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ABSTRACT

The product of a study documenting the classroom writing behavior of three kindergarten and three second grade students, this research report focuses on the kindergarten data. Following an introductory chapter describing the theoretical assumptions underlying the project, the research questions posed, and the provisions made to insure reliable and valid data, chapter two cites related research on early literacy, describes the present study, and presents a case study of a male student. Chapter three offers case studies of two female students. Both chapters two and three contain descriptions of student writing tasks, copying and free writing skills, and school success and chapter four details three children's behavior while copying words. Chapter five records the study's findings, which include the following: (1) written language is a system the children reconstruct as they interact with the environment, (2) children look for patterns in the construction of writing tasks, (3) the decontextualized nature of written language poses a significant problem for the children, (4) separating meaning from encoding in writing instruction does not help students learn how graphics and intentions are connected, and (5) personal interactions during writing affect writing strategies and outcomes. In addition, the report suggests the need to adapt school tasks to individual needs. Appendixes include observation sheets and recorded data. (MM)

Understanding the How's and Why's of Writing:

The Development of Children's Concepts of Writing in Primary Classrooms

Volume 1: The Kindergarten Data

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Research Report submitted to the National Council of Teachers of English Research Foundation, Fall 1983.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCERNS, QUESTIONS, SOLUTIONS

Concerns, Questions, Solutions

Writing has long been a "basic" of elementary education. Yet, helping children develop as writers is an intimidating puzzle for many of the early elementary teachers I have met in inservice workshops and graduate classes. These teachers frequently turn for assistance to the traditional tasks of the early elementary curricula: practicing letter forms, completing alphabet and sound/symbol worksheets, and copying the daily "news," poems, and rhymes. While not denying the importance of learning the names, sounds, and formations of the letters, the traditional early childhood activities seem lacking to many recent language arts researchers. These researchers have sought out classrooms where children are allowed and, moreover, encouraged to engage in the writing act itself (e.g., Graves, 1983); the classrooms described provide evidence of children's potential as writers and demonstrate as well how teachers can build on the learning about written language that occurs during the preschool years. There is, then, a gap between the traditional language arts curricula accepted by many administrators and teachers and the classrooms described in the literature.

In this report, I describe in detail the everyday functioning of six young children, three kindergarteners and three second graders, going about the daily writing tasks provided by their classrooms. I have chosen neither "good" writers nor "model" classrooms; I have focused on children judged by primary grade teachers to be representative of the range with which they work and classrooms considered "typical" by school administrators. My ultimate aim is to document the development of children's concepts of writing--their understandings of how writing works and the functions it serves--as reflected in their school writing behaviors. Such an aim mandates looking at development, at qualitative changes in behaviors over time, in the diverse

contexts for writing presented in the elementary classroom, for children's concepts of writing arise from their encounters with written language in varied settings, including those provided by the school. To understand the school's effect on the learning of written language, studies of children engaged in the tasks provided by the "typical" classroom can be beneficial. Examinations of how children go about these tasks can provide insight into why children do or do not become competent written language communicators. In addition, they yield data that are meaningful to many elementary teachers--data that start from where teachers are and that may assist them in reflecting upon their ways of teaching.

The first volume of this report focuses on the kindergarteners, children who are just entering the world of the elementary school, a world where written language will assume an increasingly important role. In this introductory chapter, I describe the theoretical assumptions that form the framework for this primary grade study, detail the specific questions about young children's writing to be addressed and the provisions made for reliable and valid data, and, finally, outline the focus of the coming chapters of this kindergarten volume.

Theoretical Assumptions

Curriculum guides reflect the confidence with which schools set out to help young children become literate. The guides offer scope and sequence charts for continuous skill development, complete with information as to when skills should be introduced and how they are to be maintained and tested for mastery. Written language is a set of skills taught by adults in the context of school lessons. And children themselves assume the school's control of written language; young children express confidence that, if they do their "work," they will learn (Dyson, 1982c).

In contrast to this vision of written language is that which guides much of current work in young children's writing. Here written language is viewed holistically; that is, children are described as they are engaged in the process of writing. In addition, writing is seen as a developmental process. The term "developmental" implies that acquiring written language involves gradual and qualitative changes over time as children interact in purposeful ways with the people and objects in their environment (Flavell, 1977). Development also carries with it a notion of general similarities in behavior patterns across children (Franklin, 1983). At the same time, recent sociolinguistic research has emphasized the environment's effect on behavior, pointing out that the structure and content of written language, like oral, vary with the particular context, and also that children's notions of context, of how language functions, will depend on the uses they encounter in their home communities (Heath, 1983).

In this study, I focus on young children from a developmental point of view. I assume that children actively develop their own models of how written language works. In addition, I adopt a sociolinguistic point of view, as I assume both that children's knowledge, models of written language, will be variably affected by the writing contexts they encounter and also that their own writing behaviors--the ways they effect their knowledge in the classroom--will be subject to their perceptions of the demands of the particular writing situation.

The study's methodology can be viewed as ethnographic in spirit in that I describe how teachers and children conduct their daily school lives (Hymes, 1980). I include both the teachers' and children's behaviors and reasoning about school tasks. Through the analysis of systematically-collected qualitative data, including handwritten observations of behavior, typed field notes,

written products, audiotaped talk, and recorded responses to researcher-structured tasks and questions, I aimed to understand how the children and teachers made sense of writing in school. I hope that these observations will contribute to a theoretical framework for understanding written language development and, also, that they will allow teachers to critically evaluate their literacy programs for young children.

Research Questions

This study focused on the development of children's concepts of writing as those understandings were reflected in their writing behaviors in the diverse contexts of primary grade classrooms. To clarify the specific research questions, I provide the following definitions of terms:

Writing is defined broadly as the production of letters or letter-like forms; it includes all behaviors occurring before and after, and related to, the physical act of writing. Thus, observing writing naturally involves observing children's talk and, in addition, any composing in other media (e.g., drawing, dramatic play) that is related to the production of a written product.

Concept of writing refers to children's understandings about the processes and functions of writing--how it works and what purposes it fulfills--as reflected in their writing behaviors and in how they talk about their writing.

Children's concepts of writing are formed as they encounter writing in varied social settings. Writing occasions, then, are those situations in which writing is integral to the nature of the ongoing social situation (adapted from Heath, 1982).

The specific research questions were:

What types of writing occasions occur in the observed classrooms? (The interest here is in the nature of both teacher-initiated and child-initiated occasions for writing, including the evident functions, forms, and intended audiences.)

What is the nature of children's concepts of writing as evidenced by their writing behaviors, specific characteristics of their written products, and by the ways they talk about their writing?

Is there a relationship between individual children's evident concepts of writing and the type of writing occasion? If so, what is the nature of that relationship?

How do children's concepts of writing in varied writing occasions differ across developmental levels of writing as suggested by earlier research (Clay, 1975; Dyson, 1983; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Graves, 1982)?

Toward Reliable and Valid Data

The decision to describe in detail young children's ways of functioning necessitated large amounts of observational data centering on a small number of children, and thus questions of reliability and validity of data should be addressed. To contribute to the reliability of the data, I have provided in Chapter 2 detailed descriptions of the research setting and procedures so that other researchers may understand as precisely as possible how the data were gathered. In collecting the data, I typed extensive field notes and transcribed all audio recordings immediately after classroom observations in order to augment the objectiveness and comprehensiveness of the data. In the case

studies, I used low-inference, descriptive language and, in addition, provided extensive documentation from the raw data (transcripts, field notes, written products). Finally, a research assistant, a graduate student in language education, observed and audiotaped each child in at least two different types of writing occasions, for a minimum of one hour of observation per child. We compared our collected data and in all cases found that, within each occasion type, similar behaviors had been observed and similar interpretations made regarding the children's writing behaviors.

To contribute to the internal validity of data, I did not gather data on individual children's writing processes until the fifth week of the study; by then the children appeared to consider me part of their classroom life, as will be illustrated in the data to be presented. In addition, I gathered and compared information from different types of data and from the perspectives of different informants (children, teachers, research assistant, myself as participant).

Certainly the external validity or generalizability is limited in this study due to the small sample size and the lack of random selection. Characteristics of the research site and the participants are given in detail so that the results of this study can be compared to those of other studies of young children functioning in school. In addition, the descriptions and interpretations of the observed children's behaviors are corroborated by their consistency with the developmental literacy research and can be further supported by teachers' recognition of their own students in the case study children (McCutcheon, 1981).

Organization of the Report

This volume presents kindergarten data gathered in one part of this participant observation project of elementary children's writing. I focus

on three children, Dexter, Callie, and Anne, who had contrasting ways of approaching writing tasks and who the teacher conceived of both as being at different levels of literacy skills, and also, as "typical" of the young students with whom she worked. Chapter 2, entitled "Emerging Literacy in School Contexts: Toward Defining the Gap between School Curriculum and Child Mind," includes a review of research relevant to the study of emerging writers and a detailed description of data collection techniques. Chapter 2 also presents the case of Dexter, the least developed of the writers examined and a child who frequently failed to achieve school success. By examining his case within the context of research on written language development, I both make sensible his behaviors and, at the same time, demonstrate how "unsensible" those behaviors appeared in the context of school tasks. Dexter's case most vividly illustrates the potential gap between the active child and the school curriculum, yielding theoretical, methdological, and teaching implications.

Chapter 3, "Masking the Gap: The Cases of Callie and Anne," focuses on two children whose conceptions of written language, particularly Anne's, were closer to that of the teacher's. As the report proceeds from Dexter to Callie to Anne, comparisons are made in their responses to varied school writing tasks and similarities noted in how all three children made sense of school writing instruction.

Chapter 4, "Emergent Writers and the School Curriculum: Copying and Other Myths," considers data from all three cases as they relate particularly to copying tasks. Since copying is a dominant form of school writing for young children, a critical examination of its role in learning to write seems important.

Finally, Chapter 5, "The Kindergarten Data: Conclusions and Implications," is a summary of the major findings of the study. I draw conclusions regarding

these three young children's writing development in school and detail implications for research and for practice.

CHAPTER TWO

EMERGING LITERACY IN SCHOOL CONTEXTS:

TOWARD DEFINING THE GAP BETWEEN SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND CHILD MIND

This chapter will appear, in slightly revised form, as an article in the journal Written Communication, in press.

Emerging Literacy in School Contexts:

Toward Defining the Gap between School Curriculum and Child Mind

Thousands of people in the United States do not know how to read or write. Such persons are called "illiterate," that is, "not lettered." They don't know their letters. No doubt they seem very ignorant to you; you express some such idea when you speak of someone as being so stupid that he does not even know his abc's.

-Edwin Greenlaw, Introduction to Literature and Life, 1922

You can't go to first grade unless you know your alphabet.

-Kindergarten teacher to class, 1983

The infamous gap between university and public school, research and practice, is nowhere more evident than in the area of early literacy. Researchers of written language have documented the activeness of young children who, long before public school entry, begin to construct their own notions of how written language works (Clay, 1975; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Hiebert, 1981; Mason, 1980). Yet, for most children, conventional literacy is achieved in school. And, most frequently, school contexts for literacy are structured by district curricula and adopted reading and language arts textbooks. In such programs, literacy is thought to be achieved as children master specific objectives through carefully designed lessons. Those objectives, as reflected in the quotes listed above, have traditionally been centered on teaching children the names, sounds, and formations of the abc's. We have, then, the concept of the active child constructing written language models and that of the school curriculum carefully arranging the building blocks of literacy in the child's mind. The stage is thus set for conflicts of practical significance for both researchers and practitioners interested in young children. As Clay

(1982, p. 66) phrased it, what is the nature of "the interaction of teaching with the child's discoveries?" The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between the child's construction of written language and school literacy instruction through close analysis of the literacy behaviors of a case study child, a kindergartener. My intention is to describe his literacy behaviors, detailing how they varied across school tasks, and, in addition, how they were variably evaluated by the classroom teacher. My findings illustrate the potential gap between the active child and the school curriculum, yielding theoretical, methodological, and practical implications.

This study was based on data gathered in a participant observation project which focused on young children's behaviors during school structured literacy tasks. The design of the study reflects two theoretical perspectives. First, from the point of view of developmental cognitive psychology, children are active constructors of knowledge. I aim, then, to understand how the child makes sense of, constructs an operational model of, written language. The development of cognitive models can be tapped by comparing individual children's responses to particular researcher-designed tasks over time. Second, from the point of view of developmental sociolinguistics and school ethnography, schooling is a unique social, language, and cognitive event, one which places unique sets of demands on children (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981; Gilmore & Glatthorn, 1982). Children learn in school contexts as they interact with the environment, including the immediate environment (teacher, peers, curriculum materials and content) and the environment as influenced by outside social and cultural factors. Detailing the interaction between the individual and this environment allows one to gain insight into children's thinking

and into how it changes over time as a result of that interaction (Erickson, 1982). I examine, then, how the child's knowledge of written language was revealed in researcher-structured tasks and in school literacy activities.

Related Research

Both oral and written language emerge within the everyday structure of children's lives. They are, to use Donaldson's (1978) term, "embedded" in familiar contexts. The contextualized nature of early literacy and the "disembedded" nature of school literacy illuminate the nature of the child/curriculum gap and will be examined more carefully in the following sections.

Early Literacy

Children appear to approach reading and writing as they do most human skills, globally. To build on Werner's (1948) conception of human development, they experiment and approximate, gradually becoming aware of the specific features of written language and the relationships between symbols, sounds, and meanings. This written language system is complex, including perceptual features, symbolic encoding rules, principles for structuring varied types of text, and diverse personal and societal functions. Further, written language is not an independent entity; rather, its parts are ever newly arranged, newly revealed to meet the demands of the situation.

Research focusing on both early reading and early writing has described literacy learning as going on in all areas at once; that is, children appear to learn in a holistic, rather than a linear, manner about written language's purposes, processes, and graphic details (Hiebert, 1981), although all children may not attend equally to all aspects (Dyson, in press).

Young children learn about the purposes, processes, and specific features

of written language as they encounter it within familiar contextualized settings. For example, Clay (1979) and Holdaway (1979) describe children's sensitivity to the linguistic patterns of wellknown books. Children learn, in Clay's words, to "talk like a book." As they are learning about the language of books, children are also beginning to grasp concepts about the visual aspects of print, including that of directionality and voice-print match (i.e., the one-to-one correspondence between spoken and written words).

Children also learn about print as they interact with written language embedded in the physical environment, such as in commercial labels and signs (Harste, Burke, and Woodward, 1982; Hiebert, 1978; Ylisto, 1977). Knowing the social function of the print supports their efforts to hypothesize about the probable meaning of the print. Thus, a child may read Colgate as "Brush your teeth."

Writing as well appears to develop within familiar contexts. Children do explore writing, as they do other symbolic media (Smith, 1979), for non-referential purposes, to explore the basic properties of the vehicular material (Clay, 1975). However, children's first conventionally written letters and words frequently appear in their drawings, the earlier-occurring, more familiar graphic medium and, like their drawn symbols, their written symbols represent or resemble significant aspects of their environment (Dyson, 1982). The first conventionally written words are often names (Clay, 1977; Durkin, 1966; Stine, 1980). The writing of familiar words is tied to the reading of familiar print in the environment described above. Names are reference points in learning about print. For example, five-year-old Mark notices a printed A and remarks, "That's the same as I am." Another five-year-old points to an S, saying "Santa."

Children may, in fact, initially view writing as a sort of drawing, that is, as a way of directly representing known people or objects rather than as a system for representing speech. This conception of early writing as direct symbolism was first made by Vygotsky (trans. 1978) and has found support in varied areas of research, including metalinguistic studies of children's concept of a word (e.g. Papandropoulou & Sinclair, 1974), Ferreiro's (1978, Note 2) experimental work on children's interpretations of written text, and Dyson's (1982, 1983) participant observation studies of young children's writing.

To draw again on Werner's (1948) description of human development, as children continue to explore reading and writing both independently and in interaction with adults and peers, their knowledge of written language becomes more detailed and better integrated, and thus more distinct from, liberated from, a particular context. In this regard, Mason (1980), on the basis of letter and word recognition tasks given to preschoolers, suggested that children initially treat printed words as context dependent, unique patterns that are recognized only when embedded in their context, an interpretation compatible with the previously cited research on children's interpretation of written text as direct symbolism. Eventually children learn that letters provide cues for reading and then that sounds in words are determined by letters. Children's increasing focus on the visual details of print allows them to deal with written language in increasingly disembedded ways.

The researchers included here have attempted to describe emerging conceptions of written language primarily by presenting children, aged 3 to 6 years, with specific, researcher-designed tasks and measuring and analyzing

children's responses or by describing children's behaviors in particular literacy contexts. But children's written language emerges formally in the varied literacy contexts of the school. Although researcher-designed tasks are powerful tools for constructing developmental models of cognitions about written language, they do not allow insight into the relationship between children's emerging conceptions of written language and the systematic efforts of the school to instruct. For school- and researcher-structured tasks each present unique sets of demands upon the child; as McDermott and Hood (1982, p. 234) point out, "experimental procedures create constraints independent of the involvements and concerns of the people under analysis, and they rob them of many of the normally available resources for organizing their own behavior." To understand children's evolving constructions of written language, we need to see how children use and reason about written language in their daily lives, including in school. In the next section, I examine the school context for literacy.

The Home/School Shift

As both developmental psychologists (e.g., Donaldson, 1978) and sociolinguists (e.g., Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz, 1981) stress, young children's thinking and language is contextualized, supported by the familiar fabric of everyday life. Children reason on the basis of their interactions with the objects and people around them, and they learn language also through interacting with others in information-rich settings. As discussed in the previous section, written language, like oral, can be described as embedded in the child's experience. Thus, as Clay (1979, p. 13) explains, "when a child enters school he has a private frame of reference which stems from his past experience."

School, then, represents a significant change for children. This change can be viewed positively; schooling contributes to the freeing of both language and thinking from immediate experience. Written and oral language exist apart from a familiar social and physical setting (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981; Donaldson, 1978; Olson & Nickerson, 1978; Olson & Torrance, 1981; Wells, 1981). Children must reason about meaning conveyed primarily through words alone and without a supportive adult, thoroughly familiar with the child's world who, as discussed in research on mother's speech to young children (e.g., Wells, 1981 works to understand the child's utterances and to tailor appropriate responses.

This change can also have negative consequences. The change from home to school may be too abrupt for some children who may have difficulty handling the decontextualized language of the school (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981; Donaldson, 1978; Snow, 1983). The very way interaction is typically structured in schools may make it difficult for children to bridge the gap between their own world and that of the school (Barnes, 1976). Teachers initiate interactions and evaluate the child's ability to respond appropriately (Mehan, 1979). Rather than supported in an attempt to refine their own models of the world, children are often limited to fitting into the teacher's interpretive context (Edwards, 1981).

Referring specifically to written language, the contextualization shift from home to school is clear. Written language is no longer a part of the everyday world, but becomes an object to be examined in teacher-structured tasks, within which children display their written language competence. The competencies for beginning reading and language arts programs include the names, sounds, and formations of the letters of the alphabet. However, the research reviewed in the previous section suggests that acquiring such know-

ledge is embedded in the broader task of understanding how written language functions as a symbol system.

This broader task of understanding how written language works may go on in school unbeknownst to the teacher. In school literacy tasks, teachers operate from a particular point of view, looking for evidence of particular behavioral objectives. Children are judged as failing to or successfully meeting the objectives. Thus, the possibility exists that a child's failure to meet a particular objective may mask new insights of the child (Mehan, 1978) and, thus, the teacher may fail to offer appropriate instructional support.

In this study, I view one child through different methodological windows. I describe his behavior during researcher-structured tasks and school literacy assignments, and, also, in terms of his achievement of the basic competencies to which his teacher looked for guidance as she judged his written language skill.

Method

The data presented in this paper are part of a larger descriptive study of the development of elementary school children's concepts of writing in classrooms. For the purpose of illuminating the child/curriculum contrasts, data from one child in a kindergarten classroom are being reported.

Site

The data for this report were collected in a self-contained, public school kindergarten in a southeastern city. The selected classroom was identified by school administrators as one which was socially, ethnically, and academically balanced. As this is case study research, the concern here

was not with being "representative" of any particular subpopulation of children. Rather, diversity was considered essential in order to increase the probability of identifying children who were of varying developmental levels in terms of their conceptions of written language.

The classroom teacher's literacy curriculum centered on the following activities: (a) teacher-led readiness workbook lessons, which emphasized: visual discrimination and memory of objects, colors, shapes, letters, and words; auditory discrimination and memory, particularly of initial consonant and final consonant sounds; and listening skills, including listening for sequences of events, details, and context clues, (b) worksheets emphasizing similar skills, to be completed under the guidance of the teacher's aide, (c) the independent practice of particular letter formations on lined newsprint, (d) cut-and-paste classification tasks, also independently completed, (e) teacher-led phonics lessons, which centered on listening to stories emphasizing beginning consonant sounds, and (f) teacher-led "creative writing" lessons, which involved a variety of types of activities; at the beginning of this study, the activities consisted primarily of copying class-suggested words from the board and then reading the copied words to the teacher. (I have seen the same activity labeled "language experience" activities in other classrooms.) The children were also read to daily and occasionally dictated individual "stories" to the teacher, which were then copied. Although the original focus of this study was writing, it became clear that there was not a separate "reading" and "language arts" class in this kindergarten. All of the previous activities were seen as preparation for both reading and writing, hence the setting of this study within the broader framework of early literacy, as opposed to early writing.

Participants

There were 23 class members, 9 girls and 14 boys. Eleven children were Anglo, eleven were black, and 1 was Asian. During the first three weeks of observation, three children were chosen for case study investigation who evidenced different degrees of written language development (selection procedures will be detailed). All children selected appeared comfortable with me and willingly discussed their work. The child of interest in this paper, Dexter, was judged to be at a low level of written language understanding.

Data Collection Procedures

I collected data from February 9 to May 23, 1983, a fourteen week period (eliminating the week of spring vacation). I observed in the classroom 2 to 5 times per week; each observation session was 1 to 2 hours in length. Data collection proceeded through three distinct phases.

Phase one (weeks 1-4). During this phase, I familiarized myself with classroom routines, while the children and the teacher accustomed themselves to me. During the first two weeks, my role was basically one of observer, but by the third week, I had become a participant observer as most children initiated interactions with me. And, by the end of the fourth week, I appeared to be part of their classroom life; for example, as I quite obviously watched, a group of children looked over their shoulders for the teacher as they engaged in prohibited behaviors (grabbing each other's pencils, scribbling on others' papers). In achieving this stance with the children, I adopted what Corsaro (1981, p. 118) refers to as a "reactive" field entry strategy. I did not comment on the children's work, but waited for them to initiate an interaction with me ("Look at mine."); if a child established eye contact with me, I did smile and greet him or her by name.

During this first phase, I focused on the classroom as a whole. I observed primarily during the morning language arts/reading period. In addition, I also observed the equivalent of two complete class days in order to sample the kinds of writing occasions which occurred in this classroom and, also, the ways in which the classroom teacher modeled and talked about writing and reading; I took some notes during the observation, but complete field notes were composed immediately after the observation ended. By writing occasion, I refer to those situations in which writing is integral to the nature of the ongoing social situation (adapted from Heath, 1982). The writing occasions identified during this phase formed the basis for decisions during the next, the primary data collection phase, regarding when the case study children would be observed.

Also during this first phase, I selected the three case study children, basing that selection on the teacher's recommendation of children she perceived as in the low, middle, and upper range of literacy development in her classroom and on my own observations of the children's literacy behaviors in class and their written products.

Near the end of Phase 1, I examined the tentatively selected children's knowledge of written language through the use of particular tasks. The tasks will be illustrated in the case study reported here. The tasks included a writing task based on Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) and a reading task based on Ferreiro (1978). The writing task involved asking the children individually to write their names, anything else they wanted to write, and these particular units: candy, ball, jacket, and The girl hit the ball. The reading task involved writing and then reading two sentences for the child: The boy ate a cake and The baby dropped the bottle. For each sentence, the child was asked a series of questions about the text. The questions consisted of

(a) asking the child to locate in the written text specific segments of the oral utterance and, conversely, (b) locating specific segments of the written text and asking the child to read them. (For details of this procedure, see Ferreiro, 1978, whose questions I followed exactly.) I also asked the children to identify both upper- and lower- case letters and to write "the letter that begins" a particular word, including all initial consonants. Finally, I interviewed the children about their interest in and perceptions of the reasons for writing. Questions relevant to the currently reported study were: Do you like to write? What kinds of things do you like to write? If you could write anything you wanted to, what would you write? What kinds of things do you write at school? Do you write at home? What kinds of things do you write at home? What kinds of things do adults write? The three children's responses to all tasks varied greatly and their selection was thus confirmed.

Phase two (weeks 5-13). During this period, I observed each of the case study children during at least two different writing occasions per week, resulting in 60 - 120 minutes of observation per child per week; the average length of a writing occasion was 40 minutes. Writing seldom occurred during the afternoons, so observations were made primarily during the mornings.

During the observation of a writing occasion, I either knelt or sat beside the child to be observed (the focal child). During the first four weeks of Phase 2, I placed a small battery-operated recorder on the table where the child was working; during the last 5 weeks, I carried the recorder in a tote bag and attached a lapel microphone to the table or to the child's shirt. The latter procedure was initially more obtrusive, but resulted in higher

quality tapes. After playing with the microphone for a few minutes (blowing on it, "listening"to it), the child ignored it.

As the child wrote, I took notes on the child's writing behaviors and, after the observation was completed, I transferred my observations to an observation sheet.(A sample of the observation sheet, which I adapted from Graves, 1973, is included in the appendix.) The observation sheets included all language addressed to, or uttered by, the child.

I rarely intervened during the actual writing as I did not want, through my questions, to change the child's process. For example, if I had asked the child to read his work while writing, I might have caused the child to focus on the text's meaning, when that focus was not a part of his or her naturally-occurring process. However, when the child completed the writing, I did ask the child to read his or her product to me; this request was not intrusive as it was the same request made by the classroom teacher at the completion of a child's paper. I asked all three children (not just the focal child) to read to me before they read to their teacher.

With certain exceptions, I collected and xeroxed all three children's (again, not just the focal child's) written products on each day I observed; I did not collect products that the teacher needed immediately for a classroom project (e.g., papers to be made into Mother's Day cards).

Phase three (week 14). In this phase I repeated the Phase 1 assessment tasks. I also asked each child to evaluate four of his or her writing samples, collected across a range of types of writing occasions. Questions asked included: Do you remember when you did this? How do you do this? Is this good writing? What makes it good writing? Who did you do this paper for? (Questions repeated for each of four products.) Which of all these papers you've done is the best?

During all three phases, I talked informally with the teacher. She provided information regarding her rationales for particular activities, her perceptions of what literacy skills the children were required to master, and her judgements regarding their academic progress.

Reliability of all data collected was assessed by comparing information gained from both different types of data (audiotape recordings, written products, observation sheets, assessment tasks, interviews) and from the perspectives of different informants (children, teacher, myself as participant). In addition, a research assistant, a graduate student in language education, observed and audiotaped each child in at least two different types of writing occasions, for a minimum of one hour of observation per child. We compared our collected data and in all cases found that, within each occasion type, similar behaviors had been observed and that our observation sheets supported similar conclusions regarding the children's writing behaviors.

Data Analysis

In organizing the data for the case study of Dexter reported here, I began by reading through all field notes and observation sheets collected during the fourteen week period, making notes in the margins on recurring patterns in his literacy behaviors. From the behaviors which permeated the data, I wrote a description of Dexter as a writer, identifying developmental characteristics based on previous early literacy work and noting as well observed changes from February to May. I then compared the description to the information obtained in the pre-and post- assessment tasks.

Next, I organized the Phase 2 data specifically. I considered each time the child was observed for an entire type of writing occasion to represent one writing event. The definition of a writing event was identical to that used in Dyson (1983). A writing event was defined as encompassing any verbal

and nonverbal behaviors:

1. immediately preceding, and related to, the act of writing; sample behaviors include listening to the teacher explain the day's activity, gathering needed materials, discussing a planned letter, word, or phrase with peers, orally rehearsing that planned unit;

2. occurring after the child has begun the physical writing act; sample behaviors (beyond forming letters) include soliciting help, verbally monitoring letters as they are formed, rereading sentence or word written;

3. immediately following, and related to, the writing act; sample behaviors include drawing, reading the product, naming the letters written, soliciting approval, listening to the teacher read the class's collected products (writing event definition adapted from Graves', 1973, definition of a writing episode).

I organized the observation sheets into categories that matched the types of occasions for writing which occurred in this classroom. For the currently reported analysis, I used only those occasions which had occurred during the teacher's official "creative writing" period. The types of activities which took place then were varied and included all but two regularly occurring writing occasions (practicing particular letter forms and writing letters on phonics worksheets) and one infrequently occurring type (copying individually dictated stories).

I then examined the observation sheets to identify variations in the child's writing behaviors across occasion types. Particular attention was paid to the nature of the child's oral language use from one occasion to the next. For this purpose, the observation sheets were also coded for language functions, using categories developed by Dyson (1983). I next re-sorted the observation sheets into categories in which Dexter engaged in similar reading and writing behaviors and wrote descriptors to specify behaviors distinguishing one category from another. In this way, I identified Dexter's interpretation of the nature of writing occasions as compared to the teacher's. The results of this analysis are given in the following case study.

Dexter

Dexter, a black male, whose speech contained many features of Black dialect, was 5 years and 6 months at the beginning of this study. He was a small child with closely cropped hair and a well-groomed appearance. During the preliminary observation phase of this study, Dexter's teacher, Ms. Lin, pointed Dexter out to me, noting that he had made a great deal of writing progress. She reported that, at the beginning of the year, Dexter had been a "scribbler," who had "scribbled all over everything"; he had not been able to write his name, nor did he recognize any alphabet letters. Figure 1 contains a sample of Dexter's writing from November of the school year, which, when compared with other writing samples contained in this paper, provides justification for Ms. Lin's remarks regarding Dexter's progress.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Although Dexter was generally serious and quiet when working on assigned tasks or in small groups, his attention was variable in whole class activities. When the focus of the activity was on a particular object of interest, such as a book or an object from nature (e.g., a seashell, a feather), Dexter was attentive. In activities conducted primarily through language, particularly those in which extensive verbal directions were given or in which children were called on in turn to answer questions related to language lessons (e.g., "What word is this?"), Dexter tended to become inattentive. His off task behavior did not generally involve other children. Dexter might, for example, examine his tennies, contort his face in varied ways, roll on the rug, or wander over to watch the classroom aide as she prepared materials for the children's lessons.

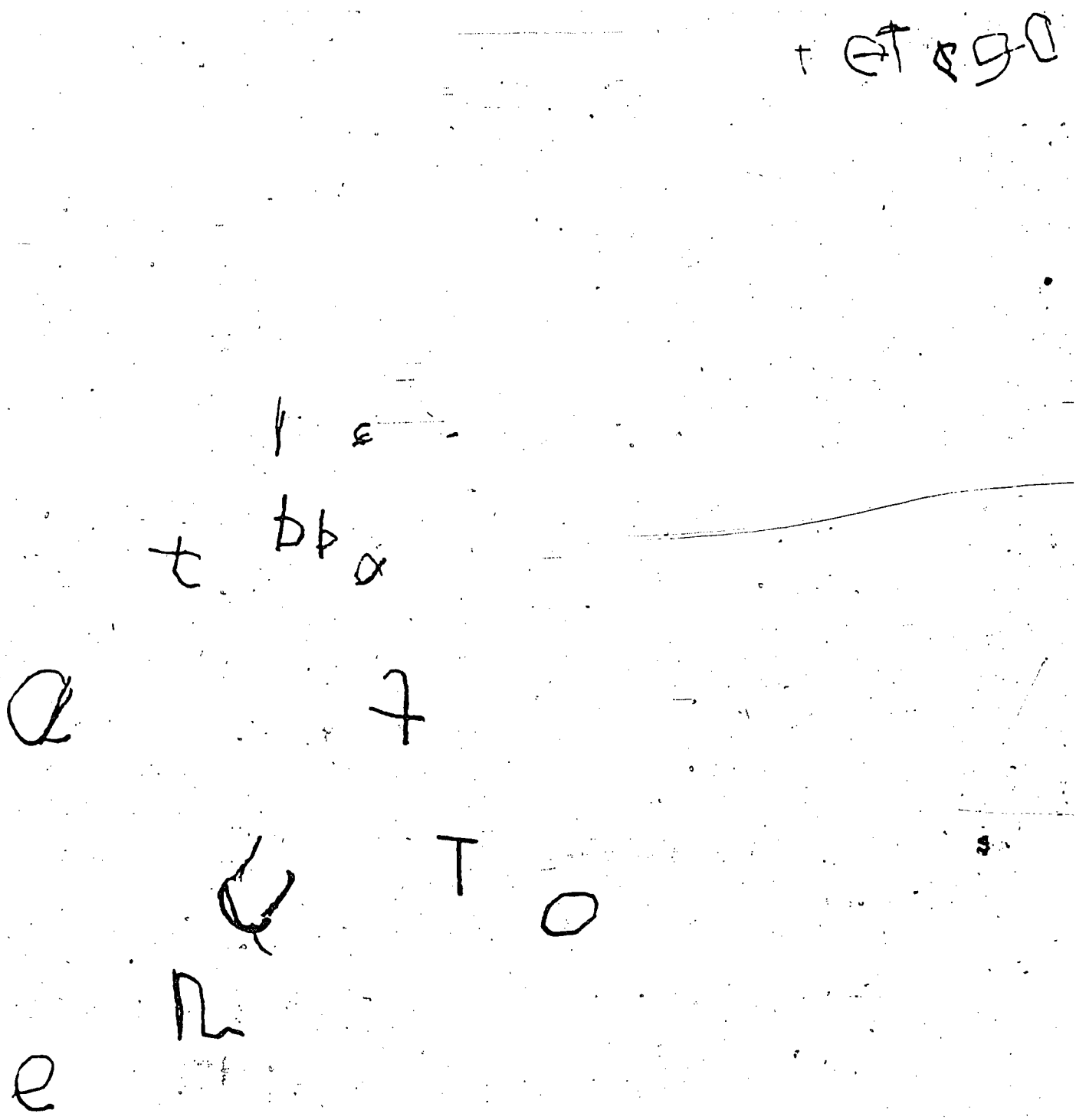


Figure 1

During the preliminary observations, I noted that Dexter frequently appeared to interject personal meaning and experiences in class activities. For example, in listening to Ms. Lin read books, Dexter, relative to the other children, more frequently offered spontaneous comments, such as "I like that boy right there" in reference to an illustration of a black child in a picture book, or "My jaws be going like this," said before chewing in an exaggerated manner while listening to a story about bubble gum. His responses to open-ended questions and tasks, such as drawing, were often a blend of everyday life and experiences gained from the television and the movies. For example, in response to a direction to draw on the topic of water after a study lesson on seashells, most children began drawing pictures of the ocean. Dexter drew a house. Ms. Lin asked him what he thought that had to do with anything about water," and he replied that his drawing was a house with water coming up in it, "you know, like when you try to fix somebody's bathroom." (The plumbers had been at school that day to fix the malfunctioning school commodes.)

The following episode illustrates Dexter's interjection of personal meaning during a writing assignment. The class was directed to cut out two small valentines from red construction paper. The valentines were to be pasted on large paper hats, which were to be worn to lunch that day in honor of Valentines Day. Ms. Lin wrote "Valentines Day words" on the board as the children suggested them; she told them that they could write words on their valentines if they wanted to. After cutting out the valentines, the children at Dexter's table began copying words from the board. As the children completed their first valentines, I asked them to read them to me. Most could not read their words, with the exception of Dexter. He had copied letters randomly from one word and then another. He read these letters as "I love my Grandmama,"

sweeping his finger over the letters. Dexter then wrote another valentine for his grandaddy and, then, another for "my other grandmama. I have two grandmamas." He read these cards as well: "I love my grandaddy. I love my other grandmama." After finishing his cards, he took them to his teacher, who reminded him that he was supposed to make two valentines to put on his hat, not three. At her direction, Dexter went back to his table, examined all three valentines, and then threw one away. This episode is illustrative of many in which Dexter appeared to be operating in a context narrower (more personal), in a sense, than the classroom.

Dexter was chosen for further study because (a) Ms. Lin stated that children like Dexter appeared in her classroom every year and that information on such children would be helpful, (b) Dexter appeared to be just beginning his exploration of written language, and (c) he was comfortable and talkative with me. In addition, I became interested in Dexter because of his persistent declaration of self in what is a group-oriented context, the classroom.

Preliminary Assessment Tasks

During the last two weeks of the preliminary observation phase, I asked Dexter to perform the series of assessment tasks. In this section, I briefly illustrate his responses to each task. For the tasks based on those designed by Ferreiro (1978) and Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982), I include their interpretations of child responses similar to Dexter's.

Dexter's responses to the writing task were comparable to those described by Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) as occurring at the earliest level of writing development. Dexter made appropriate-appearing letters, which were then read. There were no systematic encoding procedures evident; rather, his own intention was sufficient to ensure the writing's meaning. In Ferreiro

and Teberosky's (1982, p. 180) words, "the subjective intent of the writer counts more than objective differences [in the actual written letters] in the result for children at this level."

Dexter's behaviors during the writing task suggested as well a conception of writing as a way of directly representing things. I asked Dexter to write The girl hit the ball. Dexter wrote, tereDe (note that Dexter is relying on letters from his own name). He then remarked, "I'm gonna put 'girl get the ball and bit the ball and put a hole in it and get a whippin.'" As Dexter was writing leteDtl7, he said, "'The girl hit the ball and put a hole in it.' I'm gonna put--put a hole in it," and he added more letters. Dexter suggested here that writing, like drawing, involved representing events, people, and things directly -- he put a hole in his represented ball.

Another suggestion of Dexter's conception of writing as direct representation came after the reading task when Dexter wrote, XO. He remarked that XO said, "Dexter ate a cake." He explained that X was Dexter and O was "Dexter ate a cake." The following exchange then occurred:

Dyson: What if I cover up this (O)?

Dexter: Dexter didn't eat no cake cause he didn't have that (pointing to the O).

Dyson: And now (lifting my thumb off of the O)?

Dexter: Dexter ate the cake now.

In the reading task, Dexter's behaviors also fit into the lowest level of writing development as described by Ferreiro (1978). Dexter's behavions were variable, but he did not separate the utterance into parts that matched the text. The behaviors he engaged in depended upon how I structured the task. In response to a question regarding the location of a particular word, Dexter identified large segments of the text, at times spontaneously adding

the rest of the words to complete the sentence. If I focused on one segment of the text, he proposed other congruent sentences, building a narrative. These behaviors are illustrated in the following transcript excerpt, which centered on the sentence, The boy ate a cake.

Dyson	Dexter
(I read the sentence for Dexter and ask him to read it.)	(Dexter sweeps his hand back and forth over the written sentence as he reads.) "The boy ate a cake. When they were all up it was none. So he cried for some more. He said, 'Mom and Dad, cake is gone.' 'You ate it up 'cause I told you, don't eat no more food. You gonna die.' And so they went to get more cake and then they put it in the refrigerator."
(Later in the task, I asked Dexter about the location of particular words.) Dexter, did I write the word ate?	Yeah (sweeps hand over entire text).
I thought that said, "The boy ate a cake." Where's just ate?	"A boy ate cake" (focusing on text).
(I reread sentence.) Did I write the word the?	No.
What did I write?	"The boy ate a cake. The boy eat it all up" (sweeps hand over text).
(I next covered up parts of the sentence and asked Dexter what the rest of the sentence said. For each segment of the text, Dexter proposed a sentence.) And if I cover up this much, what does it say?	"The boy ate a cake."

Dyson	Dexter
And if I cover this part?	
	It says "The boy ate it all up."

I began the interview by questioning Dexter about good and poor writing. He identified appearance as the critical variable. Bad writing was "scribble scrabble." A close association between drawing and writing was also evident in the interview. For example, when I asked Dexter, "If you could write anything you wanted to, what would you write?", Dexter replied that he would "write rabbits and Chicken Little and chickens." Dexter "wrote" a rabbit for me by drawing a rabbit "hiding Easter eggs." (It's of relevance here that Dexter's teacher had mentioned that week that the class would be talking about chicks and rabbits soon as Easter was approaching.) Despite the reference to drawing in the previous response, Dexter mentioned writing when I asked, "Do you write at home?" (Although the focus of this paper is on the gap between school curriculum and child mind, the gap between researcher and child mind is evident here. I present the exchange with humility.)

Dyson: Do you ever write at home?

Dexter: Dummy. Mm mmmm.

Dyson: What?

Dexter: Ummm. Mr. Cosby, dummy, and Lester.

Dyson: You write <u>dummy</u> at home?

Dexter: Uh huh [yes], and Lester.

Dyson: Lester? Who's that?

Dexter: My dummy what I have at home, Lester.

Dyson: Lester is the dummy that you have at home? Is that your brother?

Dexter: Mm mm [no].

Dyson: What's a dummy?

Dexter: It's spelled with <u>D</u>. Lester is spelled with <u>D</u>.

And who's Lester?

Dexter: My dummy that talk on the record. That my favorite dummy.

dummy of a popular black ventriloquist. Although I was ignorant here, Dexter's response demonstrates an awareness of print in his environment. He did not, though, display an ability to detail the purposes for which adults write. He noted only that adults write "children's homework" --work for children to do.

The letter name and sound tasks were difficult for Dexter. He recognized and named seven capital letters: D,R,A,B,O,P, and C. He did not correctly name any small letters, nor was he able to identify any initial consonant sounds. Dexter evidenced confusion between letters, sounds, and words during these tasks. For example, the following excerpts are from the letter recognition task:

Letter	Dexter's Response
B	B
K	It spell helmet.
N	It spell my grandma's name [Helen].
S	It spells "sssssss,sssssss"--C.

It's relevant to note here that Ms. Lin remarked to me during the preliminary observation phase that Dexter had recently begun noticing letters, but that he associated them with things and people rather than with their specific names. For example, when she had shown him the letter Q, Dexter had associated it with "Terrell," the last name of a classmate--Quentin. His behavior here is similar to his previously described association of D with Lester. The close association between drawing and writing was also evident in these letter-focused tasks:

Dyson: What letter does deer start with?

Dexter: O (writes an O). Let me see this. I'm writing a deer.

(Dexter turns the O into a deer.)

Dexter explained that deer started with an O because "it's shaped like a O."

In these structured tasks, then, Dexter demonstrated an understanding that written and read messages were related in a global way, but his behaviors for effecting this relationship were inconsistent and loosely organized. To elaborate, Dexter did not segment a sentence into units (words); further, when writing he seemed to put down letters to represent an event (linguistically, a sentence) or concrete aspects of the reality referred to -- all behaviors reported by Ferreiro (1978) and Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982). Further, his performance suggested a lack of differentiation among the parts of written language-- letters, sounds, words -- and a close relationship between drawing and writing. Dexter did appear aware of the print in his environment both at home and at school; he associated the letters with things and people. I turn now to Dexter's behavior in school lessons.

Writing Occasions

This analysis is based on the writing events which occurred during the formally-designated "creative writing" period in phase 2 of the study. The 22 observed writing events in Phase 2 were of four different occasion types; the types, and the variations of each type, are described in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Although, with the exception of teacher dictation, all types of writing occasions occurred throughout Phase 2, copying occasions (with the exception of CRW) were introduced earliest, then selecting and copying occasions, and, finally, free writing occasions.

Table 1

Nature of Observed Writing Occasions

Type	Number of Events Observed Per Occasion[a]	Description
Teacher Dictation (TD)[b]	1_1	Children write letters called out by the teacher; the letters spell a sentence.
Copying	8	Children copy exactly what is written on the board.
Copying words (CW)	$(1)_1$	
Copying sentences (CS)	(4)	
Copying rebus sentences (CRS)	$(3)_1$	
Selecting and Copying	6	
Selecting and copying words (SCW)	$(2)_1$	Children select and copy particular words from a given set (e.g., selecting from listed food words to form one's own menu).
Fill-in-the-blank (FB)	$(4)_3$	Children copy sentence with a missing word. Children select appropriate word from a given set to fill-in-the-blank.
Free Writing	7	
Free writing (FW)	$(3)_1$	Children write however they wish; the topic may or may not be specified; spelling according to the way the word sounds is encouraged.
Free rebus writing (FRW)	$(4)_1$	Children write however they wish; the topic may or may not be specified; the use of single letters (e.g., b for bee) and pictures to substitute for conventional words is encouraged.

[a]Subscripts refer to the number of events in which Dexter was the focal child.

[b]Dictation will not be considered further as it was not typical of the kinds of writing occasions in this classroom. It was done primarily to demonstrate to the children "why we keep saying learn your alphabet."

The occasions were comprised of a regular sequence of steps. They began with Ms. Lin talking with the class. For the occasions involving copying, she either decided in advance what the children were going to write, relying on seasonal or social studies/science topics, or she asked the children for suggestions as to what should be written about or for the exact words to be written. Ms. Lin accepted only suggestions that she considered appropriate; for example, in one event, a suggestion that the writing topic be chicks was rejected as the Easter holiday had passed. Ms. Lin edited the children's comments, most often to make them brief enough to be copied. As she wrote words on the board, she orally named the letters, asking the children to name them with her. For the free writing occasions, Ms. Lin either simply told the children to "write about whatever you want," or suggested a topic, spelling a few key words on the board for them. In all occasion types, Ms. Lin wrote the day's date on the board for the children to copy.

As the children wrote, Ms. Lin and her aide, Ms. Man, circulated around the room, reminding the children to leave spaces, pointing out incorrectly formed letters or misplaced words. After the writing was completed, the children read their papers to Ms. Lin. Then, if there was time, Ms. Lin allowed the children to draw pictures on the bottoms of their papers. Finally, Ms. Lin collected all papers and, after gathering the children on the rug near the front of the room, she shared the papers. Ms. Lin praised papers which were neatly done according to the given directions.

Dexter's Occasion Types

A comparison of Dexter's writing behaviors across occasion types revealed that, despite the fact that there were 3 writing occasion types (7, when variations are included), for Dexter, there were only 2 (3, including variations).

In his words, there were those in which he "copied off of the board" and those in which he "just wrote," that is, in which he wrote whatever graphics (letters, numbers) he wished. "Copying off of the board" included CW, CS, CRS, SCW, and FB. "Just writing" included FW and, a variant, FRW.

In the next sections, I first describe the behaviors occurring during "copying off of the board" and then the variations in Dexter's behavior which occurred during "just writing."

Copying: A Mechanical Task

In all copying tasks, Dexter focused on mechanically forming the appropriate letters. In contrast to his observed behavior early in February and Phase 1, when the Valentines task was done (see p.17), by March and Phase 2, Dexter moved systematically across the page. The copying task was a silent one, a matter of focusing on the board before writing each graphic and, at times, stopping in the middle of a formation to see what to do next. He often spent a full minute on one letter. Dexter would compare the completed letter to that on the board, adding extra strokes where necessary, at times erasing to attempt a closer match. The D'Nealian script often necessitated the adding of extra strokes. For example, an *x* needed a third stroke to become *x*. Dexter typically noted every mark, including commas, and, unlike other children, did not substitute capital for small letters. Dexter initially left no spaces between words, although, in mid April, he began sporadically to do so.

During one event, toward the middle of Phase 2, Dexter did use speech while writing. His overt language functioned to monitor his writing behavior and, also, to represent, to report on, the nature of his written graphics. This was the only instance of such overt language in all Dexter's observed events; his language use was, in certain ways, similar to that of more

advanced children in the classroom who named letters or words as they copied. The following excerpt from the observation sheet for that event illustrates his behavior (key for the observation sheet code follows excerpt):

Child's Text	Code	Notes
		Dexter is copying the date: April 11, 1983 (see Figure 2).
A	OV	"A" (naming letter) - monitoring language
	P	looks at board
P	OV	"P" - monitoring language
	P	looks at board
r	OV	"C" (Dexter is naming letter, although incorrectly) - monitoring language
	P	looks at board
i	OV	"G" - monitoring language
	P	looks at board
ι	OV	"Y" - monitoring language
	P	looks at board
1	;	copying the number 1
	P	looks at board
	IS-T	"Ms. Lin, you put up 2 ones?" Ms. Lin, believing that Dexter is referring to 11, responds, "Yes."
		Now Dexter counts the "ones" on his paper as follows:
	OV	"1 2 3" - monitoring language ↓ ↓ ↓ i ι 1
	OV	"I've got about 3 ones" - reporting language

(continued)

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	P	Looks at board
P	S	copying the 9 in 1983 (Dexter has skipped the 11, perhaps confused by the il in April, which he has interpreted as "ones.")
	IS-P	"I got the biggest pencil" (to the children at the table in general) - reporting language
	P	looks at board
g	OV	"G" (Dexter was copying the 8 in 1983, but he was forming the 8 as if it were a small g) - monitoring language
	OV	"Ms. Lin [addressed to me], this spells glasses" - reporting language
	P	looks at board
3	S	
	////	erases 3
	OV	"I don't know how to make no 3" - personal language
	P	looks at board
3	S	
	P	looks at board
	OV	"p-p-p-p Pizza"[1] - monitoring language
P	S	

KEY. Dialogue: IS-T - Interruption Solicited from Teacher; IS-P - Interruption Solicited from Peers; OV - Overt language; Other: P - Pause; S - Silence; //// - Erasing

[1]Dexter is actually copying the word pizza here, the first of eight words relating to pizza (e.g., sauce, cheese) that were on the board. Dexter's behaviors in other contexts, however, suggested that Dexter associated P with pizza, just as he associated D with Lester and N with his grandmama.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Source Checklist
Repeat
Repeat
Repeat
Repeat
Repeat
Repeat
Repeat
Repeat

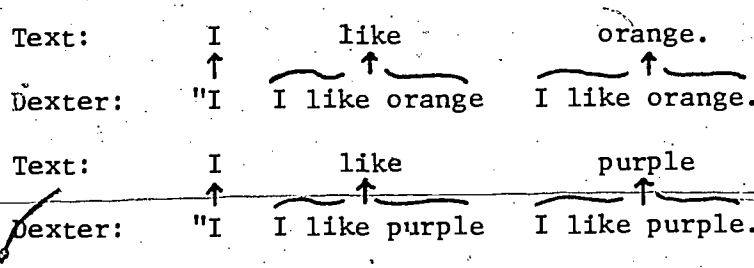
Figure 2

Although this language behavior was atypical, it does demonstrate Dexter's focus on each individual letter as a unique object of interest, an object to be made in a particular way and which might be related to other graphics he had noted in his environment. The actual unit to be copied -- a word, a sentence-- was not focused on during the actual writing. His behavior contrasts that of other kindergarteners in his room who did attend periodically to the particular linguistic unit as a whole. Such a child, for example, would have read the date "April 11, 1983" from the board and then written it, perhaps naming each word as it was written: "April [pause] 11 [pause] 1983.

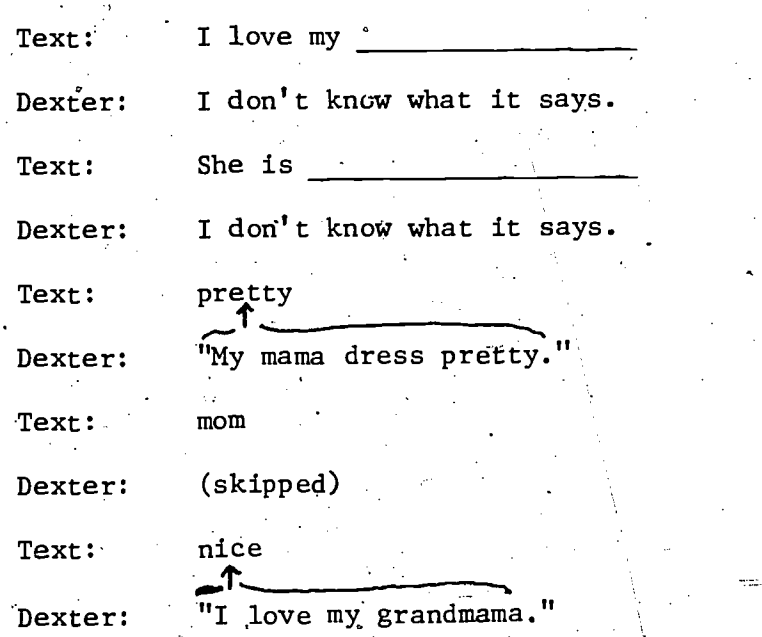
In addition to demonstrating Dexter's focus on individual letters, this event illustrates his sensitivity to the patterned nature of writing events. This was actually a select and copy words (SCW) occasion type; the children were to draw a pizza, including ingredients from the labeled model pizza on the board. Then they were to write the appropriate words, arranging them around their drawn pizzas. Dexter, however, systematically copied all of the letters on the board and, in fact, corrected another child who began drawing the pizza before copying any words: "Wayne, you forgot to write the words. [turning to me] He's in trouble": the drawing in this task, as in most, should take place after the writing. Although this was a select and copy words event, for Dexter it was simply a copy event. When asked by Ms. Lin to read his paper, Dexter was silent; Ms. Lin remarked that if he had drawn the picture as directed, he would have been able to read his writing.

Other examples of this contrast between teacher-occasion type and Dexter-occasion type can be found in the three fill-in-the-blank (FB) events, which occurred near the beginning, middle, and end of Phase 2. Here too Dexter demonstrated a systematic focus on each element to be copied and, also, a need to follow the typical writing event pattern. Ms. Lin was observed to correct

Dexter's behavior in these FB events, but Dexter found change difficult. For example, in the first observed FB event in early Phase 2, Ms. Lin had Dexter erase most of his work as he had simply copied the sentence, including the blank (I like _____.) and then copied the words which were actually choices. Although Dexter listened to Ms. Lin, after she left, he repeated his earlier behavior. With the assistance of Ms. Man, the aide, Dexter repeated the task a third time, this time correctly. His text read: I like orange. I like purple. (Dexter's text did not contain spacing between I and like.) After this task was completed, I asked Dexter to read his paper for me. He read: "I like orange. I like purple." Then I pointed to each particular word. Dexter read his paper as follows:



In the second observed FB event, Dexter wrote, without spacing, Spaghetti is _____.. hot, which he read "spaghetti." In the third, Dexter's text and reading were as follows (Dexter's text again contained no spacing):



Dexter's behaviors here can be interpreted by linking them to those observed during the initial assessment tasks. In those contexts, Dexter appeared, when reading, to focus on the linguistic unit as a whole or on concrete aspects of the reality referred to. In addition, his attention to letters as units was clear. These behaviors were evident in Phase 2. In the first FB event, for example, Dexter named letters that he recognized (I) and then read the linguistic unit as a whole for each segment I isolated. If the whole linguistic unit is present in each written segment, then copying words to fill in missing units in a written sentence is an illogical task, and Dexter appeared unable to grasp the logic of such tasks.

Dexter did not display the reading behaviors noted here for Ms. Lin. When he read to her, she pointed to the words. When he made an error, she read it correctly. In one event, he was observed to watch her mouth, saying the words after her.

Dexter's behavior in all these events, then, was to systematically copy the elements on the board, following the procedure first introduced to the children (copy all letters, draw at the bottom of the paper). In general, Dexter, if he recalled the text at all, read his print as the name of a single object ("spaghetti") or as the whole linguistic unit. He did not spontaneously read his work nor did he spontaneously segment his text with his finger as he read.

Near the end of Phase 2, there was one event in which Dexter appeared to make a precise correspondence between a word and a segment of the text. (Note that this was after spacing began appearing in Dexter's text.) The event was the first observed CRS (Copying Rebus Sentence occasion type). The text to be copied was: The [picture of a dog] eats dogfood in a [picture of

a dish]. Dexter did not place a drawing of a dog between The and eats. Rather, he drew a dog, "a lost dog," on the bottom of the page, again following the typical writing event pattern. When he had completed his paper, the following exchange with me occurred:

Dyson: Dexter, will you read your paper for me?

Dexter: (Points to The and reads:) "lost dog"

(Dexter laughs and says:)

It don't say lost dog, just dog.

I asked Dexter about the rest of the text, but he said that "I don't know the other words." Dexter thus distinguished between the precise meaning of a particular segment of the text and his own elaborated meaning.

As suggested by the preceding exchange, the drawing at the end of the writing event appeared to be important to Dexter. I turn now to a closer examination of his drawing behavior during copying events.

Drawing: The elaboration of meaning. In the assessment session, Dexter had reported that he liked to write pictures. His attraction to drawing was evident in the Phase 2 data as well. At the end of each event, Dexter drew a picture related to the topic of the day's writing. He drew whether or not the teacher directed the class to draw. Dexter made elaborate pictures, one object appearing to suggest another. As illustrated in the "lost dog" event described in the preceding section, through drawing, Dexter invested personal meaning into the copied text. These drawing behaviors are also evident in the following summarized CW event.

Dexter had copied, in list - format, the following words referring to different ways of preparing eggs: boil, fry, scramble, dye. At the teacher's direction, he drew appropriate pictures next to each word as she had done on

the board. At the bottom of his paper, he then drew a bunny rabbit. He extended an arm out from the bunny rabbit and made a circle around the picture of the dyed egg. When he had finished his paper, I asked him to read it for me. He shrugged; he didn't know what the words were. However, he offered that the Easter Bunny was "hiding her basket." At this point Ms. Lin walked by:

Ms. Lin: There you are drawing people again.

Dexter: I'm not drawing people. It's the Easter Bunny.

Ms. Lin: Everyday you draw me pictures when you're not supposed to.

As suggested by the preceding event, the relative importance of drawing and writing was reflected in Dexter's recall of his products. His actual written sentence [illegible] forth a minimum response, but his picture consistently elicited verbalization. To further illustrate, in a CS task, the children copied a rhyme, which they had recited repeatedly, and then drew related pictures on the bottoms of their papers. When asked to read and point, Dexter read his written text as follows:

Text: She slls sea
Dexter: "sea sells seashell"
Text: seashore
Dexter: "by seashore"
Text: shells by th
Dexter: (no response)

In response to the question of what he had drawn, he replied "shark." But when asked to tell about the picture, he explained as follows (explanation as recorded in field notes):

This was the lady the shark ate. These were the shells she was selling and she "gonna take and break 'em on him" so she can get out. This was the record player. This was the deep water they were swimming in.

One month later, in the final assessment session, it was the sense of the drawing that Dexter recalled. He read a version of that text as he swept his fingers over the words.

In summary, copying events were essentially mechanical tasks for Dexter. While certain, more advanced peers named and reread words as they wrote, Dexter was typically silent, concentrating on forming the letters correctly. In one event, Dexter named letters as he wrote, a behavior similar to the attention to letters that was noted in other contexts. In general, though, personal meaning in the writing actually appeared to be involved only during the drawing, when the topic of the activity was elaborated upon according to Dexter's own personal style.

How did Dexter's verbal and nonverbal behaviors during writing change when copying was not part of the writing task?

Free Writing: The Intention to Communicate

In the free writing events, the mechanical nature of writing was still evident. Dexter silently formed letters. But, since Dexter did not pause to look at the board, letters were made more quickly, with less apparent concern for form (less erasing, less adding of particular strokes to match forms on the board). In contrast to more advanced peers, there was no evidence of monitoring his writing by pronouncing individual words, nor was there encoding by attempting to "sound out" words. But there was one significant oral language behavior evident in all free writing events that was not evident during copying events: planning. And what Dexter planned to write was objects: football helmets, shoes, boots, parrots, squirrels, and dinosaurs.

For example, in producing Figure 3, Dexter commented while writing line 1, "I'm writing about football. Football helmet."

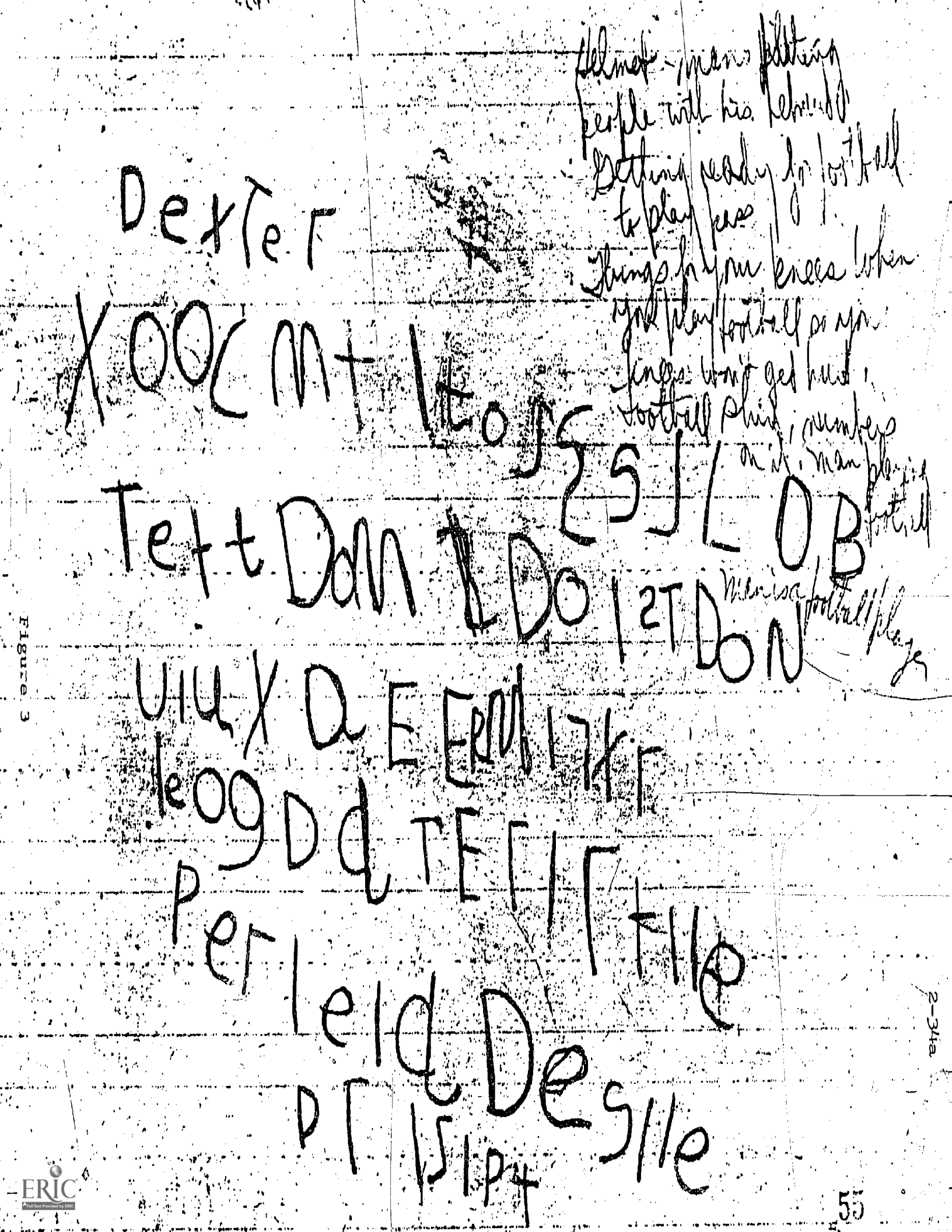
Insert Figure 3 about here

As in all events, Dexter would read his final product to Ms. Lin. In reading his free writing products, Dexter would elaborate upon what he had written: more specifically, he would read a sentence as opposed to an object's name. Ms. Lin may have prompted this change in Dexter's reading, as these fieldnote excerpts, from the first FW event, reveal:

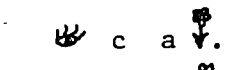
> When Ms. Lin asked Dexter to read his paper, Dexter responded by looking at the first line and saying, "Helmet." Ms. Lin responded, "Well, what about helmet?" Dexter answered, "The man's hitting people with his helmet." Dexter then spontaneously offered elaborate phrases or sentences for the other lines. [Fieldnotes edited for clarity.]

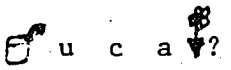
In the following chart, I contrast Dexter's planning and reporting language while writing with his final reading to Ms. Lin:

	Language while writing:	Language while reading to teacher:
Line 1	I'm writing about football. Football helmet.	
	I'm writing things that are real. I'm writing helmet.	The man's hitting people with his helmet.
Line 2	Now I'm going to write pass.	Getting ready for football to play pass.
Line 3	Know those things that go on your knees? (In response to my question about what he was going to write now.)	Things for your knees when you play football so your knees won't get hurt.
Line 4	I'm gonna write football shirt.	
	I forgot to make numbers (and Dexter adds more letters).	Football shirt, numbers on it.
Line 5	I'm writing man.	Man playing football.
Line 6	(Dexter continued from line 5 to line 6 with no comment.)	Man is a football player.


Dexter
Helmet - man getting
people with his helmet
Getting ready for football
to play game
Things for you never when
you play football or you
fingers won't get hurt.
football shirt, numbers
on it, man playing
football
Figure 3

Similar behavior can be seen in the FRW (Free Rebus Writing) events. Figure 4 contains a sample of Dexter's FRW products. In understanding this product, it's important to bear in mind that, in the week before the first FRW event, the children had copied rebus sentences similar to the following:

 (I see a flower.)

 (Can you see a flower?)

This explains why, after Dexter had completed his writing, including the pictures at the end of each line, he went back and added "eyes" and "cans" at the front of each line. Although he did not necessarily include I or can in his final reading, he knew that those symbols were necessary for "that rebus writing."

Insert Figure 4 about here

During the production of Figure 4, Dexter planned and/or reported on his writing, consistently referring to the writing of objects, just as he had done in the FW events. The difference, of course, is that, in FRW events, the object was actually drawn. And again, as in the FW events, Dexter read a more elaborate text, for example:

	Language while writing:	Language while reading to teacher:
Line 4	I'm writing parrot (planning before beginning line).	I drew a parrot at school.
Line 6	dinosaur (planning after writing letters and before drawing picture)	I look at the dinosaur in the zoo.

Dexter's behaviors in these free writing events can be linked to behaviors documented in both the assessment tasks and in the copying events. In all contexts, Dexter displayed an understanding that written and read messages were related in a global way, but he could not effect this relationship in a precise manner. He appeared, in free writing, to put down letters to represent things ("I forgot to make numbers" on the football shirt), which he could then

read back in a more elaborate manner. In both assessment tasks and in copying tasks, Dexter attributed a whole linguistic unit (a sentence) or a particular object's name to his written text.

In all school lesson contexts, Dexter appeared sensitive to the patterned nature of the event. The introduction of a new occasion type could lead to errors, as he interpreted new tasks in the light of previous ones. He responded to fill-in-the-blank events as though they were copy tasks. He initially placed the drawings for rebus writing at the bottom of the page as he did in most other writing tasks. Eventually he added "eyes" and "cans" to the beginnings of rebus sentences; he even added them to those sentences he made up himself, whether or not he actually included the word I or can in his final reading.

The Achievement of School Success

Although Dexter approached classroom writing tasks in two ways, "copying off of the board" and "just writing," the tasks as designed by the teacher were more variable. In this sense, the criterion for success varied to a greater extent than did Dexter's behaviors. As a result, Dexter's ability to achieve school success varied. In this analysis, I define school success on the basis of the response Dexter received from Ms. Lin. Success was achieved if Ms. Lin accepted his paper. Failure occurred if Ms. Lin asked that the product be redone or if she explicitly said that the product was not good or not right.

In all events, Ms. Lin consistently demanded that the writing task be finished and that the words and pictures be in appropriate places. She also consistently expected "neat" writing, which appeared to refer to papers without erasing or smudges and with no gross differences in the size and

alignment of letters. —A final consistent demand was for the correct writing of his name. Ms. Lin variably demanded that letters be made the appropriate size and that spacing occur between words; comments on these matters were made to the class as a whole and, in that sense, to Dexter, but only occasionally to Dexter specifically. With the exception of free writing tasks, Ms. Lin did not demand that Dexter be able to read his writing independently (i.e., without her help).

In CW and CS occasions, Dexter's success depended in large part on whether or not he worked quickly enough to finish. In comparison to other children in his class, Dexter had to look at the board more frequently. Certain children were capable of looking once per word or once every other letter. Dexter needed to focus at least once and sometimes twice per letter, although his need to look at the board appeared to lessen during the 3 1/2 months of observation. Ms. Lin attributed Dexter's success or failure to whether or not he was being "silly" or talking to his peers.

All fill-in-the-blank (FB) events observed were unsuccessful as Dexter simply copied the board. His failure was attributed to not paying attention -- listening--to directions. When asked to redo these tasks, Dexter redid them, but in exactly the same manner. He was capable of doing them correctly when Ms. Man, the classroom aide, sat beside him and directed his behaviors.

In both the select-and copy-words event (SCW) and the copy-rebus-sentence (CRS) event in which Dexter was the focal child, he failed to place needed pictures in the appropriate place. In both events, a picture was required amidst the writing; in no product collected, including those events in which Dexter was not the focal child, did Dexter place a picture amidst his

writing. In CRS events that occurred after the one just noted, the pictures were required at the beginning and end of each line, and Dexter did do this.

In both free writing events in which Dexter was the focal child, he was successful. There were very few criteria to be met in free writing tasks. There was no model on the board to be copied. Dexter himself could determine when he was finished. Although Ms. Lin demanded some sound/symbol logic in spelling and, also, spacing from certain children in the room, she did not demand these things from Dexter. In addition, Ms. Lin accepted Dexter's reading of his paper, although, as previously noted, she did prompt the elaboration of a single word reading in one event; however, she accepted the reading of a single object's name in other free writing events. Influenced by writing inservice sessions, she regarded writing and then reading what had been written--even though nothing, strictly speaking, had been written--as a normal part of young children's writing.

In considering all free writing events, including those in which Dexter was not the focal child, Dexter failed just once. This particular event was one in which he had copied two words from the board: boat and boats. It was also the first observed event in which such words had been placed on the board for the children to use in sentences of their own. Since they were written on the board, Dexter, predictably, copied them. Interestingly enough, Dexter spaced between the two words, the first time that I had observed this behavior. In fact, he had erased, apparently to move the second word over further. Ms. Lin corrected him for the messiness of his paper, which was due to the erasing, and for not attending to directions (i.e., for just copying the board instead of writing a sentence with the words). Dexter responded, "I can't write," in a sincere tone of voice, as if he was telling her something

she hadn't noted. But, after Ms. Lin left, he wrote a string of letters under the two copied words, which he later read for me as "water."

Dexter's behaviors, in sum, were predictable. If writing was on the board, he copied it, a slow, painstaking process. If not, he wrote his own sequence of letters and read them. When finished, he drew at the bottom of his page. Spacing occurred sporadically in the last four weeks of the study. The writing occasions, as structured by Ms. Lin, called for more variable behaviors. Thus, Dexter achieved success variably. He was successful in copying tasks, particularly short copying tasks, and in free writing tasks which did not involve using words written on the board. Dexter could vary his writing behaviors when assisted by an adult who guided him through the necessary adjustments.

I have examined Dexter's behaviors during Phase 2, noting consistencies in behaviors and, also, certain changes, including the increasingly conventional appearance of the product and a possible move toward more precision in matching oral and written language. The assessment tasks administered in Phase 3 were, then, an opportunity to look for change in structured tasks designed specifically to identify children's conceptions of written language and, also, to tap his own conscious assessment of his success in school tasks.

Final Assessment Tasks

In the third week of May, I administered again the assessment tasks first given in February. I also asked Dexter to evaluate four writing papers, each of which was from a different occasion type.

In response to the writing task, Dexter was much less willing to write than he had been in February, when he had appeared eager to write words and sentences. His first response to each writing direction was to draw. Drawing occurred in response to both requests to write words (ball) and to requests to write sentences (The girl hit the ball.) When I specifically asked him to write "with letters," he would. He formed appropriate-appearing letters

and, as before, there were no systematic encoding procedures evident. Dexter did not spontaneously elaborate upon the words or sentences I asked him to write nor did he spontaneously read what he had written, both behaviors that had occurred in the first assessment. He simply wrote letters when I asked him to. Dexter did, however, volunteer to write a word, Santa, which he knew started with an S: SlBek. In addition, he copied a word written on the top of my tablet and asked me what it said.

Dexter, then, appeared to be moving toward the next higher level of writing development in terms of the task administered: he would still make letters to represent, in a global, undifferentiated way, particular entities or events; however, he also appeared to be aware of the need for particular objective features of the text to occur with specific words. His intention as writer did not always appear to be enough. Figural correspondences between objects presented and letter forms were no longer evident (recall, from the first assessment, when Dexter explained that deer began with an o because it was shaped like an o). Dexter did seem much more aware of his own limitations and, in fact, volunteered to write a word about which he had specific information. Such reluctance to write is also reported in the Ferreiro & Teberosky study in reference to children who are beginning to master particular written words, such as their own names.

In the reading task, similar descriptions apply. Although Dexter did not change in terms of level of development as described by Ferreiro, he did evidence more precision in his understanding of oral and written language. In February, Dexter was not able to match parts of an utterance to specific parts of the text. Dexter could do this in the May assessment, although the match was not accurate. If I asked him about specific parts of the utterance, he would point to specific segments of the text. If I focused on

one segment of the text, Dexter recalled only the names of things in the original sentence or he proposed sentences complementing that sentence. In his responses, I again noted the confusion regarding letters, sounds, and words, although clearly he displayed a certain ability to differentiate among these parts. These behaviors are illustrated in the following transcript excerpts:

Dyson	Dexter
(I read the sentence for Dexter and ask him to read it.)	"The boy ate the cake."
Did I write the word boy?	Yes. That b [pointing to The]. That boy [pointing to boy].
(I verify his response and then ask:) Did I write the word cake?	(Pointing to first three words in order:) B [The] boy [boy] cake [ate]
Did I write the word ate?	B [The] boy [boy] cake [ate] ate [cake]. Now I'm finished.
Alright, what's this right here? (I point to a, which he had skipped in his reading.)	That's an a.
(I reread the sentence.) Did I write the word the?	You're going to have to take out one of the letters and make it [pointing to a] be boy.
(At the end of the task, I ask Dexter to read the entire sentence and point to each word.)	Text: The boy ate a cake. Dexter: b boy cake a cake.
(At the end of the discussion of the second sentence, I ask Dexter to read the sentence.)	Text: The baby Dexter: baby I forgot. (I reread the sentence, sweeping my hand across the sentence.) Baby dropped the bottle. Text: dropped Dexter: She ate up all the water.

Text: the

Dexter: And she drunk up all the soup.

Text: bottle.

Dexter: And then there wasn't nothing. Then it went down her throat.

Dexter's behavior had not changed in terms of the levels of written language development as indicated by Ferreiro; she describes identifying only names of objects in the text, reading sentences that complement the original for segments of the text, and reading the original utterance for varied segments of the text as alternate behaviors of children at an early level of written language development. Comparing Dexter's responses in February to those in May does indicate, though, that the latter involved a more careful matching of segments of text to segments of the message. It's also of interest that Dexter rejected, as did more advanced children in Ferreiro's study, the letter a as a word.

In the evaluation interview, I showed Dexter four of his writing papers, xeroxed copies of a CS, an FRW, an FW, and an FB task. Dexter could not recall how he had done each task beyond that he "wrote all the papers. . . I listened and learned." He did recall that the FRW task wasn't on the board but, rather, he "just wrote that." He judged all the papers to be good writing, except for the FW task, which he said was not good because it was "sloppy." And, indeed, it was the only paper on which he had erased and created smudges. Of all the papers, Dexter preferred the two with drawing on them, the CS and the FRW task. The CS, which was the previously discussed seashell task, was his favorite as the drawing was "pretty." This was, then, essentially Dexter's response in the February assessment when he defined good and bad writing on the basis of their appearance. In response to my question regarding who each

piece was for, Dexter smiled shyly and, with evident pleasure, declared that one was for me, one was for his mama, one was for Ms. Lin, and one was for Ms. Man. He had written the papers, tried to make them pretty, and since I asked, he apparently conceived of them as things that could be given to others for their pleasure. Despite his frequent failure to achieve school success, Dexter appeared pleased with his efforts.

In response to the general questions about writing, Dexter again displayed a close association between drawing and writing, although it was also clear that drawing and writing were not synonyms. Unlike the first session, Dexter did not comment on the print in his home environment:

Dyson: Do you write at home?

Dexter: I draw shoes. (Dexter had also drawn shoes in school one day.) I write Ms. Dyson. I write scary movies. (Dexter had drawn pictures of scary movies in school as well.) I look at scary movies.

Dyson: Is writing at school different from writing at home?

Dexter: School like this (pointing to his papers).

Dyson: And at home?

Dexter: Just draw.

When I asked what adults write, Dexter mentioned only one function, as he had in the first assessment. In February, Dexter noted that adults write children's homework. In May, he responded that adults write "people's phone numbers when they forget." Probing did not lead to additional responses.

In the letter name task, Dexter identified 11 capital letters, compared with 7 in the first assessment; in addition to D,R,A,B,O,P, and C, he now identified T,E,W, and A. He also named 11 small letters, compared to none in the first assessment; he named a, o, d, x, p, w, r, i, c, z, and p. For several letters, Dexter's responses were understandable, if not correct:

Letter	Dexter's Response
l	one
q	p

Letter	Dexter's Response
b	d
Q	O
R	P, It has this (traces outline of P in R).
S	Santa (And when I asked what letter it was) SSSS, SSSS, S.

Dexter displayed again a confusion between letters, sounds, and words, although less frequently in this assessment as compared to the first one. Dexter's name appeared to be a significant factor in his improved performance on this task; he recited the letters of his name in order to identify many symbols:

Letter	Dexter's Response
r	D-e-x-t-e (said softly to himself r (to me)

Dexter could not identify any initial consonants, although, periodically throughout all tasks, he would make the first sounds of the word. For example, once, in the reading task, I asked where cake was, and Dexter responded "cah, cah," as he pointed to a segment of the text.

In sum, Dexter did not yet appear to treat written text as a precise system for representing speech. His reading and writing behaviors throughout the tasks were inconsistent. The lack of differentiation between written language parts (letters, sounds, words) and between drawing and writing were still evident. Nonetheless, Dexter's literacy behaviors were more controlled than they had been in the February assessment tasks. He displayed an awareness of the segments between spaces in the text and attempted to match segments of text and segments of the original utterance when I broke down the sentence for him through my questioning. Dexter recognized more letters in this assessment and appeared aware that specific words required specific letters. And, although he seemed pleased with his products, he also appeared more conscious of his own limitations as a writer and more anxious to use the mode of symbolizing which he could control, drawing.

Summary

In this paper, I have analyzed the literacy behaviors of one child, Dexter, as those behaviors varied across tasks and, in addition, I have documented how those behaviors were variably evaluated by the classroom teacher. The analysis revealed consistencies in the child's behaviors. Dexter could not yet effect a precise connection between oral and written language. Further, his behaviors in all tasks suggested that written symbols were not conceived of as an exact transcription of oral utterances; Dexter's talk about his own writing suggested an attempt to represent concrete aspects of the world. Dexter's attention during literacy events was variable: he might focus on the individual symbols (letters), specific concrete referents of the oral utterance to be written, or the utterance itself as a whole. Precisely what he attended to varied with the way the particular event was structured.

In all writing events, Dexter's teacher had parti[illegible] criteria for evaluation, although the criteria varied with the nature of the task. The criteria varied more than did Dexter's behaviors. Dexter had basically three ways of organizing events: copying and inventing letter sequences (with or without pictures at the end points of eac[illegible]e). Dexter's teacher had seven ways. Dexter did appear to have made progress during the course of this study, but his ability to meet evaluative criteria for writing events did not notably improve.

Of copying and inventing ("just writing"), copying led to a focus on letters as unique forms to be duplicated as precisely as possible, whereas just writing led to a focus on particular referents to be represented. The

combining of both a concern with particular letter forms and with representing specific referents was evident in the final assessment task when Dexter, of his own volition, wrote Santa: SlBedk. For Dexter, the process of drawing was much preferable to the laborious and uncertain process of writing.

In her curriculum, the teacher focused on specific behaviors deemed important in literacy readiness programs--the names, sounds, and formations of the letters, appropriate spacing and alignment, recalling particular words that had been talked about, and such general objectives as listening, following directions, and working carefully. Dexter did make progress, most notably in learning letter names. But this learning appeared to be but one part of the larger learning occurring, that of discovering how written and oral language related to each other. Dexter's understandings of written language affected his ability "to listen and follow directions." He seemed to have constructed his own notion of the event structure of writing tasks (what should be done when) in addition to or, perhaps more precisely, intertwined with, understandings regarding written language as a symbol system (how meaning was represented in and reconstructed from print). The gaps between teacher's and child's world were thus revealed.

Implications

Dexter is but one child. Of what importance are his experiences in the light of the thousands of children from varied backgrounds who enter our schools? In examining one child's experiences in school, we are, in effect, confronting the essence of education: "So too when we reflect on a metropolitan school system, we can consider the distribution of reading scores of thousands of children, yet when all is said and done, we come at last to this particular teacher assisting this particular child..." (Wax & Wax, 1980, p. 55). Dexter's experiences in school help illuminate the process of becoming literate

in school and offer theoretical, methodological, and teaching implications.

Theoretical implications. Dexter's behaviors support the conception of learning written language as a developmental phenomenon, as stressed in this paper's review of literature. The notion of developmental behaviors, from the viewpoint of cognitive psychology, implies that there are qualitative changes in behavior over time as organisms interact with and adapt to their social and physical environments (Flavell, 1977). Because of "species-specific growth tendencies and universally present opportunities for interaction with the environment," we assume that there are general similarities across children in the development of any symbolic function (Franklin, 1973, p. 48). Written language, however, being considered the province of schools, has been examined primarily from the point of view of learning theory. The active child making sense of written language has been ignored. Becoming literate has been viewed as the result of how written language is broken down and presented to the child; it has a building block quality to it, more complex learning dependent upon earlier and more simple learning (e.g., Gagne, 1974). Although Dexter did make progress on subskills (e.g., letter naming), these skills were embedded within a larger effort to understand the written language system. Dexter acted upon the written language in his environment and, similarly to the preschoolers documented in the early literacy literature, interpreted that written language in context-dependent ways. For example, although the teacher introduced him to and attempted to teach letter names, Dexter associated letters with particular people and things, so that Q was "Terrell" (the last name of a peer, Quentin) and S was "Santa." The concreteness of his thinking about written language appeared to extend to the symbol system as a whole. Like other young children (Dyson, 1982, 1983; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982), Dexter appeared to asso-

ciate writing with drawing and his literacy behaviors suggested a conception of written language as direct symbolism. Certainly his teacher never consciously taught him that XO could be read "Dexter ate the cake."

Dexter learned not only about written language (in Connolly and Bruner's [1974] terms, "knowing that") but also how it worked ("knowing how"); that is, he learned how to effect that knowledge in the classroom. Erickson (1982) points out that the school learning environment involves more than the teacher and the individual child. It involves as well what he terms "the underlying task structure," including the subject matter task structure (the content and its logical sequencing) and the social task structure (the set roles of the participants and the rules governing how they interact). And it involves the actual enacted task, including the subject matter task (the physical materials used) and the social interactions involved. Although my analysis of Dexter's behaviors did not highlight the social task structure as do microethnographies, Dexter did appear sensitive to the enacted task, including the ways materials were used (for example, when one used one's colors to draw as opposed to one's pencil to write) and the sequence of actions involved in a writing task. In other words, Dexter did not focus on the teacher's directions before each event, as she broke down the task orally and explained it step by step. Rather, his behaviors suggested that he looked for patterns in the ways written language events were conducted. And, as in all areas of symbolic learning, including language (Slobin, 1979) and drawing (Goodnow, 1977), he found it difficult to make radical changes in the ways he went about his tasks.

In addition, the school learning environment appeared to have introduced particular elements of the subject matter that were difficult for Dexter to

interpret in the light of his knowledge of written language. The data reported here included many examples of seemingly isolated bits of information, such as Dexter's uttering "cah" for cake, as he pointed to the word ate. Because it so aptly illustrates such floating bits of knowledge, I would like to include here this excerpt constructed from field notes:

> In the morning writing lessons, Ms. Lin has been stressing the plural s. "One boat looks like this [boat], but if I have 2 boats, it's like this [boats]." Today the class was learning a new song in which soup is pronounced zooop. Dexter raised his hand and asked, "Does two zooop start with soup?" Ms. Lin responded that he was being silly.

His question, in the midst of a lesson, would be unsettling. But from the perspective of Dexter's continuing effort to make sense of print, his question is intriguing: If we have two zooops, then do we put the s?

Methodological implications. Detailed studies of learners, such as Dexter, in the classroom have a role to play in educational research. Qualitative studies in general offer a holistic view of classroom life. But, as Erickson (1982) recently noted, traditional ethnography has tended to focus almost exclusively on social relations in classrooms and the hidden curriculum, rather than the minute detailing of individual children's learning of the manifest curriculum. On the other hand, recent educational studies which employ techniques labeled ethnographic, such as the Graves (1983) writing project, have examined middle class children's products and behaviors, detailing children's approximations of adult goal behaviors in environments specifically selected as facilitative; these projects have contributed enormously to our understanding of children's progress in particular academic disciplines, but they have not allowed for critical analysis of the child interacting with the classroom environment. Such analyses demand a certain distancing of observer from assumptions of teaching effectiveness, a stance of personal involvement yet detachment (Bruyn, 1966). In this study, by describing the teacher's structuring of classroom writing occasions, both

ahistorically (types of classroom occasions) and historically (the order in which they were introduced), both synchronically (the nature of a typical event) and narratively (a detailing of actual events) and Dexter's reactions to these occasions, I aimed to provide insight into the school living that is learning. That is, I aimed to demonstrate the activeness of the child who processes the written language data in the surrounding environment. In addition, by viewing Dexter through the window of measurements used in early literacy studies (e.g., number of letters identified), I hoped to establish connections between his classroom functioning and the children studied in large sample, quantitive studies of children's written language knowledge. Erickson's (1982, p. 166) discussion of ethnographic studies of cognitive learning is again relevant: "It is from what can be empirically observed at the level of the transaction between the individual and the immediate environment that we infer down a level of organization to make statements about patterns of individual cognitive functioning and that we infer up levels of organization to make statements about patterns of social and cultural functioning in society as a whole." Although I am most interested here in the level of cognitive functioning--the child's construction of written language--social and cultural factors are not irrelevant. The popular assumption, reflected in this paper's opening quotes, that learning to read begins with learning the names, sounds, and formations of the abc's is clearly reflected in Dexter's school experiences.

Teaching implications. Dexter's case study illustrates that the literacy curriculum is not a list of competencies from a curriculum guide or a basal reader, nor is it the activities the teacher plans to effect those goals. The curriculum is jointly constructed by the teacher and the individual child, who interprets school experiences in the light of his or her own under-

standings. Helping children become literate is not simply a matter of teaching a series of selected literacy objectives (e.g., letter names, sound/symbol correspondences). While the importance of such learning is obvious, children must not only master that learning, but must also integrate new information into their developing models of how written language works. Further, a child does not necessarily react to the lesson's objective, to its point, but to the experience as a whole, including the materials used, the series of actions followed, and the language interwoven with the activity. The child responds to the lesson on the basis of his or her current model of written language, and that model is in turn affected by the lesson experience. As Tanner and Tanner (1975, p. 45) point out, "The curriculum must account not only for established knowledge but also for emergent knowledge. Consequently, the curriculum is not concerned merely with transmitting the cumulative tradition of knowledge but also with the systematic reconstruction of knowledge in relation to the life experience of the learner." The recognition that written language is a system reconstructed by children as they interact with their environment was recommended by the researchers discussed earlier in this paper. Dexter's case study has demonstrated that this reconstruction occurs whether or not the school recognizes and supports it.

More specifically, the study illustrates a child's varying interpretations of common beginning literacy activities. So, for Dexter, copying tasks were not opportunities to become familiar with words and the mechanical procedures for writing words and sentences (although, for other children, they were). Rather, they were opportunities to examine and produce particular letter forms. Free writing tasks were not opportunities to systematically encode his own messages (although, again, they were for other children). They were opportunities to plan his own message and then produce appropriate-appearing graphics.

The implication for teachers, then, is to consider the variable impact of the plans they make for children and to observe individual children's responses to those plans. Teaching is, as Amarel (1980) points out, a matter of actively making decisions for individual children on the basis of careful observation of their responses to school experiences. To illustrate, perhaps copying might have been a word task for Dexter if he had been copying names he was familiar with (Lester, Mr. Cosby), rather than familiar letters. Perhaps the free writing tasks would have been ways to reflect on the connection between planned messages and written text if he had talked about his product with his teacher, as he had with me in the assessment tasks as I aimed to understand what he understood ("Dexter, what part is football, all of it?"). I do not know how his conceptions of the task would have changed, but I do know that, with a change in the nature of the task (the words to be written, the nature of the interaction of the teacher with Dexter), the possibility for change would have existed. Dexter's behaviors also suggest the potential helpfulness of language experience activities, activities in which the teacher not only takes his individual dictation, as he helps her break the utterance down ("Now we've written football, Dexter. What do you want, football helmet?"), but also involves him in manipulative activities, for example, cutting apart and reassembling the words of a dictated sentence or the letters of a familiar word with his teacher.

Conclusions

I have reported here observations of but one child. Yet, when placed against the backdrop of the literature on early literacy and on schooling, certain conclusions do not appear speculative. To begin, children and teachers live together in schools, but their perceptions of that shared world differ. The teacher, frequently operating from the common sense, learning hierarchy model of the school curriculum, plans activities to promote and assess the

child's growing command of literacy skills. The child, on the other hand, operates from his or her own framework of cultural and personal experiences. The young learner looks for patterns in this new school environment and incorporates them into an increasingly organized system of knowing about written language and knowing how to act on that knowledge. Certain school experiences will result in essentially isolated bits of knowledge that the child cannot as yet incorporate into a written language model. The blinders of the school curriculum may prevent all of us, teachers and researchers alike, from noting progress in a child's thinking and from understanding the child's difficulties and, thus, providing the necessary support. Considering again the intricacy of the written language system and the intelligence of Dexter as he sought to make sense of it all, we can no longer support the view of becoming literate as a matter of mastering a series of increasingly complex steps or believe that someone with difficulty in learning to read and write is simply "so stupid that he does not even know his abc's."

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Writing sample from November, 1982. Dexter had copied these words from the board: turkey, feather, gobble, bobble. (p. 2-16a)

Figure 2. Writing sample from April 11, 1983; product resulted from an SCW event. (p. 2-27a)

Figure 3. Writing sample from March 23, 1983; product resulted from an FW event. Notes in upper right hand corner were written by Ms. Lin as Dexter read his paper to her. (p. 2-34a)

Figure 4. Writing sample from May 3, 1983; product resulted from an FRW event. (p. 2-35a)

CHAPTER THREE

MASKING THE GAP:

THE CASES OF CALLIE AND ANNE

Masking the Gap:

The Cases of Callie and Anne

Callie and Anne, two five-year-old peers of Dexter (introduced in Chapter 1) were more nearly in the teacher's world than was he. To understand Callie and Anne's cases, it is helpful to begin by briefly reviewing Dexter's.

The case of Dexter was one of a child whose school world appeared to be dramatically different from that of the teacher's, Ms. Lin's. His writings of malfunctioning plumbing, scary movies, and fighting football players seemed out-of-place in the orderly world of the kindergarten, where a sequence of holidays yielded topics of pumpkins, Santas, valentines, chicks, bunnies, and butterflies. More pertinent to the specific focus of this study, Dexter's apparent conception of writing as direct symbolism (similar to drawing) was not considered in his school literacy program. A general understanding of the nature of the written language system was assumed and the emphasis of school literacy lessons was on learning the details of that system, such as the alphabet. While the importance of alphabet knowledge is obvious and not questioned here, Dexter appeared to be engaged not only in learning the alphabet, but also in refining his relatively unorganized, diffuse concepts about writing, indeed, about the nature of the symbol system itself. Dexter clearly reasoned about the literacy experiences provided by school tasks, but, to function in those tasks, he followed the perceived patterning of occasion types; that is, he formed a notion of what should be done when.

Dexter's peers, Callie and Anne, had successively more differentiated views of written language and, although they too reasoned about school writing occasions and searched for patterns in the ways those occasions should be enacted, they were more able to complete tasks in the expected ways. The gap between child thinking and school curriculum is masked, that is, less obvious,

as I proceed from Dexter to Callie to Anne; the latter two children were more capable of achieving school success. Still, their behaviors, described in the following case studies, revealed variations in their conceptions of writing, from each other's and from that of their teacher; in addition, their behaviors revealed ways in which the challenges facing them as emerging writers were not made obvious by the school's method of evaluating progress.

Callie

Callie, a black female whose speech, like Dexter's, contained many features of Black dialect, was 5 years and 9 months at the beginning of this study. Callie was big-boned, with hair arranged in small braids around her head and a wide, infectious grin. During the preliminary observation period, Ms. Lin recommended Callie as a possible case study as Callie was average in literacy skills relative to the other children in her class. As with Dexter, Ms. Lin reported that Callie had improved greatly since the beginning of the year. Callie had not been able to write her name, nor did she know the names of the alphabet letters; she had also been very "messy" in her work (see Figure 1, which was completed in November of the school year). Callie now could easily write her name and, in addition, she knew the names of both the lower- and the upper-case letters. Ms. Lin also pointed out that Callie had become much neater in her work. Finally, Ms. Lin remarked that Callie had been a behavior problem as she would hit when angered by a peer, a behavior she no longer typically displayed.

Insert Figure 1 about here

More so than Dexter, Callie was a talkative, sociable child. Although she was attentive in whole class activities, she would occasionally put her arms around another child, usually a girl, in an affectionate manner, a behavior which was typically accepted by the other child as both children kept their eyes focused on Ms. Lin. Callie participated verbally in class lessons. She was a question-asker, seeking information about both the topic being discussed (e.g., "What's that?", in reference to a particular bone of a bird in a science display) and the directions for particular activities. She responded to Ms. Lin's frequent elicitations of whole class responses, waiting for others to answer first if she was unsure of the correct response; over - confidence could lead to uncomfortable embarrassment, as the following episode, recon-

Callie

Todaylist

Todaylist

11/8

3-3a

Figure 1

structed from fieldnotes, illustrates:

> Ms. Lin is asking the children to name the letter that begins a particular word. As she gives a word, Callie names the appropriate letter immediately after the small group of children who confidently call out a response. At one point, Ms. Lin names two words in a row that Callie associates automatically with the correct letters: zebra and umbrella. After those two, Callie confidently yells out e for octopus and is very embarrassed to be wrong, as evidenced by a sheepish grin and a hunching of her shoulders as she ducks down behind the person in front of her.

In small group activities, Callie was sociable. She often picked up on the rhythm of another child's statement, turning it into a rhythmic chant; like many of the children in her class, she would frequently break into song, particularly a pop song, or join in on another's song. In addition, she was interested in others' work, offering suggestions or materials; she appeared to be particularly sensitive to the needs of the children who were less often successful in school. On the other hand, Callie was not always cooperative and could, on occasion, revert to physical communication. In addition, she did not use please, thank you, or other forms of directive softeners when she sought materials for herself. Finally, as suggested in the preceding paragraph, Callie would copy from others when faced with a situation in which she was unsure of herself (particularly phonics lessons). Several of these behavioral characteristics are illustrated in the following edited excerpts from fieldnotes:

> Callie, Anne, Keith, and Wayne are cutting out pictures from old magazines to illustrate night and day; before each pastes pictures on a piece of white construction paper, he or she is to write Night and Day

on either half of the page. As the children work, the following exchange takes place:

Anne: Callie, can I please use the grease pencil?

Callie: Yeah [hands her the pencil]. Wayne, you ain't got no grease pencil? You didn't have none yet? Anne, you get finished, give it to him.

Keith: I'm gonna cut out this [an appealing object].

Callie: Oooooooo, you can't. You have to cut out day and night pictures.

Callie is working at a table with Anne, Dexter, Candy, and Jason. Their task is to form a row of upper- and lower-case o's, upper- and lower-case p's, and then to cut out examples of those letters from old magazines. Callie forms an O and then another about which she remarks, "I made a D," as much to herself as to anyone at the table. She erases it and forms another. After this next slowly formed O, she looks around. She then makes another O, erases it, and forms it again. She remarks, "Her [Candy] beat anybody" as Candy was already cutting out O's and P's from old magazines. Callie begins erasing again. Dexter remarks, "Boy, you're in a lot of trouble," presumably because erasing is a behavior frowned upon by Ms. Lin. Callie makes another O and then watches Candy cutting out O's. She erases her last O once again. She makes another O and then looks all her O's over. She watches Dexter for a while as he forms his letters. Then she erases her last O and adjusts it a bit. After her next O, she watches Dexter pretend to drink glue. She continues in this disjointed manner until Dexter begins looking through a catalogue for a needed letter. Callie tells Dexter, "There go a P," assuming that he is looking for a P. Dexter remarks that "I need a P that go around like a circle." Callie says, "This go around like a circle"; she is pointing to the round part of the P. Callie and Dexter are not

communicating as he is looking for an O.

During the preliminary observation phase, I chose Callie for further study because (a) Ms. Lin regarded her as typical or "average" in literacy skills relative to the other children in her class, (b) Callie did appear, on the basis of my own observations during this phase, to be more sophisticated in her ideas about written language than was Dexter, although she was not as advanced as other children in the classroom, particularly those with sound/symbol skills, and (c) she was comfortable and talkative with me.

Preliminary Assessment Tasks

As with Dexter, during the last two weeks of the preliminary observation phase, I asked Callie to perform the series of assessment tasks. In this section, I briefly illustrate her responses to each task, pointing out how her responses compared to Dexter's.

In response to the writing task, Callie's behaviors were similar to those of Dexter during the final assessment task and were thus comparable to Ferreiro and Teberosky's level 2 (out of 5 levels; see Appendix B). She realized that objective differences must exist between the graphics for different messages; there was no attempt at sound correspondences between parts of the utterance and parts of the text. For example, "candy" was WaDW, "ball" was Dames, and "The girl kicked the ball" was aMWas.

Although less so than Dexter's, Callie's behaviors suggested an association between drawing and writing; similarly, her behaviors also indicated that, at times, she treated writing as a system for directly representing things, although her behaviors were inconsistent in this regard. To illustrate, after the reading task, Callie asked me to write "something." I wrote apple. Callie then said that she was going to write "a apple":

Dyson	Callie
	(Callie writes A  .) That's a [ə] A and a [ə] apple. That's a A and a apple, "ate the apple, ate the apple." (Callie is reading her text.)
	Now I'm gonna get an eraser. Watch this. (Callie erases the apple.)
	And then the apple be all gone. There don't be no apple. It's all gone.
Is that a A or ate [pointing to A]?	
	A, ate, ate, ate [pointing to A].
What's that [pointing to A]?	
	A.
And what was that [pointing to erased apple]?	
	Apple.
And what had you written?	"Ate a [ə] apple." (Callie draws apple again.)
What's a [ə]?	
	(Callie adds an R. Then she reads:)
	Text: A R  Callie: "Ate a[ə] apple."

Although the relationship between drawing and writing is in evidence here, so also is a certain recognition of a relationship between sound segments and written graphics, including a relationship between letter names and words (A and ate). These are relatively sophisticated conceptions, reflective of Ferreiro and Teberosky's level 3. But they are conceptions that were prompted by Callie's interaction with me. My questions may have focused Callie's attention on the need to account in her text for each segment of the oral utterance, a need she did not evidence when she wrote on her own.

In the reading task, Callie's behaviors were again variable but appeared fit between what I will refer to as Ferreiro's (1978) level 3 of 4 levels exter's being level 1; see Appendix C), in which the child believes that erything is written with the exception of the articles, and level 4, in ich the child understands that everything is written. Callie found it sier to focus on the second article in a sentence as an isolated entity, ther than the first:

Dyson

(I read the sentence The boy ate a cake for Callie and ask her to read it.)

Did I write the word cake?

Did I write the word boy?

Did I write the word ate?

Did I write the word /ə/?

Did I write /ə/, /ā/?
(I switch from /ə/ to /ā/, which undoubtedly affects her response; my change is an automatic one, as I wonder if she uses /ə/ or /ā/ herself. Later, in listening to the tape of this session, I note that she uses both.)

Did I write the?

Callie

Text: The boy ate a cake.

Callie: "The boy ate /ə/ cake."

"/ā/ boy ate /ə/ cake."

"Boy ate /ə/ cake."

(Note how Callie changes from the to a, which she pronounces variably as /ə/ or /ā/.)

(points to cake)

(points to the)

(points to ate)

Huh?

(points to a)

Mm mm [no].

Like Dexter, Callie identified the written a as a letter but did not single it out as a specific word. In reading, she did not appear to attach a clear identity to the articles, as she interchanged "the" and "a", and read the latter as both /ə/ and /ā/.

In the second sentence I presented to Callie, there were also two articles, but both were the. When I structured the task so that Callie focused on one segment of the utterance and one segment of the text at a time, she ended up with one leftover text segment that she viewed as readable. She then reverted to level 1 behavior (similar to Dexter's level) and read this segment as a complementary sentence:

Dyson	Callie
(I read the sentence for Callie and ask her to read it:)	Text: The baby dropped the bottle. Callie: "The baby dropped the bottle."
Did I write the word baby?	(points to the)
Did I write the word bottle?	(Callie rereads the text:) Text: The baby dropped the bottle. Callie: "The baby dropped the bottle."
What do you suppose this is over here [pointing to bottle]?	I don't know.
What do you suppose it could be? (Again, note here that I am encouraging a response that she is initially reluctant to give, so her reading may be more a response to me, humoring me perhaps, than her interpretation of the text.)	Text: bottle Callie: "The baby picked up the bottle."

In response to the interview question, Callie, as with Dexter, identified appearance as the critical variable distinguishing between good and poor writing: "You gotta write it all good, writing a good s. That's a bad s (pointing to one of several s's on her paper). I already drawed this one fast and this one (a more accurately formed s) slow." An association between drawing and writing was also evident in the interview, although not to the extent that it had been with Dexter. When I asked Callie, "If you could write anything you wanted to, what would you write?", Callie responded, "a cake." I probed for details of the finished product, and Callie explained, "It have a plate and yeah, it look like a plate on top." In response to the question regarding home writing, Callie reported that she didn't write at home "cause I don't got no pencil." On the other hand, at school, "we don't write any--we just write something our teacher tells us to do. We write X's, and we write letters, and we write what our teacher write on the board, and I think that'll be all." School writing appeared to be the reason behind Callie's response to the question about why and what adults write: "Because they bigger 'n--bigger than little people. And they got to write to show the people--the little people--what to write." More specifically, "They write alphabet that we folks write, little folks."

Callie knew the names of all upper- and lower-case letters. She did not appear to know any initial consonant sounds. She did identify K for care, although she also reported that Q began keep; Q was also identified as the first letter in wash, yum, and violin.

In these researcher structured tasks, then, Callie demonstrated an awareness of a relationship between written and read messages and although, like Dexter, her behaviors were inconsistent, she di[illegible]are of a one-to-one correspondence between uttered and written [illegible]n writing,

she initially just put down letters, attempting only to vary the order and/or the particular letters for each new directive. However, when I probed her reasoning, she attempted to represent each part of an utterance, although I cannot say with confidence whether she was attempting to represent words or syllables. There was also some suggestion of an awareness of the use of letter names in establishing correspondences between written and oral utterances. Similarly, in reading, Callie demonstrated an awareness of a need for one-to-one correspondence between written and oral messages, but, whereas one letter could stand for one word (or one syllable perhaps) in writing, she did not attempt to read one letter. Again, my probing led her to focus on her difficulties in establishing this correspondence. In sum, while there was some suggestion of an association between drawing and writing, she appeared to be approaching, albeit hesitantly, the second order system of written symbolism. She displayed, however, little awareness of the uses of written language; as in Dexter's initial assessment, in considering adults' written language use, she focused on the most obvious example in the school context--adults write work for children to do; that is not to say that in other situational contexts, she might not have been able to identify other uses. I turn now to the written language knowledge Callie displayed in school lessons.

Writing Occasions

As previously described, this analysis is based on the writing events which occurred during the formally-designated "creative writing" period in phase 2 of the study. For ease of reading, I have again included a Writing Occasion Table, similar to that inserted in the Dexter case study, which describes the writing occasion types and the variations of each type.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1

Nature of Observed Writing Occasions

Type	Number of Events Observed Per Occasion[a]	Description
Teacher Dictation (TD)[b]	1	Children write letters called out by the teacher; the letters spell a sentence.
Copying	8	Children copy exactly what is written on the board.
Copying words (CW)	(1)	
Copying sentences (CS)	$(4)_1$	
Copying rebus sentences (CRS)	$(3)_1$	
Selecting and Copying	6	
Selecting and copying words (SCW)	(2)	Children select and copy particular words from a given set (e.g., selecting from listed food words to form one's own menu).
Fill-in-the-blank (FB)	$(4)_3$	Children copy sentence with a missing word. Children select appropriate word from a given set to fill-in-the-blank.
Free Writing	7	
Free writing (FW)		Children write however they wish; the topic may or may not be specified; spelling according to the way the word sounds is encouraged.
Free rebus writing (FRW)	$(4)_2$	Children write however they wish; the topic may or may not be specified; the use of single letters (e.g., b for bee) and pictures to substitute for conventional words is encouraged.

[a]Subscripts refer to the number of events in which Callie was the focal child.

[b]Dictation will not be considered further as it was not typical of the kinds of writing occasions in this classroom. It was done primarily to demonstrate to the children "why we keep saying learn your alphabet."

Callie's Occasion Types

Comparing Callie's writing behaviors across occasion types revealed that Callie, like Ms. Lin, had 3 basic types, although Callie's were organized differently than Ms. Lin's. As with Dexter's, there were those in which Callie "copied off of the board," which included CW, CS, SCW, and a variant, FB; those in which she "just wrote," which included only FW, and those in which she did "rebus" writing, which included CRS and a variant, FRW. In the following sections, I describe the variations in Callie's behaviors across these occasion types.

Copying: A Mechanical Task

When copying, Callie, like Dexter, focused on mechanically reproducing Ms. Lin's writing. Callie's behaviors, however, did differ in certain respects from Dexter's. First, Callie was less systematic in her copying behavior. Whereas Dexter would copy each mark, beginning with the date, exactly as it was on the board, Callie might, for example, begin with the second line on the board, ignoring the first line containing the date. After copying the line, she might decide to go back and copy the date onto the top of her page. She sometimes began copying a new line of print before she had completed copying the previous line. Occasionally she failed to complete letters, leaving off, for example, the downstrokes of lowercase a's. She did not always copy periods and commas. At times, during the sharing at the end of the creative writing period, as she observed other children's papers, her own errors would dawn on her. Callie would then retrieve her paper from Ms. Lin; as she said, "Everytime I forget things."

A second difference between Dexter and Callie is that, for Callie, copying itself appeared to take less effort. She did not pause to glance at the board as often as he did. She typically looked every letter or two, although she did, on occasion, copy a three or four-letter word after one look, which suggests that she focused on groups of letters (in a sense, words), as opposed to

Dexter's focus on individual letters. Consistent with this suggestion is the fact that Callie regularly spaced between words, while Dexter did not. I have, however, hedged on saying that Callie focused on words, preferring to say that she "focused on groups of letters," because she did not appear to focus on the unit itself. Unlike other kindergarteners who did attend to the linguistic unit as a whole, Callie was observed only once to read the board as she worked; she also did not say the words she was copying. Callie's comments as she worked supported this interpretation that she did not focus on the linguistic unit as a whole, as I will illustrate in a later writing event excerpt.

Although Callie did not read the board or vocalize as she copied, these copying events were not silent affairs, a third distinction between Callie's and Dexter's behaviors. Callie sang and interacted with her peers as she worked.

Another difference between Callie and Dexter is that, when asked by her teacher or by me, Callie was capable of reading back her text fairly accurately. Thus, although she did not focus on meaning during the actual copying task, she could retrieve that meaning if asked to do so. When asked, she typically read her text several times, self-correcting until she perceived that the text and print were accurately matched. Her reading was generally related in meaning to the original but was not always an exact rendition. For example, Figure 2 contains a product resulting from an SCW (select-and-copy-words) event, in which the children were to draw a pizza and then copy selected words from the board, including only ingredients that they'd like on their pizzas. As did Dexter on the same task, Callie systematically copied all the words on the board that she could fit onto her paper rather than selecting particular words. Callie could, though, "read" her listed words; she did not read completely accurately, but her errors were understandable:

Text: Pizza crust sauce pepperoni
Callie: "crust pizza applesauce cheese"

Insert Figure 2 about here

Consistent with her behavior during the preliminary assessment tasks, Callie had difficulty reading articles, although this problem abated during the course of the study. Callie's difficulty with articles is illustrated in her reading of the following two products, both of which resulted from CS events:

Text: My cat is a her.
Callie: "My cat is are her."

Text: She sells sea
Callie: "sea sells sea"

Text: shells by the
Callie: "shells by sea"

Text: seashore
Callie "shore"

Callie's reading appeared to be based on her recall of the discussion during the prewriting session. Unlike Dexter, she did not appear to invest meaning in the tasks through drawing. She drew only when the teacher directed her to do so. In addition, she could vary the position of drawing in the writing event. She was able, for example, to draw first in the pizza task, to perform the actual writing task in a mechanical (non-meaning-focused) way, and then to read when asked. This is not to suggest that Callie was not sensitive to the patterned nature of the writing events. She was, but she was more aware than Dexter had been of the changing of the pattern.

April

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pepperoni

Figure 2

Callie's a

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tain words. Ca

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When Call

Ms. Lin asked

Lin asked Cal

Child's Text

Gi

Child's Text

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h Riira airraqtt
ars aBKitahr it
ADth ADDEF
FGEE EFGE
Anne

Figure 4

Child's Text

irtri

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	P (94 sec)	Callie watches Ms. Lin.
		Callie then puts her finger down and leaves a large space.
airr	S	
	IU-P	Callie argues with her peers about who's knocking their knees on the table.
agg	S	
	P	
	IU-Dyson	I ask Callie about what she has written. She reads her latest line as follows:
		Text: Atth Riira Airragg ↑ ↑ ↑ Callie: "A King Kong"
ttra	S	Callie adds letters to her last letter group.
	IU-Dyson	Callie tells me, in response to my request, that she is going to write that King picked up a lady.
Riars	S	Callie has begun a new line.
	OV	"That's a short word." (directed to me) - reporting language
		Callie spaces as she begins her next letter.
iaB	S	
	OV	"This is 'King dropped her in the water.'" (directed to me) - reporting language
l	S	
	OV	"I'm doing it wrong." - evaluating language
<	S	Callie finished her K.

Child's Text

itah

Text:

Callie:

Text:

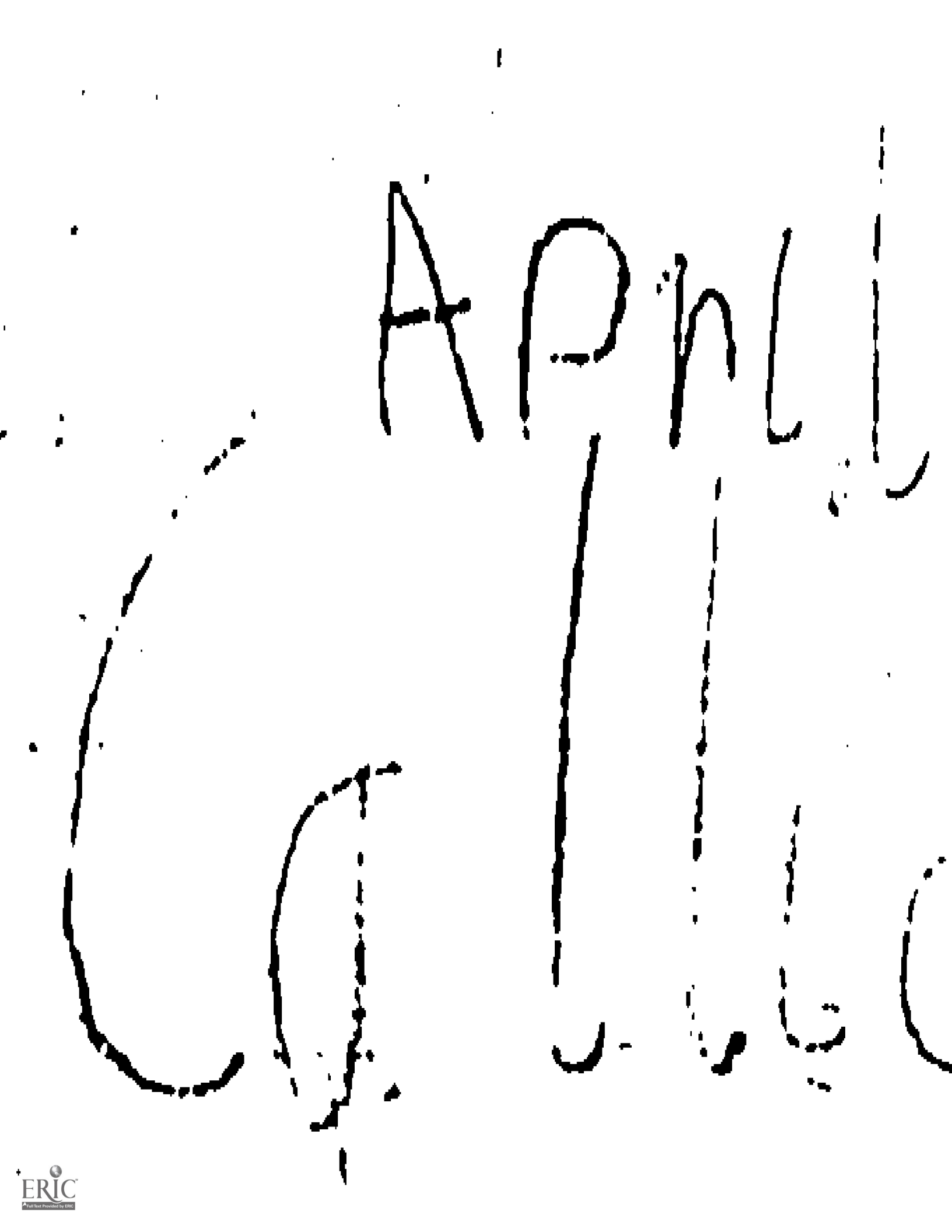
Callie:

Text:

Ms. Lin overheard Callie's remark and praised her as she had been concerned that Callie's free writing had been "such a mess" (i.e., it contained no evident sound/symbol correspondences; further, the day before in a similar event, Callie had simply copied the board). Ms. Lin asked Callie what letter float began with, and Callie answered, "C? B?" Ms. Lin did not respond and left. Callie then began copying the board. Excerpts from the observation sheet for this event follow (see Figure 5):

Insert Figure 5 about here

Child's Text	Code	Notes
b	S	
	OV	"boats, boats, boats, boats" -decoding language This behavior is a significant change; Callie is reading the board as she is in the midst of writing a word. Perhaps having a clearly articulated plan is of assistance here.
oats	S	
	P	Callie looks at board; she decides, apparently, to copy the date.
A	S	
	P	looks at board
p	S	
	P	looks at board
r	S	
	P	looks at board
il	S	
	P	looks at board


Aphi
Critic

Child's Text

19

Child's Text	Code	Notes
		Ms. Lin asks Callie what the words on the board are. Callie reads boat as "boats" and boats as "water." Callie has reduced her message to the names of the things involved, apparently in an effort to make a precise match--a behavior observed previously. Ms. Lin corrects Callie and sends her back to her seat to do the task over.
	////	Callie erases boats and the s of her first boats so that her paper matches the board.
	P (3 1/2 min.)	Callie sits and cries for a while, and then she looks at Jason's paper.
	IS-P	"Jason, are you writing about boats?" Jason says yes, and Callie copies his paper.
[boat]s	S	Callie adds an s to boat, which was already on her paper.
	OV	"At first I did it that way." - reporting language
FtL	S	copying Jason's paper
	OV	"Boats float" - decoding (while pointing) and accessing language
		This is the first time I have observed Callie rereading and apparently "accessing" the next word that she's going to write; the next oral language behavior, encoding, is also a first.
	OV	"in, N" - encoding language
N	S	
	IS-P	Jason thinks that Callie's still writing float and objects to the N.
	////	Callie erases the N.
	OV	"Boats float" (pointing) - decoding/accessing language

Child's Text

N

for a precise m

of letter names

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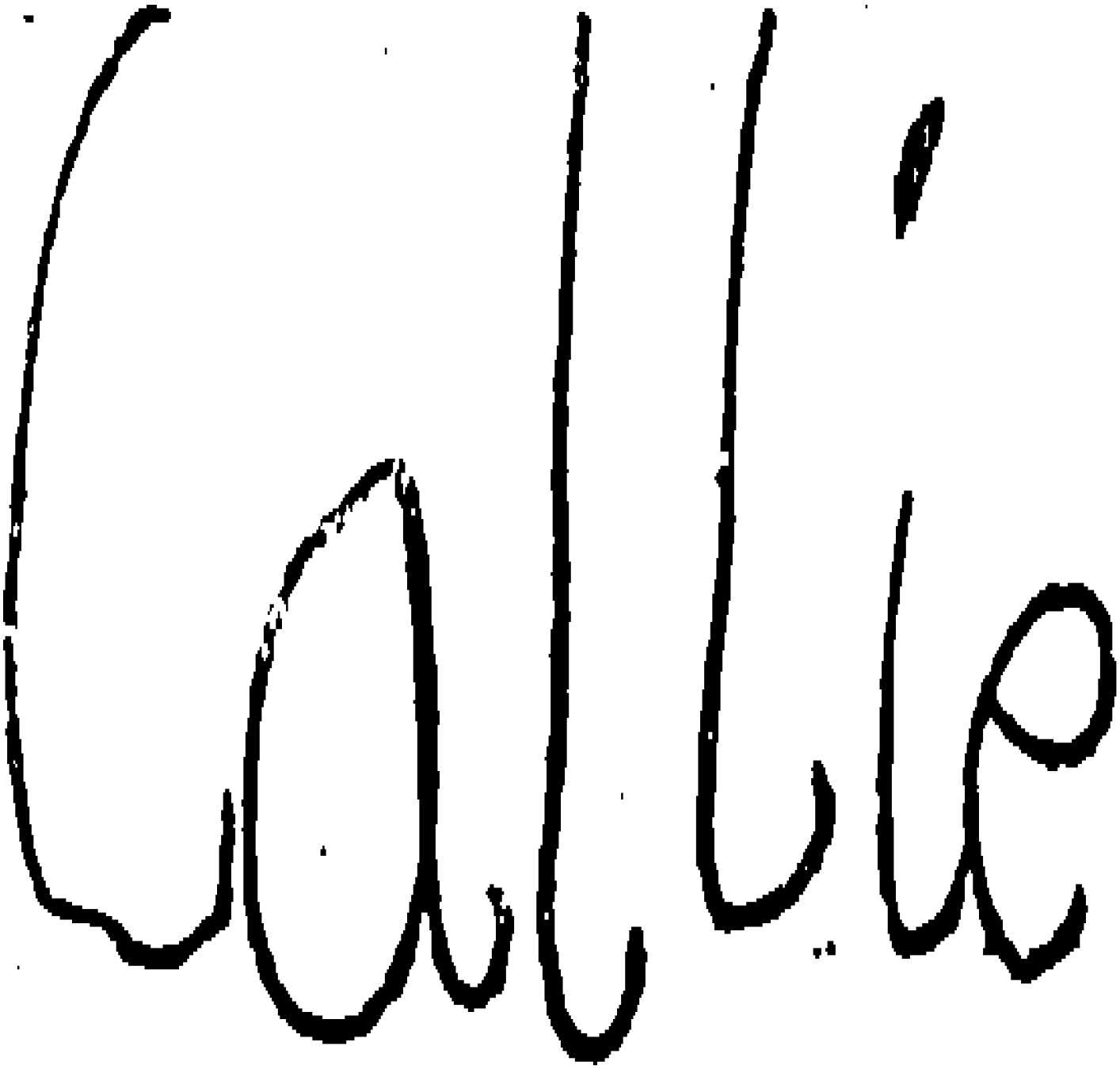
readings and re

Child's Text



Child's Text

conventional spellings. Recall that Callie had difficulty reading articles in the preliminary observation tasks and continued to do so in copying events; she did, though, attempt to represent articles when focusing on translating oral utterances to written graphics, as in the FW event on boats. In the rebus events, Callie did again display difficulty reading articles, as evidenced in the following fieldnote excerpt from the first CRS event (notes have been edited for clarity):

> Ms. Lin has written a rebus sentence beginning, "The [picture of a dog]" on the board. She asks the children what the first word is. As she calls on the children individually, many, including Callie and Dexter, say dog as Ms. Lin points to the, despite the fact that Ms. Lin shakes her head and calls on another child; other children say "the dog." Ms. Lin explains at length that the word is the. Callie reads the word correctly when she's called on a second time. Dexter is not called on again.

Callie did, however, typically read a or the correctly in her rebus sentences; she was no doubt supported in her reading by her easy recall of the particular patterned sentence(s) to be written. Callie also consistently represented the article in her own writing.

Second, in all writing events, Callie displayed an awareness of the need for a one-to-one correspondence between uttered and written graphics. To attend to the connection during the actual physical act of writing (rather than before and/or after the actual writing), Callie needed to become actively involved in the process of matching a planned oral utterance to particular graphics. In both free writing and rebus writing, a clear stable plan was helpful as was the questioning of teachers, peers, and researcher. Although rebus writing did provide a clear plan, it was, strictly speaking, more a structure that operated across events (a constraining form) than the uniquely planned content of a particular product.

Third, the rebus writing events demonstrated how Callie interpreted new writing tasks in the light of previous ones. Although Callie was more sensitive to the changing of the patterns than was Dexter, she also needed the support of others to vary her behavior. This need was reflected in the FB event in which the sentences to be copied were varied and the blanks were moved to the beginning of the lines, the FW events, when Callie appeared to have difficulty assuming control of the planned content, preferring initially to match oral utterances and written graphics at the end of events (as she did in copying tasks), and here, where FRW events were assumed to follow the pattern set out in CRS events.

The Achievement of School Success

Callie, like Ms. Lin, had three basic occasion types, but they were organized differently than Ms. Lin's. Her success on writing tasks depended in part on her own distractibility, in part on how easily Callie could retrieve her text's meaning, and, also, on whether or not the pattern (the sequence of steps involved in the writing event) varied from its typical structure.

As with Dexter's case study, I am defining school success on the basis of the response Callie received from Ms. Lin. Success was achieved if Ms. Lin accepted her paper. Failure occurred if Ms. Lin asked that the product be redone or if Ms. Lin explicitly said that the product was not good or not right. Ms. Lin had certain demands which held for all children in the classroom, including both Callie and Dexter: that the writing task be completed with appropriate and neat arrangement of words and pictures (e.g., without erasures, smudges). Ms. Lin stressed spacing between words and correct size and alignment of letters. In addition, Ms. Lin appeared to expect Callie to read her paper independently, a demand not made of Dexter.

In CW and CS events, Callie's success, like Dexter's, depended in large part on whether or not she worked quickly enough to finish. Callie did not

need to look at the board as frequently as Dexter did, and she was typically successful in these events. As I have illustrated, she did interact frequently with her peers during all writing events, and she received admonishing to be quiet and to do her work. In addition, at times she failed to completely copy a line from the board.

Callie's success in SCW and FB events was more variable than in copying events. Callie approached these tasks in the same mechanical way that she approached copying events, matching meaning to written text at the completion of the physical writing act. Since the text to be read was less stable (it depended upon exactly which choices one had made), Callie could more easily make errors in reading her text. In addition, when Ms. Lin varied the nature of the task, as in placing blanks at the beginning of the lines, Callie had difficulty varying her own behavior; further, trying to correct her paper after having become confused led to erasing, smudging, and ripping, and thus unsuccessful performance on the task.

In FW events, Callie was generally successful in terms of her feedback from Ms. Lin. There were, as previously noted, very few criteria to be met in FW events. Ms. Lin did, though, express concern to me that Callie did not use sound/symbol logic in spelling. The only observed FW event in which Callie's paper was not accepted by Ms. Lin was the same one in which Dexter had failed. This particular event was one in which Callie, like Dexter, copied <u>boat</u> from the board rather than actually composing an original sentence. This was also the first observed event in which such words had been placed on the board for the children to use in sentences of their own. Callie copied the board, seeming unaware or, perhaps, to forget that she had to take the responsibility for effecting the planned utterance. The most notable change in Callie's FW events, the emergence of a plan which was referred to during encoding, was not noted by Ms. Lin, although she appeared to have influenced this change through her task demands.

Callie was successful in copying rebus sentences (CRS) events, but variably successful in free rebus writing (FRW) events. Callie assumed that FRW products should fit the statement/question pattern first introduced in CRS events. Ms. Lin accepted this pattern initially, although Callie was unsuccessful in one FRW event: Callie had produced a "messy" product when she erased and adjusted her paper after discovering that it did not fit the pattern. Near the end of the study, Ms. Lin explicitly stated that she did not want the "I see a _____" pattern, and Callie required assistance from the aide, Ms. Man, to make this change.

Callie, then, achieved school success variably, being generally successful in copying events when she could recall the sentence(s) to be written, and in free writing events that did not involve using words which were written on the board. Callie could copy rebus sentences and produce her own successfully when the statement/question pattern was acceptable. Callie was more successful in school writing occasions than Dexter. Though the demands made on her were more stringent, she was also more capable of working quickly, not needing to focus on each individual letter to be written, and she was also more capable of making adjustments in her writing behaviors after observing others.

I have examined Callie's behaviors during Phase 2, noting consistencies in her behavior and, also,changes. Callie seemed to have achieved greater precision in matching oral and written language during reading, most notably in regard to articles. She appeared too to establish this oral/written connection in writing when working with a stable plan and with the support of others, particularly the support of their questioning. The assessment tasks administered in Phase 3 were an opportunity to look for change in structured tasks designed specifically to identify children's conceptions of written language and, also, to tap her own assessment of her success in school tasks.

Final Assessment Tasks

In the third week of May, I administered again the assessment tasks first given in February. I also asked Callie to evaluate four writing papers, each of which was from a different occasion type.

In response to the writing task, Callie's behavior was very similar to her behavior in the initial assessment and comparable to Ferreiro and Teberosky's level 2 (out of 5 levels; see Appendix B); her behavior was also similar to her performance in the early FW events. She realized that objective differences must exist between the graphics for different messages, but she made no apparent attempt at sound-related correspondences between parts of the utterance and parts of the written graphics. In response to my request,"candy"was spelled Fadcttleestrrt;"ball"was EaddeLLMNPRZY. And, although there was no attempt at making sound-related correspondences between letters and particular syllables, as suggested by Ferreiro and Teberosky to be characteristic of level 3 (and which Callie had done in the last FW event), she did attempt to make a precise correspondence between oral and written messages through the use of the word the:

Dyson	Callie
(I ask Callie to write The girl hit the ball.)	
	(Callie writes TheDFDEgGSSgrgrghhu. She includes no spacing, although she does when she writes in school tasks.)
Can you read this for me, Callie?	
	(Callie reads The girl hit the ball, sweeping her finger over the text.)
Where's the?	
	(Callie reads:) The girl hit the--

Dyson

Callie

Oh man, I forgot something.

(Callie erases the Grr in the middle of the sentence and replaces it with the.)

(Callie reads and points:) The girl hit the ball.

Callie did, then, to a certain extent, move beyond the global correspondence between oral and written messages characteristics of Ferreiro and Teberosky's level 2. She was assisted in refining her encoding procedures by my questioning, as she was in other writing contexts. However, Callie did not refine her writing through the use of letter names, as she did in the initial assessment with the article a and as she did in certain events during the observation phase of this study; rather, she used a visually recalled segment, the.

Unlike Dexter, Callie was not reluctant to write, nor did she spontaneously draw in response to requests to write; she did, though, ask if she could "write a car" and promptly drew a car.

In the reading assessment tasks, as in the just-described writing tasks, there was not a great deal of change reflected in her performance. Her behaviors varied, as they did in the initial assessment, between Ferreiro's level 3, in which the child appears to believe that every part of an oral utterance is written with the exception of the articles, and level 4, in which the child apparently understands that everything is written. Callie did not, however, revert to level 1 behaviors, as she had in the initial assessment, and read leftover text segments as complementary sentences, and she was also willing now to read a single letter as a word. With the support of my questioning, Callie was able to identify all text segments correctly, except for the articles--she unabashedly interchanged the and a:

Dyson

(I read the sentence The boy ate a cake for Callie and ask her to read it.)

Callie

Text: The

Callie: "The boy"

Text: The boy ate a cake.

Callie: "The boy"

"Boyyy ate a cake."

"The boyyy ate the cake."

(Callie slides her finger across The boy ate, as she says "The boy [elongates boy]."

Did I write the word boy?

Text: The

Callie: "The boy"

Text: The boy ate a cake

Callie: "The boy ate"

"ate cakes."

Why don't you put it this-a-way: The boy ate all the cakes.?

Text: The boy ate a cake.

Callie: "The boy ate the cake."

Did I write the word cake?

(points to cake)

Did I write the word ate?

(points to a)

What's this right here [a]?

Text: The boy ate a cake.

Callie: "The boy ate the cake."

Dyson

(I point ou
has identif
as "the.")
the?

In response to the general questions about writing, Callie said, first of all, that she did write at home, in contrast to her response in the initial assessment when she had said that she didn't write at home because she didn't have a pencil. Callie then explained that she wrote the same things at home that she did in school, particularly rebus writing. She said that, at home, she wrote for herself and, at school, she wrote for "my teacher--they tell me what to do." Again, as in the initial assessment, Callie explained that adults write "good things, that we got to copy." Upon probing, she added that her parents "sign my 'port card." Unlike Dexter, Callie made no reference to drawing.

Callie had already mastered the names of all the letters in February. There was progress evident in the sound/symbol task, although not in the ability to accurately identify initial consonants. Callie knew only K, recognizing it as the first letter in care, keep, and key. But, even though she did not identify any others, she did repeatedly pronounce the words I asked her about, breaking them into segments. Certain of her errors were understandable and suggestive of her awareness of letter names:

Word	Callie's Response
Mean	mean, mm, me, me, E
Dish	dish, ish, dish, E, ish, E

Callie also volunteered certain word/consonant pairings she'd learned from her phonics lessons: "A is for apple, and B is for ball, C is cat, S is snake, and X is for x-ray, and Z is for z-ray."

In sum, Callie's performance on these assessment tasks evidenced a certain refinement of written language understandings, although her performance on the reading and writing tasks had not changed in terms of the levels of performance described by Ferreiro (1978) and Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982).

As she had during the initial assessment, Callie demonstrated an awareness of the one-to-one correspondence [illegible] written message segments. However, she did not consistently display this awareness. In the writing task, like Dexter, she tended to simply put d[illegible]ers to represent, in a global manner, the dictated message. But she did use the visually recalled element the to establish some oral/written correspondence when writing a dictated sentence. In the reading task, Callie was more able to effect a precise oral/written relationship, but, here, her awareness of a sound (letter name) connection between a and ate seemed to interfere with her success. The elusiveness of articles was illustrated in these assessment tasks, as it had been in other contexts. In both reading and writing tasks, my probing led to more refined behavior. Callie did not shy away from the writing task, as Dexter did, but seemed eager to write and to read. She seemed pleased with her written work. She did not, though, appear aware of the usefulness of writing in adults' lives.

Summary

I have analyzed Callie's behaviors across varied literacy tasks and, in addition, I have documented how those behaviors were variably evaluated by the classroom teacher. The analysis revealed consistencies in Callie's behavior. Callie appeared to be on the brink of the alphabetic system. She evidenced understandings of the relationship between oral and written language; she seemed aware at times of the usefulness of wellknown visual patterns, such as the, and of sound (particularly, letter name)/ symbol correspondences. At the same time, she displayed difficulty effecting this relationship. In reading tasks, she had trouble placing hold on articles as separate, unique oral words and as readable graphic forms; she had particular difficulty with the letter a, which is, after all, only a single letter and not really enough to be read

(from the point of view of children [Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982]). In writing tasks, Callie tended to simply put down letter forms, grappling with their relationship to an oral utterance at the end of the event and then only if she was asked to read by an adult. The sophistication of the written language knowledge Callie displayed depended upon the specific nature of the written language event and on the amount of support, particularly on the amount of questioning, she received from peers, teachers, and me.

Callie's teacher, Ms. Lin, had particular expectations for how all observed writing events should be done. Callie was generally able to meet the requirements for these events, although she did not approach the tasks in the same ways Ms. Lin did.

In copying events, Callie centered on duplicating the forms Ms. Lin had on the board. Callie seemed to focus on groups of letters between spaces. Although Ms. Lin conceived of these tasks as opportunities for the children to write about relevant topics with written forms provided, Callie did not focus on meaning until the end of the task. She could often retrieve the meaning of the graphics--if asked to do so. Callie initially approached free writing events in a similar fashion. She would simply produce forms on her paper to represent a planned but variable message, matching text segments to a precise oral message when the actual writing was completed. In one free writing event, Callie did establish precise connections between an oral message and a written text during the actual writing; she referred to her planned message to access the next word to be written and to identify particular letters she "heard" in that oral utterance. It is significant that Callie was supported in that event by a stable plan and by a peer who shared his work with her and with whom she could discuss her own efforts. In rebus writing, the consistency of the planned message supported Callie in her matching of oral and writ-

ten messages, but the consistent plan did not stimulate Callie's own planning nor tap Callie's encoding skills.

In evaluating Callie's behaviors, her teachers focused on competencies seen as critical to early literacy--identifying the names and sounds of the letters, forming the letters correctly and with appropriate spacing and alignment, recalling particular words that had been talked about, and such general objectives as listening, following directions, and working carefully. With the exception of phonics tasks, Callie performed adequately in school work. Callie had, in a sense, more distance from, and a more differentiated view of, written language than Dexter: she did not focus exclusively on individual graphics as she wrote, and she was capable, with assistance, of moving beyond global correspondences between oral and written messages. Like Dexter, though, her own understandings of written language were reflected in how she went about tasks. She focused on groups of letters in copying, for example, not particular words, as is understandable considering the effort she displayed in attempting to match oral and written utterances. In addition, she was sensitive to the way writing events were structured, thus leading to difficulties when that structure was varied. Most notable in Callie's case study was the fact that, as with Dexter, her problems with, and progress in, understanding how oral and written language were related to each other, which was central to her behavior in all contexts, were not made obvious by evaluating any individual behavior or skill. That is, her difficulties and successes with the cognitive, problem-solving nature of writing--the relating of a guiding plan in precise ways to written graphics--could only be tapped by observing her orchestration of the free writing events. The case study demonstrated Callie's need for the support of others to become actively engaged with this writing puzzle. When assisted by teachers, peers, and me, she solved the puzzle in more sophisticated ways.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Writing sample from November, 1982. Callie had copied from the board the following two sentences: Today it is Thursday. Today it is rain-ing. (p. 3-3a)

Figure 2. Writing sample from April 11, 1983; product resulted from an SCW event. (p. 3-14a)

Figure 3. Writing sample from March 23, 1983; product resulted from an FW event. (p. 3-21a)

Figure 4. Writing sample from March 28, 1983; product resulted from an FW event. (p. 3-21b)

Figure 5. Writing sample from April 19, 1983; product resulted from an FW event. (p. 3-26a)

Figure 6. Writing sample from May 6, 1983; product resulted from a CRS event. (p. 3-31a)

Anne

Anne, an Anglo female, was 5 years and 7 months at the beginning of this study. She had a small but sturdy build, a fair complexion, and short, tousled brown hair. In the early morning, Anne usually had sleepy eyes, but, as the day wore on, she would perk up, sitting unusually straightly through lessons and independent work. During the preliminary observation period, Ms. Lin recommended Anne as a possible case study as Anne was advanced in her literacy skills relative to the other children in her class, although she was not the most advanced. Ms. Lin reported that Anne, unlike Dexter and Callie, had already known the alphabet and how to write her name when she entered school in the fall. Like all of the children in her classroom, Anne's ability to form letters and arrange them conventionally on the page had improved notably since the beginning of the school year (see Figure 1, which was completed in November). Despite Anne's apparent skills, Ms. Lin did feel that Anne did not always work up to her potential and that perhaps this was because she was not competitive.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Anne was a quiet but sociable child. She was attentive in whole class activities and, although she did not speak out as often as other children did, she answered when Ms. Lin solicited whole class responses; when Ms. Lin called on her, she typically gave correct answers.

In small group activities, I noted Anne's careful, organized approach to her work and her continual monitoring and evaluation of her own progress. Similarly to Dexter, she took apparent pleasure in making her own products different from others, as opposed to Callie, who frequently copied others. Nonetheless, Anne was sensitive to Ms. Lin's evaluations. As Ms. Lin circulated while the children worked, offering guiding comments, Anne would frequently respond to her teacher's comments quietly, as much to herself as anyone else, noting

Anna

how she was fol

in the followir

Anne, Call

zines to i

Anne: I'm making mine with crayons.

Jennifer: I'm making mine red.

Anne: I'm making mine blue and red.

Jennifer: Hey, you're making yours pretty [after looking at Anne's paper].

Anne: I wanted to. (Anne calls to Ms. Lin:) Ms. Lin, Ms. Lin, look how I made my seashell.

Ms. Lin: That's pretty.

Anne: Well, I'm coloring it different.

Later, when she has finished coloring, Anne puts her colors back into her box "in order," as they were when they were new.

Anne, Callie, and several peers are copying Easter words from index cards. Anne has finished copying her card, which says basket, and wants to trade for another card. When Callie tries to grab the card from Anne's hand, Anne calmly responds, "Callie, when you give me jelly beans [Callie's card]." Anne and Callie trade cards.

During the preliminary observation phase, I chose Anne for further study because (a) Ms. Lin regarded her as above average in literacy skills for her classroom, (b) as I observed Anne in the preliminary observation phase, I noted that she did appear more sophisticated than most other children in the class in terms of her written language knowledge, and (c) Anne talked easily with me.

Preliminary Assessment Tasks

As with Dexter and Callie, during the last two weeks of the preliminary observation phase, I asked Anne to perform the series of assessment tasks. In this section, I briefly illustrate her responses to each task, pointing out how her responses compared to Dexter's and Callie's.

To begin with the writing task, Anne's behaviors were more advanced than either Dexter's or Callie's. While the latter two children had, on their own, produced apparently random strings of letters, Anne's writing reflected a clear attempt at making precise connections between oral utterances and written graphics. She spelled "candy" KARD, "ball" was Brel, and "The girl hit the ball" was The Garbl Bbpnl (Anne's spacing); she sheepishly explained, when I asked her to read it, that the written sentence said "The girl ball." Anne did not engage in obvious sounding out behaviors during this writing, although she did clearly pause before writing each group of letters. The resulting print evidenced use of both letter names, initial consonant sounds (g), and a visually recalled element. At the same time, the print also reflected the use of less sophisticated strategies, such as including sufficient letters (r's being favorites) to make the word look long enough. Anne's behavior was thus comparable to Ferreiro and Teberosky's (1982) level 4 (out of 5 levels; see Appendix B): she appeared to be attempting to represent phonemes, although she did use a strategy observed in less advanced children, that of simply putting down letters. It is interesting that, from the dictated sentence ("The girl hit the ball."), Anne encoded the initial article and noun and the final noun; although I can only speculate about this small piece of the data, it is reminiscent of the suggestions in the previously discussed case studies that concrete entities are easiest to isolate in the oral utterance and to place hold on for encoding. Also as in the previous case studies, my questioning led Anne to reconsider her work.

In addition to writing the dictated utterances, Anne spontaneously wrote the names of three of her friends--Sarah, Bridget, and Jyl--and those of her brothers and sisters--Jeffrey, Leigh, Allison, and Michael. Neither Callie nor Dexter had evidenced the ability to write names other than their own.

Anne performed the reading task without any difficulty, easily matching the oral utterances and the written graphics. Her behaviors thus fit the highest of Ferreiro's (1978) levels (level 4; see Appendix C), Callie's having fluctuated between 3 and 4, Dexter's being level 1. It should be noted here that Anne was not a reader in the conventional sense of the term according to her own report and my observations of her "reading" (orally inventing a text as she turned the pages of a book) in the classroom.

During the interview questions, Anne displayed a certain association between drawing and writing, although she did so to a lesser extent than either Callie or Dexter had. She did refer to drawing (although not specifically as "drawing") in response to the question regarding what she wrote at home; she said she wrote "happy things, sad things, shapes, circles. And I write squares, shapes, numbers, faces--happy faces, sad faces, girls' faces." But Anne also talked in detail about writing letters to her grandmother; this is notable as neither Callie nor Dexter mentioned functional uses of writing in the home. Certainly this does not suggest that such uses did not occur, but it does suggest that Anne was able to articulate such uses and that writing was a significant activity for her. In fact, after Anne finished the reading task, she remarked that she was able to do well because "I do a lot of writing at home."

In reference to letter writing, Anne explained that "I like to write about my grandmother--write my grandmother a letter." She also reported making pictures for her grandmother. Anne said that she asked her dad in particular for help in spelling words, although, "now, both my mommy and daddy help me write letters--even my sister and my brother." Anne, in fact, told me exactly what she wrote to her grandma; pausing distinctly between each word, she recited, "I love my grandmother. This is for Nellie Bird [her grandmother]."

When I asked Anne what she would write if she could write anything she wanted to, Anne responded again with an exact message, here too pausing clearly before each word: "Valentines Day is a special day." Anne's stated desire to write is in contrast to both Callie's and Dexter's drawing responses.

Despite Anne's reported functional uses of writing at home, when asked directly why adults write, she had no response. And, although she had detailed a variety of things that she wrote at home, and although she had also noted that, at school, "I write, copy from the board," when I probed and asked directly about the differences between home and school writing, Anne responded that they were different only in that in school "we have to sit down to write, and I don't have to sit down to write. I can stand. . . ."

Anne knew the names of all upper- and lower- case letters and, in addition, could identify all initial consonant sounds, with the exception of w.

In these researcher-structured tasks, then, Anne demonstrated an understanding of the need for a precise match between oral utterance and written graphics and of the alphabetic writing system used to effect that match. She could accurately match oral and written language in the reading task. She made use of both phonological relationships and visually-recalled patterns in the writing tasks. Her exaggerated pauses between words when reporting what she would or did write illustrated her awareness of the need for precise segmentation of the oral utterance. However, Anne also evidenced less sophisticated written language behaviors that had been noted in Callie's and Dexter's case studies, such as simply putting down letters to make the intended graphic word appear long enough and an association between drawing and writing. Although, like Callie and Dexter, Anne had difficulty identifying any uses of written language when directly asked, she did report writing letters to

"Nellie Bird", her grandmother, at home. In brief, Anne had a more differentiated view of the written language symbol system than did Callie and Dexter. I now turn to how this knowledge was displayed in school tasks.

Writing Occasions

As in other case studies, this analysis is based on the writing events which occurred during the formally-designated "creative writing" period in phase 2 of the study. For ease of reading, I insert here a Writing Occasion Table, which describes the writing occasion types and variations of each type.

Insert Table 1 about here

Anne's Occasion Types

The changes in Anne's behavior across occasion types revealed that she organized her writing in ways similar to Ms. Li , with one familiar exception. Unlike Callie and Dexter, Anne clearly distingui between the copying occasion type, which included CW and a variant CS, and the selecting and copying type, which included SCW and a variant, FB. Free writing events were yet another distinctive category. However, as with Callie, the rebus writing events, CRS and FRW were a single occasion type, with only slight differences in behavior noted between them. Anne, then, who appeared to have the most differentiated view of written language, also had the most differentiated view of the writing events in her classroom. In the following sections, I describe the variations in Anne's behavior across occasion types.

Copying: Monitoring Meaning

In the first CS event I observed, copying appeared to be a mechanical task, although two weeks later additional behaviors were evident. To deal first with the mechanical (non-meaning-focused) behaviors, Anne moved systematically across the page as she copied, as Dexter did. But, like Callie, Anne looked at the board only every letter or two, occasionally copying a three- or four-letter

Type

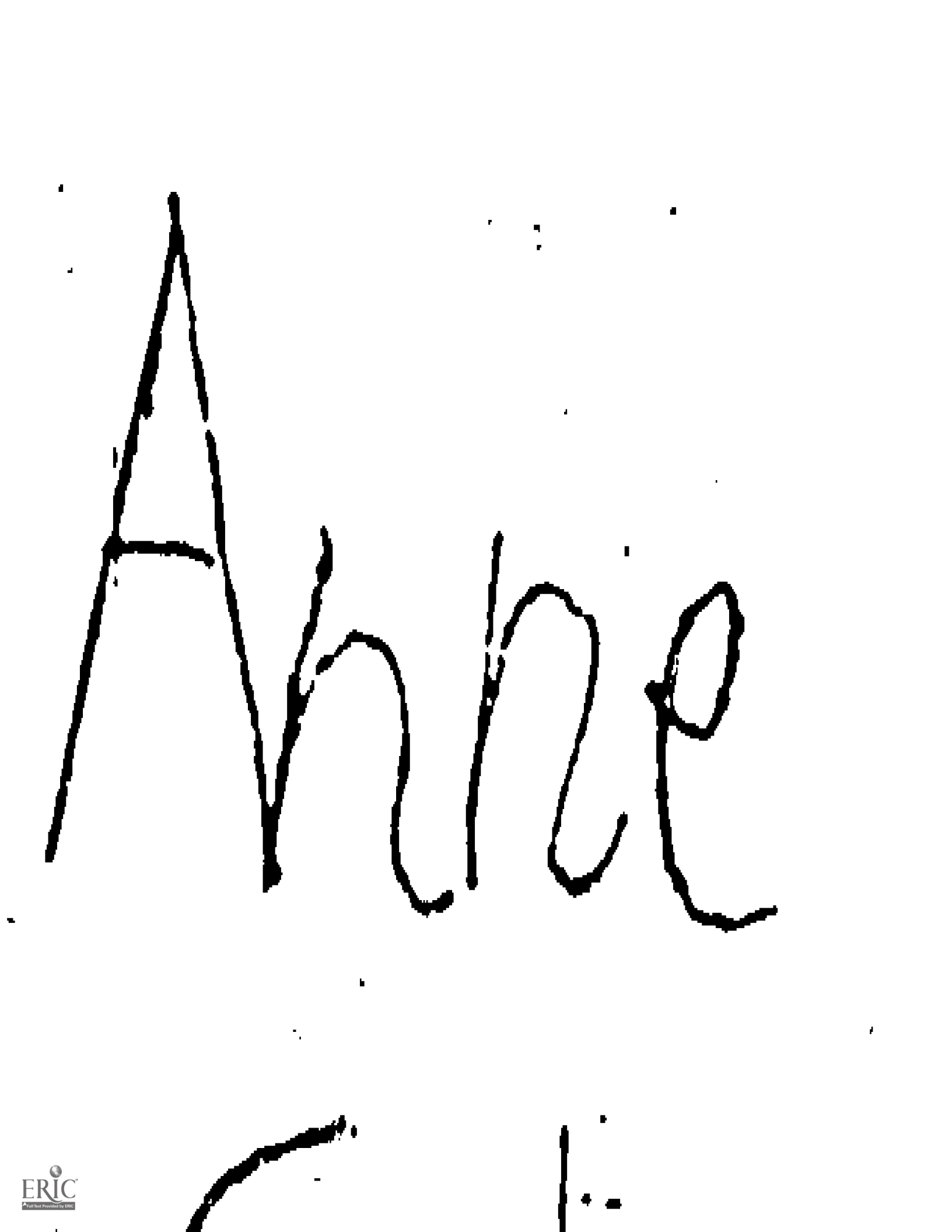
Teacher Dictat

word after one

space. Anne in

small, as Ms. L

letter forms.



S	S	
	P	looking at board
he	S	
	P	looking at board
sells	S	
	P	looking at board
	OV	"She sells" - decoding language
s	S	
	IU-T	Ms. Lin remarks to the class that there are eight s's on the board.
	OV	Anne looks up and counts the eight s's - monitoring language
ea	S	
	OV	Anne holds up her paper, comparing it to the board. She then points to the words she has written and reads: "She sells sea." ~~Anne~~ pauses here for 10 seconds and then says "she," apparently miscalling the next word, and immediately begins writing again - decoding/accessing and monitoring language
s	S	
	IU-T	Ms. Lin walks by, saying "That's nice, Jennifer, Anne, Sarah." Ms. Lin also tells Jason he could do with less erasing.
	OV	Anne comments that she hasn't erased yet - reporting language
	P	Anne listens as Ms. Lin tells another student how to make his h's with a long stick at the top.
	OV	Anne repeats and expands upon the teacher's instruction: "It comes up to the very top line" - reporting language
	P	looking at board
hells	S	

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	P	looking at board
by	S	
	P	Anne is looking at Ms. Lin, who is reprimanding a student who has twice now misspelled his name.
	P	looking at board
the	S	
	IU-T	Ms. Lin has just listened to a child read the copied sentence. She then asks the class what a seashore is, and Anne listens to Ms. Lin's explanation.
	IU-P	Keith, a peer, calls out from the opposite end of the table (relative to where Anne's sitting), "Hey, Anne, you know where I'm going this summer? I'm [illegible] to the Boys Club."
c	S	[illegible] does not answer Keith but keeps writing.
	OV	"Oh, gosh" - evaluating language
	////	Anne erases the c, using a pencil in the jar in the center of the table.
		(Anne's error here [writing c for "sea"] suggests that she was aware of the word she was writing. Note that this event took place before the introduction of rebus writing events.)
sea	S	
	IU-T	Anne hears Ms. Lin saying "by the shell shore" after a peer has mistakenly written that on his paper.
	OV	Anne laughs and repeats "shell shore" - playing with language
	OV	"shore" - monitoring language
s	S	
	OV	Oh, gosh," referring to poorly formed s - evaluating language

Child's Text	Code	Notes
	////	Anne erases and then forms a more conventional s before completing the word shore.

KEY. Dialogue: IS-T - Interruption Solicited from Teacher; IS-P - Interruption Solicited from Peer; IU-T - Interruption Unsolicited from Teacher; IU-P - Interruption Unsolicited from Peer; Monologue: OV - Overt language; Other: P - Pause; S - Silence; //// - Erasing.

In this event, as in every event observed, including those in which Anne was not the focal child, she was able to read her completed paper accurately.

For Anne, then, the data indicated that she knew, even when copying, that a message was being written and that she was interested in that message as she wrote. Such observed behaviors as rereading what had already been written and pronouncing words before writing them support this interpretation. Her behavior thus contrasted that of Callie and Dexter, who gave no such indication. Certainly a child may focus on text meaning while copying without orally indicating that focus. But the observation that Dexter could not accurately read his written text when he had finished and that Callie not only had difficulty doing so but also frequently sang while copying lends support to Anne's contrasting focus on meaning.

Of all three children, Anne came closest to performing the copying task as Ms. Lin had planned it--as a "creative writing" excercise in which children would have the opportunity to write about relevant topics, which they themselves helped to compose orally, with the support of "giving them written forms," to use Ms. Lin's words. In later sections, the differences between Anne's copying and free writing, without the given forms, will be described. First, though, I consider a type of event which offered Anne a relatively greater degree of control over the message than did copying.

Select and Copy: Taking Control of the Message

Selecting and copying tasks, SCW and FB, differed from copying tasks for Anne, as they did for Ms. Lin. In contrast to Dexter and Callie, Anne did make choices as to which of the optional words she wanted to write. In fact, Anne could adjust the optional selections to more accurately reflect her views. For example, in one FB event, Ms. Lin had written on the board:

Today is _____.

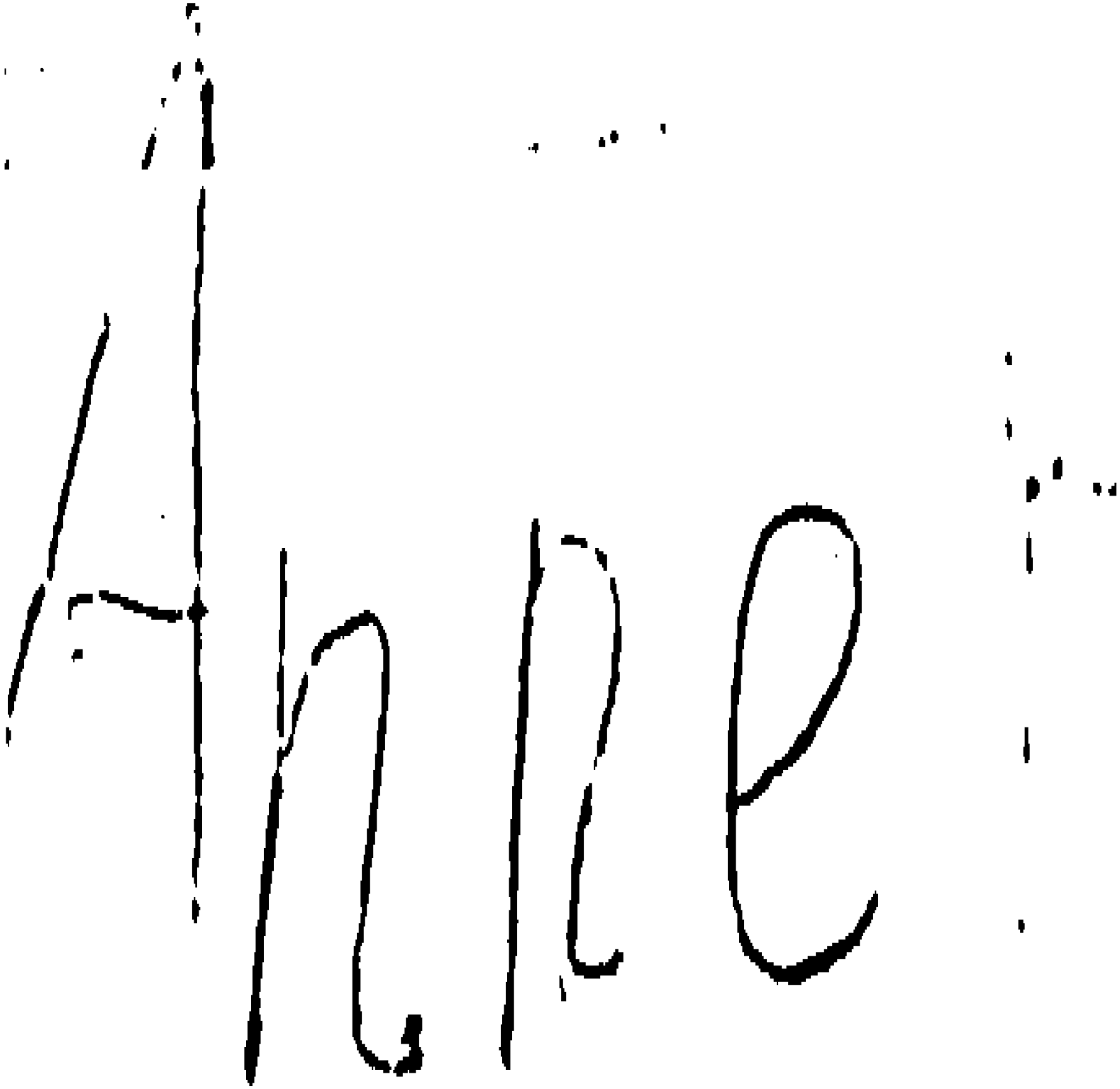
cold

sunny

Anne asked if she could put both words in the blank, which seemed a reasonable request as it was a cold and sunny day. Ms. Lin answered that she could but that she would need to include the and, which Ms. Lin then spelled on the board directly after the period. Anne then wrote the sentence, correctly arranging the words on her paper to read: "Today is cold and sunny." In contrast, Callie, like many children in the class, slotted a word into the blank, included the word and at the end of the sentence because it was on the board, and then attempted to match a recalled oral message to the print; Dexter copied as much of the board as he could (with the blank left empty and cold directly underneath the line) before he ran out of time. Anne behaved similarly in the FB event in which Figure 3 was produced. Not wanting to choose between writing that her mother was pretty or that her mother was nice, Anne included both, adding and appropriately.

Insert Figure 3 about here

It was clear then that Anne was able to approach both copying and selecting and copying occasions as the producing of meaningful content. She read during copying in order to figure out where she was in the recalled message; she actually made selections as to what she wanted to say in SCW and FB events.



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As the preceding quote suggested, Anne made plans as she drew, compared those plans with her peers, and intermittently drew attention to her product. The following transcript excerpt illustrates her behaviors:

Anne is drawing an ocean picture. Salter, my research assistant, is sitting beside her:

Anne: Look at mine [directed to Salter].

Salter: It's pretty.

Ms. Man, the aide, is walking by; she asks Anne about her product:

Anne: I'm gonna put a little bit of weeds in.

Ms. Man: Mmmmm?

Anne: I'm gonna put a little bit of weeds in there.

Ms. Man: Weeds in there. What you gonna put, Jennifer?

As Ms. Man continues talking to the children at Anne's table, Anne remarks, apparently to no one in particular:

Anne: I'm making starfish in mine. [pause] I'm going to make a fish.

Ms. Lin: Now, Anne. Anne! Now, listen, I know you like flowers, but there are no flowers growing on the bottom of the ocean!

Anne: I'm not making flowers!

Ms. Lin: Alright, I'm just reminding you. Cause I know you get carried away with flowers. [You write all kinds of stories about flowers (unintelligble)

Anne: [Hmmmmm [to self]. Let me see.

Ms. Man: Those are seaweeds, aren't they Anne?

Anne: Yeah, those are seaweeds [cheerfully].

Anne continues on now in a softer voice; the following comments are interspersed with silent pauses as she draws (I doublespace to indicate pauses here.):

I'm gonna make a [sigh]--wait a minute. See if I can make some fish.

Fins.

There. Make a turtle.

Make some clouds.

Make a few clouds up here.

Anne now speaks in a louder voice:

Look at a purple cloud. Put purple in it to make it purple.

Ms. Man: Maybe it's a black cloud.

Anne: No.

Put a--

Mine's going up in the air. I'm gonna make some small whales.

As the transcript excerpt reveals, Anne planned and carried out ner own intended meaning during drawing, and, like Dexter, she seemed quite pleased with her efforts.

Free Writing: Elaborating about People and Things

In the free writing sessions, the meaning was not to be recalled nor made more personally meaningful through adjustments of print to be copied or through drawing. The responsibility for forming the meaning was her own.

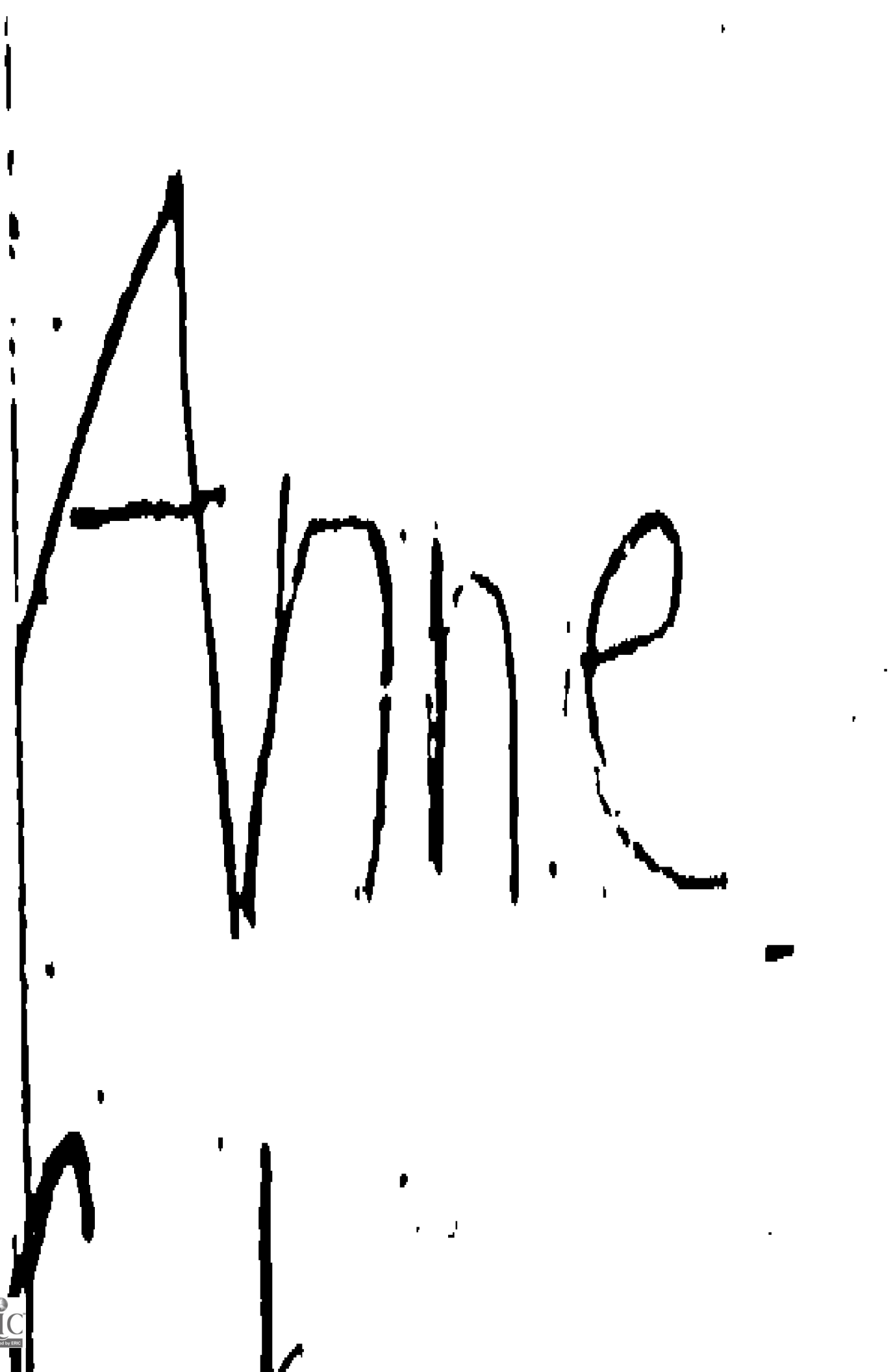
Considering first the content of her products, Anne's freely written messages were not very different from those of her copied messages. However, they were also not notably different from the messages she reported writing at home with her family's help. In school she copied Spaghetti is hot and Today is cold. She reported writing at home I love my grandmother and This is for for Nellie Bird. In free writing events, Anne wrote, among other things, fliws r buDDflol (Flowers are beautiful), sbwoeti woDfl SdFF (Spaghetti is wonderful stuff), and I liork Maw SDorear (I like my sister). Anne's FW sentences, then, were elaborations of the family names she could write independently or statements of objects' attributes.

Although the content of Anne's messages were not distinctive, the mechanics were. Consider, for example, the product in Figure 4, which was produced during the event in which FW tasks were first introduced to the class. The spelling is clearly Anne's own and very similar to that displayed in the preliminary assessment tasks. Anne appeared to put down whatever letter names or sounds

were apparent to her, then adding other letters to make the written word look appropriate. The middle of words frequently contained double letters (e.g., KeeD for "candy") or a repetition of the opening or closing letter (bufDf for "beautiful," prKoK for "pink"); her later products contained more vowels (a's, i's, and o's) in the middle of words. It should be noted that Anne's phonologically-based spellings were not typical of her class. Judging from their products, when told for the first time in school to write about whatever they wanted however they could and to "not worry about spelling," 7 of the 17 children attending school that day wrote apparently random strings of letters (Callie and Dexter were included here), 6 others copied words from about the room and/or wrote words they knew, such as family names. Only 4 children clearly attempted phonologically-based spelling, 2 children spelling words and 2 (Sarah and Anne) attempting sentences.

Insert Figure 4 about here

To continue with mechanics, Anne's spacing was conventional and consistent, as was her spacing during copying and the preliminary assessment tasks. Her use of periods was not consistent, but, when she did include a period, it was always placed appropriately. However, Anne's use of lower- and upper-case letters was different from that evident in copying tasks. Whereas Callie and Dexter appeared to put down letters randomly during FW events, Anne generally used all lower-case letters, with the exceptions of I in reference to self, the first letter of family member names, and four letters that she frequently put in upper-case form, no matter where they fell in a sentence or word; the four were D,M,K, and T. Her consistent use of upper-case forms of these four letters was perhaps attributable to not knowing the lower-case forms. For example, note in Figure 4 that Anne attempted to make a lower-case d by making a short D.



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I see a (object). Can you see a (object)?. (Recall that Dexter was not able to establish a precise correspondence between a guiding plan and written graphics in any writing context.)

As Anne wrote, she intermittently pronounced (monitored) the word she was writing, pausing at times to reread (decode) in the midst of a sentence to access the next word to be written; she frequently reread a sentence or two that she had just completed. Although Anne exhibited these behaviors in others writing contexts as well, Anne engaged in relatively more monitoring language during this task than she did in any other writing occasion type. She also engaged in these behaviors to a greater extent than did Callie. Relying on an internal patterned message rather than one displayed on the board and, additionally, on a pattern in which the oral and graphic symbols were so simply and clearly related (for one who understood the written language system as well as Anne did) may have promoted these behaviors.

To illustrate Anne's behaviors during the rebus writing process, I include here an excerpt from the FRW event in which Figure 5 was produced. (Note that, except for a rare indication of planning behavior in an FRW event, I observed no differences between CRS and FRW events.) In the event illustrated here, Ms. Lin suggested that the children write about spring. She told them not to "worry about spelling. Write however you want." Certain children, however, did ask for words they thought they might need. Children asked as well for rebus pictures they might need; Callie, for example, asked for butterflies. Anne, though, asked for neither. I begin the observation sheet excerpt at the point in which Anne had already copied the date and, also, written I c a  [chick]:

Child's Text

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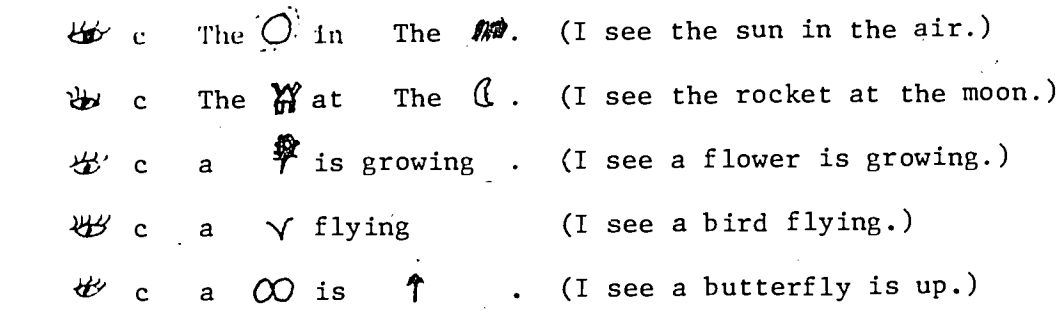

With her teacher's assistance, then, Anne di change or, at least, modify the rebus pattern. No one, though, sat beside Anne to assist her in making this change, as was necessary for Callie or Dexter to effect pattern change on demand. Nonetheless, Anne did appear to have begun her additions by answering the questions Ms. Lin posed. Further, the "I see" section of each sentence sounds awkward; Anne appears to have simply answered a question about each object and tacked the response onto the end of the appropriate sentence, although I have no way of verifying that this is what she did do. When I asked Anne to tell me what she was doing as she extended each sentence, she explained simply: "Ms. Lin asked me to write some of 'em longer, so I did."

In brief, in rebus events, as in other contexts, Anne's written language knowledge was evident, including her ability to precisely match voice and graphics by, in part, orally segmenting utterances and visually recalling patterns. Also apparent was her sensitivity to the language she perceived as appropriate for the event. Anne, who in selecting and copying and in free writing events opted for personally meaningful and factual statements, here opted for language that in a sense was not tied to her personal or real world or, perhaps, would not be tied to her world if done in written graphics. After all, no one, including Anne, could actually see a sun, a rocket, a flower, a bird, and a butterfly in the classroom--unless it was in the graphics of rebus writing.

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repeat these tasks in the final assessment.

For the evaluation questions, I showed Anne four of her papers, xeroxed copies of a CS, an FRW, an FW, and an FB product. Anne reported that she had "[illegible] the board" for all of them. Anne judged every paper to be good writing, although she paused notably (15-20 seconds) and received an occasional prompting from me ("What do you think?") before answering. Like Callie and Dexter, appearance was the critical factor in determining good writing, "cause if it were bad writing it'd be crumbling up" and "I'd make my letters all kind of wrinkly." In fact, just as they did, Anne allotted each product to a significant other—and did so with evident pleasure. One was for her mama, one for her friend, another for her daddy, and one for her brother and sister. However, unlike Callie and Dexter, Anne did not refer to her drawings in explaining her evaluations of her products. And also unlike Callie and Dexter Anne spontaneously read each of her products, self-correcting her inaccuracies (correcting "mama" to "mom," correcting "She is pretty and nice," to "She is nice and pretty").

In response to the general questions about writing, Anne reported that she did write at home, as she did in the initial assessment. She explained that she wrote words but that what she usually did now was to work with a "flip and funnies." From Anne's elaborate and patient explanation, I deduced that it was a tracing kit:

> You get a piece of paper, and there's a little knob that goes through the little thing, and there's the the lining of the things that we've--you're gonna make. You've got to think which one like--you're gonna do, and you put the piece of paper down on the one that you're gonna do. Put it down and get your crayon and go like this over the one that you're gonna do [moving hand back and forth] and it turns out.

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all contexts, suggested that he did not view written graphics as an exact transcription of oral utterances; rather, Dexter's talk about his own writing suggested that he attempted to represent concrete aspects of his world. When I asked Dexter to write "The girl hit the ball," Dexter wrote tereDe. He then remarked, "I'm gonna put ' girl get the ball and bit the ball and put a hole in it and get a whippin.'" As Dexter was writing leteDtl7, he said, "'The girl hit the ball and put a hole in it.' I'm gonna put--put a hole in it," and he added more letters.

Another suggestion of Dexter's conception of writing as direct representation came after the reading task when Dexter spontaneously wrote, XO. He remarked that that said, "Dexter ate a cake." He explained that X was Dexter and O was "Dexter ate a cake." The following exchange then occurred:

Dyson: What if I cover up this (O)?

Dexter: Dexter didn't eat no cake cause he didn't have that (pointing to the O).

Dyson: And now (lifting my thumb off of the O)?

Dexter: Dexter ate the cake now.

In these structured tasks, then, Dexter demonstrated an understanding that written and read messages were related in a global way, but his behaviors for effecting this relationship were inconsistent and loosely organized.

Callie was one of Dexter's peers. She was black, large-boned, with hair arranged in small braids around her head and a wide, infectious grin. Callie appeared more advanced in her knowledge of written language than did Dexter. Like his, Callie's behaviors were inconsistent, but she did appear aware of a one-to-one correspondence between uttered and written segments. Callie knew the names of both upper- and lower-case letters, although she was not able to

identify any initial consonant sounds. In reading sentences I had previously read for her, Callie attempted a precise match between written and oral messages, although she had difficulty isolating articles as separate, unique oral words and as readable graphic forms (The was read "the boy"). In writing, like Dexter, she randomly strung together letters to represent oral messages. However, with probing, she did demonstrate a dawning awareness of the alphabetic nature of the writing system. For example, Callie spontaneously wrote A on her paper, telling me that it was an A, and next drew an apple. Then, as if further possibilities had occurred to her, she read "ate the apple," pointing to A as she said "ate" and to the drawn apple as she said "apple." The following exchange then occurred:

Dyson	Callie
	Now, I'm gonna get an eraser. Watch this. (Callie erases the apple.) And then the apple be all gone. There don't be no apple. It's all gone.
Is that a [ā] or ate [pointing to A]?	
	A, ate, ate, ate [pointing to A].
What's that [pointing to A]?	
	A.
And what was that [pointing to erased apple]?	
	Apple.

And what had you written?

Ate a[ə] apple. (Callie draws apple again.)

Where's a [ə]?

(Callie adds an R. Then she reads:)

Text:	A	R	
Callie:	Ate	a[ə]	apple.

Anne was the third closely-observed peer. She was an Anglo child with short, tousled brown hair, a small but sturdy build, and, usually, sleepy eyes in the early morning. She was the most advanced of the three in terms of her knowledge of the written language symbol system. The global correspondences between speech and print reflected in Dexter's behaviors and, to a lesser degree, Callie's, contrasted Anne's finely-tuned connections. Anne knew the alphabet letters and could identify all initial consonants. In reading tasks, Anne could easily match oral and written words. In writing, she made use of both letter names and initial consonant sounds (e.g., the sounds of g and h) to invent spellings. She would add extra letters to her written words to make them look long enough, but, despite this latter strategy, she did appear to be operating within the alphabetic system. For example, she spelled "candy" KARD and "ball" Bbpnl.

Dexter, Callie, and Anne, then, not only had different degrees of mastery of common early literacy objectives (letter names, sounds), they displayed varying degrees of understanding the nature of the symbol system. These differences were reflective of developmental characteristics documented in the early literacy literature. Having provided these brief sketches of the three

children, I turn here to their behavior in classroom tasks. How did the children approach copying and free writing tasks? Were they all actually doing the "same" task?

"Copying-offa'-the-Board"

If a casual observer--or even a sophisticated researcher--were to enter the children's classroom and note that the children were copying, that observer might assume that such a mundane task can only be done in one way--the child looks at the board and copies the words. But Dexter, Callie, and Anne had distinctive ways of going about this task.

For Dexter, copying was a silent, painstaking event. He focused on carefully forming each letter in turn, not attending to the spaces between groups of letters. Dexter looked at the board before writing each graphic and, at times, he stopped in the middle of a formation to glance at the board to see what exactly to do next. He often spent a full minute on one letter. Dexter would compare the completed letter to that on the board, adding extra strokes where necessary, at times erasing to attempt a closer match. The D'Nealian script used by his teacher often necessitated the adding of extra strokes. For example, an x needed a third stroke to become an x.

Dexter's talk during one copying event reflected his focus on individual letters as objects of interest, objects to be made in particular ways and which might relate to other words or graphics he had noted in his environment:

> Dexter is copying the date: April 11, 1983. He alternates between looking at the board and then writing a letter. After writing Aprill (April 1 with no spacing), Dexter pauses and remarks, "I've got about three ones"; he then counts his "ones" as follows:

Text: April 1

Dexter: "one two three"

Dexter now copies the 9 in 1983; he has skipped the 11, perhaps confused by all the "ones."

Dexter then goes on to the 8, which he forms as if it were a small g. He in fact says g as he writes it, and then comments to me:

This spells glasses.

Dexter next begins to copy the first of eight words relating to pizza that are on the board, that first being pizza. As he copies the p, he says:

P-P-P-P--Pizza!

Although he is copying pizza, Dexter's behaviors in other contexts have suggested that he associates p with pizza, just as he associates D with Lester, N with his grandmama, S with Santa, and g with glasses.

Even copying the date, then, revealed Dexter's early understandings of the written language system.

When Dexter completed his copying he would read his work if asked by Ms. Lin or by me, although he never spontaneously read his product during the course of the study. In general, Dexter would read his whole text (the copied sentences) as either (a) the name of a single object; for example, after copying two sentences about spaghetti, Dexter responded to the request to read with "spaghetti," or (b) the whole linguistic unit; for example, note Dexter's reading of the following copied text (spacing added for ease of reading)

Dexter's text:	I	like	orange.
Dexter's reading:	"I	I like orange	I like orange."
Dexter's text:	I	like	purple.
Dexter's reading:	"I	I like purple	I like purple."

While Dexter seemed to focus on individual letters, Callie had another approach to copying. She appeared to focus on letters grouped between spaces and on how those letter groups were laid out on the board. Copying itself appeared to take less effort for Callie than for Dexter. She did not pause to glance at the board as often as he did. As she sang or chatted with peers, she would look up every letter or two, although she did, on occasion, copy a three-or-four-letter word after one look. In addition, Callie regularly spaced between words. I have, however, hedged on saying that Callie focused on words, preferring to say that she focused on letter groups, because she did not appear to focus on the meaning of the letter group itself. This interpretation was supported by Callie's questioning of her peers as she worked: "Do we suppose' to write the one that gots the G?" "Do we gotta write [points to a word] three times?"

Although Callie did not focus on meaning during the actual copying task, she did read her text if asked to do so. Her reading was generally related in meaning to the original, but was not an exact rendition. Callie typically read her text several times, vacillating between attributing a syllable, a group of syllables, or a word to a letter group and evidencing as well the previously noted difficulty with articles. Callie would self-correct until she perceived that the voice and print were accurately matched. The following is Callie's reading of copied "pizza" words:

Text:	Pizza	crust	sauce	pepperoni
	↑	↑	↑	↑
Callie:	"crust	pizza	applesauce	cheese"

And here is Callie's reading of a familiar tongue twister:

Text: She sells sea
↑ ↑ ↑
Callie: "sea sells sea"

Text: shells by the
↑ ↑ ↑
Callie: "shells by sea"

Text: seashore
↑
Callie: "shore"

Anne, like Callie, also looked up at the board only every letter or two and occasionally copied a three- or four-letter word after one look. And Anne too consistently spaced. But Anne, unlike Callie, monitored the message--the meaning--she was forming on her paper. Anne pronounced words as she wrote them, pausing at times to reread what she had already written and, in the process, to figure out what word she would be writing next. The following is a description of Anne copying the seashell tongue twister:

> Anne has just copied She. Anne looks up at the board once before writing sells. She then pauses, looks up at the board, and reads what she has just written: "She sells." Anne continues in this manner, copying words and pausing intermittently to reread from the beginning of the sentence.

In every copying task observed, Anne was able to read her completed paper, accurately pointing to each word.

All three children, then, had varying interpretations of this common beginning literacy activity. For Dexter, copying was not an opportunity to become familiar with words and the mechanical procedures for writing words and sentences. Rather, it was an opportunity to examine and produce particular letter forms. For Callie, copying appeared to be an opportunity to examine how words were laid out on the page. Anne came closest to the copying task as the

children's teacher, Ms. Lin, had planned it--as a "creative writing" experience in which children had the opportunity to write about relevant topics with the support of "giving them written forms," to use Ms. Lin's words. I turn here to the differences between copying and "just writing," to use the children's words--writing tasks in which the children wrote without the "given forms."

"Just Writing"

Influenced by writing inservices, in March Ms. Lin told the children to simply write: "We're not going to worry about spelling. You can write about whatever you want." Bearing in mind both the children's prior experience with copying in the school context and their varying conceptions of the writing system, I consider now how the children responded to this activity. I describe Dexter's and Anne's behaviors briefly, as they did not change their approach to free writing during the course of this study. Callie, however, merits a closer look because she did very clearly alter her approach in one particular free writing event. First, though, I return to Dexter.

In certain respects, Dexter approached free writing as he did copying—he silently formed letters; since there was no need to pause and look at the board, he did make letters more quickly, with less apparent concern for form (less erasing, no adding of particular strokes to match forms on the board). There was, though, one significant behavior evident in free writing tasks that was not evident during copying tasks: planning. And what Dexter planned to write was objects: football helmets, shoes, boots, parrots, squirrels, and dinosaurs.

Although Dexter planned to write objects, he would elaborate upon what he had written when asked to read by Ms. Lin; more specifically, he would read

sentences as opposed to object names. Ms. Lin had, in fact, prompted this elaboration at the end of the first free writing task, in which Dexter produced the paper in Figure 1. Ms. Lin asked Dexter to read that paper for her. Dexter responded by looking at the first line (beyond his name) and saying, "Helmet." Ms. Lin replied, "Well, what about helmet?" Dexter answered, "The man's hitting people with his helmet." Dexter then spontaneously offered phrases or sentences for the other lines. In the following chart, I contrast the comments Dexter made to himself and to me while he was actually writing with his eventual reading to Ms. Lin:

	Language while writing:	Language while reading to teacher:
Line 1	I'm writing about football. Football helmet. I'm writing things that are real. I'm writing helmet.	The man's hitting people with his helmet.
Line 2	Now I'm going to write pass.	Getting ready for football to play pass.
Line 3	Know those things that go on your knees? (In response to my question about what he was going to write now.)	Things for your knees when you play football so your knees won't get hurt.
Line 4	I'm gonna write football shirt. I forgot to make numbers [and Dexter adds more letters].	Football shirt, numbers on it.
Line 5	I'm writing man.	Man playing football.
Line 6	(Dexter continued from line 5 to line 6 with no comment.)	Man is a football player.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Dexter's behaviors here were similar, then, to those observed in both the assessment and the copying tasks. In all contexts, Dexter seemed aware that written and read messages were related in a global way, but he could not effect this relationship in a precise manner. He appeared, in free writing, to put down letters to represent things ("I forgot to make numbers" on the football shirt), which he could then read back in a more elaborate manner. As in copying tasks, Dexter read his text as a particular object or as a sentence.

Callie's approach to free writing was, in certain ways, similar to Dexter's. Like him, and in contrast to more advanced peers, Callie gave no evidence of monitoring her writing by pronouncing individual words, of rereading to figure out which word in a planned message to write next, nor of encoding by attempting to "sound out" words. However, while Dexter clearly planned, Callie's planning was amorphous. Her plans appeared to be held at bay until she had finished her actual writing, at which time she would, when requested, attempt precise connections between an orally stated message and the written graphics.

In the first free writing task, Callie produced the paper shown in Figure 2. She had begun writing by copying Orlando, a peer. Orlando was trying to write Easter by recalling the appropriate letters and had managed EAT. He became concerned about Callie's copying and complained to Ms. Lin, who moved him. On her own now, Callie continued to write, spacing between large groups of letters. When I asked her to read her paper for me, Callie matched an oral message to the written graphics in varied ways. Callie's paper at this point looked like this:

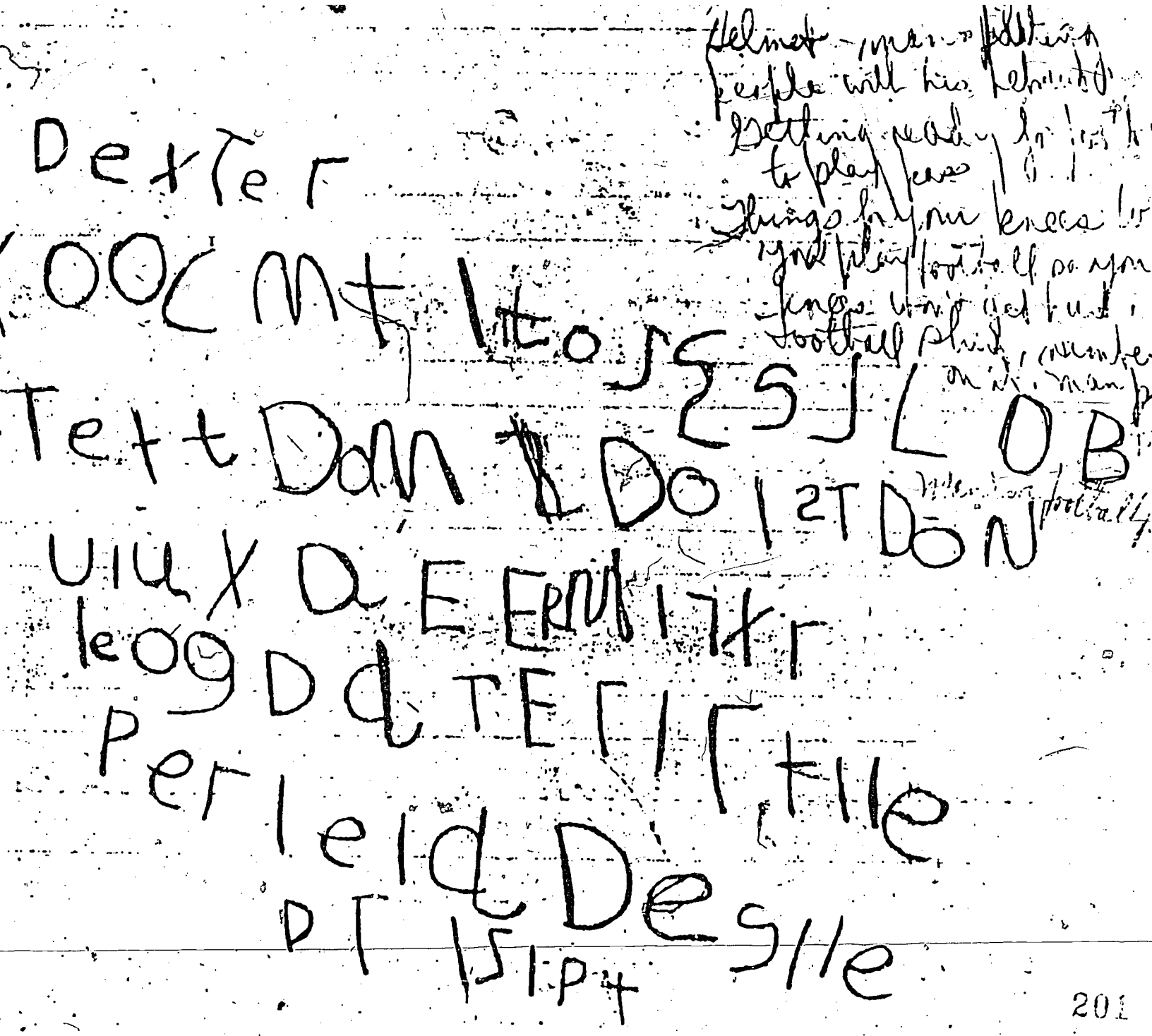

Figure 1

and she read this:

Eatnnir	Sreriaa	tissiste
↑	↑	↑
"Eas	ster	bunnies"
"Eas	ster bunnies are	soft"

I asked Callie where are was, and she added r after Sreriaa. Then, although she varied as to whether or not the first segment was Eas or Easter, and although, in reading to a peer, she identified the last letter group as nice, she consistently pointed to r when saying "are." After writing this line, Callie remarked, "I'm gonna' write the same word. I'm writing the same word two times." Later she added ET, which she read "ET" (extraterrestrial).

Insert Figure 2 about here

In later free writing events, as in the one just described, I noted that my questioning, aimed at understanding Callie's reasoning, actually appeared to cause reasoning. If I asked her during the actual writing what she was writing, Callie gave me a response, although her stated message might not be the one she eventually read. If I asked her to read her completed paper and to point as she read, Callie would do so, adding letters, at times based on letter names she heard in the spoken words. My questioning appeared to serve as scaffolding (Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Cazden, 1979) or adult support. Without that support, Callie focused on arranging letter forms. While such a procedure was not necessarily ineffective for copying, it was decidedly ineffective for composing, in which a guiding plan needed to be referred to so that precise and logical connections could be made between the message and the graphics. On her own, Callie could not manage this orchestration of multiple focuses--

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planning, encoding, arranging and forming letters. Her difficulty in matching voice and print and in sound/symbol correspondences made understandable her need for support.

During one free writing event, Callie did achieve a fairly sophisticated product by matching a specifically planned utterance to written graphics. But she had varied forms of assistance during this task, most importantly, that of a generous peer, Jason. Jason, who was more capable than Callie of orchestrating planning, encoding, and the mechanical formation of letters, was trying to write the same message that she was. At first, Callie simply copied Jason; then she too tried to encode words, discussing her efforts with him. Through recalling her planned sentence, rereading to orient herself to where she was in her message, pronouncing in an exaggerated fashion the word she was attempting to write, listening for letter names in that word, and then recalling and rereading her sentence, all steps in a cyclical process, Callie produced the product in Figure 3.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Callie copied the first two words and then, on her own, spelled in as N. She spelled the as F, after repeatedly pronouncing it; she encoded water as r, after pronouncing it in an exaggerated manner as "war r [says letter name] ter." Jason, who'd been discussing the spellings with Callie, was uncomfortable with just r for water. Callie, apparently following his lead, put a t after r, explaining to me that t was for "er, wa ter." Her final product and her reading of that product were as follows:

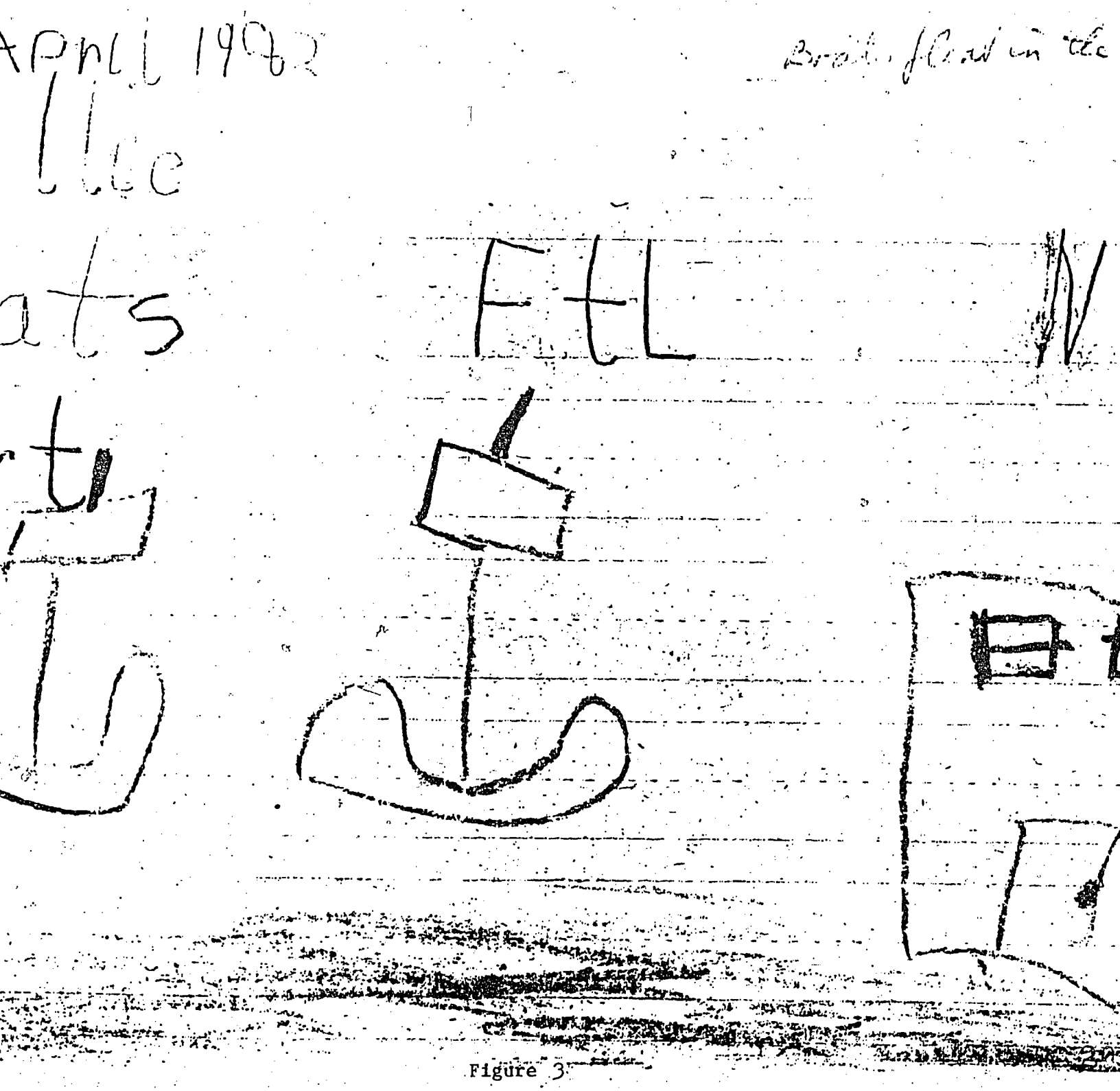


Figure 3

Text: boats FtL N
Callie: "Boats float in"

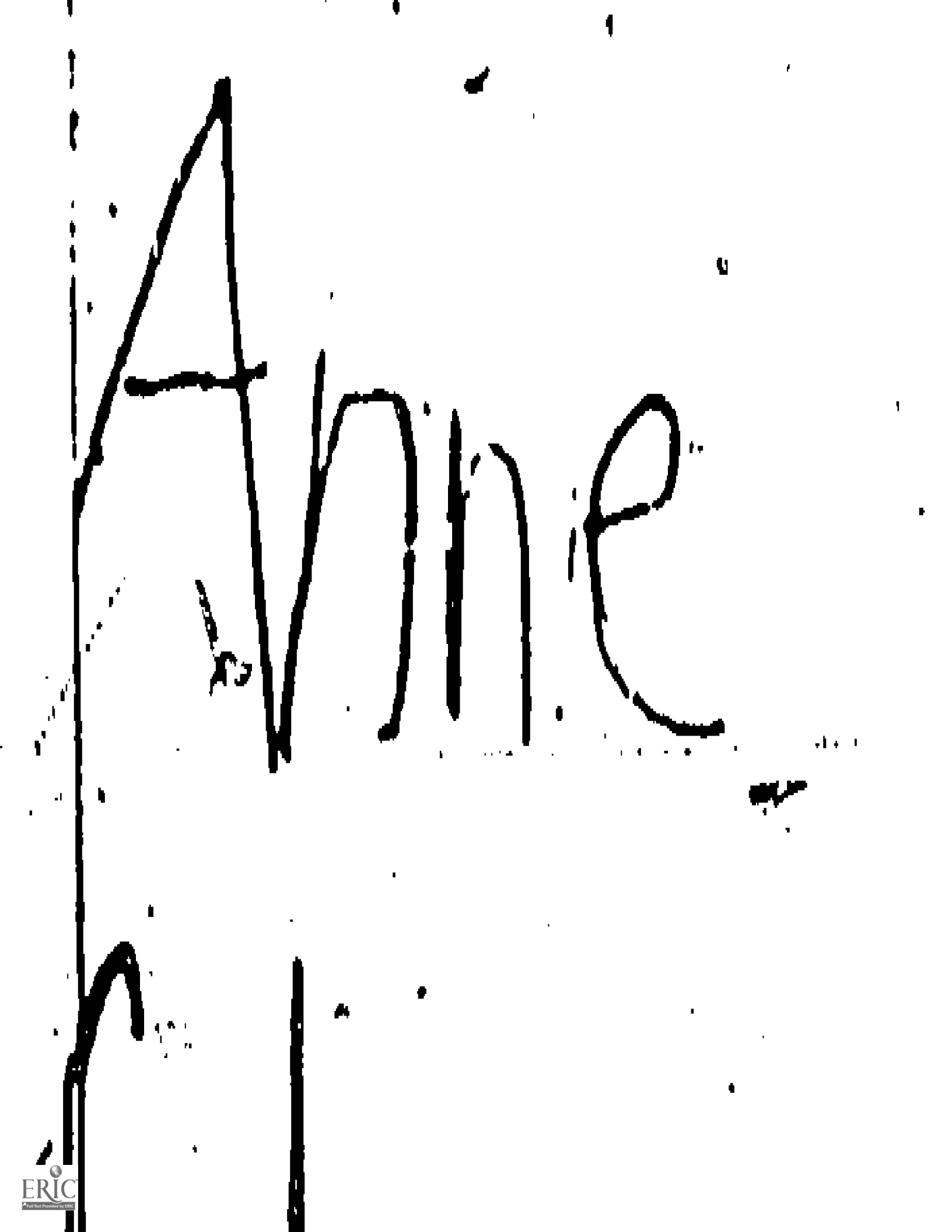
Text: F rt
Callie: "the water."

Thus, in this event, Callie changed from vague planning and nonexistent encoding behaviors, which still continued in copy events until the end of the year, to systematic attempts to enlist oral language in an effort to match specifically planned utterances to written graphics. Callie assumed the task of articulating a clearly planned message and then of referring back to that planned message during encoding. However, without support from peers and from my questioning, Callie reverted to her earlier procedure of simply putting down letters, worrying later about how those letters matched an orally read message.

For Anne, the writing process itself, including planning, encoding, and coordinating the physical act of writing with both planning and encoding, did not appear to be a struggle. Free from the need to look up at the board during free writing, Anne wrote unhesitatingly, producing papers with simple sentence patterns, usually (Object) is (attribute) and I like (name). An example of a typical product is given in Figure 4. While simply constructed, these sentences were sophisticated relative to those of Anne's peers, including Callie and Dexter.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Anne was no doubt supported in her efforts to write by her understanding of the written language system, which she had displayed in all previously discussed contexts. She understood how oral and read messages were related



through the symbol system, and she was capable of manipulating the parts of both oral and written language to effect that relationship. More specifically, in all writing contexts, she was supported by the ease with which she could match voice and print, her ability to segment oral utterances, and her ability, albeit rudimentary, to encode words by phonological analysis and by visual recall of letter patterns. Anne was able to make sense of the messages presented by Ms. Lin to be copied, and she was able to produce readable messages of her own.

Further, certain changes in Anne's free writing products suggested that, of all three children, she was the only one whose observed changes in the encoding of words--the aspect of writing thought to be compensated for in the copying task--could possibly be related to copying experiences. In the course of the study, Anne changed from encoding words through writing sounds that were apparent to her (usually initial and final consonants) and adding other letters in the middle of words to make them appear long enough to including primarily vowels in those middle positions; for example, in early March "ball" was spelled Bbpnl, while in late May, it was Bial, a change no doubt attributable to experience with print. And certainly copying was a major source of classroom experience with conventional spelling, as there was no reading program beyond the readiness workbook. Since Anne was aware of words as she wrote them, copying seems one logical source of information, although certainly it was not her only exposure to print.

The Myths Clarified

What can this close look at three children going about their daily work in a kindergarten classroom tell us? The decision to describe in detail young

children's ways of functioning necessitated large amounts of data centering on a small number of children. Yet, the degree to which the children's behavior is consistent with developmental literacy research serves to corroborate the descriptions and interpretations of their behavior, as does recognition by teachers of their own students in the experiences of Dexter, Callie, and Anne (McCutcheon, 1981). By describing in detail these children's reality, I aimed to raise questions about long-standing traditions in the education of young children.

To begin, the first belief I wish to consider is that the literacy curriculum for young children can be detailed as a set of competencies from a curriculum guide or as activities teachers plan to effect those competencies. The literacy curriculum is not solely controlled by the teacher, for children interpret school experiences in the light of their own understandings (cf. Tanner & Tanner, 1975). From Dexter, to Callie, to Anne, we viewed increasingly less context-dependent, more differentiated views of the written language system. The children did not differ simply on particular skills deemed important in the readiness curriculum, such as letter-naming, for those skills were embedded within their understandings of how the written language system worked. (For statistical support for such a conception of literacy learning, see Hiebert, 1981). The particular behaviors documented are not unique--the conception of writing as close to drawing, the difficulty of segmenting oral language and of orchestrating the multifaceted writing process have all been recorded elsewhere. What is unique about this study is that it documents the existence of these behaviors in an activity as mundane as copying the date from the board. Whether or not the curriculum allows for open-ended literacy activities that aim to facilitate children's exploration

of writing, the child's reconstruction of written language occurs. Teachers may or may not consciously recognize or support it, but it occurs.

One activity teachers have long believed to occur before independent writing is copying, another tradition I question, one which, in the observed classroom, could occupy 30 to 40 minutes of the school day. In considering the children's behaviors during copying and free writing, it was clear that only Anne, the child who was already capable of free writing in a relatively conventional way (within the alphabetic system), approached the copying task in the way planned by the teacher. Only Anne could monitor the message she was writing as she wrote it. For Callie and Dexter, copying did not involve a focus on sentence production during the process. While copying, the children did focus on the formation of letter forms and all children improved in this regard, but copying did not teach children the orchestration of processes necessary to engage in conventional writing. Further, in the case of Callie, it seemed that copying actually reinforced her tendency to focus exclusively on forming letters while free writing, worrying about meaning later. While Callie's writing style has been documented in other young children (Dyson, 1983), copying clearly did not assist her in refining her composing. One cannot break apart the writing act (separate meaning formation and the mechanical forming of letters) and preserve the essence of the cognitive problem of writing, which is, for young children, how intentions and read messages converge in written symbols (Smith, 1981).

If copying is of limited value in helping children become independent writers, are there potentially more helpful teaching strategies? Any teaching decisions are more accurately made on the basis of careful observation of individual children's responses to past teaching plans (Amarel, 1980). And, although the present study was not an intervention project, certain wellknown

teaching strategies seem logical suggestions for individual children. For Dexter, one logical recommendation is language experience activities in which the teacher not only takes his individual dictation, as he helps her break the utterance down ("Now we've written football, Dexter. What did you want, football helmet?"), but also involves him in manipulative activities, for example, cutting apart and reassembling the words of a dictated sentence with his teacher or the letters of a familiar name, such as Lester or Helen (for suggestions, see Clay, 1979a, b). All three children need to continue to explore writing and to be interacted with during, rather than after, the process. Only writing faces children with the challenge of representing intentions in graphics to be read. The questioning of their teacher and peers may help them to reflect upon their strategies and, perhaps, to revise them. The nature of the teacher's questions depends on his/her observations of a child's behavior (Genishi & Dyson, in press). For children, like Callie, who are on the brink of conventional writing, questions can assist them in coordinating the varied subprocesses of writing ("What have you got so far, Callie? What now?"). All the children could benefit from new contexts, purposes, for writing, but none more so than Anne, who needs reasons for breaking out of her comfortable patterns (for specific guidelines, see Milz, 1980, and see Klein & Schikedanz, 1980, for illustrations of children's varied responses to a real writing purpose). These suggestions are not innovative, but they are suggestions that have not found their way into many classrooms (Graves, 1978); the basics, such as the trusted copying activity, take up much of the school language arts time.

In this paper, by describing young children's responses to school tasks, I aimed to cause teachers, principals, curriculum directors and others to reflect upon their ways of approaching the challenge of helping children become

writers. Ultimately, the value of these qualitative observations and other similar studies is the degree to which they help teachers look and listen more carefully and respond more sensitively to their own Dexter's, Callie's, and Anne's. By describing children's reality, perhaps old myths can be shaken and new successes created in the education of young children.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Dexter's free writing sample. Notes in upper right hand corner were written by Ms. Lin as Dexter read his paper to her. (p. 4-17a)

Figure 2. Callie's free writing sample. (p. 4-18a)

Figure 3. Callie's free writing sample, completed with the assistance of a peer, Jason. (p. 4-19a)

Figure 4. Anne's free writing sample. Notes on the bottom of the page were written by Ms. Lin as Anne read her paper to her. (p. 4-20a)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE KINDERGARTEN DATA: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Kindergarten Data:

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the development of young children's concepts about writing as reflected in their school writing behaviors. The research questions concerned variations in children's behaviors across school writing occasions. I, therefore, identified the range of classroom situations in which child writing occurred and then observed across that range, focusing on the behaviors of three case study children.

Earlier chapters provided descriptions of the writing occasions in the observed classroom. Those occasions, with the exception of rebus writing events, centered on common beginning writing activities that were similar to those described in some language arts methods books. For example, Hennings (1982) lists copying, "slotting" (fill-in-the-blank), and "creative writing" (free writing) as structured writing activities appropriate for early primary grade children. The children themselves did not initiate occasions for writing; unlike other kindergarteners I have observed (Dyson, 1983), the children had no access to paper and pencil in the school context except in structured tasks.

Previous chapters also documented individual children's concepts of writing--their evidenced understandings about how writing works. The absence of opportunities for child-initiated writing precluded any conclusions regarding the children's understandings of writing's functions in their own lives, beyond completing classwork. The data did highlight each child's struggle with intertwined aspects of learning to write. These aspects include (a) the nature of the alphabetic symbol system, (b) the adaptation of writing, process and product, for particular situations, in this study, school writing tasks, and (c) the cognitive and linguistic problem-solving presented by writing or,

to use Edelsky's (1983) term, the "psycho-linguisitc juggling act" writing demands, as varied processes, including planning, encoding, handwriting, and page arrangement, vie for the young writer's attention. As discussed in Chapter 1, the limitations of the data are acknowledged and the need for similar work in other types of classrooms recognized. Nonetheless, the collected data support conclusions regarding children's development as writers in school.

First, the children's behaviors are consistent with the conception of writing as a developmental phenomenon. More specifically, the case studies support the conclusion that written language is a system reconstructed by children as they interact with their environment. To elaborate, in terms of Werner's (1948) theory of human development, mental activity is initially an undifferentiated fusion of concepts, processes, and events. With development, differentiation occurs--distinct and identifiable concepts and processes emerge--and integration gradually takes place as new learnings both become distinct and fit together with other learnings. As I proceeded from Dexter, to Callie, to Anne, I described increasingly more differentiated, and less context-dependent, views of the written language system. The uniqueness of this study is not the documentation of such a progression, for the children's behaviors were consistent with the early literacy research reviewed in Chapter 2. Rather, its uniqueness lies in documenting the existence of these behaviors within the structured tasks of the traditional early elementary curriculum, a curriculum that assumes that children become literate as they master a series of taught skills.

To summarize the children's apparent knowledge of the symbol system, beginning with the least conventional writer, Dexter demonstrated an understanding that written and read messages were related in a global way, but

his behaviors for effecting this relationship were inconsistent and loosely organized. Dexter did not segment a sentence into units (words); further, when writing, he seemed to put down letters to represent an event (linguistically, a sentence) or concrete aspects of the reality referred to--all behaviors reported by Ferreiro (1978) and Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982), and similar to those observed in my own earlier work (Dyson, 1982b, 1983). Further, his behaviors suggested a close relationship between drawing and writing and a lack of differentiation among the parts of written language--letters, sounds, and words.

Callie appeared to be on the brink of the alphabetic system. She evidenced understandings of the relationship between oral and written language; she seemed aware at times of the usefulness of well-known visual patterns, such as the, and of sound (particularly, letter name)/ symbol correspondences. Still, she displayed difficulty effecting this relationship. In reading, she had trouble placing hold on articles as separate, unique oral words and as readable graphic forms. In writing tasks, Callie tended to simply put down letter forms, grappling with their relationship to an oral utterance at the end of the actual writing and then only if she was asked to read by an adult.

Anne demonstrated an understanding of the need for a precise match between oral utterances and written graphics and of the alphabetic writing system used to achieve that match. She could accurately connect oral and written language when reading. She made use of both phonological relationships and visually-recalled patterns when writing. Her exaggerated pauses between words when reporting what she would or did write illustrated her awareness of the need for precise segmentation of the oral utterance. Of all three children, then, Anne was the most adult-like, the more conventional writer.

The children not only had to uncover the nature of the written language

symbol system, but they had to learn how to act on that knowledge in the classroom. From observing the children's behaviors across school tasks, additional conclusions can be drawn regarding how children acquire writing in school contexts. To begin, children look for patterns in the ways school writing tasks are to be conducted. Their constructions of the event structure of those tasks (what should be done when) are both reflective of and contributing to their understanding of the nature of the written language system. And, as is consistent with other areas of symbol learning, including language (Slobin, 1979) and drawing (Goodnow, 1977), the children found it difficult to make radical changes in the ways they went about tasks.

The research reviewed in Chapter 2 illustrated preschoolers learning about the purposes, processes, and specific features of written language as they encountered it within familiar settings. This process of looking for patterns in the occasions for literacy can thus be seen as continuing in school and is related to the notion that children develop concepts or models of kinds of text (narrative, expository), models that gradually become more elaborate and complex, approximating those of adults (Bartlett, 1981). All of the children displayed sensitivity to the kind of language needed in a particular context. For example, Anne, Callie, and intermittently, Dexter, followed the statement/answer pattern established in rebus writing events. Dexter changed the reading of the free writing products from a single word to a sentence in keeping with the kind of language expected by Ms. Lin. However, the children in this study were sensitive, not only to the kinds of language appropriate to a particular type of product, but to the entire procedure by which such a product was made. Dexter and Callie in particular, whose understanding of the oral/written connection was less stable than that of Anne, relied on the physical unfolding of events as experienced in the

classroom setting (i.e., the materials used, the series of actions followed).

To illustrate, Callie and, even more so, Dexter could not yet establish precise connections between oral and written language. In completing copying and fill-in-the-blank tasks, they focused on their perceptions of the mechanics of how tasks should be accomplished. Anne understood how intended and read messages were related through the symbol system, and she was capable of manipulating the parts of both oral and written language to effect that relationship. Anne was thus able to make sense of the messages presented by Ms. Lin to be copied and manipulated; she monitored her own reproductions of those messages. Her focus on the production of messages prevented certain tasks from becoming mechanical routines. And it was changes in the mechanics of how tasks should be accomplished--words that were not to be copied, unexpected blanks to be filled in--which confused Callie, and to a greater extent, Dexter. Anne's differentiated view of written language allowed her to orchestrate the parts of written language within a vision of the whole, and this allowed her to perform the tasks required in school.

The nature of school tasks, and the children's responses to those tasks, illustrated also that the decontextualized nature of written language in school poses a significant problem for children. Again, while developmental psychologists (Donaldson, 1978) and sociolinguists (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981) have suggested such a problem, the current study is unique in documenting the form this gap may take in the everyday contexts of the school. The kinds of models of written language the children were presented were specially-structured texts, often generated by Ms. Lin or by individual members of the class for the entire group's use. Both Anne and Dexter attempted to make these texts more personally meaningful, particularly through accompanying drawings. Callie did not evidence as strong a concern with meaning during school tasks, perhaps because she enjoyed the social aspect of writing, the chatting and

singing, and did not attend to her work to the degree that Anne and Dexter did; in addition, she was not as interested in drawing, perhaps because she did not feel that she could draw as the teacher wanted.

The need to place writing in a personal frame of reference was most notable in the case of Dexter. He interpreted written language in context-dependent ways, relating print to known people and things. He infused personal experiences and his own sense of narrative into expressive activities, his stories being of exaggerated and fantastic action and often involving physical confrontation (fighting). Although Dexter's out-of-school experiences were not examined in this study, his attitudes toward written language and narrative were similar to those described by Heath (1983) as characteristic of Trackton, a black working class community in the southeast. The young children from Trackton learn about print primarily as they encounter it in their physical environment (e.g., traffic signs, food can labels). At school entry, Trackton children, like Dexter, appear to conceive of written language in highly contextualized ways. And, also like Dexter, they find their ways of making sense of print do not lead to success in school.

Helping children make sense of print is not, however, the major concern of beginning writing activities, nor is helping children see literacy as a sensible activity in their own lives. School curricula often appear to assume that children are cognizant of the oral/written relationship and of the uses of written language. The major purpose of beginning writing tasks is to assist children in recording (encoding and mechanically forming) ideas on paper: young children are "only beginning to develop skill in recording ideas on paper" and so "written expression activity must be structured to take into account the level of their skill" (Hennings, 1982, p. 241). While this study's findings do not dispute such statements, which seem to be simply common sense, they do illustrate the limitations inherent in particular types of structured

tasks. Of the three children examined in this project, only Anne, the child already capable of writing in a relatively conventional way, was able to perform copying and fill-in-the-blank tasks in a way that was meaning-focused (at least to a certain extent), that is, in a way that at all justifies the tasks being considered "written expression activities."

The next conclusion, then, is that breaking up the writing act (separating meaning formation from encoding, for example) does not confront children with the essence of the cognitive problems of writing, the understanding of how graphics and intentions connect (Smith, 1981) and of controlling the varied sub-processes involved. The children's understandings of how oral and written language related to each other were central to their behavior in all contexts, as was their difficulties and successes with relating a guiding plan in precise ways to written graphics. These aspects of writing could only be tapped by observing the children's orchestration of free writing events.

Finally, the children's responses to my questions as researcher and to the comments of teacher, aide, and peers, illustrated that young children's interactions with others during the writing process can affect both the nature of the writing strategies used and the content of the final product. The questions and comments of others can serve as scaffolding (Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Cazden, 1979) or adult support in the writing process, assisting children in reflecting upon their strategies and, perhaps, revising or extending them.

Implications for Practice

The previously discussed conclusions of this study clearly suggest the importance of opportunities for children themselves to control the writing process and the importance of interaction during the process. In addition, the case studies have illustrated how "basic competencies" can serve as blinders to child needs and progress. In evaluating the children's behaviors, Ms. Lin focused on familiar early literacy objectives--identifying the names

and sounds of the letters, forming the letters correctly and with appropriate spacing and alignment, recalling particular words that had been talked about, and general "study habits," such as listening, following directions, and working carefully. Yet, focusing on these skills did not allow her to see children's difficulty with and progress in understanding the system as a whole which, as illustrated in all three case studies, made sensible Callie's and Dexter's difficulties and, also, accounted for Anne's success.

In addition, the children's behaviors demonstrated the gap between the child and the school curriculum. The teacher plans her lessons directed toward developing the prescribed literacy skills. School tasks are centered in the school world and are frequently oriented toward the classroom experience and common school themes, such as holidays and study units. Dexter's case study, however, illustrated how young children, who have just entered formal schooling, may operate in a world narrower, more personal, than the world of the school. Even Anne, who was capable of functioning successfully within the school context, sought ways to make writing tasks personally meaningful. And all three children appeared to look upon their written products with personal pride and with a feeling that these products were created objects that might give someone else pleasure (recall how the children, when asked, singled out a significant other, such as a family member, as the one their products were "for").

Certainly written language is a symbol system valued, in part, because it allows one to gain distance from personal experiences and to think logically about them (Olson, 1977; Wells, 1981). However, schools might ease children into such uses of written language by beginning with activities close to the individual child's world. Teachers might allow children to write and talk about well-known letters and words; teachers might then build from known print to the unknown through techniques such as those used by Heath (1983,

pp. 190-195 especially). Talking to children about and having them write about their drawing, a more accessible form of symbolizing, could also provide teachers a point from which to build (Dyson, in press b). Finally, teachers might broaden the range of writing tasks they provide for their children. These tasks, after all, model for children what the purposes of writing are. And, as Florio and Clark (1982) illustrate, tasks that are both meaningful to the children and, also, allow them as much control as possible over the writing process itself, are "highly promising as [places] to begin to construct that part of the school curriculum concerned with acquisition of both writing skills and values about literacy and its power" (Florio & Clark, 1982, p. 127). The importance of meaningful tasks controlled by the child are also themes of Graves (1983) in his discussion of primary grade writers. He stresses the increasing control over the writing process evidenced by developing child writers (by, for example, selecting their own topics and revising their products); the young writers he has studied work in environments where they are allowed and, in fact, encouraged to write and in which they interact with teachers and peers about their products. Tasks designed to ease children into composing, such as copying class-generated, teacher-edited sentences or selecting words to fill in blanks, and tasks that are ultimately evaluated only by the teacher take control away from the child. (For alternative writing tasks for young children that allow for child control of the process, see Milz, 1980, and Klein & Schickedanz, 1980.)

Implications for Research

The value of qualitative studies of this nature is their ability to offer a holistic view of schooling. To this end, researchers interested in children's learning of the manifest curriculum may turn to the tools used by ethnographers interested in the hidden curriculum and in social relations (Erickson, 1982). In doing so, researchers of young children's writing have

tended to study children in environments considered facilitative. While such studies are invaluable in portraying children's potential as writers, there are also reasons for looking in environments that are viewed by school systems as "typical." First, critical studies in traditional school settings will allow insight into children's success and failure in schools and, in addition, provide data that are immediately meaningful to teachers, data that start from where teachers are. As teachers, in conjunction with researchers, reflect upon the implications of such data, changes in school curricula may result, changes that yield classrooms similar to those currently considered facilitative--and variations on those environments to suit the variations in types of teachers and children that exist in our diverse school population.

The study reported here focused primarily on one aspect of emerging literacy, children's construction of the written language symbol system. This focus evolved as the nature of the collected data became clear--my concern reflected that of the classroom teacher and of the children themselves. The study did not address such related questions as the relationship between child-initiated and school-structured writing or alterations in child writing resulting from particular writing functions (such as letter writing) or from variations in certain writing tasks (such as copying individually-dictated sentences immediately after dictation); the data did not allow such questions to be addressed. I regret not having the time and monetary resources necessary to document the results of such intervention suggestions as have been made throughout this report. Collaborative intervention attempts, as modeled by Heath (1983), would have been logical next steps in this project. Such questions and projects remain for interested others.

This project did, though, involve me in a classroom of second graders, children from as diverse a range of background as the kindergarten children

and, in certain cases, the older brothers and sisters of Ms. Lin's children. In the next section of this report, I identify continuations of the patterns outlined here and, in addition, document children forming their own underground writing systems—their own ways of taking control of writing's power. I hope that the descriptions of kindergarten children given in the present volume will assist teachers in helping even the youngest of school children gain access to that power.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Observation Sheet

Child's name Dexter Date 4/11/83

Room K Type SCW

Context: Ms. Lin has drawn a pizza on the board and, as children suggested ingredients, she has added appropriate illustrations and written labels around pizza. Children are now to draw their own pizza, include desired ingredients, and write the correct labels. Time 8:30

Child's Text	Code	Notes
		Dexter is copying the date: April 11, 1983.
A	OV	"A" (naming letter)
	P	looks at board
P	OV	"P" [first time I've noted this oral letter naming]
r	OV	"C" (He's naming the letter, although incorrectly)
	P	looks at board
i	OV	"G"

KEY: Dialogue: (IS-P) - Interruption Solicited from Peer; (IS-T) - Interruption Solicited from Teacher; (IU-P) - Interruption Unsolicited from Peer; (IU-T) - Inter. Unsol. from T. Monologue: (OV) - Overt Language; (RR) - Reread; (PR) - Proofread (make a change in text). Other: (S) - Silence; (P) - Pause (no visible verbal or composing activity; indicate seconds) (R) - Resource use; (DR) Drawing; //// - Erasing

Appendix B:

Children's Conceptions of the Oral and Written Relationship--

Evidence from Writing Behaviors (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982)

Levels of children's conceptualization of the oral/written relationship were suggested by Ferreiro & Teberosky (1982). These levels were based on Spanish-speaking four-to-six-year-olds' responses to a writing task in which they produced, without copying, specific words dictated by the researchers. The levels they suggest are as follows:

1. The child appears to view writing as a way of reproducing the typical features of what the child identifies as writing. The child's intention to write a particular message is more important for determining the meaning of the resulting text than particular characteristics of the written graphics. The reading of these graphics is global; that is, there is no attempt at matching specific segments of the written text to specific segments of the oral utterance. However, the child does appear to have hypotheses about the way writing works; the child appears to demand that writing use a fixed minimum, three or four, number of characters (the minimum quantity hypothesis) and that the characters be varied. At this level, the distinction between drawing and writing is blurred; the child appears to consider writing, like drawing, as a way of directly representing concrete entities.

2. The child appears to understand that to read different things objective differences must exist in the written graphics. The hypotheses of a fixed minimum number of graphics and of the necessity for varied characters continue. The child may know certain stable written words, such as his or her name.

3. The child now attempts to assign a sound value, specifically, a syllable, to each letter. The child may not assign letters stable sound values, but the global correspondence between written graphics and oral messages begins to break down. The earlier hypotheses of a fixed minimum amount and variation of characters may conflict with the new hypothesis, a syllable hypothesis.

4. The child now begins to move away from the syllable hypothesis and, as a result of conflict between that hypothesis and that of a fixed minimum number of graphics, towards phonemic representation. However, the child has not abandoned completely the earlier hypotheses.

5. The child has now achieved alphabetic writing.

Appendix C:

Children's Conceptions of the Oral and Written Relationship--

Evidence from Reading Behaviors (Ferreiro, 1978)

Six categories were tentatively suggested by Ferreiro (1978) as corresponding to four levels of conceptualization regarding the relationship between oral and written language. These categories are based on Spanish-speaking four-to-six-year-olds' responses to a reading task; each child was questioned about a written sentence in order to determine the child's ability to relate parts of a normally-written sentence and segments of the corresponding oral utterance. The resulting categories are:

1. There are alternate ways of responding at this earliest and least stable level. The child appears to focus on the utterance as a linguistic form or on the concrete aspects of reality referred to by the message's content. The three alternate categories of responses are:

   (a) Although the entire utterance is written down, independent words are not, i.e., no divisions in the utterance can be made to correspond with segments of the text--the entire utterance is written in any single part of the text and, at the same time, any one of the words is written anywhere in the text.

   (b) The entire sentence is written in a single segment of the text; for the rest of the text, the child proposes sentences compatible with the first one.

   (c) Only nouns are written. (Most probably, the written text is thought to be a representation of the objects or persons referred to in the oral utterance and not a representation of the enunciation; thus, after locating the nouns, children may suggest that the other written segments refer to nouns that have something to do with the meaning of the utterance.)

2. Only nouns may be written independently; verbs may not be written independently of nouns.

3. Everything in the oral utterance is written, with the exception of the articles.

4. Everything in the oral utterance is written, including the articles.