TOWARDS A POLICY FOR FIRST LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS:

A REVIEW OF SOME ASPECTS

By

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that the whole of this thesis,
unless specifically indicated to the contrary in
the text, is my own original work and that it has
not been submitted for any degree in any other
University.

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INTRODUCTION

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THIS DISSERTATION

1.   The idea of a "language policy"

        The subject matter of this work is the rationale
        behind, and implementation of language policy at the
        primary school level, particularly for the fourth to
        seventh years of school. The concerns of the study
        include a consideration of oracy and literacy and an
        analysis of some suggested ideas in and objectives of
        language education. There is some specific reference
        to the province of Natal, but the general approach
        taken has been a wide one.

        Language has come to be recognised as the critically
        determining factor in a pupil's capacity to learn.
        Sapir (as cited by Wilkinson, 1971, p91) explains:

            "It is quite an illusion to imagine that one
            adjusts to reality essentially without the use
            of language and that language is merely an
            incidental means of solving specific problems
            of communication or reflection."

        Language, as will be shown, plays a vital part in
        the growth of child thought. Realisation of this
        ensures the teacher's success in the classroom.
        Language is surely the most useful and effective means
        of communication available to man:

            "Human fitness to survive means the ability to
            talk and write and listen and read in ways that
            increase the chances for you and fellow-members
            of your species to survive together."
                                    (Hayakawa, 1977, p17)

        The latter part of this century has produced a vast
        literature on the acquisition, different functions of,
        and the teaching of language. This fresh insight
        constitutes a challenge to the tradition of teaching
        the skills of language - speaking, listening, reading,

writing - in isolation and only in 'English' lessons.
The artificiality of "splitting" the skills of
language in a subject labelled 'English' previously
gave the impression that English had a content in
the way that other subjects in the curriculum have
a body of knowledge. This idea is now shown to be
misconceived for it has ignored the integral part
language plays in the learning situation. The
awareness of the role of language in learning in all
parts of the curriculum has, instead, culminated in
far-reaching changes in education, envisaged for example
by government reports which have recommended that all
teachers should seek to foster learning by taking
responsibility for the language development of their
pupils in all areas of the curriculum. Further, it
seems clear that the inter-relationship of spoken and
written language should be reflected in an organised
school policy which would involve all teachers and
ensure consistency of teaching.

Recommendation number four of the seventeen principal
recommendations of the committee responsible for the
Bullock Report, A Language for Life (Great Britain,
1975, p514) reads:

> "Each school should have an organised policy
> for language across the curriculum, establishing
> every teacher's involvement in language and
> reading development throughout the years of
> schooling."

Referring specifically to primary schools,
recommendation number one hundred and thirty-seven
of the Report (p528) reads:

> "In the primary school the individual teacher
> is in a position to devise a language policy
> across the various aspects of the curriculum,
> but there remains the need for a general school
> policy to give expression to the aim and ensure
> consistency throughout the years of primary
> schooling."

"Policy"[1] is in this context taken to mean an agreed set of beliefs and principles about language and learning held by any one staff of any one school. The existence of such policy, organised by consensus, implies some form of explicit documentation of beliefs, principles and aims in the teaching of language.

The need for a carefully considered policy in the use and teaching of language in primary schools finds support among many authorities. Bruner (1972, p165) states:

> "In children between four and twelve language comes to play an increasingly powerful role as an implement of knowing."

Adams and Pearce (1974, pi) say that the nine to thirteen year age group ...

> "reflects the area of greatest need, since it is the age range in which the most formative changes in the language competence of children occur, and where the greatest opportunities for a major improvement of classroom practice exist."

Lack of consistency in teaching direction in the primary school is a generally recognised weakness which often manifests itself very obviously on the child's entry to high school.[2] It seems that a language policy would "ensure consistency" for by its very nature it would set out to achieve coherence, retain variety and avoid fragmentation. Such continuity in the teaching of language would attempt to ensure the language development of every pupil.

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1. In a personal interview, Quarrell of Bulmershe College of Higher Education, Reading, 12.6.1980, stated that HMI Ron Arnold, the scribe of the Bullock Report, had come to regret the choice of the word 'policy' in this recommendation because it had allowed too wide and loose an interpretation of the recommendation.

2. For example, a survey carried out by the Natal Education Department in 39 high schools in 1976 revealed that 37% of the standard six pupils were reading at below a reading age of 12 years as measured on the Schonell Silent Reading Test B of reading comprehension.

An underlying concern of the present dissertation is the need for teachers to draw up and implement "language policies" as a means to provide all children with the opportunity to develop as much as possible in language use. Such policies could have specific effects on teaching practice and on pupils.

2.   The possible effects of a language policy on teaching practice in the classroom

A language policy designed specifically for a school would by its uniqueness be relevant to the situation found in that particular school. By being part of the team designing the policy, each teacher would be involved in the drawing up of the basic principles of language teaching. The design of a syllabus for language teaching would then be possible for the policy would reflect what the teachers had decided to do.

In the consideration and drawing up of a language policy teachers would become aware of the great diversity of written and spoken English. Through discussion and decision making, it is possible that teachers would need to acknowledge this great diversity of written and spoken language and, indeed, would recognise language as a social phenomenon. A clearly stated language policy would encourage teachers to work on structured programmes of teaching, for appropriate methodology is a natural follow-on to the establishment and implementation of policy.

An approach, founded on a set of fundamental principles, would assist teachers in their decisions regarding the choice of methods, materials and books, again ensuring both diversity and consistency.

3.   The possible effects of a language policy on
      pupils in a school

Many teachers are, by their own admittance, ignorant of aspects of language development.[1] The establishment of a language policy would lead to, and indeed encourage, a deeper understanding of what the teaching of language entails which in turn should make teachers more sensitive to the language needs of their pupils:

> "Such an understanding is likely to contain
> ideas about the function of language in life;
> how language develops in the young child; what
> human beings do with language; the special
> characteristics of our language, including its
> vocabulary; the social context of language;
> notions of appropriateness."
>   (Marland, 1977, p73)

A school policy would assist in the more productive utilisation of time in that it would probably ensure effective learning through more effective teaching with the use of selected materials.

Finally, a school policy for language would support the obvious but often neglected truth that teaching is dependent upon language because pedagogy, which is the transmission of the curriculum, depends on communication. As the Inner London Education Authority has pointed out, "Central to each aspect of the curriculum is language" (I.L.E.A., 1979, p26). Language would be given emphasis and value in teachers' considerations and would be recognised as the main aspect of the profession's task. A language policy would, therefore, assist dynamically in giving each pupil 'a language for life'.

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1.   In a survey of 258 Std II and III teachers carried out by
      the Natal Education Department in May 1979, 78% of the
      teachers said that they were ignorant of the role language
      played in learning.

4.   Background to this dissertation

The primacy of language in human learning, the
importance of verbal interaction in the classroom
situation, and the responsibility for education to
develop the child's language potential, are some of
the concerns of this work.

The study was prompted mainly by an increasing aware-
ness of the role language plays in the curriculum and
the necessity for active recognition of this in class-
room practices. The incentive for the study to take
the particular line it did was provided by Circular
Minute Number 36 of 1977 of the Natal Education
Department which reads:

> TO: RECTORS OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION AND TO
>   PRINCIPALS OF ALL HIGH AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS
>
> STANDARDS OF EXPRESSION IN WRITTEN AND SPOKEN
> LANGUAGE IN ALL SUBJECTS
>
> 1.   In order to maintain acceptable standards in
>   written and spoken language, Principals are
>   requested to ensure that all teachers place
>   special emphasis on the quality of language
>   used by their pupils, and to ensure further,
>   that language development is regarded as an
>   integral part of the teaching of all subjects
>   in the curriculum.
>
> 2.   To this end, examiners of Natal Senior
>   Certificate examination papers will be asked
>   to give credit to candidates who express them-
>   selves well and, conversely, to penalise answers
>   which may be factually correct but in which the
>   expression is poor and which are characterised
>   by consistently weak spelling.
>
> 3.   To make it possible for pupils to attain the
>   desired standard it is essential that the matter
>   of correct language usage should receive atten-
>   tion in all four phases of a pupil's schooling
>   and that teachers of all subjects should
>   collaborate in order to achieve this.
>
> 4.   Schools are accordingly requested to formulate
>   language policies of their own so that there may
>   be agreement among the staff on matters of
>   language learning. Clearly, it is essential
>   that such a policy should reflect positive rather
>   than negative features (i.e. to aim at enhancing

development rather than to penalise for
failure). To achieve this, the language
needs of pupils in various subjects should
be identified, and a consistent policy should
then be implemented to assist pupils to come
to terms with the reading and writing tasks
involved.

5.   Close collaboration between language teachers
and teachers of other subjects should be
encouraged because, "if standards of achieve-
ment are to be improved all teachers will have
to be helped to acquire a deeper understanding
of language in education. This includes
teachers of other subjects than English".
(A Language for Life - the Bullock Report 1975).

It was realised that (at least in South Africa) the
majority of primary school teachers entrusted with
the task of designing a language policy to ensure the
development of each child's language potential were
themselves not specifically trained to do this, nor
did they necessarily have the background knowledge to
ensure the design of an adequate "language policy".
Awareness of this indicated the need for as full an
investigation of these implications as one person,
working alone, could perform.

A principal aim of this study has been to investigate
the role of language in the primary school, and to
examine how effective language may be developed among
pupils. The overall aim has been to come some small
way towards a greater understanding of the language
needs of the primary school child, in the hope that
others may benefit through knowing how crucial this
is to the child's understanding and manipulation of
his environment.

5.   Method of research

The research techniques involved in this work are
of four kinds:

A library study of the available literature was

undertaken both in South Africa and England. Most
of the reading concerned publications of the post
1950s as these were thought to be both more useful
and more relevant to the particular study.

The approach is basically that of comparative analysis
in terms of the situation pertaining in Britain and
in schools under the control of the Natal Education
Department, South Africa, with regard to the teaching
of language policies. The latter schools cater only
for white pupils, who constitute a minority in the
province of Natal, but for reasons of convenience
such restriction was necessary. The writer gained access
to primary sources in England through the co-operation
of education authorities and lecturers at universities
and colleges of education.

By means of a questionnaire sent to some government
primary schools for Whites in Natal, the writer was
able to investigate the attitudes and methodology of
teachers. Involvement in in-service training of
teachers added further to this store of information.

The writer's previous training as a primary school
teacher and the advantage of having travelled through-
out Natal on behalf of the Natal Education Department
to assist and advise teachers in the implementation
of group discussion and the teaching of reading, helped
to delimit the problem area for study. The writer
was fortunate to have the opportunity to become
involved very centrally herself in the composition
and implementation of an actual policy in a primary
school. The experience gained through this work on
a language policy has had a great deal of influence on
this study.

For purposes of presentation it has been necessary to
consider spoken language, reading and writing in separate
chapters. This separation of the skills has created
some difficulty because of the unified approach to

language teaching recommended in contemporary
literature. However, there are overlaps: for example,
while spoken language enjoys a separate chapter, it
features prominently in the chapters on reading and
writing because of the vital role talk plays in any
learning done by the primary school child.

The standpoint in the research has been one of
critical evaluation of a situation with tentative
suggestions made on that basis.

CHAPTER ONE

A REVIEW OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.1   An overview of trends from 1900 to the present day

        The contents of this overview have an obvious British
        bias. Of necessity this is so, not only because much
        of the available literature pertains to the situation
        in Britain, but because education in Natal has,
        because of its historical associations, been closely
        modelled on that existing in Britain.

        A survey of the practice of the teaching of English
        from 1900 to the present day reveals three broad
        curriculum models or views on language teaching - a
        "skills" model, a "cultural heritage" model and a
        "personal growth" model.[1]

        The "skills" model was the widely accepted model up
        to about 1920. Shayer (1972, p7) sees this as the
        reflection of Latin and Greek teaching methods on the
        teaching of English; while Dixon (1967, p1) explains
        that this model suited an era when initial literacy
        was the prime demand. Both explanations seem accept-
        able. A study of early syllabuses such as the Board
        of Education's 1900 English Schedules in Britain
        (cited by Shayer: op cit, p4) reveals the nature of
        the instruction given. The skill of reading aloud,
        the skill of copying correctly, and a knowledge of
        the rules of grammar were considered the aims of
        correct teaching. It is pertinent to note that the
        term 'English' is applied to grammar work only:

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1.   These terms are used by Dixon J. (1967) in Growth Through
       English.

Standard 2 (8 years)

Reading   To read a short passage from an elementary reading book.

Writing   A passage of not more than six lines, from the same book, slowly read once and then dictated.

'English'   Pointing out nouns and verbs.

Standard 3 (9 years)

Reading   To read a passage from a reading book.

Writing   Six lines from one of the Reading Books of the Standard, read once and then dictated.

'English'   Pointing out nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, personal pronouns and forming simple sentences containing them.

Standard 4 (10 years)

Reading   To read a passage from a reading book or history of England.

Writing   Eight lines of poetry or prose, slowly read once, then dictated.

'English'   Parsing easy sentences, and showing by examples the use of each of the parts of speech.

Standard 5 (11 years)

Reading   To read a passage from some standard author, or reading book, or history of England.

Writing   Writing from memory the substance of a short story read out twice; spelling, handwriting and correct expression to be considered.

'English'   Parsing and analysis of simple sentences. The method of forming English nouns, adjectives, and verbs from each other.

Textbooks used at the time show the influence of classical language teaching, as word-paradigm grammar teaching was applied to the English language. An emphasis on rhetoric is seen in the numerous lists of figures of speech evident in the text books. (For example: Longman's Junior School Composition, 1901 or D. Salmon: Exercises in English Grammar and Composition, 1900)

Presumably this kind of teaching in elementary education was considered sufficient for the lower social classes who would only require initial literacy. In Shayer's words (op cit, p26), elementary education was seen as being a "charitable gift to the 'lower orders'".

Clearly the word 'skill' in this model has more literal than metaphoric meaning. While recognising that these "skills" assist the mechanics of reading and writing, the model may also be seen to be severely limited in its conception of language as a means of communication.

The "cultural heritage" model was, no doubt, an attempt to 'make good' these limitations. Influenced by Matthew Arnold and similar "conservative ideology" thinkers, the curriculum model changed to one where cultural heritage was emphasized. Believing that there was a need for a civilizing and socially unifying content, the model was one which included a study of literature as a means to a criticism of life. However, this view also has its weaknesses. Dixon (op cit, p3) shows that this model gives culture at the expense of the pupil's own culture and experience; while Shayer (op cit) sees it as involving a misuse of literature to inculcate moral and patriotic purposes. He quotes examples from textbooks used at the time where poems such as "It is not yours, O Mother, to complain" were studied.

In primary schools in Natal, South Africa, it is interesting to note that this influence was still in evidence in the 1960s. The New Everyday Classics, a reader, was in common use in the schools. The follow-ing excerpt from the Fourth Reader should serve as an example:

> "This poem [Ye Mariners of England] and the three which follow are patriotic poems, telling of the glory and honour of our native land and her heroes" (p149).

Clearly the "skills" model and the "cultural heritage" model have emphasized certain aspects at the expense of the rest of English teaching. Neither, for example, shows appreciation for a child's language competence and both fail to recognise the varied functions for which language is used. Any over-emphasis would seem to lead to distortion of those particular areas in practice. It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that the analogy of the swing of the pendulum, as applied to pedagogical concerns of this kind, is so often used. Further, it should be noted that these earlier models attempt to give English a 'content' in the way that other subjects in the curriculum have content. Shayer (op cit) criticises these attempts claiming that English is not a body of factual knowledge which can be transferred from teacher to pupil.

It is disturbing to note that these models are not without their adherents in the latter half of this century. A review of some of the textbooks used presently in some Natal primary schools (for example: Redgrave J.J. & Nuttall N., Junior English, Juta, and Ridout R., Better English, Juta) shows that there is still a tendency to teach prescriptive grammar, although linguists have shown this to be highly unsuitable[1]; while time-tables drawn up in some schools show a tendency to divide English into separate components such as reading study, composition, grammar, oral.[2]

Currie (1973, p19) shows that preoccupation with the more abstract qualities of instruction dominates the syllabuses in countries which have not adopted

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1. A discussion on the teaching of grammar and its ineffectiveness as an aid to language growth follows later in this work.

2. This information was gathered while the writer was visiting primary schools in Natal as an official of the Natal Education Department.

'child-centred' school programmes.[1] "Thus Greece, France, certain parts of Germany, and Poland teach a high proportion of formal analysis as the mainstay of their mother tongue". Currie sees the clinging to old tradition in England as more subtle. He shows how this kind of instruction is supported in publications such as that by Stuart Froome, who argues in his book, Why Tommy Isn't Learning, that the decline in school performance is directly related to a move away from intellectual training through rules.

The Central Advisory Council for Education report, Children and their Primary Schools (The Plowden Report, 1965, p210) found this trend to cling to past practices significant enough to comment:

> "The past is still with us in the trend in some schools to emphasise the techniques of reading and writing at the expense of speech and in the survival of a theory of grammar that derives from the inflected language of Latin".

Shayer (op cit) shows that the early 1950s saw a move to the recognition that imagination and personal expression were more important attributes than technical presentation; although he quotes (p103) the 1931 Board of Education Report on the Primary School as having already recognised the place of the child's creativity:

> "...Our witnesses were of the opinion that during this age period the exercise of creative as distinct from reproductive imagination should be cultivated."

The Plowden Report (p219) gave an "unqualified welcome" to the "free, fluent and copious writing" they found in a growing number of junior schools

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1.   Alan Pittam, overseas representative for Ginn & Co., London, told the writer that underdeveloped countries such as some in Africa, purchase what in these modern times, can only be considered as unsuitable publications. e.g. Beacon Readers, Ginn & Co. They want, Pittam says, what they think the "white" schools use. Interesting, too, is to note that many white schools in the Eastern Province, South Africa, still use Beacon Readers - these were first published in 1922.

during 1963. They found that much of this writing
was "personal" and that the writers were "communicating
something that has really engaged their minds and
their imaginations".

The establishment of the Schools Council in Britain
in 1965, with money made available for research projects,
assisted the acceleration of a new curriculum model
which gave emphasis to the comprehensive personal
growth of the child. The language development of the
child was recognised as essential to his growth in
learning. Moreover, it was recognised that growth
in language does not occur in isolation from the life
experiences of the pupils.

1.2   Contemporary views

Current thinking on language development in schools
is heavily influenced by the findings and research
of sociologists, psychologists and psycholinguists.
The work of Vygotsky, Luria, Piaget, Bruner, Chomsky,
Kelly, Bernstein and others shows that language plays
a crucial role in mental development and vice versa.
The Plowden Report (1965) in recognising the unique
role of language as an organiser of experience further
encouraged educationists to examine these findings
with a view to changing earlier conceptions of the
role of language in schools. "Language increasingly
serves as a means of organising and controlling
experience and the child's own responses to it. The
development of language is, therefore, central to the
educational process" (p19).

Findings by experts such as those mentioned have
resulted in a movement towards a conception of learning
that gives a new meaning to teaching. It demands a
rearrangement of priorities in that teachers are now
urged to recognise the vital role of language and to
examine their own and the pupils' use of language in

the classroom.

The international meetings held at Dartmouth College
(1966) and York (1971) for teachers, academics,
advisers, inspectors and educational administrators
to discuss the teaching and learning of English, also
caused a great deal of rethinking in the teaching of
English; for those who attended came to realise that
language played a part in all teaching and learning.
They reached the conclusion that language "is the
critically determining factor in pupils' capacity to
learn" (Doughty & Thornton, 1973, p10). At the
final plenary session of the York Conference one of
the recommendations for action was:

> "To re-define our subject in the light of the
> language needs of all children and their probable
> needs in a kind of society we cannot predict." (1)

The concern placed by the delegates to these conferences
in the concept of language being a critically determining
factor in a child's learning is shown by a follow-up
conference to these two in Sydney in August of 1980.
At this conference, the areas of principal concern
included the demands on English in a multi-cultural
environment, and the inadequacies of traditional modes
of assessment.

It is the re-definition of the role of language and
indeed of the teacher of language which is one of the
concerns of this dissertation. The views of some
specific writers on this topic will now be considered.

1.2.1 <u>M.A.K. Halliday</u> shrewdly points out that when a child
comes to school he is already aware that language
can be put to serve various uses; for example, to gain
something or to regulate behaviour. "The child knows
what language is because he knows what language does"
(1973, p10). Halliday goes on to say, "Much of

1. Source: Doughty P. & Thornton G., 1973, p10.

the child's difficulty with language in school arises because he is required to accept a stereotype of language that is contrary to the insights he has gained from his own experience" (p11).[1] Halliday suggests seven models of language with the implication that teachers should be aware of these models to prevent a narrow image of language and to take account of the fact that children see all language as having meaning in a very broad sense. His models (1973, pp11-17) are:

(i)   The Instrumental Model - the model for getting things done, the "I want ..." function of language.

(ii) The Regulatory Model - the use of language to regulate the behaviour of others, the "do as I tell you" function.

(iii) The Interactional Model - the use of language in the interaction between self and others, the "me and you" function.

(iv) The Personal Model - the awareness of language as a form of individuality, the "here I come" function.

(v)   The Heuristic Model - the language to explore the environment, the "tell me why" function.

(vi) The Imaginative Model - the language to create one's own environment, the "let's pretend" function.

(vii) The Representational Model - the language for communicating something, of expressing propositions, "I've got something to tell you" function.

Halliday feels that this last, relatively advanced model, is unfortunately "the only model of language that many adults have". He feels it is unfortunate because children find it an inadequate, and in early schooling, less familiar model. His argument is that

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1. The traditional first school readers of "the cat sat on the mat" variety are a case in point as this language is out of the child's experience and furthermore, he often cannot appreciate its use, or see its meaning.

this becomes the dominant <u>model</u> of language without
necessarily being the dominant <u>function</u> of language
for the pupils. The teacher's conception of language,
according to Halliday, must incorporate all the above
models, for these are the demands on language that the
child himself makes.

The need for awareness by teachers of their own and
their pupils' uses of language is a point which will
be frequently made in this dissertation. It seems
that awareness of what language is and does, ensures
the educational development of each child.

Adams (1977, p104) in commenting on Halliday's work
suggests that awareness of what language is and what
it does will ensure that teachers provide "humane
experience" and "humane examples" and "meaningful
language tasks, rather than meaningless exercises".
In this way, he says, the implications of the
Bullock Report in terms of a 'language for life' will
be translated.

1.2.2 <u>Doughty and Thornton</u> (1973) make a significant
distinction in the language needs of children. They
distinguish (p17) between language for living, which
refers to "all the ways in which human beings make
use of language in the ordinary course of their every-
day lives", and language for learning which refers to
"all the ways in which language enters into the process
of teaching and learning". They argue that language
for learning "relates to, and derives from, language
for living" and that unless teachers recognise this,
they will face "linguistic problems" and will never
be able "to make sense of the language needs of the
learners".

In addition to this call for realising the present
level of each child's language performance and
leading him on from there to the use of language
for learning, the authors highlight the question of

change within the educational system and within
society.

In exploring the nature of these changes, they look
at the implications for the use of language for
learning, because change creates new situations and
new patterns of relationships which in turn demand
"new ways of speaking for their effective realisation".
They show that because the child is "inherently
curious", "a problem-solving animal", he needs the
language for learning and eventually becomes either
hysterical or apathetic if his language use cannot
meet the demands made on it. It is the responsibility
of the teacher, they believe, to develop a language
for learning by creating learning situations which
make "new demands upon the pupils' use of language
for learning" (op cit, p39).

The authors warn that linguistic demands change
together with any change in the curriculum and in
society, and that

> "... failure to consider sufficiently the
> linguistic demands that arise from a pattern
> of change ... [will cause pupils to] find
> themselves continuously in a situation where
> their attempts to make sense of new experience
> is frustrated by their lack of the necessary
> language for learning or language for living" (p41).

In the light of this view, it would seem that teachers
need to recognise that change in our present society
is a very relevant consideration.[1] Teachers are
bound to look for ways in which to help their pupils
cope with the world in which they live and, if language
is a vital part of everyone's world, then due considera-
tion must be given to its appropriate use. Doughty
and Thornton, then, are calling for a linguistic

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1. The necessity for change in the role of the teacher
    will be discussed in a later section.

perspective which allows pupils to meet the demands of change, an approach which would seem eminently suitable in South Africa at the present time.

1.2.3 Stubbs (1976) writing with a sociological bias, says that, because of the complex relationships between language, thinking and educational success and the power of social attitudes to language, "it is important for everyone concerned with schools and classrooms to give language careful study" (p16). He believes that classroom language should be closely studied; that this study would lead to the need to consider language and that this in turn would help teachers become clear in their own minds as to what approach to adopt to their language teaching.[1] Stubbs believes that a close study of classroom language would lead to a greater understanding of the relations between language and education and, therefore, a more varied use of language. In quoting research done by Walker and Adelman (1972, 1975, 1976) he warns that too narrow a notion of classroom language may lead to a poor appreciation of the value of the "fragmented, incomplete" kind of talk which takes place in informal contexts, and an undue appreciation of chalk-and-talk lessons.

Implied in Stubbs's work is the idea that teachers, ignorant of the varied uses of language, may find it difficult to evaluate their own use of language in the classroom. It would seem necessary to have some one person, with a knowledge of language, available to the staff to assist in any evaluation of classroom language. Further, in evaluating the use of language in group discussion, Stubbs seems to suggest that, for any honest evaluation to take place, teachers would need to control any negative or pre-conceived ideas that group discussion is merely a "pooling of

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1. Stubbs blames teacher-education to a large extent for the teachers' ignorance of language (p17).

ignorances".[1]

1.2.4 <u>Barnes</u>[2] (1971) believes, too, that language is a major means of learning and that:

> "... the pupils' uses of language for learning are strongly influenced by the teacher's language, which prescribes to them their roles as learners" (p113).

In his call for a study of the language of classroom interaction, he is convinced that it would contribute to curriculum theory and help teachers define their responsibilities for their pupils' uses of language. He says:

> "There is an urgent need in educational discussion not only for a general theory of the part played by language in cognitive learning, but for special theories of language and learning in the classroom" (<u>op cit</u>, p114).

Barnes details the aspects which would need accounting for in any theory of language and classroom learning, based on his own research of twelve lessons given to eleven-year-olds. In his earlier report of this research (1969, p74) Barnes found that some teachers failed to perceive the pedagogical implications of many of their own uses of language; and also that a descriptive study provides a potential method of helping teachers to become more aware.

Barnes concludes his later article by saying that, if all teachers could be sensitive to language in the classroom, the level of learning in all schools might be raised.

Barnes's experience would seem to bear out the necessity for teachers in schools to discuss the part played by language in learning and to analyse some of the factors of the classroom situation which limit

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1. This metaphor is borrowed from James Britton.

2. Douglas Barnes's work will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

pupils' performance.

Classroom language stems from the language habits and assumptions of teacher and pupils and so it seems that language should initially be studied in its sociolinguistic context, and performance related to kinds of learning. In this way, it seems teachers would indeed learn to be "sensitive" and "raise the level of learning" in their classrooms.

1.2.5 Britton[1] (1970) hypothesises that our organisation of our representation of the world relies very largely upon language. His general theory is that man operates either in the role of participant or in the role of spectator.

Britton sees man in the role of spectator when experience is recounted and shared, very often only for enjoyment. Man takes up the role of spectator both in his own past or future events, and other people's experiences past or future. Britton extends this role to becoming spectator "of events that have never happened and could never happen", for example, in reading a story. He defines the role of spectator as

> "... someone on holiday from the world's affairs, someone contemplating experiences, enjoying them, vividly reconstructing them perhaps - but experience in which he is not taking part" (p104).

The role of spectator facilitates the critical evaluation of moral stance, and Britton's concept could obviously be exploited by all teachers.

The role of participant, on the other hand, is that in which one is participating in one's own and the world's affairs. The language used in the role of participant is very different from the language used in the role

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1. Constant use will be made of Britton's terminology in this work.

of spectator, for the "need to act and decide character-
izes the participant role - to act and decide in
response to the social demands of human co-existence"
(op cit, p105). Britton sees the spoken form of
language in the role of spectator as gossip, and the
written form as literature, whereas the language for
informing, instructing, persuading, arguing, explain-
ing, planning, and coming to conclusions, is the
language of the participant.

In a later article, Britton (1971) outlines three main
functions of language - Transactional, Expressive and
Poetic.[1] He relates these functions to the two
roles as follows:

Participant _____|_____ Spectator
    role | role

TRANSACTIONAL————EXPRESSIVE————POETIC
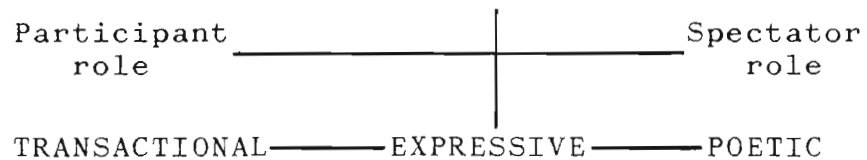
He explains the transactional function as that used by
the participant in the world's affairs. The poetic
function is where the use of language in spectator
role achieves its fullest satisfactions. The expressive
function, used most often in everyday conversation,
straddles the participant/spectator distinction as
expressive language is "loosely structured" and "free
to fluctuate".

Britton feels that this scheme may offer an approach
to the consideration of the role of language across
the curriculum and a recognition of the educational
value of spectator role activities.

It seems clear that Britton's scheme is potentially
a very useful one to teachers, for not only is it
concerned with all uses of language, but it should
help teachers to categorize language and to diagnose
where pupils may be having difficulty in the learning

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1. Britton's sub-categories of these three functions will be
found as an appendix to this work.

situation. An awareness of this scheme could possibly help teachers appreciate the linguistic demands made on pupils and be better able to plan a balanced programme for language development.

1.2.6 Rosen (1969), in an illuminating article, argues that teachers need to examine how language is working in their classrooms, for in this way, they will discover "something more general about language in education or how we use words to live". He feels that it is probably "only through such a programme of patient self-education that a Language Policy Across the Curriculum can become a working reality" (p120).

Rosen takes up the point of linguistic demands, noting that the demand for transactional writing in school is ceaseless. However, "expressive language with all its vitality and richness is the only possible soil from which transactional writing can grow" (op cit, p138). Rosen wants teachers to ensure that the linguistic demands made on pupils are commensurate with their linguistic competence, and that this competence may be developed sensitively.

It seems clear that language permeates school life and that children encounter a variety of language in the curriculum. Rosen's further suggestion that teachers should "foster the initiative" of their pupils by making fewer attempts at verbalizing ideas for their pupils so that the pupils' language will be less stereotyped, seems one which teachers would do well to adopt.

1.2.7 In stating that language is personal, Ashworth (1973) feels that teachers ought to have certain guiding principles to help them. He suggests that teachers should take into account the immaturity of the primary school child, and in considering each child's language

use consider "how effective for its purpose the
language is" and "how appropriate to the particular
purpose for which it is intended" (op cit, p22).
This diagnosis would assist in planning other
language work.

Further, Ashworth points out that the ranges of
language use to which the child is exposed need to
be considered and the child given the opportunity to
experience language over such a range. This would
require, he says, careful planning "for the extension
of a child's language experience cannot be taken for
granted" (p24). Ashworth sees language as the priority
of a primary school child and feels that with careful
planning pupils will develop language competence
which will manifest itself in the appropriate use of
English. To succeed in this, the teacher will need
to cultivate "an eye for the variety of language in
both spoken and written modes, together with a convict-
ion that such varieties have their own validity"
(op cit, p85).

Also, Ashworth believes that creativity relies heavily
on language. To develop creativity, he suggests that
children should interpret problems through discussion
in groups. A satisfactory learning situation is
achieved as the child "negotiates" rather than
"receives" a version of reality - "one that will
accommodate both his own changing perceptions and
prior knowledge and those of his group" (p119).

He sums up by hoping that teachers will extend the
language activities of children in a systematic way;
that they will design a system which moves towards
greater richness and effectiveness.

Ashworth, then, comes out strongly in support of
planning each child's language growth. It is a central
concern of the present work that such planning could
be couched in the form of a language policy for the
school, to ensure such growth.

1.2.8 Following closely on the beliefs of the aforementioned language experts, the <u>Natal Education Department</u> Guide to the Syllabus for English First Language in the Senior Primary Phase (1978) states, in accordance with the Department's policy as mentioned in the Introduction, that class teachers in the primary school have the responsibility for ensuring that language development takes places in all subjects of the curriculum, and that if mature language is to develop at all,

> "... it must grow out of the confident use
> of personal expressive language and the
> thoughtful, conscious consideration of the
> new language the teacher has to offer" (p4).

It is refreshing to note the perspicacity reflected in these words. However, the actual situation in many schools is not satisfactory because of a lack of co-ordinated planning in terms of language policy.

1.3 <u>The relationship between language and thought</u>

The relationship between language and thinking is perhaps the most important issue in any debate on language development and any subsequent language policy. Because the relationship is a major concern of this dissertation, it cannot be considered without reference to the views of language expounded by Vygotsky and Piaget. These two investigators have, perhaps, had the greatest influence on educationalists this century. A consideration of their work is pertinent as it shows the significance of language in thinking and suggests implications for teaching children.

Piaget[1] believes that the learner accommodates his

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1. Sources which refer to Piaget's theory, include:
   (i)   Donaldson M. (1978).
   (ii)   Britton J. (1970).
   (iii)   Brooks Smith et al (1970).
   (iv)   Krech D. et al (1958).

existing framework to take in new information while
at the same time assimilating and modifying this new
information to make it digestible. Language, then,
is an outside agent which is accommodated and then
assimilated: the lingual signs are accommodated to
the child's thought structures. This means that the
level of understanding modifies the language rather
than vice versa. Piaget was convinced of his view
after numerous experiments involving children manip-
ulating and understanding ideas through play which
involved no words.

The warning to teachers in Piaget's investigations
is that adult language should not be imposed on
children "or else language may even present a danger
if it is used to introduce an idea which is not yet
accessible" (as cited by Brooks Smith et al, 1970,
p133). Following this notion of Piaget's, means that
concepts taught by adults could confuse the child's
thinking and allow him to settle for a verbalised
statement of an idea without really knowing what it
means. Piaget's views greatly influenced the Nuffield
Projects in Education in England in the 1960s. These
projects followed the maxim "I do and I understand".
The new approach to mathematics in primary schools in
South Africa is another example of Piaget's influence.

Piaget does, however, view language as a vital element
in social interaction and recognises it as the means
whereby children move from "egocentricity" to a more
objective and socialized outlook.

Vygotsky (1962) on the other hand, views speech as
deriving from conversations listened to and subsequent-
ly shared. The social interchange comes first and
only later does speech become monologue and, finally,
"inner speech". Vygotsky, therefore, does not speak
in terms of 'egocentric speech' developing into
'socialized speech', but of social speech developing
in two directions for two distinct uses. The social

speech develops in complexity and becomes more communicative, while the monologue becomes internalized to become "inner speech", a function in itself - the child "thinks" words rather than pronouncing them. Beyond this plane of 'inner speech', according to Vygotsky, lies the plane of thought. He concludes:

> "Thought and language, which reflect reality
> in a way different from that of perception,
> are the key to the nature of human conscious-
> ness. Words play a central part not only in
> the development of thought but in the historical
> growth of consciousness as a whole" (p153).

Vygotsky's view shows a concern for dialogue between adult and child, unlike Piaget's view which supports discovery before adult language is introduced.

However, the stages in development of thinking of the child postulated by both these men correspond roughly.

To summarize, it may be said that teachers can benefit from the work of both these theorists. This would involve embracing a concept of personal discovery and exploration by the child and allowing language to play a major part in this exploration; a concept whereby the language of the teacher and of the child is brought into interplay at every possible stage.

In the Bullock Committee's view (1975, p50), there are certain important inferences to be drawn from a study of the relationship between language and learning. These are:

> "(i)   All genuine learning involves discovery,
>   and it is as ridiculous to suppose that
>   teaching begins and ends with 'instruction'
>   as it is to suppose that 'learning by
>   discovery' means leaving children to their
>   own resources;
> (ii)   language has a heuristic function; that
>   is to say, a child can learn by talking
>   and writing as certainly as he can by
>   listening and reading;
> (iii)   to exploit the process of discovery
>   through language in all its uses is the
>   surest means of enabling a child to master
>   his mother tongue."

It seems that these current views on language and
learning, and their relation to the personal growth
of the child imply a particular model or view of
teaching. Therefore, an examination of some of the
categories or 'types' of teacher, as described by
selected writers, will follow, in an effort to
identify the most appropriate kind of role performance
for a teacher involved in the real language develop-
ment of pupils.

1.4   Teacher 'types' and their effectiveness in the
       implementation of a language policy

Hargreaves (1975), Postman and Weingartner (1971),
Scheffler (1967), Barnes (1973), Esland (1971), amongst
others, have identified and described teacher 'types'
in detail. As there is considerable overlap only
those categories named by Hargreaves, Barnes and
Esland will be mentioned here. The writer recognises
the dangers in being too categoric - for example,
overlap between 'types' is possible; each category
being extreme by definition, no one person fitting
a description exactly. However, descriptions of this
sort are useful in considering the kind of teacher
best suited to implement a language and learning
programme which ensures the development of each child.

Hargreaves (1975) distinguishes three clear types
which he calls "liontamers", "entertainers" and
"New Romantics".

Hargreaves sees liontamers as essentially reflecting
a nineteenth-century model of teaching which is
surviving well in this century.[1] In this model,
the teacher conditions her pupils through reinforcement

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1.   Bullock comments adversely on this practice on p4; as does
      A. Toffler in his book 'Future Shock', (1970).

schedules[1], and demands pupil motivation.
"Ultimately the pupils must learn what is required
because the teacher says so and it is the pupils'
duty to obey" (p165).

The entertainer's basic assumption is similar to that
of the liontamer's - pupils do not naturally want to
learn. Rather than driving in education in the
liontamer manner, it is "drawn out" by making educa-
tion "fun". The teacher spends time in preparing
work that will be enjoyable, based, wherever possible,
on the interests of the pupils.

The New Romantics, on the other hand, believe that
pupils are naturally motivated to learn but lose this
motivation through poor schooling. In this model, the
task of the teacher is to facilitate learning by
encouraging an attitude of inquiry in her pupils. There
is a high degree of pupil participation in this model.

Barnes (1973) describes two extreme types of teacher
noting that most teachers fall somewhere along the
continuum. He names the two extremes as "Transmission"
and "Interpretation" teachers.

Barnes notes that the former "sees language as a kind
of speaking tube". Knowledge is transmitted down
this "speaking tube" or received back through it from
the pupils. The knowledge passes back and forth
unchanged. This type of teacher "puts great emphasis
on pupils' ability to reproduce information" and
assesses pupils' language ability in this light.
Discussion for this teacher means cross-questioning,
and writing means reproducing what was said in the
lesson. The pupils, according to this type of teacher,
will not be ready to think "until they have mastered
a great deal of information by rote".

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1. According to Hargreaves, this derives from the influence of
    the rationale of educational psychologists such as Skinner.

The Interpretation type teacher "will emphasize language as a means of interpretation". Discussion and writing are ways of helping the pupil think more effectively. Language "overlaps with curriculum on one side and with classroom interaction on the other". This teacher attempts to give the pupil the ability to actively make sense of the world around him.

Esland (1971) distinguishes between two psychological models for pedagogic purposes - the psychometric model and the epistemological model. The psychometric model is based on the empiricist tradition of objectives, therefore seeing the child "as object". The epistemological model is based on a concern with how the child "actively constructs and arranges his knowledge of the world in his developing interpretational schema" (p89). Esland sees these models as having fundamentally different assumptions about human nature and consciousness, each having its own consequences for the communication of knowledge. The psychometric model, he believes is "dehumanising" as it forces passivity on the learner - the child is "world-produced" rather than a "world-producer". In direct opposition to this, is the epistemological model where criteria for 'bad' teaching are the very criteria upheld in the other paradigm.

> "In an epistemological paradigm 'bad' teaching
> is associated with the reification of knowledge -
> that is, as 'facts to be learned'; and with
> weak Versteheu - the inability to appropriate
> the consciousness of the child" (1971, p96).

It is not surprising, therefore, that Esland believes that theoretical knowledge of teaching is essential and that teachers only acquiring techniques and practical suggestions will be low-status teachers.

Esland would seem to imply that a greater understanding of consciousness demands change to a more interpretive attitude and teaching style.

It is submitted that teachers, in implementing a language policy successfully, would need to be more

of the interpretation type for reasons which, it is
hoped, will become clear in due course.

1.5   Advantages in the teacher adopting an "interpretation"
       model in the implementation of a language policy

The Bullock Committee (1975, paragraph 12.3) state,

> "For language to play its full role as a means
> of learning, the teacher must create in the
> classroom an environment which encourages a
> wide range of language uses."

If a teacher is not creating this environment, it
seems clear that there is need for her to change.
The primary school teacher may enforce her own defini-
tion of a situation on pupils. As Hargreaves (op cit,
p115) puts it, "The behaviour of the pupils will be
highly dependent on the teacher's behaviour" and if
such behaviour does not facilitate the wide use of
language, harm will result.

The primary school teacher has it in her power to
initiate interpretive and integrative work in her
classroom.

> "The primary school teacher responsible for
> the whole or most of the schoolwork of his
> class already has it in his power to establish
> a language policy across the curriculum.
> Whether or not he is taking that opportunity
> will depend upon the extent to which the
> various uses of language permeate all the other
> learning activities." (Bullock, idem).

That language should "permeate all the other learning
activities" has become an accepted belief of modern
educationalists, psychologists and linguists. Bruner
(1968), among others, makes it clear that a grasp of
the full range of the potentialities of language is
an essential tool in the advancement of social man.
Bernstein (1971, p60) discusses integration of work
in the classroom showing how this will lead to a concern

and emphasis on "how knowledge is created" rather
than acquiring "states of knowledge". This integration
would require an emphasis on language for, of necessity,
language would permeate all the learning activities.
This, then, is the inquiry or interpretation model
of teaching in action.

The justification for a change to an integrative,
interpretive type of teaching is clearly mapped out
by modern educationalists and other researchers. What
some selected writers have said on the matter of
change of role in teaching will now be considered.

Elvin (1974, p20) writes,

> "One thing that is certain is that the speed
> at which we are acquiring new knowledge will
> dictate less, not more, specialisation in
> school ... the very speed of change is making
> nonsense of early specialisation ... what is
> necessary ... is to educate young people so
> that they will be able to understand and
> master the new processes that will come in."

Postman and Weingartner (1971), in their discussion
of change, point out that, although change has always
been present in education, what is new is the degree
of change, caused by the 'knowledge explosion'. They
quote from A.N. Whitehead who points out that the
educational tradition

> "... is warped by the vicious assumption that
> each generation will substantially live amid
> the conditions governing the lives of its
> fathers and will transmit those conditions to
> mould with equal force the lives of its
> children. We are living in the first period
> of human history for which this assumption is
> false" (p24).

In order for pupils to cope with change, the authors
argue, teachers will need to change. They will need
to teach what is worth knowing and how to pursue what
is worth knowing. Unless schools change to an inquiry
method, they warn, pupils will "go into a severe case
of 'future shock'".

John Watts (1974) shows how historically, teachers have resisted change and, although they have had the authority to change, they have "lacked the confidence to do so"[1] (p126). He warns that

> "The urgent need for change in schools will cause that change to come from outside pressure and initiative if it is not forthcoming internally" (p134).

Nash (1976), in his discussion of pupil learning, pleads for more critical awareness in teachers. He cites research done by Keddie in 1971 which shows that, although teachers _said_ they were working on integrated curriculum,

> "... they still maintain ideal typifications constructed on the basis of their experience of children learning within the context of a non-integrated curriculum" (p80).

What this means, it would seem, is that, although teachers are recognising the educational reasons for change, they are not actually, in any marked way, changing "type". To borrow McLuhan's metaphor, too many teachers suffer from the "rearview-mirror syndrome", in an attempt to cling to orthodoxy and tradition without realising that a new model of teaching is a new model of teaching and _not_ a refinement or modification of an older classroom environment.

The writer now proceeds to infer from the references given, some implications for language teaching.

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1. "Teaching is largely a matter of confidence and, if the system of teacher training does not create confidence either in teachers or the employers of teachers, there is something radically wrong." (Britton J, 'The teaching Profession and the Education of Teachers' quoted in _Role Conflict and the Teacher_ by Grace G.R., 1972, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London).

1.6   Some implications of change in the role of the
       teacher for language teaching

       In order to exploit to the full, situations that
       promote the language development of the pupils, it
       seems that teachers need to analyse their behaviour
       and change it where necessary.

       This change would involve a new view of language,
       that is, seeing language as a major means of learning,
       which in turn should lead to a new view of learning.

            "The teacher's language model and the interaction
            he is prepared to allow are important indications
            of his view of learning and of his priorities."
                                            (Lewis, 1975, p64)

       It seems vital that teachers adopt a view of learning
       which allows for the development of the full potential
       of the child; for on this view rests the learner's
       image of himself. Authorities agree that the most
       influential factor in school learning is how a
       learner sees himself. This view of himself depends
       very largely on how his teachers see him and how he
       interprets his position in the hierarchical structure
       of the school.

       Mead (1934, pp173-178), in offering an analysis of
       the social genesis of the self, and believing that
       the self arises from social experience, developed the
       concept of the self as consisting of two parts - the
       "I" and the "me".

            "The 'I' is the response of the organism to
            the attitudes of the others; the 'me' is the
            organised set of attitudes of others which one
            assumes oneself. The attitudes of the others
            contribute to the definition of the organized
            'me', and one reacts toward that as an 'I' "(p175).

       Placing Mead's theory in the context of the school,
       it may be seen that the child takes cognizance of the
       attitudes of the school and its teachers and then
       responds to the school "me". Because primary school
       children spend a great deal of their school day with

one teacher, these teachers can have a very strong
influence on children's self-image. It seems difficult
for children to resist this influence on self-image.
"They are what their teachers say they are" (Newton,
1978, p73).

What is of significance is that the learner's view
of himself depends in turn upon the teacher's view
of herself. Whatever role she assigns herself will
be the one to which the pupil must relate. Unquestion-
ably, this chosen role will be closely related to a
particular view of learning and it is the view
which influences the learner.

> "There is no doubt that pupils quickly become
> aware, implicitly of the model of learning
> which the teacher and the school promotes."
> (Nash, 1974, as quoted by Newton, op cit, p80)

The teacher's view of learning and her subsequent
language style may be seen as the crux of any success-
ful and productive implementation of a language policy.
In such implementation, teachers need to criticize
their own views and approaches and adopt a rationale
that is consistent with and supportive of practices
which encourage the language and learning growth of
the pupils. Lewis (op cit, p44) offers what he
considers are crucial questions which should be
answered by any teacher in analysing or justifying
her classroom practice:

> "1. What is our teaching model and how is this
>   made apparent in our classroom language?
>
> 2. How might our language model affect the
>   learning of our pupils?
>
> 3. What are the learning outcomes of our
>   teaching model, and how are these evident
>   in what the children say?
>
> 4. Are our models of learning (and thus of
>   using language) adequate when compared with
>   the way learning actually appears to operate?"

The answers elicited from these questions could be
an indication of how a teacher views learning and
language and a starting point from which to move to

a role more conducive to a productive learning
environment in the classroom.

The work of Esland (1971) suggests that teachers who
are of the interpretive type will, in their open-ended
approach to knowledge, operate a more integrated
curriculum. The pedagogical implication of the
dereification of knowledge, he explains, is that "the
organization of the curriculum into clearly bounded
zones can no longer be taken as axiomatic" (p96).
This epistemological paradigm is surely the model
which allows language to be central to learning right
across the curriculum.

Flanders (1970), amongst others, has shown that, if
teachers adopt a more flexible behaviour and include
a high degree of pupil participation in the interaction
in the classroom, pupils develop more positive attitudes
toward the teacher and the schoolwork and learning
accordingly is increased. Flanders (op cit, p15)
quotes from the Association for Supervision and
Curriculum Development Yearbook of 1962 to show that
creativity is only possible if initiated by the learner
and that this creativity cannot occur in a teacher-
dominated, close-ended classroom:

> "Creativity is not learned from restraint. It
> is a product of the lowering or removal of barriers.
> It is a matter of being different, of daring to
> change, of venturing forth ... Conformity and
> creativity are essentially antithetical - what
> produces one tends to destroy the other."

It seems justified to say that, unless teachers adopt
more of an "interpretation" model of teaching, pupils
will not be given the best opportunity to use language
and their individual growth in language will accordingly
be stunted. Further, because the success of a language
policy surely rests on the language development of
each pupil, a classroom atmosphere which encourages
personal use of language by each pupil as often as
possible seems called for.

1.7   Conclusions

The work of the cited experts has heavily influenced
the development of policy in the Western World
regarding the teaching of language in primary schools.
The following conclusions derive:

1.7.1   Language is a major means of learning, therefore the
child must use his own personal language, rather than
an imitation of the language of others as a means to
his own learning.

1.7.2   A study of the linguistic demands made in the classroom,
and an awareness of each child's performance in these
demands, would lead to systematic planning to equip
each child with the competence to meet these demands.

1.7.3   A knowledge of some of the models, functions and
theories of language such as those proposed by
Halliday, Britton, and Doughty and Thornton, would
give teachers insight into language and the language
difficulties arising in the classroom.

1.7.4   An analysis of classroom language would show the
weaknesses and strengths of that language and would
allow for adjustments and planning for a variety of
language uses in the classroom.

1.7.5   Teachers need to help their pupils cope with change
and the linguistic demands of change.

1.7.6   Someone with a knowledge of what language is and what
language does might need to assist teachers in
evaluating and analysing classroom language.

1.7.7 An exploration into the functions of language would
       encourage teachers to exchange what is often a
       traditional role for a more effective one. A recogni-
       tion of the major role of language in schools and its
       use in learning would, it seems, lead teachers to adopt
       approaches more conducive to the individual language
       development of each pupil.

       These conclusions could perhaps be combined in one
       over-riding observation - the need for a language
       policy in each school. In the designing of a language
       policy for a school, teachers would have the opportunity
       to explore the use they personally made of language,
       and would share this in discussion with other members
       of staff. A combined effort of this nature could
       lead to an awareness of classroom language that would
       make for "greater richness and effectiveness".

       This awareness and concern for the educational needs
       of the child would possibly also initiate a demand
       for greater involvement of teachers in curriculum
       planning. Clearly a personal involvement in curriculum
       planning should create an attitude of responsibility,
       interest and satisfaction in teachers. This would be
       preferable to the present position in, for example,
       Natal where syllabuses are imposed upon schools to
       be implemented with what appears, at times, to be
       little interest or fore-thought among teachers.

       The present chapter has been concerned with the move
       in the teaching of language from a "skills" model to
       the more contemporary view of "personal growth".
       Teaching models have been examined and it has been
       shown that an "epistemological" paradigm is the more
       suitable paradigm to adopt if the concern is for the
       child and his growth in language and learning.

       The next three chapters provide a closer examination
       of spoken language, reading and writing and the
       development of the child's potential in terms of

each of these as a component of a language policy, though, as pointed out before, the essence of such a policy is that the various modes of language interact.

CHAPTER TWO

SPOKEN LANGUAGE AS A COMPONENT OF A LANGUAGE POLICY

2.1   Introduction

> "The speaking voice precedes the writing pen
> and the reading eye in the life-history of
> every normal child."
>
> (Rosen, 1971, p162)

Most children learn to talk before they come to
school, because they need to. Many reasons connected
with the individual's own growth and development
render speech absolutely necessary. Halliday (1973,
p10) explains the young child's awareness of the
primacy of speech:

> "The child knows what language is because
> he knows what language does ... He has used
> language in many ways - for the satisfaction
> of material and intellectual needs, for the
> mediation of personal relationships, the
> expression of feelings and so on."

Of all the modes of language, speaking is the prime
one because it is the means of communication which
dominates the practical lives of the overwhelming
majority of people. It is through talk that ideas
are shaped and modified, questions and doubts voiced
and social relationships established. Given that:

> "The uniqueness of language derives from the
> fact that it is, at one and the same time, a
> capability that man acquires through growing
> up as a member of a particular society and the
> major means by which he can acquire all the other
> capabilities ..."
>
> (Doughty & Thornton, 1973, p43)

it seems relevant in this study to consider the part
which talk, as a form of language, plays in learning.
The present chapter is concerned with the further
development of talk rather than with initial acquisition
of spoken language. However, the writer recognises
that a knowledge of how a child acquires the early use

of language is necessary to an understanding of the child's language competence and performance, and therefore to any assessment of the child's language ability.

2.2 A matter of terminology

Many terms are used to refer to the activity of spoken language. 'Oral work', 'talk', 'talking', 'oracy'[1], 'speech', 'oral communication', are but a few. The writer chooses to use the term 'talk'[2], for its use seems to stress the naturalness of the process and connects it to the normal way of communicating in everyday life. It is probable that "naturalness" would greatly increase the value of talk in schools.

2.3 A review of the place of talk in schools

The development of linguistics in the latter part of this century has shown that what is acquired in language is the structure and use of language in historical, social and psychological settings. Linguists are mainly concerned with spoken forms of language, and this possibly accounts for the recent interest shown in talk. Whereas earlier, focus was on literacy with spoken language playing a minor role as an aid to literacy (Wilkinson, 1965, p13), oracy is now seen as a prime and vital component of language ability.

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1. A term offered by A. Wilkinson (1965).

2. Britton (1971) uses this term in an article he titles 'Talking to Learn'. The term 'talk' is also favoured by Barnes (1971) and Rosen (1971).

It is perhaps the work done by Wilkinson on oral communication which has led to the emphasis now given to oracy. He believes (op cit, p14) that an "educated person should be numerate, orate and literate", and that the main job of the teacher "is to provide situations which call forth increasing powers of utterance" (p63). In his description of oracy, Wilkinson also notes the importance in education of effective listening.

The diversity and tempo of change in modern society has brought about a situation, it is suggested, in which the individual is increasingly at risk, unless he can be flexible in his capacity to make sense of the world. It would seem that the ability to cope with change depends largely on command of language. Talk, being the principal means of relating to others and of making sense of the world, assumes an import- ance in education which it did not previously have.

> "Spoken language undoubtedly enjoys a status
> in education which it did not previously possess
> in the twentieth century ..." (Dobie, 1976, p15).

Dobie (op cit, p23) in establishing the centrality of oral communication in the curriculum quotes Britton who notes that whatever kind of language activity we value educationally,

> "We have to recognise that it is closely
> related to speech, and that speech is the focal,
> the recruiting area for all linguistic competence ...
> Therefore, priority must be given to speaking
> in schools."

The centrality of oral communication in the curriculum has been further recognised by published official reports in Britain.

In 1963 the Newsom Report (para 86) recognised that development of spoken language should be a central concern of education.

The Plowden Report (1967, p196) recognised the unique
role of language as an organiser of experience and
so found "every justification for the conversation
which is a characteristic feature of the contemporary
primary school".

The Bullock Report (1975, p144) sees a change of
emphasis from teaching to learning which means that
"talk now occupies a position of central importance".

The Natal Education Department Syllabus for English
First Language in the Primary School (1977, p3) suggests
that spoken communication should be purposefully
motivated. "The pupil must not only appreciate the
reason for communicating but also have something to
communicate."

Dobie (op cit, Chap 1) gives other examples of recent
developments in curriculum structure which stress the
importance of communication and, specifically, of
speech.

This official recognition of the importance of talk
has, no doubt, lent further impetus to the introduction
of opportunities for more kinds of talk in the classroom,
and, indeed, for opportunities for talk in the wider
context of the school and the community.

The recognition of the importance of talk in the
curriculum combined with recent thinking on language
acquisition and development has also led educationalists
to appreciate the importance of talk that is less overt;
the way talk is used in the school environment. Some
writers (e.g. Adams & Pearce, 1974) refer to this
aspect of talk in schools as part of the "hidden
curriculum" or "language between the curriculum" -
the talk which is apart from that which takes place
in a planned situation. It seems necessary to consider
this kind of talk for it may be seen as a 'model' of
language use offered to the child.

2.4   The school as a 'model' for talk

> "Schools are language-saturated institutions.
> ... Teachers explain, lecture, question, exhort,
> reprimand and make jokes. Pupils listen, reply,
> make observations, call out, mutter, whisper
> and make jokes. Small knots gather round over
> books, lathes, easels and reports, or over
> nothing in classrooms, labs, workshops, craftrooms,
> corridors and toilets to chatter, discuss, argue,
> quarrel, plan, plot, teach each other, using
> words to stroke or strike."
>   (Rosen, 1971, p119)

If language development is of central concern to the
school, then an implication which may be drawn from
Rosen's statement is that schools will need to pay
attention to the 'model' of talk they offer. Adams
& Pearce (1974, p132) point out that because the school
environment commands some measure of prestige in the
eyes of the pupils, it is a "source of language models
to the children in the school".

The way in which a school staff talk to pupils in
the corridors, between lessons, in assembly, on the
playing fields, in the daily routine and, indeed, to
each other, may be seen to assume importance and
potency when considered as a model for communication.
It is generally accepted that pupils learn much more
than the school consciously sets out to teach them;
the way talk operates in the school environment may
be seen as one of these unconscious learning situations.

A conclusion which may be drawn is that attention
needs to be paid to every single utterance made in
the school, for what the pupils learn will depend, it
seems, on the school's awareness of the effect language
has on other people. I.A. Richards (as cited by
Postman & Weingartner, 1969, p104), in criticising
the trivial ways in which language is studied at
school explains,

> "... a deeper and more thorough study of our use
> of words is at every point a study of our ways of
> living. It touches all the modes of interpretive

activity - in techniques, and in social inter-
course - upon which civilization depends."

Linguists have shown that children have accomplished
much in the acquisition of language by the time they
enter school. It seems, then, that one of the main
responsibilities of the school is to show what language
does in terms which provide humane experience and
humane examples. This implies a close examination
by the staff of many aspects of schooling.

It means, for instance, an examination of the staff's
own use of language and their awareness of all the
functions for which language is used.

It implies an examination of each teacher's attitude
to children, to their learning, and to the language
ability that each child brings with him to the school,
however unenriched this may seem to be to the school.
As Bruner (1966, p126f) has stated, "the corpus of
learning ... is reciprocal". He points out that the
teacher should not be so much a model to imitate, but
a person with whom to interact.

> "It is that the teacher can become a part of
> the student's internal dialogue - somebody
> whose respect he wants, someone whose standards
> he wishes to make his own" (idem).

It is suggested that only by taking into account the
various socioeconomic differences of the pupils and
the effect these have on language experience, will
the staff of a school respect the language of the child,
for example, seeing it not as inferior but different;
thereby allowing for a kind of reciprocity that
engenders respect for the teacher and the pupil.

It seems that an examination of this nature may bring
a staff to a collective decision, a common policy,
on what language climate is the best to offer in the
school.

Having established the need for teachers to consider their use of language in the school environment, the writer proceeds to a study of the need for various opportunities for pupil talk, both within the framework of a lesson and outside this context.

2.5   Opportunities for talk outside the lesson

> "The task is not how to teach language, but how to enhance the language learning already taking place."
>   (Brossell, 1977, p41)

Traditionally, the only useful purpose in pupil talk seen by schools, was in the 'elocution' lesson where value judgements on accent prevailed. Dobie (op cit, p252f) shows that the emphasis has shifted to a concern for "fluency" and "variety". He sees "appropriateness of a particular utterance" as being the determinant of acceptability rather than merely the aesthetic quality of its sound. Dobie concludes that an understanding of register, the appropriacy of language, is an important part of speech education. An implication is that schools will need to enhance the opportunities for pupil talk to encourage an awareness of appropriacy.

Reference has been made to the influence of sociologists on views of language and learning. Their work would seem to be of significance here. Brossel (op cit, p42) explains,

> "Growth in language reflects personal as well as social development, and thus teaching for language growth is, in the deepest sense, teaching for integrated human development."

Growth in social development, it is suggested, may be accomplished in school if pupils are given the opportunity to be protagonists in social situations. For example, pupils could greet and host visitors to the school, answer the school telephone, give addresses

of welcome and thanks on some occasions, organise
school assembly or guide student teachers or new
pupils around the school. Moving out from the school
to the wider community should give further opportunities
to experiment with talk with as many kinds of people
as possible.

These approaches may be seen as subversive because
they subvert the notion of education as a closed,
mysterious, hierarchical activity in which the pupil
has an insignificant and passive role to play. Approaches
offering the pupil the opportunity to develop his
language in the wider social context may be seen to
assert the vitality of the pupil's own language as
the central means to the successful use of appropriate
forms of language.

Since speech is a participatory event,

> "... the speech of any one participant is
> affected by his interpretation of the speech
> event and his analysis of what is appropriate
> to it."
>
> (Brenneis & Lein, 1977, p65)

It may be argued that the more genuine speech events
pupils experience, the more aware they will become
of the value of talk and the importance of appropriate
talk. Adams & Pearce (op cit, p52) point out, "In
an increasingly oral society, this is vital for their
future effectiveness and happiness".

Thus far, it has been shown that talk as a means of
communication is a vital component of any primary
school. The writer now wishes to make a distinction
between this kind of talk and talking to learn.

Torbe (1979, p113) makes the following distinction
between language for communication and language for
learning:

> "When we use language to find out what we think
> and feel, we are learning. When we use language
> to tell others what we think and feel, we are
> communicating."

In a gross way, this may be likened to Vygotsky's
"inner speech" for learning and "socialised speech"
for communication. While recognising that there is
an inevitable interaction between these two kinds of
talk, the writer wishes to focus attention on talk
for learning for, quite clearly, in the context of
the classroom, it is difficult to 'communicate' until
the child has learned what it is he has to communicate.

2.6   Talking to learn

Since language is the working medium of the classroom
and the major agent of learning, talk would seem to
have dynamic possiblities for aiding that learning:

> "Oracy we see as central to classroom activities.
> In talk, the first attempts to understand
> experience may occur; tentative hypotheses may
> be suggested; half-formulated ideas may be
> tried out against others' response."
> (Nate (England) evidence to the Bullock Committee
> as quoted by Dobie, 1976, p27)

There are voices of dissent in the idea of talk being
an aid to learning. For example, Froome (1975, p558)
believes, "It is doubtful if children's talk in school
does much to imporve their knowledge". Nevertheless,
there is a large amount of literature to support the
idea that children can use talk as a means of learning.

By making a distinction between "school knowledge"
and "action knowledge", Barnes (1976) has shown
conclusively that until a child can verbalize his
learning or knowledge in his own language, he cannot
call it his own. Barnes defines "action knowledge"
as the pupils' "assimilation of knowledge to their
own purposes" (p82). He sees talking to learn as

important,

> "... in that it is a major means by which
> learners explore the relationship between what
> they already know, and new observations or
> interpretations which they meet" (p81).

Barnes may be regarded as a pioneer researcher in
this regard. His initial research in 1966[1], in
which he investigated the presence or absence of
links in patterns in the teacher's linguistic
behaviour with that of children's learning, led
Barnes to explore further, classroom language and
the possibilities of small group learning. Barnes
(1976, p29) argues for a social context which supports
his belief that,

> "The more a learner controls his own language
> strategies, and the more he is enabled to think
> aloud, the more he can take responsibility for
> formulating explanatory hypotheses and evaluating
> them."

Turning in particular to the primary school and
exploratory findings on talk there, the following
are noted:

The importance of a face-to-face talking situation,
and the provision for such situations, is stressed
by Mallett and Newsome (1977, p139). In this situation,
they believe, the pupil has the opportunity for
gathering

> "... the essential data for building up his
> language and for forming some notions about the
> appropriateness of his reaction to reality".

Tough (1975) also expresses the importance of face-
to-face encounters and speculates that the assignment
card/worksheet system pervading many contemporary
primary schools may, in fact, reduce the opportunity
for interaction which she sees as necessary to the
development of enquiry and thinking skills, because
such methods may reduce the amount of talk.

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1. Reported in Barnes D. & Britton J. & Rosen H. (1966).

Wells (1980), in his five year follow-up study of children's language development, came to the conclusion that children needed scope to initiate and take responsibility for their further learning. Wells sees this scope as being a matter of communication:

> "More attention needs to be given to teacher-pupil talk, as the opportunities for pupils to learn are different according to the type of conversation and discussion that the teacher engages in with them" (piv).

One of the most detailed studies of primary school children's language is that of Rosen & Rosen (1973). They give many reasons for children to be given opportunities to talk. As this study was a long and well documented scrutiny of classroom language, it seems pertinent to list some of the reasons given and conclusions made by these writers.

One reason given for children to talk on their own is that "even the best kind of teacher participation is sometimes deaf to children's pre-occupations" (p52). Rosen & Rosen see talk, however limited, as a necessary agent to language development.

> "Given a challenge which they cannot meet from their existing vocabulary they make efforts to use language creatively and inventively ... Though language is public, possessed by all with common meanings, yet we must all re-discover it for ourselves, making the possession individual and unique" (ibid, p55).

The authors view "verbal drilling" as non-productive, the alternative being planned learning activities which give rise to talk. "Exploring the environment must include the verbal exploration of the environment" (ibid, p56). Exploration of this nature would include two kinds of talk which the writers believe are crucial to learning - "talking-while-doing" and "talking-while-observing" (p58). They see "talking-about-the-past" as the other category and equally as necessary -"Life does not exist as a vast anthology of unedited narratives. We impose narrative on it..." (ibid, p57). Having observed many children in many

primary schools, Rosen & Rosen (ibid, p64) came to
the conclusion that because children have so much
linguistic competence in reserve, teachers need to
create situations which draw on these latent resources
urging children towards the widest range of language
use.

By placing the emphasis on pupil talk, the child's
talk would, clearly, not only be accepted but developed.
This acceptance of the child's language would seem to be
a vital factor in any child's language progress.

> "Disapproval of the child's own language ...
> effectively undermines his confidence, and
> shows that you [the teacher] don't much care
> for him, his home, his friends nor anything
> that is his."
> (Creber, 1974, p22)

Social factors such as cultural and linguistic
diversity may aggravate the child's ability to profit
at school. Bernstein's concept of "frame" is useful
in explaining this possible aggravation. He defines
frame as

> "... the degree of control teacher and pupils
> possess over the selection, organization, and
> pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received
> in the pedagogical relationship" (Bernstein,
> 1973, p68).

He explains that stratified or closed schools would
employ strong frames which realized types of collect-
ion codes whereas more open schools would employ
weak frames which would realize types of integrated
codes. Clearly, cultural and linguistic diversity
would be appreciated in open schools in a way not
possible in a closed school. Moreover, it would seem
that in a more open school the realization of the
elaborated codes used in many situations in school
would not create alienation, but rather offer a
different means by which an "exploration of conscious-
ness" were possible.

It is suggested that, if the child is given the
opportunity through a wide range of language experiences
to develop his linguistic competence, that latent
resource recognized by researchers to be in every
child other than the most severely handicapped, he
may develop interest and ability in analysing, discussing
predicting and manipulating the world about him.

Having established by these references the importance
of talk in the primary curriculum, the writer proceeds
to a consideration of those classroom situations
which generate children's talk.

2.7   Small group talk: a favourable means of learning

How much pupil talk is generated by the traditional
class lesson? The work done by Flanders and by
Bellack is much quoted to support the view that
children are not given sufficient opportunity for
talk in this type of lesson.

Flanders (1970), on the basis of his many analyses
of classroom interaction, put forward his 'two thirds'
finding: two thirds of every lesson is made up of
talk, and two thirds of the talk comes from the teacher.
What concerned Flanders was the lack of quality of
this talk in lessons observed. He found (p13f) that

> "... more than two-thirds of all teacher questions
> are concerned with narrow lines of interrogation
> which stimulate an expected response; that very
> little teacher talk is devoted to a consideration
> of ideas or opinions expressed by the pupils;
> questions are infrequently asked by pupils and
> only 20% of these are thought-provoking questions,
> and, 'structure' in learning activities is
> established by the teacher."

What is of interest in his findings though, is that
when classroom interaction shifts towards a serious
consideration of pupil ideas, making allowance for
pupil initiative and more flexible behaviour on the
part of the teacher, pupils have

> "... more positive attitudes toward the
> teacher and the schoolwork, and measures
> of subject-matter learning adjusted for
> initial ability will be higher" (ibid, p14).

It is not surprising, therefore, that Flanders believes that every teacher should analyse her teaching behaviour in order for it to be more consistent with contemporary educational trends. While the work of Flanders has been criticised (see, for example, Furlong & Edwards, 1977), his study may be seen as a useful indication of the kind of talk that <u>should</u> be taking place in the classroom - talk that is initiated more by the pupils than by the teacher.

Bellack et al (1966) explain the shortcomings of teacher-to-class type teaching by defining it as the teaching game, involving a series of moves, because "pupils and teachers follow a set of implicit rules with few deviations" (p237). A summary of their descriptive model follows:

(i)   The structuring move.
       This gives the setting.

(ii)   The soliciting move.
       This is intended to elicit a response, frequently
       verbal.

(iii) The responding move.
       This fulfills the expectations of the soliciting
       move; it gives the required response.

(iv)   The reacting move.
       This modifies or evaluates what has previously
       been said.

As can be noted, the pupils are involved in move (iii) only, and then in a limited and tightly controlled way. Clearly, this kind of interaction is not conducive to pupil initiative.

It is worth noting that this "game" is most likely to be the one favoured by the transmission type teacher who operates within a paradigm heavily influenced by

the educational psychology of behaviourism. It was argued in the previous chapter that this perspective is a form of social control which is too deterministic; it implicitly presents the child as a passive receiver.

While not discounting the value of a traditional class lesson (one can learn some things by listening), there would seem to be justifiable argument against using this kind of approach, if children are not given the opportunity to talk.

In his attempt to contribute to curriculum thoery, Barnes (1976) studied children's use of speech in the course of learning. His contribution to this line of thought is sufficiently valuable to be quoted here in some detail. The present writer selects seven recommendations made by Barnes for mention, regarding these as worthwhile ingredients to any fruitful learning situation:

(i)   An 'open' approach to discussion which develops a hypothetical style of learning (p52);

(ii)   exploratory and hypothetical questions asked by the child should be deliberately encouraged (p55);

(iii)   the opportunity to re-articulate knowledge, to re-interpret ideas (p55);

(iv)   the social element of verbalizing for one another (p59);

(v)   some emotional commitment to the task in hand (p88);

(vi)   collaboration to develop the ability to stand outside one's own knowledge and see it as relative (p91);

(vii)   the learner himself must take responsibility for the adequacy of his thinking (p115).

These seven recommendations would seem to describe, to a large measure, the kind of approach an 'interpretation type' teacher would adopt - the kind of

teacher who would, to use Esland's (1971) descrip-
tion, be concerned with how the child actively
constructs and arranges his knowledge of the world.

Most research into classroom interaction has been
based on the 'traditional' role of the teacher - the
teacher-to-class variety. Furlong & Edwards (1977)
criticise the sociolinguistic value of this kind of
research believing that the observers have been
influenced by their commonsense notions of what the
situation was like because it was too familiar.
Implied in their paper, is the warning that, when
'traditional' roles of teaching are abandoned, the
critic's 'general knowledge' of classrooms will no
longer be of use to him and he will need to be careful
of condemning the validity of findings and recommend-
ations made for other roles of teaching. Because the
work of Barnes and his associates has been an analysis
of informal group discussion, where the structure of
the talk has been inseparable from the structure of
the social relationships within the group, Furlong
& Edwards (op cit, p127) see this work "as proper
sociolinguistic analysis", believing that "Social
and linguistic information are only comparable when
studied within the same theoretical framework". The
inseparability of talk and social relationships is
further highlighted in a study by Barnes and Todd;
a description of which follows.

In a study of learning in small groups, Barnes & Todd
(1977) noted four categories of collaborative moves
which aided group discussion. These were the (i)
initiating move, often begun with 'I think ...' or
'I don't think ...'; (ii) an eliciting move to
sustain discussion - requests to continue or expand
or support or for information; (iii) an extending move -
taking up an idea where another left off; (iv) a
qualifying move which led from extending - adding to
what had been said or recognising contradictions and
reconciliations. Barnes & Todd noted that cognitive

strategies were adopted by the groups because they constructed questions to answer, raised new questions of their own, set up hypotheses, used evidence and expressed feelings and recreated experience. The writers felt that this showed that group discussion led "to the construction of new ways of understanding" (p50). Their study concluded that collaborative learning in small groups developed cognitive and social abilities, and that this kind of organisation placed the responsibility for learning in the learners' hands thereby changing the nature of that learning "by requiring them to negotiate their own criteria of relevance and truth" (p151).

An equally strong appeal for group discussion in the primary school in particular, is made by Cornwell (1979) who recorded and analysed mixed ability small group discussion. In tabulating the performance of each child in a group, he shows that both those with a "high potential" and a "low potential" benefit, and he suggests, "Group talk can be, and should be, the foundation of literacy" (p21). Above all, he sees group discussion promoting

> "... the child's own responsibility towards the understanding of the task, and of the sequence in which he and other members of the group present their ideas" (p22).

Interesting support for small group learning situations in a primary school comes from Harrod (1977) who, in making a study of classroom language, set out initially to show that

> "... individual encounters would produce the richness of exploratory dialogue which had proved elusive in the class lessons" (p6).

He found, however, that the language of these individual encounters with the teacher proved to be disjointed, predictable and sterile, conforming to a general pattern of minor points on management. Harrod concludes that

> "... it seems on the face of it that Barnes'
> label of 'transmission' teacher applies
> equally to individual learning situations in
> this sample, as indeed it does to the more
> formal lessons" (idem).

Official support for group discussion is found in
various sources, including the Plowden Report (1967,
Para 755, 757 and 758) which suggests that group
arrangements could offer children opportunities for
discussion, thereby stimulating their thinking and
conversational skills; and the Bullock Report (1975,
p146) which sees the intimacy of a small group as
an ideal setting for

> "... an encounter with unfamiliar ideas and
> material ... the children can 'stretch' their
> language to accommodate their own second
> thoughts and the opinions of others".

Thus far, an attempt has been made to indicate the
importance of talking as a means of learning. The
standpoint has been taken that small group discussion
may well be the most fertile means of generating talking
to learn. There are obvious implications for teaching
in what has been reported and these need clearer
definition.

2.8   Implications for teaching

2.8.1   The central problem of primary school teaching, it
        is suggested, is how to put adult knowledge at
        children's disposal so that it does not become
        restricting. In the previous chapter, evidence
        suggested that the teacher who adopted an interpreta-
        tion model of teaching was more likely to succeed in
        educating the pupils. Writers quoted in the present
        chapter, make it clear that teachers who adopt a
        more flexible and 'open' approach will establish
        opportunities for small group discussion because they
        will recognise its value. With this 'open' approach

the teacher, far from dominating the discussion,
will act as listener, guider and contributor.

2.8.2   Teachers will need to know more about language and
learning so that they may be able to adopt a view
of learning and language that is compatible with
practices in the classroom and which encourages
exploratory talk.

> "The job of the teacher in the 1980s demands
> an application and a degree of technical
> expertise considerably in advance of what
> has been required in the past" (Cashdan, 1979, pviii)

2.8.3   It follows that knowledge of learning and language
will enable the teacher to plan a learning situation
which has structure and direction.

2.8.4   It seems necessary to make a distinction between
the child's initial groping to verbalise and his
final attempt at verbalisation. Tentative first-stage
thinking in talk will lack many of the characteristics
of the more confident and organised formal use of
language, when finally communicating what has been
learned.

2.8.5   If the child is to articulate his own understandings
in a meaningful way, he will need an audience of
more than the teacher. "The need to explain to
someone who does not understand is crucial" (Barnes,
1976, p92). In the small group situation, the pupil
will clearly be challenged to communicate his
viewpoint to others with different assumptions.

2.8.6   Great emphasis is placed by teachers on the value
of questioning. However, in an atmosphere of enquiry
and exploration, the wrong question by the teacher
may very possibly stem the flow of thought. Teachers
will need to consider very carefully the kinds of

questions they ask - this will no doubt require an
interpretation of the way children's talk is going
and the nature of the contributions being made.
Rosen & Rosen (op cit, p69) warn that group discussion
may require a treatment different from that of question-
ing by the teacher.[1]

2.8.7 "... since the child can speak when we first meet him,
there is nothing for education to do" (Wise, 1965,
p47). Wise does not, of course, support such a view,
but clearly any teacher holding a "threshold" view of
speech will need to change it, if she is to recognise
the value of talk as a means to learning.

2.8.8 If teachers do intend adopting a talking-for-learning
policy, then certain questions relating to small
group work and its organisation need to be asked and
answered. Boydell (1979, p33) lists these as follows:
   (i)   How can opportunities for teachers to work
           with small groups of children be increased?

   (ii)   How can teachers set up groups which really
           'work' in the sense that there is free-flowing
           conversation amongst the children with sustained
           exchanges about the work in hand?

   (iii)   Which kinds of task are most helpful in
           encouraging the type of interaction needed for
           effective group learning?

   (iv)   In which areas of the curriculum is group
           learning most feasible and profitable?

   (v)   What kinds of resources are needed?

   Undoubtedly, answers to these questions would assist
   teachers in adopting strategies which allow for the
   kind of talk that has been suggested in this chapter.

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1. Further discussion on the matter of questioning will be
    found in the ensuing chapter.

Possible strategies may be the provision of interest-
ing material which would stimulate discussion.
Certainly, if children are being encouraged to think
for themselves in all subjects in the curriculum,
they will feel challenged in the group situation to
explore and discuss solutions to problems presented
by the work in hand. Tasks which have a clearly
defined purpose and involve some form of selection
and evaluation would perhaps be the most suitable.

2.9   Conclusions

This chapter has been concerned with the place of
talk in the primary school curriculum. It has been
shown that talk forms the bedrock of the curriculum
and should, therefore, occupy its proper place in the
curriculum. The main conclusions reached are:

2.9.1 Oracy is as necessary to the educated person as
       literacy and numeracy.

2.9.2 Oracy is central to classroom activities because it
       is through talk that early attempts are made to
       understand experience.

2.9.3 There is a difference between language for communi-
       cation and language for learning.

2.9.4 Talking is a dynamic way of learning.

2.9.5 Small group discussion is a powerful means of develop-
       ing both language and thinking skills, so as to
       solve problems.

2.9.6   Teachers will need an understanding of language and
         learning processes to facilitate the adoption of
         techniques more conducive to a real learning situation.

2.9.7   Accountability in teaching should be more concerned
         with guiding pupils than dictating to them. To
         borrow Cashdan's metaphor (op cit, p11), a teacher
         should see herself as running a shop in which she
         helps pupils to choose wisely -

> "... the shopkeeper stays in business only
> if he can persuade his customers to come a
> second time. Given the choice, how many of
> our 'customers' would use our schools again?"

2.9.8   The school's conception of language will need to
         broaden to include all functions of language including
         all social functions. Halliday (1973, p34) has
         argued: "Our conception of language, if it is to
         be adequate for meeting the needs of the child, will
         need to be exhaustive ..." The language environment
         created in the school will need to be one which
         encourages all forms of language use.

2.9.9   The climate in the school should be such that respect
         is shown for the child's language performance.

2.9.10   "We want children, as a result of our teaching,
         to understand, to be wise as well as well-
         informed, able to solve fresh problems rather
         than have learnt the answers to old ones; indeed
         not only able to answer questions but also able
         to ask them" (Britton, 1971, p81).

         If children are to understand and be able to solve
         problems and enquire about the unknown, talk will
         need to hold a central position in any language
         policy designed by a teacher or a school.

2.9.11   It seems that in group counselling lessons (which
         form part of the primary curriculum in the United States)

spoken participation by pupils is an important
element. Competence in speech, in such lessons,
ensures real participation in decision-making and
in the oral exploration and classification of
intellectual concepts and moral issues (Keat, 1974,
p150). There are indications that group guidance
and counselling will soon become a more significant
part of primary school curricula in South Africa than
is at present the case.

2.9.12 Contemporary teacher education stresses the need for
pupil participation, the success of which clearly
depends on speech competence. Therefore, the import-
ance of speech as an element of the language policy
across the curriculum, is established.

In the chapters thus far presented the role of
language, and in particular of spoken language, in
society and in education has been defined and explained.
Expectations of teacher attitude and approach have
been shown as central to any successful language and
learning development in the child. Further evidence
of the major position of talk in language development
will be offered in the next chapter on Reading, where
it will be shown how discussion helps comprehension
of reading materials, and again in chapter four
where talk is seen as crucial to any sustained writing
development.

CHAPTER THREE

READING AS A COMPONENT OF A LANGUAGE POLICY

3.1   The importance of the teaching of reading and
        literacy

>   Malmquist   (1972, p342), in pointing out that
        literacy is necessary for survival in our world
        to-day, puts the matter very succinctly:

>   "The person living in the twentieth century
>   who has not been given the opportunity to
>   learn to read cannot function in a proper way,
>   cannot live a full human, individual and social
>   life. He is deprived of a fundamental human
>   right to gain further education, to gain access
>   to one of the most invaluable instruments for
>   learning. It has been said: 'Learning is
>   living and living is learning.' In a real
>   sense, therefore, the ability to read is an
>   indispensable element in a person's eqipment
>   for living in every corner of the world today"
>   (p342).

Historically, the ability to read has never had the
importance it now has. With modern technical develop-
ment and means of transportation and communication,
reading ability has become a necessary means of
effective survival. It has been suggested by UNESCO
that illiteracy is one of the subtlest threats to
peace because it divides groups, races and nations.
As expressed by a UNESCO group in a progress report
on literacy (1970, p23):

>   "The crisis in education - and the particular
>   symptom of it, mass illiteracy - has outgrown
>   the preoccupation of educational planners to
>   become a matter of public concern throughout
>   the world."

The Bullock Committee (1975) show their concern for
adult literacy (and they imply mainly an inability
to read) by devoting a full chapter to it in their
Report. They give a psychological emphasis to their
discussion, pointing out that adult illiterates "often
feel a sense of inadequacy, which reveals itself in

pretended indifference or in attitudes of hostility"
(p277). The Bullock Committee quote research figures
obtained by Reading University which show that since
1950 adult literacy programmes in England have provided
at least 30 700 adults with instruction.

Pumfrey (1978, p420) endorses the Bullock Committee's
view by saying,

> "The ability to read is an amplifier of the
> child's power to understand, appreciate and
> control his environment. Our society reinforces
> high reading attainments and often punishes in
> subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle ways the
> child or adult who is not a competent reader."

Literacy is a basic component of reading ability,
the development of which is the concern of this chapter.
In working towards an assessable definition of literacy,
Hillerich (1978, p35) brings the educational and the
sociological viewpoints together to generate the
following definition:

> "Literacy is that demonstrated competence in
> communication skills which enables the individual
> to function, appropriate to his age, independently
> in his society and with a potential for movement
> in that society."

Emerging from Hillerich's article is the question of
the extent to which the educational system has considered
the literacy requirements of adult living, and adjusted
the reading curriculum accordingly.

The importance of literacy to a child cannot be over-
stated for, as Luria and Yudovich (1959) have shown,

> "The acquisition of a language system ...
> introduces ... new potentialities for the
> organisation of the child's mental life."(1)

J. Morris (1975) and Ralph (1975) among others, show
that the teacher's responsibility is greatest in the
matter of literacy. Morris (1966) produced research

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1. Source: Britton J. (1970).

evidence to reveal that pupils who fail to achieve
functional literacy rarely succeed in subsequent
life.

Postman (1978), however, questions the emphasis
placed on reading in this society of electronic media
and comments on the influence electronic devices
have on students. The printed word, for Postman,
is a medium which leads to "political and social
stasis". He argues that while schools limit them-
selves to the written media, they will fail to generate
new patterns of behaviour - an essential prerequisite
for future living. It is worth noting, however, that
Postman, in listing the resources of future schools,
does include books - no doubt because even he recognises
their value for a literate society.

R. Morris (1970, p13) suggests quite a different
future for reading. With the abundance of communi-
cation through non-literary channels in contemporary
society, Morris argues that the main contribution of
reading to-day and in the future will be in

> "... helping the individual to reflect upon,
> organise and understand at a deeper level
> some of the ideas and information that reach
> him first through other channels".

In his attack on the teaching of reading in schools,
Smith (1978) places the issue of literacy in a
wide context. Following on the school of thought
that language gives dimension to life, he argues that
schools cause "mental stultification". In his attack
on schools and their "encouragement of ignorance",
he claims that schools "are not concerned with literacy"
but rather with "getting through the day". Because of
this, Smith argues that literacy is "too precious to
leave to our schools". Unlike Postman, who seems to
suggest that as teachers make such a poor job of
teaching reading they should not do it, Smith argues
that "the price of literacy need not be the reader's
free will and intelligence" if teachers were not so
ignorant of the reading process.

Marland (1977) makes two points which bear on Smith's comments. In writing about schooling in England, he comments that compulsory education has been introduced up to the age of sixteen at the same time as a shift in curriculum emphasis to more independent learning and problem-solving. The success of these innovations, he points out, depends on a high level of literacy.

Marland feels that teachers, instead of meeting the demands of literacy, are actually "retreating from print". He explains that teachers attempt to simplify texts through worksheets and "rewrites", and, finding that these fail too, teachers "circumnavigate the print" by paraphrasing it. The danger in this practice, as Marland points out, is twofold. It implies that reading is unnecessary and that it is far too difficult.

The clearly dangerous practice of evading the task of teaching reading is elaborated on by Halliday (1975, p189), Director of a national programme to eradicate illiteracy in the U.S.A., who states, "If Right to Read is to succeed in its goals it will do so by improving education for all". Marland (1978) perhaps indicates the possible reason for limited reading instruction in schools by suggesting that teachers are trapped by a "threshold" view of reading - once you are over the threshold you can read, and nothing further need be done about it. To improve education for all by teaching literacy, the educational system, it would seem, will need to pay more attention to the reading which comes after the initial stages of teaching.

James Allen (1972, p446) underlines the point of reading beyond the "threshold" to foster literacy in schools by describing a cynical advertisement which depicted a young black boy reading a book on Dick and Jane at the farm:

See the nice book.
See the big boy read the nice book.
See the big boy drop out of school.

It was, no doubt, these kinds of problems which
caused the Bullock Committee (op cit, p78) to write
"a detailed understanding of the reading process is
of critical importance".

It is with the realisation of the critical role
reading plays in a literate society that the writer
addresses herself to a discussion of reading and its
consideration in a language policy in a primary
school.

3.2   The growing emphasis on reading comprehension

The statement that "children must read to learn
while learning to read" (Smith 1978, p3) may appear
at first glance to be an oversimplification of what
has come to be regarded by some as a process surrounded
with awe and mystique. However, there is enough
evidence to suggest that only a small minority of
children should, for personal reasons, find difficulty
with reading (Smith, 1978; Goodman, 1967; Kohl, 1973).
The balance of children who find difficulty with
reading, it is claimed, do so as a result of wrong
or poor instruction.

> "Much of the misunderstanding surrounding ...
> reading results from the lack of a proper
> examination of what the process involves."
> (Bullock, p78)

As the area of concern of this dissertation is the
9 to 12 year old child, the discussion must centre
on reading development and extension rather than on
initial teaching of reading. However, it is probable
that all teachers involved in furthering children's
reading ability and interests, should be conscious
of the initial stages of learning to read. "A
detailed understanding of the reading process is of

critical importance in terms of its practical
implications" (Bullock, idem). Such would discourage
a "threshold" view of reading as previously described,
and encourage a consideration of what is expected of
the child reader in both the short and long term.
For, as Marland (op cit, p25) points out,

> "The real problem of reading in our education
> system comes after the initial stages and
> concerns pupils more able than the low achievers.
> The real problems, in fact, are the uses of
> reading by the older and average or above-
> average pupil. It is not that they can't read
> the words, but that they cannot master the sense."

Mastering the sense of what is read is clearly
fundamental to any effective learning. Understanding
the sense of what is read is, then, the prime purpose
in reading. Halliday (1975, p123) in discussing the
essential properties of text, explains that text,
in the first place, is meaning. He says text is not
made of sounds or letters or words, phrases, clauses
and sentences, but rather of

> "... meanings, and encoded in wordings,
> soundings and spellings ... text is a
> semantic unit realised as lexico-grammatical
> units which are further realised as phonological
> or orthographic units".

It seems fair to say that most of the older research
on learning as a result of reading centred on what
the reader remembered of the material but it has
become obvious that learning is more than that.

> "The crux of learning from reading is the
> ability to use appropriately what we have
> learned ... Learning from reading is thus
> not a simple matter of remembering something
> and giving it back to the teacher verbatim."
> (Gibson & Levin, 1975, pp396-397)

Any consideration of the learning process should lead
inevitably to a consideration of reading comprehension.

'What is comprehension?' may appear to be a super-
fluous question as most people have an intuitive

notion of what the word means. However, many
theories and models of reading comprehension have
been designed this century, indicating that compre-
hension is a complex process eluding a clear, accept-
able definition. Smith & Barrett (1974, p49) show
there is no consensus on what is involved in the
process of comprehension; while Simons[1] (1971, 1972)
after reviewing seven approaches to the matter of
reading comprehension concludes that not a great
deal of progress has been made since Thorndike's
work in 1917.

Thorndike (1972, pp24-30) in 1917 concluded that
reading was the ability to reason. Understanding a
paragraph, he explained, consisted of

> "... selecting the right elements of the
> situation and putting them together in the
> right relations, and also with the right
> amount of weight or influence or force for
> each".

The influence of linguists such as Bloomfield[2] (1944)
and Fries (1962) led, in some circles, to reading
being narrowly defined as a process of decoding
written symbols into the corresponding phonemes.

The theory that comprehension is made up of separate
but related skills, is well supported. (See
R.L. Thorndike[3], 1973; Melnik & Merritt, 1972;
Spearrit[3], 1972; Chapman[3], 1969). Davis (1972)
in various studies from 1944 to 1971 finally identified
four subskills - (i) identifying word meanings;
(ii) drawing inferences; (iii) identifying the writer's
technique and recognizing the mood of a passage;
(iv) finding answers to questions.

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1. Source: Harris A.J. & Sipay E.R. (1975).
2. Source: Malmstrom J. (1975).
3. Source: Harris A.J. & Sipay E.R. (1975).

The current interest in reading comprehension is largely due to the blending of the knowledge of linguistics and psychology. The transformational - generative grammar of Noam Chomsky has provided a fresh slant on semantics. One recent model of comprehension is that of Trabasso (1972, p113). He views comprehension as

> "... a set of psychological processes consisting of a series of mental operations which process linguistic information from its receipt until an overt decision. Two main operations are noted: (1) encoding the information into internal representations and (2) comparing these represent- ations ... Comprehension may be said to occur when the internal representations are matched. The overt response is an end result of the act of comprehension".

Gibson & Levin (1975, p405) criticize the data on which this model is based, arguing that the

> "... operations suggested do not appear to be easily generalizable to comprehending and learning from discourse".

Goodman (1967) and, to a large extent, F. Smith (1978) interpret reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" - a reconstruction of meaning cued by either syntax or phonology or word semantics or combinations of these three sources.

Following on the thinking of psycholinguists and with further research, the Schools Council Project 'The Effective Use of Reading', led by Lunzer and Gardner (1979, p38), defined comprehension as the ability

> "... to penetrate beyond the verbal forms of text to the underlying ideas, to compare these with what one already knows and also with one another, to pick out what is essential and new, to revise one's previous conceptions".

Rather than viewing comprehension as a set of subskills, the authors see it as a unitary operation while recognising levels of difficulty.

It would seem that the psychological data available
is inadequate to form a basis for a valid, reliable
conclusion on the reading comprehension process.
There is criticism to level at each of the models
of comprehension in relation to pedagogical practice.
The linguists' model is too narrow in concept to be
of more use than possibly for the early initial
teaching of reading. The subskills model, while
being convenient to apply in the classroom, is one
with questionable data (Davis, 1972, admitted this
of his own much quoted data). It is a model which
could lead to a distortion in the development of the
child's comprehension process.

> "The criteria against which the teacher evaluates
> the product of the reader's comprehension may
> not be those which the reader himself uses when
> he is comprehending."
>   (Augstein & Thomas, 1978, p108)

The Lunzer & Gardner model of seeing comprehension
as a willingness to reflect upon what is being read
is criticized by Hewitt (1979, p26) who argues that
prior knowledge brought to the text may preclude the
necessity to reflect. Hewitt sees reasoning as part
of a more general comprehension ability and not as
part of reading comprehension in particular.

The problem in this lack of consensus is possibly
because emphasis has been given to the product of
comprehension rather than the process. Most attempts
at a definition of comprehension have resulted from
hypotheses which measure comprehension against a set
of criteria embedded in various forms of test
material. It is perhaps fair to note that the Lunzer
& Gardner research is one exception. Their empirical
research revealed that comprehension was not what
they had hypothesized, a set of distinct skills, but
rather a unitary ability. They concluded,

> "It is a very serious mistake to suppose that
> the completion of a test and comprehension in
> reading are one and the same thing. How a
> student completes a test is an index of his

capacity to comprehend: it is not the capacity itself and still less is it the comprehension itself" (p66).

Although there is no consensus on the process of reading comprehension, there seems to be no doubt that the abilities necessary for comprehension can be taught. Smith (1978); Herber (1970); Smith and Barrett (1974); Gray (1925); Harris (1970); Lunzer and Gardner. (1979) amongst others, support the idea that critical reading does not automatically develop, but must be taught.

> "The fact that one cannot reliably measure different skills in comprehension does not mean that comprehension cannot be taught (p69) ... Given the initial willingness of pupils to reflect, steps need to be taken to improve the quality of this reflection" (Lunzer & Gardner, p301).

The lack of a clear, consistent conceptualization of reading comprehension has undoubtedly influenced classroom practice. However, there is sufficient evidence and information available to enable a teacher to help learners understand and react to a text.

One such effort to aid teachers has been the development of Taxonomies of Reading Comprehension (after Bloom, 1956). Examples are those proposed by Guilford (1958) and Barrett (1972). The taxonomies attempt to define and classify comprehension abilities.

A study of these taxonomies reveals many common features. There is, for example, recognition:

(i)   of a hierarchy of levels of comprehension;

(ii)   that understanding of the higher levels is not exclusive to the older, more experienced reader;

(iii)   that greater and lesser demands can be made on the reader within any one level and tasks in one level may be more demanding than some in a higher level;

(iv)   that there is an overlap of these levels;

(v)   that lists of this sort can be reduced to
        the broad idea that there are three levels
        of reading: on the lines (literal level),
        between the lines (inferential level) and
        beyond the lines (evaluative level).

These taxonomies may, it is suggested, serve as a
guide or framework to teachers in planning, teaching
and evaluating reading comprehension. Crisp (1978,
pp36-43) concludes that an application of a taxonomy
can assist teachers in assessing the level of under-
standing of the child reader, and its use would
encourage questions more appropriate to the demands
of the higher levels of comprehension, thereby
assisting the development of higher order skills in
the reader.

However, there are dangers inherent in this approach.
In the context of education, taxonomies may be viewed
as leading only to clearly defined behavioural
objectives, and although they may constitute an
operational criterion of the pupils' comprehension,
such objectives could well be limiting and, to some
extent, inspire mechanical teaching. The questions
that would be posed would inevitably influence the
reading behaviour of the pupil to the possible
exclusion of a deeper, more reflective, critical
reading behaviour (as indeed Lunzer & Gardner, op cit,
found in their research). Moffat (1970) contends
that the behavioural approach is neither scientific
nor honest. Because objectives must, of necessity,
be observable, they rule out that covert response so
vital to language. The danger of objectives, says
Moffat, is that teachers will opt for short-range,
well-segmented teaching fragments, "because observed
'responses' can then be more easily related to the
applied 'stimuli'" (p112). A further danger, he
contends, is that objectives imply evaluation and
this would "pervert the curriculum into one vast
testing system" that would leave no room for small
group discussion, reading and writing. Clearly,

reading comprehension is more than responses to
"short-range" questions which limit the critical
reading potential of the child.

Another avenue of attempt at aiding teachers has
been research projects carried out by bodies such as
the Schools Council in Britain. One such project
has been the detailed research into the effective use
of reading directed by Lunzer and Gardner (op cit).
In seeing comprehension as a unitary ability and not
a collection of subskills, they came to the conclusion
that for a child to comprehend fully, he must have a
"willingness to reflect on what is being read" (p64).
The research team claim that the school can develop
the pupils' comprehension ability by providing "a
structure of instruction, guidance and reading practice
which improves the quality of reflection" (p301).
Their findings suggest a combination of a skill-based
procedure (for example as used in S.R.A. Reading
Laboratories) and group discussion activities based
on printed matter.

The printed word, it is generally accepted, can be
used as a stimulus for reflective and critical learning.
It is therefore apparent that if a child is to use
reading for the purpose of learning, he must approach
the material in an active, interrogating manner.

> "Reading then becomes a 'conversation' with the
> text in which the student asks his own questions,
> finds the answers, and makes his own comment."
> (Lunzer & Gardner, p303)

Having established the place of reading and the
contribution which comprehension of reading material
makes to the learner, the writer proceeds to a closer
examination of the demands made on the reader by
particular functions of language in print.

Because of the great breadth of the topic of Reading,
the present chapter will be limited to a consideration
only of some of the aspects of the reading of

transactional writing and poetic writing. (The
writer chooses to use these terms of Britton's because,
as suggested in Chapter One, his scheme is potentially
a very useful one to teachers.) Further definition
of these terms may be to some purpose at this stage
of the dissertation.

Britton (1971) sees transactional language as that
used by a person in a participatory role. It is the
language of action; it is the language in which
information is imparted. Theorizing, generalising
and hypothesizing take place using this function; it
is the language used for reports, records, argument
and reasoning. It is the language found in most
school textbooks in history, geography and science,
for example.

Britton defines poetic language as that used by a
person in the role of spectator. It is language used
for its own sake. It is a verbal construct made for
the pleasure of making it and sharing it. It is,
therefore, the language used for storying and for
poetry. Much of the prescribed and recommended
literature in schools, for example, makes use of this
function of language.

Marland (1978, p372) explains the difference between
these functions by showing that transactional language
often uses the passive rather than active voice, longer
sentences are more common in transactional language
and the connectives not only differ from the narrative
mode, but differ depending on the subject of the
material.

The writer submits that Britton's terms serve to
delineate the kinds of printed matter to which the
primary school child is normally exposed. The reading
of transactional writing will be considered first, in
an effort to identify some problems which children
meet in terms of this language, and some of the
concerns regarding the teaching of the reading skills

necessary for this type of reading. Later in the chapter, the reading of poetic writing will be considered in a similar light.

Section A

The Reading of Transactional Language

3.3   The place of transactional language in school

Transactional language dominates much of the curriculum of the primary school. The Natal Education Department, for example, has laid down a minimum time allocation for subjects from Standards Two to Four (Circular Minutes No. 38/1978). This states that five hours (ten periods) per week should be spent on main language and seven-and-one-half hours (fifteen periods) per week, on Mathematics, History, Geography, General Science and Health Education. The Natal Education Department Guide to Differentiated Education lays down a minimum time allocation for subjects in Standard Five. Nine hours (eighteen periods) per week should be spent on main language and nine hours (eighteen periods) on Mathematics, History, Geography and General Science. Clearly, much of the lesson time is devoted to transactional language for it is the language used almost exclusively in the 'content subjects' and the sciences. It is the language of most of the reading pupils must do for projects, assignments and self-study tasks. This language has its own style and vocabulary, demanding, therefore, particular reading skills.

It has been found (Rosen, 1972; Herber, 1970; Robinson, 1965) that pupils experience difficulty with trans-actional language because of the high-order abstraction not only in the terminology but in the concepts them-selves of the separate subject disciplines. As

Rosen (p119) puts it,

> "Difficulties of this sort turn whole
> subjects into foggy mysteries and for many
> children the fog is so impenetrable that
> all higher levels of learning become un-
> attainable."

Vygotsky (1962); Halliday (1973); Wilkinson (1971)
and many others have shown that language is acquired
almost entirely through linguistic experience and
activity. The home and the environment extend
the child's use of everyday language but it is the
responsibility of the school to give the child access
to the transactional language required by much of
the curriculum and subsequent career pursuits. The
school has the unique opportunity to introduce the
child to this language. Olson (1977) as cited by
Smith (1978, p82), claims that our ability to produce
and understand spoken transactional language is a
by-product of literacy in that this ability comes
about through experience in reading this kind of
language.

The work of Vygotsky (1962, p82f) may be seen to
explain further the responsibility of the school in
teaching transactional language, for he believes that
to succeed in teaching children systematic knowledge,
"it is necessary to understand the development of
scientific concepts in the child's mind". Vygotsky
distinguishes between two kinds of concept - scientific
and spontaneous - contrasting them to show that
scientific concepts are consciously taught, depend
upon their verbal mediation and provide systematic,
general structures, unlike spontaneous concepts which
are acquired in everyday living without systematic
instruction. The child becomes conscious of his
spontaneous concepts relatively late - he has the
concept but is not conscious of his own act of thought,
he is unable to define it; whereas the development of
a scientific concept begins with its verbal definition
and its use in non-spontaneous operations. Vygotsky

concludes that "the development of the child's spontaneous concepts proceed upwards, and the development of his scientific concepts downward" (p108). However, he sees a close connection between the two developments and, what is of relevance heuristically, he points out that "the development of a spontaneous concept must have reached a certain level for the child to be able to absorb a related scientific concept" (idem). It seems then, that the school will provide the pupils main chance of acquiring the language and thought of impersonal observation and description, generalization and theories, argument and speculation.

It was previously noted that, if a child is to use reading for learning, he should approach the material in an active, interrogating manner. Transactional language clearly demands particular reading techniques, which would seem to imply a fundamental relationship between reading purpose and the effective use of reading techniques in order to learn. Because the recognition and development of this relationship would ensure a more successful and appropriate use of transactional language by the child, the writer proceeds to a consideration of 'purpose' and its effect on critical reading.

3.4 Reading 'purpose' and the effects of purpose on reading behaviour

In order for children to learn successfully, it seems that the situation should be meaningful. Bruner (1966, p119), in his discussion of competence and accomplishment, states that unless there is some meaningful unity in what a pupil does, he is not very likely to strive to excel himself. Smith (op cit, p89) states quite emphatically that,

> "Anything that bewilders a child will be
> ignored; there is nothing to be learned there.

It is not nonsense that stimulates children
to learn but the possibility of making sense."

This is possibly the most important single feature of
the psychological process of learning to read: if
the child cannot see the purpose of the reading act,
he will not be motivated to read (Reid, 1966; Downing,
1970). Therefore, it may be said, it is vital to
ensure that reading activities at all times and at
all stages, are purposeful.

The key emphasis here is on the child himself
recognising the purpose in reading, for as Smith (op
cit, p97) explains,

> "Teachers might see quite clearly that a certain
> exercise will improve a child's useful knowledge
> or skills, but unless the child can see some
> sense in the exercise, the instruction is a waste
> of time."

That there are different purposes for reading may be
self-evident to the experienced reader. For example,
he has discovered that a magazine may be read for
amusement, for gathering factual information or for
opinion; a child reader still has to recognise these
various purposes.

The current plea made by educational authorities to
teachers to expose their pupils to a wide range of
sources rather than just to a single source (often
the prescribed textbook); and the sheer bulk of
information which is recorded in printed form in our
society, has created the necessity for a reader to
organise his own effective use of this mass of
information. The Bullock Committee (1975, p95) state
that, in order for a child to cope with a vast amount
of reading, he "should have extensive experience in
defining his own purposes". The Committee see
motivation as the key to real gain in reading develop-
ment and this, they interpret, as "reading to satisfy
a purpose" (p117).

The idea of establishing purposes for reading in school is not a revolutionary one. This has long been in practice in pedagogy as reflected, for example, in the common instruction given to pupils to read a particular section in preparation for a test or assignment. However, the literature (H.K. Smith, 1967, Merritt, 1975; Augstein & Thomas, 1978) suggests that these practices should be broadened in scope to include better defined purposes relating specifically to the text. As Herber (1970, p33) explains it, the teacher should develop in the pupils on 'I'm-looking-for-something' attitude, for, "If the pupil is to understand what he is reading, he must know why he is reading".

Various lists of reading purposes have been drawn up by experts in the field. A well quoted list is that of H.K. Smith (1967) who distinguishes between primary and secondary purposes. She sees primary purposes as the life purposes, the ultimate ones for which people read; while the secondary purposes are "desired behaviours or instructional objectives related to comprehension" (p89). Her primary purposes are reading for:

(1) enjoyment;
(2) intellectual demands;
(3) utilitarian purposes or meeting the practical demands for living;
(4) socioeconomic needs or demands;
(5) vocational or avocational interests;
(6) personal needs or demands;
(7) problem-solving;
(8) inspiration, spiritual or religious needs.

Smith's secondary purposes are reading for:

(1) the general impression or general idea;
(2) details;
(3) sequence (time, space, ideas);
(4) directions;
(5) comparison;
(6) cause-and-effect relationships;
(7) generalizations and conclusions;
(8) anticipation of ideas or predictions of outcomes;
(9) characterization;
(10) description;

(11) mood;
(12) tone;
(13) sensory imagery;
(14) fact and opinion;
(15) fact and fiction.

Clearly, Smith's secondary purposes are related to reading tasks; for example, to read for cause and effect relationships could be related to a science experiment or a geography assignment. There are possible disadvantages in this sort of listing in its application in the classroom. One is that the purposes are not specific enough, giving the prospective reader little guidance in what techniques to apply.

A more useful kind of categorization of purposes would seem to be that of N.C. Farnes (1973, p13) who summarizes categories of purpose into four levels as follows:

	Purpose	Context	Example
1	life purposes	the person as an individual	to enrich my experience
2	role purposes	the person in a particular role	to do well at school
3	task purposes	the person in a role and a task situation	to write a project evaluating the increase in world population
4	specific purposes	a particular resource within a task	to obtain information on population statistics of the U.K. from the Registrar General Report

It becomes obvious when studying this proposal that awareness of specific purposes will give the reader immediate and direct guidance as to how to approach the reading task.

The need for well defined purposes for reading was recognised as early as 1917 by Thorndike (as published 1972) who concluded that comprehension takes place

"under the right mental set or purposes or demand".
Yet Perry (1972, pp370-377) found that 99% of freshmen
entering university were reading purposelessly and
subsequently failing as critical readers. He shows
that the reader's purpose for reading is inseparable
from the reading techniques applied, as the purpose
for reading not only provides a basis for judging
the relevance of material, but it indicates how the
material should be handled. The implication for
teachers to delineate purpose is very clear.

It seems that if a reader has a specific purpose,
his reading becomes goal-orientated and he will apply
those reading techniques which allow him to concentrate
on what is relevant. "If pupils know what ideas are
to be discovered, they will know what reading skill
to apply" (Herber, op cit, p33).

The ideal situation would no doubt be the ability
of the child to set his own purposes. In this way,
he would gain further independence in learning, for
he would be able to select appropriate materials from
a range of resources and apply the various and
effective reading techniques to these materials.
Downing (op cit, p21) shows this ability to set
purposes as an important educational aim for, in this
way, the reader expands his personal autonomy. Bond
and Tinker (1973) see personal autonomy in terms of
versatile adaptable reading habits. The versatile
reader is one who has "learned to set his own purpose
... [who is] able to size up the materials and clearly
understand the purpose" (p453).

Before the pupil is able to set his own purposes in
reading, however, he should presumably be made aware
of the wide range of purposes that can be met through
reading. This would ensure a more accurate definition
of purpose and application of the appropriate skill.
Furthermore, as Farnes (1973, p11) points out,

> "... the efficiency of skills can only be
> <u>assessed</u> in the context of the purpose for
> reading. If the reader has a limited conception
> of the range of purposes, his range of skills
> will be consequently limited."

Reading for different purposes obviously fosters
flexibility in reading. An essential part of this
flexibility would seem to be reading rate. Experiments
with cameras measuring eye-movement show that a good
reader changes his rate of reading according to his
purpose. Burmeister (1974, p238), in pointing out
that all ideas cannot be assimilated at the same
rate, suggests that:

> "Students should use different rates for reading
> various types of materials and/or when reading
> for different purposes ... the rate must be
> appropriate to the reader, the material, and
> the reader's purpose."

This would accord, in some respects, with what Lunzer
and Gardner (<u>op cit</u>, p26) found: "Flexibility in
reading pace is essential to profitable reading for
learning." In accordance with their idea that
comprehension is "a willingness to reflect on what
has been read", they offer a fresh slant to the
principle of reading rate. They believe,

> "For optimal efficiency, [in the context of
> reading to learn] , the reading of each phrase
> should always be comfortably fast. The difference
> in rate is, or should be, due to the length and
> frequency of pauses between reads" (p28).

In summary then, the idea of introducing children
to a wide range of reading purposes, and encouraging
them finally to set their own purposes in reading,
would lead to flexible, effective reading habits.
This ability would, in turn, greatly assist the
child's development towards autonomous learning.

It may be concluded that the teaching of transactional
language and the establishment of specific purposes
in reading, is the responsibility of the school.
Such an approach has much of consequence for the

teacher, implying as it does, a particular attitude
in the learner. Some of these implications will now
be discussed.

3.5   Some implications arising from the teaching of
        transactional language

In Chapter One, the crucial part language plays in
thinking and subsequent learning was examined,
together with the necessity for teachers to adopt
a model of teaching commensurate with this relationship.
The influence of that discussion may be seen in what
follows because:

> "There is unanimous agreement that the classroom
> teacher is the key to successful reading on the
> part of all school children" (Robinson, 1972, p483).

3.5.1   The pupil as interrogator of the text

The knowledge explosion has given a new emphasis
to "the means for acquiring, interpreting, and using
knowledge independently" (Herber, 1970, p3). It
would seem to demand a learning situation in which
the pupil is actively and intimately involved. This
would hold true for reading to learn as it would for
any other learning situation. The Bullock Committee
(1975, p118) sum up the situation by saying,

> "... reading for learning will be most
> effective when the reader becomes an active
> interrogator of the text rather than a
> passive receiver of words".

Active involvement in a reading task would seem to
imply a certain curriculum strategy: a strategy
which would encourage pupils to read purposefully
and make fuller use of the variety of cues in all
the texts they read. The conventional comprehension
test or exercise with questions provided, is clearly
not a strategy which encourages the <u>pupil</u> to make

full use of the text. A typical example of this
sort of comprehension exercise, taken from a Standard
Four textbook currently in use in Natal primary
schools may illustrate the point:

> Read this passage carefully and then answer
> the questions which follow.

> They called him "The Rat"...
>   There is no doubt about it he was extremely
> ugly, and instead of improving as he grew older,
> he became worse; yet I could not help liking him
> and looking after him ... and sometimes really
> admiring him. He was extraordinarily silent.
> While the other puppies barked at nothing, howled
> when lonely, and yelped when frightened or hurt,
> the odd puppy did none of these things ... He
> hardly ever barked, and when he did it was not a
> wild excited string of barks, but little suppressed,
> muffled noises, half bark and half growl ..., and
> he did not appear to be afraid of anything ...
> If anyone fired off a gun or cracked one of the
> big whips, the other puppies would yelp at the
> top of their voices ..., and start running ...
> as fast as they could towards the waggon without
> looking back to see what they were running away
> from. The odd puppy would drop his bone with a
> start ..., his ears and tail would flicker up
> and down for a second; then he would slowly bristle
> up all over, and with his head cocked first on one
> side and then on the other, stare hard with his
> half-blind, bluish puppy eyes in the direction of
> the noise ...
>   From Jock of the Bushveld by
>   Sir P. Fitzpatrick

1. What did people mean when they called Jock
   "The Rat"?
2. What sort of noises did the other puppies
   make?
3. Describe the sort of noise made by Jock.
4. In what two ways did Jock differ from the
   other puppies?
5. Describe what the other puppies did when
   someone cracked a whip.
6. What words tell you that Jock was never a
   good-looking dog?
7. When did the other puppies howl?
8. What is meant by to "bristle up all over"?
9. Draw a picture of Jock.
          (Hosking G.A. & Dale G.A.H., pp38-40)

An analysis of the questions reveals that the first
seven may be answered directly from the passage,
requiring literal comprehension ability only. Question
eight presumably is aimed at some form of inference
on the part of the reader. However, a prior knowledge

of dogs, which most Standard Four pupils would bring to this text, would make this unnecessary. Question nine seems somewhat pointless as an illustration of Jock is included on the page. Questions based on other passages in the book fall into a similar pattern. For example, questions based on an extract from The Children of the New Forest (p53) are as follows:

1. To which of the following families does a stag belong?
   The deer (buck).
   The cat (lion, tiger, leopard).
   The dog (wolf, fox, hyena).

2. Does the word printed in colour rhyme with "lose" or "goes"?
   "The does fled rapidly away."

3. Jacob and Edward were hunting the stag for venison. What do we call meat from:
   a) sheep? b) cattle? c) pigs? d) fowls?

4. Did Edward get any proof that the stag's ears were sharp?

5. How far was Jacob from the stag when he fired? Give your answer in feet.

6. What are "does"?

7. What forced Jacob and Edward to go hunting?

8. Write down three words, all of which end in "ly", which tell us how they moved.

9. What were the animals doing when they were first seen?

10. Use these words in sentences which will show that you understand the difference in meaning:
    sight, site.   sent, scent.

Of the ten questions, only questions 4, 7, 8 and 9 are directly related to the passage. Question Four requires a one word answer, 'Yes', while the other three merely require location and transcription of answers.

Further investigation indicates that questions in other textbooks currently in use also fall into this pattern. For example, a passage from King Solomon's Mines is questioned as follows:

1. Who was the author of the book from which this extract is taken?

2. The writer says that he has done a good
    many things in his life. What things are
    we told?

3. Why does his life seem to have been long?

4. Write out the sentence that tells us when
    he acquired enough money to retire on.

5. Explain the meaning of the expression "made
    my pile".

6. What does "timid" mean?

7. How do we know that he doesn't want any
    more exciting and dangerous experiences?

8. Which four of these adjectives would best
    describe the writer?
    wealthy, bold, experienced, violent, timid,
    sick, contented, poor.
                (Ridout R., Better English,1966, p51)

Of the eight questions, only question five, and
possibly question eight need inference through
contextual clues to be answered. The name of the
author is printed directly above question one.

This kind of exercise would seem to be an unproductive
task. Lunzer and Gardner (1979); Stauffer et al (1978);
Thomas and Augstein (1972), amongst others, question
the validity of the task. Walker (1977) states that
this traditional approach of testing 'comprehension'
is unsuitable at levels beyond the most transparently
literal. Merritt (1978, pp92-106) demonstrates an
application of the Barrett taxonomy on a nonsense
passage to illustrate how invalid an approach to
teaching comprehension this is. He makes the point
that a passage and questions invariably demonstrate
linguistic facility, a manipulation of words. Merritt
sees this as failure on the part of teachers, failure
"to diagnose linguistic facility when it masquerades
as comprehension" (p95). He points out that strategies
which encourage the active involvement of the pupil
should be used. Merritt sees activities which do not
encourage the pupil to interrogate the text as
"positively training them in mindless reading" (p101).

It is probable that the way to help children think
deeply about the ideas in what they read is to allow

them much closer scrutiny of the text in a group
situation, where discussion, however tentative, can
lead readers to possible and acceptable solutions of
the author's message. Only in this way, as Lunzer
& Gardner (op cit, p26) suggest, will the text under
discussion be "used" in its fullest sense. The idea
that small group discussion leads to productive
learning was examined in the previous chapter. It
was shown that exploratory talk is essential to the
formulation of ideas and that group work afforded the
opportunity to take individual thinking that much
further through interaction with other group members'
thoughts and ideas. Small group discussion of a
common text, it is suggested, would maintain a balance
in the reader between responding freely as a person
to the message of the text, with his own distractions
and distortions of personal associations, and reaching
out, through discussion, more critically in search of
the exact intention of the author.

> "Group work can encourage the reading and
> discussion of a common text ... to further
> reading skills, particularly in the areas of
> comprehension and response."
> (Peacock, 1980, p8)

The Bullock Committee (p118) lend their support to
group discussion of printed matter by stating that
they believe that "group discussion based on
co-operative reading is a valuable means of learning".
They re-emphasize the point in their conclusions on
page 123.

3.5.2   Knowledge of the reading process

Arnold (1977, p165) suggests that one of three main
factors which shape teachers' perceptions of their
pupils' reading behaviour is the teachers' own concept
of what the reading process constitutes. It follows
that these initial concepts form the basis for any
emphases the teacher might place on the various
aspects of the reading process. Downing (1973), in

his comparative study of the teaching of reading, dramatically demonstrates the practical effect of teachers' beliefs and attitudes about reading on teaching methods. Moreover, he warns (p139) that there is no correlation between professed methods and actual methods used. He implies that only a true understanding of the reading process, rather than a professed understanding, will lead to effective methods being implemented in the classroom.

Arnold (op cit, p169) after investigation into teachers' concepts of the reading process concluded:

> "The reader who matches up to the teacher's ideal model will be a pleasant, cooperative girl from a 'good' home background, who exhibits her skill through fluent oral reading. She will be able to extract factual information from a given text and to write her information down neatly. She will be happy to pursue a set reading scheme systematically, use phonic attack successfully, but not necessarily prediction skills."

Arnold, quite rightly, asks if this is enough. If one accepts this psychometric description as a general one held by primary school teachers, then there would seem to be an urgent need to encourage teachers to augment and/or change their basic understanding of the reading process.

Southgate and Roberts (1970) give much evidence to show that a teacher teaches best when she is teaching by what she believes to be the best method. The writers argue, therefore, that it is vital that teachers understand the reading process, for it is on the basis of this understanding that teachers rely when selecting methods and materials.

Moyle (1977, p53) in his discussion of reading materials and their use in classrooms, cites the work done by Murphy (1973) to show that there is a low correlation between success in, say, the reading of a newspaper and the reading of a recipe. He argues that teachers

must acknowledge this low relationship if they are to
improve the quality and appropriateness of reading
skills among their pupils. Moyle supports the use
of a wide and varied range of reading material in
the classroom to develop the reading skills necessary
to a versatile and flexible reader, together with
an appreciation of the range of reading skills.
Without this appreciation of reading and the accompany-
ing skills, the teacher of reading may very well be
limiting.

Both Gray (1956) and Kohl (1973) remind teachers that
they should ask themselves leading questions before
teaching children to read. The former (p105) suggests
this principle: "In trying to find out which of two
methods is the better, we must first ask: better
for what?" while Kohl (pp145-146) offers seven groups
of questions to be answered before teachers can help
others learn to read effectively. A sampling of
these is,

> "Why should your students learn how to read?
> How difficult do you think learning to read is?
> Would you rather be teaching something else?"

Answers to these questions may be an indication of
whether a teacher holds a "threshold" view of reading
or whether she believes that learning to read is an
on-going process. As Goethe, at the age of eighty,
is reputed to have said,

> "The dear people do not know how long it takes
> to learn to read. I have been at it all my
> life and I cannot yet say I have reached the
> goal."

A surer understanding of the reading process may
help teachers appreciate more fully that reading is
for meaning. Unless teachers accept that reading is
for meaning, it is probable that priority will be
given in their teaching to the lower order skills
such as literal comprehension, phonics and word
calling rather than the development of higher order
skills. Maxwell (1977), in reporting an investigation

into the teaching of reading in Scottish primary
schools, states,

> "Of the one hundred classes whose practices
> were observed ... none received consistent
> teaching which stressed comprehension skills" (p45).

R. Morris (1970) believes that all teachers involved
in the teaching of reading, irrespective of the level
at which they themselves teach, should not only know
about the reading process but should take an interest
in the initial teaching of reading

> "... to ensure that a climate of opinion
> is produced which favours the growth, in
> schools for young children, of early reading
> methods that will promote ... subsequent
> development ... " (p15).

Morris is categoric about this because he believes
that a child's first encounter with learning a
particular skill can have "profound far-reaching
effects" not only on the acquisition of that skill
but also on any subsequent profitable use which may
be made of it.

There would seem to be an urgent need for teachers to
be informed of the real purpose for reading. It is,
therefore, not surprising that the Bullock Committee
felt it necessary to comment that

> "... a detailed understanding of the reading
> process is of critical importance in terms
> of its practical implications" (p78).

3.5.3   Awareness of the linguistic demands of text

A great deal of meaning can be derived from a text
provided that the reader has sufficient experience
in making full and effective use of the cues that
are available. The child reader needs to be taught
how to make a full and effective use of these cues.
Smith and Dechaut (1961) state that, "Reading is one
of the few academic areas in which we demand success

from all children" (p1). They show that the child's
need for effective reading increases as he advances
through school owing to the particular reading
demands of each subject in the curriculum. Jenkinson
(1973, p40) points out that not only do the concepts
that the reader meets become more complex, but the
ideas are presented in language which itself is
linguistically more complex and usually removed from
the reader's experience. Two implications for teaching
arise from these findings: teachers will need to be
sensitive to the language of the texts used if they
wish to encourage pupils to make more use of printed
material, and they will need to be aware of the reading
demands made by any printed material used.

To the teacher sensitive to the language needs of
her pupils, a close scrutiny of texts to be presented
to pupils should reveal areas where difficulty may
arise. The relationship between understanding
conjunctions and reading comprehension is a pertinent
example. Stoodt (1972) found a significant relation-
ship between the understanding of conjunctions and
reading comprehension. She found the most difficult
conjunctions for her test subjects (fourth graders)
were when, so, but, or, where, while, how, that and
if. The easiest were and, for and as. A further
example of difficulty which children might experience
with the reading of transactional language is that
much of it is written in the passive voice. Blount
and Johnson (1973) found that complex sentences in
the active voice were recalled more easily than those
written in the passive voice.

Further, if it is recognised that bringing meaning to
print more accurately describes the reciprocal process
between the printed symbols and the mind of the reader,
the teacher will need to be aware of those features
of the text which may hamper comprehension. Lunzer
and Gardner (op cit, p270) list these as technical
and semi-technical vocabulary, abstract ideas, density

of presentation and the imperfect matching between
the importance of an idea and the amount of space
devoted to it. Hewitt (1979) in his suggestions
for promoting effective comprehension suggests that
readers should be exposed to more complex forms of
language, and that teachers should avoid circumventing
reading problems by using 'worksheets' or by avoiding
reading altogether. Rather, they should ascertain
what prior knowledge the reading material requires
and try and provide pupils with that prior knowledge.
He suggests that all teachers ask themselves, "Will
my reading policy enable my pupils to develop their
competence in reading?" (p31).

3.5.4 Defining reading purposes

The idea that teachers should assist their pupils
in developing suitable strategies for specific purposes
is well supported (Downing, 1976; Herber, op cit;
H.K. Smith, op cit). Robinson (1977, p62) suggests
that "Purposes should be set prior to reading" and
points out that "these will differ in terms of ... the
demands of the learner, the demands of the instructor
and the demands of the curriculum".

In order for the teacher to set various and effective
purposes for the pupils, she herself needs to realise
the many purposes there are for reading. As Farnes
(op cit, p12) says,

> "If the teacher has a narrow view of the variety
> of purposes that can be met through reading, she
> will be unable to develop her pupils' reading
> skills."

Not only does the teacher need to recognise the
various purposes for reading, but she needs to plan
reading tasks to train the pupils in accomplishing
these purposes (Herber, op cit, p33). An item from
the Standard Five Natal Education Department
Geography Syllabus may serve to illustrate how the

teacher could plan a reading task to serve a reading
purpose: During the teaching of 'The Netherlands',
pupils could be trained in recognising cause and
effect relationships by completing the following
worksheet with the injunction to read the source
material for this purpose.

Cause	Effect
1.	1. The Dutch farm only with pedigreed animals and do not keep herds of beef cattle.
2.	2. The farms are small and land is expensive.
3. Much of the Netherlands is below sea level.	3.
4.	4. Transport of goods is done mainly on water.
5. Top soil is brought down by the rivers flowing into Holland.	5.
6. Initially the polders are very salty.	6.
7.	7. Many hectares of tulips grow in the Netherlands.
8.	8. The Dutch make no use of hydro-electric power.
9.	9. Holland imports most of its grain.
10.	10. There are gates but NO fences on the pastures.

It follows that a teacher's aims are closely linked with the reading purposes she plans for the children.

An example from the Natal Education Department History Syllabus, Standard Four, may serve as another illustration of the close link between the teacher's aims and her pupil readers' purposes. Farnes's categories (1973) are used in this example:

<u>Pupils' Purposes</u>

Task purpose   : A study of the Voortrekkers in
                     Natal(1)

Specific purpose: Why did Dingaan kill Piet Retief?

<u>Teacher's aim</u>

To train pupils in testing the bias of writers by
referring to more than one source and weighing
up the evidence accordingly: comparative reading.

<u>Exercise</u>

Read these five accounts of the death of Piet Retief
and decide why Dingaan killed Piet Retief. Give
reasons for your decision.
(Obviously, the five chosen accounts would differ
in style, information and interpretation).

Lunzer and Gardner (1979, p26) describe four styles of reading - receptive reading, reflective reading, skim reading, and scanning; claiming that the appropriate style is selected according to the reader's purpose. The reader can only apply the appropriate style if he is fully aware of the particular purpose for reading that material. Lunzer & Gardner seem to imply that along with indicating the purpose for reading a particular text, the teacher should indicate the appropriate style. For example, if the purpose were to locate a particular piece of information, the teacher would encourage a skim reading and then a scanning; training the pupils to ignore all other information in the text as irrelevant to the purpose.

Downing (1976, p20) after reviewing a great deal of research evidence on purposes for reading concludes

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1.   I am indebted to my colleague D.W. McKellar for this
     particular exercise

that there are three possible improvements in reading
education: (i) more attention to helping pupils to
establish purposes in their reading; (ii) deliberate
teaching and practice in adjusting reading technique
to reading purposes; (iii) more concern for reading
skill development by subject area teachers for all
specific reading purposes in their particular
disciplines.

3.5.5   Effective questioning in the teaching of comprehension

Closely linked with training children to read for
defined purposes would be the kind of questioning
approach the teacher would adopt. For if the teacher
were to check the accomplishment of purposes for
reading, she would need to question accordingly. In
fact, H.K. Smith (1972, p93) warns that, if questions
asked by teachers do not relate to the stated purpose,
"pupils lose faith in directions and instruction given
them and become confused about their real goals".

Allied to the close link between teacher's questioning
and reading purpose is the linking of questioning with
teacher's aims. This relationship implies the need
for teachers to have wide and diverse aims. Burton
(1972) shows how crucial the teacher's awareness of
aims is for developing effective questioning techniques,
by arguing that,

> "As long as the aim of education is believed
> to be the mastery of content, the memorization
> of masses of unrelated, fragmentary facts; a
> barrage of minute fact questions is a natural
> and legitimate procedure" (p378).

Burton points out that the aims and purposes to be
served by questioning are fundamental. He lists
eleven of what he considers to be the most important
aims and suggests further that teachers should write
out some questions in advance with probable answers,
to train themselves in making questioning more
meaningful and various.

That effective questioning needs to be both artful
and well planned is shown in the findings of various
studies made on the questioning of comprehension.
Balmuth (1975) in discussing the difficulties of
measuring reading comprehension, believes that construct-
ing questions to determine success of comprehension
is extremely difficult, because of the ramifications
and implications present in reading selections. Bloom
(1956) acknowledged the dangers of inferring too much
from answers to particular questions; while Hewitt
(op cit) queries the validity of some questions intended
to measure comprehension by pointing out that prior
knowledge brought to the text can supply the answer
without any reasoning being necessary. The question,
'What are some of the results of Marco Polo's explora-
tions?' for example, might stimulate critical thinking;
on the other hand it might only elicit rote recall if
pupils have learnt 'facts' from a textbook. These
dangers would seem to lend further support to the need
for restricting questions to those appropriate to the
aims and purpose in reading the selection. For example,
if the purpose were to read a text to find out whether
it were fact or opinion, the teacher would limit her
questioning accordingly: Is this true? Why do you say
so? What other evidence, if any, supports your answer?
Is any of the evidence possibly not supportive of your
answer?

It is a truism for educators that questions play an
important role in teaching. The importance of this is
shown by the many studies made on the kinds of questions
teachers ask in the classroom. Gall (1972) after an
intensive study of the findings on teachers' questioning
practices concludes that 60% of teachers' questions
require students to recall facts, about 20% require
students to think; and the remaining 20% are procedural.
In the light of this Highet's observation (1951, p124)
that "there is probably as much bad teaching done through
bad questioning as in all other fields put together",
seems valid. Many experts in the field (Flanders, 1970;

Barnes, 1976; Bellack et al, 1966) have shown that
almost all teachers appear to use the question-and-
answer routine. These researchers suggest that much
of this routine is used as a way of controlling pupils'
attention. Barnes (op cit, p177), in his discussion
of this teacher centred question-and-answer technique
points out that controlling behaviour is, in fact,
controlling knowledge. He sees this control as being
detrimental to real learning.

If teachers wish to encourage rational problem-solving
in their pupils, if indeed they wish their pupils
to take a responsible part in their individual learning,
a particular kind of questioning seems necessary.
Most of the studies made on questioning have been
descriptive and offer little guidance to the teacher
as to what questioning is effective. However, Gall
(op cit, p348) lists four question types as worthwhile,
claiming that they are scantily treated; (i) questions
which cue students to improve on an initially weak
response to a question; for example, Can you explain
in more detail? (ii) questions which create a discuss-
ion atmosphere; for example, Do you agree with Tom's
answer? Can anybody add anything further? (iii)
questions which stimulate students' sense of curiosity
and inquiry; for example, What would you like to
know about this? What do you think is going to happen
next? (iv) questions which guide students' learning
of a problem-solving, behavioural or effective skill.
For example, What do you think our next step should
be? Do you still dislike that character?

Many reading experts believe that for full comprehension
to develop, pupils should be encouraged to ask their
own questions. This is in accordance with the idea
that a good reader is one who sets his own purposes
for reading and therefore his own questions.
H.K. Smith (op cit, p93) suggests that "Deeper compre-
hension results when students ask questions than when
the teacher does". Blackie (1972) reported on an
experiment she conducted in literature classes. Groups

of children were instructed to read and talk about,
for example, a poem, and set out to formulate questions
about it. The stipulation was that the questions
should be (a) questions to which they did not already
know the answers and (b) questions to which they would
like to know the answers. These were collated on the
chalkboard and used in subsequent discussion. Blackie
feels that this procedure encourages independent
work and leads to a deepening response to the real
insights that occur.

These, then, are some of the implications for class-
room practice of the teaching of reading of trans-
actional language.

3.6   Conclusions to Section A

In this Section certain aspects of the teaching and
reading of transactional language have been examined.
The linguistic demands made on the reader through
the particularities of transactional language, and
suggested reading behaviour of this language have been
some of the concerns of this Section.

Some conclusions are as follows:

3.6.1   The teaching of transactional language is the
responsibility of the school for this language is,
generally, first encountered at school.

3.6.2   Both teachers and pupils should be clear on the
purposes for reading for this would ensure a meaning-
ful and active interrogation of the text.

3.6.3   An open-ended approach such as is possible in the
small group learning situation allows for a closer
scrutiny of the text and an opportunity to reflect

on the author's intent. This would seem to be a more
favourable approach to the teaching of reading
comprehension than that of the teacher-dominated, close-
ended passage and question technique which does not
account for independent response to the text.

3.6.4   It is perhaps appropriate to repeat an earlier quota-
tion, "Children must read to learn while learning to
read". Although this statement may appear to be some-
what paradoxical, it is only so if reading is conceived
of as a skill to be learned once and for all at an
early stage of schooling. If reading is seen as a
developmental process, it seems only natural that the
ability to read is developed through experience in
reading.

3.6.5   A knowledge of the reading process is essential for
teachers. Clearly, if teachers recognized reading as
a developmental process, their approach would alter
accordingly. The approach would possibly be founded
on a set of principles on which decisions regarding
the choice of methods and materials could be based.
The set of principles could lead to the formation of
a reading policy, a policy which would encompass all
reading across the curriculum. A policy such as this
would, it seems, ensure the reading development of
every pupil.

Section B

The Reading of Poetic Language

3.7   The place of poetic language in primary schools

"... we dream in narrative, remember,
anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt,
plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip,

> learn, hate and love by narrative. In
> order really to live, we make up stories
> about ourselves and others, about the
> personal as well as the social past and
> future."
>   (B. Hardy[1], "Towards a Poetics of Fiction")

It would appear that narrative imagination is a common
human possession; so much so that sociologists see the
study of a culture's literature as a necessary part
of the systematic study of a society -

> "... literature neither 'reflects' nor 'arises'
> from society, but rather is an integral part of
> it and should be recognised as being as much so
> as any institution, the Family for instance, or
> the State."
>   (Rockwell, 1974, pvii)

Because of the place of literature in society, literature
clearly has a place in the school. It seems, too,
that every child should be given the opportunity to
generate hypotheses, testing them out and modifying
them in the light of fresh experience so as to construct
"a theory of the world in the head" which will make
sense of the world for him. Britton (1970) has argued
that being in the role of spectator affords the
opportunity to contemplate and "digest" experience,
organizing and modifying the experience to our own
satisfaction. It follows that exposure to the poetic
function of language will afford the child the opport-
unity to evaluate experience, his own and that of
others', and in so doing, bring order and control to
his construct of the world.

If arriving at an interpretation of the world is
closely linked with hypothesizing about stories then
clearly the acquisition of literacy ought also to be
approached through literature. As Spencer (1976, p2)
puts it, "Our most pressing unsolved problem is to
define and exemplify the place of children's literature
in literacy".

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1.   Source : Cate D. (1971)

What follows in this chapter is an attempt to define the place of children's literature in a school policy for language, for it may well be that it is from his "narrative purposes that each child will discover the real urge to become literate" (Lavender, 1979, p16).

Three specific contributions to the child's developmental growth will now be examined as examples of the possible contribution literature may make to that growth. These are: the contribution to the child's language development, his emotional education and his moral awareness.

3.8 Specific contributions of literature to the growth of the primary school child

3.8.1 The connection between language development and literature

Literature may be seen as a storehouse of the poetic function of language which can be manipulated by the child, for the child. Aiken (1972, p23), although stating that the primary function of children's books is to provide readers with an objective view of life, notes

> "... even before that ... one of their first purposes must be to exhibit language ... language is for [children] to enjoy in their own way ... it is not a set of fixed traditions, but a useful store of the most flexible raw materials in the world."

The Bullock Committee (1975, p525) re-inforces this in Recommendation 97:

> "Literature brings the child into an encounter with language in its most complex and varied forms and is a valuable source of imaginative insight."

A review of some of the relevant writings indicates that whilst there is no consensus on the view that

literature assists <u>mastery</u> of language, the <u>need</u> for
poetic language may well be crucial to a child's language
development.

Strongly rooted beliefs that the effective use of
language can be mastered through reading find support
among experts. Whitehead (1975, p7) in working on
children's reading interests has stated,

> "There are grounds for believing that, where
> it exists, this habit of wide independent reading
> has a massive influence for the good on the child's
> mastery of the written patterns of his language."

Some have argued that our heritage of songs, poems,
nursery rhymes and fairy tales affords an opportunity
for language learning. Wilkinson (1971, p106) and
Watts (cited by Field & Hamley, 1975, p22) both draw
attention to the value of this heritage in the informal
linguistic education of young children.

In advice to teachers offered by the Centre for
Language in Primary Education, London (McKenzie &
Warlow, 1977, p20) it is suggested that,

> "Literature offers optimum opportunity for
> developing language, for within the 'world
> of the book' language is learned in a context
> of meaning and experience, where imagery and
> metaphor give life to words ..."

That a child meets written language when he reads is
irrefutable but whether he masters the language patterns
of non-functional writing through exposure to it, is
questionable.

A note of doubt is sounded by Young (1978, p212) who
says that it cannot be assumed that the language of
great literature and other great examples of communi-
cation skill can be acquired "simply through exposure
to such examples of greatness in the first instance".

Mallett & Newsome (1977, p86) found no evidence in
children's writing to support the belief that a focus
on the language of the story would develop children's

language ability.   To the contrary the authors argue,
in fact, that "focus upon language may well divert
attention from the search for meaning and significance".

It may be that those who support the idea of a child's
expertise developing as a result of 'exposure' actually
encourage a close attention to the language of the
story.   In this highlighting there is the danger of
children mimicking the language to 'please the teacher'.
This mimicking, it is suggested, is in direct contra-
diction of the belief that for any real learning to
take place the child should communicate his ideas in
his own language, however unpretentious it may be.
According to Roberts (1977, pp20-25) too close an
attention to poetic language encourages artificiality
and "manufactured glitter" which stifle the natural
voice.

> "We get them busily mimicking other people's
> language; and we punish or reward according
> to how well they deny themselves".

Regarding the child's <u>need</u> for the language of
literature, it may be noted that many researchers in
both psychology and linguistics have shown that the
narrative function of language is vitally necessary
to the child's development[1].   A crucial part of any
child's development would seem to be his need to make
sense of the world around him.   According to psycholo-
gists such as Piaget and Bruner, play and the narrative
mode appear to be the two main vehicles in the child's
attempts to come to terms with his world.   It is the
part that language plays in this that is relevant to
this discussion.

Piaget[2] explained that it is through play that the

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1.   This would seem to lay doubt on the already questionable
     assumption that children should read literature purely
     for pleasure.

2.   Source: Krech, Crutchfield & Livson (1958)

child tries out his hopes and fears. The child indulges
in symbolic activity, and language, having its most
rapid development in these early years, is a very
important symbolic activity. Piaget believed that
language helps the child assimilate aspects of the
external world without the need for accommodation.
Wilkinson (1971), Moffett (1968) and others have shown
how crucial the function of the narrative mode is to
children, for not only is it part of the the whole
process of symbolic representation but it is the only
kind of discourse available to children for some time.
Further evidence of this kind of discourse being
heavily relied upon by the child is found in their
early attempts at writing.

Britton (1970, p115) shows that the habit of sorting
impressions through storying remains. "We so readily
construct stories out of past experience that it is
difficult to perceive that anything has been constructed
at all."

In conclusion, it is clear that literature has a place
in the language development of the child; differences
of opinion lie in the kind and degree to which this is
so. In the light of the available evidence it would
seem desirable to ensure that primary schools expose
pupils to a great deal of literature, both for personal
reading and for listening to, so that the child has
made available to him this construct for personal use
in hypothesizing on experience and, possibly, for use
in oral and written discourse.

3.8.2   The connection between emotional development and
         literature

"What sort of things do you like reading?"
"Well", said the eight year old girl, "there's
Treasure Island - that's a bloody one for when
I'm feeling boyish. And there's Little Men -
a sort of half-way one."
"Don't you ever feel girlish?"
"Yes, when I'm tired. Then I read The Smallest
Dormouse."
                            (Britton, 1977, p109)

This conversation may be seen as evidence, not only for the total disregard of 'literary quality' children show in book selection, but, more importantly, it would seem, the decisive role children's feelings play in their choices. That there is emotional response to literature is shown by most readers. Laughter, anger, tears, excitement, fear are some of the emotional reactions familiar to many readers. Accepting that readers do, in the main, respond emotionally to a text, the question is whether it is possible to educate this response.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the reader's experience and response will influence his future appraisals of behaviour and feeling. The idea of literature contributing to the emotional maturity of the child is lent support by experts in the field.

The Bullock Committee (op cit, p125) explain that literature presents the thoughts, experiences and feelings of people who exist outside the reader's awareness. They see literature's greatest value lying in the widening of the reader's consciousness because literature has the capacity to develop empathy, for it

> "... provides imaginative insight into what
> another person is feeling; it allows the
> contemplation of possible human experiences
> which the reader himself has not met".

Storying would seem to be a powerful vehicle through which the child may channel and come to terms with feelings.

So powerful a vehicle is this means of examining and realising feelings that children protected from fairy tales inevitably make up their own. Chukovsky (1977, p49), in his study, comes to the conclusion that if a child is not offered fairy tales "he becomes his own Anderson, Grimm, Ershov". Both he and Britton (1977, p45) show that a child's play is a dramatization of storying. The latter writer states that part of the

assimilative function of play is

> "... to improvise freely upon events in the
> actual world and in doing so enable ourselves
> to go back and meet the demands of real life
> more adequately".

Humes (1979, p17) would seem to come to the root of
the matter of educating the emotions through literature
by quoting Hepburn, who considered what the task of
educating the emotions through literature would consist
of:

> "It will be concerned ... with ousting vague
> and imprecise or crude emotions by more specific,
> appropriate and discriminating ones; with
> preventing emotion-experience from stagnating -
> replacing jaded and repetitive habit-emotions,
> with fresh and keen emotions, coupled logically
> to new individualized ways of seeing".

Humes elucidates his argument further by saying that
literature provokes new ways of perceiving the world
and, therefore, can be "creative of new emotions".
He concludes by saying, "The process of educating the
emotions is, therefore, essentially an attempt to bring
about refinements in perception and articulation".

It would seem then that the principle of organisation
of a work of literature is, in the final analysis,
affective. James Britton (1977, p111) reminds the
reader that Sapir pointed out long ago that man handles
reality "via a symbolic representation of the world
as he has experienced it". This means that man will
improvise the representation to please himself; for
example, to allay his anxieties, to boost his ego,
to ease his disappointments. Britton concludes his
discussion on the reader's response to literature by
saying,

> "We take up as it were the role of spectators:
> spectators of our own past lives, our imagined
> futures, other men's lives, impossible events ...
> Why do men improvise upon their representations
> of the world? Basically because we never cease
> to long for more lives than the one we have;
> in the role of spectator we can participate in
> an infinite number" (idem).

By extension then, it would seem that if the child
reader were placed in the role of spectator as often
as possible, he would become more discriminating for
his emotion-experience would not stagnate but rather,
through education, become virile, perceptive and wide
ranging.

3.8.3   The connection between moral awareness and literature

The idea that moral awareness is developmental enjoys
strong support. Piaget[1] has shown that moral judg-
ment is related very closely to the cognitive develop-
ment of the child. He argues that moral judgment is
nothing more than the cognitive structuring of how we
feel we ought to treat others and how others ought to
treat us. The point at issue is whether a child can
become morally aware through a study of literature.

Both Dewey and Piaget (as cited by Kohlberg, 1971)
hold that a child learns to accept authority genuinely
when he learns to understand the principles and
reasons behind the rules and power of authority. It is
reasonable to suggest, in terms of a language policy,
that literature can assist in bringing about this
understanding in a context that has appeal and interest
for the learner.

Whether moral education is the responsibility of the
school is open to question. Schroenn (1978) has noted
that "Moral Education should be one of the central
concerns of all schools", and he suggests that moral
education can take place through the study of literature.

Kohlberg (1971) makes a telling statement in showing
that, although teachers are not fully aware of their
role in moral education, they are "constantly acting
as moral educators" because they are heavily involved
in disciplining the child's behaviour and guiding his

1.   Source: Hersh; Paolitto; Reimer (1979).

interaction with other pupils and staff. Kohlberg argues that the so-called "hidden curriculum" should become overt and his studies define an approach to moral education.

The fact that there are many morally mature people who are unmoved by or who ignore literature would make it presumptuous to state that moral awareness comes only through a study of literature. Humes (1979, p19) illustrates this point by saying,

> "There are some academics who seem to possess extreme sensitivity in their elucidation of texts [but] display extreme insensitivity in their dealings with colleagues and students!"

Literature has an elusive and intangible nature which makes it difficult to transform assertions into demonstrable evidence. However, it is the perhaps immodest intention of the writer to list some of the published assertions as to how literature can make the reader more morally aware. These will be borne in mind when the planning of a literature policy in primary schools is considered.

Field and Hamley (1975, p14) quote two assertions:

(i) "... of all studies, that of literature is the discipline which most intimately affects the character of a person's self, which most radically and permanently modifies the grain of being".
      (Walsh W, 1959, The Use of Imagination)

(ii) "... we are convinced of the value of stories for children ... children feel forward to the experiences, the hopes and fears that await them in adult life ... as children listen to stories ... they may ... be choosing their future and the values that will dominate it".
      (Plowden Report, HMSO, 1967, p216)

Field and Hamley ask, in relation to these claims, what would count as evidence? How do we know whether literature permanently modifies the grain of a child's being or whether it helps children choose the values

that will dominate their futures?[1]

The Bullock Report (op cit, pp124-125), in its discussion on the claims made for the value of literature quotes three sources in an attempt to give both sides of the argument:

(i)   Nowell Smith (1917) saw literature's purpose as "the formation of a personality fitted for civilized life".

(ii)   The Newsome Report (1967) said that

> "all pupils, including those of very limited attainments, need the civilizing experience of contact with great literature, and can respond to its universality".

(iii) George Sampson (1925) said,

> "... let me beg teachers to take a sane view of literature. Let us have no pose or affectation about it. Reading Blake to a class is not going to turn boys into saints".

The Bullock Committee admit that "we lack evidence of the 'civilizing' power of literature" but suggest that those credos upholding the moral value of literature represent "a faith that English teaching needs". The Committee state further that,

> "In Britain the tradition of literature teaching is one which aims at personal and moral growth ... It is a soundly based tradition, and properly interpreted is a powerful force in English teaching" (p125).

In the United States, there are also two camps about the moral value of literature:

Postman (1970, p244) says,

> "... among every 100 students who learn to read, my guess is that no more than one will employ the process towards any of the lofty goals which are customarily held before us".

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1. This whole argument presents complications when considering objectives for a literature policy. Are objectives feasible?

The rest, he says, will keep themselves at a
relatively low level of emotional maturity and social
and political awareness.[1]

Frank Smith (1973, p44) in direct reply to
Postman's attack points out that Vietnam was the
world's most televised war and yet it did not
seem to end any sooner. He asks if the fact that
there was very little written literature - as opposed
to factual reporting - had anything to do with the
way the war was tolerated.

Anne MacCloed (1976) and Clifton Fadiman (1975)
both believe that there is a relationship between
literature and a reader's morality. The latter
states,

> "We need, we must have, a way of developing
> better human beings ... And I still believe
> that literacy, the literacy that reaches its
> highest development in literature - is a
> pre-requisite conditon for a society of better
> people. And if you want better people, it makes
> sense to start with children".

Moving from dogmas and assertions to empirical evidence,
it is noted that little research has been done on the
9 to 12 year age group and the moral effects of
literature on them. What research has been done is
tentative. One of the most recent pieces is the Schools
Council's Project: Children's Reading Interests (1975,
p7) and here too findings are not conclusive in
relation to moral influence: "we suspect that [reading]
can have a far-reaching influence on the child's
attitudes and values" (emphasis added).

The writer submits that, although there is no conclu-
sive proof, there is sufficient evidence to support
the idea that literature offers an awareness of

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1. The writer wonders how much the teaching is to blame for
this poor attitude to literature. The teacher is surely
central to any reader's success with literature in school.

morality if, indeed, it does not lead to moral growth.

Having established that literature does have a vital
contribution to make to the education of the child,
the writer is inevitably led to consider the question
of books and their suitability for the child reader,
for it may be said that it is on the satisfaction that
the child finds in a book that the successful contri-
bution of literature rests.

In the light of her investigation of the field of
study, the writer proceeds to offer some suggestions
in the matter of book selection. These suggestions
will cover three areas: the matter of responsibility
for choosing books in schools; some issues in the type
of book selected; and how knowledge of child develop-
ment may aid book selection for children.

3.9   Book selection for nine to twelve year olds

3.9.1   Responsibility for selection of books in schools

If literature does have an important part to play
in the primary school curriculum, it seems necessary
that the selection of fiction for children becomes a
matter of concern and care. A clear problem is the
matter of who is entrusted with the selection of books
in schools.

In primary schools of the Natal Education Department,
for example, the selection of fiction is at best, a
somewhat arbitrary affair as schools appear to rely
on lists and recommendations made by authorities out-
side the immediate school environment. Some of these
sources of recommendation are:
(i)   Lists issued by the Natal Education Department's
       library services. These lists are drawn up
       largely from books which have been sent to the

Education Department by publishers for review purposes. Obviously, this means that books not sent in for review do not appear on the list, and also that there is little selection taking place by the Education Department library service itself.

(ii) Lists issued in the course of the Natal Education Department's in-service training of teachers. Generally, these lists are drawn up by the individual speakers and consist of lists of titles with no comments as to why the particular titles have been selected for recommendation. By their very nature, the lists are biased to a particular speaker's judgment of books and have not necessarily been tried on a wide or differing range of readers.

(iii) Lists issued by the College for Further Training of Teachers. Again, these lists reflect the bias of the lecturers concerned. For example, none of Roald Dahl's books appear on any of the lists which have come to the present writer's attention although Dahl is a highly respected children's author in many circles and is widely favoured by the child reader.

(iv) Model resource centres were set up by the Natal Education Department to display works of fiction regarded as suitable for children. These centres were closed in 1978 as they were allegedly non-viable as so few teachers took advantage of the services offered. However, it is possible that these services could have been more widely promoted.

(v) Lists circulated by the Natal Education Department on behalf of the Principal Adviser for English. These are lists which come to the Adviser's attention from other sources such as journals or schools.

(vi)   Titles suggested by booksellers. In some ways
       these are the most useful as the booksellers
       are in the position of obtaining opinion of
       books from a wide range of schools. However,
       the bookseller is in the business of selling
       and must rid himself of stock in hand in spite of
       its possible lack of suitability to a particular
       age range or type of reader.

Although these avenues have assisted some teachers
to some extent, it is likely that lists issued by
an Education Department gain a kind of approval that
they don't necessarily deserve. It is also likely
that many recommended books fail because they are
selected by adults: the child's response is not
considered. Certainly, until books are read and
personally selected by the teacher and children within
any one school, many books will prove unsuitable and
therefore remain unread.

The concept of an approved list should be a vital
reality within each school. Lists should, by their
very nature, differ in content from one school to
another. It will be argued that a literature policy
and its subsequent programme of action is discrete in
its content because it is peculiar to its school and
the pupils in it. Research has shown how fruitless
it is to attempt compilation of a list of children's
preferences drawn from a wide sample. Whitehead's team
(1975) found Black Beauty to be the most popular
quality book on children's reading lists but it was
read by a mere 3,4% of the research sample. Indeed
Fox, in a personal interview at Exeter University in
April 1980, told the writer that because of the wide
selection of books now available to children, it is
an artificial and pointless task to judge any one book
in a popularity rating. Chambers (1975) has pointed
out that titles gain and wane in popularity and,
therefore, lists should not be regarded as static
affairs, nor should attempts be made to draw up a
'popularity' list from a wide sample.

3.9.2   Three issues related to the place of particular
        kinds of book in primary schools

> "In both political and moralistic aspects,
> censorship can become a dangerous and
> destructive influence, not only in publishing
> and book-selling, but in library service,
> in education and in intellectual and cultural
> life."
>   (Haines, 1954, cited by Dobie, 1976, p81)

While it is not the intention of the writer to consider
in any detail the matter of censorship, it should be
recognised that certain forms of censorship do operate
in schools. Dobie (1976, p83) states:

> "It seems clear that censorship of some kind
> or another is almost inescapable as a form
> of social control and that even if it were
> totally abolished, other forms of control
> would appear."

While the most frequent concern of the censor is,
no doubt, material which is pornographic, this would
not seem to be an issue of any great significance in
a primary school. However, the matter of 'poor quality'
books and then of 'fearful' books in primary schools,
follows.

3.9.2.1

Decisions on literary quality can only be tentative
at best, for personal opinion inevitably comes into
play. There is disagreement amongst authorities on
what is 'good' children's literature and what is
'mediocre' or 'poor'. For the purpose of this disserta-
tion, good novels will be those which are in Leavis's
terms "a living principle", books which have both an
aesthetic and educational (in its broadest sense) value.
Two books which have been widely acclaimed by critics
and avid readers alike, are examples of good novels.
They are The Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula le Guin,
Penguin, 1978 and The Borrowers by Mary Norton, Piccolo,
1977.

Some of the distinctions between 'good' and 'poor'
books made by authorities in this field are respect-

fully offered here, together with criticisms of these distinctions.

Whitehead's team (op cit, p51) make a distinction between 'quality' and 'non-quality' books:

> "... on the one hand those whose production
> has been essentially a commercial operation, a
> matter of catering for a market; and on the
> other hand those in which the involvement of
> the writer with his subject matter and his
> audience has been such as to generate a texture
> of imaginative experience which rises above
> the merely routine and derivative."

Recognizing the element of 'subjective' judgment in this distinction, the question the team were finally forced to ask themselves when applying this quality/ non-quality discrimination, was roughly,

> "Is this book one that a responsible teacher
> would recommend on the grounds that pupils
> were likely to take from it some imaginative
> experience?"

Chambers (1975, p42) argues that there are many books likely to be judged 'non-quality' that responsible teachers would find to be precisely of the value that researchers wanted when given to a child whose literary development was cruelly unformed. He criticises, too the belief commonly held in educational circles that the literary quality of what you read matters more than how you read.[1]

Egoff (1973, p7) offers this distinction:

> "A poor book takes a child and puts him back
> a step or two, a mediocre book takes a child
> and leaves him where he is. A good book promotes
> an awareness of the possibilities of life, the
> universality of life, the awakening of response."

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1. It is outside the scope of this thesis to deal with the
    'snob cult' in literature, but it seems likely that a
    belief that reading of so called 'quality' books as the
    only 'worthwhile' reading, has been the cause of much
    of the disinterest in literature reported by teachers.

Yorke (1979) talks of first-rate and second-rate
books, recognizing the quality of 'growth' in the
first-rate; and Dickinson (1973, p101) labels as
"rubbish" all forms of reading matter which contain
"to the adult eye no visible value, aesthetic or
educational" (emphasis added).

It would seem that criteria for 'goodness' will differ
from one judge to another. Clearly, the warning to
teachers implied by these differing distinctions between
'good' and 'bad' is that care must be taken before
placing adult judgment on any book. The child's
response to the book and his needs as a reader should
perhaps be the main criteria for any grading in quality.
Further, a teacher would need to keep her own bias in
judgment in firm control and, indeed, keep fairly
private her own opinion of what is 'good' and 'bad' so
as not to frighten off the kind of reader Chambers
so justly considers.

Teachers and librarians without the confidence gained
by a thorough knowledge of children's literature and
of the research in this field, are often in the
situation of not knowing whether to condone the reading
of certain books or not. For example, Enid Blyton
was an author frowned upon by the Natal Education
Department some ten years ago because her books were
regarded as being morally unsuitable for children
to read; in fact certain provincial libraries did
not keep her books on the shelves. It is relevant
to note what some authorities feel on the matter of
censorship and exclusiveness.

Moss (1977, p335), editor of an annual list of books
for children warns,

> "If we mute colours, if we insist that the
> only worthwhile book is the one which deals
> with a subject in depth, we shall turn potential
> readers into non-readers. First steps must be
> sure but easy."

R. Bamberger (1975, p31) in a research paper for UNESCO points out that the aesthetic sense is not fully developed in the primary school child and therefore any aesthetic literature chosen should "deal with children's experience".

Malcolm Yorke (op cit, p24) found in his research that to children "rubbish" and the "classics" are all books and "the first are accessible and the second are often not". He argues, like Chambers, that the second-rate is very hard work for some pupils and "it does indeed extend him in terms of language, experience portrayed, insights into himself, society, values, relationships etc". He suggests too that some readers may never be ready to tackle the 'first-rate' or 'classics'.

Driver (1976); Inglis (1978) and Dickinson (1973) all plead for a balanced diet of reading for the primary school child, arguing that this leads to refinement in judgment of a personal and real nature rather than opinion imposed by some adult. In fact, Inglis (p74) uses the metaphor of food to make his point saying that a

> "... homeopathic diet of chick peas, huskwheat bread, nuts and sultanas, and raw fennel has a deadly earnest reek about it ... I would press curry and chips, gobstoppers, cherryade, HP sauce, SMASH and shreddies on the fourth year of the junior school".

Dickinson (op cit), an award winning children's author, says, in defence of the reading of 'rubbish',

> "Nobody who has not spent a whole sunny afternoon under his bed rereading a pile of comics left over from the previous holidays has any real idea of the meaning of intellectual freedom" (p101).

He presents six points in support of the reading of 'rubbish':
(i)   it is important that a child should have at least 'a whole culture at his fingertips';

(ii)   a child should feel he belongs to his peer
        group and "inevitably the group interest
        will be mostly rubbish";

(iii)   children should discover things for themselves,
        in the process they will learn "the art of
        comparison, and subconsciously acquire critical
        standards";

(iv)   the psychological argument that an insecure
        or unhappy child may

>   "... need to reread something well known
>   but which makes absolutely no intellectual
>   or emotion demand. Rubbish has this
>   negative value";

(v)   any rational reading system should include
        both "plums" and "roughage";

(vi)   adults' judgment of books as rubbish is
        dangerous as

>   "... the adult eye is not necessarily
>   a perfect instrument for discerning
>   certain sorts of values ... the child's
>   eye can take or leave in a way an adult
>   cannot, and can acquire stimuli from things
>   which appear otherwise overgrown with a
>   mass of weeds and nonsense".

Egoff (1973) distinguishes between "good", "bad" and
"mediocre" books, arguing that "mediocre" books are
the most dangerous because they are stultifying. They
deprive the reader of judgment, new ideas and a sense
of humour. The "mediocre" books harm pupils in the
"sense of deprivation" rather than "actual damage";
while "bad" books are easily recognisable and therefore
"combatable".

It may be appropriate to conclude this section with
an actual case study in reading interests carried
out by Brown (1979). Catherine's reading progress
was charted through questionnaire and interview, for
three years - from her last year in junior school in
June 1975 when aged 11 years 3 months, till July 1978,
when aged 14 years. Catherine was not a reluctant reader
On examination it was found that she read widely,
irrespective of literary quality and reread many books

including easy ones, particularly during examination time.[1] "I read all the books I can lay my hands on", Catherine told the researcher, and yet she was quite able to make sound value judgments on her reading matter. In July of the final year of the study she was reading only adult books and this included The Omen and The Exorcist. She was no longer reading comics.

It would seem fair to conclude by saying that children read books regardless of literary quality, that they select books according to their mood, needs and changing interests and that they do acquire value judgment of their own if they are exposed to all standards of fiction. The evidence suggests that both books of merit and books with no apparent merit, deserve a place on the book shelves of primary schools.

3.9.2.2

Whether books arousing fear and horror should be excluded is a matter of opinion. It is reasonable to suggest, however, that fear is present in all of us. Witches and ogres have been present in the fairy tales of all cultures for many generations. This, as Tucker (1973) points out, is evidence of the latent fear in all people being played out in the form of story.

What exactly will cause fear in any particular child seems unpredictable. Chesterton (1976) states that anybody who knows children, or, indeed, has been a child himself, would know that fear is incalculable. "The hint of horror may come by any chance in any connexion" (p126). Storr (1976), too, points out that in spite of the progress made in this century, there are still no conclusions about what causes fear in

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1. The writer noticed the same trend with a group of Standard Five children who, during the writing of their final examinations, took to reading comics and annuals, with one girl reading the class ii readers her sister brought home.

children. The issue is further confused, according to Storr, because there are no rules among the children themselves as to what causes fear. She asks,

> "Why is it that a child who can read the most
> blood-thirsty of the Grimm fairy stories without
> flinching, is reduced to a pulp of tears by
> Black Beauty and terrified by an illustration
> of a water nymph? ... Why is the under-the-bed
> monster for this child a wolf, for that a snake
> and for the third a spider?"

Storr answers her questions by saying, "We don't know".

The psycho-analytic work of people such as Freud and Klein has possibly influenced the approach to children's literature in this century for the Victorians hardly spared the child reader at all. Sherwood (1976) writing of the Fairchild Family tells how Mr Fairchild took his three young children to see a man hanging from the gibbet to teach them to love each other, for this man had been hanged for murdering his brother. Although death in a Victorian family was perhaps not as traumatic as it might be to a modern child, it does seem that the Victorians were instinctively 'cashing in' on the fear of punishment experienced by children in their early stages of moral development.[1] The old children's rhyme 'Step on a crack, break your mother's back' is indicative of a child's fear of physical punishment for wrong doing.[2]

Accepting that children do experience fear raises the problem of how to place fear in children's literature and what role this can play in the growth and development of the child.

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1. The inevitability of physical punishment, often greatly exaggerated, is central to a child's conception of doing right. Kohlberg (1971) sees this as Stage One in a child's moral development.

2. For more examples, see OPIE (1959), The Language and Lore of Children, Penguin.

As to the child's development, McCreesh (1977) and
Lewis (1975) suggest that literature can provide
the child with the appropriate language to verbalize
his fears. In showing the value of literature in
developing the imagination, both suggest that one value
of this is the control it brings to new and strange
areas of experience. Lewis says, "It can help the child
realize and define his feelings".

The argument to allow children to meet fear in books
is lent further weight by Tucker (op cit) who states
that the peak age for nightmares is between five and
nine years of age. He advocates an element of fear
in books for this age group reasoning that the child
can "test himself out" on the fear in the story.[1]

Storr (op cit) suggests five ways in which a writer
can depict evil of any sort without the danger of
overwhelming the child participant:

(i)   the innocuous "Ian Flemming" style where "goodies"
        and "baddies" are clearly defined;

(ii)   dehumanizing the enemy and pitting the hero
        against Fate in the shape of either the forces
        of nature, or the evils of society, for
        example, Avalanche by Rutgers van der Loeff;

(iii)   a humorous approach which reduces the horror
        of the villain, for example, Black Jack by
        Leon Garfield;

(iv)   a distancing by time as this makes the horror
        remote, for example, The Chief's Daughter by
        Rosemary Sutcliffe;

(v)   the use of fantasy as children move easily from
        fact to imagination, recognising the value of
        both, for example, The Hobbit by J.R. Tolkien.

Teachers in primary schools who decide to include

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1. The writer knows of a Class i group who begged their
    teacher daily to read and reread Sendak's Where the Wild
    Things Are. The teacher believed that the pupils were
    "trying on" the fear in the book.

books with an element of fear and/or horror in them
could well find Storr's view of use in selecting
books.

The value of literature would seem to lie in the
pattern in which it presents both good and evil and
the realisation it brings to the reader that both these
elements are essential to people's lives.

The sociologist, Anne McCloed (op cit, p96) notes
that although pessimism is not always the theme it
is "a shadowy presence" in a number of recent books
for children and points out that children's literature,
like any other, is of its time. She concludes, "If
the time is darkened by doubt and fear, the literature
is likely to be shadowed, too, even against the intent
of its creators". Russell Hoban's superbly written
book The Mouse and His Child is a fine example of this
undercurrent of pessimism.

It seems inevitable that children will meet the darker
side of life and teachers would seem advised to take
cognisance of this when selecting books. There is
no reason why books dealing with these matters should
not be provided for potential readers.

3.9.2.3
It is not uncommon to hear teachers complain that
children will not read particular books and for no
apparent reason. Nor is it uncommon to read criticism
by ecuationalists of award winning children's books
which are not regarded as such by children.[1]
Concerned teachers, librarians and researchers in the
field of children's literature, in an attempt to seek
an answer to this vexing problem, are looking more
closely at the reasons for children choosing one book
in favour of another. This anomaly will now be
discussed and the applicability of suitable theories

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1. McPhail (1975) says that the award of a Carnegie Medal
    "is the kiss of death" to a book as far as children are
    concerned.

of development to the selection of books for children
will be suggested.

It seems reasonable to suggest that there is predicta-
bility in young children's tastes in books, although
authors and plots may differ from one decade to another.
This view is supported by many authorities in the field.
A selection of these views follows:

The Bullock Committee (1975, p125) found enough evidence
to support the idea that

> "Children's favourite stories at different ages
> reflect the particular fantasies and emotional
> conflicts which are foremost in their experience
> at that time. ... It accounts for the conclusion
> that although the names of the most widely-read
> authors change from one decade to the next the
> characteristic features of their books remain
> much the same. The presentation is vivid and
> dramatic, the characters relatively unsubtle, and
> virtue triumphs in an ending which places everyone
> where he should be."

Richards, the author of the once popular Billy Bunter
comics gave his recipe for success (as cited by
Tucker, 1972, p49):

> "I tell him [the boy reader] that there are
> some splendid fellows in the world, that it
> is after all a decent sort of place. He likes
> to think himself like one of these fellows and
> is happy in his daydreams."

The notion of heroism is predictably of interest to
children. Meek and Warlow (1977, p74) explain it thus:
"Children prefer the small courageous serf to outwit
the bullying landlord, the thoughtful younger son to
marry the princess", because this is how things should
be ordered in the universe. Tucker (1972, p54) adds,

> "You could say that growing up is one long
> process of cutting down this heroic view and
> gradually coming to terms with what really
> is."

Attending to this unchanging characteristic in children's
taste in literature should lead one to a consideration

of some of the peculiarities of the particular age
group which make children select one book in favour
of another. Schlager (1979) explains that in order
to predict children's choices in literature we need
a cross-pollination between the literature expert
and the child psychologist. The literature expert
can tell us what children read while the psychologist
can give the major reasons why children read particular
books, because of their particular stages of develop-
ment. Books that reflect the child's perception of
the world and whose main characters reflect the complex
psychological and emotional aspects of the reader,
according to Schlager, gain wide readership. Books
which fail to reflect this viewpoint, no matter how
beautifully written, are seldom read. Schlager supports
the position that books which succeed are those "that
contain an identifiable stage of development, regardless
of the literary quality so appropriately desired by
the adult" (p138).

Of the theories of child development available[1], two
have been chosen for review in terms of a relevance
for teachers in understanding children's reading
interests and selecting books. Both theories have
found application by authorities in literature and
both chosen for analysis are rather categoric by
nature and clearly biased in their emphasis of certain
aspects of development over others. However, their
worth may perhaps be best illustrated by showing how
some authorities use them to explain the popularity
of certain books.

According to Erik Erikson's Theory of Development
(1950), nine and ten year olds reach his fourth stage
of development, which he calls "Industry versus
Inferiority"; while the older primary school children
are closer to his fifth stage of development - "Identity
versus Role Diffusion".

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1. Piaget's theory of moral growth in children or that of
Kay could possibly serve the purpose.

Schlager (1978) applies Erikson's theory to children's literature for the middle childhood group (the fourth stage) while Taubenheim (1979) applies Erikson's theory to the adolescent group (the fifth stage). Each of these applications will now be reviewed.

Schlager (1978) in her exploration of the relationships between child development and children's literature applied Erikson's theory to Newbery Award[1] winning novels and found that the five most circulated books matched Erikson's stages of development whereas the least circulated did not. As example, Schlager cites The Island of the Blue Dolphins[2] by Scott O'Dell - the most widely circulated book on the Newbery list to date. O'Dell deprives his main character of adult help and pits her against a stark reality (her brother is killed very early on in the book). By doing this O'Dell has touched upon one of the most consuming concerns of the primary school child - what Erikson calls "reality orientation", the desire to handle real situations. As Schlager says, "It is highly gratifying for the young reader to observe a fictional peer's successful struggle with the problems of survival" (p138). A further reason for the wide circulation of this book is the element of what Erikson calls "task orientation" in the novel. The main character builds a shelter, a canoe, dries and preserves food and makes a bird's feather skirt for herself. Schlager points out that the character's obvious pride and pleasure in the finished products, and her skill of workmanship are greatly "appreciated by her reading peers" (p139).

It is pertinent to note that the least circulated of the Award winning books, although beautifully written,

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1. The Newbery Award is a prize awarded annually to the book judged the best children's book published in any one year. It is America's most respected children's literature award.

2. The writer has personal experience of the success of this novel with this age group.

did not, Schlager found, in any way reflect Erikson's stages of development.

Taubenheim (1979) compiled an annotated bibliography of fiction corresponding to concepts deducted from Erikson's fifth stage of man, namely "identity versus role diffusion".

One of the titles suggested by Taubenheim for early adolescence is Armstrong Sperry's Call it Courage (more often entitled The Boy Who Was Afraid in the publications available in South Africa). This is a Polynesian legend about Mafatu who is searching for an answer to the question, 'Where do I fit within the scheme of my cultural heritage?' Mafatu is frightened of the sea but because his people support themselves by the sea it is important that he learn to overcome his fear. He goes out to sea alone, overcomes his fear and takes his place as a respected member of his society. As will be noted the ingredients of identity - searching and reality situations are evident in the novel and are therefore, in terms of Erikson's theory, of interest to the early adolescent.

Implications of Erikson's theory for book selection in terms of what the writer personally observed in her preliminary investigations towards the preparation of this work are perhaps of interest here. The Pigman by Paul Zindel is one of the books recommended by Taubenheim for late adolescence. This particular novel did not meet with the expected 'good' reception by a twelve-year-old group, thus supporting Taubenheim's argument. Clearly, according to Erikson's stages, these twelve year olds had not reached the stage of development whereby they could respond to this 'level' of novel.[1]

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1. On the other hand the writer has personal experience of this particular novel being 'a success' with adolescents in high school.

The second theory suggested in this section as useful to teachers for book selection is that behind Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development (1971). The theory proposes three levels of development with each level having two stages. Kohlberg (op cit, p171) explains that,

> "Any individual is usually not entirely at one stage. Typically, as children develop they are partly in their major stage (about 50% of their ideas), partly in the stage into which they are moving, and partly in the stage they have just left behind."

In relation to literature, this would seem to imply that a reader can understand but not necessarily accept a stage through which he has passed and cannot grasp the reasoning of more than one stage above his own.[1] Therefore, when a child is offered a selection of possible reasons for an action, he inevitably selects as 'best' the reasoning of the stage immediately above where he is actually functioning.

The applicability of this theory to books may be illustrated by means of reference to the findings of Broderick and of Hollindale, both experts in the field of children's literature.

Broderick (1973) finds Kohlberg's theory a useful one to explain the success or failure of books. Like Schlager, she cites Newbery titles, two of which will be mentioned here. Coatsworth's The Cat Who Went to Heaven has a limited audience. Broderick claims that the artist (the main character) is seen initially operating strongly at Kohlberg's stage four - evincing respect for authority. However, the artist,

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1. This perhaps explains in part why many "classics" fail with high school pupils, for some may not be ready to reason their way into the moral dilemmas presented by great authors and playwrights; who, according to Kohlberg, have characters operating at Level Three - the universal ethical principle orientation of a Postconventional Level.

in spite of the Buddhist priests, paints his beloved cat into the commissioned picture. This is, as Broderick explains, a classic case of Kohlberg's level six - where right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to universality. But, as she says, "The book's potential audience is not at an age where such reasoning has any meaning" (p37).

Rabbit Hill by Robert Lawson, on the other hand, was found to be far more popular for the same age group because the highest level the main character achieves is the "good rabbits do this" stage - which most ten-year-olds can easily accept.

Broderick concludes her findings by giving three implications of Kohlberg's theory for reader guidance (p38):

(i)   the books a child likes best are either at his own level of moral development or the one immediately above;

(ii)   books rejected by children are operating at a stage more than one above where the reader is at, or are below his level;

(iii) discussion groups containing children from two adjoining levels help the children at the lower stage move more rapidly into the next stage.

It is suggested that these implications of Broderick's should be seriously considered by teachers concerned with choosing books for children.

Hollindale (1977) comments in detail on the Narnia Series by C.S. Lewis[1]. This series enjoys a wide circulation among child readers and is, in the main, highly regarded and well reviewed by adults. The writer plans to discuss Hollindale's view and relate it to Kohlberg's Theory in an attempt to understand

1.   Called the Narnia series because the events take place in the Land of Narnia. There are seven titles to the series, each of which can be read independently.

the reason for the success of this series. For the
sake of convenience particular reference will be
made only to one book in the series - The Lion, the
Witch and the Wardrobe.

Hollindale shows, with reference to the texts, how
retribution and punishment are the moral order of the
stories. Corporal punishment is in order, often of a
brutal kind - for example, the brutal whipping of
Aslan. As Hollindale says,

> "It is not hard to see what children find so
> compulsive in such books ... Good and bad are
> clear and unambiguous, and romantic war
> continually takes place between them. The
> baddies get 'paid out', and 'our side' can use
> whatever methods it likes provided they are
> chivalrous and brutal" (p20).

Kohlberg's Level Two is the conformity level - the
Morality of Conventional Role. The child characters
in the Narnia Series are taught that conformity pays
and that good behaviour and orientation to authority
are primary values. For example, the guests attending
the enjoyable but forbidden tea party are turned to
stone when discovered by the witch. Good behaviour
and orientation to authority are the very values
which Kohlberg sets out in stages three and four of
his Level Two. These are the very values which a
primary school child would seem to grasp, and this,
perhaps, is the main reason for the popularity of
this series. J.R. Tolkien has said that before a
child concerns himself with whether a story is true
or not, he likes to make a clear distinction between
the 'goodies' and the 'baddies'. The Narnia Series
would seem to provide the reader with these clear
distinctions.

It would seem that books intended for middle childhood
readership must have characteristics to which that
particular age can relate, in order to succeed. This
means that well-written books with good plots and
good storylines, but lacking in the developmental
perceptions of middle childhood, remain basically

unappealing to nine-to-twelve year olds.

It is submitted that theories such as Erikson's and Kohlberg's have much to offer teachers who wish, not only 'to fit the book to the child', but to plan a pupil's reading path through the primary school.

In this section (3.9) the writer has attempted to examine some of the concerns relevant to book selection in schools. It has been established that those responsible for selecting books should be familiar with the contents of the books and should be conscious of their own biases and tastes. It has also been established that there is a place for 'poor quality' books and books containing elements of fear and horror. Lastly, it has been suggested that theories of development, such as those evolved by Erikson and Kohlberg, can guide teachers in the choice of books for primary school children.

The discussion thus far in this chapter has focussed on the child and the books. How literature may assist the child's development to a level of literacy where he may operate independently and satisfyingly in society, has been the main 'thrust' of this presentation. Implications for the teaching of literature are clearly evident in what has been examined. Three such implications, which seem vital to the promotion of an interest in literature, will now be mentioned.

3.10 Some implications for the teaching of literature in primary schools

Three possible ways of awakening and maintaining a child's interest in literature involve considering and respecting the child's response to his reading; having a knowledge of and appreciation for children's literature; and, showing the insights literature may

offer to subjects other than that labelled 'English'.

The writer proceeds to an examination of these three
avenues with the intention of indicating certain
attitudes and behaviours which seem necessary among
teachers for the promotion of interest in literature.

3.10.1 Considering the child's response to literature

> "... We say what we think about the poem and
> if it is considered the wrong answer it is
> brushed aside. ... I'm fed up with people who
> ask you a question and then when you give them
> an answer which they don't understand or it's
> rubbish in their way of thinking they pass
> over you - I think it's very much wrong."
>   (Pauline, quoted in English in Education,
>   5(3), Winter, 1971, p7)

The assimilation and re-shaping of past experience
in the light of new experience has been shown to be
of primary importance in the learning situation.
Moreover, it has been argued that teachers who adopt
an 'interpretive' or 'epistemological' pedagogical
perspective are more likely to create an active
learning response in the pupil than those teachers
who impose a body of knowledge on the learner. In
the study of literature it seems essential for the
teacher to provide a situation for individual inter-
pretation and enquiry - a situation that will encourage
a rich and varied response to literature.

The work of selected experts in the field may serve
to indicate the kind of teaching that may be required,
if any modicum of success is envisaged in gaining
and maintaining a child's reading interest.

Lewis (1975) in a discussion of fiction and the
imagination points out that fiction is written as an
imaginative act with the reader invited to join in
the 'let's imagine' game. He says that it is the
teacher's job to facilitate imaginative reception in
the pupils, giving them the opportunity to reflect

upon the author's message and to move beyond it imaginatively. Teachers who do not allow for this reflection but impose their own reactions and literary critical processes on the pupils perform, in his view, the "worst kind of literature teaching". Lewis argues that the teacher's role in fostering responsive reading is a delicate one, in which the teacher is a learner trying to help children formulate their responses and reactions to books. In this process, he says, there can be no 'right answers', but rather different qualities of response.

Britton (1977, p107) believes that the child's response to literature, however naive, differs in degree rather than kind from that which is desirable. He sees the teacher's aim to be an attempt to refine and develop the responses which children are already making to stories, songs, films and television programmes. Progress in response, according to Britton, lies in

> "... perceiving gradually more complex patterns of events, in picking up clues more widely separated and more diverse in character, and in finding satisfaction in patterns of events less directly related to their expectations and, more particularly, their desires" (idem).

He warns that to have children take over the teacher's response "is a short circuit that destroys the whole system". The response of another reader, he maintains, can only have value if it helps the reader "become aware of the form of a response we have already made or are capable of making" (idem).

Britton believes that the independent, active response - "a fabric of comment, speculation, relevant auto-biography" - is the one to invoke. "Talk in class should arise from, and further stimulate this individual response" (p108).

The Bullock Committee (1975, p134) give clear indications of the role the teacher must play in deepening the reading experience of children:

> "A child derives value from a work of
> literature in direct proportion to the
> genuineness of the response he is able
> to make to it. The teacher's skill lies
> in developing the subtlety and complexity
> of this response without catechism or a
> one-way traffic in apodictic judgments."

In the teaching of literature it would seem crucial
that a teacher assume the role of an agent leading
the child to personal autonomy rather than that of
a moulder to her own set of value judgments. It
has been suggested elsewhere in this work that the
reader is a spectator to the events represented in a
story. It is unquestionable that each reader will
look on in his own way bringing his own personal
experience to bear on the text; taking from the text
that satisfaction which suits his needs and interests.
Opportunity to do this would seem to lie in the
sympathetic handling of literature by the teacher.

If the teacher accepts that she must meet the child
where he is in his response, and yet must encourage
him to progress in his sophistication of response; it
follows that the teacher will need to consider the
kind of discussion she wishes to initiate or guide.

Field and Hamley (1975, p57) suggest that there are
two main types of discussion with children about
books which are worthwhile. The first is during the
reading of the book - noting the "signposts" developed
by the author and asking if subsequent events are
likely to be pleasant or unpleasant and why. The
second type of discussion occurs on completion of the
book where only two questions need to be asked: "Did
you like it?" and "Why?" In the exploration of the
'Why?' answers comes critical awareness. Although
articulateness is difficult and slow, the authors
believe it does, finally, have a cumulative effect.

Fox, in a personal interview at Exeter University
in April 1980, told the writer that individual response
to books is vitally important. In his on-going

research (as yet unpublished) he has found the most important questions to ask of the child reader are: "Which character do you like best?", "Why?", "What do you think he/she looks like?".

The value of small group discussion has already been established earlier in this work. It would seem to be a favourable approach to adopt if any real opportunity is to be afforded for individual response to literature. Support for literature to be discussed in this way in the primary school is found in the work of many researchers, for example, Barnes et al (1971), Rosen & Rosen (1973) and Phillips (1971). These authorities show that regular discussion of literature in small groups has a cumulative effect both on the child's personal writing (Martin et al, 1972) and in his perception of stories. In fact, Rosen & Rosen (op cit, p192) show, through recorded discussions subsequently transcribed, a group of eleven-year-olds reaching a new stage in their responses. The transcript reveals that the children finally became conscious of a writer behind the text, a writer who is capable of making choices.

At the Conference for English teachers held at Dartmouth College in 1966 teachers came to the following conclusion:

> "Response is a word that reminds the teachers that the experience of art is a thing of our making, an activity in which we are our own interpretive artist. The dryness of schematic analysis of imagery, symbols, myth, structural relations, et al should be avoided passionately at school. It is literature, not literary criticism, that is the subject."
> (Reported in The Cool Web, Meek M & Warlow A, (ed), 1977, pp379-392)

3.10.2 The teacher's knowledge of books as a pre-requisite for their subsequent promotion

Knowledge of children's books as a requirement for primary school teaching would seem to be self evident. However, according to a questionnaire circulated to

teachers in August 1980[1] indications are that
class teachers rely heavily on teacher-librarians
to promote interest in the reading of fiction. It
is suggested that a more positive way in which to
promote reading interest is for the class teacher
herself to take an interest in children's literature.
This implies that the teacher will need to do more
than merely acknowledge the availability of certain
books, she will need to know the contents as well.

Foster (1975, p53) in drawing up a reading policy for
his school recognised how vital it was for teachers
to read children's books. He states:

> "The skill in recommending books to children
> lies not only in knowing the child and his
> interests, but in knowing the books as well."

Whitehead et al (1975) in their research on children's
reading interests came to the very strong conclusion
that it was essential for teachers to acquire a
knowledge of children's books if interest in reading
were to be sustained. The authors state (p49):

> "It is impossible to overstress the influence
> of the teacher's own knowledgeability about
> books. The right book brought forward or
> recommended at the right time can make all the
> difference to a child's reading development."

They recommend that various educational institutions
and organizations should give a higher priority to
courses, conferences and study groups to deepen
teachers' insights into children's literature.
Whitehead et al state that experience has shown that
very few children, if any, cannot be 'hooked' on
books if the right selection is made.

The Bullock Committee (op cit, p128) concur with this
in saying that ingenuity in 'promoting' books is an
important feature of developing self-initiated reading.
They explain this by saying that it is "a case of the
teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm bringing child,

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1. Details of this questionnaire follow later in this work.

book and situation together in a natural interaction".

The point about "natural interaction" is enforced by
Blishen (1970) who describes the influence one of
his own teachers had in his developing love for fiction.
This teacher loved some novels and scorned others
and discussed this in a "running commentary" with
the boys. In Blishen's view this discussion and
knowledge of books in its informal approach taught
the natural enjoyments of reading fiction. He concludes
with what may be construed as a warning to those
teachers who do not make the effort to read or show
interest in children's literature. Blishen believes,

> "Reluctant teachers create reluctant readers ...
> it must be through the exhibition in ourselves,
> the teachers, of what a true reader is - an
> excited person, whose responses to books are
> many and varied and complicated" (p37).

The implication would seem to be that if a teacher
is not a reader herself, and lacks interest and
knowledge about children's literature, she is not
likely to engender a love of reading in her pupils.
That literacy is is a desirable and crucial part of
the education of the child would seem to be irrefutable.
The inevitable conclusion, therefore, must be that
teachers will need to recognise the part literature
plays in the education of the child, or fail in their
responsibility as teachers.

A recognition of the unique role literature can play
in the child's education would be illustrated, it is
suggested, by a wide, rather than confined use of
literature. This suggestion will be expanded in what
follows.

3.10.3 The place of literature in other subjects in the
curriculum of a primary school

> "The work of the primary school should have
> a pupil's language development as its central
> and unifying factor. To foster language growth
> and to make it the concern of all teachers,

integration with other subjects is essential."
(Natal Education Department Syllabus for
English First Language in the Primary
School, 1977, Introduction, p3).

Because the teacher in the primary school is
responsible for the whole or most of the school-work
of her class, she is well positioned to use literature
to enhance an understanding and appreciation of the
content in subjects other than that labelled 'English'.
The teacher can create in the classroom an environment
which encourages a wide range of literature reading,
permeating all subjects.

The Natal Education Department Guide to the English
Syllabus in the Senior Primary Phase (1977, p1)
explains why literature should permeate all subjects:
The Department believes that literature can enhance
an understanding of many subjects:

> "Children's literature offers provocative
> material that lends interest and excitement
> and encourages children to reach a level of
> interpretive critical comprehension. Many of
> the skills necessary to an understanding of
> the content and science subjects can be taught
> most effectively by initiating interest through
> children's literature."

There would seem to be two main purposes for the use
of literature in the content and science subjects.
It could be used to initiate an interest in an area
of study and it could deepen an interest in the subject.

It would seem that literature can be a most effective
way to initiate interest in a subject. Billig's (1977)
metaphor is very suggestive of this intention - she
suggests that children's literature can serve as a
springboard to the content area. She gives examples
of how interest in the social sciences and sciences
can be awakened by the skilful use of fiction.

Quina and Greenlaw (1975, p105) argue that Science
Fiction

> "... contains a hypothetical picture not only
> of what various fields of science may look
> like under other conditions, but also of what
> the humanities may look like".

They suggest that this is a way of helping students
cope with an everchanging world in an inter-disciplinary
mode. This inter-disciplinary approach has the added
advantage of showing how knowledge is applied in
society, creating thereby, an interest in particular
subjects.

A deepening interest in subjects may be achieved, it
would seem, by a study of selected literature. History
and Geography are included in some form in the primary
school curriculum because it is a common belief that
these subjects develop attitudes and understanding
of other people and places; they also help children
to grasp the interaction between people and environ-
ment. The emphasis in these syllabuses (certainly in
Natal, at least) is on this sort of understanding
rather than on the mere accumulation of facts. Because
of this emphasis it may be argued that stories could
provide a kind of insight which text books and other
factual source material cannot approach.

Atkinson and Evans (1979) believe that the reliving
of the past through fiction is a valuable aid in the
teaching of history particularly as the historical
novels for children published since the 1950s "set
a high standard of research and creativity" (p9).

An interesting Schools Council Project at present in
progress is that of Williams (1980) who has embarked
on a project to show that literature extends the
child's "world-view" because literature "gives the
child the opportunity to examine ways of living that
he can't experience at first hand" (p1). Williams
gives as examples of this, the life of a pioneer in
the western U.S.A., or of a Roman Soldier stationed
in Britain.

That literature can be mis-used in the curriculum
would seem to be a real danger. Fox (1974, p68)
expresses a reservation in using literature in subjects
other than 'English' because he fears that "Fiction
may become a quarry-face, hacked about by well-
meaning social studies teachers ..."

Clearly, there is the possible danger of losing sight
of the function of literature when it is used in the
content subjects. For example, The Wheel on the
School by Meindert de Jong is not a book on Holland
but a book about relationships and independence.
Using it as source material for facts on Holland would
seem to be a most insensitive and impertinent use of
the book. However, it does offer the 'flavour' of
living in Holland and could be used successfully in
that way. As Rosen & Rosen (1973, p195) warn,

> "Treasure Island is not a handbook of piracy
> and Hickory Dickory Dock is not a footnote
> on the nocturnal habits of mice."

To summarize, it may be said that literature offers
unique perceptions - other disciplines invite the
reader to observe phenomena, fiction puts the reader
within the situations presented. Parker (as cited by
Johnson, 1979, p37) illustrates the unique contribution
literature makes to a child's learning by comparing
a piece of informational writing with an extract from
a novel: "The lower part of the rabbit's hind leg is
long. The upper part is short. This makes the leg
just right for running and jumping" (Who Lives in This
Meadow? by G.O. Blough). Blough does not tell how
it feels to have legs just right for jumping, but the
following does:

> "His legs were like coiled springs of steel
> that released themselves of their own accord.
> He was hardly conscious of any effort, only of
> his hind feet pounding the ground, and each
> time they hit, those wonderful springs released
> and shot him through the air."
> (Rabbit Hill by Robert Lawson)

The point to be made, it would seem, is that although
literature offers unique perceptions, they are not

necessarily superior; other views are as valid. But
it is in its very uniqueness that its value lies
when offered alongside more 'cerebral' views in the
curriculum.

It would seem that literature, provided that it is
well selected and sensitively handled, can be a very
effective mode towards the promotion of integrated
knowledge across the curriculum in the primary school.
In addition, this would surely make reading a much
more dynamic and enriching experience.

3.11   Conclusions to Section B

Section B has been an attempt to describe the
contribution literature may make to the development
of the child - linguistically, emotionally and morally -
and to show how teachers may contribute to this
development through a judicious and wide use of books.
Some conclusions are:

3.11.1 Narrative is a common possession and as such is an
essential part of our lives. Literature has, therefore,
a vital contribution to make to the developing child.

3.11.2 Literature provides a child with a representation
of experience; in the role of spectator he is able to
broaden his knowledge of experience making it that
much easier for him to develop a frame of reference
more effective for life in a community.

3.11.3 Regular exposure to and reflection on literature will
provide the child with the language of storying in
order to express his own emotional reaction to life's
experiences. In addition, it can offer emotional
possibilities and interpretations of life as yet
not contemplated by the child.

3.11.4 An awareness of the developmental stages of a child's growth to maturity would assist in the recommendation of books for particular age groups.

3.11.5 There is no uniformity of response to any one story. Teachers will need to be prepared to tolerate a great deal of tentativeness, grasping towards coherence, fragmentariness in children's responses to literature. Obviously, this is preceded by the condition that teachers should elicit individual responses from the pupils.

3.11.6 In the congenial context of small group discussion the child, through the collaborative effort of the group, will reach new areas of consciousness in understanding his own and others' reactions to life.

3.11.7 The selection of books for pupils should be a matter of personal concern for each teacher. The idiosyncracies of each reader can only be accounted for if teachers have a knowledge of children's literature, and offer a wide selection of qualities and themes.

3.11.8 In the primary school, the 'intepretive' type teacher is more likely to see a study of literature as an intellectual adventure into all fields of study, both cognitive and affective, than the 'transmission' type teacher who views literature as a 'filler' for spare time or as a source of suitable extracts for 'comprehension' exercises.

3.11.9 The role of the teacher in the teaching of literature is manifold - spectator, contributor, organizer, coordinator, initiator, adviser and promoter.

3.11.10
The teacher who profoundly affects the relations of children and books will be one who talks with joy and

pleasure and, if necessary, abusively about books;
who, in other words, exhibits all the natural responses
to books.

3.11.11

The school has the responsibility of educating the
child to a level of literacy whereby he may move
independently and positively in society. Poetic
language is part of this literacy. A recognition of
this responsibility could be realised in a literature
policy and programme as part of a broad school
language policy. A literature policy could ensure a
coherent synthesis of the many ways in which literature
can contribute to the "sentient inner man" - that part
of the growing child which could so easily go by
the board when an emphasis is placed on more pedantic
educational concerns.

This and the preceding chapter have been concerned
with the skills of spoken language and reading as
part of the language development of the child. The
final language skill to be considered is writing.

CHAPTER FOUR

WRITING AS A COMPONENT OF A LANGUAGE POLICY

4.1   Introduction

The particular concern of this chapter is writing.
However, writing should more correctly be seen as
part of the total context of language, and as a feature
of language development. This is not to deny that
writing has its peculiar structural properties, but
rather to stress the necessity for a view of writing
which allows for an account of the relationship between
language development and the maturational process of
the child. It also enables recognition of the necessary
links and diversities of modes of language.

In considering the relationship between writing and
speech, for example, diversities do appear. Two
aspects entirely absent in speech but present in writing,
are the page and its layout, and lines.   These aspects
are unique to the presentation of written language.
However, there are more subtle differences that need
to be understood by teachers if writing ability is to
be fully developed. Harpin (1976, p32) gives the
reason for the necessity for this understanding.

> "If speaking and writing are distinct modes,
> each with its own strengths and weaknesses and
> its own range of functions, these need to be
> acknowledged in what children are asked to do."

A study of dialects and the use of standard English
in print leads naturally to the conclusion that spoken
English, certianly at the levels of phonology and
morphology, varies much more than written English,
for written language is the product of deliberate
formalization - a formalization that is crystallized
in a way that does not seem possible for spoken
English. Clearly adherence to convention is necessary
to reduce ambiguity, which is combated in other ways
in spoken language.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of formalization is the spelling system operating in written language. Spelling in English is a relatively inflexible convention and has gone virtually unchanged for two hundred years. It has been the target of spelling reformers and humorists (George Bernard Shaw's spelling of 'fish' as 'ghoti' is perhaps the best known example of this) but they have had little effect in implementing any changes in the system.

The development of literacy in large sections of the populations, particularly in the twentieth century, has given characteristics and functions to written language which are absent in spoken forms. Written language seems to have developed a kind of autonomy that it initially did not possess. For example, writing is public and official in a way speech is not. The Law and minutes of meetings are two instances where written documentation is accepted but verbal agreement is not. In many cases business letters are given a kind of attention that telephone calls are not. As Stubbs (1980, p30) points out, "The written language takes on a life of its own, develops along partly independent lines and is used for different purposes".

It would seem that an appreciation of the particular functions and characteristics of written language would surely have a positive effect on the development of the writing ability of pupils. The remainder of this chapter is addressed to that end.

4.2   The development of writing ability in primary school children

A great deal of research into the development of writing ability has taken place in the last decade, and is indeed still of major interest. What has been made clear from this research is that writing is generally a language skill first learnt and used at school. The development of this language skill is therefore of pedagogical concern.

Early studies of word count, vocabulary and language structures would seem to be of little help in explaining writing development in children. It is possibly for this reason that recent research has focussed on the process of writing rather than the product and in so doing, has attempted some conclusions on the stages of development in writing.

That there are stages in writing development is quite obvious - there is a difference between mature and immature writing, between an appropriate and inappropriate use of language. However, evidence suggesting measurable stages of development in writing ability is slight and inconclusive. As Graves (October 1979, p830) points out:

> "Writing process research is virgin territory,
> we are only beginning to identify and understand
> some of the significant variables."

What some selected researchers have already noted on the general development of writing ability will be reported here as an introduction to a closer study of the development through writing of the three functions of language - expressive, poetic, transactional - identified by Britton (1970).

Burgess et al (1973, p83) suggest that a developing writer's progress is slow, "although not necessarily gradual", that he does not develop "on all fronts at once" and that there is "some relation between what a person reads and what he writes".

The idea of writing development being slow but not necessarily gradual is also a conclusion of Harpin (1976) who sees the stages between the spurts of development as "plateaux of consolidation":

> "Some children seem to advance very little over
> considerable periods of time. Others appear to
> mark time for months and then accelerate with
> startling rapidity to overhaul their peers" (p74).

Harpin believes that development in writing ability
seems to lie in sentence length and complexity and
variety of fundamental forms, a more subtle use of
subordination, for example, but he warns against the
temptation of measuring this against the Piagetian
idea of moving from 'concrete' operations to 'formal'
operations as there is still too little evidence on
language acquisition to support this matching.

A different conclusion from that of Harpin is the
one offered by Mallett and Newsome (1977). Rather
than seeking syntactical evidence of writing develop-
ment as noted by Harpin, Mallett and Newsome see
writing development moving alongside the child's
developing personal relationships and his intellectual
operations. They illustrate their discussion with
a lesson they observed where a story was read and
discussed with great expertise on the teacher's part.
They found that the older children in the age range
were triggered to write of their own experiences.
However, the researchers believe that younger children
in the observed age range cannot so easily maintain

> "... such a clear focus as was demanded in this
> lesson, nor conceive of the story, the discussion,
> then the writing, as a continuous sequence, each
> part building on the other" (p87).

Britton's contribution to monitoring the development
of writing ability has probably been the most
influential in recent years. Because he took the
view that language and learning are closely inter-
related and that children learn to write by writing,
he studied the functions[1] of writing, saying that
it was "misguided to expect [children] to 'practise'
in one lesson what they will actively employ in
another" (Britton et al, 1975, p3). In recognising
the different demands made by various subjects in
the curriculum, Britton et al were able to plot
various stages in the development of writing ability.

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1. Details of Britton's Function Categories are given in an
    appendix to this work.

There was, for example, a general rise in the
abstractive level of writing coupled with a concentration
on classificatory writing of the analogic kind. They
noted, too, that few children at the end of their
schooling were able to cope with speculative or
tautologic writing. Their recommendation to teachers
was clear - in order to develop the writing ability
of pupils, teachers should concern themselves with
the functions of language and the interrelation of
function with a sense of audience.

Britton's function categories are very detailed with
many sub-categories (See Appendix). However, for
present purposes, concerns relating specifically to
the development of writing in the three main categories
- the expressive mode, the poetic mode, the trans-
actional mode - will follow, while the concept of
'audience' will be reserved for a later section of
this chapter.

4.3   The development of the expressive function in writing
       in the primary school

> " Expressive language appears to be the means
> by which the new is tentatively explored, thoughts
> are half uttered, attitudes half expressed, the
> rest being left to be picked up by the listener,
> or reader, who is willing to take the unexpressed
> on trust."
>   (Britton et al, 1975, p11)

Expressive language would seem to have a direct
relationship with thinking. This relationship is
well described by Martin et al (1976) who see
language as facing both outwards and inwards. Its
outwards face is the relatively constant common forms
and meanings developed by speakers everywhere. Its
inward face "is towards everyone's individual
experience which never exactly coincides with anyone
else's" (p144). Martin et al see this opposition
between common forms and individual utterances as the
"dynamic by which we advance in our use of our mother

tongue" (idem). They believe that both directions
are necessary parts of one's education and suggest
that expressive writing should be encouraged through-
out a child's schooling and in every subject because

> "... such writing would free the writer to think
> in writing and to learn through using written
> language in the same way that he already uses
> talk" (p61).

Burgess et al (1973, p22) also argue that the
expressive function of writing is vitally necessary
as a way into learning because this kind of writing

> "... affords a chance to make explicit in a
> first draft those processes of thinking which
> the demand for an immediate objective presentation
> would force him to leap".

Burgess et al would seem to imply that a leap to a
more objective presentation is a missed opportunity
to think things out, a lack of appreciation on the
teacher's part of the necessity for exploratory
writing. It may be said that teachers who are concerned
with imposing a model of writing on the child -
the 'transmission' type teacher - would, of course,
see no necessity for expressive writing as an initial
step to the more formal demands of poetic and trans-
actional writing.

It is reasonable to suggest that the expressive mode
is the function which every child uses and, indeed,
should use as a basis for moving out towards either
end of the continuum. The lesser formality and the
more personal nature of expressive writing release
the writer from the demands of an audience. Rather is
he given a sense of their support, in their apprecia-
tion of knowing that he is not ready, as yet, to
explain his thinking through a clearly differentiated
function. Dixon (1975, p135) sees this phase where
the writer is free to follow the ebb and flow between
expressive and communicative impulses as the "natural
precursor to more careful, deliberate learning, when
we are ready to meet the demands of an audience".

The use of expressive language in writing should be
encouraged as a crucial part of each child's learning.
Recent surveys (for example, Britton et al, 1975,
Harpin, 1976) show that there is a profoundly institu-
tional aspect to writing as it occurs in schools, for
it is over-whelmingly of an 'imposed', 'public' and
'formal' kind. This would seem to be an incorrect
focus if writing is to be seen as a means of learning.
If teachers aim to improve the quality of learning,
optimal opportunity should be given to the use of
expressive language. For example, expressive writing
should be envisaged as the child's first steps into
note making in the content subjects. The practice
of issuing pupils with duplicated notes and 'worksheets'
should be viewed as confining and 'close-ended'. Rather
should the child be allowed to experiment with ideas
through the use of expressive language, thereby
learning and gradually developing to a more formal,
explicit presentation of information.

4.4   The development of the poetic function in writing
       in the primary school

> "In poetic writing the expressive language
> of the writer moves under the demands of the
> spectator role towards the articulation of an
> independent verbal construct."
>   (Britton et al, 1975, p161)

The contribution of the spectator role to learning
was discussed in the previous chapter. It was shown
that in this role the child can gain wide and varied
experience. As Britton and Newsome (1968) explain -
not only do we savour our own experiences in the
spectator role but we enjoy experience in a wider
context because we are interested in the possibilities
of experience.

It is presumably with a similar belief in the power
of storying that Fox (1977) criticizes the practice
in many schools of promoting and valuing activity
to the exclusion of reflectiveness. In showing how
essential poetic writing is to the developing child's
imagination, he quotes Hughes's argument that in

focussing only on the outer world, the inner world
becomes indescribable, impenetrable and invisible.
Fox suggests that this breakdown in communication
atrophies the imagination

>   "... for the patterning of our experience
>   through the interplay of inner and outer
>   worlds is an essential imaginative activity" (p18).

Having established the need for poetic writing in
the primary school, consideration needs to be given
to its development.

Expressive writing is close to "inner speech" and so
not all of the writer's thoughts are made explicit;
it is also relatively unstructured. Poetic writing,
on the other hand, uses language as an art medium;
a piece of poetic writing is, therefore, a verbal
construct, a formal pattern.

According to Britton et al (op cit, p85) development
in poetic writing may be seen as a move away from the
expressive mode into a language where the writer
"takes on responsibility for rules of use that represent,
in sum, a different kind of organization".

It may be said, therefore, that development in poetic
writing is a progression in the increasing recognition
and attempt to meet the demands of poetic tasks and
the increasing internalization of forms and strategies
appropriate to these tasks.

Clearly, this progression in poetic writing depends,
not only on an appreciation of form, but on the child's
capacity to internalize experience, and make imaginative
use of it.   Rosen and Rosen (1973) believe that the
youngest writers have a limited appreciation of the
poetic function of writing because "their capacity
to internalize language is so limited" (p149). On
the other hand they believe that with regular exposure
to experience that engages the imagination, the primary
school child may develop the capacity not only to
internalize language but to discipline his imagination.

The authors see imaginative penetration as vital to
the child's learning situation. For this reason, Rosen
and Rosen argue against an over-emphasis on factual
writing in the primary school, pleading for the use
of poetic writing in all subjects. They see a teacher's
over-emphasis on factual writing as collaboration in
an "escape into reality" (p150).

Further support for poetic writing in all subjects
comes from Burgess et al (1973, p22) who ask why there
seems to be so little concern for poem and story outside
the 'English' lesson. They feel that "it is not in
English alone that imaginative entry into experience
is required".

Another aspect of the development in poetic writing
is the idea of interest matching the developmental
stages of the child. Mallett and Newsome (1977, p177)
in seeing poetic writing as a means for the child to
express his desires and fears, found eight year olds
enjoying taking up a role of power, with many of their
stories being improbable or impossible. Similarly,
they found older boys seeking a male identity by
choosing themes centred on "aggression, power and status-
seeking".

To summarize it may be said that evidence suggests
that progress in poetic writing is probable if the
child's imagination is regularly engaged in all learning
situations. The regular excitement of the imagination
should include exposure to poetic language as described
in Section B of the previous chapter. Moreover, the
context in which the writing is done would seem to
have an effect on the results; by the teacher not
specifying what a story should be about the child is
freed to use his own resources drawn from his inner
needs.

A narrow concept of literacy, like that held in the
early part of this century, would view poetic writing

as a training in penmanship towards accepted models
of writing. On the other hand, teachers who see
language as an integral part of learning will have a
far more meaningful concept of poetic writing, for
they will view this kind of writing as the development
of a medium of expression with its own unique possi-
bilities for enabling children to understand and act
in their world.

This 'interpretive' type teacher would, for example,
allow her pupils to speculate with the imagination -
'what would it feel like to find oneself in such a
situation?' - and would welcome a varied response in
writing to a learning activity or situation. Poems
and stories would be regarded as valid writing in
history, geography or science. Clearly, the all-too-
common isolated 'composition' lesson, condemned by
recent researchers (see, for example, Mallett and
Newsome, 1977; Burgess et al, 1973, Martin et al, 1976),
would have no place in such an integrated approach
to the curriculum.

4.5   The development of the transactional function in
       writing in the primary school

Moving from a consideration of poetic writing to
transactional writing, a change of emphasis may be
noted. Whereas in poetic writing there are implicit
connections between the parts, rendering an aesthetic
whole inseparable from its parts, in transactional
writing the emphasis is towards a linear logical set
of connections. Britton et al (1975, p93) set out
these contrasts as follows:

Transactional (Participant role)	Poetic (Spectator role)
The writing is an immediate means to an end outside itself.	The writing is an immediate end in itself, and not a means: it is a verbal artifact, a construct.

The form it takes, the way it is organized, is dictated primarily by the desire to achieve that end efficiently.	The arrangement _is_ the construct: the way items are formally disposed is an inseparable part of the meaning of the piece.
Attention to the forms of the language is incidental to understanding, and will often be minimal.	Attention to the forms of the language is an essential part of a reader's response.
The writer is concerned in his writing to en-mesh with his reader's relevant knowledge, experience, interests; and the reader is at liberty to contextual-ize what he finds relevant, selectively. This 'piecemeal con-textualization' we consider to be a part of the conventions governing transaction-al writing.	The writer is concerned to create relations internal to the work, and achieve a unity, a construct discrete from actuality. Thus he resists piecemeal context-ualization: the conventions holding between writer and reader in poetic writing call for _global_ contextual-ization.

It may be clearly seen that these kinds of writing make different demands on the writer and have clearly different purposes.

It was shown in the previous chapter that transactional language is generally first met at school and that the school has the unique opportunity of introducing this mode of language to pupils. Therefore, a knowledge of the development of the ability to write in trans-actional language should be a priority for any teacher who is likely to demand this kind of writing.

Britton _et al_ (_op cit_, p160) see the development of transactional writing as a modification of expressive language under the demands of the participant role; a developing ability to be more explicit through a growing consciousness of audience.

Transactional language focusses the child's attention on the world as it exists outside himself. It would appear therefore, that transactional writing requires a subordination of personal, self-revealing features

in the writer. In fact, Mallett and Newsome (1977,
p138) see the development of the child's ability to
write in the transactional mode as a growing ability
to "inhibit the self and the organisation of feeling,
or at least its expression".

The 'inhibition of self' would seem to develop along
with the increasing ability to "de-centre" - the
capacity to see the world from different perspectives
and to understand the view points of others.   The
move towards this objectivity, in G.H. Mead's terms
(1934) would be the ability to internalize a "general-
ised other".   This internalization, it is suggested,
would develop the writer's capacity to anticipate likely
responses of other people, a necessary requirement
of communication.

Burgess et al (1973, p27) see the ability to "de-centre"
as a necessary adjunct to transactional writing while
still recognising that "there is a range of ways in
which the writer's sense of self can be integrated into
the ongoing business that he has with the reader".
Persuasive writing is surely an example of the ability
to 'de-centre' while integrating a 'sense of self'
in the writing.

A further aspect to the development of transactional
writing is the recognition that each subject discipline
has its own technical vocabulary and particular ways
of presenting information and structuring arguments,
but what is possibly not recognised is that growth
towards this recognition is slow and in some cases
minimal - "progress towards being competent is made
in small stages" (Mallett and Newsome, op cit, p182).
Vygotsky's explanation, as described in an earlier
chapter, that scientific concepts are only possible
when a child's spontaneous concepts have reached a
certain level, gives an indication of the gradual way
in which transactional language is acquired. Vygotsky
(1965, p100) observes that some modes of writing are

particularly remote from the purposes of the child and sees the growth towards this writing as being particularly strenuous:

> "The change from maximally compact inner speech to maximally detailed written speech requires what might be called deliberate semantics - deliberate structuring of the web of meaning."

The acquisition of the technical language used to structure this web of meaning requires connections to be made between the meanings of these new words and other meanings which are already part of the child's existing framework. Torbe (1972, p140) quotes an example of a child's writing in science to show how meaningless a grasp of terminology and style can be when no allowance has been made for the child to grasp the concept. Torbe believes that until the child

> "... has developed his own matrix of language with which to grid and map his experience, he will not be able to impose an alien matrix."

He believes that teachers should question the assumptions on which they base their demands for written work from their pupils and states that, if necessary, the teacher should change her approach to allow the learner to "approach the complexities of the subject in his own way, at his own pace, and with his own concepts of relevance and appropriacy" (idem). Or, as Martin et al (1976, p66) express this idea - a child's writing should be "coloured by his own voice".

Evidence of the difficulty children have with transactional writing may be seen in many 'project' books in many schools, where material is copied with little understanding from sources, in an effort to complete the written exercise.[1] One of the dangers of this transcription is the possibility that children may

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1. An excellent literary comment on so called project work and the mindless occupation it often turns out to be may be found in the children's novel Thunder & Lightnings by Jan Marks.

believe that copying from books has educational value.

However, an interesting indication of development in transactional writing may be seen in the child's attempts to copy only phrases from books. Mallett and Newsome (op cit, p101) see this kind of copying as being "one way of making information our own".

Reflection and discussion are obviously important to the learning situation. It seems that if these elements were present in the writing situation, children would not need to distort their work by indiscriminate copying.

4.5.1   Specific implications arising from transactional writing in primary schools

Teachers would perhaps gain by asking which is the more effective learning situation - reconstruction or reproduction? The Bullock Committee (1975, p50) comment at length on this point in their support of reconstruction through language in order to learn:

> "It is a confusion of everyday thought that we tend to regard 'knowledge' as something that exists independently of someone who knows. 'What is known' must in fact be brought to life afresh within every 'knower' by his own efforts. To bring knowledge into being is a formulating process, and language is its ordinary means, whether in speaking or writing or the inner monologue of thought."

One of the central threads in this work has been the reconstruction of knowledge through language and thinking. The main purpose of transactional writing is to inform the reader; the child requires, therefore, a personal construct to use as information.

Certainly, there are occasions when the pupil is called upon to perform a writing task to show his capability of performing that kind of task. For example, the child may be asked to write an essay on, say, the Savannas after a study of these lands, not

actually to inform a reader but to learn how to
organize his information through transactional writing.
This 'pseudo' use of transactional writing while
perhaps being inevitable in some instances in the
school situation, needs to be approached with great
sensitivity, to avoid a delay in the development of
transactional writing in children. Mallett and
Newsome (op cit, p182) feel that a child may come to
believe that

> "... there is a model of 'how it should be
> done' in the teacher's mind, and that success
> will be judged more on how closely he makes
> his piece resemble the model than on what he
> has to say".

Clearly, to avoid this dangerous impression, and if
these transactional tasks are to have any value as
a learning situation, it needs to be recognized that
writing for a public audience develops out of writing
in a teaching rather than a testing situation.
Burgess et al (op cit, p23) see the writer "as a person
committed to his own search for meaning", a learner
who finds in language "an instrument at his disposal
and in writing a way of using it" (emphasis added).
Certainly there is sufficient evidence to suggest that
primary school children are capable of using the
transactional function of language in writing, given
the right climate for the development of this capacity.

The right 'climate' would seem to be one in which the
needs and interests of the child are an initial concern.
Unless the interest of the child is arrested, inform-
ation will probably remain invert, a collection of
facts which have no real significance. Clearly, writing
from first hand observation and experience holds much
interest for the child and allows him to offer not
only the information, but something extra - his own
experience, or thoughts, or feelings - which is not
already known to the reader, giving the writing a
freshness and purpose that other transactional writing
may not have. This kind of transaction encourages

hypothesizing and affords an opportunity for the
teacher to focus the child's attention on how he
feels about the facts in terms of his own observations.

Writing initiated by secondary sources is probably
less original as the child is influenced by another
writer's perceptions. Nevertheless, an opportunity
to discuss and reflect on interesting secondary
sources may lead to speculation and a penetration of
the facts, providing new insights in the child's
construction of knowledge.

The teacher's capacity to maintain the child's interest,
making connections between what she knows of the child
and what she knows of the subject is perhaps the mark
of the successful teaching of transactional writing.
Martin and her co-workers' definition of a good teacher
of writing captures the view of teaching suggested in
this study:

> "If [the teacher] can encourage her pupils to
> find points of contact between the unfamiliar
> and the known - in their own terms and in the
> context of their own needs and interests - she
> will be helping them to extend their insights
> into the world around them and their own relation
> to it, which after all is what teaching is all
> about" (op cit, p83).

Having established the possible form development may
take in expressive, poetic and transactional writing
among primary school children, the writer proceeds
to a consideration of some issues regarded as vital
for developing writing ability in pupils.

4.6   Some considerations for the teaching of writing in
        the primary school

Writing development seems to mean the developing ability
to write in certain ways appropriate to the writer's
purpose, subject and reader. This development will,
therefore, depend on the writer's understanding of

the needs of his reader, the subject matter, his own
purpose, his knowledge of appropriate models of writing
and his familiarity with the conventions of written
language.

Four issues of methodology which seem to be crucial
to the successful development of children's writing
ability are (i) the value of discussion; (ii) the
writing of more than one draft; (iii) the idea of
purpose, authenticity and audience; and (iv) a knowledge
of the lexicon and spelling system of the language.
Each issue will now be considered.

4.6.1   The place of discussion in the writing situation

It is often asserted that in the teaching of writing
in schools, talk should come first. A representative
expression of this belief is Dixon's (1975, p44):

> "... writing assignments without a background
> of discussion and shared experience are unlikely
> to elicit much response from many children".

The principle would seem to be a sound one although
Harpin (1976, p136) warns against preparatory talk
being a universal principle in writing and gives
evidence to show that in some instances, such as
creative writing, verbal preparation can actually hinder
development in written language. An over-employment
of this approach, he feels, may "set boundaries for
the writer" and, in addition, "the self-motivating
writer is less likely to emerge if these are the
standard conditions for work".

Graves (October 1979, p830) also warns against an
over preparation for the creative writing task showing
how word lists restricted the first graders he and
his co-workers observed. "Restricted by inexperience,
the word list, and the desire to write correctly,
the children wrote nearly identical compositions."
In an earlier piece of research Graves (1978)
distinguishes between two kinds of writer - the

reactive type and the reflective type. While appreci-
ating the distinction as a gross one, he believes that
the reflective type of writer does not require the
same amount of verbal and/or other preparation to
write, as he is in a "constant state of rehearsal".

These findings lead to the question Rosen and Rosen
(1973,p154) believe every teacher should ask in a
writing situation: "What sort of talk should be going
on?" Teachers, it seems, need to appreciate that
different kinds of talk are required by different writing
situations. If the writing is to be transactional in
function, the discussion will surely aim at appreci-
ating the facts in hand, speculating on them, inter-
preting them and coming to certain conclusions. On
the other hand, for poetic writing, the discussion
would presumably be more tentative and exploratory
in nature; more like the invitational mood of "let us
suppose ..." as described by Kelly (cited by Martin
et al, 1976, p135). Kelly suggests that this mood
helps bridge the gap between the known and the unknown.
This procedure, he believes, allows for a wide range
of constructions and hypotheses leaving the person
himself intact and whole.

A further kind of discussion which has gained a great
deal of support recently is the talk carried on during
the process of writing. In America the work done by
Graves with 7 to 10 year olds is perhaps the most
influential in this regard. He, and his team, found
that interviews with the teacher during writing had
a valuable impact on the finished product. "Nowhere
is contact time, particularly of the one-to-one variety,
more important than in the teaching of writing through
conferences" (Graves, January 1979, p77). Benefiting
from Graves's work, Petrosky and Brozick (1979) reported
on their conclusions of developing the composing process:

> "The central idea is to keep the writers moving
> toward more sophisticated writing in the most
> unobtrusive way possible - through the use of
> conferences" (p101).

The idea of conferences during the writing process is, obviously, closely linked with the idea of there being more than one draft necessary for a satisfying piece of writing.

4.6.2 The value of writing more than one draft

Having more than one draft is an essential practice of most professional writers. However, in schools, it would appear that having more than one draft often means merely copying out the original neatly, and as Hillerich (1979, p772) points out, children often "resent the busywork of recopying merely to clean up a final draft". The value of preparing more than one draft is clearly more than this, and when linked with the notion of individual conferences, it becomes a very powerful means of improving one's attempts at writing.

Doughty (1973) argues for reworking of writing as a necessary aid to fluent command. Mallett and Newsome (1977, p181) in supporting the idea of conferences with the teacher as "a sounding-board for their first drafts" welcome the idea of more than one draft.

> "Once we have given basic shape to our idea, some rearrangement to achieve greater impact will help us feel more satisfied with what we have made."

As a result of his intense research with young children Graves (op cit) believes that revision is a vital factor in children's writing progress. Beginning with single word revision the child moves to larger units of revision. This is when crossing out enters the picture. Graves sees this as an important step because the draft then takes on an important, temporary quality and the child learns that print "is a means toward a more permanent end" (March 1979, p316).

However, Harpin (op cit, p137) warns that revision tactics are relative to the age and skill of the child.

The younger child hardly ever expresses "dissatisfaction with a piece of writing, once complete". He sees the ability to detach oneself and view the writing objectively as being "learnt over considerable periods of time and often with great difficulty".

Harpin does not, however, make mention of how this ability to revise is accelerated if individual conferences with the teacher take place. Graves found 7-year-olds coping well with the idea but they were having interviews with a teacher or research team member. A control and understanding of the writing process, Graves believes, leads the child to the "clarification of experience through several drafts" (March 1979, p316). Discussing the difficulty and reluctance of one of the children (Andrea) in their study, they note that the premium she placed on neatness, combined with her understanding of writing as "a one-step process, prevented Andrea from actualizing her potential". Permission from her teacher to draw arrows and insert sentences is an "important early step towards becoming a critical and deliberate writer" (May 1979, p571). Graves believes that revision, once appreciated, moves to whole paragraphs and relocation of ideas; the children's drafts begin to resemble "the working manuscript of a writer" (ibid, p574). He found, too, that a great deal of revision became covert by the end of six months. Calkins, a member of Graves's team, by using examples of children's writing in her class of 10 year olds, shows how writing improves by the writing of more drafts than one. "Revision", she says, "is a tribute to the potential in a piece. It is not punishment but opportunity" (1979, p751). She sees successful writing as coming "from crumpled papers on the floor" and discussion with the teacher.

There would seem to be a great deal of potential in the idea of writing more than one draft. The child would be able to recognise writing as a learning

process with the opportunity to see his errors as
a source of fresh learning. Clearly, a conference/
draft approach would also afford the teacher the
opportunity to present and discuss the different
devices available to the writer; in this way the child
becomes conscious of form within the context of his
own need to express his ideas as potently and
appropriately as possible.

Just how much revision is necessary in any one piece
of writing depends largely on the purpose of the writing
and the audience for which it is intended. Purpose
and audience, therefore, would seem to be of paramount
consideration when dealing with children's writing.

4.6.3   Purpose, authenticity and audience as part of the
         function of writing

> "Writing offers a means of thinking through
> by oneself the complications and justifications
> for a point of view, the subtleties and
> intricacies of states of feeling."
>   (Mallett and Newsome, op cit, p165)

Children, initially at any rate, seem unable to see
this as an advantage. The child on school entry is
already competent in speech and is generally unable
to appreciate the advantage of a permanent record
of what he thinks. Stubbs (op cit, p114) explains
that

> "Because written language has complex and
> sophisticated intellectual and social functions
> which are inevitably beyond the needs, interests
> or understanding of young children",

it is not surprising that they see little value in the
exercise and are often vague and confused about the
functions of written language. The question arises
as to what will contribute to the pupil seeing writing
as a worthwhile means of communication. Mallett and
Newsome (op cit) see two conditions contributing
favourably - the writer finding his work seriously
received by the reader, and secondly, finding that

he makes progress in the act of writing. For these
conditions to be fulfilled, Mallett and Newsome state
that the writing task must have a real purpose. But
the purpose must be one which the pupil recognises
for the writing must fulfil the pupil's purpose before
ever it can fulfil the teacher's.

> "... the writing task must offer an invitation
> to tell, explore or state, and suggest a real
> purpose, rather than an exercise or mere practice"
> (p166).

The Bullock Committee (op cit, p164) also see the
solution to developing writing ability as dependent
upon purpose. They see purpose as being a prerequisite
for the successful development of writing techniques.

The idea of a clear purpose on the part of the pupil
has already been discussed in relation to reading,
and it would seem to have as vital a role to play in
writing as an aspect of language development. As
Harpin (op cit, p35) explains: "Before writing is
undertaken it needs to be justified as an inescapable
product of the experience that has preceded it." The
confusion that arises in a child's mind when he is
not clear on the purpose for a writing activity can,
perhaps, best be illustrated by an example used in
the Science Teacher Education Project, as quoted by
Adams (1977), to make the same point:
The example is a transcript of a teacher talking to
a group of pupils in a Science lesson, and reads like
this:

Teacher	We're not going to do Science for the first few minutes of this lesson. As an exercise I want you to write down what a corkscrew is like, without saying what it's used for.
Pupil	Why?
Teacher	Because there's a man at the University who's interested to see how well you can describe things and this is one of the easy examples he's chosen.
Pupil	I don't understand what you want.

<u>Teacher</u>	Just describe, let's say, as if to a blind man, what a corkscrew is like, but without saying what you use one for.
<u>Pupil</u>	But a blind man could feel it, couldn't he?
<u>Teacher</u>	Look! Imagine taking a blind friend into a museum. One of the exhibits in a glass case is a corkscrew. You say that there's a corkscrew in this case and your friend says, "What does it look like?" O.K.?
<u>Pupil</u>	Yes.
<u>Pupil</u>	(After five minutes) Please sir, what is a corkscrew?
<u>Another Pupil</u>	One of these (producing a knife with a corkscrew attachment).
<u>Several Pupils</u>	Hey! Those aren't allowed in school!
<u>Pupil</u>	(At the end of the lesson). Please sir, what are we doing this for?
<u>Teacher</u>	A man at the University is going to show it to his student teachers to help them learn how to become good teachers.
<u>Pupil</u>	Is he blind?

Clearly, the pupils were totally confused as to the reason for the writing task and were unable to appreciate the unknown audience of a "man from the university".

If writing were viewed as the product of experience and thought, purpose would surely be an inherent element of such writing.

Rumsby (1977) in his discussion of the function and nature of the creative act, proposes that the intention for a piece of writing is inextricably bound up with its creation. He continues, "'How to get children to write' has always been the stated problem rather than 'How writing gets done'" (p30).

It follows that if a teacher appreciates "how writing gets done" and intends that the child should write, she endeavours to give the child the opportunity to

accept the purpose as his own. As Rumsby (op cit, p31) puts it: "The teacher must convince the child of the possibilities in the situation; the youngster must assimilate the purpose as his own".

This transfer of purpose would seem to be a clear directive to the teacher if she wishes to develop in her pupils the creative ability to write, for this is surely part of her responsibility as a teacher. "The teacher's job is not to create, but to transfer desire for the power which creates" (Rumsby, op cit, p32).

It follows that if the pupil has a genuine purpose for his writing, it will have an authenticity to it which tasks such as the one cited by Adams seem definitely to lack. It was suggested earlier in the present chapter that authenticity produces language which is in close relation to the writer and his purpose for it forms part of the creative whole. The ideas cohere in a way not possible, it seems, in writing that is less purposeful and meaningful to the writer.

> "Unauthentic writing contains a dislocation of coherences, in that the writer is himself aware of a weakness obscured, a hollowness, an expression or a thought which he has not entirely made his own" (Rumsby, op cit, idem).

Authenticity and purpose would seem to lead to a genuine communication rather than a spurious one; a communication that has a sense of positive engagement with the ideas and an urge to share these ideas. Purposeful writing would seem to include a sense of a potential audience.

The idea of "sense of audience" has been much commented on in recent publications, possibly due to the close examination given to this concept by the Schools Council Project, The Development of Writing Abilities 11 - 18 (1975). Steered by Britton, the team, after studying examples of pupils' writing, concluded that

"One important dimension of development in
writing ability is the growth of a sense of
audience, the growth of the ability to make
adjustments and choices in writing which take
account of the audience for whom the writing
is intended" (p58).

That the concept of "audience" is inextricably linked
with purpose is explained by this team -

"... a highly developed sense of audience
must be one of the marks of the competent
mature writer, for it is concerned with nothing
less than the implementation of his concern to
maintain or establish an appropriate relationship
with his reader in order to achieve his full
intent" (idem).

Because Britton et al attributed so much importance
to the writer's sense of audience, they evolved a
model of the categories of audience for whom one
writes.   The model is represented below:

1. Self
    Child (or adolescent) to self

2. Teacher
    2.1 Child to trusted adult
    2.2 Pupil to teacher, general
    2.3 Pupil to teacher, particular relationship
    2.4 Pupil to examiner

3. Wider audience (known)
    3.1 Expert to laymen
    3.2 Child to peer group
    3.3 Group member to working group

4. Unknown audience
    Writer to his readers

5. Additional categories
    5.1 Virtual named audience
    5.2 No discernible audience   (p66)[1]

What is of concerned interest in the findings is
that 92% of the scripts examined fell into just two
of the above categories - pupil to teacher (special
relationship), and pupil to examiner.

It is not surprising that in the school situation
most writing has the teacher as at least one member
of the audience.   What has caused concerned comment

1.   Britton's detailed table of Audience Categories is an
     appendix to this work.

is the high percentage of writing done for the teacher
as examiner, assessor or judge as it is generally
accepted that this limits the kinds of writing avail-
able to the child.

It is perhaps necessary to look at the young child and
his initial writing to see what, if any, effect a
developing sense of audience has on his writing.
Rosen and Rosen (1973, p137) believe that initially
children "talk to themselves on the page". It is
only when they appreciate that writing serves a
different function from speaking that they become aware
of the reader as a vital part of the communication
process. It is with this realisation in mind, Rosen
and Rosen believe that a child's writing changes.

> "When once the writer becomes aware that he
> must take active steps to accommodate the
> reader, his writing will change in certain
> important respects" (p137).

Obviously, by the nature of the situation, the teacher
becomes the child's first reader in his groping attempts
to communicate in writing. However, it is the role
the teacher adopts which seems of paramount importance.
The young child, accustomed to having instant feedback
and reaction to his spoken communication, a source of
information unavailable in the writing situation,
needs a reader whose function will be much the same
as someone he talks to - the teacher should, clearly,
be this kind of audience. "Children come to accept
the teacher-reader and, if they are lucky, find the
best audience they have" (Rosen and Rosen, op cit, p138).
It is for this reason that it has been generally
advocated that the teacher should be a sympathetic
reader and adviser.

> "When the child begins to write in school, he
> seems to perceive a dual audience. One is
> his own self: he is writing for his own
> purposes, fulfilling his own intentions. The
> other is the sympathetic adult to whom he looks
> for praise, encouragement and assistance."
> (Torbe, 1972, p136)

On the other hand, if the teacher adopts the role as
assessor too often, the child's writing, it is
generally found, develops according to his understanding
of what the teacher wants as judge, for the child will
modify his writing according to his expectation of
his teacher's reaction. Burgess et al (op cit, p121)
show that the young child finds it difficult to write
for an unknown audience, for the child has no experience
of any other audience and, indeed, does not know, as
yet, the tastes of an unknown audience. It is for
this very reason that the authors warn of the dangers
of a teacher-as-assessor being a child's only
experience of audience, for the child then has "a
picture of his reader as a judge".

The image of the teacher as a "judge" is yet a further
instance, it would seem, of the damaging influence
a teacher with a "psychometric" view of learning may
have on the learner; for the teacher-as-assessor role,
by implication, brings to the child's writing a set
of criteria, a 'model' of publicly acceptable writing
which has clearly defined norms of appropriacy. The
role seems to encourage the writer to focus on
returning as exactly as possible what he has been
given, excluding independent thoughts, reflection, the
sense of any other audience and his own intentions.

Clearly, this is opposed to a view that sees the child's
own use of language as central to the learning situation.
Martin et al (op cit, p132) see the role of teacher-
as-assessor as being the reason for much of the poor
writing found in schools:

> "... one reason for the great amount of inert,
> inept writing produced by pupils is that the
> sense of audience, learned through speech, has
> been perverted by the use of writing as a
> testing or reproductive procedure at the
> expense of all other kinds of writing."

While accepting that evaluation in some form is
desirable in any learning situation, the problem as
it affects children's learning, they claim, is linked

with "how they see their teacher (and themselves)"
(p141).

A further restricting influence of the teacher-as-
assessor role is that it tends towards a negative
response on the part of the teacher - to correct rather
than to assist and advise.   Torbe (op cit, p136) sees
this as counter-productive to the development of
writing ability.

> "Instead of the child developing a concept of
> autonomy in writing, the negative reinforcement
> is so effective that what is developed is an
> internalized set of teacher's sanctions."

This negative approach to assessment is seen by Kantor
(1979) as pathological. He notes that terminology
for assessment is pathological and gives terms such
as 'learning disability', 'error analysis' and
'restricted codes' as examples of this negative
approach. He asks why evaluation cannot be positive
and particularly in relation to writing. He believes
that teachers need "a greater appreciation of children's
writing" (p743). This appreciation would lead to
teachers seeing errors "not as deficiencies but as
signs of growth" (idem). Drawing on the work of
Mellon (1975), Kantor shows that errors are often
indications that the writer might be stretching for
a higher level of understanding or capacity. Clearly,
the teacher-as-assessor would disapprove of "risk
taking" and the concomitant errors which risk obviously
generates, encouraging the child to "play it safe"
and not experiment. Appreciation of children's
writing, Kantor believes, is revealed in "positive,
specific comments on a striking image, a unique idea,
a clear and concise statement, or something that
touches a chord in the reader's experience ... in a
gesture of approval" (p744).

Rumsby (op cit, p30) also comments on the stultifying
effect the teacher-as-assessor has, for he believes
this role results in the end-states receiving "unduly

fallible scrutiny"; supporting the claim that this role in demanding a particular model of writing cannot appreciate the child's experiments with language in order to make it his own.

Medway (1976), in fact, believes that teachers focus too much attention "on the way the medium is being handled" before making the purpose for this writing model clear to the pupils. He sees this as an incorrect focussing of awareness, for the pupils lose sight of the learning by channelling their energies into 'how'; into what Polanyi (as cited by Medway) calls "subsidiary elements" which cause confusion because "subsidiary awareness and focal awareness are mutually exclusive". Medway feels that this focus on the end-state "destroys one's sense of the context which alone can smoothly evoke the proper sequence of words" (p56). He believes that talking and writing to discover what you know is more important in many ways than talking or writing to show what you know. By moving pupils too quickly to the end-state, teachers miss out stages of the learning process. As Medway puts it:

> "[Learners need to] break patterns down in order to come to grips with their meaning - their significance - by a process of recon- struction" (p59).

The criticism of "incorrect focus" by the teacher-as- assessor has been heavy and well researched in England and America. It has, for example, led educationalists to revise their attitudes to the teaching of grammar in schools. Their findings show conclusively that formal grammar exercises are ineffective as a means to improved language use. John De Boer, as reported by Meisterheim (1977, p5) surveyed more than fifty years of research, and reported the impressive fact that

> "... in all these studies, carried out in places and at times far removed from each other, often by highly experienced and disinterested investigators, the results have been consistently negative so far as the value of grammar in the improvement of language expression is concerned."

Quite clearly, insistence on understanding of grammar
would affect the approach to language study a teacher
adopted in her classroom. Perhaps this may be summed
up by suggesting that children only need an under-
standing of the structures of language and their
functions in the context of use, when a problem of
communication arises. This individual need for
particular understanding could take place most fruit-
fully during the individual conferences with the child
while he is in the process of writing and working
towards a final draft. For, as Loban (1979, p485)
expresses it,

> "In writing, such editing skills as agreement
> of subject-predicate, spelling, punctuation,
> and capitalization are final courtesies to the
> reader. They are important, but they are not
> central."

This does not suggest that a casual, haphazard approach
is recommended, rather is it supportive of the idea
that it is the child's individual use of language
and its development that should be of constant concern,
together with a consideration of language use in the
context of the work under scrutiny. Harpin (op cit,
p130) states categorically that language growth will
be "stifled in the world of standard exercises". It
is interesting to note that Thurber (cited by
Meisterheim, 1977, p7), as early as 1894, argued against
the use of textbooks with exercises in English. He
saw the textbooks as an obstacle to every teacher
for the "good teacher will accomplish something good
in spite of the book; the poor teacher will accomplish
nothing even with the book".

Britton et al (op cit, p107) state quite categorically
that the sample of writings they classified in the
Schools Council Project cannot be taken as a sample
of what young writers can do but rather of what they
have done under the constraints of a school situation.
It is hoped, and possibly assumed, that if teachers
adopted the role of sympathetic reader and adviser

more often, and used the teacher-as-examiner role
less, the pupils' writing would have freedom to develop
in ways not possible when writing for a limited audience
and that audience being one of judge. In this sense,
Britton's audience categories become even more
meaningful for the categories are defined in terms
of relationships and it is these relationships which
either develop a child's writing ability or stultify
it. For, as Britton et al explain, the writer defines
himself in a role which is complementary to the role
he assigns his teacher as reader. They suggest that
two sets of expectations are set up in the pupil's
school work - one 'closed' and the other 'open'.
Whichever set of expectations operates depends very
heavily on the teacher's conception of the learning
process.

> "Polarizing the distinction, we should say that
> the closed view sees teaching as instruction,
> while the open view sees learning as exploration
> and discovery. Methodologies appropriate to the
> two views would clearly have divergent implica-
> tions for the teacher's role and hence for
> teacher-pupil relationships" (p194).

The indications of this discussion seem clear. Pupils
need to be absorbed and committed to what they write
and it is up to the teacher's ingenuity to see this
happens. Mallett and Newsome (op cit, p182) suggest
that if pupils view writing as a useful activity
from the very beginning "many of the later problems
may never develop". This implies less writing of
the "showing what we know" variety and for more
opportunity to support a viewpoint or justify an
opinion; a writing task which enables a pupil to
use rather than report what he has learned, which
must, by its nature, be more satisfying for it is in
essence more purposeful. Harpin (op cit, p35) expresses
this view most succinctly:

> "... with relatively unimportant exceptions,
> writing is exploration of experience - the
> experience and the comprehending of it are
> in a real sense created by the words in which
> they are expressed".

To summarize then, it would seem that there are stages
of development in writing ability and that this
development can be encouraged if the pupil is given
the opportunity to discuss his writing with a sym-
pathetic reader/adviser in order to improve on his
initial draft. Further, if the child writes purpose-
fully with a sense of audience, his writing will be
both authentic and more satisfying.

4.6.4 Word study as a further aid to the development of
writing ability

Earlier in this chapter it was noted that orthography
is an example of the formalization of written language.
Clearly, if a pupil is to develop his ability in written
language he will need a knowledge of the spelling
system and of the lexicon. The Bullock Report (1975)
states:

> "We believe that in the course of their writing
> children should acquire a knowledge of the
> spelling rules and an ability to generalize
> about words" (p168).

In any consideration of spelling, one may be justified
to ask, 'Does it matter if one spells correctly or
not?' Two main reasons for correct spelling seem
to emerge from writings on this subject. One is that
of social convention. "Spelling is clearly important,
because people attach so much importance to it. What
people think is important" (Stubbs, op cit, p69).
The other reason, and it would seem to be the more
important one in the context of the present chapter,
is that spelling ability frees the children to write.
Even Martin and Mulford (1971, p380) in an attack
on too much emphasis on spelling, admit

> "It is true that a writer (adult as well as
> child) may choose to write down a word that
> he thinks he can spell, but which doesn't
> precisely capture his meaning, just because
> he cannot spell the right word."

In their enquiry into the teaching of spelling in
schools, the Bullock Committee report (op cit, p181),

"Most of the contention surrounding spelling is
concerned with timing and method rather than justi-
fication".

It would seem appropriate, therefore, to look at what
abilities are needed to spell well, before deciding
on what method of teaching to adopt. Peters (1970,
p20) summarises these as

> "... the ability to generalize, possibly
> though not very satisfactorily, from explicit
> formulated rules, more certainly from having
> learned the serial probability of letter
> occurrences. This involves transfer via
> visual perceptions and recall through imagery".

One may conclude that whatever method is adopted
in the classroom, it should include the training of
these abilities.

The systematic teaching of spelling as a means of
assisting progress in spelling is well supported in
the literature. Peters (op cit, p38) found that a
class of children given no instruction in spelling,
but plenty of time for creative writing deteriorated
significantly in generalizing ability. She came to
the conclusion that generalization is dependent upon
rational and systematic teaching procedures.

In the light of recent research, such rational and
systematic teaching of spelling would seem to be at
variance with the traditional rote learning of words
from published spelling lists.

> "The traditional spelling lesson is an ad hoc
> approach to the task of internalization (of
> spelling patterns) and one which, for lack of
> awareness of the working of the orthography,
> falls back on random procedures and on rote
> learning."
> (Mackay and Thompson, 1968, p68)

In an investigation of 65 classes in primary schools
in England, Peters (1967, p52) shows that haphazard
practices and reliance entirely on published lists
are not aids to progress in spelling. She comments:

> "Children left to themselves with word lists
> learn these in a very haphazard kind of way,
> reciting alphabetically, reading over the words ...
> the time spent on spelling can be used more
> effectively if children are taught to attend
> carefully to word structure, to look for the
> 'hard spots', to identify familiar word sequences
> within long words, to syllabize, to exercise
> visual imagery."

Although there is agreement by researchers that
spelling should be taught, there is disagreement as
to when this instruction should begin. Martin and
Mulford (op cit, p389) criticize Peters for her
"earlier the better" attitude to instruction in
spelling; while Johnson and van der Merwe (1979)
suggest that instruction should begin when writing
begins. In their comments on spelling in junior
primary classes they come to the conclusion that
"learning correct spelling is important but should
not be stressed to such an extent that it stifles
a child's creative efforts in writing" (p112).
Templeton (1979, p795) sees correct spelling as part
of a child's developing orthographic awareness.
Spelling consciousness, he believes, should begin as
a feature of proofreading.

In order to ensure that spelling progress is maintained,
regular testing would seem to be essential. Peters
(1970) suggests that it is highly likely that a
class's spelling will progress if it is tested regularly
rather than irregularly. If it is agreed that good
spelling frees the pupil to write, it would seem to
indicate that his ability in spelling should be
measured. It is suggested that dictation exercises are
a suitable means of doing this. Further, dictation
exercises provide an opportunity for pupils to proof-
read materials by comparing them with the correct copy.
In the words of Clanfield and Hannan,

> "Skill in proofreading is one of the most
> valuable language skills pupils can learn.
> ... Proofreading provides pupils with
> opportunities to evaluate their own work in
> terms of accepted standards, to develop critical

judgment, and to set and maintain high
standards for themselves" (p20).

Thus, in the context of <u>writing</u>, spelling plays an
important role in a language policy.

Studies of language development reveal that the wider
the child's experience of language, the more he can
manipulate it for his own purposes. That each
sentence we utter is unique, implies a choice. The
more a child experiments with and experiences language,
the wider his choices become, so that he is able,
finally, to select that word which fits exactly and
precisely the meaning which he wishes to convey. It
follows, therefore, that effective and efficient
communication requires a firm knowledge and experience
of vocabulary. Such knowledge and experience could
be gained by designing opportunities for vocabulary
enrichment, in which the child is given the opportunity
to experiment with words, to compare and discuss
words, and to reflect on the various ways in which
words come to hold so much meaning for the writer
and the reader.

In order to ensure a pattern in the child's developing
awareness of words, it is suggested that word study
policy be designed and implemented, as part of the
overall language policy in the school.

4.7   Conclusions

In the present chapter an attempt has been made to
examine some of the processes and elements of creative
thinking in the <u>writing</u> of primary school children.
Various conclusions may be drawn from this examination.
Some conclusions are:

4.7.1   If the child is to learn by writing, the teacher will
need to teach the <u>process</u> by which knowledge is

acquired rather than a body of accepted knowledge.

4.7.2   Creativity is initiated by the child's interests.
It is dependent upon the ingenuity of the teacher as
to whether this interest can be sustained in the
writing situation.

4.7.3   Intention would seem to be the motivating force for
thinking, therefore creativity in the writing process
is dependent upon a clear purpose within the mind of
the writer.

4.7.4   Progress in writing may be seen to involve the ability
to communicate successfully to one's intended audience,
in language appropriate to that audience.

4.7.5   Progress in effective, satisfying writing is more
easily accomplished through the writing of more than
one draft in consultation with the teacher and peers.

4.7.6   For a written communication to achieve full impact,
it should be written with the 'comfort' of the reader
in mind - grammar, spelling and punctuation are,
therefore, necessary considerations.

4.7.7   The teacher's influence on her pupils is immense.
In the context of learning this implies that the teacher
adopt a view of learning which does not impose on
the structure of the pupil's thinking but, instead,
is committed to reciprocity, to co-operative learning,
a learning environment which supports the growth of
creative thinking.   The role of teacher-as-assessor
has a minimal place in this environment.

4.7.8   For writing ability to be fully developed in pupils
it is suggested that the school adopt a policy whereby
growth is ensured: a policy which would take into

account those features of writing and learning that have been mentioned in this chapter. With such a policy, the child's writing may assume a potency far deeper than the surface features of inculcated models of writing.

Thus far, this study has considered the effect language has upon a child's learning behaviour: how talk is generated not only to suit the situation but also to influence it in accordance with the child's needs and purposes,; how reading is a way in which a child may, independently, constantly draw on other people's knowledge and wisdom; how writing is a means by which the child comes to terms with other people's knowledge and wisdom, and with his own representation of experience. The belief underlying all that has been said about language-in-learning is that knowledge is not something that exists outside the knower; knowledge is not just transferable matter. The study has been a criticism of traditional notions of what constitutes 'learning', and has proposed that accountability in teaching rests on a view of learning which recognises and appreciates the many uses of language by which a child goes about his learning. The way is now clear to propose how a school may ensure the development of language potential in every child, through the formulation of a school-based language policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MAKING OF A LANGUAGE POLICY: A REVIEW OF SOME ATTEMPTS

5.1   Introduction

        One of the underlying concerns in this work has been
        the role of language in education. Arising from this
        concern the value of, and necessity for, a language
        policy for the primary school has been postulated.
        The study has taken place at a time when important
        changes in the teaching and assessment of language
        are occurring. Such changes will no doubt continue
        as education benefits from research into learning
        and language.

        The present chapter involves a review of the feasibility
        of a school language policy. The possible merits of
        such a policy are considered as well as suggested
        content. Examples of policies obtained by the writer
        on her visit to England are included, as well as the
        partially completed language policy of a primary school
        in Natal.

5.2   A review of moves in England and Natal towards the
        idea of a school-based language policy

        In May 1966[1] the London Association of Teachers of
        English began discussion on functions of language
        and the relationship between language and thought.
        Inevitably this led to discussion of the place of
        language in subjects other than that labelled English,
        and subsequently to the coining of the phrase
        'language across the curriculum'. In the May 1968
        Conference of the London Association of Teachers of
        English, the terms of enquiry into language use were
        broadened, culminating in the drafting of a statement

1.   Reported by Rosen in Barnes D; Britton J and Rosen H
     (1971), p144f.

for circulation to schools. This Discussion Document[1] inspired some school staffs to attempt their own drafting of language policies for cross-curricular purposes.

The 1971 Conference theme of the National Association of Teachers of English in England was "Language across the Curriculum", and gave impetus to the publication in 1976 of the NATE booklet, Language across the Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools.

In 1972 the Open University introduced a Reading Development post-experience course, marking the acceptance of the need for understanding and teaching reading in all subjects in the curriculum.

The recognition of the importance of the continued teaching of reading and of the role of language in learning culminated in the unified approach taken by the Bullock Committee in their recommendation in 1975 of a 'language across the curriculum policy'.

The influence of these ideas continues to grow in Britain as may be seen by the examples of policies and guidelines quoted later in this chapter.

In Natal, it is probable that the awakened interest in reading in England, evidenced by the volume of publications over the past decade on reading and its development, gave the necessary impetus to the Natal Education Department to focus attention on the language development of pupils.

In 1976 two teachers were seconded to work in an itinerant way under the direction of the Inspector of Education for English as First Language. Guidance in the teaching of reading was given by these teachers to teachers working in junior high schools. This led to the secondment of one such teacher for a further

1. Ibid, an appendix to.

two years to help staff in primary schools with the teaching of reading.

The idea of the role of language in learning was introduced to primary school principals at an Easter vacation course in 1976. This was followed by a one day in-service course for teachers on the role of language and reading in learning.

1977 saw the issuing of Circular Minute 36 officially requesting schools to draw up a language policy, and a one day in-service course for principals and senior staff which focussed mainly on the place of talk and the teaching of reading. In addition, the Natal Education Department paid the expenses of teachers attending the National Conference of the English Academy of Southern Africa in July 1977, which took the theme 'The Teaching of English as First Language in Schools'. Official recognition of the need for a school language policy was further given by the inclusion of the Bullock Committee recommendation for school language policies in the Natal Education Department Syllabus for English as First Language in Primary Schools, issued in 1977.

A one day in-service course, titled 'Language across the Curriculum', was offered to teachers in 1979; while in 1980 a talk urging teachers to interest themselves in devising a policy for language was offered to principals and senior staff of primary schools.

While it may be seen that the Natal Education Department has gone some way to furthering the interest and knowledge of teachers in the teaching of language, it is possible that this assistance has either been insufficient or of the wrong kind[1] for at the time

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1. Attention will be drawn to what may be weaknesses inherent in the form of in-service training of teachers as reported here, in the conclusions to this study.

of writing it has not been possible to find a primary
school in Natal which had yet developed an explicit
language policy.

The Bullock Committee (para 12.3) point out that the
primary school teacher has the power to establish a
language policy across the curriculum because she is
responsible for most of the work of her class. But
the Committee add this rider:

> "Whether or not he is taking that opportunity
> will depend upon the extent to which the various
> uses of language permeate all other learning
> activities, or to which, on the other hand,
> language learning is regarded as a separate
> activity."

Evidence of a lack of permeation of various uses of
language into some Natal primary schools comes from
replies to questionnaires which the writer circulated
as part of her research. These replies are examined
in detail in a separate section of the present chapter.

Replies to questionnaires issued at an in-service
course organised by the Natal Education Department
in 1979, showed that 78% of the teachers attending
the course felt they were ignorant of the role language
played in learning. 82% of the teachers admitted
that they were ill-equipped to teach developmental
reading.

Clearly, if teachers in Natal primary schools are to
adopt policies whereby language permeates all learning
activities, they will need more intensive training
than that which has already been offered.

Having established some of the background leading up
to a call for school-based language policies, the
writer turns to an appraisal of the possible merits
in designing any such policy.

5.3   Some suggested merits inherent in formulating a
        language policy

        While it may be said that the preceding chapters
        suggest to a large extent the value of a language
        policy and the considerations necessary for a full
        language policy, it seems relevant to consider other
        merits inherent in any language policy which may lead
        to more effective teaching behaviour.   What has
        preceded this chapter has been written largely with
        the child in mind; what follows has the teacher more
        specifically in mind.

        Clearly, all teachers do have some form of language
        policy, in the sense that assumptions about the
        relationship of language and learning are made. It
        is the degree of permeation into all subjects in the
        curriculum, however, that would seem to indicate how
        aware a teacher is of the crucial part language plays
        in learning.

5.3.1   One of the principal values in devising a school
        language policy, it is suggested, lies in the oppor-
        tunity the exercise provides for teachers to articulate
        their views on language and learning and to listen
        to the views of others. Drawing up a language policy,
        it may be said, is a process of recognising the
        assumptions about the relationship of language and
        learning, challenging them and moving towards a
        "consensus of activities linked to a theoretical basis
        that is sound linguistically and educationally" (Harris,
        1977, p85). The scope of a school policy is such that
        it involves all teachers in an awareness of language
        and an understanding of how language works to mediate
        learning.

        The discussion held towards devising a language policy
        would no doubt encourage members of staff to explore
        for themselves the validity of particular approaches
        and ideas. Although change in teaching does not come

about simply from learning someone else's theory,
for change is more complex than that, hearing about
other theories, as Torbe (1980, p280) points out,
can "short-circuit" the reconstruction process, it
can "accelerate" the process of discovery, and lead
to the possible adoption of an approach more conducive
to the language and learning development of the child.

5.3.2   A language policy may offer a different way of
exploring teaching and learning. Teachers would need
to search for, and adopt, strategies that would enhance
the use of language in learning situations.

> "For language to play its full role as a means
> of learning, the teacher must create in the
> classroom an environment which encourages a wide
> range of language uses."
> (Bullock, op cit, para 12.3)

5.3.3   While considering the child's language development,
the teacher would inevitably be forced to a state
of self-evaluation; for her own use of language would
need to be considered in the light of its effect on
the language learning development of her pupils.
Evidence of the value of this personal consideration
is given, for example, by teachers writing in Language
Policies in Action, with reference to their own lessons.
Torbe (op cit, p156) concludes,

> "... the power of a tape-recording to change
> or affect a teacher in a very particular way
> when he or she is 'ready' to listen to himself
> or herself, is unique. It enables a teacher
> to make perceptions about his or her own language
> in the classroom and how it affects pupils'
> language ...".

This self-evaluation could lead to a more appropriate
and considered use of language by the teacher.

5.3.4   The possibilities of what may be termed a unified
approach to language lie in the creation of a language
policy. The Bullock Committee (pxxxv) based its

deliberations on the "principle that reading, writing, talking and listening should be treated as a unity". The fragmentation of 'English lessons' into composition, grammar, comprehension and so on, is seen by the Bullock Committee as counter-productive to language development, and, indeed, untypical of the growth of language competence (para 1.10). The adoption of a unified approach to language teaching would not, it seems, ignore the differences between spoken and written forms of language; rather, it is suggested, a language policy would ensure the distinctness of each element while recognising their relationship.

> "It is in the careful recognition of the relation-
> ships between the different modes of language,
> that we shall find a coherent unity ..."
> (Allen, 1980, p98)

Moreover, recognising the relationship between the different modes of language would surely go some way to achieving a balanced programme with no undue stress on any one aspect of language.

5.3.5 A language policy would, in essence, provide an overall view of the language demanded of children in each subject of the curriculum. This would highlight other imbalances possibly operating in the school. Saunders (1976, p89) gives the example of "a crushing over-emphasis on one particular mode of expression - the transactional", evidenced, for example, in the duplicated and dictated teacher-prepared notes issued to pupils, and in the lesson presentation of the teacher-class variety. This highlighting would, in turn, show how essential expressive talk and writing is to the learning process. Torbe (1979, p116) has pointed out that if expressive talk or writing is bypassed, there is every possibility that learning will be bypassed, too.

In summary, it may be said that a language policy makes views, values, ideas, approaches and behaviours

explicit, affording the security for teachers to face and study the nature of their teaching and to change it where necessary.

Moving from the abstractions of the possible merits inherent in formulating a language policy, the writer turns to the more concrete idea of guidance in devising such a policy. It is intended that this may show, by example, what various educational bodies understand by a 'language policy'.

5.4   An example of a document offering guidelines towards a language policy

Various associations and education authorities in England have attempted to assist schools in the formation of language policies by offering points of departure, possible aims and suggested content - a framework on which schools can build. The writer was privileged to study some of these documents during study leave in England.

Parts of one of these documents (from Norfolk County Council) have been selected for inclusion in this dissertation.[1] It is hoped that such inclusion may give some idea of what is intended by a language policy. The qualification for choice of this particular document is that it covers the age range 8-13 years, being almost exactly the age range under consideration in this work (9-13 years).

The document was developed by a group of headteachers, deputy heads, teachers, lecturers and members of the local Advisory Service. It is intended as a basic framework for individual school policies. The document

1.   As far as the writer is aware, no such guidelines have been issued by the Natal Education Department for use in primary schools in Natal.

introduces the idea of language and learning and the part played by the teacher in a child's language growth. The suggestion is made that teachers in schools start discussion on a language policy by examining their present practices. This is followed by an analysis of some of the "special skill and knowledge areas thought to be most desirable for children" (p6). These number seven in all - Spoken language, Writing, Reading, Literature and Poetry, The application of study skills, Drama, Language Rules. The first four of these skills will be considered here. Each of these "special skills" is treated in the document under sub-headings of Important Considerations, Skill, Example of Strategy and Most Likely Stage. Only the sub-sections of Important Considerations and Skill will be quoted here, as these seem to give sufficient indication of the detail of these guidelines.

Spoken Language   (pp7-9)

Important Considerations

    1.   Children should be given the opportunity:-

        a)   to discuss with peers in various working situations.

        b)   to discuss with their teachers the work they are doing and the problems they may meet.

        c)   to talk with adults other than their own teachers
            e.g., other teachers and parents, visitors to the school, adults met on school visits.

    2.   Children should be encouraged to explain answers and comments and helped to find more precise and appropriate ways of describing their experiences.

    3.   A vital strategy for all areas of oral work is the skill of the teacher in questioning. The more demanding the range of teacher questioning the wider the range of oral skills the children will develop.

Skill

1. Discussive
1.1 expressing own ideas/thoughts clearly.
1.2 following a sustained discussion and contributing appropriately.
1.3 following the line of an argument.

1.4 giving reasoned response
1.5 debating
2. Informative
2.1 responding to instructions and directions
2.2 giving instructions/directions clearly and concisely
2.3 giving information clearly and concisely.
3. Questioning
3.1 asking questions
3.2 predicting outcome of activity
3.3 presenting verbal report of conclusions
3.4 setting up hypotheses
3.5 setting up logical sequence of argument/ action - testing of hypotheses.
4. Listening
4.1 following and understanding an informal exposition
4.2 inferring missing parts of a conversation from what is actually heard
4.3 detecting the kinds of relationships existing between people from the language they employ
4.4 understanding differences in meaning brought about by different emphases
4.5 understanding differences in meaning brought about by different stress and intonation patterns.

Writing

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. Children should be actively encouraged to share with other pupils what they have written.

2. A child's move through hesitant command of his language to fuller competence will be facilitated if at least some of the following strategies are employed:

    a) giving children opportunities to explore in talk before writing.

    b) exploring in writing, pupils knowing that they will be able to alter, re-arrange etc. at a subsequent time. Writing received at this stage should be treated as a working document: crossings out, insertions, etc. should not be penalised, in fact alternative forms of presentation (such as notes) might be encouraged on occasions.

    c) wherever possible, providing opportunities for children to discuss written first drafts in order to test and clarify under-standing.

    d) using first drafts (hesitant command stage offerings) as the basis for discussion directed towards a further piece of work on a similar topic.

e) encouraging the "translation" of first
    drafts into other specified forms. For
    instance, practical material garnered
    through reading may be offered first as
    report, and later incorporated into a
    story, or presented as persuasive material
    for one side of an argument.

In the lower middle years it seems sufficient
simply to build a learning structure which brings
about redrafting and refocussing, whilst still
producing final presentations. In the upper middle
years it is suggested that it may be possible to
focus the child's attention on the process of
redrafting etc. so that he may make explicit the
reasons why he has changed a particular form to fit
a given purpose or audience.

Skill
1.   'Personal' Writing
1.1 Writing diary/news
1.2 letter writing to friends
1.3 biographical/auto-biographical
1.4 narrative/descriptive.
2.   'Public' Writing
2.1 formal letter writing
2.2 presenting a coherent statement
2.3 exploring alternative possibilities.
3.   Recording/reporting
3.1 classifying information and ordering of notes
3.2 expansion of notes to make a summary
3.3 selecting most appropriate means of recording
     different types of information
3.4 ordering of observations for report on experi-
     ment
3.5 ordering of information to present conclusions
3.6 selection of most appropriate means/style of
     presenting materials/conclusions etc.
3.7 following different lines in an argument and
     drawing a conclusion according to selected
     values.
4.   Note making
4.1 preparing headings from heard material
4.2 preparing headings from read material
4.3 listing important points from observations
4.4 introduction of more complex note making.

Reading

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. Reading tasks should be undertaken to satisfy
    a clear purpose.

2. Reading for information and for pleasure can
    both be pursued through opportunities for
    children to:-

    a) select books for themselves

    b) comment on what they have read

c) discuss books they have read at other than a superficial level of comprehension.

Other aspects of reading for information may usefully be developed through a systematic approach to study skills.

3. Opportunities for children to read fiction and poetry of quality should not be neglected.

4. Reading schemes:
'As soon as the children have gained some confidence in reading, these schemes should be supplemented with reading material which has been carefully selected to provide broader literary experience and extension of knowledge. Once the skills of decoding are firmly established further skills should be introduced ...'
(Primary Education in England 5.47).

Skill

1. <u>Further development of decoding</u>
1.1 fluency
1.2 vocabulary
1.3 meaning.
2. <u>Development of study skills</u>
2.1 identifying main points
2.2 reading for detail
2.3 reading to establish evidence/arguments for and against
2.4 detecting bias.
3. <u>Development of reading research techniques</u>
3.1 skimming for quick retrieval of information
3.2 scanning to establish the main points
3.3 information location including library skills.

Literature and Poetry

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. To interest children in books:
   a) the teacher must enjoy books - read as much as possible to the children, plan the reading carefully and above all show enthusiasm.

   b) let children review books and recommend them to each other - their recommendation carries more weight than any other.

   c) make full use of libraries, school bookshops, book clubs, T.V. programmes, displays and exhibitions etc.

2. Stories and poems should be taught in school as part of the curriculum because they promote:

   a) enjoyment

b) experience outside "the trivial round"

c) insight into one's own personality and problems - an aid to personal growth

d) exploration of someone else's mind through their writing

e) an appreciation of others' problems

f) learning more about the world

g) development of a lasting and worthwhile interest in good books

h) development of personal use of language

i) reading for complex meaning

j) sensitivity to form rhythm and imagery as means of expression.

3. As soon as a child can read for himself and understand enough to have enjoyed the experience, he should be directed in a number of ways so that his continued reading is a planned part of the learning process.

Aspects to be taught

1. Literature
1.1 characterisation
1.2 background setting and illustration
1.3 identifying sub-plot
1.4 excitement
1.5 themes.
2. Poetry
2.1 themes
2.2 rhythm
2.3 form
2.4 concentration of language and expression of emotion
2.5 meaning.

The document concludes with a section on assessment, record keeping and remedial action. It also includes a list of selected titles for further reading.

From a study of this document and others of similar nature, it may be concluded that a language policy should be more than a concentration on surface issues such as a common marking scheme in the correction of errors in writing. While these surface issues are important, they are not, it is suggested, in any way a

language policy. A language policy may be seen to
concern itself with the fundamental issues of language
and learning in all aspects of the curriculum.

Marland (1977, p264) explains it thus:

> "To plan ways in which we can effectively improve
> our pupils' learning is inevitably to consider
> how we use language, the language environment
> of our school, the language expectations we have
> of our pupils, and the tuition and encouragement
> we give in language. If we do all this, that is
> if we establish a whole school language policy,
> we shall not only have helped the subject learning
> of our pupils, we shall also have helped them
> with their own language for life."

Having established what is meant by a language policy,
the way is now clear to examine some language policies
which are in operation in particular schools. Before
doing so, however, it seems necessary to consider the
reasons why each shool should devise its own separate
and unique language policy, rather than adopting one
devised by an education authority or another school.

5.5   <u>The need for a school's individual language policy</u>

> "We are born into a vast potential cultural heritage,
> but we can only hope to succeed to a very small
> part of the total heritage and then only in stages.
> There would appear to be a need to emphasize that
> for <u>each</u> stage of childhood and youth, for <u>each</u>
> type of child, there are a relevant environment
> and relevant forms of language."
> (Writer's emphasis) (Firth J, 1935, cited by
> Rosen in Barnes, Britton and Rosen, 1971, p158)

Educationalists have benefited sufficiently from
research on language to appreciate that while there
are similarities in the acquisition and development
of language, each child is unique in his use of
language. Broadening this realisation to encompass
the school, it may be said that each school has its
own set of language users, with their own demands,
problems and needs. Aspects such as socio-economic,

psychologocial and cultural factors will affect the particular design of a language policy.

The implementation of a language policy may be seen to have two directions - towards the classroom, and towards the collective decisions made by the staff of a school. The teacher makes her own decisions about her teaching behaviour and classroom procedure; while the staff of any one school collectively give priority and emphasis to particular curricular areas and pupil behaviour. These may differ widely from priorities in another school. For example, one school may have a large percentage of children with reading difficulties while another may find pupil talk a crucial issue.

The successful implementation of a language policy rests on the decisions made by each individual teacher herself and in conjunction with the other staff, for it is these people who will either implement or ignore the policy. It would seem, therefore, essential for each school to design and implement its own language policy, for such a policy would reflect the concerns, interests and strengths peculiar to that particular school. Moreover, it would be a policy founded in the confidence of the ability of that staff actually to implement it; unlike an imposed policy from some other source which may very well include approaches or beliefs untenable or impossible for particular teachers or schools to adopt. Torbe (1976, p5), an authority on the devising and implementation of language policies in schools, points out,

> "A language policy cannot exist outside the school
> that creates it; it must relate to the specific
> problems and approaches of that school, and it
> draws its impetus from the kinds ofquestions
> the staff themselves ask about teaching and
> learning."

This, of course, implies or necessitates a low turn-over of staff, initially at any rate, for the policy actually to reach the stage of documentation and

implementation. Certainly, one reason for documenting
a language policy would be so that new members of
staff may more easily become familiar with the existing
policy in the school but the policy may need subsequent
alterations to accommodate that particular staff
member's aptitudes and idiosyncracies. While these
alterations may be an improvement on existing policy,
it may, on the other hand, well entail further training
of new staff members to ensure skilful implementation
of the policy. Clearly, this would hinder any
monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy.

It is with these qualifications in mind that the writer
turns now to specific examples of language policies.

5.6 Some examples of language policies

The writer finds it necessary to draw from documents
she was able to study while in England as no similar
documents exist in any Natal primary school. Possible
reasons for the lack of such documented policies will
be considered later. However, the writer is privileged
to be on the staff of a primary school which is presently
engaged in the devising of a language policy. This
experience will be reported on later in this chapter.

It is the intention of the writer to report and comment
on selected language policies, and then to quote one
policy in full.

5.6.1 Aldermaston Church of England Primary School
(Aldermaston)

This policy was initiated and documented by a teacher
on the staff who attended a post-experience course
at Bulmershe College of Higher Education. The devising
of a language policy was the main practical assignment
demanded of the students. Although guidelines and

lectures were given to augment their knowledge of
language and learning, students were required to
consider the individual needs of their own particular
schools. The policy referred to is a language and
learning policy detailing aims and practices in
talking, listening, reading and writing. It includes
a section on monitoring children's language develop-
ment and also diagnostic procedures for the classroom.

Although much theory on language and learning is
included in the document there seems to be conflict
between this theory and some of the practices
recommended. For example, the policy states that
reading can be a source of pleasure and personal
development, yet there is no mention anywhere in the
policy of suggested or intended use of children's
literature.

This policy is perhaps an example of insufficient
discussion among staff members of views of learning
and language and the concomitant classroom procedures.

5.6.2 Bentley Heath School (Solihull)

This policy, documented in May 1980, was initiated
by the headmaster in consultation with his staff. The
policy recognises the limitations of the staff in
theoretical knowledge of learning and in expertise
and is, therefore, simply and clearly expressed,
quoting only from the Bullock Report. It has two
sections - Reading and Writing. The policy has an
instructive tone to it - "When hearing children read,
please refer and adhere to the recommendations ..."
(p2) - and the use of the first person singular -
"Reading is a two-way process and I am often disappointed
to discover ..." (p3) - leads the reader to suspect
that the headmaster interprets a policy as being a
form of teacher control. It is perhaps not surprising,
therefore, that on visiting the classes in the school,
the writer found evidence of misinterpretation of the

policy. However, it should be recognised that the initial thrust towards an awareness of language development may be made by a document of this nature and that with follow-up discussion, teachers may find the confidence to change their classroom behaviour to suit more adequately the school policy.

5.6.3   Clifton Withant County Primary School (York)

This policy was devised in 1978 as a result of the headmaster's attendance on a course involving language. The policy is written in a most polished form and covers listening and talking, reading, and writing. To the eye of a teacher in Natal, the policy reads similarly to a syllabus with carefully planned areas of study for each year group. Although the policy supports modern views on language and learning - "Language is the main means of communication and the chief tool in learning and forming concepts" (p1);

> "In writing we must provide time to search out the best way to express a thought and its meaning and allow opportunity to alter and re-draft" (p5) -

the teachers in the school used a rigid approach with little talking being allowed. Rote learning and traditional comprehension exercises were also in evidence. The impression gained was that this policy, devised and written by the headmaster, had not engaged the imagination of the staff. Perhaps the comment of Nancy Martin (cited by Torbe, 1980, p271) about staff-room discussions is relevant here,

> "... where a school is talking to itself ... then language across the curriculum can be implemented; if a staff is not talking seriously about education, then that must begin first before innovation can take place".

5.6.4   Clifford Bridge Junior and Infant School (Coventry)

The staff of this school are fortunate to be in Coventry. The Elm Bank Teachers' Centre in Coventry

is heavily committed to assisting teachers with
language development across the curriculum. The
Director of Education for Coventry explained in an
interview with the writer that language was a funda-
mental priority for in-service work throughout the
authority. Rather than request statements from schools
about their language policies as some authorities in
England have done, the Coventry LEA has been more
subtle. The Director explained that they have tried to
find ways to let the ideas have a currency in their
schools which would make them familiar to teachers
and so sensitize them to thinking about the language
use in their own classrooms. In addition to this
general assistance has been the more specific assistance
given by the Curriculum Development Officer for
Language, based at the Elm Bank Teachers' Centre, whose
brief has been to encourage and support work in
language in schools. This means that there has been
a central co-ordinator of work and also someone to
visit schools and discuss specific needs.

Clifford Bridge School, therefore, has been able to
take advantage of the facilities offered in Coventry.
Their policy was devised as a result of many staff
discussions and experimentation in language work.
The policy is of particular interest because it is a
statement of intent and a description of action which
is embodied in classroom practice, as observed by
the writer. Because this policy seems to come closer
to what may be termed a school language policy in
that the majority of the staff appeared to be committed
to its implementation, it seems to be worth quoting
in full:

LANGUAGE POLICY

The starting point for our policy is the children.
We try to look at the interests and needs of the
children, both present and future and organise the
ways in which we 'teach' language around those
needs. We feel that a child's language is part of
the child as a whole and shouldn't be artificially
separated. (You can't separate the language from
the child). We value the child and her/his

language.

Just as language is part of the whole child, so the different aspects of language (spoken and written word) are interrelated. Our language policy is a unified one which takes account of this in relation to the children's needs.

For the purposes of this document, however, the various aspects have been categorised as follows.

1. <u>SPOKEN LANGUAGE</u>   a) <u>Talking</u> b) <u>Listening</u>

2. <u>WRITTEN LANGUAGE</u>   a) <u>Reading</u> b) <u>Writing</u>

3. <u>LITERATURE</u> (Does this need a separate section?)

There is no special section for remedial work as this is integrated into the normal school day rather than being isolated or different.

<u>Each aspect is dealt with as follows:</u>

A.   What are our <u>goals/aims</u>?
B.   What are our <u>teaching strategies</u>? (How we implement our goals).
C.   How do we <u>evaluate</u> and <u>develop</u> our teaching? (There are two aspects here (i) Evaluation of teaching strategies and (ii) Evaluation of children's progress/learning.)
     (i) This is informal and takes the form of team discussions.
     (ii) Also generally informal. Written records are kept but are more detailed for children with problems - 'language' or other.

<u>Spoken Language</u>   a) <u>Talking</u>

<u>Goals</u>
We accept, encourage and value the children's talk.
We encourage them to learn through talk.
We recognise the importance of adults as 'language models'.

<u>Strategies</u>
.   We use children's talk as a prime resource for reading and writing. - we make their 1st reading books from their spoken sentences/phrases, using Breakthrough to Literacy materials. This is just one example of the interrelatedness of language.
.   We encourage children to talk to their friends, while working - they can work with children of different ages, go and see siblings, friends in the Inf. or Jun. dept, go and talk to other teachers, head, caretaker etc.
.   We encourage mums, grans, visitors to talk with the children, share their experiences and set up others (play reading games, share a book, cookery, sewing, knitting etc.)
.   We create opportunities for children to talk in small groups without direct supervision of teacher. (making tapes of subjects that interest them stories etc. in the staffroom)

- Children sometimes make personal tapes for their teachers.
- We try to help children towards the use of technical terms (eg. Fletcher Maths) by first helping them to understand concepts in their own language. (exploratory talk)
- We try to ask open-ended questions, which encourage exploratory (thinking) talk, rather than closed-ended ones which usually have a right or wrong answer.
- We try to create opportunities for quiet children to talk (eg tapes).
- We actively create different functions and audiences for the children's talk, encouraging them to develop and use different styles of talking, appropriate to different situations, (talking to friends, into a tape-recorder, to teacher, in assembly etc).
- We give children the freedom (and time) to ask their own questions.

Evaluation
- We evaluate our teaching strategies informally in staff meetings. (i.e. do we create enough opportunities for children to talk?)
- We assess the children's talk informally too and only record in great detail the development of children with problems.

Spoken Language   b) Listening

Goals
- We try to encourage children to listen when others are talking.
- We try to show them real reasons for listening, (active listening, not passive). (Listening to stories, tapes, radio, T.V., on country walks etc).

Strategies
- Tapes are used a lot (children making tapes for others to listen to).
- Stories are used a great deal (on Radio, T.V., tapes and teachers reading and telling stories).
- In group discussions children and teacher sometimes sit in a circle on the floor to make it easier to listen to what others are saying, instead of teacher sitting apart.
- Children are allowed to ask genuine questions of teachers and other children, therefore, creating situations where they really listen to the answers.
- Children are encouraged to bring and talk about interesting things in assemblies. (Another situation in which children have a real reason for listening).
- We really listen to children and value what they say. (Value of the teacher's model).

Evaluation
- We evaluate our teaching strategies informally.
- We assess children's listening informally too.

Written Language   a) Reading

<u>Definition</u> - To get meaning from a page.

<u>Fluent Reading</u> - Ability to read independently
          (silently?), using a variety of
          techniques for a range of purposes
          (e.g. recipe, novel, newspaper, Ceefax
          etc). Also ability to evaluate
          critically what is read.

Goals
. To get children into the 'reading habit'
  (reading for pleasure).
. To produce functionally efficient adult readers
  (by encouraging functional independence at
  school).

Strategies
. We try fit the reading material to the child,
  (not vice versa). (We use Breakthrough to
  Literacy materials initially).
. Children are encouraged to select and evaluate
  their own reading materials from the wide range
  available. (Books are colour-coded according
  to approximate readability levels).
. We try to create a balance between reading for
  pleasure and functional reading by introducing
  children to formats other than books (schedules,
  notices, instructions, timetables, labels,
  forms etc.)
. We use children's writing as a prime resource
  for reading. (Their 1st sentences with Breakthro'
  made into 'reading' books for themselves and
  others to read, children writing for younger
  children to read etc.)
. We create opportunities for children to read
  differently for different purposes therefore
  developing different strategies (a skimming,
  b scanning, c intensively reading -
  a selecting a book, b looking for a word in
  a dictionary, c following instructions).
. We present books (stories) by using different
  media - story telling, drama, Weston Woods film,
  radio, T.V., tapes etc.
. We see pre-reading as an introduction to books/
  stories rather than a programme of matching
  activities. (We show them our enthusiasm, explain
  how to find their way around a book, talk about
  books without words, create an interesting book
  environment, make books from their own talk etc).
. We try to provide flexibility in the timetable
  for children to read at length and to set aside
  a time for silent reading.

Evaluation
. Evaluation of teaching strategies takes place
  informally in staff meetings.
. We assess childrens reading informally when
  listening to them read. We try to look at the
  strategies they are using and not using rather
  than what they know, (analysing their miscues

and self-corrections is more helpful here than using standardised reading tests).
. Diagnostic tests are used for specific problems.
. Children are encouraged to help with record-keeping (listing books read etc) and we try to look at the pattern of their reading and record specific difficulties rather than listing what they know.

Written Language   b) Writing

Goals
. To show children the need for writing.
. To show children the enjoyment possible from writing.
. To teach them to write differently for different situations (different functions and audiences).

Strategies
. We use Breakthrough materials so that children can 'compose' written language before they are able to 'write'.
. Alongside this we teach letter formation and the physical techniques of handwriting.

Function
. We try to develop different styles of writing appropriate for different situations, eg. note to friend, story for others to read, instruction, menu etc.

Audience
. We create situations in which the children's writing produces responses that encourage further writing therefore showing the 'communication' process, eg letters.
. We encourage children to write for teachers in ways other than 'for assessment' and value what they write.
. The children are encouraged to use Breakthrough materials (word-makers) to develop correct spelling.
. Generally we encourage writing more by the use of 'real' (as in Reading, Writing and Relevance - Hoffman) activities than by the use of work-sheets/exercises.

Evaluation
. We try to keep samples of childrens writing to put in their folders.
. We find it more helpful to look at children's use of word makers and the strategies they are using rather than just correcting writing.
. We try to record the pattern of children's writing (moves from personal writing, close to talk to other modes - story, poem, instruction etc).
. Children are encouraged to record the kinds of writing they do and sometimes the audience for whom it was written.

Literature

Definition - Any written language which sets out
              to represent the human condition,
              (Novel, poem, T.V. series, child's
              story).

Goals
. To encourage children to read/write stories.
  Why? Because it can help us to understand our-
  selves through understanding others. Also
  (Bullock 9-9) the narrative mode provides the
  strongest motivation towards reading books.

Strategies
. We value children's writing, using it as the
  1st step towards literature, (children's sentences
  stories etc being a prime resource for reading).
. Children are encouraged to read 'literature'
  (stories) from the reception stage (story books
  not reading primers).
. We read to children as often as possible and
  at varying times (as much as timetable restrict-
  ions allow), showing our own enthusiasm for
  books, knowing the books, sharing responses.
. Children have access to a wide range of books
  and the time to preview, select and read them.
. We encourage children to select (from reception
  stage) their own reading material. (Selection
  is part of reading).
. We encourage children's responses to literature,
  both individual and in groups, (discussion -
  how did it make you feel? etc reviews, adverts,
  cover designs, writing to authors etc).
. We run a school bookshop, selling cheap paper-
  backs and we encourage children to borrow books
  from school libraries etc.
. Our criteria for choosing books include the
  following - aesthetic qualities, intrinsic value
  (purpose in writing), interests and needs of
  children (need for both real life and fantasy
  situations) and reading abilities of children
  (if book is to be read by them). Also possible
  bias (race, sex, class etc).

Evaluation
. Children help with book selection and constantly
  evaluate what they read.

While this language policy does not have the 'public'
polish in appearance (the original is handwritten and
duplicated on a spirit-carbon machine) or in written
expression that other policies may have, it would
seem to have value because it is the genuine statement
of what is implicit in school. Moreover, the policy's
somewhat temporary appearance is partially intentional

as the staff believe that a policy is not an end-state
but a statement of a process which must alter
according to the needs of the pupils and the expertise
of the staff.

These then are examples of language policies devised
in England. Although they are different in form, it
should be noted that in every case there was at least
one member of staff who had the confidence and know-
ledge to institute what may be seen as a difficult
undertaking. Such knowledge is usually gained from
the variety of resources available in England such as
teachers' centres, reading centres, post-experience
full-time courses, long and short period in-service
courses, all designed specifically to train teachers
in the concept of "language across the curriculum".

It would seem that until teachers have a full under-
standing of the concept of "language across the
curriculum", existing approaches to teaching may not
be radically changed. Whiteside (1978, p74) notes that
resistance to change is common in those who are not
"true believers" in an innovation; "Existing patterns
are not readily given up ...". Another problem of
innovation, he feels, is one of misconception of an
educational innovation. Misconception may lead to
distortions of the innovation in the classroom practice.
Recognition of this difficulty led Goodlad (as cited by
Whiteside, op cit, p42) to stress that "it is essential
that educational change begins from a full understanding
of what already exists".

Teachers in Natal have not had the benefit of the kinds
of intensive in-service courses offered in England
and so may misinterpret what is meant by a policy for
language in learning, or they may resist change to
their own teaching behaviour. Both of these possi-
bilities may be seen as contributing factors to the
responses received to a questionnaire circulated by
the writer to some primary schools in Natal. A report
on this questionnaire follows.

5.7   Comment on the results of a questionnaire circulated
        to some Natal primary schools

In order to obtain some impression of selected aspects
of the teaching of language in primary schools in
Natal, the writer drew up a questionnaire for completion
by teachers in some primary schools in the province.

The writer realised that the use of a questionnaire
was not necessarily the most satisfactory or reliable
method of gathering information. Problems such as
low response and misinterpretation of the questions,
would have to be taken into account. Nevertheless,
the questionnaire method seemed acceptable when
considering the overall aim, which was broadly to
survey attitudes and practices in relation to the
teaching of language.

Official permission to distribute the questionnaire
was given by the Director of Education in Natal. A
copy of the questionnaire appears as an appendix.
Replies were received from a range of schools, urban,
rural, parrallel-medium, co-educational and single sex.
Approximately 50% of the schools to which the question-
naire was sent, replied. This may be regarded as a
comparatively satisfactory response. A questionnaire
circulated to all primary schools in Natal by the
Inspector of Education for English First Language in
1979 resulted in an approximate 20% return.

The questionnaire was designed to allow for responses
which might be considered more in the nature of
'evidence' than in terms of statistical data. It was
felt that a survey of such 'evidence' regarding the
teaching of language might indicate in some measure
what effect recent thinking on language and learning
had had on teachers.

The questions fell broadly into three areas of concern.
Six questions (numbers 2,4,5,6,7,11) were related to
matters on the teaching of reading. Three questions

(3,9,10) related specifically to the teaching of writing, and the balance (1,8,12,13,14,15) were broader in scope, the intention being to gain some impression of teachers' views on language in learning and the notion of "language across the curriculum"; in this way it was hoped to discover to what extent new ideas in education had permeated the schools.

The writer now proceeds to a presentation of an analysis of the responses. This analysis will focus on the three areas of questioning rather than on individual questions as a general analysis probably fulfils the intention of the questionnaire more closely.   The questions will be given where relevant in the discussion.

5.7.1   Analysis of responses to the questions relating to reading (Numbers 2,4,5,6,7,11)

2(a)   In general, do you provide your pupils with opportunities to read other sources as well as the class textbooks, in your teaching of history, geography, and general science?

(b)   Whatever your answer, please elaborate.

4.   What methods are used in your school to promote or encourage the reading of books?

5.   How do you, personally, acquire information on new books and publications which may be suitable for your pupils or for your own teaching purposes?

6.   What would you say are the largest problems relating to interest in reading among pupils in your school?

7.   Mention some follow-up activities to reading in which your pupils engage (e.g. writing book reviews).

11.   Please indicate briefly how you go about teaching reading comprehension.

It is evident from the responses that teachers show a concern for the teaching of reading. Efforts are made to promote an interest in reading through, for

example, reading aloud to the pupils and frequent use of the resource centre. The teaching of reading comprehension seems to be a regular feature of class-room procedure and obvious attempts are made to offer a variety of sources of information to the pupils.

However, there is cause for concern in the evident lack of understanding of the reading process displayed in these responses.

In response to the question on use of textbooks and other sources, teachers gave the impression that the textbook was relied on for teaching purposes. Typical replies were:

> "Yes - If, for example, the development of shipping is being done in History, then books are collected from school and town libraries and displayed in the classroom for the children to read during their spare time";

> "Yes. The textbooks do not contain enough material for their assignments, so they have to find suitable material in the Resources (sic) Centres";

> "Yes. Self-study tasks involve consulting books in the Resource Centre or books they have at home".

Other sources, unfortunately, appear to be regarded by these teachers as means of gaining additional factual information rather than for the more critical use of comparison and evaluation.

As to engendering a desire for reading in pupils, the writer could find only two responses which implied that the teachers read children's books themselves in order to promote interest in reading. One teacher replied, "I don't, this requires effort", to the question on acquiring information on new publications. Although many teachers encourage dramatisation, much of the follow-up work to children's reading seems to be in the form of written book reviews or oral re-telling of stories. No indication was given that the

teachers themselves contributed to book discussion, they would appear to rely heavily on peer recommendation. Typical of the replies to the question were:

> "Nothing of this nature is being done in Std II. Some pupils are still 'learning to read' and those who are already fluent are being encouraged to read for enjoyment's sake only. I feel that book reviews and related matters are only necessary from Std V";

> "I only have time to attend to Reading Skills used in conjunction with S.S. Tasks (sic) and English and have not been able to extend the scope of the activities mentioned previously";

> "Each term, they are expected to prepare one oral book review".

It is possible to conclude from these responses that teachers are ignorant of the immense value of suitable follow-up activities as an aid to deepen an interest in literature.

Reading comprehension is taken by most to mean the traditional comprehension exercise of passage and questions to be answered in writing. The procedure adopted by most teachers is similar to this description,

> "I choose Comprehensions from Brighter English, Buck-Up and extracts from books I've read to the class. They read the story (sic) twice and then I read it once. Questions are asked about the content. Full sentences are required and one word answers to test their vocabulary."

While many teachers said that discussion is held (more class than group discussion), the discussion seems to be merely the first step to a final required written answer (individually or by a group leader). A criticism of this kind of instruction in comprehension was made in Chapter Three of this work, where it was shown that use of this method was evidence of the ignorance of teachers of the reading process. Techniques such as cloze procedure and prediction exercises are being used by some teachers and although reading laboratories appear to be in use, no mention is made of how techniques learnt on the laboratories are transferred to other learning situations.

'Comprehension' is still seen by many teachers as being part of the 'English' lesson although non-fiction passages may be used as exercises:

> "I give one written exercise a week. Often this is read as a class first";

> "I do formal comprehension +- three times a term. We do do oral comprehension in groups where the children are free to discuss their answers".

Obviously, a unified approach to the teaching of language is not recognised as being necessary by some teachers.

5.7.2   Analysis of responses to the questions relating to writing (Numbers 3,9,10)

3(a)   To what extent are your pupils involved in "note making" of their own composition in various subjects?

(b)   Please elaborate on your answer.

9.   Do your pupils ever write for an outside reader or "audience" apart from a teacher? Kindly explain your answer.

10.   Do you feel that the "formal rules of grammar" should be taught at primary school level? Please explain your answer.

Many of the teachers see children writing their own notes as impossible, boring or a waste of time. Two typical replies are:

> "I feel that they are too young and irresponsible to compose their own notes";

> "They spend a lot of time copying pages from various encyclopaedias etc. Often their answers are inaccurate, facts incorrect and it takes so long, very little of the syllabus is covered".

While many teachers are attempting to train their pupils in the use of keywords for future note-making, little opportunity is given for this except in self-study

tasks. Many teachers claim that the examination/test
system operating in the school demands uniformity
of notes throughout a standard:

> "It is school policy to provide each pupil
> with the same notes for learning purposes ...";

> "Pupils write an end-of-year exam therefore need
> accurate and concise notes from the teacher for
> study";

> "... with our testing system there isn't time...".

It is what appears to be the lack on the part of
teachers to recognise the <u>learning</u> value in note-
making, that may be seen as perturbing. Indications
of this lack of recognition come from replies such
as:

> "Too much personalized 'note making' is
> detrimental to the subject at the Std 4 level";

> "When too often used, this method can be a
> definite handicap to weak pupils".

These comments articulate, perhaps, a view of language
and learning that is widely at variance with an
"epistemological" view.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the
majority of these teachers feel that the "rules of
grammar" should be formally taught to primary school
pupils. High school requirements and those of second
language are given by some as reasons for formally
teaching grammar, but typical replies are:

> "It is impossible to expect children to use
> correct tenses, punctuation, grammar etc
> if the pupils have never been taught it (sic)";

> "It will help combat spelling and language
> errors";

> "In essay writing grammar is fairly important,
> and later on in life it would be difficult for
> the pupil to communicate effectively if they
> do not have the basic grounding of certain rules
> in grammar (sic)".

Although some teachers see the teaching of grammar

as being necessary only when the need arises as
evidenced in the pupils' writing; all but one gave
the impression that their reasons for teaching grammar
were founded on "tradition" rather than from a study
of relevant research.

Many teachers are attempting to offer a wider "audience"
for children's writing through authentic letter writing,
displays and school magazines, indicating an appreci-
ation of the purpose of written communication, but a
disappointingly large number state that they are their
pupils' only audience.

5.7.3   Analysis of responses to the questions relating
        to "language across the curriculum" (Numbers 1,8,
        12,13,14,15)

1. Have you any ideas on how speech and writing can
    be made to play more positive roles in the learning
    of subjects other than English? Please elaborate.

8. Has your school, over the last few years, intro-
    duced any new trend or innovation in connection
    with the teaching or improvement of language
    among pupils? Please explain your answer.

12. Do you use the tape recorder as an aid to language
    development in your classroom? Please elaborate.

13. Please indicate how in your teaching you make use
    of outside media such as magazines, newspapers
    and television programmes. Ignore this question
    if it is not applicable.

14. "Every teacher is a teacher of language".
    Explain briefly what you understand by this
    statement.

15. If your school has attempted a language policy,
    what were the problems experienced? Please
    elaborate, with regard to solutions which may have
    evolved.

The overall impression gained from these responses
is that many teachers interpret 'language across the
curriculum' as meaning that children should use

language 'correctly' - "Children's language usage
should be corrected or praised by every teacher
regardless of subject being taught" - and that teachers
should serve as a model for good language usage -
"The teacher serves as a model for the pupils at school
and thus sets a certain standard for pupils". While
these interpretations are commendable, it is somewhat
disturbing to note that almost no mention is made of
the relationship between language and learning.
Teachers seem to view language as something separate
from learning. Time and subject teaching are used
as reasons for not applying the teaching of language
to all learning situations. To quote:

> "Time - money - staff shortages - unmotivated
> home environment";

> "Time factor - themes are interesting but there
> is often not enough time to devote to a complete
> section";

> "Time ... this is especially noticeable with
> subject teachers ...".

Where new trends have been introduced, they seem to
be in connection with group work or different reading
techniques. It is perturbing to note that teachers
see the introduction of cloze procedure exercises or
prediction exercises as being sufficiently dramatic
to be mentioned as innovations. Replies such as,
"No. Any initiative or enthusiasm has been dampened"
or "We have decided to go back to formal language
tuition", seem to indicate that teachers do genuinely
attempt new ideas but without the necessary theoretical
knowledge for proposed practices or possibly the
required expertise, teachers become nervous or dis-
illusioned and return to more traditional approaches.
Reference was made earlier in this chapter to these
being typical reactions to and problems of innovation
in schools. Innovation does not find sustained success
because it is undermined by the 'non-believers' and/or
because it is not easy to show continually improving
results.

Although schools had been asked officially (CM 36/1977 as quoted in the Introduction) to devise a language policy, clearly many teachers are in ignorance of what a language policy is. A sample of replies to question fifteen may indicate how the Natal Education Department request has been interpreted:

> "The most difficult task has been to persuade some members of staff to use this method";

> "A balanced programme combining formal teaching and experiential learning";

> "No language policy - it was felt that it would be easily interpreted as a 'watch dog' or set of rules interfering with individual rights of teachers to apply their own policy to teaching English";

> "We teach combined classes so the needs of each class are different; often the needs of individual pupils are different";

> "There could be many meanings to the words 'language policy'. To me the meaning of 'language policy' is the way in which it should be spoken, written and read. In a dual medium school, such as ours, it is not always easy to implement this. The English teachers, however, do their best to uphold a standard which is, to a certain extent, being corroded by the 'intrusion' of another medium ... ";

> "Lower standards II and III want to follow more orthodox methods - they feel suggested language policies (new apporach) more suited to older age groups IV-V...".

Clearly, these teachers do not view a language policy as involving a unified approach to the language and learning development of the pupils, something that would continue to alter as the needs of the children in the school changed.

Although these questionnaires are not fully representative of the position in Natal primary schools, they do give clear indications of the need to assist teachers further in their efforts to teach reading and writing. Further, if schools are expected to devise and implement a language policy, it would seem vital that teachers gain some insight into the part language plays in learning so that any such policy

can be founded on understanding and implemented with
fair confidence.

The lack of awareness of the enormous contribution
language does make to the learner's development may
be seen to be one of the main stumbling blocks in
the attempts of one Natal primary school to devise a
language policy. A report on this school's efforts
follows.

5.8   **Comment on the efforts of a Natal primary school
to implement a language policy**

Manor Gardens Primary School began work on a language
policy in 1979. Recognising their own ignorance and
lack of expertise, the staff decided at their first
meeting on this matter, to focus initial attention
on particular aspects of language development.

A survey of the pupils' spelling ability gave impetus
to the idea of a word study policy. The writer drew
up a document to initiate discussion on word study.
A series of meetings resulted in a final documented
policy being accepted by the staff. It reads:

STD II - V WORD STUDY POLICY

I   MOTIVATION
Spelling is regarded as a test of literacy
in adult life. Socially speaking, it is
as important as a good accent, but this in
itself is not reason enough for teaching
word study.
Some of the good reasons are:
(i)   to communicate accurately and
       efficiently;
(ii)   bad spelling is just as discourteous
       as mumbling over a telephone;
(iii)   precision - habit forming precision
       in all work is part of a successful
       education;
(iv)   the need for freedom to write un-
       hampered by spelling problems.

Margaret Peters, a world authority on
spelling, has shown "that children left to

themselves with word-lists learn these in a
very haphazard kind of way, reciting alpha-
betically, reading over the words, etc., and
that the time spent on spelling can be used
more effectively if children are taught to
attend carefully to word-structure, to look
for the 'hard spots', to identify familiar
word sequences within long words, to syllabize,
to exercise visual imagery." (Peters 1967)

In the drawing up of this policy and in the
design of the programme for implementing the
policy, we have taken into account some of
the factors revealed by research as being
determinants of a good speller. These are:

    (i)   reading words aloud;
  (ii)   knowledge of sequential probability;
 (iii)   immediate memory for visual material;
  (iv)   the intellectual factor - NOT 'intelli-
           gence' as measured on an I.Q. test.

II   OBJECTIVES
      that children
    (i)   realise the real reasons for learning to
         spell;
  (ii)   spell effectively in all situations;
 (iii)   enrich their vocabularies;
  (iv)   have a positive self-image of themselves as
        good spellers.

III   SYLLABUS

    1.   Phonics
    2.   Syllabification
    3.   Root/affix
    4.   Spelling rules where justified
    5.   Plurals, degrees of comparison, contractions
    6.   Synonyms, antonyms, homonyms
    7.   Homophones
    8.   Dictionary skills
    9.   Other enrichment e.g. emotive language.

IV   ORGANISATION

    1.   Pupil to work at his/her own level.
    2.   Pupils to be exposed to as many aspects
        of the syllabus as is feasible at each
        level.
    3.   Test, learn, test to be the mode of
        operation.

V   TESTING

    1.   Initial testing to place the pupil on a
        level.
    2.   Wherever possible testing to be done through
        dictation to measure pupils' ability to
        spell while thinking in context. Dictation
        also provides an opportunity to proofread
        materials by comparing the words with the

correct copy - one of the first steps in learning to proofread one's work.

3. Testing to be done after every section, rule pattern etc., has been taught.

VI ERRORS

a) **Errors during word study lessons.**
The correct version of the word should be written below the test in red (by the pupil) and immediately proofread.
This highlighting of "unknown" words makes revision at home easier. All words must be continually revised at home as future testing will be cumulative so that words keep recurring for long term memory training.

b) **Errors in class written work.**
These errors to be the responsibility of the class teacher.
Errors in pupils' books to be underlined by teachers. Pupils must cross out the word and insert the correct version above or near the original. Corrections to be marked with a 'C' by the teacher. Further to this the teacher should keep a Spelling Error Book in which to record all these errors and their frequency. Lessons must be given on these errors adopting the strategies used in the programme e.g. highlighting the root or the 'hard spots'. This will assist transfer of learning from the block word study lessons. These words must then be tested, preferably in a dictation passage. NOTE: Research shows quite clearly the value of teaching lists of words directly related to children's writing needs, and spelling progress rests on very regular testing.

VII SPECIALISED VOCABULARY

Research has shown that a preview of new vocabulary aids comprehension of unfamiliar work.
Words that are particular to or relevant to a section of the curriculum should be studied in detail by the class with the teacher. The words should be tested by the teacher when planning that section.
e.g.

Maths: On introducing fractions-
numerator, denominator, fraction, equivalent ....

English: A theme on loneliness -
forlorn, forsaken, abandoned, solitary, derelict, deserted, privacy, isolation ....

Science: On introducing reptiles –
reptile, reptilia, retilian ......

Using the strategies of syllabification, root/
affix, origins (e.g. <u>numerator</u> from Latin
'numerare' to count, <u>number</u>) and word families
(e.g. solitude, solitary, solitaire, solitarily,
Latin 'solus' alone) introduce the words to
the pupils. The spelling of these words to be
used by the children should be tested, learnt,
tested.

VIII <u>LANGUAGE</u>

The following terminology must be used by all
teachers on every occasion:

1. syllable   e.g. <u>ac</u> <u>ci</u> <u>dent</u>

2. root   e.g. sur <u>round</u> ed

3. prefix   e.g. <u>sur</u> rounded

4. suffix   e.g. surround <u>ed</u>

5. vowel digraph   e.g. s<u>ay</u>; br<u>ea</u>d

6. consonant blend   e.g. <u>sh</u>ow; <u>ch</u>op

7. short vowel
    sound   e.g. băt

8. long vowel
    controlled by
    the 'e' ending   e.g. māke; pūce

9. vowel   e.g. a;e;i;o;u

10. consonant

11. accented syllable e.g. per/form

12. synonym

13. antonym

14. homonym   e.g. I can <u>run</u> fast.
                           He will <u>run</u> the show.

15. Homophone   e.g. meat; meet

16. Phonic sounds – these are the sounds <u>we</u> make
                    for individual or com<u>bi</u>na-
                    tions of letters (<u>Never</u>
                    'What does this word <u>say</u>?)

17. Contractions   e.g. don't; didn't

18. Recognition of
    <u>vowel</u> sound   e.g. m<u>a</u>ke

IX   LEARNING STRATEGY

Pupils will adopt this procedure:-

Look, cover, write, check.

X   DICTIONARIES

Each classroom should have an assortment of good dictionaries.
Every pupil should be encouraged to buy a good dictionary for personal use from a standardised list available in the Resource Centre.

XI   EVALUATION

For this only one question needs to be answered at regular intervals:

"Is this child on the way to becoming a good speller?"

Note: The responsibility of each child rests, finally, with the class teacher.

However, what was immediately evident was that teachers required advice and direction on how to implement the policy. Four months of strenuous work on the part of the staff resulted in a programme of work consisting of graded 'worksheets', dictation tests and introductory lessons, to teach word structure and vocabulary enrichment. Two published spelling programmes were purchased to complement the school-produced work.

A year after the policy's implementation, the pupils were re-tested to check the effectiveness of the policy and programme. The results, documented for internal purposes, are quoted below:

WORD STUDY PROGRAMME   TEST RESULTS

Initial test August 1979   Re-test   August 1980

Test: Dictation passage designed by M. Peters (1970) and standardized for 9-10 year olds.

TABLE 1

Comparison within the same standard - 1979/1980

TABLE 1

Comparison within the same standard - 1979/1980

	STD V		STD IV		STD III		STD II	
	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980
Total no. of errors	98	308	383	137	210	318	672	794
Average no. of errors	4.26	11	13.2	5.9	9.13	10.2	19.76	18.46
No. of pupils	23	28	29	23	23	31	34	43

The most interesting result in Table 1 is the Std V group. The 1979 group were exposed to an intensive word study programme prior to the initial testing. The 1980 group form what might be called a control group as they have had the minimum requirement of exposure to the school programme over a year, with very limited 'back-up' teaching in other lessons. The results seem to indicate that intensive concentration on word study is necessary to remediate pupils of this age.

The 1980 Std IV group, again an experimental group having intensive word study training in all lessons since last tested, show a radical improvement against the 1979 control group.

For further indications of growth in word study ability it is necessary to study Table 2 where the groups are compared against themselves one year later (new admissions to the school in Std 3-5 were excluded from the statistics).

TABLE 2

Comparison of group ability one year later

	II 1979	III 1980	III 1979	IV 1980	IV 1979	V 1980
Total no. of errors	672	318	210	137	383	308
Average no. of errors	19,79	10,2	9,13	5,9	13,2	11

Evidence of growth is well indicated by this table. The following are the percentage growths over the past year:

Std III (1980) show a 48.45% growth
Std IV (1980) show a 35.37% growth
Std V   (1980) show a 16.66% growth

Although maturation is an element not to be discounted in this table, it is felt that more than this is needed to account for the obvious growth. In looking at both tables, therefore, it can be seen that the pupils in this school are spelling with far more expertise in 1980 than they did prior to August 1979. It is possible to conclude that the drawing up of a word study policy and its implementation through a structured programme through the school leads to a marked improvement in the spelling ability of pupils.

Once the word study policy had reached the stage of consensus, discussion began on the place of literature in the primary school. Suggested aspects for consideration were listed by the writer. A series of meetings produced a documented policy. This policy has recently been revised in the light of the experience gained by the staff during 1980. The revised policy is reproduced below:

LITERATURE POLICY FOR MANOR GARDENS PRIMARY
SCHOOL STD 2-5

I   GOALS

   1.   that our pupils should read more books
        with satisfaction;
   2.   that our pupils should read books with
        more satisfaction.

II THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL

   1.   A study of literature helps the child in
        his language development. The child needs
        the language of literature for his own play
        and storying. Through storying, and the
        language of storying, we make sense of our
        world.

   2.   Literature contributes to the emotional
        development of the child. Stories help
        explain emotions we feel and extend our
        range of emotions.

   3.   Literature contributes to the moral awareness
        of the child. Although we recognize that
        "reading Blake to a class is not going to
        turn them into saints", children are exposed
        to moral issues in literature.
        Strategy: Through reflection and discussion
        of each child's response to the story
        (preferably in small groups) they can become
        aware of possible emotions and moral princi-
        ples, as reflected by the actions of the
        characters in the story, and the results of
        those actions.

III BOOK SELECTION

The following issues should be borne in mind
when selecting books for children:

1. The book must correspond to the child's level
    of <u>general development</u>. e.g. most senior
    primary pupils are in the "task orientation"
    stage of development and so respond to
    situations in a book where the characters
    work for reward or for survival etc. ('My
    side of the Mountain' by Jean George;
    'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by
    C.S. Lewis etc).

2. Books must offer moral exploration at the
    child's level of <u>moral development</u>. e.g.
    Many pupils are at the reward/punishment
    level where they believe <u>all</u> baddies get
    caught and <u>all</u> baddies get punished - thus
    the popularity of Enid Blyton's books.
    Books beyond the child's level of moral
    development will fail - the child will find
    them boring.

3. Plots, for young readers, must work out
    (c/f no 2).

4. The theme of journeying is popular as this
    gives them the chance of "trying on"
    independence.

5. Have books which have an element of fear in
    them so that children, all of whom have
    private fears, may see how characters cope
    with fear.
    e.g. Fantastic Mr Fox;   Roald Dahl
          Let the Balloon Go; Ivan Southall

6. Let the children read rubbish as well.
    Children must develop their own set of values
    if they are to be worth anything at all.
    By being exposed to a wide range of books in
    quality and kind, children will learn to
    evaluate for themselves what is quality and
    what is not. The staff must at all costs
    stop pupils seeing a difference between
    school reading and home reading creating an
    artificial 'snob' attitude to school read-
    ing which destroys many potential readers.
    There is no place in this policy for "class
    readers" of the traditional sort. Pupils
    must have the final say in any book chosen
    for reading.

IV TYPES OF BOOK

Children must be exposed to all kinds of fiction
so that they experience what each offers.
Myth, legend, fairy tale, historical settings,
science fiction, family settings, adventure,

books that are both action centred (e.g. Hardy
Boys) and feeling centred (e.g. The Secret
Garden). To ensure that a child reads widely
over the course of his years in primary school,
recommended reading should follow an overall
plan.

The purpose of the selection should be borne
in mind i.e. what use is to be made of the book?
- Is it for group discussion? class discussion?
free reading? reading aloud? for use with a
content subject?

V   THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

1.   The teacher must have a knowledge of the
    books to stimulate discussion.

2.   She should read and share books with the
    pupils.

3.   The teacher must allow the child to make an
    independent response to a book by not only
    requesting a response but respecting it.
    Children can voice their responses through
    class discussion on books generally or in
    small group discussion. The teacher's
    response should be regarded by the children
    as one of many possible responses NOT the
    best.

4.   Discussion and activities centring on books
    should be designed to deepen the child's
    understanding and satisfaction of the book.
    Discussion should centre on "what character
    do you like best?" "Why" "If he/she walked
    into the room now, how do you think he/she
    would behave or what would he/she look like?"
    "What did you like most/least about the book?'
    It can be very revealing to both the teacher
    and the pupils to compare these responses.

5.   Stories are works of imagination requiring
    an imaginative response from readers. They
    should NOT be used as a source of facts in
    order to justify their use e.g. 'Charlotte's
    Web' is not an exposition on the life cycle
    of a spider. We believe in integrating
    literature with all subjects in the curric-
    ulum in order to deepen our pupils under-
    standing and feeling for subjects not for
    the factual information.

VI   SYLLABUS

1.   Novels for group study
2.   Reading aloud to the class
3.   Individual controlled reading
4.   Individual free reading
5.   Poetry
6.   Literature across the curriculum

      7.   Short stories
      8.   Drama.

VII   SUMMARY

      1.   "For children, to live is to discover.
            To discover means to find out about things
            vaguely known or completely new. They will
            discover new opinions and possibilities,
            new values and new doubts. Perhaps surprises
            and doubts - even anguish and terror - are
            the essence of life: we cannot withhold
            them from our children. If we do, we fail,
            because we deceive them. Deceit is often
            so easy and cosy for them and their grown-
            ups: but only for the moment, not in the
            long run."
            (A. Rutgers van der Loeff - author)

      2.   Teachers have to ask themselves questions
            about books and methods; but in the end I
            believe it is an utterly simple thing - we
            accept ourselves the natural benefits of
            reading, using the word benefits in all its
            richest senses, and from that acceptance
            we develop and draw out of it naturally those
            intuitions that tell us what to do about
            literature in education. And this, I believe,
            is really fundamentally our task: to become
            as sensitive as possible to the whole nature
            of literature, and to join that with our
            other professional task of becoming as
            sensitive as possible to the nature of human
            beings, and in our case especially young
            human beings. I believe that this is what,
            at heart it is all about: it is about
            simply delighting in the existence of
            literature and using the energies that arise
            out of that delight in a natural way.
            (E. Blishen - teacher)

It was found that this policy also required a programme
for its effective implementation, for two main reasons:
to reserve certain books for particular standards so as
to avoid repetition and ensure exposure to a wide variety
of kinds and authors, and to guide those members of
staff who had minimal experience and knowledge of
children's literature.

The next focus of attention is writing. A written
description of how one of the staff members teaches
writing, expressive, poetic and transactional, has been
prepared as a preliminary to discussion on a writing
policy for the school.

What is of relevance in mentioning the work done at
this school is that these first steps, although some
distance from a full school language policy, have done
much to innovate change in teaching behaviour. To
borrow Torbe's words (1980) - the Word Study and
Literature Policies may be seen as "thrusts" towards
an understanding of language and learning; but what
follows these "thrusts" is a "seepage" of ideas, atti-
tudes and approaches towards teachers who were hitherto
untouched by recent language and learning theory. As
Torbe explains (op cit, p278):

> "Thrust may be either the preliminary push, or
> a final catalyst; but the change itself comes
> about ... in a much subtler way, with the teacher
> trying on, gradually and continuously to begin with,
> small things, and moving carefully towards what
> is at first only dimly perceived."

It is this process of "seepage" then, which may be seen
to determine the real effect of a school language policy.

If a "thrust" is seen as a necessary element of this
kind of innovation then each school will need someone
to provide thrust. Clearly, this will need to be someone
who has an interest in and some knowledge of language
and its part in learning. Further, for innovation to
have any modicum of success, the school principal would
need actively to support any efforts made by the staff
in this direction. The primary school reported here has
been fortunate in this respect in both its previous and
present principal, and in at present having other members
of staff to provide future inspiration.

Some effects of the policies thus far implemented are
already well in evidence in this particular school.
For example, more children are reading more books with
more satisfaction and the number of reluctant readers
is diminishing markedly. Spelling ability is no longer
the problem it was. Teachers appear to be re-considering
their role as there is more exploratory talk and discus-
sion taking place in the classrooms than ever before,
and far more integration in the curriculum is in
evidence. There seems to be more careful planning of

lessons and less reliance on textbooks. The Resource
Centre has become active and the purchasing and selection
of books is far more purposeful. The process of "seepage"
would seem to be evincing change. Indeed it may be
said that talking about language and learning and devising
a school policy generates teachers who actively demon-
strate in their classrooms that the ideas work.

5.8   Conclusions

"Every teacher in English is a teacher of English".
This remark was made in the Newbolt Report on The
Teaching of English in England, published by the Board
of Education in 1921. The remark has, in the last
decade, changed to "Every teacher is a teacher of
English".[1] The implications of this remark are many,
particularly in the light of present knowledge on
language and learning.

5.8.1 If every teacher is a teacher of English, language should
be of central concern to all teachers. A close consider-
ation of language should, therefore, mean more than
seeing language as a set of skills. It should mean
paying attention to the way children learn through
language. The recognition of the way in which children
use language to learn should, it seems, be the basic
rationale behind all teaching behaviour.

The belief in a language based rationale of learning
would lead inevitably, it is suggested, to an appreci-
ation of the value of talk and writing as instruments
of learning in all parts of the curriculum; and with
this appreciation, an increasing recognition of the need
for school staffs in consultation to develop school
policies for language which would cover the whole
curriculum. A school policy would be a statement of

1. Widely used with and without quotation marks. Used, for
    example, by Sampson in his book English for the English.

intent, aiming at the consistent development of the full language potential of each child.

5.8.2   For a language policy to be of any real value, it would need to be a comprehensive document covering all the skills of language. That the policy should be documented, rather than remain as an implicit agreement in the school, would seem to be essential in the event of staff changes. A document would be, whatever the circumstances, an effective way of ensuring continuity of teaching in the school.

5.8.3   Each school would need to devise its own language policy, for only in this way would it truly reflect the needs and requirements of its own pupils and the practices of its staff.

5.8.4   The composition and implementation of a school language policy would need to be a gradual process if the confidence of the staff were to be maintained and dis-illusionment controlled. Allowance should be made for "seepage" of ideas and for positive effects of a policy to be recongised by those staff members reluctant to change their teaching behaviour.

5.8.5   The production of a language policy would seem to require someone or some body to provide the "thrust" towards a policy, or at least to initiate and sustain discussion on the role of language in learning.

5.8.6   A school language policy has the merit of focussing attention on the teacher as well as the child. Teachers would be given the opportunity to examine closely their own beliefs, views, approaches and language use. These considerations could well result in classroom procedure which was favourable to the learner's situation.

5.8.7   If schools are to follow the Natal Education Department
        injunction (CM 36/1977) to devise a language policy,
        teachers will need far more intensive, long term assist-
        ance and guidance towards the adoption of a model of
        learning which has as its underlying principle the belief
        that children learn through talking, listening, reading
        and writing in all subjects in the primary school
        curriculum. A confirmed belief in and understanding of
        how a child learns through his own expression, is
        central to the success of any language policy.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter of this dissertation contains
some recommendations arising out of the study. The
recommendations are concerned in particular with the
role of the teacher, the role of the school, and
teacher education. Some general recommendations are
also made. The recommendations are presented in all
humility and with the specific features of primary
school education in Natal, South Africa, in mind.

6.1   The role of the teacher

6.1.1   Reference to the role of the teacher has frequently
        been made in the foregoing chapters. These references
        may be summarised in the over-riding recommendation
        that the modern primary school teacher should be one
        who places the main emphasis on the pupil actively
        learning through language. This implies a radical
        revision of teachers' and pupils' roles for if pupils
        are actively to formulate knowledge, they will do so
        as a result of negotiation - negotiation between
        teacher and pupil will therefore be an important
        characteristic of the classroom situation.

6.1.2   All teachers will need to take deliberate responsibility
        for helping children use language to question, to
        set up hypotheses and test them. Teachers will need
        to give children the opportunity to use language
        freely and experimentally, so that they may profit
        from their primary school experience.

6.1.3   While the recommended change to an 'interpretive'
        model of teaching may appear radical, it does not
        imply a negation of particularly successful elements
        in traditional teaching practice. Torbe and Protherough
        (1976   95) describe the successful teacher:

"The successful teacher continues to learn
from experience, changing to meet the social
and educational changes around him, but without
rejecting the valuable elements in the past
and present."

It is recommended, then, that the teacher combine
the wisdom arising from past success, with innovation.

6.1.4   It is recommended that teachers have a firm knowledge
of the reading process. This should include an
awareness of the divergent views on the teaching of
reading that presently exist. Teachers need to
recognise the differences between a 'skill-based' view
of reading and a 'cognitive' view of reading. This
is vitally important for the choice of method.

The teacher who believes that 'meaning' is paramount
in reading will avoid methods involving the use of
structured materials giving training in isolated,
disconnected skills; she will not use reading schemes
which rely on phonic knowledge or the artificial
repetition of vocabulary; she will not use the
traditional 'comprehension' exercise, or exercises
involving a purposeless search for isolated facts;
but will teach reading comprehension in the context
of use and purpose, recognising that success lies in
what one does with information, not how one locates it.
Published language and reading programmes will be of
little or no use to this kind of teacher and textbooks,
if used at all, will be regarded as merely a source
of information. In summary, her aim will be to develop
critical readers through an 'open-ended' approach;
such aim can only arise from the basis of firm
knowledge of the reading process.

6.1.5   Children's literature should play a far more important
role in the life of a primary school child than at
present seems the case. Teachers should read children's
literature regularly and regard a thorough knowledge

of children's literature as being part of their
professional accountability.

6.1.6   The crucial role that talk plays in the learning
situation should not be under-estimated. Regular
and consistent opportunity for small group discussion
will develop in the child a mode of enquiry and of
social discourse, an involvement in perceptiveness
impossible in a teacher-class situation.

6.1.7   An integrated curriculum seems better suited to the
needs of the modern primary school child. In such,
emphasis may be placed on the development of learning
skills, rather than on the mere accumulation of facts.
The Natal Education Department, in recognising the
need for integration, already sees the traditional,
segmented time-table as out of place in a modern
primary school. The Department's latest Schools'
Handbook (1980, G.3.3) reads:

> "... Because modern approaches to senior
> primary teaching often involve studies across
> the curriculum the Department does not prescibe
> the type of timetable to be followed ..."

It is up to teachers to take advantage of this situation
and release the pupils from seeing knowledge as
isolated, disconnected content to be passively received.
This implies determination on the part of the teacher
(and principal) to take a stand and to innovate in
terms of role; to be, in fact, autonomous.

6.1.8   Methodology that increases the use of language by
the pupils should be practised. For example, broad-
based topic or project work, where the edges between
the subject disciplines are blurred or erased, provides
an organizing principle under which pupils and teachers
may engage in a variety of activities which promote
learning and language skills. In this way, "partici-
pant -" and "spectator-role" activities can be catered

for in a purposeful way and knowledge becomes
meaningful. Broadbased work can give the opportunity
for first hand experience, for talking about information,
reflecting on it, writing about it, comparing it,
verifying it, responding to it - in short, actively
using the information.

6.1.9 It is suggested that teacher-prepared notes and
completion-type worksheets are totally out of place
in a modern primary school. Writing their own notes
is one way in which pupils can actively use information
and develop the appropriate language skills for
presentation of information. Those schools which use
standardized testing as a reason for distribution of
teacher-prepared notes are out of order. A change
in teaching approach naturally demands a change in
the method of assessment.

6.1.10 In terms of an "epistemological" paradigm, assessment
surely means the assessing of language and learning
skills that have been taught to the pupils and not
the testing of the number of facts the child might
have memorised, whatever the 'subject' being 'examined'.

Four examples of testing strategies (of some reading
and writing skills) used by the writer while engaged
in language-across-the-curriculum work in a primary
school in Natal follow. They may serve to indicate
the direction in which primary school teachers are
recommended to go if they plan to implement changes
in methods so as to facilitate an atmosphere of
enquiry and curiosity in the classroom.

6.1.10.1
Testing the ability to select relevant information
and to record it appropriately.

Study the two sources of information below and
then make a flow chart of cocoa farming from
planting to marketing. Include climatic

requirements in your diagram.

Cocoa

Although the Congo does not produce as much cocoa as Ghana and Nigeria who, incidentally, produce more than half of the world's cocoa supply, there are today, large cocoa-plantations in the Congo.

The cocoa-farmer has to burn or chop down the forest trees to make room for his plantation. The cocoa-beans are first planted in bamboo pots, and when the seedlings are about a foot high they are transplanted. After four years, when the trees have reached a height of twenty feet, they start bearing fruit.

Pods of different sizes and colours as well as flowers of different colours are to be seen simultaneously on the same tree. Because the pods do not all ripen at the same time, the harvesting of the cocoa-bean goes on throughout the year. The most important harvesting time, however, is from November to May. When the pods are about six to ten inches long and yellow in colour, they are ready for picking.

With heavy chopping knives the Negroes cut the short stalks off the pods. The women gather the pods under the trees in heaps and cut them open. In each pod there are about twenty to thirty pink beans surrounded by a while, woolly covering. The beans are scraped out of the pods and sent to a fermenting-house to ferment. After a week the white coverings disappear. The beans are then put on frames to dry in the sun. When the beans are dry, they are put into bags and sold to the dealers. The dealers export to factories overseas, where chocolate and cocoa drinks are manufactured. In a warm country like the Congo very little of the cocoa which is produced, is used locally.

THE COCOA FARMERS OF WEST AFRICA

Among the most valuable products of the hot wet forests of West Africa are palm-oil and palm-kernels, and cocoa. In West Africa are found two of the most important cocoa-growing countries in the world, namely Ghana and Nigeria.

Cocoa trees want plenty of heat and moisture. They also need shelter and shade. Cocoa is usually grown in clearings in the forests, where there is shelter from strong winds that might otherwise blow the pods from the trees. On many cocoa farms the necessary shade is often supplied by banana trees. On such farms the work of planting, weeding, and harvesting, and getting the beans ready for sale, is done by the farmer and his family.

If we visited one of these cocoa farms we should notice bunches of flowers springing from both the main trunk and the branches. As the petals of the flowers open they uncover the pods, and these grow rapidly and reach a length of 15 to 20 centimetres. Inside each pod are from 20 to 40 beans set in a white pulp. Harvesting takes place between mid-October and mid-February, and during this time the ripe pods are cut off the trees about every three weeks. The pods are split open and the beans are scraped out of them. They are then piled in heaps and covered with banana leaves, or are placed in baskets lined with banana leaves and are allowed to ferment for six or seven days. During this process the beans are turned over every other day or so. After they have been fermented the beans are dried in the sun by spreading them out either on mats placed on platforms, or on cement drying-floors. When thoroughly dry the beans are packed in sacks and are taken for sale to a produce store, where they are inspected and graded for market. Most of the cocoa-beans grown in Ghana and Nigeria are exported to other countries, especially to England and the United States, where they are used for making chocolate, powdered cocoa, and cocoa-butter.

6.1.10.2

Testing the ability to interpret knowledge of an historical event and draw personal conclusions.

Read the following article which appeared in the Daily News (11.1.79) and then answer the questions which follow.

War medallions anger chief

Daily News Reporter

THE KwaZulu Chief Minister, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, has described a proposed issue of silver medallions to commemorate the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 as disgraceful and said they would fill any proud Zulu with bitterness if they were struck.

The proposed issue, to be marketed by the South African Historical Mint (Pty) Ltd of Cape Town, will consist of eight medallions and it is proposed to mint 2 000 sets, 500 of which will be sold in South Africa.

One medallion is titled "Death of a Zulu" and portrays a Zulu warrior being impaled on a sword wielded by a British soldier on horseback.

Others depict British officers escaping across the Buffalo River, Rorke's Drift, the death of the Prince Imperial of France, the saving of the regimental colours by two British officers depicted fighting off Zulu warriors, the capture of King Cetshwayo, British soldiers being slain at Isandhiwana and the battle of Ulundi.

"I am appalled at the approach adopted towards this tragic war. Although the British were the aggressors, the Zulu people are portrayed in a negative light," Chief Buthelezi said.

"It is disgraceful that a war fought by brave men

'INVESTMENT IN BITTERNESS' UNDER FIRE

on both sides should be depicted in such a poor fashion as far as the Zulus are concerned.

"It is tantamount to a glorification of the imperialism that caused the war in the first place — an imperialism of which the British people of today are not proud."

Apart from drawing attention to the manner in which Zulus were depicted on the medallions and that the Zulu King was shown only as a captive, Chief Buthelezi said he wished to give two examples to typify the approach adopted in the brochure designed to sell the medallions.

These were the description of the Zulu King Cetshwayo as a despot and the use of the word "murder" to describe the destruction of the British force at Isandhlwana.

"It is unbelievable how such a word can be used

after the British had invaded the Zulu kingdom," Chief Buthelezi said.

"I note that the company claims purchasing the medals will be an investment. To purchase them can only be an investment in bitterness and can do nothing for reconciliation," he said.

A spokesman for the company in Cape Town said today the medallions were designed to depict an historic event.

The first medallion was of British soldiers being slain at Isandhiwana and the brochure made it quite clear that the British started the war. There was no intention to degrade Zulus whatever but simply to portray significant events.

He said he would be writing to Chief Buthelezi personally expressing his concern over the Chief's objections.

1. "It is tantamount to a glorification of the imperialism that caused the war in the first place".
    Discuss the cause of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879.

2. Why do you think Chief Buthelezi objects to the word "murder" to describe the destruction of the British force at Isandhlwana?
    Do you agree with his objection? Why/why not?

3. According to this article eight medallions
   were minted. Why does Chief Buthelezi object
   "to the manner in which Zulus were depicted
   on the medallions"?
   Give a detailed answer.

6.1.10.3

Testing the ability to use appropriate language.

Imagine that you are a scientist out in the veld
with a poet. You both watch a hyena. The poet
writes the following poem about what he sees.
Using only the factual information in the poem,
write a description of the hyena in the language
that you would use.

Hyena

I am waiting for you.
I have been travelling all morning through the bush
and not eaten.
I am lying at the edge of the bush
on a dusty path that leads from the burnt-out kraal.
I am panting, it is midday, I found no water-hole.
I am very fierce without food and although my eyes
are screwed to slits against the sun
you must believe I am prepared to spring.

What do you think of me?
I have a rough coat like Africa.
I am crafty with dark spots,
like the bush-tufted plains of Africa.
I sprawl as a shaggy bundle of gathered energy
like Africa sprawling in its waters.
I trot, I lope, I slaver, I am a ranger.
I hunch my shoulders. I eat the dead.

Do you like my song?
When the moon pours hard and cold on the veldt
I sing, and I am the slave of darkness.
Over the stone walls and the mud walls and the ruined
   places
and the owls, the moonlight falls.
I sniff a broken drum. I bristle. My pelt is silver.
I howl my song to the moon—up it goes.
Would you meet me there in the waste places?

It is said I am a good match
for a dead lion. I put my muzzle
at his golden flanks, and tear. He
is my golden supper, but my tastes are easy.
I have a crowd of fangs, and I use them.
Oh and my tongue—do you like me
when it comes lolling out over my jaw
very long, and I am laughing?
I am not laughing.
But I am not snarling either, only
panting in the sun, showing you
what I grip
carrion with.

I am waiting
for the foot to slide,
for the heart to seize,
for the leaping sinews to go slack,
for the fight to the death to be fought to the death,
for the glazing eye and the rumour of blood.
I am crouching in my dry shadows
till you are ready for me.
My place is to pick you clean
and leave your bones to the wind.

EDWIN MORGAN

6.1.10.4

Testing the ability to generalize after studying
the particular in a learning block on Deserts.

Pretend that you are Nature. Describe an
imaginary plant that you would design to grow
in the Sahara Desert.

This kind of testing is, of course, only one form of
assessment. Teachers will best monitor the needs
and progress in oracy and literacy of their pupils
if they involve themselves with the pupils in small
group and individual discussion and provide a regular
and sympathetic audience for the child writer. The
teacher-as-judge role will inevitably be seen as a
minor role by any primary school teacher with current
knowledge of language and learning processes. It is
distressing to record that in some Natal primary
schools 'formal examinations' with clear-cut subject
divisions still occur. They are preceded by rote
learning and followed by time-wasting activities.

6.2   The role of the school staff

6.2.1   It is recommended that a teacher with specific
knowledge of language and the part it plays in learning,
should be appointed to the staff of each school. In
this way, the staff may combine in their efforts to
implement desirable change and gain confidence in the
knowledge that there is someone who can guide and
advise where necessary.

It was noted in the previous chapter that schools in
England which had explicit language policies were those
fortunate enough to have a member of staff who could
initiate discussion and decision on language policy.
The promotion post of Language Specialist is offered
by most primary schools in England. The post of
Head of Department in primary schools in Natal could
fulfil a similar function, or special posts could be
created. Teachers aspiring to such posts should be
required to have a firm grasp of language processes.

6.2.2   It is essential that the whole staff commit themselves
to a sound policy for language teaching if any marked
progress is to be made in the language growth of pupils.
Lewis (1976) has shown that the work of any one teacher
can be seriously compromised by the power of a particular
school organization when the general aims of the school
conflict with those of a teacher attempting to give
priority to the language of the child. Lewis points
out that a school which underestimates the imaginative
work of the child limits what any one teacher can
achieve.

> "The teacher might manage to awaken a genuine
> response, but his next essential concern, to
> make sure this response is nourished and
> sustained, cannot be his alone" (p125).

It is recommended, therefore, that principals of
primary schools commit themselves to an examination
of school policy and practice, and in so doing,
implement desirable change where necessary in school

organization, teaching practice and pupil assessment.

The traditional prize-giving ceremony, for example, is surely a contradiction in terms of the present trend of assessment, operating as it does a sort of "Catch 22" situation where the dice are loaded against those whose achievements may never measure up to those of the more linguistically and intellectually favoured, irrespective of the effort they may make. Indeed, is it feasible to suggest that effort can be measured?

6.2.3   Principals should ensure that regular opportunities are provided for staff to meet and discuss the theory and practice of language and learning. It would seem that the pressures of general class teaching and extra-curricular duties intrude on the time available for staff to meet and discuss educational trends and practices. This is surely short-sighted in the extreme if education is to meet social change, and if every teacher is to know how language interacts with learning. Teachers, too, must retain their interest in, and capacity for, learning.

6.2.4   Curriculum planning should be a matter of extreme importance to a primary school for it is only in this way that the interests and needs of the child can be met. Principals should initiate discussion and planning on this matter to ensure that the school offers the child as sound and realistic an education as is possible under any one set of circumstances. The Natal Education Department has paved the way, to some extent, for schools to take more responsibility in curriculum planning. The Department's latest Schools' Handbook (1980, para G.11.3) reads:

> "... The syllabuses should be regarded by
> teachers more as guides than as schemes of
> work which must be rigidly followed. Provided
> the approval of the principal and/or the district
> inspector or subject adviser/inspector is
> obtained teachers may modify and adopt the

> syllabuses to suit the specific needs of
> their classes, the social and geographic
> environment of their pupils and their own
> ideas of the subject they are teaching."

6.2.5   It seems that school staffs exist too often in
isolation, almost as cloistered groups. Staffs could
learn much from one another and benefit from more
interaction, particularly in the case of primary
schools which are joint 'feeders' to local secondary
schools.

6.3   Teacher education

6.3.1   Student teachers should be exposed to and personally
experience various learning situations. Much of the
learning done by students in colleges of education
is through the lecturer-class approach where the
student, in the main, is a passive recipient of
information. Far more opportunity should, it seems,
be given to other forms of learning such as small
group discussion where the students regularly experience
the value of exploratory talk and recognise the kinds
of learning that are possible in this situation. While
the tutorial class may be claimed to fulfil this need,
it lacks the kind of negotiation that takes place in
a group situation where there is a common responsibility
and common commitment, where all responses are equally
received and debated, and conclusions drawn in spite
of the presence (or absence) of the lecturer. It
would seem to be artificial to offer and or support
the theory of an 'epistemological paradigm' without
including the pragmatics of the rationale in the
professional training of students.

> "How we are introduced to theory, how we
> attempt to make sense of it, how we grapple
> with it is itself an essential part of
> educational theory" (Rosen, 1976, p136).

6.3.2   The apparently intractable dilemma of theory versus
        practical experience is often raised in discussions
        on the professional training of primary school teachers.
        However, a high-status teacher is surely one who is
        familiar with those theories apparently advisable for
        the effective implementation of the curriculum. For
        example, a knowledge of the process of language-in-
        learning is crucial to any successful teaching.

        Furthermore, lecturers at colleges of education in
        Natal seem in the main inexperienced in the methodology
        of current educational trends in primary education.
        It is difficult to advise on methodology without
        experience in the day to day currency of methods in
        a primary school where, for example, integration is
        the recommended policy. A possible resolution of this
        dilemma is to have students, after three years of
        training, teach full-time for a minimum of one year
        before returning for a post-experience final year of
        training. From speaking to three lecturers from
        colleges of education in Australia, where students
        return for a further year of study after two years of
        teaching practice, the writer gathered that these
        students are far more motivated and career-oriented
        and, therefore, respond more positively to the further
        theory and training that is offered.

6.3.3   It is recommended that colleges of education should
        take more cognisance of the injunction to schools to
        devise language policy. This does not imply that
        colleges should design language policies for use in
        schools, as this would not be feasible; but if teachers
        are expected to do such designing, they need to be
        trained to do so. Colleges of Education could contribute
        by devising comprehensive guidelines for language
        policy and training students in their interpretation
        so that students have some indication and understanding
        of what is expected in a language policy. They would
        thereby be able to appreciate, for example, that a
        language policy is not a list of isolated skills to
        be taught and 'ticked off' but a policy to ensure a

unified, global approach to the teaching of language
across the curriculum. The writer's investigations
in Natal revealed that colleges of education did not
formally prepare students for devising language policies.

6.3.4   In discussion with lecturers at colleges of education
in Natal, the writer was led to believe that language
policy was regarded as the responsibility of the
English Department. Such compartmentalising of a
concept as wide as this seems to indicate that these
colleges still support a non-integrated curriculum
with too little emphasis placed on the <u>language</u> of
the subjects that the students meet.

Every lecturer is surely responsible for the language
of his own subject. The way the lecturer handles the
teaching of the language of his subject is a measure
of the kind of teaching the student will subsequently
choose to use. A belief in the tremendous contribution
language makes to learning should be evinced in the
way in which lecturers attempt to share their knowledge
with students. This would surely be one way in which
to link pragmatics and theory comfortably and
realistically.

6.3.5   While the Natal Education Department has attempted to
bring new thinking on language and reading to the
attention of practising teachers, more intensive
training is necessary. One-day in-service courses,
as presently offered, place heavy demands on the
listening ability and concentration of those attending.
Even more perturbing is the lack of organised follow-
up to these courses. It is not surprising, therefore,
that much of what is offered at in-service courses
is ignored or misinterpreted.

If any recognition is made of current thinking on
learning, it should be appreciated that real learning
takes place through exploratory talk and experimentation.
One day in-service courses hardly give the opportunity

for this kind of learning. A more acceptable idea would seem to be residential courses where teachers, freed from the responsibility of class teaching, could participate more actively and have the time to develop an understanding of the concepts being offered. Courses of this nature in Canada, which has problems of geographical distance as does South Africa, are residential and, according to John Dixon (who as a visiting lecturer to Canada has spoken and worked at these courses) they are very effective.

The writer, while attending a one-month full time course for practising teachers at Reading University found an atmosphere of commitment. Teachers attending such protracted courses return to their schools with the confidence and knowledge to implement change where necessary.

The College for Further Training in Natal already has the 'machinery' for offering such courses and could make a dynamic contribution to the further training of teachers in this way.

6.3.6   Some of the long-term in-service training courses that are urgently required are:

6.3.6.1

Courses for principals and senior staff to acquaint them with moves in Departmental policy.

The Natal Education Department has recommended that formal examinations are an inappropriate form of assessment in the primary school; that primary schools should adopt a more integrated approach to the curriculum and that some curriculum planning be done in the schools.

The Departmental school report form, although unfortu- nately still separating the content subjects under the general heading of "environmental studies", does

very definitely emphasize the importance of language
and numeracy and demands the use of symbols not marks
to encourage the idea of continuous assessment. Yet
many principals still cling to traditional practices
which forestall change in their schools. Clearly,
this is because of ignorance and a lack of perception,
or fear, of present educational demands in a changing
society.

Courses for head teachers should be offered prior to
any for class teachers, to ensure that teachers will
be given every encouragement to move to a pedagogical
perspective more consistent with the needs of the
modern child.

6.3.6.2

A knowledge of language and learning processes is
essential for primary school teachers. Far more
long-term training is necessary if the effect of
recent thinking on language and learning is to be
felt in the schools. The skills of talking, listening,
reading and writing need close attention, for radical
changes have been proposed in the last ten years. It
is too much to expect full-time class teachers to keep
up with the wealth of educational publications or
indeed to expect them, working in isolation, fully
to comprehend what is implied by recent educational
theory.

Training in the concept of a unified approach to the
teaching of language in a more integrated curriculum
should be given top priority by educational authorities.
Initial and advanced courses should be organised so
that teachers may implement change in relation to their
own growing understanding of and confidence in this
concept.

6.3.6.3

With the present change of emphasis, courses on the
assessment of primary school children's language
ability are necessary, for it is no longer possible

to issue a 'comprehension' exercise, a composition,
some grammar exercises and an oral topic and call
this language assessment.

6.3.6.4

Children's literature has a powerful contribution
to make to the development of the primary school
child. Courses should be designed to show how
literature and talking about literature should enter
teaching at all levels. For example, the State
College of Victoria, Australia, offers a Graduate
Diploma in Children's Literature as a one year full
time or two year part-time course. The Department
of Education and Science in England offers courses
which involve a weekly two-hour session on various
aspects of children's literature.

The writer was privileged to attend a session organised
by Dr Atkinson at the University of Warwick, at which
practising primary school teachers discussed, read
and learned about the ways in which fiction can assist
an understanding of environmental studies. The
English Adviser for Wakefield, England, runs a weekly
book discussion with groups of teachers who read and
discuss recent publications and write book reviews for
the benefit of other teachers.

All of these courses are successful because they train
more and more teachers to value and appreciate the
standard of many novels now published with the child
reader in mind. These teachers no longer regard
literature as a soft option or time-filler.

6.3.6.5

The need for a language specialist in each school is
clear, if schools are to implement effective policy
on language. Specific courses providing this kind of
training are essential. Teachers selected for this
course should be released from their posts, and on
completion of the course be expected to lead their
schools in matters regarding language teaching across
the curriculum.

6.3.7   In terms of present legislation, colleges of education
        may offer courses for junior secondary phase teachers,
        under the guidance of universities; and in some
        universities, primary school teachers are trained.
        It is recommended that the universities, with their
        facilities for research and development, mount
        investigations into language and learning, and make
        the fruits of this research available to students
        and qualified teachers.

6.3.8   It is possible that teachers' associations could
        assume a more educative role than is at present the
        case in South Africa, thus assisting their own members
        in professional development in such areas as curriculum
        planning and policy formulation.

6.4   General recommendations

6.4.1   Until such time as schools are staffed with people
        who are language specialists, it would seem necessary
        for education authorities to appoint one or more
        persons in itinerant positions to assist schools in
        this work. Positive and prolonged guidance of this
        nature would do much to train practising teachers in
        the concept of language across the curriculum. It
        is of interest to note that in Coventry, where such
        a post exists, twenty of the twenty-one secondary
        schools in that education authority now have trained
        personnel on their staff who have established meaning-
        ful language policy for all subjects in the curriculum
        in their schools.

6.4.2   While Teachers' Centres have, in some instances, been
        found to be largely 'white elephants', the idea of
        a central point at which teachers can meet remains
        a good one. Those Teachers' Centres and Reading
        Centres which are capably organised and which offer

interesting and stimulating courses on educational
and professional matters are an example of the
possibilities of such meeting places. The College
for Further Training in Natal could have its function
further extended in this way, offering displays of
current material, advice on reading and related matters,
courses and follow-up courses relating to primary
school teaching and opportunity for research into
primary education.

6.4.3 Very little research is done into primary education
in Natal, the tendency being to await developments
elsewhere. This is unfortunate and professionally
unsound. Research into the language needs of the
Natal school-going child, the place of literature in
the primary school, the reading habits and interests
of these children, the language of local textbooks,
the language demands of local syllabuses, the development
in writing ability of young children, those ways of
talking together which help children learn, and assess-
ment of the primary school child, are some areas in
which research could benefit primary school education
in Natal. It is recommended that the education
authority give the impetus and support for research
of this nature, and that collaboration with universities
should also occur.

6.4.4 Until inspectors/advisers are appointed specifically
for primary education, inspectors and advisers who
are presently responsible for primary school education
and who may be unfamiliar with current trends in
primary education, should be given the opportunity
to learn of new developments, either through courses
specifically designed for them or through programmes
of reading. In this way, they may form a coherent
pedagogical theory of language and learning sufficiently
powerful to illuminate and guide those schools for whom
they are responsible. This would do much to establish
reciprocity in the relationship between theory and
practice.

6.4.5   The present expenditure on in-service training in
        Natal is hopelessly insufficient, allowing as it
        does, for an odd day's training in the year for those
        teachers who can be freed from their classes to
        attend. This is totally inadequate when it is
        considered that this is the only form of further
        training given to primary school teachers by the
        Department aside from occasional published bulletins.

        Primary schools lack guidance from senior personnel
        in the Natal Education Department as the majority of
        Inspectors and Advisers have no first-hand experience
        of primary school teaching. If primary school teachers
        are to extend the activities that they and their pupils
        pursue as they strive to achieve the goal of competence
        in listening and speaking, reading and writing, not
        to mention the greater richness and effectiveness
        that is advocated by leading educationalists, then
        education authorities must commit themselves to a
        realistic budget for training teachers to appreciate
        the value of moving from a narrow orthodox view of
        teaching to a more enlightened approach.

6.4.6   Because many teachers in Natal and other provinces
        are appointed on a 'temporary definite' basis, that
        is for a year at a time, the staffing situation at
        many primary schools is often unpredictable. Because
        such teachers may not as yet apply for promotion
        posts, too, they may lack commitment to teaching.
        These facts, and the generally low salaries paid to
        all teachers, may lead to lowered morale among school
        staffs as a result of which pupils suffer. Radically
        improved conditions of service would help to remedy
        this.

Apart from three Appendices which follow, and the Bibliography,
this dissertation is now complete.
Appendix A has reference to Chapter One, B to Chapter Four
and C to Chapter Five.

TRANSACTIONAL (1)
Language to get things done, i.e. it is concerned with an end outside itself. It informs, persuades and instructs.

EXPRESSIVE (2)
Language close to the self, revealing the speaker, verbalizing his consciousness, displaying his close relationship with the reader. Possibly not highly explicit. Relatively unstructured.

POETIC (3)
A verbal construct, patterned verbalization of the writer's feelings and ideas. This category is not restricted to poems but would include such writings as a short story, a play, a shaped autobiographical episode.

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES (4)

INFORMATIVE (1.1)

CONATIVE (1.2)
Instruction and persuasion.

IMMATURE CATEGORIES (4.1)
E.g., undissociated categories, practice play, etc.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES (4.2)
Categories created by the special contexts of education.

REGULATIVE (1.2.1)
Language which lays down a course of action to be followed, makes demands, issues instructions where compliance is assumed, and makes recommendations which carry the weight of authority or the force of the speaker's wishes.

PERSUASIVE (1.2.2.)
Since compliance cannot be assumed, an attempt is made to influence action, behaviour, attitude by reason and argument or other strategy.

PSEUDO-INFORMATIVE (4.2.1)
Writing directed to the teacher via an 'apparent transaction' but failing to take up the demands of the apparent transaction.

PSEUDO-CONATIVE (4.2.2)
Another 'apparent transaction' but a conative one.

DUMMY RUN (4.2.3)
Exercise and demonstration of the ability to perform a writing task, which fails to take up the demands of that task.

RECORD (1.1.1)
-witness -ount or -ning -mentary.

REPORT (1.1.2)
The writer gives an account of a particular series of events or the appearance of a particular place (i.e. narrative and/or descriptive).

GENERALIZED NARRATIVE OR DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION (1.1.3)
The writer is tied to particular events and places but he is detecting a pattern of repetition in them; and he expresses this in generalized form.

ANALOGIC, LOW LEVEL OF GENERALIZATION (1.1.4)
Genuine generalizations but loosely related, i.e. the relationships are not perceived and/or not made explicit.

ANALOGIC (1.1.5)
Generalizations related hierarchically or logically by means of coherently presented classificatory utterances.

ANALOGIC- TAUTOLOGIC (SPECULATIVE) (1.1.6)
Speculation about generalizations; the open-ended consideration of analogic possibilities.

TAUTOLOGIC (1.1.7)
Hypotheses and deductions from them. Theory backed by logical argumentation.

APPENDIX B

BRITTON'S AUDIENCE CATEGORIES

AUDIENCE CATEGORIES

1	2	3	4	5
SELF	TEACHER	WIDER AUDIENCE (KNOWN)	UNKNOWN AUDIENCE	ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES

Child (or adolescent) to self (1) Writing from one's own point of view without considering the intelligibility to others of that point of view: a written form of 'speech for oneself'.

Expert to known laymen (3.1)

Child (or adolescent) to peer group (3.2)

Group member to working group (known audience which may include teacher) (3.3)

Writer to his readers (or his public) (4) Writer to his readers, marked by a sense of the general value or validity of what he has to say, of a need to supply a context wide enough to bring in readers whose sophistication, interests, experience he can only estimate and by a desire to conform with and contribute to some cultural norm or trend.

Virtual named audience (5.1)

No discernible audience (5.2)

Child (or adolescent) to trusted adult (2.1) In the early stages, transference into writing of the talking relation with the mother—writing that accepts an invitation because it comes from this particular person; later the liberating sense that this particular adult wants to hear *anything* you have to say.

Pupil to teacher, general (teacher-learner dialogue) (2.2) Writing for a specifically 'educational' adult, but as part of an ongoing interaction; and in expectation of response rather than formal evaluation.

Pupil to teacher, particular relationship (2.3) Writing for a specifically 'educational' adult; a personal relationship but also a professional one, based upon a shared interest and expertise, an accumulating shared context.

Pupil to examiner (2.4) Writing for a specifically educational adult, but as a demonstration of material mastered or as evidence of ability to take up a certain kind of style; a culminating point rather than a stage in a process of interaction and with the expectation of assessment rather than response.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE   (submitted to teachers: see Chapter Five)

1.   Have you any ideas on how speech and writing can be made
     to play more positive roles in the learning of subjects
     other than English?
     Please elaborate.

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

2.   (a)   In general, do you provide your pupils with oppor-
           tunities to read other sources as well as the class
           textbooks, in your teaching of history, geography,
           and general science?

           _____

     (b)   Whatever your answer, please elaborate.

           _____

           _____

           _____

           _____

3.   (a)   To what extent are your pupils involved in "note
           making" of their own composition in various subjects?

           _____

           _____

     (b)   Please elaborate on your answer.

           _____

           _____

           _____

           _____

4. What methods are used in your school to promote or
    encourage the reading of books?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

5. How do you, personally, acquire information on new books
    and publications which may be suitable for your pupils
    or for your own teaching purposes?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

6. What would you say are the largest problems relating to
    interest in reading among pupils in your school?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

7. Mention some follow-up activities to reading in which
    your pupils engage (e.g., writing book reviews).

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

8. Has your school, over the last few years, introduced
    any new trend or innovation in connection with the teaching
    or improvement of language among pupils?
    Please explain your answer.

    _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.   Do your pupils ever write for an outside reader or
      "audience" apart from a teacher?
      Kindly explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10.   Do you feel that the "formal rules of grammar" should be
      taught at primary school level?
      Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.   Please indicate briefly how you go about teaching reading
      comprehension.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12.   Do you use the tape recorder as an aid to language develop-
      ment in your classroom?
      Please elaborate.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Please indicate how in your teaching you make use of outside media such as magazines, newspapers and television programmes.
Ignore this question if it is not applicable.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. "Every teacher is a teacher of language".
Explain briefly what you understand by this statement.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. If your school has attempted to introduce a language policy, what were the problems experienced? Please elaborate, with regard to solutions which may have evolved.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your co-operation.

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