she lives up north at a house on a golf course during these months.

Pat's segmenting of time, work, and interests is even reflected in her name. Friends and family in the northern region of the state, many of whom live near the golf course, call her "Patty." Colleagues at school and friends in the southern part of the state call her "Pat." When she is mentioned in professional journals or gives presentations at conferences, she prefers to use her full name, "Patricia."

When Pat talks about her writing curriculum, she is also specific in the distinctions she makes between morning writing work and other writing. She feels process theorists put too much emphasis on teachers writing and sharing personal narratives with students.

Field Notes Excerpt (10/23/87)

Pat is talking about writing and her role in the class.
Pat: I don't write personal narratives and share them, and I could feel bad about that. But I don't think it's important that the children see me write stories, as much as it is important that they see me write--recording things, using writing as a regular part of my life.

Pat does write every day in class, but this writing is normally a record of what is being said during large and small reading and writing groups. The children are able to see some of the functions of writing in Pat's life.

Tape Transcript (10/29/87)

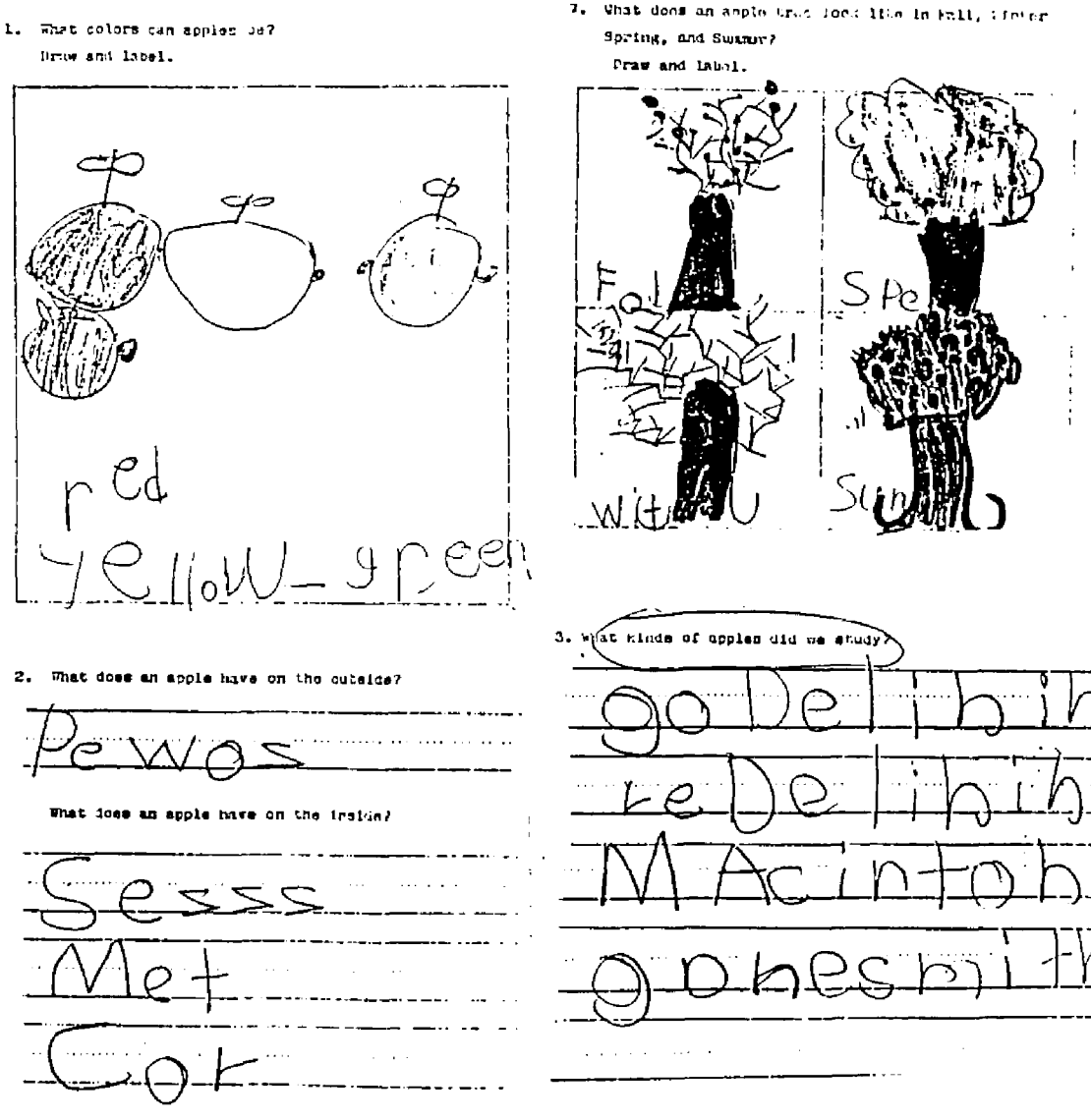
Paul after sharing rocket story, with whole class, is taking questions and comments.
Ethan: I like the part when they flew up to the gray planet and then they crashed back down and then they um went up again and you said they builded a new one and they went up again.
Paul: Oh, was I reading that?
TJ: You read part of it.
Paul: I was gonna write that they saw aliens.

Pat: You read that in your story (looking at notes). Yes, here it is.
Paul: No, I said they built another rocket ship.
Pat: But you told us that the rocket blasts off and they saw aliens.

In this situation, Pat shows Paul than writing is more permanent than memory. They see her daily order and record events as they occur, and then refer to them later.

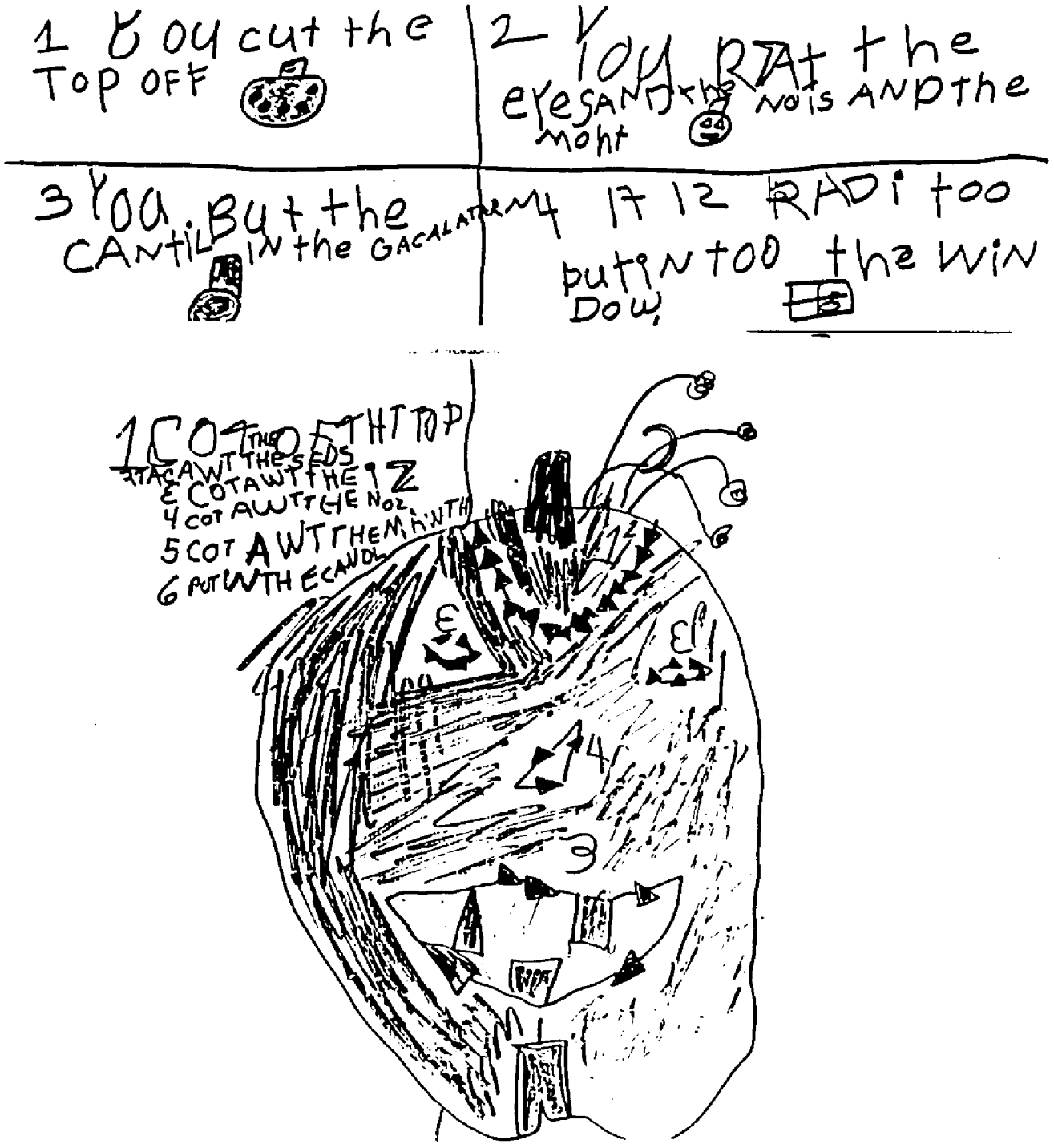
The children also learn to order and record events through assigned writing genres. After a trip to an apple orchard, the children write about different kinds of apples and changes in seasons in their "apple books":

Figure 31: Excerpts From Apple Books



A similar genre is the "How to Carve a Jackolantern" direction sheet, which also appears early in the year:

Figure 32: Examples of How To Carve a Jackolantern Lists



Responsibility

Pat uses writing to promote specificity, and an extension of that specificity is responsibility. In the example shown of Paul sharing his rocket story, Paul is responsible to conduct the share session. Pat, as a teacher, is responsible to take notes about what occurs, so that there is a record for future use.

An emphasis on responsibility pervades the classroom, and this emphasis affects the writing curriculum in a number of ways. Responsibility in Pat's room means working through problems together. When almost everyone is late for morning writing share, Pat discusses the problem with the whole group:

Writing Share Group Transcript (10/19/87)

[children are late coming to the share area]
Pat: This seems to be a problem for us every day. What could we do?
Ming: Look at the clock.
Pat: Well, we say that every day and it doesn't work. What else could we do?
Child: We could do a timer. And when people. . .(unintelligible) . . .that
Pat: We could try that. . .
TJ. We could give them a little card, so like the resource center. . .
Pat: Give them a card, TJ? Who would we give a card to?
TJ. Um, to the people who. . .to the people who forgot?
Pat: Well, that's just about everybody. That seems to be our problem. What are we supposed to do?
[pause]
Ethan. We're supposed to come here when the big hand's on the two.
Pat: Yes, when the big hand on the clock goes past the two. **Why is it a problem for us if we don't pick up then?**
TJ: 'Cause we'll waste somebody's sharing time.
[Pat nods]
Ming: It wouldn't be fair.
Pat: If we don't come over here and are ready to listen, then somebody's sharing time starts to go by. (pause) Anyone else have any ideas of what we can do? Would you think about it today?
Claudia: Yes
Pat; See if you can think of some ideas of what would help people remember to pick up in time. And we'll talk about it later this afternoon.
Nick, do you have some writing to share this morning?

Later, the class does talk about more solutions. They set up a system for a few days where a paper clock is placed on a wall, and Pat shifts the hands of the clock to note when the next work period will begin.

This method of problem solving is also a part of the writing curriculum. Every fall, Pat has the children keep "Look What Happened to Rotten Jack" journals. The class carves a pumpkin before Halloween. After Halloween the pumpkin remains in the room and slowly decomposes. Each children is responsible to make one entry daily into the journals.

Pat entered the room one Monday morning two weeks after the project began to find the rotting pumpkin had fallen off of its shelf. She carefully placed the pieces of pumpkin into a plastic container, attempting to duplicate the order of the pieces on the floor. After morning writing share, she asked the children to consider what happened to "Rotten Jack":

Excerpt from Tape Transcript of Writing Share (11/9/87)

Pat: For the first working time this morning, I'd like people to concentrate on Rotten Jack, so they can finish up their books.
children: Yuk!
Pat: What has happened to him? Ming?
Ming: He got rotted and he gotted smushy.
Pat: Alright, he got smushy. Joshua.
Joshua: He, he's dead.
[laughter]
Pat: Eugene?
Eugene: I think it looks like he got a little too much soft on the inside.
Pat: Um-hm. He did get very soft on the inside. Megan?
Megan: I think he just. . . died.
Pat: You think he just died. Brad?
Brad: I think somebody shot him.
[laughter]
Pat: Why do you think that? I don't think anybody touched him at all. Susan?
Susan: I think he falled down.
TJ: Like he melted. He melted into pieces.
Pat: No, he didn't melt.
Megan: Did you take him apart?
Pat: No, I
Susan: He felled apart.
Pat: He fell
Paul: He fell on the floor and you had to pick him up.
Pat: That's right. What made him fall? Linda? Why did he fall down?

Linda. I think he got sorta smushy on the bottom and he he sorta fell down.
Pat: He got soft and smushy? Gwen?
Gwen. Because he's so rotten?
Pat: Because he's so rotten? That's right. He got softer and softer.
Sarah: Because the sides got really soft and squishy and they just went pffft like that.
Pat: When he was new, his sides were hard and he was strong.
child: yeah, he was
Pat: And he got older and rotten, and his sides went soft.
children: Yeah, now, right
Pat: He wasn't strong enough to stand up.
Gwen: It's like, What happened to Rotten Jack? Because he's all gone.
Pat: He disappeared, um-hmmm.
[children all talking at once]
Pat: We need to have people listen.
Nick: I think the top got all squishy and stuff and he collapsed.
Pat: He did collapse. That's true. It was hard to tell. When I came in this morning and it was on the ground, it was hard to tell what had happened to the top. The stem had broken off from the top.
child: oh-oh
Pat: But it was hard to see whether the top fell inside of him or beside. I tried to pick it up and put it in the bucket just about the way it was on the floor. Not exactly, but close to it. Jimmy?
Jimmy: I think he tripped over hisself.
[laughter]
Paul: He tripped over his what?
children: self
Pat: We need to think very carefully about this being true information. Just what we've seen. Joshua?
Joshua: I think someone came in here at night and threw him across the room.
[laughter]
Pat: It didn't happen, because it was right there.
Paul: It was falling [mumble]
Pat: Claudia?
Claudia: um. . .I tink I know why the pumpkin fell down.
Pat: Why did the pumpkin fall down?
Claudia: Because
Nick: It's rotten
Claudia: Because, um, all brown, all brown and black and white.
Pat: That's right. And all of that made it very soft.
Claudia: And then it fall down.
Pat: And then it fell down. Paul?
Paul: Um, I think maybe the top fell in there and then it jiggled it so it fell down. And it's just so uh loose it just fell apart or maybe, it was the stem that was a little heavy and the top was so heavy and the sides were so uh soft that it pushed it down, it was so heavy. It just pushed it, it just pushed it down sideways, and also it looks like it's leaking. It's all wet right there.
Pat: That's because I had to wash the carpet.
Claudia: Why?
Pat: Because it made a mess on the carpet.
Paul: And then it will be all yellow and sticky
Claudia: Not yellow!
Paul: Yes it would.
Linda: It's wiggle-ly. Like my teeth.
Pat: It's wiggly. Um-hm, you know about that. Claudia?

Claudia. I tink, I tink the pumpkin fall down all by itself because he because the soft stuff move.
Pat: Um-hm. Okay, just two more. Megan?
Megan: Um, I think I agree with what Paul said. The top fell in, but the sides were so loose, that it was kind of big for the sides and it went way down to the bottom and the bottom.
child: How could it fall down if it was the same size?
Claudia: I don't know.
TJ: Cause it shrinked.
Graham: Because it was all squishy.
Megan: It was really squishy at the bottom and then the top fell down here and it was squishy down a little bit because the top was kind of stronger than the sides, and then it pushed it down so far that it just falled off.
Pat: Eugene?
Eugene: I I I think that Paul's theory that the top fell in, except first I think it might have fellen apart and then fell down.
Pat: You think it might have fallen apart, and then fallen down?
Eugene: Yeah.
Claudia: I think that somebody blow. . .
Pat: Brad, would you get the little basket off the shelf of the booklets? Can you call names to give them to people?

Like the earlier discussion of getting to share circle on time, Rotten Jack's demise is a problem which needs to be solved. His fall needs to be interpreted. Pat cannot leave the wet, rotting pumpkin on the floor early in the morning. But she tries to recreate the image she saw, so that her students can interpret, can "read" the situation, as she read it earlier in the morning. Pat draws out the responses of the children, continually refocusing their thoughts on the problem of the fall, and their responsibility to give accurate and truthful responses. She encourages Linda in her "wiggly tooth" analogy, saying that Linda is comparing the pumpkin to something she knows about.

Pat also demands that they work within a genre different than the "stories" they are accustomed to during morning writing time. They can ascribe human characteristics to Jack, but only to the extent that they say he is "like" a human. They are responsible for giving specific "true information"--the children can say he looks like he was shot, but they can't say he was shot.

Community

Constraining the task and genre through an assignment like "Rotten Jack" leads to some fascinating writing. E.B. White's advice "Don't write about man, write about a man" is carried through in this assignment. After weeks of writing about Halloween in all sorts of ways during morning writing time, the children have to be very detailed, specific and truthful in writing about one element of Halloween lore--the carved pumpkin. They share the task, and the problem which must be solved. Together, the children experiment with metaphors, similes, and different ways of describing the action of the fall and the appearance of the pumpkin.

With the common task as a focus, conventions quickly move through the class.

Field Notes Excerpt (11/9/87)

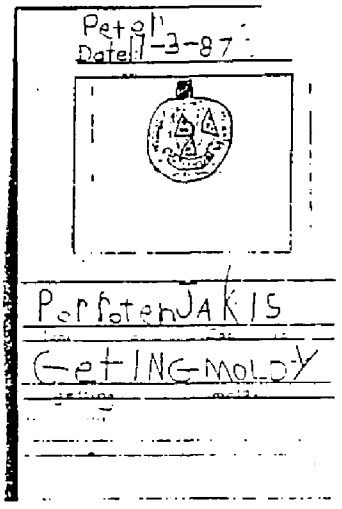
Kelly: Now what should I say he looks like. [pauses, looks up] Rotten Jack looks like mashed potatoes. Yeah.
Debbie: Mashed potatoes. Yeah.
Sarah: I'm writing orange mash potatoes.
Brad: Mashed potatoes.

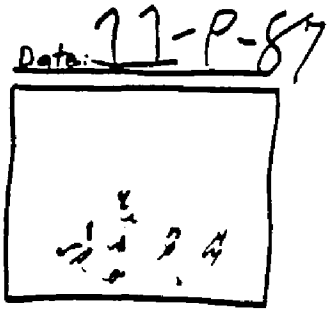
Many children pick up the convention of describing him as "looking like mashed potatoes. A few moments later, Brad says, "I'm going to say I think he looks like he was in a fire. Orange, black, orange, black." Brad picks up on the use of similes in Kelly's work, and develops one of his own.

In addition, because of the focused work periods and deadlines, many children produce more writing in a few minutes of daily writing in these journals than they produce in entire morning writing sessions.

Pat uses science journals in different projects throughout the year. Together, the children will record the hatching and growth of chickens in the

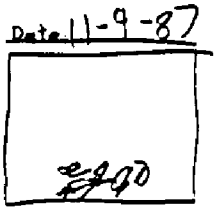
Figure 33: Excerpts From Rotten Jack Journals



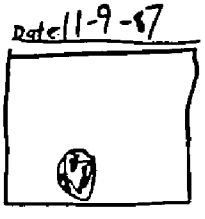


Kelly:
"Now to me he looks like some mashed potatoes."

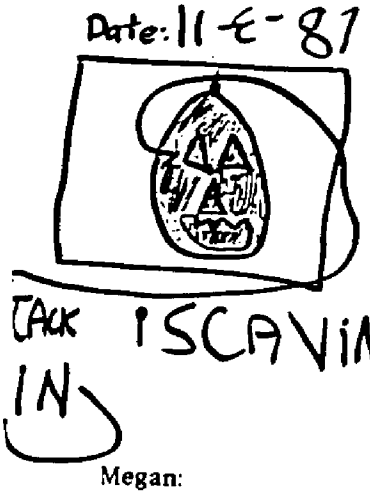
Graham:
"Jack is getting rotten. What could happen next?"



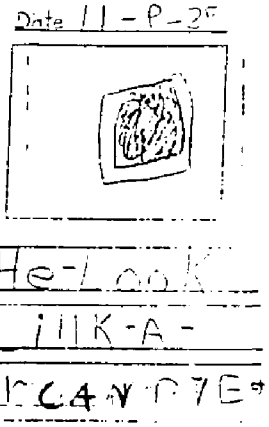
Sarah:
"He looks disgusting."



"The black is all the way on the inside."



Megan:
"Jack's eye is caving in."



Ming:
"Now to me he looks like some pecan pie."

early spring. After a field trip to the beach in June, each child will report on one thing they saw at the beach.

Through "the other" writing curriculum--the notes, lists, science journals, and classroom records--the children see the functions of different genres in ordering and recording events around them. The differences in the writing tasks cause the children to take on different roles as writers. They learn the different responsibilities writers have with specific tasks. The children also work together as a community of problem solving writers, with the problems ranging from the fair assignment of chores to the mystery of a collapsed pumpkin. By constraining the conventions of these genres, Pat shows how writing can serve as a tool in everyday life.

V. WORK, DUDS AND LIVE MINES: READING GENRES

> *"When you open a book," the sentimental library posters said, "anything could happen." This was so. A book of fiction was a bomb. It was a land mine you wanted to go off. You wanted it to blow your whole day. Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of books were duds. They had been rusting out of everyone's way for so long that they no longer worked. There was no way to distinguish the duds from the live mines except to throw yourself at them headlong, one by one.*
>
> Dillard (pp. 83)

When I give workshops for teachers in reading instruction, I often ask them to bring a favorite book to our meetings. Not surprisingly, many teachers choose a favorite book from childhood, a book that was a trip through a "live mine" for them. Robert Louis Stevenson's garden of verse for children, Dr. Suess's exotic characters, the wanderings of Sarah Crewe--different books and characters hold special places in readers' childhoods, and the texts serve as a kind of magnet for memories of a specific place and time.

It's not surprising, either, that certain books spread through Pat's class and become collective favorites. The children work together, and share many common concerns and interests. These favorite books sometimes set the conventions for genres the children define. Two of these child-defined genres which I will look at in-depth are "silly books" and "scary books." Books which interested the whole class served as archetypes for these genres, paralleling the writing genre archetypes I've already explored.

But there were important differences in the ways these children categorized reading and writing texts. Reading in this first grade class is presented and perceived differently than writing, and this also influenced

the ways children categorized texts. In analyzing the children's interactions during reading times, I found two factors were important in the children's categorization of reading texts:

1. Morning reading time, unlike morning writing time, is often defined as "work" in the classroom community.

2. Texts which were particularly popular with students served as archetypes for the children's perceptions of genre.

I will explore each of these findings in the following sections.

Reading as Work

Field Notes Excerpt (1/11/88)

Gwen and Sally are writing, early in the morning.

Gwen: But I'll have to do this later, cuz pretty soon it's time for work.
Brenda: Isn't writing work?
Gwen: Well, no, cause look at this. (Opens up folder) I'm sure you could never fill this up, and if you did, then, well, you would just put it in your saving folder and get more. **You could never be done with it, so how could it be work?**
Brenda: Then what is work?
Sally: You do work during reading.
Gwen: Yeah, cause you do your sentence paper, or you finish reading your book. **You finish your reading work. Writing. . .you just never finish it, so it's not really like, WORK.**

I noticed major differences between in the formats of the reading and writing curricula from the start of my research study. But it wasn't until I heard Gwen talk about work in mid-January that I was able to pinpoint many of the reasons for the differences in the way that children categorized reading and writing texts.

Reading time in the morning is work time. The "first working time" that Pat discusses with the class always comes after morning writing time.

As the children are gathered in the sharing area, Pat discusses what work will be done for the rest of the morning. The work varies, but it always includes some reading:

Tape Transcript Excerpt (9/15/87)

It is the end of whole class writing share.
Pat: During this first working time, you need to get your red folders, and the books that you chose this week and people need to start working on the paper. [sentence paper] We have a place for your name and the date, title of the book. The author. . .what's the author?
child: The name of the person who wrote the book.
Pat: And you have a space for a picture about the book and you can start on your paper today, and you can work on it tomorrow. Right beside your red folder.

Reading work is segmented into small tasks, with daily and weekly expectations for completion. Students are instructed to choose their books on Monday and practice reading them. The book choice is supposed to be a book that "is a little bit hard to read, but something you can read." The choice is presented in terms of challenge--picking a text that will involve some effort in reading. After choosing a book, each child then is supposed to:

1. Practice it alone and record on booklist. (by Tuesday)
2. Read the book to a friend, and write a sentence paper about the book. (by Wednesday)
3. Share the book in a small reading group, where Pat records reading strategies and comments by others in the group as the child reads. (by Friday)

When I interviewed the children about the kinds of books they liked to read in late September, November and January, a major means of categorizing books in all three interviews was through degree of difficulty in

reading. In contrast, the children never categorize texts they write as "easy" or "hard."

There are many factors in and outside the classroom which help shape the children's perceptions of their reading. Last year, I surveyed first graders from Pat's class and another local elementary school (Miller, 1987a). When the children were asked the question, "Why do you read?" over 30 % of the children in both classrooms responded, "to learn to read."[1] The children all believe that they can write, but reading is a task which they believe they haven't mastered. Many of the children know enough about letter-sound correspondence to know that they haven't yet "cracked the code." In addition, some of the children talk about how their parents practice reading at home with them, using both books and flashcards. For many children, "books I can read" and "books I can't read" are the only kinds of texts.

Reading genres are often either public or private, with fairly sharp distinctions. During morning writing time, small group genres emerge on a regular basis, reflecting the importance of informal small group work during this time. It's more difficult to work in small groups around reading texts. When children ask each other for help, more often than not they want help with individual words. In writing, more time is spent helping each other with ideas for stories, with genres rising from these ideas. Because of the nature of the reading curriculum and the task of reading, children spend

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[1] The children were survey in February and late April. Interestingly, the percentages of children responding "to learn to read" did not drop significantly during the first and second dates of the survey, even though many of the children had made significant gains in reading ability. One girl, in the middle of answering in April, said, "to learn to read, except wait. I guess I do know how to read, so I don't know why I read now." In contrast, the replies to the question "Why do you write?" were much different. The most popular responses included "for fun" and "to make up things."

most of their reading time working alone or as a whole class listening and responding to one reader, and this structure is reflected in how the children categorize their texts.

In designating many reading tasks as "work," Pat controls many of the conventions of how the work will be done. Children have a variety of responses on their sentence papers, but for the most part, the sentences are summaries of the book or discussions of favorite parts.

When I asked Pat about the differences between morning writing and reading periods, she explained reasons behind the differences:

Field Notes Excerpt (1/11/88)

Pat: A few years ago, my reading program was much more like the writing program, with children keeping booklists and reading at very different paces. But I didn't feel like I could keep track of all the kids, and I didn't think they all could handle that responsibility. I think there are differences in what parents expect from a reading program, too. They are more concerned about levels and demonstrations of success. I try to have a range of tasks and deadlines in the class. There are some kinds of writing work that have flexible deadlines--booklets like the apple book or "Rotten Jack" that have two week deadlines. A child like Ashley, the "Ruths" in my class [refers to other very conscientious researcher in class and laughs] will sit right down and do it without me saying anything, and it's done just fine in three days. Others take a week or more, and some, like Graham, will need to be pushed in the last few days because they will procrastinate right up till the deadline. Some tasks don't have deadlines, like the morning writing work, though I will push kids individually if I think they need to try publishing or finishing something. And with the reading work, there are those constant, short deadlines with smaller tasks that need to be reached. When we have silent reading in the afternoon, there aren't those deadlines and the choice is open. I **think the students need to see that range of ways they can work, the different kinds of deadlines and work they will face throughout school.**

Because morning reading time is a time for piecemeal work, the children don't have as much freedom in choosing how they will work on texts, and what texts they will work with. For example, Jimmy told me in November that his favorite book was Dr. Suess's Green Eggs and Ham. "I really can read this book," he told me, "and I read it at home." I noticed that Jimmy often had this book in his hands, and this was a source of trouble with his classmates.

Field Notes Excerpt (2/29/87)

I am sitting with Claudia as she reads the book she has just chosen for her reading work this week. I notice Jimmy, sitting at the next desk, is silently reading Green Eggs and Ham. His lips move, and his finger traces the words.
Brenda: So, I see you're reading your favorite book.
[Jimmy nods]
Claudia: You can no read! You already read! Today, you pick new book.
Jimmy: But I just want to read a few of these words, I just like this.
Ethan: But you already read that book. You can't read it again. You have to do your reading work.

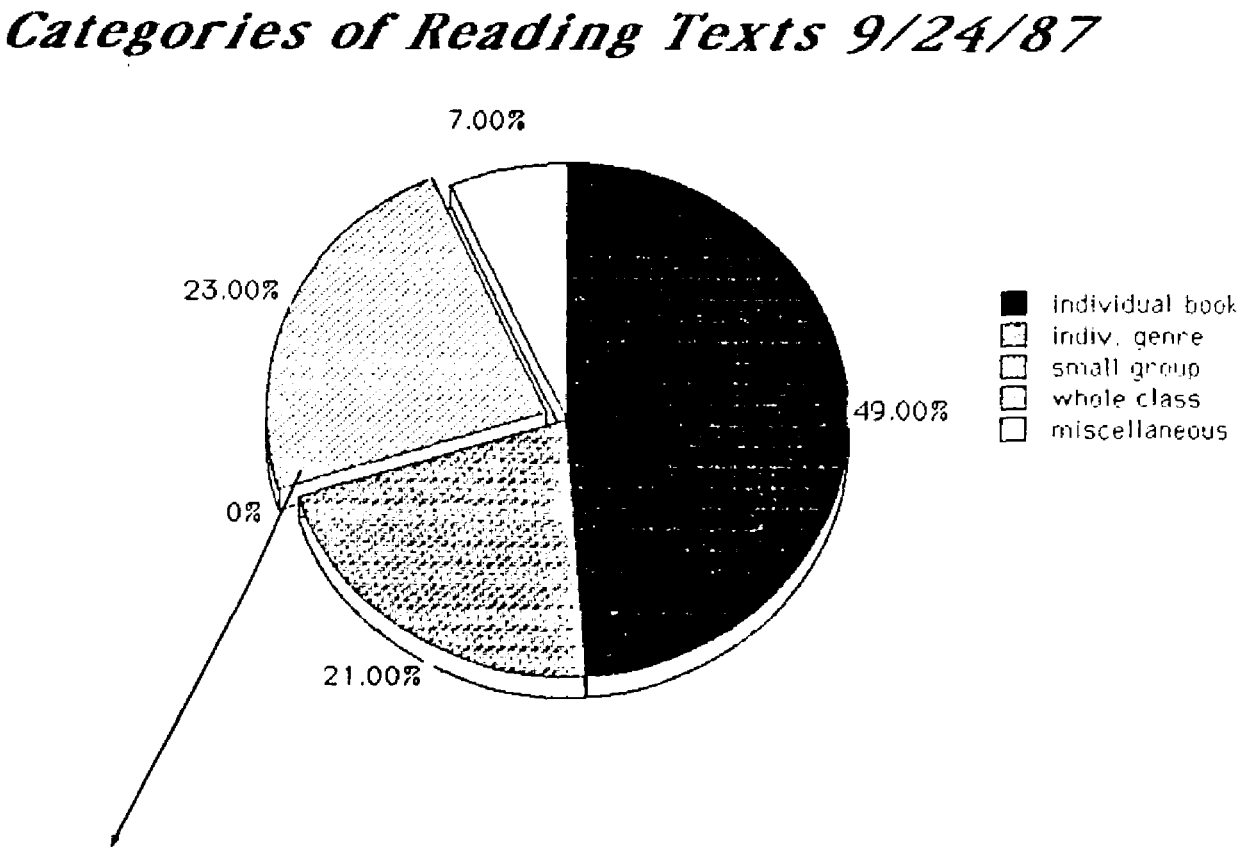
If Jimmy wanted to reread or rewrite a story during morning writing time, the children wouldn't question what he was doing. The children are free to do their writing, and begin writing tasks, in whatever ways are comfortable for them. Readers and writers develop rituals. But if starting the work week with Green Eggs and Ham is a reading ritual for Jimmy, it is a ritual that the children dismiss as inappropriate behavior.

Personal and small group behavior are limited by the "work" demands of reading time. These limitations show up in the ways that the children categorize their texts. When I asked the children the question, "What kind, or type, of books do you like to read?" I found categories which parallel my analysis of the written text responses. I defined the categories of response in this way:

individual book --the response is a title of a book (though not necessarily a book read by the child responding)
individual genre --the response is a category devised by the child to include two or more books, but the category is unique to the child responding
small group genre--two or more children in the class understand and use the genre to categorize texts, but a majority of children in the class cannot define the core features of the genre.
whole class genre--a majority of students in the class understand some core features for the genre.

Figure 34

Students Respond to Question:
What Kind, or Type, of Books Do You Like to Read?



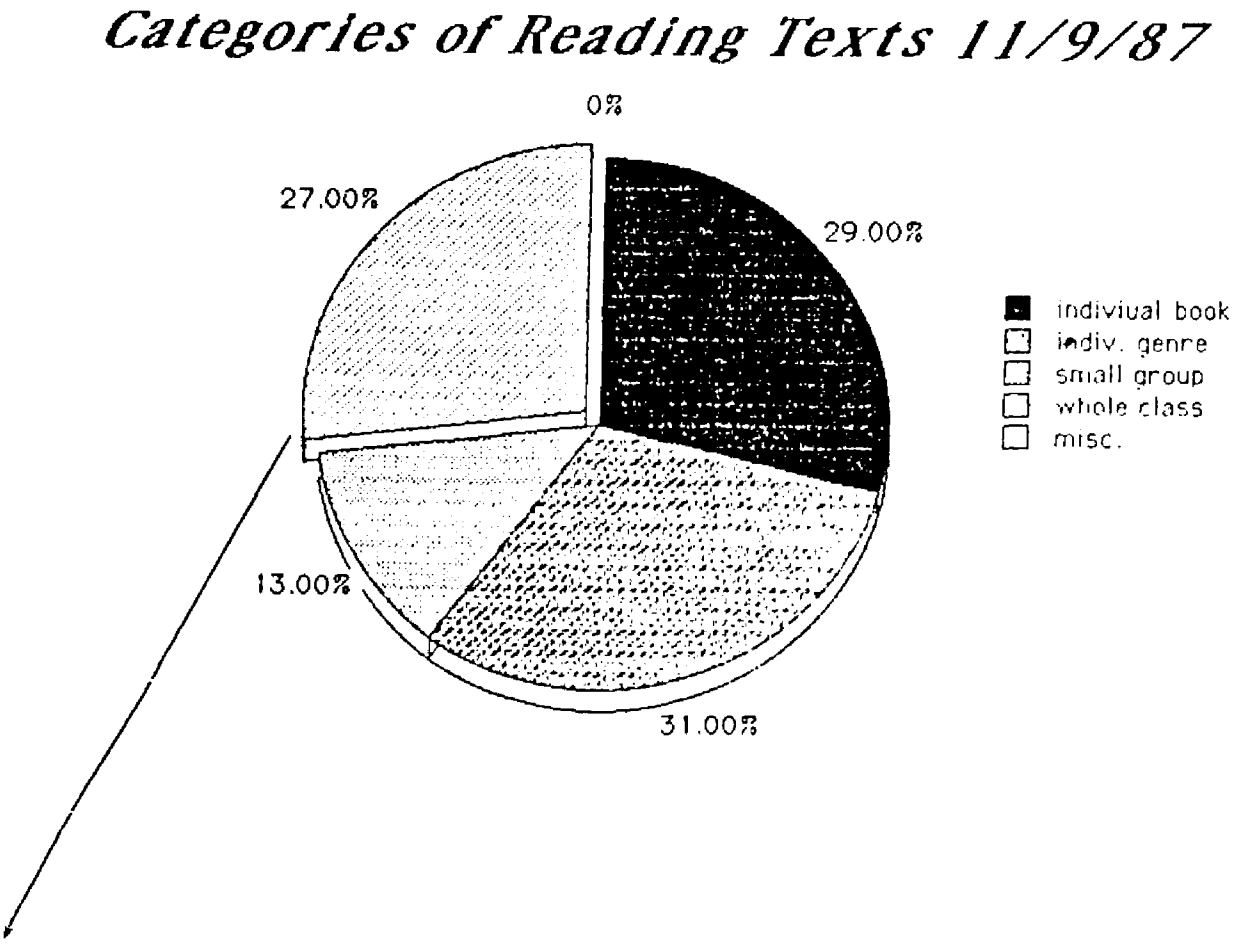
Whole Class Genres

12 responses in category

difficulty of text (8)
author or series (4)

Figure 35

Students Respond to Question:
What Kind, or Type, of Books Do You Like to Read?



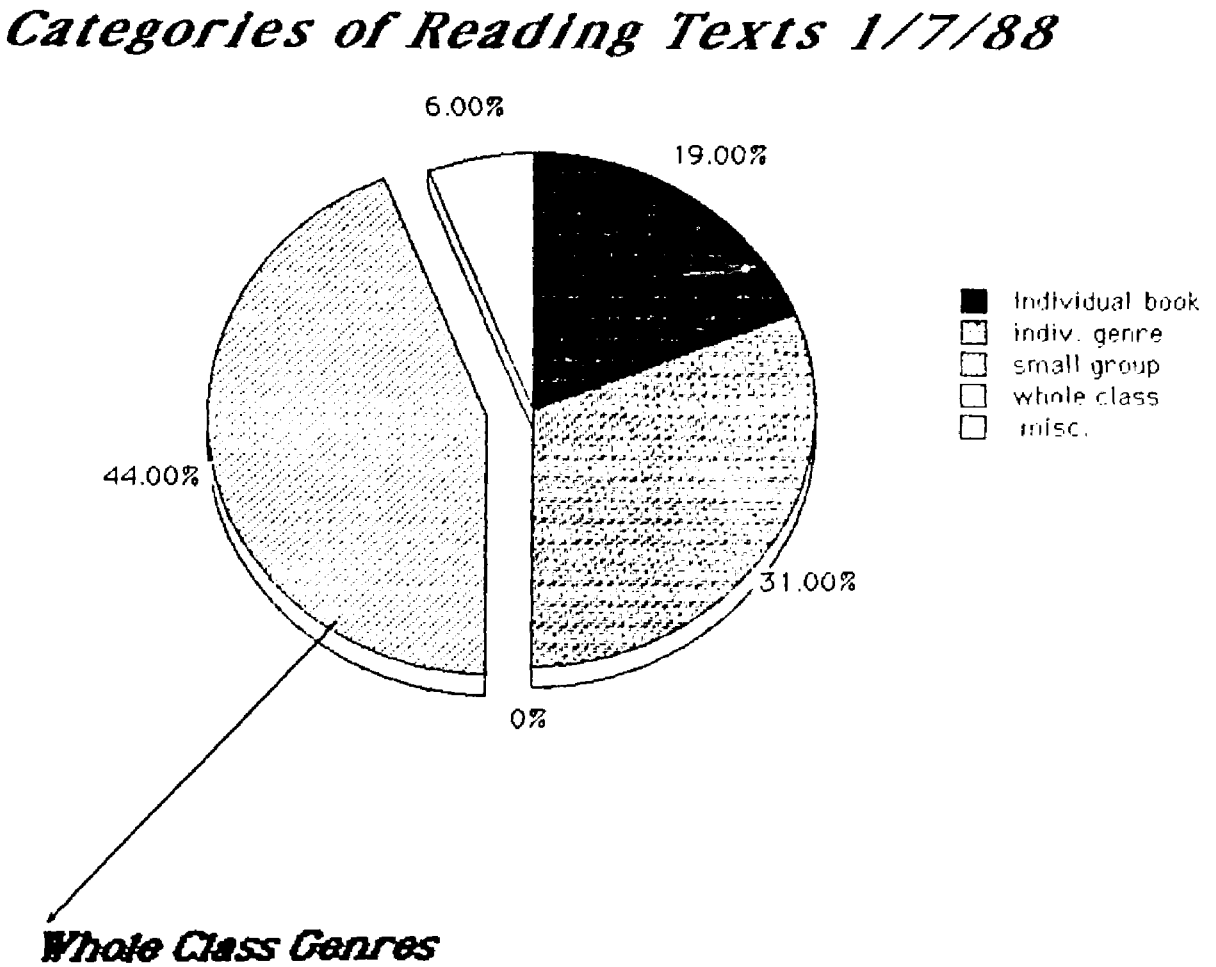
Whole Class Genres

14 responses in category

author or series (6)
difficulty (5)
veracity (3)

Figure 36

Students Respond to Question:
What Kind, or Type, of Books Do You Like to Read?



24 responses in category

scary (5)
silly (5)
veracity (4)
author or series (4)
adventures (3)
difficulty (3)

Examples of individual books include Trumpets and Grumpets or The Old Man Who Couldn't Read. Examples of individual genres include "books from back when it wasn't our age" and "sea books." Examples of small group genres appeared only in November, during the second survey session. Small group genres included "silly books" and "scary books." Whole class genres included "fiction," "nonfiction," "hard" and "easy" books.

During reading time, children spend a lot of time working independently on focused tasks. A good portion of the day is also given over to whole group sharing of books. There are two periods during the day when a child can read a book to the whole class, and Pat reads a book daily in the afternoon. The growth and prominence of individual genres reflects the independent nature of much reading work in the class. The growth and increase in variety of whole class genres reflect the importance of whole class reading shares. In my analysis of writing genres, I focused on small group genres. Because of the differences I've cited in the reading and writing programs, I will focus on whole class genres in analyzing reading genres. It is in this category where the class's perceptions of genre change the most over three months.

"Silly Books," "Scary Books," and the Growth of Whole Class Genres

The whole class reading share is the component of the reading program that most closely resembles its counterpart in the morning writing program. But Pat also has more influence over this part of the reading program. Unlike the writing share, Pat reads books for the first week of whole class reading shares. Through the books she selects, she demonstrates different ways that children can share and respond to books. She shares

books which are part of a series, books where the children can repeat patterns or rhymes within the text as she reads, and books which are connected to different stories the children are writing.

At first, only the most proficient readers in the class chose to share during whole class reading sessions. But gradually, as children identify books they can read, more children chose to share during this time. As the children share, Pat encourages them to connect the books they read with other books. She wants them to identify kinds of books they enjoy and can read. Pat's questions in small and large group frequently involve asking the children to make associations of themes or authors.

Whole Class Reading Tape Transcript (10/20/87)

Debbie has just read The Carrot Seed to the class.
Pat: Debbie, have you ever read any other stories with giant vegetables?
Debbie: No.
Pat: Has anybody?
Children: Yes, no
TJ: I did, last year.
Pat: What did you read?
TJ: The Great Big Enormous Turnip.
Pat: Yes, The Great Big Enormous Turnip. Can others think of books like this?
[Pat continues to call on children.]

The growth of the whole class genres section of the reading surveys reflects changes in the children's perceptions of themselves as readers, and their sense of the class as a reading community.

In the September survey, there are only two ways of categorizing texts which are consistent across the class. The class categorizes books by degree of difficulty, using a variety of terms ("easy reading," "easy," "adult with no pictures," "hard chapter books"). The other category within whole class genres is defining texts by an author or series ("National Geographic," "Bugs Bunny Books," "Baranstain Bears").

By November, the whole class category has increased slightly. Both of the whole class categories from the September survey appear again. In addition, there is one new whole class category--veracity ("real," "imaginary"). This is the only survey where small group genres appear, and by the next survey these categories are recognized by the whole class. There are two categories within the small group genre category--"scary" books and "silly" books.

By January, the whole class category has increased dramatically. All three whole class categories from November appear again. There are also three new categories. The categories of "scary" and "silly" books are now identified by the whole class, and "adventures" appears for the first time.

The movement of scary and silly genres through the class can be traced directly to small and large group conventions during share sessions. I will explore the growth of these genres in-depth, because the way they became defined as genres closely resembles the way writing genres emerge in the class.

Scary Books

"He's got you!"

Jimmy jumped out at me from behind a desk. The words flew out of his mouth as he dived at me. I didn't realize it at the time, but this late September surprise was the first glimmer of the rise of the scary book genre in the class. "He's got you!" is the end line of the book In a Dark Dark Wood, an archetype for the scary books genre.

The chart on the following two pages shows books within the "scary book" genre read during whole class, small group and individual reading work periods. Not shown on this chart are the scary books read by children outside of these recorded times. Many children may have read "scary books"

Figure 37:
Scary Books

book titles and authors:

A Ghost Story by Bill Martin jr.
Old Devil Wind by Bill Martin jr.
Ghost by Joy Cowley
Shivers by Arnold Lobel
In a Dark Dark Wood by Joy Cowley and June Melser
Haunted House

	September	*October*	*November*	*December*
whole class	TJ (9/25) *Haunted House*	Paul (10/2) *Old Devil Wind*	Jimmy (11/5) *Haunted House* Paul (11/13) *Haunted House* Ming (11/20) *Ghost* TJ (11/30) *Shivers*	Claudia (12/3) *Ghost*
small group	Joshua (9/3) *Old Devil Wind*	Ming (10/15) *In A Dark Dark Wood*	TJ (11/19) *Shivers*	

	September	*October*	*November*	*December*
	Paul (9/24) *A Ghost Story*	Brad (10/22) *In a Dark Dark Wood*	Ming (11/20) *Ghost*	
	Debbie (9/25) *A Ghost Story*	Graham (10/22) *Haunted House*		
individual reading work	Joshua (9/8) *Haunted House*	Jenny (10/2) *In a Dark, Dark Wood*	TJ (11/16) *Shivers*	
	Brad (9/14) *A Ghost Story*	Sally (10/5) *A Ghost Story*		
	Paul (9/21) *A Ghost Story*	Gwen (10/5) *Ghost*		
	Debbie (9/21) *A Ghost Story*	Ming (10/5) *In a Dark Dark Wood*		
	Jimmy (9/28) *A Ghost Story*	Brad (10/19) *In a Dark Dark Wood*		
		Nick (10/19) *A Ghost Story*		
		Ming (10/26) *A Ghost Story*		

during silent reading time in the afternoons, but this wasn't a time when I collected data, and Pat keeps no records of book read during this time, either.

The books within this genre share a number of core features including:

1. The presence of supernatural characters--ghosts, goblins.
2. A sense of mystery or foreboding.
3. Frequently, a surprise at the end.

Scary books also cover a range of reading abilities. Not everyone can read Shivers or Old Devil Wind, but the Joy Cowley titles are all pre-primer level reading. The genre spreads through the class in part because a child of even a low-range reading ability can find a book to read with the core features.

Like the pop-up genre, popularity of scary books can partially be traced to the skill with which they are shared. The conventions of the genre evolved within large and small share groups. One early share with a scary book occurred in late September.

Excerpt from Ruth Hubbard's Field Notes (9/24/87)

Paul reads A Ghost Story to a group including Pat, Nick and Gwen. In a loud voice, he ends his reading: "He's got ya!"
Pat: I like the way you made your voice sound scary, then surprised at the end.
Nick: How did you learn to read it?
Paul: I picked it up during quiet reading time. I couldn't read it all, then I tried again and I got a few more words, and then the third time, I read it all.
Gwen: Why did you pick it?
Paul: I just explained. I picked it on the red rug. It was just quiet reading.
Pat: I think you read one of the same set. When It Rains, It Pours. Do you like that kind of book?
Paul: It was in a different box. I read two other scary ones. I think they're all by the same man.

This small group share also demonstrates how Pat encourages the students to connect their texts to others, and identify core features of a

"kind" of book. These core features are also considered during whole group shares:

Excerpt from Whole Class Reading Share (11/5/87)
[Jimmy reads Haunted House, and while reading asks for help with Pat for a few words]
Comments or questions?
Claudia: Why you pick this book?
Jimmy: Cause I could read it.
later (children saying parts they like)
Claudia: Why you like this book?
Jimmy: Because the scary things. . .I love scary people!
[later during share, Ming comments. . .]
Ming: I have two comments and questions. One, is um, when the, that one says Boo. It shows an upside-down "i" and I wondered it you know what that meant?
Jimmy: Well, no. . .
Ming: My other one was, um, I like the pictures in the book.
Pat: Ming, did you know what that means?
Ming: Yeah, it meant, um, to just like put surprise in.

Pat draws the share back to Ming's recognition of an exclamation point, a feature of surprise at the end of the book.

The genre also reflects the season in which it appears. As I mentioned in my chapter on first grade life, certain annual events are important to the children. One of these events is Halloween. Like the sprouting of flowers from kindergarten which helped the "flower genre" to arise in the class, the sharing of Halloween parties and rituals gives students common ground to conceive a genre. The reading of scary books is clustered around the holiday, with early November the peak time for the rise of the genre.

Silly Books

The evolution of the "silly books" genre may have begun in mid-September, when Gwen shared the book Is This You? during whole class reading share. The book contains a series of pictures, with the text asking simply "is this you?" As Gwen shared the book with the class, she called on people to answer whether they were represented by the picture or not. This

led to quite a bit of giggling, and was a departure from the normal sharing procedure. The children participated in the reading from the first page of the story, rather than saving the bulk of their response for the end of the story.

When children began to read and share riddle books in October, they followed the "Is this you?" convention of calling on classmates in the midst of the share. Children would raise their hands and vie to be called on--often regardless of whether or not they knew the answer to the riddle.
Conventions for silly books were soon in place:

1. Whoever was in the group at the time of the reading of a silly book participated in the reading.

In fact, when Nick tried to read Riddles to the class without calling on children in the whole class share on November 9th, the class became angry and didn't want him to continue.

2. The books contain questions that demand a silly answer based upon word play.

For example, when Gwen, Brad and Nick talked about silly books in their small reading group on January 5th, they defined a riddle as "a question, and a good one is one you can't answer."

3. Silly books are specifically for children.

The first graders saw riddles as part of childhood, outgrown by adults. When Ethan, Paul and TJ talked about riddles in their small group reading conference on January 13th, they talked about adults and riddles. Ethan said, "I like telling riddles to my mother, because she never knows them." TJ replied, "Of course not. She's a grown-up." Paul explained further, "She probably knew them when she was a kid but now she forgot."

Figure 38:
Silly Books

(both ***Riddles*** and ***Silly Riddle Book*** have no author listed)

	October	***November***	***December***	***January***
whole class		Jimmy (11/2) ***Riddles***	Ashley (12/8) ***Silly Riddle Book***	
		Nick (11/9) ***Riddles***		
small group	Nick (10/29) ***Riddles***	Joshua (11/5) ***Riddles***	Peter (12/3) ***Riddles***	Gwen (1/7) ***Silly Riddle Book***
		Bruce (11/6) ***Riddles***		Ethan (1/13) ***Riddles***
		Ming (11/13) ***Riddles***		
individual reading work	Nick (10/26) ***Riddles***	Bruce (11/2) ***Riddles***		Gwen (1/5) ***Silly Riddle Book***
	Eugene (10/26) ***Silly Riddle Book***	Jimmy (11/2) ***Riddles***		Ethan (1/11) ***Riddles***
		Ming (11/12) ***Riddles***		Susan (1/19) ***Riddles***

The rise of the silly books genre in some ways parallels the rise of the scary books genre. Many of the children came into first grade already fascinated by wordplay and rhyme. Like the scary books, the silly books are open to the entire class. Even though not all children can read the riddles, they can all memorize at least a few. Reading ability isn't a critical issue with the books, since the text is practiced and shared orally. Children of lower reading abilities who share the riddle books receive help from the rest of the class, since their classmates provide half of the text when they answer the riddles.

Though the two riddle books charted on the previous page served as archetypes for the silly books genre, other books soon found a place within the genre. These include Danger and A Monster Sandwich by Joy Cowley. Like the riddle books, the story lines are built of these books are built upon rhymes and wordplay.

The scary and silly book genres unite the class as a community of readers. Everyone can be a part of these genres--scary books have a wide range of reading levels, and silly books depend upon whole class sharing sessions, where everyone can participate. These genres develop within the specific context of first grade life, reflecting the rituals, concerns and pleasures of these young students.

VI. LIVING ON THE SOCIAL EDGE: A CASE STUDY OF BRAD

Field Notes Excerpt (11/30/87)

Brad and Ming are sitting next to each other
Brad. What should I write now. Oh yeah. I had some crackers at Graham's. I had some graham crackers at Graham's Graham gave me the flu
Ming. I know you wrote that.
Brad So tell me a joke (playfully falls out of chair onto floor)
Ming. Brad, are you too crazy for to be in school?
[Brad nods yes]
Ming. I thought so. I knew you were too weird.
Brad I'm gonna make a bite out of the cracker
Ming. I knew you were weird.

In this scene from my field notes, Brad physically demonstrates his social position in the class. Brad is at the edge of the class socially, and at times almost "falls out of the picture" of the classroom community. Ming on the other hand, has the social savvy to tell others when they are "too weird," because she swims in the social mainstream of this class.

In earlier chapters, I've presented whole class and small group analyses of how genres arise in this class. In this section, I will "adjust the lens" to give another view of genre development. Case studies of individual children have long been the bedrock of process research. The seminal studies of Graves (1973) and Emig (1971) are often cited as the forerunners to current qualitative studies of literacy processes. Both researchers used case study methods.

My case studies will concentrate on how Brad interacts with others in the class. In keeping with LeFevre's "new fiction of the collective," the

genres used by Brad will be reflected in the ways he interacts with others in the class.

In Interpretive Conventions, Mailloux (1982) presents a scheme for analyzing conventions within a culture. Understanding conventions within any literary community is critical for genre study, because conventions are the roots of genre. As conventions become formalized into regular and predictable clusters, genres emerge. Mailloux's "Typology of Conventions" begins with the analysis of conventions within an individual text, than moves into authorial, literary, linguistic and social modes:

Figure 39: Mailloux's Typology of Conventions

Social

Ligusitic

Literary

Authorial

Within Individual Works

I've revised Mailloux's typology for considering Brad's conventions, and the genres which emerge from these conventions.

Figure 40: Typology for Brad's Conventions

Collective in and Around Texts

Individual Outside of Texts

Individual In Texts

My analysis of Brad begins with the conventions and genres within the texts he writes. I then look at collective conventions and genres within the class which were used by Brad. After looking at relationships between Brad and the class' conventions within texts, I will also consider conventions outside of texts. My earlier analyses of flower, ghostbuster, "scary" and "silly" genres show the importance of these conventions in shaping conventions within the texts.

Personal Conventions Within Texts

Brad was a solemn first grader during the first week of school. His wide blue eyes were even wider than normal, and I imagined if I could see through his neck that his throat was almost pinched shut. He was shy and nervous, and this shyness appealed to Pat. During the second week, she remarked, "If there was one student that I could put in my pocket and carry home with me, it would be Brad."

I, too, found Brad's personality appealing. But this didn't make him easy to deal with as a case study. Brad often didn't like to answer the questions I asked him as he worked. Pat also noticed that he has a tendency to 'black out"--to suddenly ignore what's being said or done around him. On more than one occasion he drifted off right in the middle of an interview. Many of the interactions with Brad which I recorded in my field notes are similar to this exchange:

Field Notes Excerpt (9/15/87)

I walk over to Brad holding a book.
Brad: I already picked the book I wanted.
Brenda: Well, how did you know that was the book you wanted?
Brad: Cuz.
Brenda: Did you see someone else read it?

Brad: No
Brenda: [nervously] Well, that is a nice book, isn't it?
[Brad turns back to book]

Yet Brad's frequent indifference to my questions and presence was also a strength in the study. I could sit closely by and record his interactions, without Brad adapting his behavior because of my proximity to him.

In the first weeks of observation, Brad developed a number of personal conventions in his writing which he maintained throughout the the data collection period. Brad's dog, Dickens, showed up in many different texts:

Figure 41: Dickens in Brad's Writing

In responses at whole class reading and writing shares, Brad would either give the stock response "I like the pictures," or he mentioned his dog:

Excerpt from Writing Share Transcript (9/10/87)

[Megan has shared "Brown Shaggy Dog" story and is taking comments and questions]
Megan: Brad?
Brad: Whenever I don't eat all my eggs my mom gives them to my dog.

Excerpt from Reading Share Transcript (9/10/87)

Pat has just read "The Blue Ribbon Puppy" and is taking comments and questions.
Pat: Brad.
Brad: [mumbles]
Pat: What? I couldn't hear you.
Brad: I have a dog.
Pat: Oh, you have a dog? What's his name?
Brad: Dickens.

Another convention which appeared in Brad's texts were pictures with many dots and slashes in them. Brad enjoyed hitting the pencil to the page, and creating action from the movement. In one drawing during the third week of the September, the dots and slashes are ants:

Figure 42: Ant Dots and Slashes

As Brad writes, he says:
"These are ants, ants coming out of the hill, lookit, all the ants, ants, tons of ants coming.

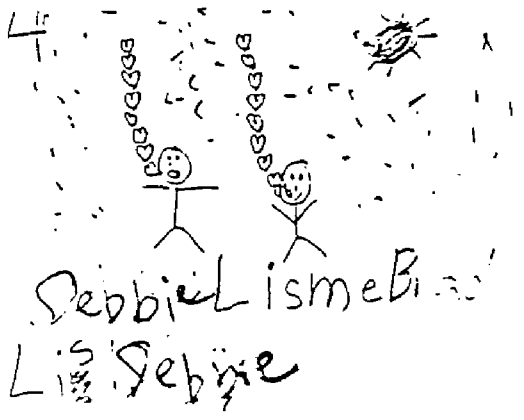
But on another day in October, the dots are snow:

Figure 43: Snow Dots

Brad's oral text:
Snow falling all over this page, this snow falling, it's falling ahhhh! It's really cold, snow snow snow . . .

Still later in October, the dots surround Brad and his lady love, Debbie:

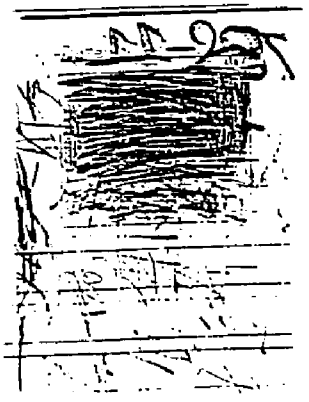
Figure 44: Brad and Debbie Dots



Brad's oral text:
Can't tell what this is, it's really funny though, this book is too funny, don't look.

When Brad used his "dots and slashes" convention in his "Look What Happened to Rotten Jack" book, he was disturbed by the results:

Figure 45: Rotten Jack Dots and Slashes



Brad's oral text:

Fire, fire, Jack looks like he's in a fire. Pieces pieces everywhere, pieces in my words, on the words those yucky pieces.

Oh dear, I think this is the worst page I've ever made. This is the messiest page ever.

Brad seemed to realize with the "Rotten Jack" book that the dots and slashes page was more permanent than the pages written during morning writing time. The messy page, a product of play with the pencil, couldn't be separated from the rest of the text, or shoved to the back of his writing folder.

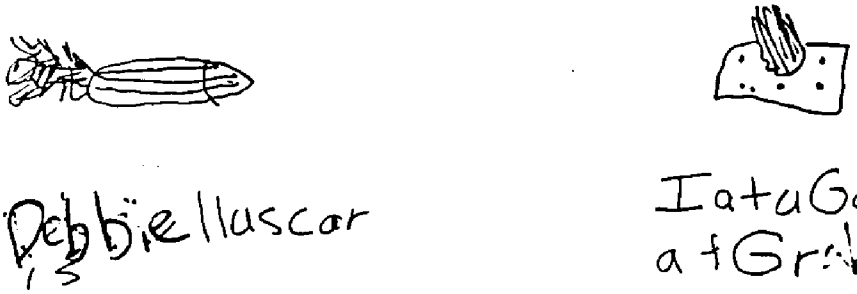
Another convention that appeared randomly throughout Brad's written work was a drawing of Brad or Dickens, with the word "Wow"

coming out of his mouth in a word bubble. Brad told me he said "wow" in these places "because it's like wow, yippee, it's fun":

Figure 46: "Wow" Images in Brad's Texts

Beyond the random conventions of Dickens' presence, dots and slashes, and the "wow" man, Brad developed a genre which was eventually attempted by others in the class. In two books, "Debbie and Me" and "Graham and Me," Brad creates a narrative of visiting a friend's house, playing with the friend, and eating food at the friend's house. The food is represented by a drawing of the item being eaten (i.e. a graham cracker in the "Graham and Me" story; a carrot in the "Debbie and Me" story).

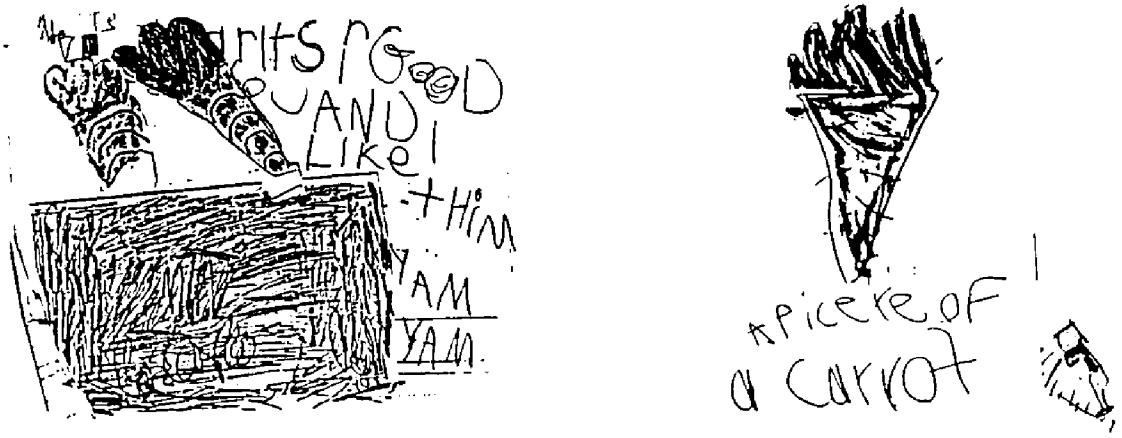
Figure 47: Representations of Food in Brad's Writing



Both the story lines and the conventions of these stories were imitated. Debbie attempted a "Brad and Me" story, Kelly wrote a "Debbie and Me"

story, and many children put carrots or other representations of food in their stories.

Figure 48: Representation of Food in Other Students' Writing



Personal Conventions Outside of Texts

Brad remained an isolate throughout the data collection period on all of the writing sociograms, and two out of three reading sociograms. Yet Brad appeared to be much more popular than the other consistent isolate, Bruce. Brad was much more a part of the mainstream of the classroom community than Bruce. He had friends in the class, was invited to the homes of classmates and seemed to understand the conventions developing within the class. It was difficult for me to understand why Brad continued to appear as an isolate on sociograms.

After many hours of reviewing Brad's interactions with students, I believe Brad's personal conventions, outside of texts, are the determining factors in his isolate status. He is not "isolated" in the traditional sense of being ostracized. But he isn't someone the children consciously would choose to work with.

One of Brad's conventions which affects his work with others is his leisurely pace in finding a seat and getting to work in the morning. The children begin to filter into the room at 8:35 in the morning, and after finding folders, greeting Pat and giving her notes, chatting with friends and finding a seat, they begin to work. Most children have found a seat and started writing by 8:45. In contrast, Brad usually doesn't find his seat until 8:50, or even later. He is slow and methodical about taking off his outside clothes. Sometimes, he is so distracted by something he sees when he first enters the room that he doesn't even take off his coat until someone reminds him during whole group sharing.

In William Corsaro's (1981) study of peer culture in a nursery school, he found that children expected peers to be present at the start of play activities. A child who tried to join in on games or activities after they had begun was almost invariably rebuffed, even if the child was popular or a "best friend" of someone playing the game.

Brad is "out of the action" on many days almost before the day has begun. The five or ten minutes of group writing he misses many mornings are the times when children determine where they will sit, who they will sit with, and what they will write about. By the time Brad tries to find a seat, the "games" have begun with the players already determined.

Another personal convention which inhibited Brad's popularity was his violation of others' "space." There are appropriate times for hugging and touching others in this class. Many times I notice that the children hug and kiss each other during the transition periods of the day--as they head for the share area, line up to go to a special or out for recess, or first enter the classroom. In contrast, Brad would hug or kiss friends within work periods. While I was interviewing Graham in the middle of a work period in late

February, Brad twice walked up to Graham's seat, hugged him from behind his seat, and kissed him. By this point in the year, Graham was so accustomed to this behavior that he didn't even acknowledge Brad. Instead, he continued his conversation with me without missing a beat. Debbie also was the object of Brad's affection in and outside of work periods.

Brad also violated other's space in a different way. During work times, the children expect that they can chat with whoever is sitting next to them or near them. This is particularly true during morning writing time. Instead of being to close to others in his interactions, at times Brad was too distant. He would ignore direct questions, or "black out" as others tried to converse from him.

Field Notes Excerpt (9/28/87)

Brad and Gwen are working next to each other.
Brad: I'm gonna write this is me freeeezzzzzzinnng.
Gwen: Brad, do you know how to spell this is? T H I S space I S.
Brad: [talking to self, ignores Gwen] Wait a minute, wait a minute.
Gwen: Do you have a red [crayon]?
Brad: Yeah. [doesn't give it to her]
Gwen: We both have the same color, we both have the same color. What is that?
Brad: [still talking to self, ignoring Gwen] This is what it really looks like.
Brenda: What really looks like?
Brad: My place. ju-be, ju-be, ju-be what should I write?
[only dashes and dots in picture]

Brad ignores Gwen and me when we try to talk to him, instead referring vaguely to what he is doing when he writes.

One other convention strongly affected other students' perceptions of Brad. During morning writing time, Brad usually "campaigned" for one of two tasks--either to be designated "the lunch person," or to be allowed to share his writing during whole class sharing times. The person who had the "job can" controlled the assignment of the "lunch person"; the person who was assigned the "sign-up job" was in charge of determining who would

share during the designated times throughout the day. By October, the class informally had established the convention that it was "rude" to ask for a job, or to share. The more Brad lobbied for these jobs, the less likely he was to get them:

Excerpt from Field Notes (11/30/87)

Claudia is sign-up person.
Brad: Please, please can I share?
Claudia: No. You no ask. You ask, you no share.
Brad: Oh please...
Claudia: No.

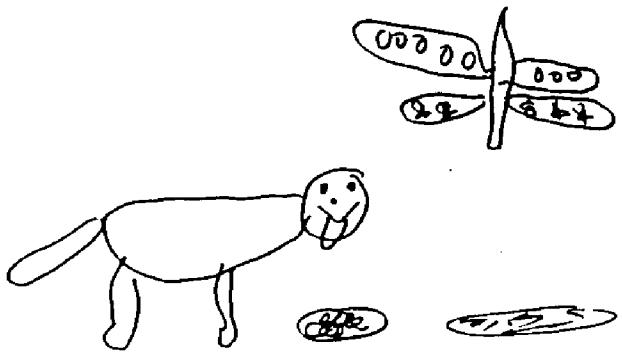
Brad did little to adapt these personal conventions during the course of the research. In turn, the class didn't adapt their perceptions of Brad as a person they wouldn't want to work with.

Collective Conventions In and Around Texts

Like the random presence of dots and slashes or the wow man, conventions from the classroom community would appear randomly throughout Brad's work. In an earlier section, I showed how Brad imitated Megan's "Brown Shaggy Dog" story. After Megan shared her "Brown Shaggy Dog" story, Brad put a word bubble similar to Megan's in the page he wrote about Dickens the next day.

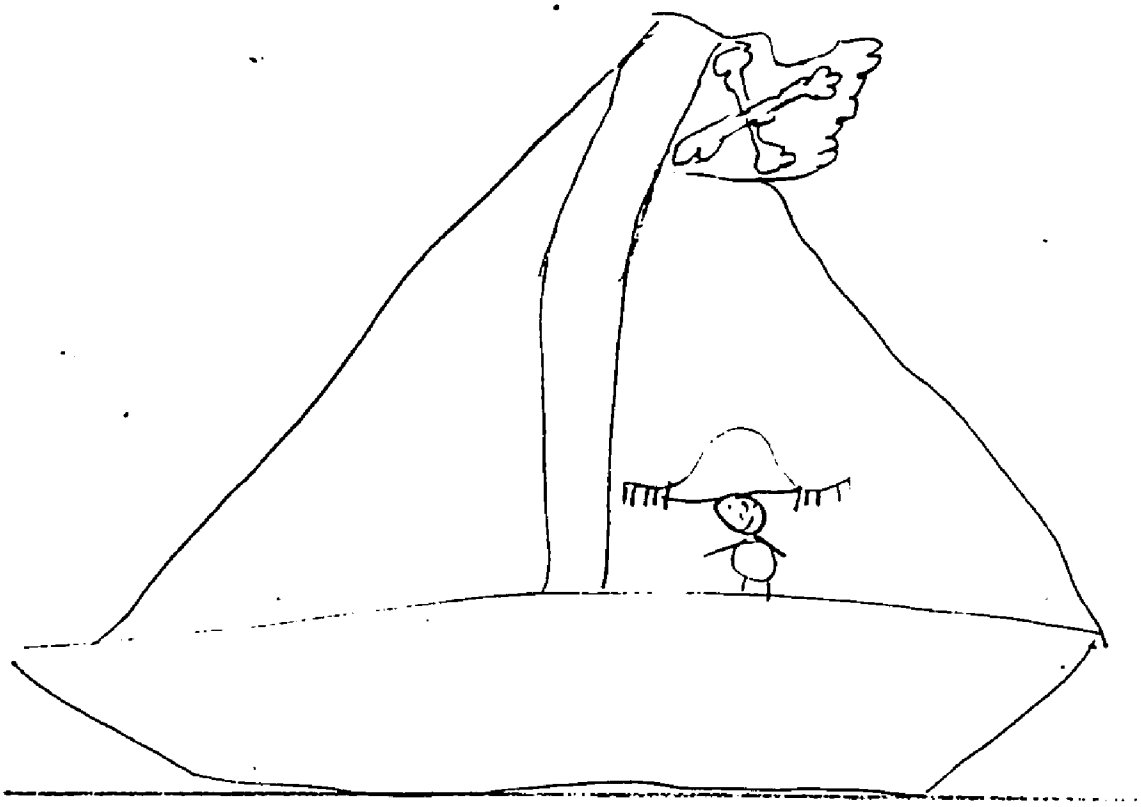
Early in September, Pat set up butterfly displays in the room, read books about butterflies, and had chrysalises hatching in the science area. A butterfly appeared in Brad's text about Dickens, even though it didn't appear in Brad's written narrative or oral explanation of the work:

Figure 49: Butterfly in Brad's Writing



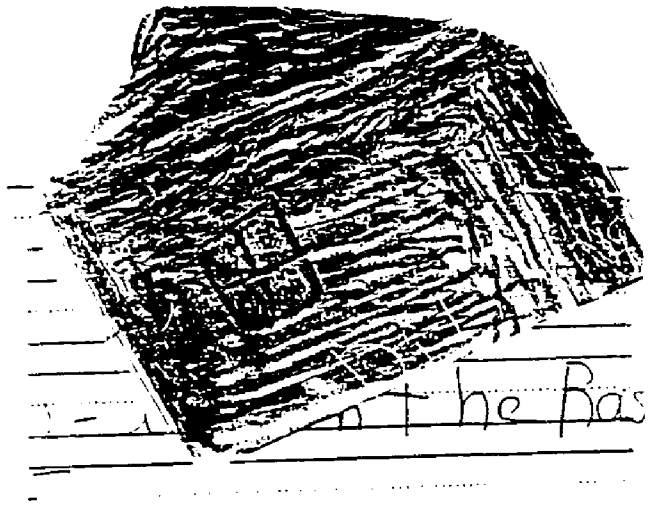
Brad also imitated genres established by others in the room. Nick's boat book, a series of pictures of different kinds of boats with his family in them, was attempted by Joshua and Brad. When Brad did a similar book, he included many different kinds of boats. Like Nick, he didn't write words beneath many of the pictures:

Figure 50: Excerpt from Brad's Boat Book



Brad made a pop-up witch book during the height of the pop-ups popularity. When he did a pop-up Christmas story, he showed his understanding of how pop-ups work. I talked to him as he taped a pop-up house onto the page:

Figure 51: Pop-up House in Santa Story



Brad's text with me as he writes.
Brad: This is the pop-up.
Brenda: To show how big the house is?
Brad: No, to show the house moving. When Santa goes down the chimney, the house starts flying to Mars.

Brad adopts the convention of the pop-up representing movement, and his text reflects the collective definition of the pop-up book.

But Brad in many ways remained an enigma for me throughout the study. He attempted unsuccessfully at times to adopt the collective conventions of the class.

For example. Brad, like others in the class, loved a secret or a mystery. He attempted to create one for the class one day in early October. He mixed characters from "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood" and "Dr. Who" (two television shows), and tried to see if classmates could follow his train of thought:

Excerpt from Field Notes (10/12/87)

Brad is walking from desk to desk.
Brad (to Debbie): Do you know who Ramona is?
Debbie: No.
Brad: Good. (to Kelly) Do you know who Ramona is?

Kelly: No.
Brad: Good. (to Sally) Do you know who Canine is?
Sally: No.
Brad: Good. (continues through class)

The class was confused by his questions, and many were disinterested. But Brad choose to share the story (two pictures with no words) during whole class share, with these results:

Tape Transcript Whole Class Share (10/12/87)

Brad: I don't think anybody know who that is.
Child: I do.
TJ: Canine.
Ethan: Yeah, Canine.
Ming: I know cause I saw that.
Brad: Corny.
TJ: I didn't get to see that.
Child: I didn't see.
Child: I didn't see.
Brad: Corny! Comments or questions?
Claudia: Where'd you get the idea?
Brad: I don't know. Ming?
Ming: Umm, what part do you like in the book?
Brad: I like the cat.
Ming: I like, you know that um Canine. That's a nice picture.
Brad: Gwen?
Gwen: Why didn't you color the pictures in?
Brad: I don't know. Kelly?
Kelly: I like the part where you said about Corny.
Brad: Jimmy?
Jimmy: I like the pictures.
Brad: Graham?
Graham: On one of the Dr. Who shows I just saw recently, just recently, well, they had this castle. And Canine was trying to drew through the wall, a brick wall, with his laser. Dr. Who said, "A gerbil with a ink pen could, a gerbil with an ink pen would be faster than you!"
Brad: Mrs. McLure?
Pat: Brad, I guess I haven't seen some of these shows. Could you tell me more about your pages in your book? Cause I don't understand some of them.
Ethan: I know, cause you're not a childr. . .uh, kid.
Pat: I've never seen those characters before.
Brad: Dogs watch Dr. Who. Even kids.
Ethan: I like to watch it.
Pat: Well, which characters are from Dr. Who that you showed us? Were all of your pictures. . .
Ethan: Corny wasn't from Dr. Who.
Pat: Well, which characters are from Dr. Who that you showed us? Were all of your pictures. . .
Brad: Only this one.
Pat: Just Canine? And what about the other pictures?

Brad: Mr. Rogers?
Pat: The other pages are all from Mr. Rogers? And that's the first one about the castle is from Mr. Rogers? And then th other page is from Mr. Rogers too? Do you watch those shows, Brad?
Sarah: I watch Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers both.
Brad: Susan?
Susan: I like your reading.
Brad: Thank you. Bruce?
Bruce: I like the pictures.
Brad: Joshua?
Joshua: I like. . .(long pause)
Brad: Megan?
Megan: Why did you write about Mr. Rogers?
Brad: It's how he did stuff. TJ?
TJ: I like the story and I like how you made the pictures in the book and I also like how you made Corny's factory.
Pat: Thank you, Brad.

Brad clearly misjudged his ability to engage the class with this story. They are at a loss to respond with anything more than stock comments and questions.

Yet the very next time he shared, Brad showed a keen awareness of many of these collective conventions. Later in October, he knew he was going to share his Halloween story with the whole group in ten minutes. As he worked, he knew exactly what he needed to do to have a story which was well-received by the class:

Field Notes Excerpt (10/20/87)

Brad is working on a Halloween story. JR has just signed him up to share in 10 minutes.
Brad: I want to make it pop-ups like the others [in the class]. Gonna share this.
Brenda: Is this book going to be just pop-ups?
Brad: No, more words so I have more comments and questions. If you have more words, you get more. I like having comments and questions.
Brenda: Do you have any favorite comments or questions?
Brad: How'd you get the idea. I love How'd you get the idea.
Brenda: If someone asks that, what will you say?
Brad: I don't know. I like that comment or question, but I don't know what I'd say. [puts pop-up witch on page] Now I'm going to make a clown. Oh, I'm running out of time.
Brenda: What are you going to do?
Brad: Words. Gonna share, so words. I don't know if I have enough time for all these words. I wish I had time to make a great pirate, but I don't.
Ming walks by and stops.
Ming: Are you going to make an old-fashioned book? I mean a published one?
Brad: I'm never doing an old-fashioned one.

Brad concentrates his energy on the share, and he knows words, pop-ups and colorful pictures will lead to a responsive share. His Halloween share did generate more positive responses than the "Dr. Who/Mr. Rogers" story.

Brad by this point seemed to know what he needed to do to share successfully on the one day a week when it would be his turn to share. The question, for Brad, became what to do on the other four days of the week. Graves (1985) has documented the normal development of sense of audience in children. Children first ignore audiences, then become overly conscious of them, and "finally get back to a balance between their own voices and their audiences." (pp. 194)

October and early November found Brad at the height of his interest in audience response. So what's a kid to do at a time like this, especially a kid like Brad? Some of his personal conventions inhibit his ability to work with other children during morning writing times. All he wants to do with his writing is share it with the whole class, but he's only allowed to do that during a small portion of the week. He understands collective conventions, to the point where he can provoke a positive response from students. During many mornings during this period, Brad seemed at a loss after attempting to get the job can person to allow him to sign up. He was quieter during writing time, his withdrawal due in part to a virus that kept him out of school for almost a week.

I think Brad at this point was searching for a way to fit within the classroom community. Mythologist Joseph Campbell was well-known for his research of folklore surrounding the search for the Holy Grail. He found an important pattern in the quests of the knights:

> Whenever a knight of the Grail tried to follow a path made by someone else he would go altogether astray. Where there is a way or a path it is someone else's footsteps. Each of us has to find his own way. You find your path in your dreams, images, and actions, and you'll learn them after you pass them. (in Ferguson, 1987)

In trying to integrate his own conventions with the collective conventions, every student tries to find a kind of "truth" for how they might work with others. In struggling to fit in and find a place through performing for the class in whole class shares, I believe Brad may have been trying too hard to follow the well-worn paths of others, and he lost his way for a while. Earlier themes and conventions which were important in his work disappeared. Dickens was gone, as well as the dot pages and the "wow man." Brad wrote fast and furiously on the days he knew he would share. But he seemed to write with the sole purpose of pleasing others with conventions like "pop-ups" which others had created. On days he wasn't going to share, little if any writing was done.

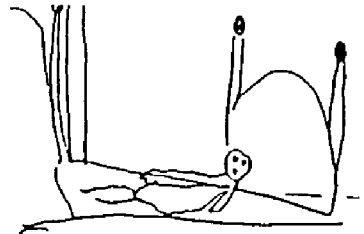
In late October, Brad decided to lobby for doing "an old-fashioned" book--a published book. His energies were refocused. The contents of the book show the turn of Brad's writing. There is a fine line between experimentation and aimlessness, and Brad seemed to have crossed it. Pat refused to help Brad publish the book until he made it "make sense," and then she helped him to edit the book. The focus of Brad's efforts was turned from the whole class share, to creating a story that made sense.

Another turning point for Brad came when he wrote his "Graham and Me" story (see Figure 50). Brad admired Graham, and frequently reported to Graham about the progress of the book. The story grew out of a visit Brad made to Graham's house. Brad seemed almost surprised by students'

positive response to the story at share, and revised and expanded it after their comments. As I noted above, the story spawned a new genre and a number of conventions attempted by others in the class. Rather than the imitator, Brad found himself in the position of being imitated.

It is March now, and Brad continues to mark and set his own path through first grade. His latest lobbying efforts involve getting his "Santa Going to Mars" story published. Pat finds it an odd book, and she's surprised he's chosen it over other more popular books (like "Graham and Me") to be published. "Still," says Pat, "If that's what Brad wants. . ." and she shrugs her shoulders. As Brad sets his path, Pat and others challenge Brad's conventions. Many times these challenges are unsuccessful, but at this point, Brad seems happy with his personal conventions and the collective class conventions. He seems to have found a path in this class, even if the path at times veers onto the far edges of the social collective.

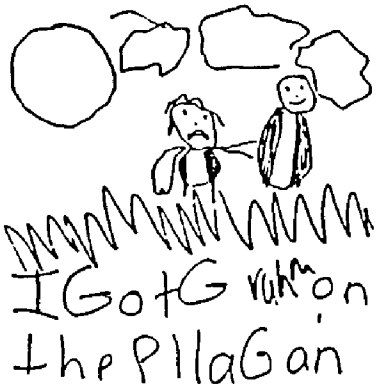
Figure 52: Graham and Me Story



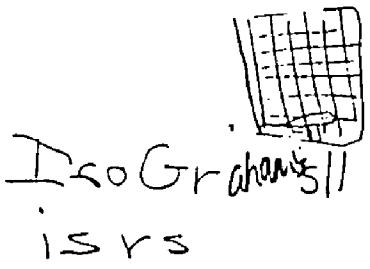
Graham gave me a flu.

Because I went to his house.

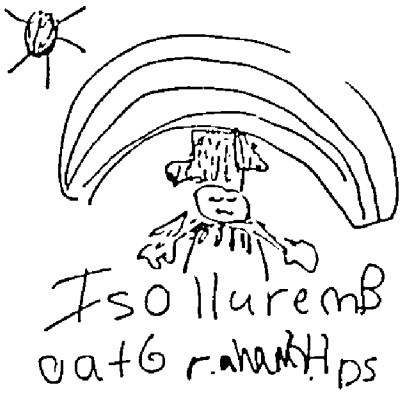
Graham's mom is calling my mom.



I got Graham on the playground.

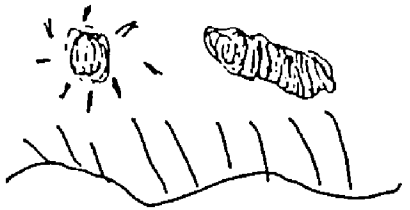


I saw Graham's lizards.



I saw a rainbow at Graham's house.

I ate a graham cracker at Graham's house.



I played at Graham's house.

VII. GENRE, PROCESS AND QUALITY INSTRUCTION: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, the character Phaedrus agonizes over the quality of his instruction of freshman composition students. The word "quality" haunts Phaedrus as he attempts to define it with his students, and demonstrate it through their writing. In the process, he argues with himself over defining it:

> Quality. . .you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. . .But some things *are* better than others, that is, they have more quality. . .but what's the "betterness"?
>
> (pp. 107)

Genre theorists debate the "betterness" of texts. Instructional theorists debate the "betterness" of teaching methods. In recent months, process instruction at all grade levels has undergone a series of attacks revolving around the issue of quality.[1] Issues of quality involve both the texts produced in process programs, and process instructional methods. In considering the implications of this study, I would like to explore these issues of quality. Specifically, I will consider the value of the different genres read and written throughout this first grade literacy program, and critiques of the instructional methods utilized in producing these texts.

Thus far, I have shown how Pat McLure's classroom has two distinct writing programs: "morning writing time," in which children control many of the tasks and their interactions, and focused writing tasks (lists, science

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[1] For examples of attacks, see Smagorinsky (1987), Applebee (1986), and Hillocks (1984; 1986).

journals, etc.) which Pat primarily controls. The reading curriculum has elements which parallel both writing programs, but it also includes unique elements. Genres that are written, read and analyzed in the reading and writing curricula are in many respects dependent upon the different ways that Pat and the students interact in different elements of the literacy program.

The morning writing time precedes work in Pat's room. "Work" doesn't begin in the class until after morning writing, and the teacher doesn't direct the class as a whole until this writing is completed. During morning writing time, children control what writing they will do, what materials they will use, how and when they will work with others, how much writing they will produce, whether or not they will read their work to the class, whether or not they will have publishing deadlines.

George Hillocks (1984) would describe this type of writing curriculum as "natural process." In his meta-analysis and critique of writing models, he challenges writing theorists who advocate the kind of instruction utilized in Pat's "morning writing time." He writes:

> Although the research is incomplete, it does provide clear direction for practice. We know that the teaching of traditional grammar has virtually no impact on the quality of writing and cannot be expected to have. We know that free writing when it is disconnected from knowledge related to data and form is of little use, even when coupled with peer feedback. We know that the traditional study of model pieces of writing has effects somewhat greater than free writing. We know that the most effective approaches to teaching writing involve students in learning how to examine and analyze data and how to use formal knowledge.
>
> Hillocks (1986, pp. 90)

Hillocks defines quality in a number of ways, including inter-rater analysis, fluency of writing (words written per minute) and sophistication of linguistic forms utilized by the writer. Based upon his meta-analysis, he advocates an "environmental" approach to writing instruction. In an environmental approach, the teacher gives brief lessons on form and content and directs students to attempt specific forms. Students contribute in various ways to the program, notably through work in small groups and whole class discussions.

Applebee (1986) challenges Hillock's findings and terminology, even as he supports a number of Hillock's conclusions:

> Hillocks interprets his findings as a condemnation of process-oriented approaches because he finds that classrooms using an environmental mode of instruction do better than those using a natural process mode. Hillocks' argument involves a semantic sleight of hand, however, that can produce a serious misinterpretation of what his data mean.
>
> (pp. 104)

In reinterpreting Hillocks' data, Applebee argues that Hillocks actually is promoting a form of process instruction:

> The "environmental" mode that Hillocks champions is itself a version of process-oriented instruction and draws on the panoply of techniques he seems to be attacking. What differs in "environmental" instruction is that materials and problems are orchestrated by the teacher in order "to engage students with each other in *specifiable processes important to some particular aspect of writing.*" "Environmental" instruction is in fact a series of process-oriented activities structured to avoid at least some of the problems of implementation [of natural process] . . .rather than an alternative to the pedagogical trends of the past decade, it represents a natural extension of them. Indeed, "environmental" instruction in Hillocks' terminology might better be labeled "structured process" (in the seemingly obvious contrast to the "*natural* process" mode he does include).
>
> (pp. 105)

From this point on, I will use Applebee's terms of "natural" and "structured" process in considering both Applebee's and Hillock's critiques. I think Applebee and Hillocks would cite other tasks in Pat's writing curriculum outside of morning writing time as more productive, more focused on tangible skills, and more clearly scaffolded by the teacher than tasks completed during this time.

For example, in the pumpkin unit, the children go through a series of tasks that lead to the pumpkin journals. These tasks are all constructed by Pat. Each child brings a pumpkin in from home, decorates it, designs a face to carve on a large pumpkin, carves the pumpkin together, and carefully notes the decay of the pumpkin in the days following the carving. In teaching the children the form and style of science writing, Pat keeps them on task and within the form by discussing as a group what observations qualify as "true information." The children learn to make specific, detailed observations. Based upon my observations of the children at work in these journals and analysis of the journals themselves, I am fairly certain that the sophistication of the word structures, and the number of words written per minute during this task is much higher than production during morning writing time.

But I think there are many dangers in conceiving this kind of writing task as a natural extension or evolution of the morning writing time. Applebee might highlight this task as the kind of structured writing that could replace morning writing time. If "structured" process tasks were the only kind of writing tasks in Pat's curriculum, much of what the children gain through the morning "natural process" program might be lost. The two programs are separate in part because there are different goals within these

programs, and the programs reflect different conceptions of what writing is for. I will explore notions of "quality" and "process" as they relate to instruction in genre while contrasting Pat's program with the "structured" programs proposed by Hillocks and Applebee.

Hillocks is specific in outlining how teachers might go about presenting and fostering genres. He demonstrates how a teacher might effectively teach children to write fables, based upon his research findings:

> Before asking children to write a fable, for example, she would have asked them to read several fables over a period of time and then asked them to generalize about the form, particularly the relationships among the key elements (for example, the animal characters usually represent some abstract human characteristic, often an undesirable one such as greed or excessive pride). She might have asked students to revise or complete inadequate fables using techniques suggested by Sager, asking them to think of morals, elaborations of how a prideful mouse might act, what such a mouse might say in a given situation, and so forth. She might then have asked children to think of human characteristics that annoy them (for example, "saying bad things about you behind your back," "thinking you're better than anyone else"). She might have asked children to think of animals that might be used to represent each such characteristic: a hypocritical cat, canary, or giraffe; an egotistical monkey, ant, or toad. The teacher might then have asked youngsters to work in groups listing foolish things an egotistical monkey, ant, or toad might do, what might happen as a result, what the animal might learn, and so forth. In short, before making the writing assignment, the teacher would help students develop the substantive, formal and procedural knowledge necessary to writing a fable. Finally, she would have provided opportunities for students to share their ideas and writing before producing a finished draft.
>
> The fable, of course, is one form that most people never write outside school. But the instruction involved in helping students write effective fables is parallel to that involved in helping them learn to write effective reports, analyses, or arguments. Until curricula in composition begin to prepare

> students with the necessary types of knowledge, improvements in student writing will continue to come slowly and painfully. (pp. 91)

I've included this lengthy explanation by Hillocks because it so clearly demonstrates what his structured writing program might look like, and the roles students, teachers and implicitly, researchers might have in such a program. Many theorists and practitioners who have examined Hillocks' general principles for structured writing programs notice the presence of small group work, class sharing, and student input and believe the program in many ways parallels the "natural process" programs in numerous classrooms being researched. But when a specific application is given (i.e."how a teacher might instruct students to write fables") the differences are clearly evident.

Contrast Hillocks' explanation of teaching a genre to Sally's attempt at a genre, poetry, during morning writing time in Pat's room. Sally identified books of poetry as a genre she liked to read in mid-September. Her parents often read poems to her at home. Sally began to write a series entitled "Poems About Thanksgiving" in late November. When asked why she decided to write poems, she explained:

> Well, I knew I wanted to write about Thanksgiving, and other people are writing about it too. But I started thinking about what I know about Thanksgiving, and I only know these short things, little things like what you eat and there were pilgrims. So I thought I could write poems, because that would make each little thing separate. And I put "next poem" on the pages to separate, so people wouldn't think it was supposed to be all one thing.

While working on "Poems About Thanksgiving," Sally experienced a small crisis. Megan, a girl Sally disliked, began writing "Riddles About Thanksgiving." This was distressing to Sally:

Excerpt from Field Notes (12/2/87)

Sally is working on her "Poems About Thanksgiving" book.
Sally: Yeah, except I'm not done yet and Megan's writing "Riddles About Thanksgiving," and everyone's going to think she wrote it first.
Brenda: But her's is riddles, not poems.
Sally: It doesn't matter, because it looks the same, it's short with a picture, and it says "next riddle" instead of "next poem."
Brenda: Has Megan read hers during sharing time?
Sally: No.
Brenda: Well, maybe you could sign up and read yours first.
Sally: No, because I don't read mine until I'm finished. Megan reads hers in the middle, so I know she'll read hers first and get the credit.

Sally was shy throughout the fall about reading her writing to the class before she had completed a story or booklet. But she decided to read her incomplete "Poems About Thanksgiving" the next day, in order to get "credit" for her innovation--a book of poems. When she shared her book of poems, the class focused on a deer head on a plate in one of the pictures. They discussed whether people still really ate deer, and if it was a "real" picture or "fake" (i.e.Would people serve deer on a plate like that?).

There are many things that Sally learned through attempting a new, self-selected genre. She knew she didn't have enough "stuff," enough background knowledge, to write a "story" (or at least, her conception of a story). She was able to test out a form she had first heard and read at home.

Sally also had to balance her own interests and work conventions with the conventions of the classroom community. Even though she preferred to share her writing after it was complete, she had to balance that preference with the knowledge that children wouldn't realize that this innovation in form was hers if she didn't share immediately. Sally also looked beyond

surface titles and features, noting that in Megan's and her case, "Riddles About Thanksgiving" and "Poems About Thanksgiving" were similar enough in their conventions to be considered the same form by students. The talk during the share is focused on some of the class's interests which don't relate to this new form--details in pictures and contrasts between the Pilgrim's life and ours.

Hillocks' hypothetical teacher would present a unit for writing poems about Thanksgiving quite differently. Following the tenets of the fable scheme, the class might read, together over time a series of poems about Thanksgiving. They might next analyze what makes a poem a poem, relationships among elements like images, sounds, line length, and Thanksgiving content. She might then give them worksheets with Thanksgiving poems which were missing key elements--rhyming words, "turkey," "giving thanks," etc. She might then ask them to think about what they like best about Thanksgiving. In small groups, children might brainstorm for rhyming words and Thanksgiving themes. Finally, they would talk together about different poems they might write about Thanksgiving, and write them.

If this hypothetical classroom became real, and someone actually attempted a study where this procedure was undertaken, I wouldn't be surprised if first grade children could produce more sophisticated poems about Thanksgiving than those in Sally's book. After direct instruction from the teacher and focused exercises, these poems would likely include more surface and core features associated with poetry--rhyming words, striking and detailed imagery, metaphors and similes, line breaks, cohesion in theme from poem to poem. In short, the quality of the writing would likely be better, if Hillocks' meta-analysis and application has validity.

But I question whether the quality of the writing *experience* would be better. I also question how much the experience can or should be separated from the final product. The experience of writing during "morning writing time" is one of learning to work with others, of balancing personal conventions with group conventions, of writers finding genres to fit what they want to say. Hillocks argues that "the fable, of course, is one form that most people never write outside school. . .[but writing effective fables] is parallel to that involved in [helping students] to write effective reports, analyses, or arguments." The skills Sally uses in writing her "Poems About Thanksgiving" can also be transferred to writing effective reports, analyses, or arguments. Finding a form that fits the content, working through concerns about the best means of sharing information, and sorting through the differences and similarities in her writing and Megan's riddle book are also part of the training necessary to write in the genres Hillocks mentions. Gains in these skill areas cannot necessarily be measured through the text that appears on the page.

Even when these ancillary social and thinking skills are recognized, the quality of the writing remains an issue. The concept of "quality" in texts brings me back full circle to my initial theorizing of what genre study is and might be. I considered issues of canons, reader response, and "popular" literature. When Applebee and Hillocks discuss the quality of writing in various writing programs, I hear echoes of E.D. Hirsch. If written texts are taken out of the contexts in which they are written, objective measures (i.e. t-unit and inter-rater analyses) can be used to determine quality. As Langdon Elsbree (1982) notes, such structures limit our analyses and their implications for the larger culture students are a part of:

> . . .We require a mode or modes of analysis to help us see the narrative as part of a larger set of structures, not just literary forms or conventions (or even codes) but of the largest structure--human culture. We need to again realize that the making of stories--acting, telling, writing--and the experiencing of stories--watching, listening, reading--are both "art" and "life," are neither more nor less natural than other significant, distinctively human rituals.
>
> (pp. 5)

Reader response theorists such as Bleich (1984), Fish (1980), Rosenblatt (1978) and Iser (1980) long ago abandoned consideration of the quality of texts in isolation. Writing theorists who follow the reading theorists' lead, considering issues of interpretative communities (Fish), affective response (Bleich), and interaction of text and reader experience (Rosenblatt), might present radical alternatives to "objective" measures of quality, alternatives which begin to get at those difficult issue of links between "art" and "life."

Also at issue is the concept of the canon. In moving beyond individual texts, Hillocks and Applebee might question the quality of the genres conceived, invented and attempted during morning writing time. For every attempt at poetry, there were three attempts at a ghostbusters story. It could be argued that for all the thought refining and negotiation that goes on in developing a ghostbusters genre, the writing is too far removed from adult categorizations and functions of genre to be meaningful to children. Once again, the experience of the writing cannot be divorced from the writer. The children are learning to integrate their experiences and their concerns into the routines of school life. They are in the process of learning how to "get along" socially and academically within their school and home cultures. Their individual and collective genres are an exercise not only in form, but in learning to work with others. Genres like the ghostbusters and flower books link the children together as a community. Analyses of successful businesses

show the importance of collaborative work among individuals. Much of the writing done in business and industry is done collaboratively.

At the same time, Pat acknowledges the concerns expressed by Applebee and Hillocks through the writing curriculum attempted outside of morning writing time. By constraining genres and tasks, and providing tasks which explicitly link experiences to writing (i.e. carving pumpkins and writing about pumpkins, building snowmen and writing out directions), Pat is attempting to provide children with the skills and the experience with different conventions necessary for success in academic contexts. Attempts to develop the children's ability to write clearly, specifically, truthfully, and sequentially are evident throughout her structured writing tasks.

If we are to believe Applebee, these tasks are the oak tree which follow that acorn--morning writing time. I think the comparison is more that of apples and oranges. Paul Light (1979) has argued that child development should be marked through analyzing children's abilities to take on different roles. The roles of writers in these two writing programs are different. The ability of individual children to separate these roles in some ways mark their abilities to take on different writing tasks, and use their literacy for different purposes in life. Applebee would agree that any effective writing program should emphasize different roles and purposes for writers:

> Different tasks will pose different problems and require in turn somewhat different writing processes. . .Indeed, the universe of writing tasks, both in and out of school, is large and diverse. Essay exams require one set of approaches, research papers another. The journalist dictating a late-breaking story over the telephone writes in one way, the short story writer in another.
>
> (pp. 102)

There are differences between the roles and purposes of literacy in the reading and writing programs. The children's categorizations of their reading texts reflect different roles. The children are aware that they are in the process of learning to read, and so they are "workers", separating books into "easy" and "hard." categories. They are surprised and delighted by oral and written language, and as a playful community identify "silly" and "scary" books. They are aware that the adult world is different than theirs, and as they begin to understand adult conventions, "poems," "mysteries" and "nonfiction" become categories.

Morning writing time, structured writing tasks, and reading work in Pat's room could be seen as three distinct "instructional genres"--with different purposes, conventions, social and academic tasks evolving from each form. Within these instructional genres, issues of quality, response and method remain important, but they vary with the goals of the genre.

Blurring Genres and Process Basics

> . . .Rather than face an array of natural, fixed types divided by sharp qualitative differences, we more and more see ourselves surrounded by a vast, almost continuous field of various intended and diversely constructed works we can order only practically, relationally, and as our purposes prompt us. It is not that we no longer have conventions of interpretation; we have more than ever, built--often enough jerry-built--to accommodate a situation at once fluid, plural, uncentered and ineradicably untidy.
>
> Geertz (1973 pp.21)

In "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought," Clifford Geertz argues that the roles people play as part of our culture are becoming less defined He gives examples from literature, citing researcher and doctors who write like poets, essayists who could compete with the best

researchers, and novelists whose work defies any categorization. The means of analyzing these roles has also become blurred, as research "conventions of interpretation" are changing. Questions of roles and analysis will continue to be important in process theory, method, and research.

There are key elements in process instruction that form a kind of compass in mapping out this blurred landscape. Graves, Hansen (1985) and Hubbard (1985) have identified the key elements of process instruction to be the following:

1. Students need to given sufficient **time** to read and write texts.
2. Students need some control over **choice** of books and topics.
3. Students need **response** to their work.
4. Students need to be part of a classroom **community**.

These four elements--time, choice, response, and community--are the underlying tenets of any process literacy program. But I hadn't realized how often these elements conflict with each other until I began this study of genre and convention formation.

For example, Pat has a policy that no child has to share with the whole group if she doesn't want to. Some children don't share at all for the first few months of the year. Pat wants the children to have **choice** in her literacy program. But there is a trade-off with this policy. Hansen and Graves (1983) have documented the importance of children occupying "the author's chair" in order to become part of the writing **community** and to receive **response** from students. While the children may choose whether they share with the whole group or not, the choices they make can limit their role in the classroom community.

In assigning genres and conventions in her structured writing program, Pat limits the **choices** of the students. But the assignments enable

the class to work as a **community** around a single focused task. When Pat works with her students individually and collectively, she must balance these four tenets, weighing the benefits of sacrificing time for choice, response for community. Issues surrounding the balance of these tenets arise daily.

Pat's instructional genres reflect her training in process methods, her conception of how these four tenets might be balanced, and her personal values. She has always been very timid about sharing her writing with groups of people, and her empathy with the timid student influences her decisions concerning classroom procedures for sharing. Her segmentation of the literacy curriculum also reflects her personality. She is aware of the different personal and public roles within her own life. The sharp segmentation of work times in part mirrors the ways Pat segments time in her own life. The children within their own lives will develop "Pats, Pattys and Patricias"--different selves in different contexts. The curriculum reflects many contexts and roles for literacy.

This classroom provides no blueprint for introducing and fostering genres in students, nor would Pat want it to. The basic tenets of process instruction also provide no clear path for teachers in dealing with genre in their classrooms. Traditionally, researchers have controlled the conventions of instruction. Through various studies and results, university personnel convene, and through their analyses develop models of instruction for teachers. The evolution of an instructional method or "genre" parallels the evolution of the sonnet noted earlier. A researcher produces new results, an archetype for instruction or training. Subsequent researchers test out the model, ascribing credit to the original researcher, whether he wants it or not (i.e. "The Graves Method for Writing Instruction," "The Joyce Model for

Teacher Training"). The model is adapted and presented to teachers to be applied within the classroom only after the conventions within the model have been determined. Normally, the instructional genre quickly enters its period of decline as new models are presented and mandated for classrooms. In criticizing the way methods are adopted and discarded in schools, Dyson (1986) notes the role of the teacher as a "good shopper" in this view of instruction:

> Teachers are encouraged to select a "method" [to teach writing], preferably the latest method, as they would pick the freshest fruit from the bin. . . Rather than the gradual accumulation, integration, and re-shaping of knowledge and know-how in educational practice, there may be a swing from one methodological answer to another.
>
> (pp. 138)

Process teaching as an instructional genre has proven to be problematic for teachers and researchers. Within the model set forth in studies by the Writing Process Lab of the University of New Hampshire (1981, 1985) and studies adapted from this work, the roles of teachers, students and researchers are blurred. Teachers are encouraged to learn from their students, researchers are encouraged to be students, students are encouraged to be researchers and teachers, teachers are to do research in their own classrooms, and **everyone** is an evolving writer and reader. As the roles intersect and blur, students, teachers, and researchers all play a part in developing the conventions of this instructional genre. The conventions vary according to the players, the place, and the values of teachers and students within the instructional context.

The differences in the evolution of the process instructional model demand new methods of presentation and research. Numerous debates have

taken place over the role of quantitative and qualitative research. These debates are beyond the scope of this paper, but they reflect changes in research conventions.

A recent surge in critiques of process instruction in journals go beyond these methodological debates. At issue, I believe, is the break process instruction makes with traditional conceptions of the roles of researchers, teachers and students.

Beneath Hillocks' and Applebee's critiques of "natural" process are attempts to define the conventions of this process, validate a "structured process' model through the interaction of various research studies, and offer this model as the appropriate instructional genre for teachers and researchers to adopt. Providing a response to Hillocks' and Applebee's models is difficult, because models built around the key elements of process produce radically different classroom instructional methods. Like the genres conceived and created by the children in Pat's room, the genres of process instruction will vary among different communities of students, teachers and researchers conceiving and creating new means of balancing time, choice, response and community.

This issue came up recently when a student dropped out of a workshop series Pat is presenting about process methods for elementary teachers. The teacher felt that Pat wasn't telling her exactly what process instruction was, and how to implement it. Pat was upset, but the criticism didn't change the way she works with these teachers. "It seems like new methods in elementary instruction come and go so quickly," Pat told me. "The only hope process instruction has for survival is to not be easily defined, implemented, and discarded. As soon as I can give that teacher the

response she wants, process theory and method will be just another fad that fades away."

The knowledge that process instruction isn't easily defined or implemented is reflected in some of the differences between instruction in Pat's classroom and models advocated by Hansen and Graves. As I've already noted, Hansen and Graves (1983) document the importance of every child occupying the author's chair. Their work also demonstrates the importance of teachers writing and sharing different forms of writing (normally narratives or other "creative" genres) with students (Graves 1985; Hansen 1987). Pat doesn't follow these conventions agreed upon by Graves, Hansen, and other researchers at the university only three miles from her classroom. Yet Graves and Hansen often cite Pat's room as an exemplary model for process instruction. The quality of instruction in Pat's room isn't measured by these researchers in accordance with how accurately her room reflects their instructional conventions. Instead, the researchers highlight Pat's ability to adapt and balance the key tenets of process within her classroom.

While process instruction may remain blurred as a genre, specific works within the form are clear. What researchers, teachers and students can do to help the form evolve and change is to explicate these "works"--why and how specific classroom communities and teachers balance time, choice, response and community. I haven't provided a blueprint for genre theory and instruction, but I have attempted to show how Pat and her students develop their theories of genre and its place in this curriculum. Other researchers in other process classrooms could contrast Pat's means of dealing with issue involved in genre instruction with the methods of the teachers they research. Pat is attempting to work through many of the

issues I presented in an overview of genre theory. She finds a place for the children's genres in the curriculum, but she also presents the academic genres they will need to succeed in school. Other teachers, with the infinite variations of configurations that can occur with time, choice, response, and community, will have different solutions for the same issues. Rather than adopting the model of Pat's classroom as an instructional genre, I hope teachers and researchers provide other models that can serve as points of contrast. I think these are the models that Donald Gray is calling for when he writes:

> The most important lesson of recent ideas about language and literature is that they put literature with other kinds of writing, and writing with other uses of language, and language in the social communities that use it in quite distinct ways and for quite specific purposes.
>
> (pp. 152)

Exploring the interactions of literature, language, and social contexts may require some changes in the ways researchers go about their tasks. While the case study method has been effective in focusing researchers' attention on the processes of individual children, LeFevre's "new fiction of the collective" may be a more appropriate means of understanding how literature, language and social communities interact. When case studies are followed, more time might be spent analyzing interactions with other students instead of idiosyncrasies in producing individual texts. If process instruction is to be defined through differences and similarities in classrooms, more attention has to be focused upon how students, teachers and researchers in these rooms interact.

Process, Research, and All that Jazz: Directions for Further Research

One of the hottest topics in literacy research these days is the great "paradigm shift." Hairston (1983) and Weaver (1985), among others, point to the work of Kuhn (1962) in linking changes in literacy research and instruction to fundamental changes in scientific belief systems. The proponents of a "paradigm shift" point to a change in emphasis in instruction from "product" to "process," and in research, from "quantitative" to "qualitative" methods.In looking at directions for further research in genre, literacy, and process methods, I want to take a critical look at the metaphors and assumptions underlying the "paradigm shift." At the same time, I will propose another metaphor for changing research and teaching practices which challenges the Kuhnian framework.

Trimbur (1987) in his analysis of "inner/outer" metaphors in composition theory, argues that our metaphors shape our belief systems. Gordon (1984) makes similar assertions in his study of change in public schools. Gordon criticizes the Kuhnian framework (or "research metaphor" in his terms) in looking at how schools change. He presents an alternative metaphor for considering change, "the jazz metaphor." I think this jazz metaphor provides a strong and needed contrast to the Kuhnian conception of change. In applying and analyzing the jazz metaphor, I hope to provide a new perspective for how future research in literacy, genre study, and process instruction might be conceived and implemented.

In the previous section, I proposed that Pat's class and curriculuum can be seen as a kind of "work," an improvisation using the core elements of time, choice, response, and community. In adapting the premise to Gordon's

jazz metaphor, process teachers like Pat can be seen as both jazz performers and fans. In applying the jazz metaphor to educational systems, Gordon notes a number of ways that the metaphor supports an image of how teachers and schools change. The following principles are extracted verbatim from his work:

1. The jazz fan's relationship to different works is not a simple two-valued, good-bad one. One's reaction to music is much more fine-graded. Some pieces are great works of art, others are good, others are so-so, others are pleasant background music, some are uninteresting, some are bad, some are technically superb but emotionally shallow, and so on.

2. From the listener's point of view at least, there are two relevant "systems" of importance. The one is the semiotic, aural system of jazz pieces, records, and performances. The other is the jazz fan's set of reactions to the aural system.

3. The development of the system of reactions of the fan is determined in part by one's own taste, but far more important, it develops in response to the internal developments of the semiotic system of jazz works. This is a bona fide system in which the various works are interrelated.

4. Musical pieces, at least if they are recorded, do not die. They rather enter the tradition that in jazz is institutionally sustained by a very flourishing reissue record industry. The latter ensures that classics of the past are continually being repackaged for new scrutiny.

5. At a particular point in time, certain pieces of music will not be appreciated because of links with other pieces (or styles) in our minds.

6. New music sometimes enables one to hear such negatively evaluated music in a more positive light by *relinking* it, to coin a term.

7. In other cases, our appreciation of a musical style changes because of its insistent presence. It is as if a strange dialect becomes natural to us as we hear it more and more.

8. Openness in this context is not related to openmindedness, but rather to opportunities to hear new music.

(pp. 136)

Gordon contrasts this metaphor to the Kuhnian or scientific research metaphor, in which "beliefs are either true or false," "discredited beliefs eventually pass out of the belief system and are forgotten," "inability to accept new beliefs--provided they have been empirically proven to be true--is incompatible [with the system]," and "new beliefs, if empirically proven to be true, must be accepted at once." (pp. 137)

Scientific and technical models of literacy have hindered instructional practice for decades. As Shannon (1987) notes, the emergence of the basal reader can be traced to the prevailing views of science and industry in the early part of this century. The basals remain as a staple of literacy instruction, long after these behavioral views of learning (i.e. "stimulus-response") were rejected by scientific communites. Continuing to look to science for models and metaphors, however fascinating the new models might be, may cause literacy theorists to repeat their previous errors. The famous Santayana quote is now a cliche--"Those who forget history are destined to repeat it."

I think the jazz metaphor more accurately reflects the ways teachers like Pat change their instructional practices, and provides a counterpoint to the Kuhnian model. Pat has not adopted all of the elements of different "classroom works" set forth by process theorists in various studies and presentations. Her current attitudes toward students and the rhythm of classroom routines are linked and relinked to the ways she has worked with students for the past twenty years. Rather than discarding old methods wholesale and adopting new orthodoxies, Pat adapts new methods and ideas to her existing belief system.

I've presented Pat's room as a "process model" to teachers in many different workshop and teaching contexts. Very few teachers accept or reject Pat's classroom outright. Instead, they behave like jazz musicians or fans, improvising on themes. They may attempt some of her content area writing projects, or begin to move around in their classroom during conferences instead of staying in one place. As Gordon notes in 1-3, jazz fans develop certain tastes and preferences. In workshops, teachers strive to understand "the system" of process. After understanding the system, different "works" within the system--individual teachers and their methods--are variations upon that theme which can be explored or rejected.

Only two decades ago, this metaphor would have been irrelevant. The "dialect" of research in journals was so alien to teachers that it was unreadable and unread by most of them. Process theorists are now "writing research to be read" (Murray, 1982) and this has enabled teachers to become research fans and practitioners. The field of research is now open to teachers. They can improvise in their classrooms, and present these improvisations as works for other teachers to examine.

Within a jazz metaphor, teachers aren't "converted" to process theory--neither do they accept or reject it. Instead, presentation and understanding of process methods for teachers is seen as a much more complex process. Individual improvisations and presentations of process methods by teachers and researchers may be rejected by a teacher or researcher based on their belief system. But this is a fluid process. Teachers are active in developing their own process teaching system. As their personal and professional lives change, they will make new or different links to the individual "improvisations and presentations" they have experienced in the past. And

for some teachers, the pervasiveness of the method in the schools they work in may help it become the norm in their own classroom.

The jazz metaphor has many implications for further research in genre. What I would hope to see are detailed explications of other "works"--different ways that different teachers balance time, choice, response and community in presenting genre in their classroom. Bussis (1985) makes a similar call for such work in her longterm study of children's learning processes:

> Teaching is not so complex as to verge on the impossible or to defy conception at an abstract level, but it does defy concrete prescriptions for action. It too is a complex skill that must be guided by knowledge. . .In short, there are neither prescriptions for action nor checklists for observation to assure intelligent and responsive teaching. All that *can* be offered are a guiding theory and abundant examples.
>
> (in Dyson, pp. 142)

Variations on the same research theme in classrooms like Pat's might also be useful. My main "motif" was a view of genre through the social interactions in the class. Another "motif" might be the analysis of genres presented by Pat when she reads to the class, and how these genres then are and aren't expressed in the children's reading and writing choices. Studies show that without exposure to specific genres, students cannot write within a specific form. It would be interesting to contrast student work from classrooms where teachers emphasize different genres in different ways.

Future research into these blurred, unknown and unexplored terrains needs to carry with it an element of risk. Jerome Harste (1985) has argued that we need researchers willing to carve out big territories and to tackle the great, unanswerable questions about what it means to be literate at any age

in any culture. Starting with a concept like genre can provide a kind of "lens" for viewing the territory and questions.

Above all else, what is needed is more. More detailed and carefully crafted research projects by teachers and researchers which explain differences among process teachers. More journals with readable research for teachers. In the jazz metaphor, the growth of the system relies upon its remaining open. Openness comes through availability of new works, and respect of old works. These need to be "recorded so they do not die."

This is an age where proponents of cultural literacy, mandated statewide curricula and required standardized tests are on the rise almost everywhere in the United States. What the jazz metaphor gives us is a view of teaching as art and craft, a much needed contrast to the view of teaching as science, with verifiable outcomes and "teacher-proof" procedures for instruction.

I hope that process teaching and research in the coming decades can parallel the growth of the jazz industry in the last sixty years. Writer Hayden Carruth echoes my hope when he writes of the promise of jazz:

> Jazz gives us a new angle of vision, a new emphasis, and this is important too. The past sixty years of jazz have produced an eruption of both individual and communal genius that is truly astounding, and because of the nature of jazz this has placed the emphasis in creative intuition precisely where it should be, on the fusion of "tradition and talent," on the concurrence of discipline and freedom, and on the mutuality of creative transcendence. I say, let us rejoice. We have little enough else to please us.
>
> (pp. 32)

Final Reflection

When I was an undergraduate at Michigan State University, I volunteered to help clean artifacts from archeological digs. The artifacts came in from around the world. I had visions of experiencing different cultures and other ages through exotic remains I would clean with my own hands.

The reality of the job was far removed from my fantasies. For two hours at a stretch, I would stand in a dimly lit and dirty basement below the archeology museum. I worked my way through tub after tub of caked mud. The tubs had labels like "Peru 9-2534-82-964-ML" or "Egypt 83-26574-32-BL." I would carefully scrape off baseball size chunks of dirt and clay, and wash it away in the sink until any foreign materials were revealed. Ninety-five percent of these artifacts were bits of bone too small to be identified as any body part, or small chards of everyday pottery. Occasionally, but only rarely, did the mud wash away and reveal a coin or an odd copper figurine.

By the time I quit that job two months later, I had learned a lot. I knew for archeology to come alive, you really have to "be there." "Peru 9-2534. . ." is a code familar only to those who worked the landscape and were a part of it, at least for a while. I realized the treasures are few and far between, buried within fragments of everyday lives and living.

I think we want to give children the thrill of exploring new cultures and exotic literary landscapes through a variety of genres. But too often, their experience is similar to my work in that dimly lit basement. The genres we give them are coded with our adult literary values, crusted in a literary landscape that may be absolutely foreign to them. Students like those in Pat McLure's class are able to develop and understand genres

by beginning with the terrains of the many social, psychological, and academic worlds they travel through. It takes a lot of everyday, mundane effort and negotiation among texts and others before treasures eventually emerge from this literary tribe.

The genres presented to the children by Pat are also rooted in the terrains of the classroom and outside concerns. She builds upon the rituals of Halloween in her "Rotten Jack" projects, the pleasure of a field trip to an orchard in her "Apple Book" unit.

We need to continue to make connections between the literary world adults may be comfortable with, and the many worlds young children and teachers negotiate daily. The treasures--the pop-up shaggy dogs, the vivid views of pumpkins and apples--do emerge. It may take a little bit of digging through the landscapes of these many worlds to see and appreciate them, but the treasures are there.

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