1998

Teachers as learners: transformimg curriculum through teachers' dialogic interactions

Jacqueline Silva
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Silva, Jacqueline, "Teachers as learners: transformimg curriculum through teachers' dialogic interactions" (1998). *Master's Theses*. 1670.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.237s-eb9t>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/1670

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

TEACHERS AS LEARNERS:
TRANSFORMING CURRICULUM THROUGH
TEACHERS' DIALOGIC INTERACTIONS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Division of Teacher Education
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Jacqueline Silva

May 1998

UMI Number: 1389681

**Copyright 1998 by
Silva, Jacqueline Sue**

All rights reserved.

**UMI Microform 1389681
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

© 1998

Jacqueline Silva

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

APPROVED FOR THE DIVISION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Dr. Victoria Harper

Dr. Carolyn Nelson

Dr. Kristine Pemberton

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

TEACHERS AS LEARNERS: TRANSFORMING CURRICULUM THROUGH TEACHERS' DIALOGIC INTERACTIONS

By Jacqueline Silva

This thesis suggests that through dialogic interactions, teachers can transform their teaching and learning. This participatory research study involves four teachers as they engage in critical conversations concerning their new literacy training. This research was conducted at an urban elementary school in San Jose, California. Events and conversations that have occurred school-wide have been documented as the teachers have gone through a change in their process of teaching literacy. Reviewing transcriptions of dialogue among research participants has also provided insight as teachers grappled with their new knowledge while they transformed as learners.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to so many people who have supported my efforts in the writing of this thesis.

I am grateful for the support and guidance of my advisor, Dr. Victoria Harper, whose knowledgeable insight has been invaluable and who has encouraged me to continually question my teaching practices. This has allowed tremendous transformational growth in my own personal thinking and learning.

I am grateful to the teachers who agreed to be involved in my research study through engaging in dialogue with me. They generously gave their time and support. Their voices and input have provided a major contribution to the writing of this thesis.

Ultimately, I could not have completed this thesis without my family. My parents, Dr. Robert and Jean Muckel, whose guidance led me into the teaching profession, have supported me intellectually and spiritually.

Most of all, I am thankful for my husband Fred, to whom this work is dedicated. He has offered his constant love and support for a wife who was always working and feeling stressed. Without his affection, help, and patience, I could never have written this thesis and continued teaching at the same time.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
CHAPTER ONE CRITICAL RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	1
Introduction: My Story	1
CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	9
Dialogue in Education	9
Dialogue as Conversation.....	9
Dialogue as Inquiry.....	10
Dialogue as Debate.....	10
What is Dialogue?	10
Emotional Factors in Dialogue	13
Listening	14
Rules of the Dialogue Game.....	16
General Rules For Communication.....	17
Utterances Which Occur In Dialogue.....	19
The Silenced Dialogue.....	22
Audible Silences.....	25
Communicative Competence.....	25
Banking Concept Of Education Versus Problem Posing.....	26
Richness In Dialogue	28
Critical Thinking.....	29
Transforming Reality.....	30
Anti Dialogic Action: Divide And Rule	30
Anti Dialogic Action: Manipulation	31
Anti Dialogic Action: Cultural Invasion.....	31
Dialogical Theory.....	32
CHAPTER THREE CRITICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	34
The School Site and Student Population	34

Fammatre's History	34
Reform At Fammatre School.....	35
Research Participants	37
Why Qualitative Research?.....	37
The Research Process	41
Research Participants	42
About the Researcher.....	43
The Project.....	44
CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	46
What Research Participants Consider To Be True	48
What Research Participants Believe Or Desire Concerning Literacy Practices	53
What Participants Believe Or Desire Concerning Dialogue.....	59
Field Notes	66
What Research Participants Consider To Be Appropriate Concerning Literacy Practices.....	71
What Research Participants Consider To Be Appropriate Concerning Dialogic Interactions.....	76
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	83
EPILOGUE.....	93
REFERENCES AND RELATED WORKS	95
APPENDIX.....	99

CHAPTER ONE

CRITICAL RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction: My Story

Schools across the United States seem to be constantly delving into issues relating to success in student literacy. As changes are made in the educational system to better provide students with instruction necessary to improve literacy, it has become apparent that an important underlying issue is the lack of sustained change in school curriculum and pedagogy. Falling back on our familiar patterns, we have failed to question our basic assumptions about teaching and learning, often because there has not been adequate time to discuss and process new learning. Most often teachers are “trained” in using a variety of teaching methods, but rarely given opportunities to engage in dialogue concerning these new teaching practices. It is through dialogue that people can negotiate meaning and gain understanding of alternative perspectives that can lead to sustained change.

As I planned to take courses during the evening to work on my Master’s Degree program, I realized it would be a difficult year. I was teaching kindergarten during the day, and once a week, on Tuesdays, I would attend two back to back classes. My first master’s degree class focused on the social and political aspects of education, and the second on curriculum and were team-taught by two instructors, Dr. Victoria Harper, and Dr. Carolyn Nelson. Much to my surprise, the time went by very quickly. This was, I believe, due to the conversational approach in the classroom. I began to question the ideas and beliefs I held as well as those of others involved in schools. We were expected to read quite extensively and reflect on our

writing in a way that I had never done before. We were expected to engage in a conversation with the text and encouraged to question. After eleven years of teaching kindergarten, I began to view my role as a teacher in a very different way. I had always accepted what people told me and accepted the belief that my reading assignments always represented the "truth". For the first time in my teaching and learning career, I realized that it was all right to question. At the same time, I was realizing that it was important that my students be able to question me. I was learning the importance of actively involving my students in the learning process by allowing them to help me know what they wanted to learn. I was beginning to see what the paradigm shift I was studying about in my own college classes looked like, and to see the importance of contributing to this paradigm shift through the transformation of my own teaching practices. In order to transform my current curriculum into one that had the qualities of a critical, post-modern perspective, it would be necessary to examine and renegotiate many of the core beliefs I had about education. It would be imperative that I question the assumptions and prejudgments I held so dear. In order to look to a vision of a new curriculum through communication and renegotiation, I found that it would be necessary for me to explore my own cultural and historical views as well as those of my students. These views, I was learning, had been firmly grounded in a modernist world view.

The modernist perspective born in the Enlightenment, is grounded in a closed system, and inhibits the spontaneous development of ideas. Closed systems are designed to transmit and transfer, while an open more post-modern perspective might better promote the creation and transformation of

ideas. The modernist mind set defines good teaching as the transfer of knowledge. Learning in this line of thinking is based on the teacher telling the students what they will learn and the student following prescribed activities to reinforce what the teacher wants them to learn.

Until now, I had not questioned my modernist views or given the concept of an open system consideration. I now began to work to transform my curriculum into a more open system. As I began to use a critical post-modern perspective to shape my own views about curriculum, I wanted to establish an environment that would encourage the creation of a dialogic community of learners. Such a community, I believed, would foster communicative competence for both my students and myself.

Communicative competence as described by Habermas (Bowers 1987, 2),

is an individual's ability to negotiate meanings and purposes instead of passively accepting the social realities defined by others. Communicative competence requires, beyond facility in speech situations, a knowledge of relevant issues and the conceptual frameworks that influence our way of thinking.

Communicative competence is necessary in order for students to personally transform their own learning. This was a new view of learning for me that would need to be oriented not only toward content but also toward process. I began to encourage my students and colleagues to become more interactive and communal as a body of learners. This new way of teaching needed to be flexible, conversational and negotiated with the learners. Prior to my new way of thinking, I was the one who was in control of the learning and the content of the learning. The students took on the role of accepting whatever information that I presented them with as the truth. I was the one in charge of making the decisions about the learning that would take place.

Bowers (1987) tells us, knowledge is socially constructed making social interaction necessary for knowing to happen. As teachers and students communicate and negotiate, ideas of both self and community will be created, where students can explore beyond information presented by the teacher and where teachers constantly take into account their students' multiple perspectives. Students can learn through, by, and with others. Evaluation, it was clear, would need to be more open-ended.

Throughout my first semester, I developed curriculum plans that incorporated student-to-student and student-to-teacher dialogic interactions. These interactions exposed contradiction, perturbation and dilemma, which then promoted discussion, questioning, and renegotiation of understanding: in short, growth. Reading Ira Shor's book, *Empowering Education* (1992), helped me bridge the gap I was experiencing in reading Doll's (1993) *A Post-Modern Perspective On Curriculum*. Doll helped me to better understand a post-modern perspective. Shor showed me what implementing such a perspective into classroom curriculum might look like. Shor provided specific ideas about how to add a critical dimension to Doll's post-modern frame and actually helped me place this theory into practice in my own classroom.

The university class focusing on the social and political nature of education brought new insight into my own teaching practices. Through this course I became more familiar with the phases and struggles that have occurred historically, influencing the direction and shape of the curriculum. This was a very important concept to consider in my new view of learning. Since we all come into the classroom motivated by different historical and

cultural perspectives, religious orientations, and political philosophies, as teachers, we need to be sensitive and respectful regarding our children's unique differences. Our different cultural maps and patterns of thought, such as eye contact and body language, may not coincide with the pattern of thinking held by the children we teach (Bowers, 1987). By assisting children in gaining knowledge about each others' historical perspectives and phenomenological worlds, we may be able to bolster an appreciation for individual differences. As a result of this insight, I began to make my lessons more cross culturally based.

Reflecting on this learning, I realized that teachers were also learners. I realized that as a teacher, I needed not only to be aware of my students' historical perspectives and phenomenological worlds, but also to consider my own cultural and historical situatedness. In order for me to be transformed by learning, it would be necessary that I, too, have interactions about my work within a dialogic community of learners; I needed to talk about these ideas with a community of teachers.

During the second semester, I again enrolled in two classes. In a multi-cultural literature course I read a large number of children's literature books that helped me learn a great deal about other cultures. While learning about different genres in children's literature--how authors develop different components of a story such as character, plot, theme, setting, point of view, style, and tone--I wrote my own children's book entitled "My Grandpa And Me." This book helped me unveil some of my own historical and phenomenological world. The second course I took that semester focused on first and second language acquisition and reading expanding my

understandings of emergent literacy. These new understandings helped me connect my new knowledge with work that I was currently investigating at my school site.

Teachers at my school had decided to work on a grant proposal that would assist us in better understanding the concept of reading for meaning. I examined current research supporting our school's focus on reading for meaning that suggested that children learn to read through whole-to-parts reading instruction, rather than a common pattern of parts-to-whole prevalent in curriculum designs (Routman 1994). The back and forth between wholes and parts connected with the post-modern ideas I had read about in the work of Doll (1993). Doll notes that the modernist view supports a fragmented parts-to-whole view, while a post-modern perspective suggests whole-to-parts. Building on this notion, I began to think about my teaching in new ways and began to change how I was teaching the children in my class beginning reading and writing skills. As the faculty focused on the concept of reading for meaning, several teachers attended a workshop on a literacy curriculum program, taught by Dr. Rena Walker, Accelerated Literacy. Her work seemed to coincide with my studies on literacy at San Jose State University.

Entering into my qualitative research course that summer, I knew I wanted to integrate work in my thesis with the work I was beginning at my school site. Through such research I might gain greater insight into my teaching practice. My intention was to focus my thesis research on these new literacy practices. As I continued to read and write about literacy, as well as dialogue in education, however, I began to see that in order to transform my

teaching, I must be able to critically think about my teaching practices and engage in dialogue about them. In order to do that I would need to create a dialogic community of learners for myself.

I decided to form a conversational group with other teachers at my school who were interested in meeting and talking about our program. When first meeting with this research participant group we shared what we were doing in the area of literacy. Although I gained new information, somehow the richness of our conversation was disappointing. As I read books such as *Dialogue In Teaching* Burbules (1993) and *Pedagogy Of The Oppressed* Freire (1970), I began to realize that a more important issue had emerged in my research. I became aware of the important role of dialogic interaction in learning. In order to critically reflect through conversation, we must first look at what dialogue really is, and come to agreement about what dialogue in our group would look like. As I learned more about dialogue, I began recording in my journal what various authors described as the qualities and characteristics of true dialogue described by Burbules (1993). As my research participants and I discussed my new understandings about dialogue we began to look for evidence of dialogue in our conversations, I realized the importance of our ongoing dialogue as a way to improving our practices. The focus of my thesis consequently now shifted to critically thinking about our engagement in a dialogic community of conversation rather than merely looking at the artifacts of our daily practice. Where I had initially focused on the situation we faced in implementing one of many curricular programs constantly being imposed on teachers and students I now became aware of the underlying meta-issue that can lead to real understanding and appropriate

change in education. Not only was I interested in dialogue among the research participants, but this expanded to consideration of whether a true dialogue could actually take place on a school-wide scale.

This research therefore, focuses on recording and analyzing the experiences of teachers at Fammatre School as they discuss and grapple with issues of teaching practice and the role of dialogue. Through participation in this research both participants and researcher have been able to discuss learning, examine practice and gain new insight into teaching. As the research participants discussed the characteristics of a dialogue, and engaged in a dialogic community, we also investigated whether we were really able to successfully engage in true dialogue. The following chapters document my efforts to connect my learning about the role of dialogue and literacy to my transformation as a teacher researcher.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Dialogue in Education

In schools, dialogue, as described by Gadamer (1976), whether between children and teachers or among teachers, rarely occurs. Burbules (1993) describes different types of dialogue that may occur: dialogue as conversation, dialogue as inquiry, and dialogue as debate.

This review of literature provides a theoretical background for my research study and has helped inform my colleagues and me about characteristics of engaging in an effective professional dialogic encounter. My hope is that my research on dialogue will encourage not only the faculty at Fammatre school, but other teachers as well to see the value of engaging in dialogue as a means of making more informed decisions about instructional practices.

Dialogue as Conversation

There are two main characteristics of a dialogue as a conversation. There is generally a cooperative, tolerant spirit and a direction toward a mutual understanding. This type of dialogue usually takes place as one participant becomes interested in understanding the outlook and experiences of the other participant. Partners in this type of dialogue interact, and cooperate, not toward a specific goal, but in a process of mutual engagement directed toward a shared understanding. In this type of a dialogue there is no one true answer to a question. Rather, the goal is to gain a heightened sensitivity and understanding of one's conversational partner.

Dialogue as Inquiry

Dialogue as inquiry is motivated by the desire to answer a specific question or to resolve a problem. Dialogue as inquiry is aimed at producing an outcome agreed upon by the participants. This type of dialogue takes on different forms such as investigating a particular issue, solving a problem, working to achieve a political consensus, achieving a common purpose and adjudicating moral differences.

Dialogue as Debate

Dialogue as debate takes on a sharply questioning, skeptical spirit without there necessarily being any aim toward an agreement or reconciliation of differences. The primary purpose of this type of dialogue is to reveal others' respective positions while articulating and defending one's own position. Questions are directed toward the respective positions at issue and the arguments that are put forth for them. There are a range of outcomes in this type of a dialogue. There may be: 1) agreement or consensus, 2) no agreement but an understanding of each other's view point, 3) no common understanding but an understanding of differences, 4) little understanding but a respect across differences, or 5) irreconcilable and incommensurable plurality.

What is Dialogue?

Defining what dialogue looks like is a complex undertaking. Dialogue may take on many forms, and one cannot truly define exactly what is and what is not dialogue. Certain components are necessary, however, in order to have a successful dialogue. Nicholas Burbules (1993) explains that,

Greek expressionists break down the word dialogue, dia-meaning two. It is also a preposition meaning between, across or through and can also apply to more than two people. Logos is a term, not only for word or speech, but also for thought, reason, and judgment (15).

Dialogue, therefore, means an interchange of ideas by two or more people in an open discussion. Dialogue is not something that we do or use. Instead, it is a relation we enter into. It is also important to note that if agreement about everything exists, or there is an absence of individual differences, a dialogue does not exist.

A true dialogue is not experienced as a loss of self possession, but rather as an enrichment of one's self. Burbules tells us that dialogue is a symbiotic communicative relationship between equals that requires emotional as well as cognitive involvement (1993, vii). Participants in a successful dialogue share mutual feelings of concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection and hope, as well as a cognitive understanding, and are guided by a spirit of discovery. Even when they disagree, participants in a true dialogue are interested in, respectful of, and concerned about one another. Dialogue has a tone that is exploratory and interrogative with the goal of seeing things through to some meaningful understanding or agreement.

Hans Georg Gadamer describes dialogue claiming...

what characterizes a dialogue in contrast with the rigid form of the statement that demands to be set down in writing that here, language in the process of question and answer, giving and taking, talking across purposes and seeing each other's point, performs that communication of meaning which is the true task of hermeneutics. . . Thus it is characteristic of every true conversation that each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other (Gadamer in Burbules 1993, ix).

Freire (1970) defines dialogue as an encounter between individuals, mediated by the world in order to name the world. For Freire, the goal of dialogue is the mutual development of understanding through a process of a shared inquiry, not the transmission of truths from a knowledgeable expert to a passive recipient. In pedagogical encounters, Freire claims “. . . we do not change others, they change themselves” (1970, 23). Individuals construct their own understandings and change their own minds, when through dialogue they are convinced, not threatened or told to do so. Through dialogue participants are given the opportunity to solve problems, think sensibly toward conclusions and then choose reasonable courses of action. To enter this relation of dialogue across differences does not necessarily entail agreement. In fact, in many cases, dialogue can make conflict become all the more apparent.

When participants commit themselves to a dialogue, they are entering into a relation of exploration and negotiation of understanding. There need not be a specific outcome in mind. Discussion may remain open ended in direction. When entering into a dialogic relationship, participants may hold a certain position or view point. In fact, Gadamer shows us how our biases or prejudices enable us to have meaningful experiences when he says,

. . . the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience. Prejudices are biases to our openness to the world (Gadamer 1976, 9).

Participants must, however, have an open mind and be willing to relinquish any position of non-negotiability. Burbules (1993, 19) tells us that, “. . . a spirit of good will or friendship is necessary in order to have the spirit of dialogue.”

Emotional Factors in Dialogue

Burbules (1993) examines these five emotional factors which must be considered upon entering into dialogue. These include concern, trust, respect, appreciation, and affection. By concern, Burbules is referring to the fact that by getting involved with someone else, individuals must feel something for that person as well as for the subject at hand. Trust involves feeling safe to disclose what one believes or feels, with each participant speaking in confidence with the understanding that their confidence will not be broken. Trust also involves having a feeling that the participants can rely on one another to withhold judgment. Participants in dialogue must respect the fact that not all people know the same things or are privy to the same amount of information. To appreciate and value the unique qualities that others may bring to a dialogic encounter, feeling affection and esteem for them are also important. These emotional bonds influence why we are drawn to, and remain in, a dialogic encounter. Burbules (1993) states that hope is not included in the emotional elements of dialogue but is necessary in order to have a successful dialogic interaction. Habermas refers to this hope as an ideal (1981). Individuals must hope that through this relation, they will gain new insights and understandings.

In order to have successful communicative relations with a variety of people over time, it will be necessary to possess such qualities as tolerance, patience, openness to give and receive criticism, an inclination to admit mistakes and a desire to reinterpret one's own concerns in a way that makes sense to others. It is also important to practice the quality of restraint so that others have a turn to speak. As others speak, participants in a true dialogue

must be willing to listen thoughtfully and attentively. To be engaged in a true dialogue, we must be willing to reexamine our own beliefs and compare them to others. In order to have a successful dialogue, individuals must commit to forming a willing partnership, and to cooperate in the face of likely misunderstandings, disagreements, confusion, and failures. Burbules states that the fundamental tension underlying dialogical relation is that “. . . we need to be similar enough for communication to happen, but different enough to make it worth while”(1993, 31).

Listening

Listening is a key element to a dialogic interaction. In order to participate in a dialogue, one must be tolerant of others' opinions and views and willing and open to hearing others' points-of-view even when contrary to one's own. This means that individuals must be able to restrain themselves when necessary.

Listening does not simply mean the act of hearing. To truly listen to others, one must work to empower others to speak. When an individual truly listens, she stands to learn something new. Consequently, listening may also alter the status of one's authority. Listening is a specific way of enabling others' voices to be heard.

Failure in Dialogue

Many elements may contribute to the failure of dialogue. A breakdown in dialogue may occur for many reasons. Marcondes (1985) lists a range of factors that can contribute to failure of dialogue, such as manipulation, misinterpretation of intentions, opposition of goals in communication, contradictions between whose voice is the dominant one, and interruptions.

In order to attempt to achieve a successful dialogic relation, the participants must acknowledge and be aware of their own responsibility for the success of the dialogue. When only a certain select few feel comfortable enough to express their opinions, dialogue does not exist. Individuals who have a different perspective from the norm of the group must be able to contribute in the absence of fear. If they are to be empowered to share their voices in a dialogue they must not feel threatened because of their differing opinion.

When there is a breakdown in communication, or a failure in dialogue, one can often look back to the so called rules of dialogue to find the source of the breakdown. They can often shed light on what went wrong. It is at the point where dialogue becomes formal, calculated, and competitive, that it ceases to be dialogue. As participants engage in dialogue they need to consider, not just what is happening during a particular moment, but how it fits into an ongoing pattern. The type of questions posed may also comprise how the dialogue may take its characteristic shape and tone. For example, if my question is: "What is the problem?" I have definitely set a negative tone to the dialogue and called forth a combative pathology.

Post-modernists insist that a plurality of differences helps create and preserve cultural spaces in which it is safe to act, feel, and speak. To do this there must be a common willingness to accept that there is not one "true" answer to any situation. Dialogue, therefore, is essential to the spirit of a genuinely pluralistic democratic society. As Burbules claims, the significance of philosophical questions about what is true, or good, or right, or beautiful, needs to be assessed in terms of their relation to and effect on social life (1993, 2).

Rules of the Dialogue Game

Burbules uses the metaphor of dialogue being played like a game, explaining that,

dialogue constitutes a relation in which spontaneity and creativity are possible. There is a to and fro exchange of comments and responses. Dialogue builds upon itself to reach new and unexpected results (1993, 50).

In the dialogue game participants are developing new beliefs and new understandings. As in a game it will be necessary to deal with conflict as well as to have a tolerance for conflict. Participants will be looking at what is already known as well as new information or perspectives that may challenge them. An excess of conflict, however, can be directly counter productive to the goal.

In playing a game, Gadamer (1976) claims, we lose ourselves in the back and forth relationship and follow a set of rules. The term "rules" is used loosely, because, for the most part, when we think of rules we think of a set of standards that is very rigid. He describes the rules of the dialogue game as providing participants with a reliable form of organizing activities within the game. The rules help to provide consistency, predictability, and continuity, while still allowing for spontaneity, creativity, and surprise. Burbules tells us that the dialogue game is guided by certain broad rules and motivated by various intrinsic satisfactions (1993, 66). When individuals agree to play the "dialogue game" they must begin by having a formal agreement that each person take his or her turn to speak. This part of the "game" is crucial in order to heighten sensitivity toward listening and speaking and taking what others say seriously. This requires the use of patience and self control. Some

general guideposts or ideals that should be considered are ideas such as, what is good judgment, keeping conversations in confidence, concern for each other, integrity, and responsibility. It is necessary, however, to reiterate that the rules are not set in stone and can be made up and modified as you go along. The key is to be aware of agreements on how to treat one another while engaged in dialogue.

General Rules For Communication

Paul Grice (1989) has also generated general rules for communication which are helpful as we engage in a specific mode of communication such as dialogue. They are quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The first, quantity, relates to the importance of the individual's contribution to the discussion being only as informative as required without being more informative than is required. In order to have a quality conversation one must not say something they know is untrue, nor state information as fact without adequate evidence. That is not to say that one could not let it be known that they "think" something is true. What is important is that the individual let it be known that they are not sure about something. Relation is another of Grice's general rules, which means that conversation must be relevant. Lastly, the manner in which dialogue is conducted is significant. Participants in dialogue should avoid obscurity of expression, and ambiguity. They should be brief and orderly.

Grice's rules parallel those of Jurgen Habermas (1981) who has developed a theory of communication based on what he calls "validity claims." Habermas shows us that underlying any statements made by people engaged in a dialogue oriented to understanding are certain implicit claims

that the speaker makes to ensure that his statements are valid ones. When these claims are violated there is a breakdown of communication, and subsequently, failure of dialogue. Habermas' validity claims include comprehensibility, truth, sincerity and appropriateness. By comprehensibility, Habermas means that statements made should be grammatical, clear and understandable. In order to be true, information shared must represent accuracy in fact. When being sincere in a dialogue, individuals must not be duplicitous. Legitimacy or appropriateness refers to satisfying recognized norms of accepted beliefs.

Dialogue has certain characteristics which make it a particular form of communication. It is a particular kind of pedagogical communicative relation. While it is relevant to consider the characteristics that make up a dialogue, it is also necessary not to place constraints which may stifle creativity and spontaneity.

Burbules (1993) indicates that there exist rules of participation, commitment and reciprocity. One characteristic of dialogue, or "rule" of the game is the rule of participation. Active participation must occur and opportunities must be available so that all members involved have the opportunity for engagement. Participation includes questioning, trying new ideas and hearing diverse points of view. Participants should be able to raise topics, pose questions, challenge others' points of view, or engage in any of the other activities that define the dialogical interaction.

A second characteristic, or "rule" of the dialogue game, is the rule of commitment. There must be some degree of desire to understand others' views and the thoughts, feelings, and experiences that underlie them. It is

important to at least listen and respect differences of opinion. Where conversation is extensive across a range of concerns, even difficult or diverse ones. Participants must be willing to disclose their underlying reasons, feelings, and motivations.

The final “rule,” as Burbules (1993) indicates, is the rule of reciprocity. In order to maintain an effective dialogue, it must be fostered, frequently developed, and improved. Participants must have a mutual respectful concern, and must not take for granted roles of privilege or expertise. The “rules” of the game, according to Burbules, are not mandated. They should only be used to help characterize one sense of a dialogue.

As participants in dialogue look to the general rules for communication, it may enable them to improve in their own dialogic encounters.

Utterances Which Occur In Dialogue

Burbules (1993) suggests there are five types of utterances during dialogue: questioning, response, open-ended responses, building statements, redirecting statements, and regulatory statements. He gives examples of what purposes these various utterances can serve.

Questioning occurs in order to get a specific piece of information to help identify the conditions that situate the dialogue, such as to find out what the participants’ knowledge of the subject is, or to introduce topics to be considered later. More elaborate questions are used to probe for understanding, to learn what others think, know or feel, or to learn something about each other. Questions may also be used in dialogue to encourage others to formulate their own opinions or to articulate viewpoints.

Questions might also pose a challenge or a view point. For example, “Why do you think that?”

Another type of utterance is a response. Responses are statements which are made immediately following a question. Some responses are brief, direct and informative. Others are detailed elaboration’s of a view or the experiences, beliefs and feelings that underlie it. Some responses are an attempt to end the dialogue by satisfying an inquiry, while others are more open ended speculations.

Open-ended responses encourage another step in the discussion. Responses may also take the form of another question such as, “What do you mean?” Building statements and redirecting statements are also a form of utterances. They are statements which follow responses.

Building statements encourage further discussion. Building statements make a connection that encourages a continuation of the discussion. For example, one may take what the other person says and add a personal story which relates to the topic, thereby motivating further conversation.

Redirecting statements lead participants to a new topic or another course of discussion. The participant in the dialogue may say, “I hear what you are saying, but what do you think about this?”

Regulatory statements are utterances that come in the form of a comment, not directed toward the process of communication itself. For example, one might say, “I can follow you up until now.” Regulatory statements are used to encourage or motivate further discussion. They may also be explicit and pointed statements such as agreement, praise, or

reassurance. Regulatory statements provide an emotional assessment of oneself or partner. All five categories of utterances in dialogue work together to create an ongoing dialogue.

David Bridges (1989) has given an even more detailed list of possible questions that promote discussion. Some possible types of questions include "Why do you hold that opinion?" "How does this point follow from your previous one?" "What is the relevance?" "What alternative opinions might you want to express?" "Can you give me some clarification (evidence, reasons, explanations, etc.)?" This allows one to seek to hear divergent opinions and encourages respect for others' opinions.

By encouraging questioning, one can begin to shed light on specific insights that we hope to develop in ourselves and others. Getting into the practice and feeling comfortable about asking questions can help participants in dialogue develop the capacity for asking genuine and productive questions.

Wade and Armbruster (1990) suggest that if questions have the following goals, they can be beneficial to an ongoing dialogue. First, one can set a purpose by identifying what the subject at hand is. Questioning may guide cognitive processing by framing a particular line of inquiry. Questioning may activate prior knowledge by linking knowledge to a familiar experience. Questions may focus attention by pointing out certain aspects of a problem. Questions may also be used to promote cognitive monitoring, such as helping participants to focus on their own understanding or thought process.

The Silenced Dialogue

In order to engage in a dialogue it is necessary to examine relationships among speakers to come to terms with what Freire (1970) has called the "culture of silence." There are many factors which may cause a silenced dialogue. Freire analyzes the various relationships that people take on in a variety of situations. These situations, however different, have a common thread that society has accepted as a way of life, the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressors. He states,

one of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness. Thus the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor (Freire 1970, 31).

By critically recognizing the causes of oppression, action can be taken to create a new situation in which there is a possibility to pursue a fuller humanity. This action, however, cannot come from those in power because they dehumanize those whose voices are unheard. Therefore, the role to transform reality must be taken on by the unheard individuals, in order to fight for liberation. The oppressed are the ones who understand the significance of an oppressed society. According to Freire, every human being no matter how "ignorant" or submerged in the "culture of silence" is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter with others (1970, 13).

When provided with the proper tools, the oppressed can gradually come to recognize their personal and social reality, as well as the

contradictions in it. As an individual becomes conscious of their own views of reality, then they can deal critically with it. By coming to this awareness of self, individuals can have a new sense of dignity stirred by a new hope. In this type of encounter the oppressed are no longer mere objects responding to changes occurring around them. According to Freire, our advanced technological society is rapidly making objects of us and subtly programming us into conformity to the logic of its system (1970, 14).

The unheard voices, who have adapted to a structure of domination, however, are inhibited from waging the fight for freedom. By doing so, they run the risk of an even greater repression. They prefer the security of conformity. It is not a fight to be fought alone; you need the support of your peers. In order for the oppressed to wage the struggle for liberation they must be able to recognize that there is a way out and that the situation they are in is a limiting situation they can transform, in other words, hope.

In this new view of the unheard individuals, the more powerful must be able to stop regarding the less powerful as abstract objects and instead view them as people who have been unjustly dealt with and have been deprived of their voice.

Freire identifies two stages in the fight for the freedom from the silenced dialogue. First, the oppressed must unveil the world of oppression and through the unveiling commit themselves to transformation. Second, within conditions in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all involved in the process of permanent liberation (Freire 1970, 40).

The fight for freedom is not one in which the oppressor gives up easily. "The oppressor's tranquillity rests on how well men fit the world the oppressors have created and how little they question it" (Freire 1970, 63). Often the oppressors show a false sense of generosity in order to keep things the way they are, or status quo, often expressed in liberal philosophies. In many cases their generosity is given unjustly, thereby causing the oppressed to become divided among themselves.

Depending on each individual situation, critical and liberating dialogue must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever stage of their struggle for liberation they are experiencing. If an outsider attempts to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation, then the oppressed are again being treated as mere objects that only someone else can save, thereby defeating the purpose, and turning the oppressed into masses which can be manipulated. It is when the oppressed are able truly to reflect on their situation that valid action follows. In order for this sequence to occur it is necessary to trust the oppressed and rely on their ability to reason. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate dialogue and reflection (Freire 1970).

Both teachers and students must together take on the task of unveiling reality, thereby coming to know it critically. In the task of recreating reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent recreators. In the voices of the unheard members, as they struggle for liberation, the more powerful are not merely in the act of pseudo-participation, but rather committed involvement. This often is expressed in the form of what Bowers (1987) describes as audible silences.

Audible Silences

Bowers describes audible silences as areas of human experience about which there is a collective silence in the larger society due either to a lack of communicative competence in focusing and articulating the unmentioned issues or to the fear that often arises when it is no longer possible to escape existential choice forced on us by critical awareness (1987, 63).

Often these unspoken issues in schools result in forced choices which demand that teachers do work that they may not be committed to doing or become complicit in oppressing themselves and their students to the benefit of the status quo. They feel compelled to do this work because they do not feel comfortable enough to speak out and question its value.

As teachers are enabled to feel comfortable questioning, they will be able to bridge the gaps that cause audible silences. Individuals must make sure they are providing an environment that allows for a communicatively competent dialogic community of learners. This new learning will be oriented towards the learning process.

Communicative Competence

People who are able to articulate their ideas most effectively are the people that hold power. Communicative competence is necessary in order for individuals to personally transform their own learning. Teachers need to be encouraged to be an interactive communal body of learners. The design of these communicatively competent conversations needs to be flexible, conversational and negotiated by the speakers. Communicatively competent individuals tend to be the people who everyone listens to. As a result others end up adopting the ideas or concepts of the most vocal and

communicatively competent. Encouraging communicative competence, therefore is an essential part of engaging in a successful dialogue because it allows individuals to construct their own social reality and critically examine their beliefs. In order to be communicatively competent one must be provided with enough knowledge of a concept to feel comfortable about speaking up. When an individual is communicatively competent they are able to engage in discourse which strengthens their descriptions of reality. In this process they are allowed to question what is relevant and meaningful to their life and then take on the challenge of coming up with strategies to solve problems. The content is embedded in the process. Individuals need to be provided with knowledge about relevant issues, assured of a trustworthy relationship with conversants, and open to a discussion of the right or wrong action to take, thereby allowing them to negotiate meanings, rather than passively accepting meanings provided to them.

Banking Concept Of Education Versus Problem Posing

Those truly committed to equal access to knowledge, must give up the notion of the banking concept of knowledge acquisition fostered by modernist thinking in its entirety and replace it with a problem posing approach. Within the banking concept, described by Freire (1970) the “expert” (leader) deposits information into the heads (bank accounts) of the unheard individuals, who accept the information as the truth without questioning. In a problem posing environment, however, the leader is no longer the one in total control, but is jointly responsible for a process in which all can grow. In this process authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it aligned with democracy rather than in support of status power relations. Teachers in

this situation are no longer in the role of docile listeners, but are now critical co-investigators engaging in dialogue concerning their teaching practices. Problem posing encourages critical intervention of reality. As teachers are increasingly presented with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world they are increasingly challenged, obliging them to respond to that challenge. They find that ideas are interrelated to each other and see how each idea fits into context. The result of seeing these connections allows new challenges to emerge followed by new understandings. As individuals are included in the posing of problems they begin to regard themselves as committed.

In a problem posing situation the oppressed develop the power to critically discern the ways they exist in the world and are able to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process of transformation. Teachers able to reflect simultaneously on themselves and the world, are able to establish an authentic form of thought and action. Problem posing in education makes dialogue indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Freire (1970) tells us that problem posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action.

Problem posing in education enables us to view people as being in the process of becoming, as unfinished, uncompleted beings, in and with a likewise unfinished reality. This unfinished quality necessitates the ongoing questioning and problematizing of reality. Freire attempts to analyze dialogue as a human phenomenon by saying the essence of dialogue itself is the word. The word is more than just a tool or instrument that makes dialogue possible. Within the word there are two dimensions; reflection and

action. If one is sacrificed, even in part, the other suffers. Thus to speak a true word is to transform the world (Freire 1970, 75).

According to Shor (1992), classroom participatory-problem posing can transform academic knowledge into themes accessible to students. Such an approach involves a two-way transformation of subject matter and discourse. The teacher may introduce a problem for students to reflect on or students may have the opportunity to challenge themselves by exploring new areas of interest or concern.

Freire (1970) goes on to say that if the dimension of action is deprived then the word becomes empty; it is reduced to idle chatter. On the other hand, if action is over emphasized or is emphasized exclusively, then the word is converted to activism. Both idle chatter and unreflective activism compromise an ongoing dialogue.

Richness In Dialogue

Dialogue is an encounter which requires a combination of both reflection and action united in order for the world to be transformed and humanized, therefore the richness of the dialogue is very important. Dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of depositing ideas into another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be consumed by the people engaged in the dialogue. Richness in dialogue occurs as individuals look in depth at different interpretations and meanings and then work to renegotiate core beliefs.

According to Freire (1970) dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world. Only by abolishing the situation of oppression,

is it possible to restore the love which originally allowed for dialogue to take place.

As individuals engage in dialogue they must acknowledge themselves as being as mortal as everyone else. They must be willing to experience humility as they arrive at the task of learning and acting. Everyone involved must be committed to the cause of liberation and have mutual faith in each others' power to create and recreate in the act of becoming more human. Within conditions that combine love, humility, and faith, dialogue naturally creates a mutual trust as its logical result.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a necessary factor for engaging in dialogue. Critical thinking enables individuals to understand reality as a process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity. This dynamic way of thinking generates further critical thinking. One must not be preoccupied with the content of the dialogue in order not to sway the direction that it takes. It is important that the dialogue remain open, creative, and spontaneous. Many times failure of dialogue occurs because one person, or leader, has plans which do not take into account the people in the situation to whom the dialogue was ostensibly directed. In dialogue, the leader must come to know the people they are involved with and the various perspectives that they have pertaining to a variety of situations. Individuals' view points must not be used to impose upon others, but rather to dialogue with one another about their multiple views. Each individual's view of the world is reflected through his/her own view of reality and situation in the world.

Transforming Reality

As participants in dialogue engage in the process of analyzing their shared reality, they become more aware of their prior distorted understandings, thereby coming to have a new perspective of that reality. It is through this action of critical reflection which increasingly organizes thinking leading participants to move from a purely naive knowledge of reality to a more complex, higher one, that participants are enabled to unveil the causes of their reality. Those who hold power (status quo) today discourage this type of activity among the general population because they do not want people to critically examine the relations of power they enjoy and are privileged by in society. This allows individuals who hold power to remain in the dominant role of the oppressor. The ideal situation would be for leaders to think about the true needs of the people in order to liberate, rather than dominate. This would mean changing their role from thinking about the people as a dominator does, to thinking with the people. In this kind of communion the people liberate each other. In this context, the importance of the leaders is emphasized because of the importance of living and working with the oppressed. Freire conveys to us that when the leader enters into a dialogue with the people, the people's empirical knowledge of reality, nourished by the leader's critical knowledge, gradually becomes transformed into knowledge of the causes of reality (Freire 1970, 129).

Anti Dialogic Action: Divide And Rule

According to Freire (1970), divide and rule is another fundamental dimension of the theory of oppressive action. As the oppressor, usually in the minority, attempts to dominate the majority, they must divide the

oppressed and keep them divided in order for the oppressor to remain in power. This division of the oppressed weakens them and further isolates them creating and deepening rifts among the oppressed. This is in the power interest of oppressors who want to maintain their power. A major weak point of the oppressed is their basic insecurity. The oppressed know from experience the price they may have to pay for questioning the dominant leader, (i.e. loss of job, possibly finding their name on a black list, or removal from a deans' list). When people continue to work under such oppressive conditions they no longer have a fulfilling pursuit. They feel dehumanized.

The leader may also use false generosity (charity) to cover up his sense of guilt. This false generosity is used not only to preserve an unjust order, but also to buy peace (sate guilt) for themselves.

Anti Dialogic Action: Manipulation

Manipulation is another dimension of the theory of anti dialogical action. Dominant elites use manipulation in order to conform the masses to their objectives. Manipulation is accomplished by the dominant leader having pacts with the oppressed. These pacts may appear to look like dialogue. In reality these pacts are not reality because they are built from a false premise whose true objective is to serve the interests of the dominant power group.

Anti Dialogic Action: Cultural Invasion

According to Freire (1970) a third form of anti dialogical action is cultural invasion. In this situation cultural invaders or colonizers penetrate the cultural context of another group imposing their world views upon those

whom they invade thus inhibiting their creativity by curbing their expression. The invaders attempt to mold those that they invade.

Bowers (1987) shows us how we all come into the classroom informed by different historical and cultural perspectives, religions, and political philosophies. Teachers need to be sensitive and respectful regarding others' unique differences. Different cultural maps and patterns of thought, such as language, eye contact and body language may not coincide with the pattern of thinking of others. To assist individuals in gaining knowledge about others' historical perspectives and phenomenological worlds there must be instilled an appreciation for one another's differences.

Dialogical Theory

The ideal working relationship, according to Freire

... is the practice of freedom, where one deals critically and creatively with reality and discovers how to participate in the transformation of the world. This inevitably leads to tension and conflict, but can also contribute to the formation of a new person (1970, 15).

Cooperation leads dialogical subjects to focus attention on the social reality which first mediates them, and which, posed as a problem, challenges them. According to Freire (1970), dialogical theory requires that the world be unveiled. The dialogical theory of action opposes authoritarianism and license and thereby affirms authority and freedom. There is no freedom without authority, but there is also no authority without freedom. All freedom contains the possibility that under special circumstances (and at different existential levels) it may become authority. Freedom and authority cannot be isolated, but must be considered in relationship to each other

(Freire 1970). Leaders and the people they lead together experience authority and freedoms as they transform and recreate their own realities.

In what Freire (1970) calls cultural synthesis, instead of following predetermined goals, the leader and the people together co-create their guidelines and their plans for action. In this sense the leaders and the people are somehow reborn in new knowledge and new action. As this is occurring, individual's concerns, doubts, hopes, religious beliefs, their ways of viewing their leaders, and their perceptions of themselves must be taken into account. These elements cannot be viewed as separate entities, but an interaction of all of them composing a totality. Freire proposes that by engaging in authentic transformation of reality, you humanize reality, thereby humanizing the world (Freire 1970).

As the research participants at Fammatre School engaged in dialogue concerning our new literacy practices, this literature review enabled me to analyze our dialogic interactions and compare them to various forms of dialogic encounters described. As teachers of Fammatre School engaged in dialogue in a variety of situations this literature review helped to define what dialogue might look like. These understandings may also assist us in making a conscious effort to improve in our professional encounters with one another as we make decisions which can affect the life chances of our students.

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on how the teachers at Fammatre School went about the work of improving of their own practice through engagement in dialogue. Through self reflection and conversations about the curricular goal of reading for meaning, they explored their interactions as they investigated signs of transformational growth in their own teaching practice.

The School Site and Student Population

The site of this inquiry into teacher dialogue was Charles Fammatre School in San Jose California, between September 1997 and March 1998. This site was chosen because, as an educator involved in the change of curriculum process, I could participate in critical conversations about my learning and teaching within a critical community of conversation with my peers as, we reflected on the impact we had on students' success in literacy.

Fammatre School is a K-5 elementary school with a faculty of 25 teachers. The student population of 500 is comprised largely of middle class students, 78% Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, 5% Asian and 3% African American. The faculty at Fammatre School felt a need to focus their efforts, as a group, on increasing parental and community involvement and developing assessments to evaluate progress, particularly in the area of literacy.

Fammatre's History

In October of 1996, the faculty at Fammatre School applied for membership with the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative with the submission of a school portfolio. Following a review of the portfolio and teacher interviews, the Fammatre faculty proposal was approved for

membership. In January of 1997, a funding proposal was submitted to support efforts in the area of early literacy.

Fammatre also lends itself to this study because school policy allows time for teachers to collaborate, reflect, and have conversations about their work through a restructured school day schedule. Each Wednesday teachers have time to collaborate regarding how students learn and which literacy teaching practices reflected through current research are best.

Reform At Fammatre School

Upon receiving a BASRC grant (Bay Area School Reform Collaborative) for the 1997-1998 academic year, the Fammatre School faculty decided that as a school focus we would explore the concept of reading for meaning.

We began our focused effort by collaborating to formulate a problem statement based on evidence provided through CTBS test scores for our school. Test results suggested that children attending the school seem to be able to decode words, but did not have as much success in reading for meaning.

Before writing the Executive Summary for the BASRC, we as a faculty worked on the development of a shared vision. To this end the following questions and concerns were discussed.

- How do we get there?
- What are the high leverage activities that we need to engage in to reach our goal?
- We don't want too many activities or it won't be focused.
- Our plan needs to be coherent, not go off in several directions.

- Do these high leverage activities address best practices in teaching? high standards for all? assessment and inquiry? accountability to the community?
- Do these activities address areas in the established rubric?
- Will we have in place the best practices for systems to manage the change process?
- What do we throw away?

At the point of generating these questions we asked ourselves again, “why should we focus on reading for meaning?” Students’ problems were identified through teacher observation and resulted in the development of a problem statement which can be located in our Executive Summary (appendix 1). As a result of teachers identified problems they believed students were having, teachers created the following list:

- making the connection between isolated skills and the meaning of the text
- comprehension (evidenced in the CTBS test)
- making meaningful connections between what they are reading and their own lives
- more difficulty excelling in reading than in math
- having difficulty reading beyond the literal level
- communicating the meaning of the story
- using clues other than pictures for comprehension. (For example, when a student transitions from a book with pictures to one without pictures)
- retelling, and applying performing on CTBS in areas where there has been heavy instructional emphasis
- failing to read for enjoyment

Teachers were experiencing difficulty:

- reaching students at all levels, to their capacity
- establishing appropriate expectations and standards
- finding ways to engage large numbers of parents consistently throughout the grades in meaningful ways of helping their children in the reading process
- maintaining a balance between receptive modes (listening and reading) and expressive modes (speaking and writing)

The faculty at Fammatre School began to put in place an action plan they hoped would produce substantive change in the area of literacy at the school. The Accelerated Literacy program was used by all teachers as the basis for working on change in the area of reading for meaning.

Research Participants

The participants for this research include the school principal, parents, teachers, and the school's BASRC consultant.

Why Qualitative Research?

A qualitative research approach was selected for this research because it is social research grounded in critical theory. Engaging in qualitative research allows the researcher to continue to question. Reality is socially constructed, therefore questions are complex and ever changing. Qualitative research is evolutionary in that as the research develops, questions and interpretations change setting the stage for discovery as well as personal empowerment.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) remind us that, as participants researcher, face to face interactions are very important. I met with my focus group on a regular basis as an observer, listener, and question poser in an effort to clarify meanings. I learned through my own experiences as well. As a diverse group

of educators we collaborated as we learned from each others' experiences. My role was to encourage the participants in the group to collect data, interpret data, and take action towards solving problems we identified. Following the suggestion of Geertz (1973), I also asked that participants to describe their experiences as thickly and descriptively as possible so that I might acquire thick descriptors. As they described events or practices they critically reflected on these practices. We were bound to have multiple perspectives as participants thus encouraging us to negotiate mutual understandings of our various perspectives. This critical social science method, described by Kieffer (1981), is concerned with helping individuals reflect on individual understandings. As we came to know ourselves better, and self reflected on our new knowledge, we formed our new perspectives about our new learning. After self reflection we were better able to make well thought out decisions about the kinds of action we wanted to take concerning our new learning. Critical theory provided the framework to help us make decisions about actions we would take.

From personal experience, I know that teachers often hoard ideas and materials. Through this research study, I was able to encourage teachers to sit down together on a regular basis and seriously discuss how the new learning related to each of us individually and how we could better achieve our educational goals. As we shared our findings we worked together to implement strategies based on new understandings as they emerged.

Critical action research allowed for more authentic educational reform, because it related to the lives of teachers. Dewey saw the value of teachers inquiring into their own successes and failures. As teachers come to

understand how they construct personal understandings of the learning process, they are also able to move into unknown territory with students in the learning process.

Critical action research enabled teachers to experience a sense of empowerment because it involved them as the most important part of the process.

Unlike empirical instruments used in quantitative research, qualitative research enables teachers to synthesize information, generate their own personal interpretations and then revise those interpretations as new insight into the inquiry become visible.

Using qualitative research allowed the teachers to get a closer look at experiences of students, other teachers, and parents. Our research study included parental involvement as an integral part of our learning. As parents were involved in the classroom and invited to participate in training sessions, we included them as part of our critical conversations in order to gain the benefits of their insight. As we interacted in a variety of ways as teachers, students, parents, and principal, our experiences were analyzed to gain insight into our individual and shared experiences.

Giroux (in Glesne and Peshkin, 1992) believes that teachers are obligated to become researchers themselves in order to reveal the interests implicit in their own teaching. In this way there is a fusion between the knower and the known, where the researcher is no longer able to separate what he/she knows from the research. What is said is not separate from the knower. This research, therefore, is the truth; it is truth from the perspective of the researcher. As researcher, I was obliged to take a position and to make

that position explicit to others. My role was to not impose my position or interpretation onto others as the truth. Individual teachers involved in the study had the right to reject what was said.

Critical constructivist teacher researchers are post formal question formulators and problem posers. Post formal thinkers are not worried about what knowledge is going to emerge from the research. They are comfortable with this uncertain nature of gaining knowledge. This type of dialogue, or critical conversation, focuses on the process of question formulation rather than problem solving. Einstein argued that question formulating is more important than answers to the questions or solutions to the problems (in Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

Positivistic researchers, on the other hand, often treat their research as an external body of information, independent of human beings, objectified and existing outside of a historical context. Separated from political and cultural interpretations, such a posture also loses its meaning to the individual. If teachers and researchers are to understand from a critical perspective, we cannot separate facts from peoples' thoughts and feelings about the facts. These thoughts, feelings, and questions all produce relevant insights into the research. Jürgen Habermas tells us that knowledge cannot be separated from human interests (1981). If we are to separate our reflections, assumptions, and inquiries, then we are reducing our research to the cause/effect rationality of empirical science. This positivistic approach treats human experience and problems as if they can only be solved in one way, through the rigorous application of scientific techniques.

Giroux contests this belief, stating that knowledge is an entity which must be constantly challenged, redefined, and negotiated by all participants. Dewey says that knowledge based on connections would view experience as a vantage point from which a problem presented by a new experience could be considered.

As the teachers at Fammatre School met on a regular basis to have critical conversations about their work, we continued to question, learn, and continually gain new insights into our teaching practices. Qualitative research, grounded in the interpretist paradigm, allowed us to make sense of our social interactions.

The Research Process

Using Kiefer's model of Dialogic Retrospection (1981), I asked three teachers from Fammatre School to join me, on a voluntary basis, to engage in an initial interview. During the interview, I gained background information about each participant's understanding of literacy and how they felt about changing the curriculum. I also wanted to gain information about the participants' backgrounds related to their own education.

Interviews were electronically tape recorded. Interview questions were open ended allowing participants to fully describe their own historical perspectives. Following the initial interview, interviews were transcribed and returned to each participant. This type of interview process allowed participants to reflect upon, as well as clarify, anything that I, as a researcher, might have misinterpreted. This process allowed for validation of the data. Participants were able to share ownership of the data. This group of peers met once a month to have critical conversations regarding the work we were

doing in the area of literacy. A final research participant meeting took place at the end of the research, allowing us to expand or clarify ideas. This meeting enabled us to reflect on our new insights and transformational growth resulting from our conversations about dialogue as well as our conversations concerning our new literacy practices.

Research Participants

The participants in this research study were teachers at various grade levels at Fammatre School in San Jose, California. Each of the participants is a dedicated and experienced teacher with an interest in the subject of literacy.

Petunia is a third grade teacher who has been teaching for eighteen years. She has taught seventh and eighth grade in middle school, as well as second, third, and fourth grades at the elementary school level. She grew up in San Jose and all but four years of her teaching career has been spent in San Jose. Petunia is very dedicated to the teaching profession, attending a variety of training workshops each year, and remaining current on the most up-to-date research in education. She is very interested in the curricular area of mathematics, but has donated much time to the area of literacy. Petunia also serves as a member of the literacy team at Fammatre School helping in the writing and rewriting of the BASRC grant as well as the coinciding accountability framework.

Sarah grew up in upstate New York. Since jobs were hard to find when she first graduated from college, Sarah had previously worked as a substitute teacher. Sarah received her Master's Degree in reading and served as a reading specialist for four years. After meeting her husband, she moved to San Jose where she has taught in grades preschool through high school

(excluding grades seven and eight). Sarah has extensive background in the area of literacy and continues to remain up to date on current research in reading through attending workshops, classes and training each year.

Kelly is a first grade teacher who recently moved to San Jose from Oregon. Her first teaching position was in kindergarten in Portland, Oregon. After two years in Portland she met her husband and moved to Denver. In Denver she had several long-term substitute teaching positions over three years, one at the fifth grade level. At the same time she also ran a catering business. During the next two years, Kelly taught at the first grade level. Kelly took time off from teaching when she had her children and went back to work with her husband at their catering business while she raised her children. Next, moving to Florida, Kelly substituted every day at a variety of grade levels and worked in an after-school program with children. Kelly's family then moved back to Portland where she taught E.S.L. remaining at the school for ten years. She eventually became the head of the E.S.L. department at her school. Two years ago Kelly's husband was transferred to San Jose where Kelly began teaching first grade at Fammatre School. Kelly has been very involved at Fammatre School in the area of literacy. She remains up-to-date on the most recent training in the area of literacy and serves on the *Partners In Print Committee*, which was designed to encourage parents to become educated alongside the teachers, in the area of literacy.

About the Researcher

As the teacher-researcher, I have taught kindergarten for twelve years, this year teaching a K-1 combination class. I grew up in Crete, Nebraska and attended Doane College. Following graduation college I taught kindergarten

for five years at Blue Springs Elementary School in Nebraska. During this time, I completed graduate courses at the University Of Nebraska. Always wanting to live in California, I began to send letters of application to many schools and felt fortunate to be hired in the Cambrian School District where I have taught for seven years. Upon completing a fifth year of study through San Jose State University, I began working towards a masters' degree.

The Project

As a faculty at Fammatre School, during restructured day schedules, we met in grade level groups once each month and again once each month to discuss about our BASRC work. During these meetings, field notes were taken concerning what the group felt was important or relevant to discuss about their work. My hope was that through my study on dialogue, I might encourage successful dialogic interactions school wide.

The dialogue among research participants at Fammatre School was a conversational interaction directed toward teaching and learning. Although dialogue is different from conversation, it has some of the same elements.

This research was intended to encourage dialogic interaction between research participants on the faculty at Fammatre School. As we went through the process of change in reading instruction, through our dialogic interactions, we gained new insights and new understandings of each other as individuals. Rather than only to hear the voices of a group of isolated individuals, the goal was to empower all voices to be heard and to encourage everyone to listen. The dialogic interactions of the research participant group were analyzed by the group itself, an effort to verify that there was a dialogue

occurring in the true sense of several characteristics provided in the literature review.

It was my intention to examine the difference between a conversation and a dialogue, to define what a dialogue looked like in this situation, describe the characteristics of a dialogue, and examine various dialogic interactions that occurred at Fammatre School.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Gadamer (1976) suggests that when individuals approach a conversation with the intention of learning and coming to understanding others, they find themselves transformed by it. When we genuinely open up to the conversation by listening and allowing the conversational text itself to speak and assert its viewpoint, we are able to confront the “otherness” of the text and hear its challenge.

The presentation of the data is multi-layered due to many underlying themes that have emerged as a result of this study. In this chapter I connect the literature review from chapter two to data collected at Fammatre School. There were several types of data analyzed and presented: data that emerged through transcriptions from conversations with the research participants, data in the form of documents received from the administration concerning our new literacy practices’, and data from field notes.

In order to make obvious the format of these data, it was necessary to make clear how it unfolded. In organizing these data, I began by examining numerous transcriptions and various other related documents as I considered which information I felt portrayed transformational growth of the research participants. At the same time, I realized that there were two substantial themes emerging-growth and change in literacy practices and transformational growth in terms of understanding the role of dialogue in the change process. I began to organize these two themes under Habermas’ validity claims. Jürgen Habermas’ validity claims include truth, sincerity,

appropriateness, and comprehensibility. This structure allowed me to analyze what the research participants revealed as being the truth, how they felt about the new literacy program and the role that dialogue plays, what is or is not appropriate, and the role of comprehensibility as it relates to the change process.

Using four sheets of butcher paper, I separated the data under each of Habermas' validity claims. At the same time I separated data which pertained to literacy practices, from those relating to the role of engagement in dialogue. At that point I realized the relevance of organizing data in a chronological manner. Arranging the data in this way enabled me to recognize signs of growth occurring as I made comparison from the beginning of the research study to the end.

When looking at data that count as truth claims, one looks to see how it is described or are accepted as true statements such as "The earth is a sphere."

Sincerity claims allow the researcher to identify an individual's personal beliefs or desires. These data include what individuals think or believe. As a researcher, sincerity claims will also show up as field notes. These data belong in the category of sincerity claims, because the information recorded is subjective as-to my own personal thoughts and beliefs as a teacher, a learner, and a researcher. One would fail the sincerity claim if they knowingly told a lie.

Appropriateness claims refer to information that an individual believes is appropriate or if individuals agree that the speaker is the appropriate person to know. Words used to help describe appropriateness

are: legitimate, rightful, and relevant. An individual may say, "I think it should be this way" or "it ought to be done this way", or "how about like this?" In this research, appropriateness claims may also show up in the form of "whatever Rena says is right"- Rena being the coach in our new literacy procedures. It may also look like something that the teachers are "supposed" to do.

The claim of comprehensibility underlies our speech when we assume others understand our language and our meanings. It may not be met when educational jargon is misunderstood when being used to explain something. Often the comprehensibility claim must be questioned when someone uses language that is not common everyday language and they may not be understood by the listener.

Habermas' validity claims allowed me, as a researcher and a learner, to look at data in terms of how the research participants in this study determine what was truth, how they felt about ideas and issues, if the ideas speakers and issues were appropriate, and what did and did not make sense to them as a part of their new learning.

What Research Participants

Consider To Be True

Within the first meeting of the research group, each participant took turns reporting what they were doing in the area of literacy. At this point there was little evidence that a true dialogue was occurring. According to Burbules, in dialogue there is a to and fro exchange of comments and responses. Dialogue builds upon itself to reach new and unexpected results (1993, 50). During the first meeting there was no to and fro exchange. Rather

each participant reported information, none of which was unexpected or surprising. Reading the transcriptions of this meeting I questioned whether we really understood the nature of a dialogue.

In October I prepared a brief description of what dialogue might look like and shared it with my group. The research participants discussed how the dialogue we were engaged in might come to be what Burbules (1993) calls dialogue as conversation. The two main characteristics of dialogue as conversation are that there is generally a cooperative, tolerant spirit and a direction toward a mutual understanding. This type of dialogue usually takes place as one participant becomes interested in understanding the outlook and experiences of the other participant.

Burbules (1993) uses the metaphor of dialogue being played like a game. He uses the term rules loosely. Rules help to provide consistency, predictability and continuity while still allowing for spontaneity, creativity, and surprise. Looking at the brief description of dialogue and asking questions for clarification, the research participants were also asked to think about what they would like their “rules” of the dialogue game to be.

The research group was then asked to look at the transcription from the first meeting to find evidence of engagement in a dialogue and how we might improve the quality of discourse. This we agreed, would be the topic for discussion at our December meeting.

In December, after participants had studied the preceding transcripts they looked for evidence of dialogue. Petunia noted that “It seemed more like reporting you know.” She went on to say that “It has been more sharing

so we could get off from the same base, starting from the same point, the same page.”

Reviewing my field notes I noticed that,

. . . to come to a point of engaging in dialogue is not an easy thing to do either. I noticed in the transcription that when there was a difference of opinion, people got really quiet. We started to have a dialogue, but then it trailed off.

Realizing this helped participants in formulating appropriate “rules” for our dialogue. According to Burbules (1993) it would be necessary to trust one another in order to feel safe to disclose thoughts or feelings which may be controversial.

The research participant group continued to discuss what the “rules” of their dialogue game should be. Sarah asked that the rules that we agreed upon be taken out of the text of the transcription and put into a list that could be added to our field note binders.

The following list was the result of our discussion about what we decided would be the “rules” that we would follow as we engaged in the dialogue “game”.

- Confidentiality
- Effective listening (You would repeat back what you understand the person to be saying if you need clarification or if you have a difference of opinion.)
- Formal agreement that everyone take their turn to speak
- Tolerance for different point of views
- Patience
- Accepting the fact that people do or may have differing opinions

- Trust
- Commitment to being sure that everybody feels okay at the end of the meeting
- Hope
- Agreement to use of building statements: Example: using and instead of but. . .

The rules were agreed upon in hopes of overcoming emotional elements might obstruct our engagement in a successful dialogic encounter.

As the research participants discussed the role of dialogue in our small setting there was also discussions pertaining to other possible places where participants may engage in dialogue on a school-wide basis. For instance, once a week on Wednesdays, Fammatre School has a restructured shortened day schedule in order to provide time for teachers to engage in dialogue in a variety of settings (i.e. grade level meetings, staff meetings, committee meetings, and literacy meetings). There is also a teacher advisory committee that meets once a month prior to staff meetings with a representative from each grade level.

The agenda of faculty meetings was closely scheduled and did not encourage or allow time for dialogue. Individuals on the faculty requested opportunities for more open discussions during faculty meetings. Beginning in January, a ten minute block was put into the agenda to allow for a school wide dialogue. Although time was provided it was prescribed and quite limiting to real engagement. Kelly, who was a member of the T.A.C. (teacher advisor committee) worked to build the ten minutes into meetings. She stated,

you know it's really an interesting process, figuring out who gets what and making sure we have enough time. Even just the things besides that ten extra minutes, but even the pieces that we are going to need to do, to make sure that there was enough time on those, if somebody had a question, or something like that.

The design of the agenda for faculty meetings is grounded in a closed system. Closed systems are designed to transmit and transfer information. The extra ten minutes allotted beginning in January was an attempt to provide a short amount of time for interactive dialogue.

Sarah then questioned the purpose of T.A.C. saying, "One question I have, I haven't been on T.A.C yet. But when you go, are you there representing yourself, your grade level, or both?" Kelly's reply was "your grade level" plus "you always represent yourself no matter where you are." Neither Sarah or I had served on T.A.C. yet. We requested a time toward the end of the year. Our grade level has never asked them for input. The purpose of T.A.C., not being made explicit makes it difficult for the representative who attends on a brief and sporadic basis on the committee to know what their responsibilities to T.A.C. are. Kelly described a T.A.C. meeting stating, "I was asked 'Anybody at first grade have anything?' and you kind of go 'no, I don't think so.'" Kelly was asked to go back to her grade level and get information from her team as to what they were going to do for the parent forum and to ask what they might want to know about disaster preparedness. The process promotes what Freire (1970) describes as the silenced voice. Those members who have been on T.A.C. have opportunities to give input in planning faculty meetings. Those who were not on T.A.C. until the end of the year do not have knowledge of the processes and issues until that point.

Most grade levels have grade level meetings once a month. I teach a K/1 combination class, and am involved in engaging in dialogue with first grade teachers. Due to scheduling difficulties (having an a.m. K, K-1, and a p.m. K class), however, there has been no time scheduled for kindergarten teachers to work as a grade level team.

Sarah also admitted to not being involved in a grade level team dialogue. She claims “We were actually given permission by the principal to work as two separate individual groups within a group.” She went on to say that this was due to the two groups having different philosophies. This lack of engagement between individuals in order to avoid conflict is an example of what Freire (1970) defines as divide and rule. Divide and rule occurs when the unheard must divide and remain divided. This division weakens them, further isolating them and creating and deepening rifts among them.

Petunia, Kelly, and I have all been involved in an interactive dialogue with our grade level where we have the time to discuss and engage in dialogue about issues concerning us as a grade level.

What Research Participants Believe Or Desire Concerning Literacy Practices

In September, members of the research participant group grappled with how to group students who were below grade level. Petunia felt that when grouping children below grade level, it would be helpful to have books readily available that could just be pulled when needed. Sarah agreed, saying,

I agree with Petunia in that my problem was that because I didn’t have anything low enough, that I actually had to go to things of that sort,

like the placement test that we had put together for reading intervention.

This provides an example of one of Burbules (1993) utterances in dialogue. When Sarah said "I agree with Petunia," and then went on to add a personal story which relates to the topic, she was motivating further conversation on this topic. This type of utterance is called a building statement and its purpose is just that, to encourage further discussion.

Sarah also went on to comment about assessment by saying,

I'm finding that that has been the challenge for me, actually developing assessments and finding the assessments. I think the consistency within a grade level and across the grades is good.

Sarah liked the idea of a place to make staged books accessible to all. Walker (1995) suggested organizing benchmark books in a binder to provide for consistency across the grade levels.

At the first meeting in September, Kelly shared her feelings concerning the new literacy program, saying

I gotta say, I am really into this Rena Walker stuff. When I heard her in San Diego, I just thought whoa, this is me and plus everything more. This is where I have been and is just the added stuff that I have been looking for. It just really hit me like a ton of bricks.

Kelly went on to say that she was really anxious for her children to get to stage 3.5 because she wanted to do whole group instruction in this area. This was something new to her and she was feeling this was a piece that was missing for her.

Management was a concern of the research participants. Sarah said "I just feel like I really need to have those behaviors in place and that the children need to know what the expectations are during that time." Here

Sarah was referring to what the other children would be doing while she was working with a small group for guided process reading.

There were mixed feelings and beliefs within the research participant group about a phonics and spelling approach. Sarah stated,

I feel that if they have a real strong phonics program, Zoo Phonics in kindergarten and Slingerland in first and second, then if they are still not getting it, then they're not. They need to have a solid base in phonics and if they are not getting a heavy dose, then you need to go some place else. But I feel that it is successful for most children.

Kelly admitted that she did the Slingerland five minute phonics drill, but preferred to teach the sounds within the context of their reading when it came up.

This belief is consistent with Goodman, Bird and Goodman's (1988) research showing that it is not necessary to introduce and drill words out of context, teach phonics in isolation, or teach reading in a hierarchy of skills to be mastered.

Petunia interjected,

. . . for me, I guess I hear what you are saying, but I feel, with Rena Walker, she gives you the structure and in it you can put any phonics you want, any spelling you want.

As for the spelling lists used at first and second grade levels, Kelly said,

I just didn't feel my particular children last year, maybe it was the group or maybe it was me, used those words in their writing. They were good writers, but some of the words too just really bothered me to be honest. Mirth, for one, that just stuck out in my head. I had a really hard time explaining mirth to the children and that was a spelling word.

According to Goodman, Bird and Goodman (1988) words that students use in their writing should have meaning for the child conceptually.

Sarah to commented about the spelling list that she used by saying,

the first year that we had a second grade list, they too went along with the sounds and we used them. (Slingerland sounds) Then we felt the concept was good, but we actually looked at Macracken and pulled those words in and replaced some words with those that were more meaningful. I think what we have is very tight.

In our December meeting the research participants discussed the new teachers hired at Fammatre School. Due to efforts to lower class sizes, many new teachers were hired. I was curious as to whether the new Accelerated Literacy Program had any influence on who was hired. I wondered if it had anything to do with a strong literacy background. Kelly, who has been at Fammatre for two years, commented that she was asked about her literacy background during her interview. She went on to say that the new hires were not so much encouraged in the area of literacy, but she thinks the hiring was done looking at those kind of people. Kelly said, "I feel that in order to be hired at Fammatre and even Cambrian, they are looking for people who are going in that direction in literacy." By "that" she meant that the Cambrian School District was looking for new teachers on the basis of their experience and interest in the area of literacy. She also felt that it was evident and could be evidenced in the new hires especially, because one new hire had already been trained in Accelerated Literacy.

Sarah built on this conversation by adding that she thought it might be part of their teacher education at this point. At the same time she thought that it was also important to maintain a balance. Even as changes were being made, she felt it was important not to lose sight of the balance because she thought that all kinds of people were needed to keep the environment stable

while also moving in the direction of change. Sarah went on to comment about the importance of teaching to the child's various intelligence's saying,

I guess with the training in terms of the different intelligence's, I think it is important to consider that. A lot of times when kids are not able to be successful in the language arts because they are not verbal linguistic, or they may not be logical mathematical, at least they have that piece" (she is referring to the other multiple intelligence's, such as musical, spatial, interpersonal, etc.) so I am thrilled that our focus is literacy, but at the same time, I think it is important not to put all of our eggs in one basket, and lose sight of the fact that we have the responsibility to educate the whole child.

Last year the school focus at Fammatre School was providing an environment to address children's needs through teaching to the various multiple intelligence's.

In December, Sarah's class wrote about how they felt concerning the Guided Process Reading (G.P.R.) Sarah brought the students' comments to share with the group. Sarah believed that the letters were truthful. She said that they had no reason not to be because the students were allowed to remain anonymous with their comments. Sarah found the comments very insightful because she had noticed the students' body language communicated to her that they were not into it. The student's comments however, portrayed positive thoughts and feelings from the students. What she was observing and what they were saying were two different things. According to Shor (1992), in order to transform a curriculum in to one with qualities of a post modern perspective we must be willing to question our basic assumptions.

In January, Petunia and Sarah were comparing their experiences about a meeting they had with Walker with their grade level teams. Petunia began

by explaining that when her team first observed Rena Walker do a demonstration lesson with a small group of children, she was fascinated. Following the lesson, however, she was frustrated because there was not enough time to ask her all of the questions she wanted to ask. The second time they met with Walker she felt better because Petunia's grade level team had generated a list of questions before the meeting. Petunia's advice to the rest of the group was,

I think one thing that I would say is to really pick a couple of areas to focus on, rather than try to ask her about everything, unless there were some quick questions like little detail things. I know for me when she demoed with my class, it was very humbling for me. You know like at the end, she did ask about the staging of one girl in particular. Then she asked me about the theme. I felt like I had to learn from that time, that it's hard. It's like she is pushing us into growth and it hurts.

According to Freire (1970) as individuals participate in dialogue they become more aware of their prior distorted perceptions. Through critical reflection, one may move from a naive knowledge of reality to a higher one. Sarah relays her experience with her Walker demonstration, saying

I think in all fairness to her, she comes in cold, but I wasn't nervous, or I wasn't embarrassed. I was disappointed if anything in that for me personally, it wasn't a real growing time. It wasn't really productive. I'll be honest with you, the kind of questions that I ask in my G.P.R. groups are higher level thinking than what I saw her asking. I saw a lot of disrupting the flow of the text, you know where the kids would start and then they would stop, and start and stop. I'm not sure that, I don't know, if that doesn't break up the continuity. I felt that there was a lot of starting and stopping within the text, you know?

This statement is an example of Grice's (1989) general rules for communication. He claims, that in order to have a quality conversation, one must refrain from saying something that they know is untrue. One can however state that you think something may be true. Sarah does this by

saying "I'm not sure. I don't know." She then goes on to say what she thinks is true. At the end of her statement she also asks a question. This type of utterance in dialogue, outlined by Burbules (1993) is intended to encourage others to formulate an opinion or articulate a view point.

Kelly interjected to say "I think we need to remember that that is why it is called guided process reading. The children need to be able to process the text." Sarah concluded by remarking on various individuals perceptions saying,

I think the way that we perceive things, and I know too, the way I perceive Accelerating Literacy, may be different from the way the rest of you perceive it.

What Participants Believe Or Desire Concerning Dialogue

These data shows how participants felt about dialogical encounters in their teaching practice-before and after the conscious awareness of dialogue. I began the first meeting of research participants by saying,

I want this to feel like a safe place, that we can talk and not feel uncomfortable about expressing opinions. Because I think as different things come out, we may have different opinions. If we do express a differing opinion, I think we can express it in a way where maybe we can agree that it is all right to disagree.

This type of conversation involves the emotional factor of trust. Burbules (1993) claims that trust involves feeling safe to disclose what one believes or feels. It also involves relying on one another and believing that judgment will be withheld. In order to participate in dialogue, one must also be tolerant

of another's opinions and views and willing and open to hearing other points-of-view even when contrary to your own.

I had hoped that the dialogue participants would think about literacy, what they were doing in the area of literacy, or any concerns that they had about enriching their conversations. I commented,

I feel that what is really important too, is that with the 'rules' of the dialogue game, everyone feels free to say things that we may not all agree upon. I feel that if we just agree about everything and I just deposit my ideas into your heads and you say uh huh, uh huh, or you say something to me and I feel like I have to agree, then we do not have a dialogue. In order to engage in dialogue we need to be similar enough to have a shared vision, but different enough to make it worthwhile.

If our conversations were to go in this direction we would be in a relationship which Freire (1970) describes as the banking concept of education. In the banking concept the leader deposits ideas into the rest of the group and the information is taken as truth without questioning. In a problem posing environment the leader is no longer the one in control, but is jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.

Noting the importance of individuals participation in active listening, even if they did not agree, I stated,

. . . for instance, I may not agree with what Sarah says, but I truly listen to what she says, and through listening to her, I can gain an appreciation for what she said even though I don't believe the same thing.

According to Burbules (1993), listening is a key element to a dialogic interaction. Listening does not mean the act of simply hearing. When one truly listens they stand to learn something new.

Looking at a previous transcription of a research participant meeting, Petunia claims,

I felt like when I looked at the definition of dialogue and then I went through and looked at what we had done, I didn't feel like it was dialogue because part of the definition of dialogue was that it was spontaneous. It is like it bubbles up and comes from yourself.

According to Shor (1992), themes for discussion must be generated by the group as a whole allowing the group to take possession of that reality.

Sarah found a portion of the transcript which looked like dialogue to her. She said,

I had the feeling that that was more like a dialogue. I think we had some direction initially, but I think the direction that the conversation took on was our own based on what we had experienced.

Sarah went on to say, "That was the piece that I thought was perhaps the most like dialogue, because none of us really had the answers." This notion is similar to what Doll (1993) is speaking about when he describes what a post modern perspective looks like. There is no one "truth."

In January, Lisa noted that when she read through the transcriptions from the previous research participant meeting, she thought she recognized more dialogue occurring. She said "I really noticed a difference from last time to this. Did anyone else feel that way?" Here again is an example of a question which was asked to encourage others to formulate an opinion or elaborate as to what they thought.

Petunia added "Yeah, in this section I hear dialoguing, so I marked it. It started to get super interesting." Sarah followed, stating "I felt that it was at that point that we were more in sync and listening to what was being said."

At one point in the January discussion, Petunia mentioned some questions that she had asked Rena Walker. Sarah then said, "See, that is the kind of learning that I think needs to be shared." Sarah was referring to the idea of sharing through a school-wide dialogue. She went on to say

. . . so if a question is asked and another group has the same question, unless it is specific to a grade level or specific to a stage, then I think it would be helpful for all of us too, because I think there are probably some common questions throughout the stages.

Petunia disagreed with this notion, contending "A lot of the answers in third grade were very different than the rest of you would get." Kelly agreed with Petunia saying "I bet you at grade level, even that common question, the answer would look different." Sarah was hoping to encourage a school-wide dialogue through encouraging others' to discuss questions which may be similar. This type of dialogue, according to Burbules (1993) would be described as inquiry. In this instance dialogue has taken on the form of investigating a particular issue.

At the final research participant meeting I said that I felt looking back on transcriptions was very helpful to me in that I was able to think back to what was said. It helped me as I was thinking about certain pieces of the literacy program. I also wished that such dialogue could occur more on a school-wide level. There was, however, a "wall" of people on a school-wide basis, who didn't seem to want that. It was difficult for me to understand why this was so although I was glad that ten minutes had recently been added into the meeting minutes. Due to some negative body language on the part of various other faculty members however, I did not always feel comfortable speaking up. Kelly mentioned that she thought it was a big step. She stated,

"The extra ten minutes allotted for open discussion was a real conscious effort on the administration to get that piece in there." Negative body language serves to silence others. Burbules (1993) tells us that the key to engaging in an effective dialogue is to be aware of the agreements. One of the norms agreed upon as a faculty, was respect of others' and appropriate body language. By ignoring the agreements, the result can be a failure in dialogue.

Sarah did not feel that we were engaged in dialogue during faculty meetings. She said "I feel that it's top down. I feel that it's one way."

Kelly felt that dialogue happened more in small groups such as grade level, teacher advisory committee, and committee meetings, because it is more casual.

Sarah and I expressed an interest in engaging in school-wide dialogue in faculty meetings, especially when it pertained to important decisions or things we would be expected to do as teachers.

Petunia then said, "But you have to understand the other side, for some of us, it is okay if we do not have input. It really, really is." She went on to say that she thought that Sarah and I needed that processing time, but when the principal summarized the surveys concerning how the faculty felt about that extra ten minutes in faculty meetings for open dialogue, some people said we needed more processing time, some people said we needed less.

Petunia, who is on the leadership team, stated that she was involved in meetings but didn't think they resulted in really implementing anything. She claimed "cause we've gone back and said, what do we want?" When asked about speaking up in faculty meetings, Kelly said,

I think a lot of times it's individual. It's important for all of us to remember that. Because even being new last year, I never felt I couldn't speak out. Sometimes time was not allotted for us to have that process time or chance to contribute, but I never felt I couldn't. Plus I think even the first year that you are with a group, it takes a while. I mean it's the second year when you feel ready to voice your own opinions.

According to Burbules (1993) the emotional factor of trust is necessary in order to feel safe to disclose ones' thoughts and feelings. New teachers may need time to feel safe in an environment and gain trust in others' before verbalizing an opinion.

There are other areas in which dialogue occurs in small settings at Fammatre School. Petunia gave her insight into T.A.C. (teacher advisory committee) saying,

I love the way T.A.C. is working, but I had to be on T.A.C. for a couple of times to get it. So with dialogue, what I love is I can sit down with people and talk about teaching and talk about reading. I really enjoy that, I feel like it's refreshing to have some of the new people here because they have been different places. It makes me reflect and think.

Kelly liked the fact that people on the T.A.C. changed. She felt that it allowed her access to different opinions and enabled individuals to get to know different people with backgrounds different from hers. Kelly relays to Sarah and I, who had not yet been on the T.A.C., that she felt that it was our responsibility to tell the representative from our grade level if we had any thoughts or concerns to be shared.

All members of the research participant group agreed that they really liked the way the literacy committee meetings had been run. There had been two at this point in the year. The members of the research participant group really felt that there had been a positive interactive dialogue occurring. Kelly said "I like the forum. I like how it was being done, how we got into groups

and then we went back. I thought it was faster moving too.” This type of dialogue would be described by Burbules (1993) as dialogue as inquire. The faculty was investigating a particular issue. Through problem posing (Freire 1970) the faculty addressed the issue of assessment. The faculty worked together as critical co-investigators in order to make connections and respond to the challenge of coming up with school-wide standards.

Petunia felt that the facilitator of the meeting did a good job. The facilitator had told Petunia that since she had a chance to talk with her grade level group prior to a whole faculty meeting, she had a forum to share her ideas. When she went before the group she left her ideas and opinions up to her grade level to share for her and took on the role of facilitator. Kelly also felt that grade level dialogue was a big help, in order to hear what other people were doing and what questions they had. When Kelly was asked if she minded if she wasn't involved in decision making at the school, she replied, “I think it would depend on how far fetched it got. But some things, it's just kind of life. You've got to do, what you've got to do.” This describes what Freire (1970) talks about when he states that the silenced voices come to accept and adopt their role.

At the final research participant meeting, the research participants were asked to make some final comments on any new insights relating to the role of dialogue in education. Petunia said,

for me some new insight really in dialogue, I have to be open. If I go in with my mind already made up, or I come with a hidden agenda, and I've already made up my mind, then it doesn't work. I think even at third grade we've really had to work on that as a grade level, because we are really, really different.

Regarding the Rena Walker training, Petunia stated "Sometimes Rena comes and says, "remember I said this in training," and I think 'oh, yeah, I wasn't ready for it.'" Petunia thought that as learners one needed to be ready for each piece before they are ready to absorb it. According to Bowers, (1987) the connection between language and thought is fundamentally important. It is important not to dismiss the role that language plays in the construction of reality. Therefore, in order to construct knowledge, one must engage in discussion about the knowledge to be acquired.

I went on to say,

I agree with what you are saying, where we are just learning, so the more we learn, the easier it is for us to dialogue about it, or grapple with it, or question it, or add new ideas to it or refine it.

Sarah's final comments on dialogue in general were

I think it has to be something that you're ready for. I mean, I think you have to be ready in all facets. You have to be ready mentally, intellectually, you have to be there. I think things need to be in place in order to dialogue. It is so important not only to be ready to take on new learning but also to dialogue about it.

Field Notes

Field notes are included under the category of sincerity because they are subjective reports of my own personal feelings and beliefs untested by the interchange of dialogue. These field notes are a record of various experiences which occurred throughout the year as a result of the changes in literacy practices. As a researcher I noted various levels of depth of commitment to training in the use of Accelerated Literacy as well as individual commitment that each teacher was willing to put forth to use the components of Accelerated Literacy in their classrooms. Most teachers at Fammatre School

were integrating the components of Accelerated Literacy. We were all learners at this point and we all varied in our understanding of what it looked like at each grade level. As Sarah mentioned, the way that she understood Accelerated Literacy might be different than the way the rest of us did. I think this was an important point to remember, and that even within grade levels individual teachers' styles were reflected through their new learning. More in depth learning concerning new literacy practices occurred as a result of engaging in dialogue in grade level teams. The role of dialogue in the learning process itself however, has not been questioned or acknowledged. I also heard comments in the faculty room about the amount of work that teachers who had a high level of commitment to this new program were doing. Teachers on the faculty were excited about their work, but overwhelmed with daily meetings and evening commitments.

Two new teachers were directly asked by the principal to be on the partners and print committee. They felt obligated since they were asked to do this and because they were new. Both expressed displeasure in the fact that it was a sizable time commitment, not only in preparation for presentations, but also in having to be at school at night. They did receive stipends for the time they were actually present, but not for the preparation time it took to make their participation possible. This was an example of what Freire (1970) describes as manipulation. This occurred when the leader used manipulation in order to conform the masses to their objectives. The teachers were made to feel that they "should" be on this committee.

Another example of manipulation was when there was a parent forum in February. Although teachers were told they did not have to be present at

the night meetings, teachers felt obligated. They felt this way because all parents were invited. They worried about how it would look if one teacher decided not to be present.

In October there was an all day inservice in order for teachers in the Cambrian School District to be trained by Walker. Sitting with the kindergarten teachers from the district, we wondered what the relevance of the training was for them. Walker was discussing what the program might look like at many different grade levels. I noticed a lot of note writing and whispering. It seemed difficult for people to pay attention. This may have been due to the fact that all grade levels were present. Only certain information throughout the day directly related to each grade level.

Walker had come to Fammatre School to serve as a coach. Depending on the desires of each grade level team, their time with Walker could be used either to have her demonstrate one of her components of reading with a small group of children, or it could be used for a question and answer period. Each group that signed up to spend time with her while she was at Fammatre was allotted approximately one hour. There were rotating substitute teachers who were hired for the day in order to give grade levels time to work with Walker. I found her demonstrations helpful in that I tend to be a visual learner. When I actually saw Walker model what it looked like I had a better idea of what it would look like for me in my own teaching.

Walker's presentations were very fast paced and to the point. Although I learned a great deal from her, her manner made me apprehensive. I really wanted to learn, but did not like being put on the spot

feeling like I had to answer questions or come up with questions for her. Other teachers on the faculty expressed similar feelings.

During the previous school year one person on the Fammatre School faculty opposed the work that the school was doing in the area of literacy making her opinions known to parents, faculty, and board members. The day after school was out, the Superintendent of the Cambrian School District, sent a letter to her informing her that she had been involuntarily transferred to another school in the district. During the summer, some faculty members found out that she resigned under protest. Other faculty members were unaware of this action. The teacher receiving the involuntary transfer had worked in the school district for many years. People who did hear about what happened heard about it through the grapevine. Parents of children from Fammatre School asked to be added to the minutes of two school board meetings. Parents expressed displeasure with what had happened and were concerned about a possible infringement of the teacher's First Amendment right of free speech. One parent wanted to stress the importance of diversity in thinking and valuing different opinions. This parent also wanted the school board to give equal consideration to different points-of-view about the new literacy program. Many families were disappointed and discouraged that there had been no communication with the community. After the parents made their views public, they were told that the board was going to reconvene in closed session, but no action was anticipated. When school started in September, no mention was made of what had happened during the summer. The teacher's name was not spoken publicly and her room was left empty. This was a clear example of what Bowers (1987) described as an

audible silence. Audible silences are areas of human experiences about which there is a collective silence. It was like having an elephant in the middle of the living room that no one acknowledged. Such audible silences can cause a failure in dialogue because, according to Marcondes (1985), when only a certain select few feel comfortable enough to express their opinions, then dialogue does not exist.

Early in the year, the following norms were generated by the faculty to follow during meetings: 1) sense of humor, 2) respect of others, 3) respect of time, 4) absence of threat, 5) decisions made by consensus, 6) accept everyone's level of involvement, and 7) hard on ideas-soft on people. At that point, some faculty members did not feel an absence of threat and, therefore did not feel comfortable speaking at staff meetings. At the same time a division was beginning to occur among the faculty members. There were differing points of view as to how faculty members felt about what happened to the transferred teacher. Some people had knowledge concerning what had happened during the summer while others had little to no information. According to Freire (1970) divide and rule occurs when the unheard or silenced group is divided, in order for the leader to remain in power. This division weakens them, further isolating them, creating and deepening rifts among them. Many know from experience, the price they may have to pay for questioning the leader (i.e. possible loss of job or harassment).

In September, the faculty at Fammatre School engaged in a team building training entitled "Keys to Working Together Effectively." The presenter, Marilyn Aden, told the faculty that if they were going to do quality

work together, they would need to decide what their personal responsibilities were and what behaviors they would bring to the group.

In December the faculty decided to invite Marilyn Aden back in January to work with the faculty on conflict resolution. What would be discussed in this meeting would be confidential. Many issues that the teachers were concerned about were, for the first time, discussed. It is important to note that some people did not want this meeting to occur. The principal at Fammatre School was apprehensive about the meeting, but agreed to it in an effort to allow members of the faculty to speak out hoping this would bring the school together. During the meeting individuals made known their thoughts and feelings concerning the teacher's involuntary transfer. It was very difficult for individuals to disclose their feelings because of the fear of retribution. The meeting was emotional but many felt it was necessary to discuss this audible silence that was continuing to affect dialogic interactions within the school.

What Research Participants Consider To Be Appropriate Concerning Literacy Practices

Appropriateness refers to statements that the research participants made which they felt were correct. For example: "It should be done this way," or "it ought to be this way." Also appropriateness claims may appear as "Rena's" way of doing things, (Rena, referring to Rena Walker).

In September the research participant group began by talking about their management system during literacy time. Sarah began by saying,

I feel like I need to have it real calm and real quiet, because I need to be able to focus with the G.P.R. group that I am meeting with. So that's what I am building, a sense of independence and responsibility. We

have actually been practicing what the room feels like and sounds like and those kinds of things during certain blocks of time.

Kelly interjected by saying that what she was doing for management was alternating her groups,

. . . so I don't have a set order. I have one child that goes to E.S.L. and I have another child who goes to speech. I know they have to go first or second, but I really try to alternate that.

Kelly went on to say that sometimes it was easier to take the top group last, because you are so worn out and they don't take as much energy. The research participants felt that management was very important. They wanted to make sure that students knew what they were responsible for doing while the teacher met with a small group for guided process reading.

When referring to assessment, Petunia stated, "The hard part for me is that I have to ask different people to find out how to stage children that are not on grade level." Her concern was that there should be consistency. Walker had talked about putting together a binder that would have a book at each stage in it, in order to provide for consistency. Kelly agreed, saying,

I think that is a good idea to provide that consistency. When we start putting that binder together, maybe we could put a copy of the cover in there and say that it is in room such and such.

Petunia then said,

I was wondering if we need several binders, because for some of these, there are not so many pages. It would be a lot of copying. I don't know. I am not sure about primary grades, but it seems that the kids need the pictures to help them.

Sarah thought it would have been better to have it centrally located.

Petunia agreed with Sarah saying,

it would make the higher up you are, it would make your job even simpler. So you don't have to run every time you get a new student to

find a certain staged book. It could all be together. Maybe at the lower grades there would be a copy of the book and at the upper grades, where the books would be a lot fatter, we could just put a copy of the passage.

Shared reading, as described by Walker (1995), takes place as the teacher and the students share read a book. Students are encouraged to choral read predictable phrases. When discussing shared reading, I was concerned because I had a child in my kindergarten class who was reading way above grade level. During shared reading the child shouted out what the book said before other children had a chance to read the predictable pattern of the book. Kelly went on to say, "Yeah, she is going to have to stop doing that. That's the whole thing is trying to figure it out." The group went on to discuss that she still needed some of those conceptual skills at the kindergarten level. Sarah said,

. . . they get into literacy devices, when you push them, that are too complex for where they are developmentally. So they are really not getting as much as they possibly can, simply because they can decode.

Kelly's suggestion was to have this child possibly read the teacher's part of the shared reading. Sarah thought that maybe she could read the "read-aloud" to the other students, because it was on a higher level. I was concerned that the parents might think that because the child can read that she would be bored. Kelly commented on what she had done in the past with students who are working at a higher level of thinking by saying,

well you know I had a student last year who was really high and extremely bright and his mother asked me, 'well what are you doing for him?' I told her what I was doing for him and I also said that it is your responsibility as a parent of a child like him to supplement him (meaning to supplement what the teacher is doing).

When the topic of phonics was addressed, Kelly said,

I am doing the Slingerland for five minutes a day. I am just doing five minutes a day. On the spelling this year, I am going to pilot doing a different thing, going along with what Rena says about starting with so many words that they use in their writing. I am not going into so much spelling that followed along with Slingerland.

This approach again followed along with Goodman, Bird and Goodman's (1988) research in which he encouraged teaching skills within a context. I then went on to elaborate why it was important for me to continue to have my own individual approach as well, by saying,

I guess the one thing that keeps going over and over in my mind, is that I don't feel like I am Rena, and I don't feel I am Zoo Phonics, and I don't feel like I am Slingerland, and I don't feel like I am any one thing in particular. So I hate to say out loud that I am teaching only Rena, or I am teaching only Slingerland. I know that some people have strong feelings about one direction or another. I honestly, personally see the value in several different approaches. Even when I was talking about my stations. I know it is unique, but it works for me, but I still feel like I am pulling out the components that I have found are valuable into that.

In January there was much discussion concerning themes. Petunia began by explaining what her grade level had discussed with Walker during a debriefing following a demonstration lesson with a small group of children. Petunia said, "Rena asked me what was the theme that I was working on. I said, 'I don't have one.'" She told Petunia that if she did have one, then all of her questions could relate to it. So Petunia began playing with the idea of themes. She decided to use the theme of challenges, which relates to many stories. Petunia told the group that Rena's themes are really high level. She went on to say that it was really different from what she has done before. The themes were abstract and the children were doing a lot more thinking. Sarah then told the group that in second grade they had more concrete themes that tied into abstract themes. Sarah went on to say "They are just beginning to

transition between those two levels and so to use the concrete and transfer to the abstract.” Kelly then stated, “You can tie in the life skills too and that is something they are familiar with, something they understand.” Goodman, Bird and Goodman’s research (1988) supports teaching new information within the context of the child’s conceptual understanding.

After Sarah showed concern for the starting and stopping process of G.P.R. groups, Kelly interjected saying,

I think the key is that it is called guided process reading and that’s what you are supposed to do. You’re supposed to be the guide and the students are supposed to be processing.

Sarah wondered if Rena really meant to disrupt the flow of the text so much.

Petunia went on to say,

that’s the way she does it. Because we asked her about that. And what I learned, it’s like I had to change my thinking. When they are back in G.P.R. groups, it’s not really to be introduced to another book. With my group she said “why are you here?” And she ended up saying to them, “you are here to think. We are thinking together.”

Sarah did not feel that her demonstration lesson with Walker was appropriate because she walked away with numerous unanswered questions. She said,

I felt that instead that the tables were turned and that I was the one that was being asked the questions. I didn’t feel comfortable with that. I didn’t feel that it was appropriate for me to be talking about stages of my kids and that type of thing. I felt that would be an appropriate conversation with her one on one. To be there and have other people in there, I don’t know, I just felt that the focus was not what we had wanted it to be.

Sarah felt she wanted to ask questions, but was not given the opportunity to do so. This is an example of what Freire (1970) refers to as the culture of silence. In order to transform reality, the unheard must fight for liberation.

Kelly's experience with her most recent visit by Rena was that Rena came and gave a demonstration lesson. Kelly however did not feel that it was appropriate to have so many people observing her children and she believed it made the children feel uncomfortable. There were approximately 12 people observing. This discussion led the research participant group into talking about what they were doing for the parent forum. Kelly said that the first grade level team decided not to have children demonstrate what Accelerated Literacy looked like. Kelly went on to say,

well I think that's a lot of pressure on the students, especially when they just started learning to read. There's a little bit of confidentiality there. I think it might be a little tough. Okay, so this kid is really struggling and everybody is watching and it's my child and I'm thinking "why didn't my kid know that word?"

The preceding transcriptions were organized under the category of appropriateness, because the research participants were sharing experiences which they felt were inappropriate concerning their new learning.

What Research Participants Consider To Be Appropriate Concerning Dialogic Interactions

These data concern what is and is not appropriate in dialogue, before and after the use of dialogue. In September I began sharing my rationale as to my thinking, by saying,

. . . some questions that I may ask you about, you may think, "Oh she knows the answer to this question." The reason I am asking some of these questions is because I really may not know, or I may be assuming things that are not true.

This information was shared with the research participants in order to allow me to ask questions and not to fall back on basic assumptions that I might have which may be untrue.

In October the participant group and I discussed how only those who are really vocal are heard at faculty meetings. I went on to say, "It is really important that if we are going to empower others to speak, then we have to be ready to take the time to listen too." Petunia went on to say,

but you said something really important, because we want them to feel empowered to speak, and so somehow, I see what you are saying, there is a responsibility from us too though, to somehow let them know they have that power.

Kelly added by saying,

I think that as far as the new teachers though, I think that as being a first year teacher here at Fammatre last year, I think that you try and be careful. It is not a matter of being afraid. You don't know the history of the school and you don't always know what has happened before. And I think it's really important to wait and do more listening, especially your first year.

Marcondes (1985) tells us that listening empowers others to speak. It can also alter the status of one's authority thereby enabling others' voices to be heard.

In December, the research participant group discussed how dialogue could be spontaneous and creative, where one need not feel like there were boundaries about what could and could not be talked about. The research participants spent time talking about what dialogue looked like for them. I said, "If our school does want to engage in dialogue as a broader base it will be interesting to see if in a smaller setting we can do it."

Preparing to go to the conflict resolution training, a new teacher, Kelly, thought,

what they are saying or what they are upset about doesn't have anything to do with you. You don't know where it is coming from and there is a piece of you that, it's not that you don't care what they are going through, you just don't want to get into that.

Burbules (1993) might describe this as the emotional factor in dialogue, respect. This refers to participants in dialogue respecting the fact that not all people know the same things or have the same amount of information.

At the first literacy meeting I felt personally empowered from having some say about what we would talk about. "I thought it was really wonderful, I was excited about it." Here, I was referring to a committee meeting involving the entire faculty in which I felt dialogue took place school wide for the first time. I stated,

I feel like this is the first opportunity that we have had to do that. Does anybody else feel that way? I mean in small group settings yes. I feel we have it in grade level meetings, and committee meetings, but don't feel that we have it at staff meetings. I guess personally, I would have liked to see a little more towards the beginning of the school year, where we had a chance to talk about certain things, or time to do that. It's amazing, with just one question, how much we learned in a short period of time.

In this type of dialogic interaction, there was an initial question, but the faculty at Fammatre was able to have a to and fro exchange of ideas described by Burbules (1993) as a quality inherent in dialogue. Petunia felt, that in part, this forum was successful due to the facilitator. She went on to describe her understanding of good facilitation:

Our facilitator had this amazing, I don't know if amazing is the right word. But it's like, she left all of her feelings to the side. And when she went up and led, she didn't bring her own thoughts in. So when someone said something, she didn't say, oh I thought of that too. Or she didn't disagree. She was truly just a facilitator.

Sarah then described her view of the results of effective facilitation:

I liked the process of that meeting. I thought the steps that we as a staff went through were productive and I was pleasantly surprised by the product that we came up with. I thought that there was a lot of work done in a short period of time. I felt that everyone left feeling that they

had input. That with input is buy in. So, I feel that that's the first step towards making everyone feel included and a part of the change process. I think it's really important for people to feel a part.

The literacy team meeting, which Sarah is referring to, was similar to what Freire (1970) defines as problem posing. A general question was brought to the table and the faculty was given time to engage in dialogue around the question.

When referring to the ten minutes added to the faculty meeting agenda for open discussion, the research participants had these thoughts. Petunia said,

I think the ten minutes at the end of the meeting, everybody gets what they want, I mean that ten minute processing time. Because then people who want that, have that. If it is not used, then we just end early.

Kelly agreed with Petunia saying,

yeah, I thought it was really good, because some of the things were brought up were things that, well, I can't even think of an example, but it's kind of like a chance to say things that are bugging us or not bugging us, or a good thing or a bad thing, and I thought it was really good to have that.

However, Kelly and Petunia did not feel that more than ten minutes was necessary for school-wide dialogue. Kelly went on to say that giving input through committees is sometimes clearer and neater. This statement parallels the idea of a modernist view. The modernist defines good teaching as the transfer of knowledge, it inhibits the spontaneous development of ideas. The design is linear in fashion. In order to look to a vision of a curriculum which has the qualities of a post-modern perspective, it is imperative to question assumptions, communicate and renegotiate learning. To work in committees and to simply report or share information does not

allow for spontaneity, creativity, or even conflict, which stimulates growth.

Kelly went on to say, "We don't always get what we want. Sometimes we get a piece, but we don't always get things our way. And sometimes you just have to do it."

Sarah and I, through observation, thought that some people on the faculty did not want to put the ten minutes into the staff meeting agenda. I said,

even though it was only ten minutes, I saw people that as soon as we had our processing time, and people were bringing up ideas from here and there, things that I was glad to hear about, that related to several different things, I saw the negative body language all over the room and so I didn't even want to share at that point.

Sarah added saying,

I saw people looking at the clock when someone else was talking, people folding their arms, people rolling their eyes, people saying things, people sitting next to me two seats away and saying things under their breath.

This is an example of a reason why you might have a failure in dialogue.

Marcondes (1985) refers to the fact that in order to achieve a successful dialogic relation, the participants must acknowledge and be aware of their own responsibility for the success of the dialogue. Burbules (1993) claims that participants in dialogue must respect, appreciate and value the qualities that one may bring to a dialogic encounter. Another necessary element in dialogue is listening. Listening is also a key to a successful interaction. When one truly listens they empower others' to speak.

Concerning the idea of dialogue in general, Sarah had this question. She wondered if it was acceptable not to have input about things that are

going to directly affect you, or things that you are going to be asked to do, or things that you're going to be required to do.

Kelly replied,

a key is maybe it's the amount. I don't need to have my finger in every single piece. I can choose what is kind of important to me. And I can also trust some people. I also feel like through T.A.C. and through our grade level things, we do get input into things that go on to the next level.

Kelly felt that was another thing we all needed to remember about ourselves.

Some people need the time to process and we all need to compromise.

Petunia feels comfortable trusting others to make decisions for her.

She says "I feel like it's my responsibility to be open and trust others." Sarah interjects by saying,

I think that there is another side to the coin. If you look at the topic say, of assessment. The fact that it wasn't about a group, it wasn't about a person from each grade level, being on a team and coming up with the assessments that are going to be used. And I feel that is how it has been done. What happened last Wednesday was different. It wasn't a matter of me giving my thoughts and feelings to someone else to take to a group, that was going to determine what types of assessments were going to be used or how we were going to assess, or what we were going to assess. So, I think, it was a large group dynamics which I feel is really really important. If you are going to move a whole staff forward through the change process that I think there are times and places for small groups for giving input. I think when it is something that directly affects all of us, i.e. assessment, that it's really important that we can be there to speak for ourselves.

When asked about dialogue as it pertains to our research participant group, Kelly stated, "As far as the dialogue part, I just don't like talking too much about what we're doing before we do it. I mean I just want to do it." Here, Kelly is referring to our conversations within our research participant group, where we were discussing what dialogue looks like.

Sarah made some final comments concerning the purpose for dialogue.

I think the key to dialogue is having the time to dialogue and I think building that into agendas. I just don't see schedules meshing because people are on different committees, and so they may be available one day after school, when you wouldn't be. I think setting aside the time, for dialogue is necessary. I think that we're beginning to engage in dialogue. I know it's hard to keep going, but I believe we need to, if we are going to make a difference.

Sarah also thought that everyone should be able to have the same information. She believes, everybody should be included all the time. She does that as a teacher with her children. Some of her children are not privy to some information and not others. She didn't give some of her kids the script to practice for auditions and not others. She felt it was important that everyone "buy in." Sarah stated,

I believe, as you used the word empower, the more you empower the people, the more unified they are going to be, and the stronger they are going to be. And you're certainly going to be a lot farther ahead when people are united than when people are divided. Personally, if I were to go to meeting after meeting after meeting and have the same people there all the time, I would say, where is everybody else? That would be my thought. Why isn't everyone contributing here?

Throughout these data there are two differing philosophies which emerge. Sarah and I see the importance and relevance of empowering others' by engaging in successful dialogic interactions. At the same time we want these discussions to take place school wide. Petunia and Kelly also see the value of dialogue, but are content with it occurring in small group settings. These two distinctions are evident among the population of the faculty as well.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the faculty at Fammatre School involved in the change process, we began to realize all of the facets that have evolved as a result of making a change in our literacy practices. Not only must we be trained in teaching a different way, but each teacher must make sense of how the change is viewed. Weeks (1992) states,

perceptions are the lenses through which we see ourselves, others, relationships, and the situations we encounter. As such, perceptions wield enormous influence over our behavior. If we perceive something to be a certain way, even if we are incorrect, in our mind it is that way, and we often base our behavior on that perception (Weeks 1992, 1).

The most important conclusion that I have made as a result of this research was as the research unfolded, I realized the real issue at hand was not concerned with literary practices but with the importance of the role of dialogue in the change process. If meaningful change is to occur in schools it will be necessary to look beyond the artifacts to the meta-issues. Dialogue in schools is a necessary dimension in the change process in order to ensure sustained growth.

Another conclusion is that the faculty at Fammatre School truly care about children and their education. Faculty, administration and parents have put forth considerable time and effort in order to ensure the best education for the children-the "best" meaning an approach which is research based. The best also comes from the heart; even though it is not something that you can

measure with some type of instrument. The dedication given to learning has been very evident. According to Freire (1970) dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world. Love is the foundation of dialogue. Love is the commitment to others, it is not an act of courage or fear. The act of love is commitment to the cause.

It has been apparent that teachers respect the fact that individuals may all be at different places in learning. There is not one teacher at Fammatre School, however, who is not putting forth the effort to try something new in the area of literacy.

There has also been considerable effort to ensure that parents have an opportunity to be educated alongside the teachers. There has been a parent forum in which parents were invited to an interactive presentation about what the components of the literacy program look like. The Partners In Print Committee invited parents and children to come to school in the evening in order to help parents see what they can do at home to help in the partnership to educate their children. Teachers have had B.E.A.R. (Be Enthusiastic About Reading) breakfasts, where parents and children are invited to bring breakfast to the school and spend time reading with their children. Middle school students have volunteered their time to come to Fammatre School for a Reading Under The Stars event. At this event, kindergarten children are invited to come to a pajama party, where middle school students read to them. People from the community have been invited to read books that are special to them, with individual classes. The School Site Council was moved to a night meeting venue, in order to encourage more parent participation. Along with all of these activities, we must not lose sight of the efforts that

must be put forth in order to prepare and present such a program. Night meetings, are not mandatory, but strong suggestion is made that one participate. It would be awkward, for instance, to have a K-3 parent forum in which all are invited, while one or two teachers are not in attendance. At the same time, many teachers are excited and enthusiastic about these forums.

The money that Fammatre School has received through the BASRC grant has been very rewarding. Classrooms that were lacking literature at the beginning of the year, are now being filled with read aloud books, big books, and multiple copies of staged books. Having the money to spend is wonderful. At the same time, however, the teachers need to take the time to find books, fill out purchase orders, stage books, and arrange them in a way that is accessible, while still accounted for.

Fammatre School has added minutes to the school day in order to accommodate a shortened restructured day on Wednesday. Each Wednesday has a specific purpose, (i.e. literacy meetings, staff meetings, committee meetings, and grade level meetings). Although there has been some time allotted, "time" is a key element. With many events to plan and to prepare for, as well as time for learning about new literacy practices, teachers may not have enough time to get things done. This issue has been considered; however, a solution has not been found. Throughout these conclusions, "time" will continue to be an unresolved issue.

Engaging in dialogue at Fammatre School occurs in a variety of ways, most of which are in small group settings. For example, during grade level meetings once a month, teachers have time in order to have a conversation about what they are doing in their classrooms. At least one other grade level

does not meet as a group, due to differing teaching philosophies within the group. This leads me to think about the need for tolerance of people with opposing opinions or views.

There is also the T.A.C. (teacher advisory committee), which meets once a month before school. Teachers were asked at the beginning of the year to sign up for a few time slots throughout the year. My turn to be on the T.A.C. has not occurred yet. Until recently, many teachers did not know what the abbreviation stood for. It is the responsibility of individual teachers to go to whoever is on the T.A.C. committee with any questions or concerns they may want brought forward to be discussed, or to be put on the agenda for a faculty meeting. What T.A.C. is, and the purpose of T.A.C., should be clearly explained at the beginning of the year so that all teachers understand their responsibility to T.A.C.

At the beginning of the year, the faculty went through a procedure to come up with our problem statements as to what we would work on during our committee time. The original statements were brought to the group from the leadership team. It would have been more appropriate for faculty members to be involved with the original statements, because the statements set the group in a certain direction. Although much discussion occurs, dialogue is meant to be open ended without a prespecified goal. In this case there is a pre-ordained goal. Teachers on the committee do engage in discussion around this goal.

There have been two literacy committee meetings which have involved the entire faculty. A “big” question arose concerning assessment. Teachers sat in grade level teams and discussed the question. Following the

discussion a facilitator from the leadership team asked the faculty to share their responses. For the first time during the year I felt we were actually engaging in a school-wide dialogue about something that affected all of us. I felt empowered by the fact that everyone got to share in a decision making process. I felt that it gave the group ownership of an important decision.

It is also necessary to take into consideration the thoughts and feelings that were occurring among the faculty as a result of the staff member who was involuntarily transferred to another school possibly because she disagreed with the proposed program. This teacher, who spoke out against the direction of the work of the school, to other faculty members, parents, and board members, decided to resign under protest. When the school year began there was a silence surrounding this teacher's name while her room was left empty. While some faculty members were given no information as to what had happened and why, others had key information. Because of this lack of communication, some were concerned, upset, and felt threatened by what happened. Several people said, "I could be next." Because of this, there was not a safe non-threatening environment for all. Many new teachers did not know this teacher, and did not want to get involved as well as teachers who just didn't want to get involved for a variety of personal reasons. Some teachers also had information that others did not. It created a climate of fear and distrust for some, mostly because of the variety of ways that people understood what had happened. Finally, in January, teachers engaged in a conflict resolution training in which they were encouraged to bring their thoughts and feelings to the table without fear of retribution. It was at this

point that the audible silence which had been so deafening to some, could finally be resolved.

At faculty meetings, teachers had received an agenda, which had a minute to minute schedule. Until the last two staff meetings there was no time built in to comment on something or bring up anything spontaneously. There were a few people on the staff who are always on the agenda. Recently, a ten minute block of time was put into the agenda in order to provide time for open discussion. Now faculty members say things like "well you fours need that time to process, I'm a one and I don't need or want that time." The number system refers to categories that faculty members were placed in as a result of the learning style inventory. This is something that really frustrates me. This simplistic analysis of time for processing reduces the notion of engaging in dialogue to a preference possibly motivated by "time". This view of dialogue reveals the lack of understanding relating to the powerful role which dialogue serves in the creating of reality. The learning style inventory reduces individuals to a generalized category. Some faculty members use their category to describe certain characteristics that they may take on. For example, it can be used as an explanation as to why they like to get to the point quickly and not spend a lot of time discussing it. this in turn can result in failure of dialogue. According to Marcondes (1985) participants in dialogue must be aware of their own responsibility for the success of the dialogue.

T.A.C. worked to get ten minutes built into the agenda. When given the ten minutes the first time, I sensed all sorts of negative body language around the room. One other person that I spoke to noticed people looking at the clock, rolling their eyes, whispering, and folding their arms. I personally

did not feel like I wanted to talk under those circumstances. It was only for ten minutes! At the next faculty meeting, the principal reviewed the norms. I thought it was because of something that I had said to her, but apparently another teacher had also noticed that the norms we had set were not being followed. People who did not want processing time said, "Well, you have to be considerate about how we feel too." People who did want some time to dialogue about decisions that affected them said, "I really want to have a say in what I will ultimately be expected to do." "I do not know how to resolve this problem." "I don't know how you can make everyone happy, unless you have a separate dialogue forum for those who are interested." Again, where would the time fit in? It also seemed that some of the people who did not care to engage in dialogue in a school wide setting, were already on certain committees where they did find out what was going on and talked about it. According to Bowers (1987) knowledge is power. Therefore groups of people that hold privileged information are in the position of having power over others. It just seems that somehow, everyone should be privy to the same information.

As for the idea of dialogue in general, the term dialogue was used in the Accountability Framework and the work plan for BASRC (Bay Area School Reform Collaborative). There has been no discussion about what dialogue looks like, or the components that it may take on. It seems that if our plans repeatedly say that the faculty, parents, stake holders, and committees are going to engage in dialogue, shouldn't they know what characteristics make up a dialogue? It is also written in a couple of places that we will "conduct" a dialogue. The literacy team has recently undergone

training in this area. In fact, if we conduct a dialogue, does that not defeat the purpose of what dialogue is intended to be?

At the beginning of the year, we had no time for school-wide dialogue. Fammatre is now moving in that direction, as the literacy team learns more about what dialogue looks like. Comparing where we were at the beginning of the year, the learning that has taken place has been considerable. This growth has not only been in the area of literacy, but also in the way that we work together. Fammatre faculty and administration still have a long way to go, but learning is an ongoing process. As we grapple with new learning and continue to question we will stimulate new growth.

I feel the research participant group, who faithfully met with me throughout the year, have been transformed in our learning concerning the role of dialogue. When we began our first research participant meeting, there was more of a report of information. We then discussed what dialogue might look like and came up with our own “rules” of the dialogue game. I realized how difficult it is to be patient and tolerant of others’ different view points. At the same time, I appreciated the fact that I could share my thoughts and feelings that may have been different from those of others. I also realized that although we became comfortable enough towards the end of our sessions to open up to each other, there were still issues that were too difficult to talk about.

An important conclusion that I came to is that it takes time to get to the point that we did in our sharing. It will take more time to actually trust each other enough to share all of our thoughts and feelings. With four research participants, it was difficult to face certain issues, and it would be even more

difficult on a wider scale with more people. I learned to work at being a better listener, and reflector of others' ideas. I learned to restrain myself in order to give others a chance to speak.

I observed the other research participants being conscious about their efforts to listen, reflect, be tolerant, and restrain themselves. I noticed effective listening occurring. One member of the research participant group mentioned that she would rather just get to it and engage in dialogue, rather than taking so much time to talk about it. But at the same time, I observed a tremendous growth in understanding what an effective interactive dialogue looked like. I could see it through the transcriptions from the beginning of the year until the end. At the first few meetings, there were a lot of interruptions, talking over one another, and whispering when bringing out an idea which might be controversial. Through reflections on transcriptions, I could see the participants make conscious efforts to think about dialogue and follow the "rules" we had decided were important to us as a group.

Recommendations:

- Educate all teachers as to the characteristics which make up dialogue.
- Finding time in order to encourage those who want to engage in dialogue concerning important decisions creates a special opportunity for professional growth among teachers.
- The p.m. kindergarten teacher has a substitute on the day that there are committee meetings and faculty meetings but not for grade level meetings. The schedule could be changed, so that grade level meetings were on the same day as faculty meetings. In that way the kindergarten teachers could also meet.
- Encourage a tolerant attitude on everyone's part to be able to discuss the difficult issues, whether discussion be school wide, or within committees.

- Encourage all to respect the fact that differing opinions can help the faculty to learn and grow.
- Pay teachers for time that is not instructional as they work on educational reform.
- Identify what learning is inherent in the activities in which parents and children are involved.
- Consider reducing the time for activities or tasks in order to create time for engagement in true dialogue with parents concerning literacy.
- Make apparent to all faculty, terms which may be incomprehensible.
- Involve faculty in making decisions which involve them.
- Make time to discuss issues which may be controversial in a non-threatening environment.
- The structure of faculty meetings should be changed in order to encourage dialogue. Currently agenda having minutes assigned to each topic is limiting.
- A communiqué could help to inform all faculty members of decisions that are being discussed which relate to the school. This would assure that all faculty members have the same information.
- Involve different groups of people in a variety of situations in order for faculty to begin to create a sense of community among all members.

In order to join together and work as a team as a whole, engaging in dialogue about change is necessary. In order to let others know that their ideas, opinions, and input are valued, engagement in dialogue allows all community members to feel ownership of the work that they are dedicating their time to.

EPILOGUE

As a result of this research study I have gained significant insight into the importance of the role of engaging in dialogue concerning the change process. Moving a school through change is no easy journey. There is no blue print, recipe, or formula for success. Each teacher's experiences and attitudes towards change are different. There are no easy answers to solve the problems that arise as a result of change.

The faculty at Fammatre School have taken on a considerable challenge. As teachers transform in their learning and teaching in the area of literacy, many obstacles have arisen along the way. There were decisions made affecting all teachers. In some instances input into these decisions was requested; in other instances decisions were made for teachers. There were more "activities" which teachers were required to be involved in. Teachers have attended a variety of meetings, were involved in various activities, and have striven to change in their teaching of literacy. However, I believe that what has been overlooked is the meta-issue of the importance of dialogue in the change process.

The term "dialogue" is used in many different ways in terms of individuals' understandings. There is not a commonly understood definition, nor has there been discussion about characteristics that a dialogue may take on. Going through a change in literacy practices is more about learning than it is about teaching. It is more about asking questions than it is finding answers. Most of all, it is about making a profound shift in beliefs about learning and teaching.

With a frenzy of attending workshops, implementing new techniques, engaging in various literacy activities, taking running records, analyzing data, writing standards, revisiting reading intervention, ordering and organizing thousands of dollars worth of books, and presenting information to parents about new literacy practices, the concern with accountability and rapid change has taken first priority. A restructured schedule allowed time on Wednesdays once a month for work in the area of literacy. There have also been three literacy committee meetings which allowed for dialogue around pre-determined questions. In my opinion, there has not been time allowed for thoughtful reflection about new learning. Allowing and valuing time for change in the process cannot be overstated. Unless teachers are encouraged to take time to reflect and engage in dialogue around their new learning, I do not feel meaningful change will occur. In the process of changing, we find that we are continually struggling and questioning what we are doing. Just when we think we have the answers, new questions arise. As the faculty members at Fammatre School continue to transform in their teaching and learning, my hope is that we will take more time to thoughtfully reflect through interactive dialogue in order to enhance our own personal learning and in order to appreciate the life long learning process.

REFERENCES AND RELATED WORKS

- Beyer, L. E., ed., and Michael Apple, ed. The curriculum: Problems, politics, and possibilities. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1988.
- Bigelow, William. "Inside the classroom: Social vision and critical pedagogy." Teachers College Record 91. (Spring 1990) : 46-51.
- Bowers, C.A. The promise of theory: Education and the politics of cultural change. New York: Teachers College Press, 1987.
- Bridges, David. "Discussion and questioning." Questioning Exchange 1 (1989): 34-37.
- Burbules, Nicholas C. Dialogue in teaching: Theory and practice. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993.
- California Department of Education. Teaching reading: A balanced, comprehensive approach to teaching reading in prekindergarten through grade three. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1996.
- Cochran-Smith, Marilyn. "Learning to teach against the grain." Harvard Educational Review 61. (August 1991) : 279-286.
- Covey, Stephen R. The seven habits of highly effective people: Restoring the character ethic. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.
- Cox, Carole, and Paul Boyd-Batstone. Crossroads: Literature and language in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Westerville, Ohio: Merrill Publishers, 1997.
- Doll, William E. A post modern perspective on curriculum. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993.
- Doll, William E., Jr. "Complexity in the classroom." Educational Leadership 4. (September 1989) : 65-70.
- Fammatre School, Accountability Framework, by Principal: Carlene Gundersgaard, Nov. 1997.
- Fammatre School, Work Plan, by Principal: Carlene Gundersgaard, 1997.

- Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.
- Freire, Paulo, and Donaldo Macedo. Literacy: Reading the word and the world. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1987.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. Translated and Edited By David E. Linge. Philosophical hermeneutics. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- Gaskins, Irene W., Linnea C. Ehri, Cheryl Cress, Colleen O' Hara, and Katharine Donnelly. "Procedures for word learning: Making discoveries about words." The Reading Teacher 50. (December 1996/January 1997) : 312-327.
- Geertz, Clifford. The interpretation of cultures. New York: Basic Books Incorporated Publishers, 1973.
- Giroux, Henry A. Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey Publishing, Inc., 1988.
- Giroux, Henry A., and Paulo Freire, Education and the American dream: Conservatives, liberals and radicals debate the future of education. New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1989.
- Glesne, Corrine, and Alan Peshkin. Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction. New York: Longman, 1992.
- Goodman, Kenneth, Lois Bridges Bird, and Yetta Goodman. The whole language catalog: Supplement on authentic assessment. Blacklick, Ohio: Division of Macmillan/McGraw Hill, 1992.
- Goodman, Kenneth, Yetta Goodman, and Wendy Hood. The whole language evaluation book. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1988.
- Grice, Paul. "Logic and conversation." In Studies in the way of words, 1-143. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Habermas, Jürgen. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. The theory of communicative action: Reason and the rationalization of society. Vol. I. Boston: Beacon Press, 1981.

- Isenberg, Joan P., and Gloria Gerbracht. Teachers stories: From personal narrative to professional insight. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.
- Kieffer, K. "Doing dialogic retrospection: Approaching empowerment through participatory research." Scotland: International Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, 1981. Photocopied.
- Kincheloe, Joe L. Teachers as researchers: Qualitative paths to empowerment. New York: The Falmer Press, 1981.
- Kuhn, Thomas. The structure of scientific revolutions. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Marcondes, de Souza Filho. "Dialogue breakdowns." In Dialogue: An interdisciplinary approach. ed. M. Dascal, 415-426 Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1985.
- Moustafa, M. "Children's productive phonological recoding." Reading Research Quarterly 30. (September 1995) : 464-476.
- Nelson, Carolyn and Victoria Harper. "Promoting transformational education through learning conversations." Los Angeles, CA: Reclaiming Voice Conference, 1997. Photocopied.
- Routman, Regie. Invitations. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann (A division of Reed Elsevier Inc.) 1994.
- Salz, Arthur. "Brother, can you paradigm? Quantum mechanics and the first grade reading test." Theory Into Practice 31 (Spring 1992) : 107-115.
- Shor, Ira. Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications Inc., 1990.
- Sylvester, Paul Skilton. "Elementary School Curricula and Urban Transformation." Harvard Educational Review 64. (Fall 1994) : 309-330.

Van Doren, Charles. A history of knowledge: The pivotal events, people, and achievements of world history. New York: Ballentine Books, 1991.

van Manen, Max. Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Wade, S.E., and B.B. Armbruster. Learning from the text. Champaign, Illinois: Center for the Study of Reading, 1990.

Walker, Rena. Accelerating literacy: A handbook to assist educators in creating balanced literacy instruction. San Diego: Walker Enterprises, 1995.

Weeks, Dudley. The eight essential steps to conflict resolution. Barrington, Illinois: Excel Inc., 1992.

APPENDIX

Executive Summary

Fammatre School is a K-5 elementary school located in west San Jose. They have a staff of 25 and a student population of 500 comprised of largely of middle class students with 78% being Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, 3% African American, and 5% Asian. In the Winter and Spring of 1994-1995 the school identified the following four Student Outcomes: powerful thinkers, effective literate communicators, self confident individuals, and responsible citizens. From that foundation, Fammatre School began their work in studying current brain research and Multiple Intelligence theory and application of each to instructional practices. The Cambrian School Board supported their work in this area by approving funds for staff development in brain research and Multiple Intelligence theory as it related to Language Arts. Additionally, a restructured schedule was instituted that allows two full afternoons each month for staff development. These bi-monthly sessions included a school coach working with grade level teams, whole school training, and peer planning. In October of 1996, Fammatre School applied for membership with the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative with a submission of a school portfolio. At the subsequent Portfolio Review they were approved for membership. In January of 1997, Fammatre School submitted a funding proposal and is being recommended for Leadership School status.

The efforts of Fammatre School, though commendable, have presented numerous challenges: a need to focus its efforts, increase parental and community involvement in the authentic work of the school, and develop and use effective assessment tools and strategies to evaluate overall progress. The school and district have maintained a consistent emphasis over the years on what is now being called a "balanced approach" to teaching reading. As a result, the school is fairly comfortable with student progress in acquiring basic decoding skills, but test scores show less student success at Reading For Meaning. The school's focused effort is to increase student success in Reading/Literacy so that reading can be a powerful tool for all students.

The work of Fammatre School involves agreeing on standards for Reading For Meaning, professional development relative to Reading For Meaning, engagement of parents related to that effort, and initial data collection around reading after they have arrived at a common definition and standards.

The supportive relationship that Fammatre School has developed with the Cambrian School District and the District's indications of interest in promoting reform efforts throughout the District is particularly significant. The staff of Fammatre has established an enthusiastic and committed professional learning community around the exploration of brain research and Multiple Intelligence theory. They have engaged parents in this work with a result of a significant number of parents being knowledgeable in these areas and able to assist in the classroom. These give us indications that a focused effort around Reading For Meaning can engage parents, staff, and community in an effort that can indeed reform the school. Fammatre School has proposed a budget of \$75,000 to support these efforts.

School contact person: Carlene Gundersgaard
BASRC contact person: Larry Johnson

I VISION:

At Fammatre School our vision is for every student to be actively engaged in Reading For Meaning.

Reading For Meaning is that capacity to read effortlessly and accurately. Students are able to construct meaning from what is read at two levels; at the literal level, students are able to understand what is intended by the written text. At a more subtle level, students are able to reflect on what is read, evaluate, make personal connections to their own lives, and make applications to life questions and challenges.

II PROBLEM STATEMENTS:

As we identified our vision for all students we also targeted several glaring gaps between where we are and where we want to be.

Staff:

1. There is a gap between teachers' current knowledge and teaching strategies and the latest research regarding how students learn best and best literacy teaching practices.
2. Although teachers use a variety of strategies and techniques to teach students to read, the school lacks enough effective forums where ideas and information can be discussed and explored. We have yet to create an environment where all perspectives can be viewed so that informed decisions around school practices can be made.

Parents:

1. Although parents are highly visible at the school their participation has largely been to help, i.e. classroom volunteers, field trip drivers, fund-raisers, etc. Parents now seek to expand their role so that their perspective is included in school wide decisions that are made at the school. They no longer wish to be just informed about school decisions, they wish to participate in the decision making process.
2. Parents at the school are actively involved in their children's learning. However, they too lack the tools to help their children Read For Meaning. They want to actively participate in this focused effort as learners, trainers, and teachers.

Students:

1. Students have difficulty making the connection between the skills taught in isolation and the meaning of the text.
2. Students have difficulty making connections between what they are reading and their own lives.
3. Not all students read for enjoyment.

III. ACTION PLAN

This school wide action plan contains activities we believe will address our issues in ways that will produce substantive change at our school.

Background:

To address the issue of time in implementing our BASRC plan, informal structures emerged that included the principal, staff, and parents. As we worked to bring our different perspectives together, we discovered the value of different points of view in solving our problems and realized that we need to formalize our decision making structures and gain better tools to be able to handle diverse perspectives while moving forward in making decisions.

Parent Focused Activities:

We have targeted several activities that we feel will assist us in this effort.:

1. Creating a Change Team

A. The principal, three teachers, and one parent will participate in the BASRC six-day training where we will learn more about the BASRC vision and gain important skills that we will be able to use next year.

B. A consultant group has worked with our district for the last four years in our district Strategic Planning process. Two consultants from the Leadership Connection will contract with Fammatre to help us define the role of the Change Team and develop effective skills and strategies for managing change. Staff and parents will receive monthly training held in the evenings to maximize parents participation. We have identified several areas of need:

- decision making skills
- facilitating school forums for discussion
- bench marking and evaluating change
- communicating in ways that encourage “buy in” and involvement

2. Committee Work

Our new restructured schedule will provide the time we need to do some small committee work during the school day on short Wednesdays. Parents will be involved on school committee whenever possible.

3. Parents as Teachers

We will involve parents as planners, trainers, and teachers in the new “Partners In Print” program adopted by our entire school community this spring 1997. This early literacy training program promotes parent, student, and teacher involvement and participation. Parents will be involved in all aspects of the design and implementation of this program.

Staff:

Background: Although Fammatre has a strong language arts program, staff identified their own lack of training as an essential barrier to maximizing student success in Reading For Meaning. This year we will focus on a few activities that are both broad, that is impacting all staff and more in depth, so that we achieve long lasting meaningful changes.

Activities:**1. Accelerating Literacy Training**

All teachers will be trained in "Accelerating Literacy" by September 1997. Fourteen of our teachers will receive six days of this foundation to literacy training. This training will give teachers a common structure and language to use as they learn and grow in the area of literacy.

2. Literacy Coach

During the 1997-98 school year, Dr. Rena Walker will serve as our school coach. She will work with grade level teams on campus three times during the year. She will work with individual teachers and small groups providing more in depth training and coaching in Reading For Meaning.

3. Team Facilitators

Team clusters (K, 1, 2, 3-5) have targeted a team facilitator whose role is to ensure that monthly literacy meetings are structured for quality and rigor. The team facilitators will meet a week prior to the literacy meetings. They will identify their topic for in depth exploration, gather research materials and resources if needed, and develop Essential Questions for exploration for each session. At each team work session, a record will be kept of knowledge shared, strategies and techniques discussed, and new questions raised for the next session. The team facilitator will be responsible to report back to the staff at staff meeting on the following week.

4. Team Meetings

Monthly team meetings will be held to address a variety of topics regarding our new literacy focus. These forums will provide teams with the opportunity to go into depth in areas being explored and tried in the classroom. Examples are: running records - when and how to effectively use them; reading logs - how to assess comprehension at deeper levels; guided process reading - how to engage all students in the group, etc. The facilitator's Essential Questions will guide the group's discussion for the day. After each session, the group will identify the topic for the next session.

5. Professional Library

Staff identified the need to have a variety of current books and magazines available as a resource for their own use and for team meetings. Our professional library will be a resource where staff and parents may borrow books, journals, articles, etc. to keep informed about the latest research concerning topics such as brain research, multiple intelligence, cooperative learning and literacy.

6. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning will be used to strengthen the quality of work engaged in by students during language arts while the teacher is engaged with small group work. At least one teacher at each grade will have received training in cooperative learning by Sept. 1997. As part of our literacy work sessions, these teachers will work with others at their grade level to develop projects that tie into the literature and themes being used in the classroom. The emphasis will be on authentic tasks that tie in to the real lives our students.

7. Teacher Management Of The Change Process

The changes that have occurred at our school just over this past year have both jarred and invigorated our environment. We now have a deeper respect for the need to develop the tools to guide our own process so that we enter a comfort zone about change. Two consultants from the Leadership Connection will work with the staff on the following areas we have identified as needs:

- A. Communication
- B. Team Building
- C. Productive conflict during the change process
- D. Decision Making

The Leadership Connection will meet with staff four times during the 1997-98 school year as trainers and coaches.

8. Change Team

The two consultants from the Leadership Connection will meet with the Fammatre Change Team that will include both staff and parents. They will meet on a monthly basis during evening hours. (See Parent, Section I, Part B for identified training needs.)

IV. STUDENTS

Although many of our students read reasonably well by the end of first grade, Reading For Meaning is an escalating concern as students progress through the grades. The following activities are designed to better target individual students, provide more teacher time during reading instruction, and give students many more opportunities to read at both their skill and challenge levels.

1. Students will work in a variety of group settings throughout the day to meet their individual learning needs: cooperative groups, heterogeneous groups, reading teams, and developmental reading teams. Through the use of appropriate literature and these group settings, students will be guided to make connections between skills, what they are reading, and their own lives. Teachers will use read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading to encourage the joy of reading for all students. (Through "Accelerating Literacy", teachers will be trained to use these four structures in their classrooms.)

V. COLLECTING DATA

1. Standards

Using the reading standards from the "Accelerating Literacy" program as a starting point, we will develop K-5 reading standards to fit our student population.

2. Identifying a Grade Level Standard

Each grade level will select a piece of literature that is identified as the reading standard for that grade level. This literature is used for assessment, not teaching. The decoding and comprehension ability of all students will be monitoring using these pieces of literature.

3. Running Records

All teachers will be trained in the use of running records by Sept. 1997. Running records will be used to monitor student progress and to plan strategies to help each student individually.

4. Reading Portfolios

By Sept. 1997, all teachers will be introduced to reading portfolios as developed by the "Accelerated Literacy" program. The portfolio will be purchased for each student to ease the sharing of data between teachers and used as a tool to communicate student progress to parents.

5. Reading Logs

All teachers will be trained in the use of reading logs by Sept. 1997. Students will write in reading logs on a regular basis. The specific assignments will be determined by each teacher and will be based on the literature being read and the theme being taught. These logs will be used to monitor student progress in reading and will be used by grade level teams to examine student progress.

6. Pilot Project Assessment

Interested teachers will take part in a pilot program where student-friendly rubrics will be created and used by the student themselves. These rubrics will be used to assess the quality of student work products and projects related to their theme focus. This pilot will attempt to begin to incorporate Reading For Meaning into student projects that are theme correlated.

VI. SYSTEMS TO MANAGE CHANGE

1. Change Team

The staff and parents who will attend the BASRC six day training will comprise the school Change Team for the 1997-98 school year. With the assistance from the Leadership Connection consultants they will define their role and develop a variety of forums where all stakeholders can give input to and participate in the school's change process.

2. Open Forums

Open forums will be held monthly so that all stakeholders can participate in examining the work of the school in Reading For Meaning. The Change Team will facilitate these meetings.

3. School Wide Evaluation

In March 1998, a SBC Day will be dedicated to the examination of the school's work in Reading For Meaning and the change process. A variety of venues will be used to evaluate our work such as small study sessions, a school wide protocol, and displays of student exhibits in literacy. Staff, parents, district office personnel, and student leadership representatives will participate. A video of this day's events will be made available for working parents and will be shown at School Site Council, Home and School Club, and Change Team meetings.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

APPLIED IMAGE, Inc.
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved