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ABSTRACT

In Judith Richards' ethnically diverse third and fourth grade classroom, the morning meeting is a time for discussion. The functions these discussions serve range from sharing personal news to talking about problem-solving strategies. During these meetings, the teacher has a polyphonic role. She participates, moderates, and sometimes writes students' contributions on a chalkboard. She thus creates an orchestration of voices in which children respond both to other children and to what is written on the board. In this paper, the teacher gives the in-front-of-the-camera perspective, describing how she brings diverse voices into contact and what effects her organization of discussion has on children's discourse skills. The behind-the-camera perspective focuses on turn taking behavior that takes place during morning meeting. Specifically, the observer draws on methods from conversational analysis to show the placement of one instance of classroom discussion on a continuum with other speech-exchange systems. The paper concludes with an analysis of the conventions employed by the teacher which appear to influence classroom turn-taking organization according to the "cognitive apprenticeship" model of teaching. (Author/LL)

In Front of and Behind the Camera: Two Perspectives on "Morning Meeting"

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Abstract

In Judith Richard's ethnically-rich 3rd/4th grade classroom, "morning meeting" is a time for discussion. The functions these discussions serve range from sharing personal news to talking about problem-solving strategies. During these meetings, Richards has a polyphonic role. She participates, moderates, and sometimes writes students' contributions onto a whiteboard. Richards thus artfully creates an orchestration of voices in which children respond both to other children and to what is written on the whiteboard. In this paper, she gives the in-front-of-the-camera perspective, describing how she brings diverse voices into contact and what effects her organization of discussion has on children's discourse skills.

The behind-the-camera perspective is taken by Loretta Gray. Her focus is the turn-taking behavior that takes place during morning meeting. Specifically, she draws on methods from Conversational Analysis to show the placement of one instance of classroom discussion on a continuum with other speech-exchange systems. Gray concludes the paper using the "cognitive apprenticeship" model of teaching to talk about the conventions employed by Richards which appear to influence classroom turn-taking organization.

In Front of the Camera (Judith Richards)

In this paper, Lori Gray and I will present two perspectives on classroom meetings. As the practitioner, I will describe the setting, influences and experiences that have shaped our present structure. Lori will then present her analysis of the turn-taking behavior that appears to define our meetings, and detail the conventions that promote such organization.

Three hundred and sixty children attend the Saundra Graham and Rosa Parks Elementary School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The student body is culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse. Approximately one third of the children at Graham and Parks are Haitian American. The city wide 'magnet' school houses three kindergarten classes followed by four interaged first/second, third/fourth, fifth/sixth, and seventh/eighth grade classrooms. In order to support Haitian children in their first three school years in Cambridge, one homeroom at each team level is taught in Haitian Creole.

Classroom meetings are a frequent occurrence in the fabric of the school's embodiment of democratic values. For example, kindergarten meetings are often transcribed and sent home as part of classroom newspapers, and at the Junior High level, 'community meetings' [all four 7/8 classrooms meet together] are conducted both in Kreyol [Haitian Creole] and in English.

The evolution of my own use of classroom morning meetings has been an ever-changing process during the past two decades. For example, in the mid 1970's, I taught in a [Bank Street College of

Education model] Follow Through classroom. 'Family groups' were an integral part of Follow Through classrooms. We met in small groups (8-10 children and one adult) to share home and school news. The practice of greeting each other in the 'mother tongue' of family members began at this time, since the school was housed in a neighborhood rich with linguistic and cultural diversity. We transcribed children's news onto large chart paper in order to begin the connection between oral language and print.

In my current classroom, morning meetings serve four different functions. With the help of volunteers on Monday morning, our Monday meetings are again smaller 'family meetings' to allow each child personal sharing time. Tuesday and Wednesday meetings are generally reserved for news "deyo tapi wouj" [outside of the *red rug* in our classroom meeting area]. This provides opportunity to learn from each other's current events homework and to discuss and debate city, state, national, international and sports issues. Thursday's meeting is a Kreyol as a second language lesson, and we use the Friday session as a problem-solving strategy discussion, following an hour of cooperative problem-solving groups.

The present turn-taking rules [necessitated in large part by increasing class sizes] was developed through my own interest in, and adaptations of the work of many mathematics and science educators. (Among them are Robert Moses, Constance Kamii, Magdelena Lampert, and Kiyonobu Itakura.) Moses' nationally renowned Algebra Program, began at the nearby Martin Luther King School in Cambridge. Bob Moses developed a five-step transitional algebra curriculum that allows students to "build mathematical

symbols and objects using familiar experiences as their foundation" (Silva & Moses, 1990). The third step of this process allows students to express the experienced event in their own words and "in a class where many languages are spoken there will be opportunities for a rich cultural exchange focused around language" (Silva & Moses, 1990). The fourth step of Moses' curriculum allows children to access regimented English and vocabulary from the mathematical register. Moses' work has profoundly influenced our Monday afternoon "Math Talk" sessions, as well as the Friday problem-solving and algebra discussions. For both of these meetings, any speaker may present a hypothesis which is then either challenged or ratified by the whole group. The adult has had the opportunity to design the investigation that precedes the discussion, to act as the scribe during the meeting, and to participate as a member of the community of discourse. Classroom children use new vocabulary to re-invent and co-construct rules and formulae generally relegated to memorization. For example, after several investigation sessions with three dimensional geometry models, I noted that an eighteenth-century mathematician had found a relationship between the number of vertices, edges and faces of a polyhedra. I did not offer Euler's formula, but encouraged children to reflect on their investigations and share any pattern they may have found. Vonel, an eight-year-old boy offered the following, "I think the rule is the number of vertices and the number of faces less two equals the number of edges." This formula, ratified by the group, became known as Vonel's Formula. I believe that Vonel will always 'own' it, as will other children who

participated in our discussion. It is now part of our shared cognition.

Magdelena Lampert and Constance Kamii both encourage children's construction of mathematical ideas in an "active community of discourse" (Lampert, 1990). In Kamii's University of Alabama 'lab' classrooms children offer their own strategies for mentally decomposing and adding or subtracting two digit numbers. Other children call out, "agree" or "disagree". The children's "outloud" thinking constitutes the bulk of the discourse. Again, the teacher's role is one of scribe and facilitator.

We have adapted Kiyonobu Itakura's Hypothesis Experiment Instruction method for the investigation of several physical science experiment concepts during the past three years. In this method, a physical science experiment is posed to the group along with three possible outcomes. Children vote (by hand count) for one of the possibilities. After this vote, children begin a discussion to persuade their classmates to join a position. The form for the persuasion statement begins, "I think that ... because ...." This has given me an additional window on individual children's thinking, as well as an opportunity to watch "cooking" (Elbow, 1986) of new shared understanding. The formal structure of our HEI discussions has now permeated all meetings. It gives us empirical evidence that children are listening to each other. We hear the phrase, "I agree (or disagree) with _____ (the previous speaker), because...." This may not be as evident in classrooms where children respond only to the teacher's questions, and are acknowledged only by the teacher.

I believe that group problem-solving experiences enhance children's talking and teacher's listening time. John Holt chides us to consider: "Who needs the most practice talking in school? Who gets the most?" Exactly ... children need it and teachers get it." Flanders (1970) observed that someone was talking two thirds of the time in a classroom and that two thirds of *that* time, it was the teacher who was talking.

The practice of inviting the next speaker into the discussion came into our daily lives one year after reading a book by Tetsuko Kuroyunagi, *Totto-Chan: A Little Girl at the Window.* This autobiographical account of a curious child's experiences in an alternative school in Japan prior to World Was II delighted reader and listeners alike. Many Tomoe School ideas seemed quite appropriate and natural for our alternative school. Each child at the Tomoe School claimed a climbing tree as her (his) own. Other children asked for permission to climb up. "May I come in?" As an urban school we do not, of course, have trees to claim. With twenty-five children and multiple adults for at least some part of each day, we have little private physical classroom space. What we do own is respected time in the conversation. *Smart* is not interchangeable with *fast* in our room, and fair is getting what you need. The first response is not necessarily acknowledged as the best answer. Children wait to be invited into the conversation by the previous speaker. This has greatly changed the dynamics of who has a chance to speak, thereby addressing the issue of equity. Children do acknowledge alliances as well as an understanding and acceptance of this classroom practice. The realization that this turn-taking

structure had become part of our classroom culture was clear to me in a meeting two years ago. A child, trying to decide who to call on, said the following, "Anthony, you know I'll always be there for you .. we're both from Potoprins [Port au Prince, Haiti] so this time I'll call on somebody else." In our interaged third and fourth grade classroom, we often talk about the ways in which older children share the classroom culture with incoming third graders. In this sense, we are using the word *culture* to represent a shared set of behaviors, expectations and vocabulary that is common to our classroom family.

I do not view our present meeting structure as fixed and final. My teaching practice continues to be influenced by interaction with classroom children and their parents, access to current literature, and active involvement with the research community. For most of my teaching years I have had the opportunity to design and adapt a variety of curricula for use in my classroom. As new curricula is enacted in the classroom, our communicative practice changes to include new vocabulary as well as borrowed cultural ideas, gestures and language.

The opportunity to share my perspective with Lori, to re-read morning meeting transcripts, and to listen to Lori's analysis has allowed me to see whether the group interactions that I have been encouraging, were indeed occurring. Our partnership has thus enabled me share my present practice and at the same time, to rework, refine, and extend my role in the classroom.

Behind the Camera (Loretta Gray)

Over the past twenty years, increasing attention has been paid to the inclusion of more student talk in the classroom. The type of participation advocated is one in which teachers talk less and students, addressing other students as well as the teacher, talk more. Reasons for including this type of interaction in the classroom range from its effectiveness in enhancing certain kinds of learning (Barnes, 1976; Duckworth, 1986; Gall & Gall, 1990; Watson & Young, 1986) to its success in enriching communication skills (Gall & Gall, 1990; Pinnel, 1984; Seiler, Schuelke & Lieb-Brilhart, 1984). However, instances of this type of classroom interaction are difficult to find in research literature (Cazden, 1988). Much of the documentation that does exist on classroom discourse shows an interaction pattern consistent with the two-to-one ratio. The well-known IRF (teacher initiation--student response--teacher follow-up) or IRE (teacher initiation--student reply--teacher evaluation) sequence depicts a situation in which a student's turn at talk is always sandwiched between the teacher's turns. Or stated in other words, all student turns are channeled through the teacher.

Upon examination of morning meeting, however, we immediately notice quite a bit of student participation in which students speak to one another, most often with one student speaking at a time. Although elementary classrooms across the country probably include some version of "morning meeting," each classroom will incorporate practices that are unique to its version. Judith has just provided us with a view of how those practices developed in her

classroom. Not only has she cited influences on her work, but reflecting on her practice, she has also reported a synthesis of these outside influences with personal experience. My goal now is to analyze the manifestation of this synthesis to see what the shape Judith's objectives take as morning meetings are enacted. I would also like to explore the use of the "cognitive apprenticeship" model described by Collins, Brown and Newman (1989) in order to examine the particular classroom conventions that Judith has instituted in her classroom.

The part of morning meeting that is most interesting to me is when students talk to each other in nonformulaic ways, that is, they are not acting out a predetermined script on requesting the date and/or exchanging greetings. I asked Judith what she would call this activity. She responded by labeling it a discussion. In a later conversation, I asked Judy to define "discussion." She defined it as "a conversation in which two or more people are verbally working on a new shared piece of understanding." Judith's definition accords with that of proponents of discussion as a teaching method. Pinnell (1984) refers to classroom discussion as "group conversation." Wilen (1990) also refers to discussion as a group conversation, but he includes the modifiers "educative, reflective and structured."

I would like to turn now to some of the Friday morning problem-solving discussions presided over by Judith and describe her orchestration of them. In particular, I will look at the turn-taking organization that is manifest. It is my hope that an examination of the turn-taking organization will distinguish discussion from other activities characterized by the IRE sequence,

such as recitations. Analyses of other aspects such as topic management and interactional structure are also important to a thorough description of an activity, but due to time constraints I will not be talking about them here.

As a starting point to my investigation of turn taking, I would like to refer to the well-known study by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). According to this study, speakership is distributed equally in conversation. In a pared-down version of the rules proposed, all conversants have the choice either to select the next speaker, self-select, or continue.

Applying these rules to classroom discourse, McHoul (1978) proposes modifications which take into account the differential status of teacher and student. The speakership that results from the application of these modified rules differs from that of conversation. Whereas the teacher may self-select, select the next speaker or continue (which are the same privileges that conversationalists have), the student may only select the teacher or continue. This division of speakership privileges leads McHoul to collapse his rules into one summary rule: "Only teachers can direct speakership in any creative way" (1978: 188). In other words, the teacher has more options for deciding who should take the next turn.

The rules McHoul proposes for classroom discourse, however, portray the activity that has come to be known as the classroom lesson in which all turns are channeled through the teacher. At the time of his writing (late 1970), McHoul claimed that exchanges that varied from the format he documented would be considered subversive. I imagine that times have changed in Australia as they

have here. Hence, the rules that McHoul arrived at, though adequately describing some classrooms, fail to account for the various kinds of turn-taking behavior that can be found in discussions like those of Judith's classroom. First of all, they do not account for students' selection of speakers other than the teacher. Sometimes this selection of the next speaker is initiated by the students. Other times it is encouraged by Judith's prompts. Second, the rules of McHoul do not explain instances in which the student self-selects, either after the teacher's turn or after another student's turn. Examples of these types of turn-taking can be found on your handouts. (See attached.)

I will now propose modifications that I hope will better explain the data from Judith's classroom. The rules I set forth here locate turn allocation procedures between those established by Sacks et al. and McHoul. As in the McHoul rules, the teacher and student have different participation rights. However, the options available at transitions between turns is greater than those offered by McHoul. For a teacher's turn, the following possibilities may occur: (i) the teacher selects the next speaker; (ii) a student raises her hand and is called on by the teacher; (iii) a student speaks without being called on; (iv) the teacher continues. The following is a list of options available for a student's turn: (i) the student selects the next speaker; (ii) another student raises her hand and is called on by the student currently speaking; (iii) another participant (student or teacher) speaks without being called on; (iv) the student continues.

A comparison of these rules to those of McHoul reveals that they do not break down into the same summary rule: "Only teachers can direct speakership in any creative way" (1978: 188). Instead these rules permit teacher and student to share in the direction of speakership. This is the major difference between lessons of the recitation ilk and discussions. Unlike the students in McHoul's study, the students of this classroom may self-select and they may also respond to each others' turns.

It should be noted, however, that teacher and student nonetheless have different privileges. The teacher does not need to raise her hand to self-select. In contrast, students often raise their hands to respond to the teacher or to respond to another student. The question raised at this point, then, is what determines when students must raise their hands (according to interviews, they believe they almost always do) and when may they self-select?

McHoul comments in a footnote that the technique of hand-raising may blur the distinction between 'current speaker selects next' and self-selection. Students with their hands raised may be said to self-select, but since no talk actually takes place, he claims that next speakers are selected by the teacher. Contrary to McHoul's position, I have opted to refer to a turn acquired via the raising of hands as self-selection because raising one's hand seems to indicate willingness and readiness to respond. It is as if the student is replying "I do" to the teacher's question "Who has something to say?"

One incident when a student raises her hand absentmindedly supports this choice of hand raising as self-selection (10/4/91). After the teacher requests the class to label a particular problem-

solving strategy, Lindy's hand goes up. Upon being called on, however, she says she has nothing to say. At this point, she receives a mild sanction from the teacher. Lindy's behavior receives attention because it violates hand-raising protocol which assumes that students raise their hands (i.e., select themselves as possible speakers) only if they have something to say. The teacher would not have sanctioned Lindy in this manner had she been selecting her as next speaker because she could not have assumed that Lindy necessarily had something to say.

To answer the question of how hand raising operates in these classroom discussions, inspection of the transcripts suggests that a distinction be made between official and unofficial contexts. In official contexts, one member of each small problem-solving group reports for the other members. In order to report or respond to a report, students need to raise their hands. These are the rules which students explicitly know. If students self-select without raising their hands they may be sanctioned.

Within the official context, however, students do not always need to raise their hands as long as they are not competing for the floor. For example, a student may ask for a clarification or make an aside. These types of turns which neither change the topic nor add to it, are called *non-floor-holding turns* by Edelsky (1981). Within the boundaries of reporting, in addition to some clarification questions and side comments, comments that are made by students after official comments have been made do not have to be preceded by hand raising. In these instances, a dialogue between two students has already started. An example of this can be seen in excerpt 4 on

your handout when Laurie clarifies another student's contribution for Mindy. Continuing to raise hands beyond the initial exchange would be very contrived because such a gesture would place the students in the realm of official and formal procedures which the situation does not require.

Outside of the parameters of the official reporting context, students also do not need to raise their hands. For example, when the teacher addresses the entire class, students may contribute without raising their hands. Such exchanges stand outside of the official context because the teacher is addressing the whole class instead of just focusing on the reporters from the small groups.

In order to recognize the influence official and unofficial contexts have on turn-taking behavior, constraints need to be grafted to the rules already stated. The *official context constraint* applies to self-selection rules which require hand raising. This constraint comes into play when students are reporting strategies of their small groups or asking a question or making a comment which may change the topic. The *unofficial context constraint* holds for self-selection rules which do not require hand raising. Its application occurs in parts of a discussion outside of official reporting. It is also used in the following islands of unofficial context which may occur within the official context: (i) dialogue continuation and (ii) non-floor-holding turns such as clarification questions and side comments. With the recognition of such constraints, it appears that hand raising should be viewed as a student's bid to remain in or move into the official context.

It should be noted that the teacher is not limited by such constraints. She does not need to raise her hand. Because of her role as moderator, she has the same speaking privileges regardless of context. Nonetheless, Judith is aware of the contexts and reports that she instates the formal turn-taking structure when she feels the group discussion is dispersing into multiple discussions. She believes her imposition of the formal system brings the group back together. Her recognition of informal contexts comes through in her apologies for cutting off student contributions because of time constraints.

If we compare the rules and their constraints posited here with those of Sacks et al. and McHoul, we discover the main technical difference in the turn-taking options which are available to speakers. These turn-taking options McHoul refers to as the "permutability" of turn taking. Compared to the Sacks et al. rules, permutability of turn taking in this study is decreased. Some pre-allocation does exist in the official contexts of problem-solving discussions. But compared to the McHoul research, permutability is increased. Teachers are not the only participants who can direct speakership creatively. Therefore, on a continuum of turn-taking management systems the rules stated here exist between those of conversation and formal classroom settings. This finding suggests that other analyses of speech-exchange systems may also lead to placement upon this continuum.

So far I have tried to show the rules governing turn-taking behavior in Judith's classroom discussion. These rules apparently enable more student participation than that previously documented.

They also seem to encourage the practice of democratic values and responsible participation that Judith takes as goals. I would like to turn now to the conventions that seem to influence the shape of these rules. These conventions include requiring students to call on one another and imposing a hand-raising routine in certain contexts.

In an interview, Judith stated that her choice of procedures stems from her belief that having children call on each other is preparation for adult discussions in which participants do not always rely on a facilitator. Turn-taking procedures in such "adult" discussions were analyzed by Kuhn (1984). He found that adults in university classrooms most often self-select. They also select other students as next speaker. By relaxing her control of discourse and encouraging students to speak to one another, Judith, thus, seems to be preparing her students for this type of adult discussion.

The formality of hand raising, according to Judith, helps give some structure to younger students who are not accustomed to the talk she promotes in her classroom. I have interpreted Judith's comment to mean that the implementation of required hand raising encourages her fledgling discussants to be aware of themselves within a group of other participants. At the same time, hand raising promotes the procedure of having only one speaker talk at a time.

The conventions Judith has put into place in her classroom discussions appear to promote the development of discourse skills for a type of discussion that she believes the students will encounter. Looking at Judith's practice through the application of the "cognitive apprenticeship" model developed by Collins, Brown and Newman (1989), we see a combination of the coaching and

scaffolding methods they mention. Judith coaches her students by giving them hints and reminders to look to their peers for responses. She scaffolds participation in discussion by including hand-raising procedures that encourage students to be aware of their place in relation to one another and to the group. These methods thus provide an activity in which students have the opportunity to talk to one another in such a way that their voices are publicly available to the rest of the class.

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Excerpt 1: Student selection of next speaker

Lena: well I disagree with Pedro/ we- we thought/ well what we did is we made a graph and umm/ I think/ that what our group thinks/ is that D was the- used least often/ and E was used most often// umm Den// [his hand is raised]
Den: well I kind of agree with Lena but I also have a question for Pedro/ how many of E and A did you get?
Pedro: eight//

Excerpt 2: Prompted student selection of next speaker

Teacher: Laurie there's some people who wanna get i- who wanna/ talk to you about it//
Laurie: okay Ralph//
Ralph: I'm not raising (...)//
Laurie: okay/ then Lindy// [her hand is raised]
Lindy: umm/ well we could say drawing/ 'cause for most problems we might do you might/ you probably might/ do lots of drawing/

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Excerpt 3: Student self-selection

Teacher: and I should have/ made sure that was a- so- a condition that/ I forgot to remind you// however/ i- this group that was successful/ why do you think you were successful?
Estella: 'cause we •(...)//
Josie: •we worked together//
Ralph: yeah//
Den: and we didn't get as- in much of a knot as they did//

Excerpt 4: Student self-selection (hand raising not required)

Teacher: all right/ somebody else can/ Em-uh/ Mindy see if you can [find] somebody else who thinks they can/
Mindy: Laurie// [her hand is raised]
Laurie: when you're thinking of number are you thinking of the digits? or which digit is/
Mindy: yes//
Laurie: well she means the whole number//
Mindy: oh//
Laurie: like three digit number or five •digit number (...)//
Mindy: •yeah//